Poland
— a Country of Folklore?

Poland — a Country of Folklore?

edited by Joanna Kordjak

Zachęta — National Gallery of Art, Warsaw 2016

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Zespół pieśni i tańca przy spółdzielni Kamionka w Łysej Górze podczas tournée, Egipt, lata 60, fot. archiwum Bolesława Książka

POLSKA ~~KRAJ FOLKLORU?

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Introduction

Poland — a Country of Folklore? is the latest in a series of Zachęta historical exhibitions that revisit, including from the perspective of visual culture, the early decades of living in post-war Poland. Art and history, culture and politics, sociology and anthropology mix here, forming a vivid, multi-threaded story about a longing for things familiar and native, for social advancement, but also about the repression from consciousness of certain phenomena and facts. It is also a story about the temptation to centrally foster a folk (i.e. national) culture as a political rather than artistic construct. Genuine artistic fascinations and fads, folk-art motifs and their caricatures, idyllic countryside and despised 'rustics', or the urban management of folklore — these are but some of the elements of this colourful puzzle. A history that wants (and should) be read anew and reinterpreted, as evidenced by publications and exhibitions from recent years.

The Zachęta — National Gallery of Art and the State Ethnographic Museum are both located at Plac Małachowskiego; the Academy of Fine Arts is a few hundred yards away. One of the 'protagonists' of the exhibition, the Dom Chłopa [Peasant's House] hotel, is not far either. *Poland — a Country of Folklore?* gives us and our viewers an opportunity to look afresh at this vicinity.

We thank all those who, by sharing their knowledge and collections, have contributed to making this show happen, as well as our time-proven partners: the National Museum in Warsaw, the National Film Archive, the Tchorek-Bentall Foundation, as well as the State Ethnographic Museum and the Museum of Warsaw.

Hanna Wróblewska
Director, Zachęta — National Gallery of Art

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Poland — a Country of Folklore?

Joanna Kordjak

> In a poster, amid the dimness of dark colours, there stands out the firm outline of a tree trunk supported from below by claw-like roots. A sign says: 'Folk Culture – National Culture, Zachęta.'[1]

Organised in 1978, on the 60th anniversary of the rebirth of Poland, the exhibition *Folk Culture — National Culture*, whose scale and attendance levels caused it to be compared to the famous *Romanticism and Romanticness in 19th- and 20th-Century Polish Art*, was also the last in a series of exhibitions presenting, or referring to, folk art that had taken place over two decades at the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions 'Zachęta' (CBWA). During that time folk art was presented here in various aspects: as a source of inspiration and antidote for 'bourgeois kitsch' in exhibitions of product and interior design, or as an artistic phenomenon in the presentations of 'newly discovered' folk artists. The exhibition mentioned at the beginning took place at a time when the notion of folk art was being redefined in Poland, and there was growing criticism of the overproduction of pop-culture 'pseudo-folk'. 'What to do with folk art?', wondered critics, art theoreticians and (professional) artists in press enunciations in the early 1970s, noting issues such as the devaluation of the very concept of folk art, at a time when viewer attitudes were becoming shallower and tastes distorted.[2] Although staged in different political conditions, the exhibition in its very title seemed to be expressing the socialist realist idea, as formulated by Bolesław Bierut, that 'everything great in art originates in folk art'.

Paradoxically, despite several decades of cultural policies meant to promote folk art (one of the manifestations of which was the CBWA exhibition history), the countryside remained (and would remain long after the breakthrough of 1989) our 'worse part, lesser self, our dark alter ego'.[3]

The fact that Poles chose to forget about their peasant origins and disown the cultural traditions of the peasant class has been, as Wiesław Myśliwski put it over a decade ago, something of a 'cultural tragedy'.[4] The necessity of 'working through peasantness' entails the need to rewrite marginalised areas of our history. As Andrzej Leder points out, one of such areas of recent history is the 'peasant revolution' that occurred in Poland in 1939–1956.[5]

Polish mentality has been shaped by a deeply entrenched division between landlords and peasants,[6] a division that has continued to this day. Features of this 'farm mentality' include both a 'lordly' sense of superiority and a feeling of contempt for the 'boor'. Even though post-war Poland was, in name at least, a 'people's' republic, rural background was something to be ashamed of and things rustic were mocked and ridiculed. The regime supported and promoted folk art, exploiting folklore as useful 'scenography', while at the same time antagonising the peasants and undermining the farming sector's growth potential. Rural tradition was presented as being backward and superstitious, and economic policy was geared firmly towards modernisation and industrialisation, much to the detriment of individual farming. Such policies led to mass migrations from country to city — particularly intense during the Six-Year Plan and continuing into the 1970s — and in effect, to the ruralisation of cities. The new urban dwellers disowned their rural origins. The regime turned the worker-peasant alliance, its ideological foundation, into a caricature: 'the peasant was supposed to feed the country and produce a high yield per hectare, while being forced to wear a staple folk costume with a peacock feather — it was a kind of human zoo.'[7] Images from 'Cepeliada' festivals show city people looking at country people dressed up in ceremonial costumes. Folk artists, their work presented on captioned plinths or in specially arranged 'enclosures' — embroidering, making pottery or carving figures — become an 'exotic' element in the cityscape. The untrue, distorted, virtually caricatural, image of the countryside that is constructed by the new post-war city inhabitants actually says a lot about themselves; it is their 'mirror'.

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[1] Mat, 'Rodowód kultury', *Nasza Trybuna*, no. 264, 1978 (review of the exhibition *Folk Culture — National Culture*, 30 November–26 December 1978, CBWA 'Zachęta', Warsaw).

[2] Andrzej Osęka, 'Co zrobić ze sztuką ludową?', *Kultura*, no. 31, 1973.

[3] Waldemar Kuligowski, 'Dlaczego Polacy wstydzą się chłopskiego pochodzenia?', survey, *Tygodnik Przegląd*, http://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl/jestem-ze-wsi-mam-kompleksy/, accessed 5 September 2016.

[4] Wiesław Myśliwski, *Kres kultury chłopskiej*, Bochnia–Warsaw: Prowincjonalna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 2003.

[5] Andrzej Leder, *Prześniona rewolucja. Ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2013.

[6] Cf. Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą*, Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Renewed interest in rurality (noticeable, for example, among sociologists) has its consequences in both art and in the preoccupations of art critics, as evidenced by a number of recent exhibitions. Their authors examine the phenomenon of 'modern folklore'[8] (contemporary art made by young country-based artists of rural stock), as well as tracing the impact of rural modernisation (particularly during the Edward Gierek era) on folk art.[9]

Poland — a Country of Folklore? aims to offer a visual analysis of what folklore and folk art were in the first post-war decades. It takes it point of departure in the history of the exhibitions that took place at the CBWA 'Zachęta' in 1949–1970. The focus is, therefore, on folklore and folk art as an urban representation of the countryside and its inhabitants — as it was perceived by ethnographers, art historians, collectors and artists. It was in the city that it was decided what folklore was and what it wasn't. At the Cepelia, the 'folksiness' of incoming products was evaluated by Artistic-Ethnographic Committees comprising ethnographers, art historians and professional artists. While the idea of constructing national identity through folk culture wasn't a communist-era 'invention', having become topical with the rebirth of the Polish state in 1918, the new geopolitical situation after the Second World War, and the structural changes in Polish society it had brought about, provided a new context. There was direct continuity in thinking about folk culture between the interbellum period and the post-war era, despite radically different political and institutional conditions. The omnipotence of the post-war state created prospects — impossible in the Second Polish Republic — for realising the idea of exploiting folk culture on an unprecedented scale. This led to the institutionalisation and centralisation of folk art. A crucial role in the promotion of folk culture, as well as in fuelling demand for its products, was played by the Cepelia enterprise (short for Centrala Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego, Folk and Artisan Industry Central), started in 1949[10], as well as by the Folk Artists Association, founded in the early 1960s.

Folk art became a foundation of a uniform national culture and played a key propaganda role in a policy of national unification. A popular mandate legitimised the new regime, which politically relied on peasant support. Thus modernist idealization of the peasantry was wed to socialist realism. Folklore was exploited politically and aesthetically. Neutralising its religious (sacral) aspect, the authorities sought to make folklore an integral part of the eclectic repertoire of a new, secular, culture. The ideological foundation was provided by older stereotypes about folk art, dating back to the late 19th century, such as that folk art is 'timeless', 'indigenous and free from borrowings', or an 'emanation of national spirit, a source of polishness, a reflection of national character', as described by Antoni Kroh.[11] A folklore-based vision of 'indigeneity' or 'nativeness' was constructed in opposition to the socialist-realist image of the 'other'. In the new geopolitical situation after the Second World War (the shift of borders to the west, mass population transfers), folklorisation was an important instrument for the regime to 'manage diversity'.[12] It was easy to co-opt ethnic difference by reducing it merely to matters of costume or hairstyle.

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[7] W. Kuligowski.

[8] Drawing attention to contemporary art that is made in the countryside by artists of rural origin and emphasising their connection with the rural community (*As You Can See: Polish Art Today*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 14 February–31 August 2014).

[9] E.g. *Masters Peasants Peasants Masters* at the BWA Sokół, Nowy Sącz, 24 June–11 September 2016, or *Farmhands in Factories and Boas in Brasseries*, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 29 February–3 April 2016.

[10] It rapidly launched 59 outlets throughout the country, and gave employment to 20,000 artists. By 1951, it had 292 production units (including 194 cooperatives), employing 30,000 people. Cf. Piotr Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warsaw: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana; Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.

[11] Antoni Kroh, *Sklep potrzeb kulturalnych*, Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2013.

[12] Ewa Klekot, 'Ludowość górala. O pożytkach z folkloryzacji i samofolkloryzacji', in *Materiały z Konferencji Tatrzańskiej. Wokół Zakopanego i sztuki Władysława Hasiora*, ed. Julita Dembowska, Kasia Redzisz, Kola Śliwińska, Ewa Tatar, Zakopane: Muzeum Tatrzańskie w Zakopanem, 2015.

Globally, folklorisation was an important element of Soviet colonisation policy in the countries in its (seemingly ever larger, as the old colonial empires collapsed) sphere of influence. The much-touted diversity (within the framework of communist unity) of the 'brotherly countries' was identified with folkloristic exoticness, a strategy illustrated by youth festivals, with multinational crowds parading around the streets with song and dance. During those spectacles, national borders seemingly ceased to exist, geographically distant countries became neighbours, and dancers from Poland and Africa performed the harvest-home dance together. 'China is Near', a newsreel proclaimed, and that was true not only during international festivals. The People's Republic of China was becoming more familiar, as interest in the exotic cultures of other socialist countries grew and cultural exchanges intensified. Polish artists visited China, Vietnam or India, and presentations of (mainly folk) art from countries controlled by, or allied with, the Soviet Union were held regularly.

The promotion of folk art played an important role in both domestic and external policy, serving to convey a desired international image of the country. The strategy, based on self-folklorisation and exoticisation, was expressed in tourist-poster slogans such as 'Visit Poland — a Country of Folklore'. Folklore itself was turned into an on-stage phenomenon, with the choreography of folk-band performances now consulted with professional artists for the sake of the urban viewer. The folk costume, now a stage outfit, was an indispensable feature of such shows. While its usage in the countryside (where, as Janina Orynżyna wrote, 'it was the most vivid element of the landscape'[13]) was declining, in the city, paradoxically, it was the subject of growing interest. For the rural dweller, the traditional costume was like a 'window to the world', acquiring the 'magical power to transport its owner from the back of beyond right to the capital'. It was revived as an outfit for outdoor shows, demonstrations, street parades or festivals, to eventually become their 'indispensable adornment', a marvel of 'delicious authenticity'. Sample depots and handicraft cooperatives were launched under the Cepelia's auspices, such as Chałupnik or Opocznianka, the latter being responsible for the production of regional costumes for much of the country, but the stage costumes of the most popular ensembles were designed by professional artists, often incorporating elements from different regions.

The 'revival' so construed was true not only for the folk costume, but for folk art in general. This 'renaissance', as it were, was connected with the wider phenomenon of large-scale ethnographic research in post-war Poland. Paradoxically, while fuelled by substantial government funding (as part of an official policy of supporting and promoting folk culture), such research coincided with a period of profound changes in the countryside itself. A brutal policy aimed at industrialising rural regions and eliminating city-country divisions meant that the natural habitat of folk art was quickly disappearing.

Wide-ranging field research yielded ethnographic-museum collections of folk art as well as catalogues and atlases of Polish folk art and folklore, providing an inspiring impulse for other milieus. Publications such as Marian Pokropek's *Atlas of Folk Art and Folklore in Poland* could serve as 'guidebooks' for foreign (mainly German) buyers of Polish folk art. The ethnographic listing in the 1950s of the major rural centres and artistic communities helped to plan the itineraries of field trips organised for designers by the Institute of Industrial Design (IWP). Their participants produced photographic documentation of folk art and artists in a convention that brings to mind 19th-century 'ethnographic' photography. The IWP trips inspired Wanda Telakowska to initiate 'designer collectives' informed by the idea of fine design not only aimed at the masses and widely available ('inexpensive and beautiful furniture for everyone', as the slogan went), but also created *through* the masses. The purpose of design, Telakowska wrote, was to 'combine the experience and skill of fine artists with the unbridled imagination, fresh ingenuity and prolificacy of grassroots groups'.[14] Accordingly, selected folk artists were invited to Warsaw where, as part of the IWP collectives, they worked with professional artists, creating designs for industry (analogous designer teams featured workers and young people). The collectives, providing for hands-on creative collaboration with folk artists, were informed by a different philosophy than, for example, the Cepelia cooperatives, which generally copied pre-defined patterns. Telakowska's initiative hel-

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13 Janina Orynżyna, 'Żywotki, purpurki, błękicie (Zagadnienia stroju ludowego)', *Przemysł Ludowy i Artystyczny,* no. 4, 1956, p. 2.

14 Wanda Telakowska, *Twórczość ludowa w nowym wzornictwie*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sztuka, 1954, p. 10.

ped to 'discover' the women folk painters of Zalipie, who gained considerable renown. Working in collectives with professional artists (such as husband and wife Helena and Lech Grześkiewicz), they designed textiles or dish decorations for the Faiance Factory in Włocławek. The characteristic floral motifs of Zalipie became hugely popular, appearing on festival scarves, upholstery fabrics or evening dresses. The painters received major commissions, and the flower patterns from the cottages and barns of Zalipie were sampled to decorate such prestigious interiors as those of the MS Batory ocean liner or the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw. At the latter, they can be found on chandeliers made by the Włocławek factory (to a design by the Grześkiewicz duo), which represent a fine example of socialist-realist eclecticism.

The work of Eleonora Plutyńska was a special case and, as Telakowska called it, a 'glorious example' of such collaboration. Plutyńska was able to draw on her pre-war experience of working with rural artists, when she had been entrusted with the 'difficult and responsible mission' of reviving dying folk art traditions in eastern Poland. Her role, as she wrote, was to 'judge and be watchful — to tell the bad from the good, and to extricate, wherever it remained intact, the art of the old days from under the tarnish of modern decay'.[15] After the war, Plutyńska started working with women weavers in Janów near Sokółka in the Białystok region, her purpose being to save the tradition of double-warp weaving and counter the 'spoilt' taste of the locals, e.g. the 'vulgar colours' of their carpets, increasingly inspired by mass-market production. By providing the right designs (which usually had little in common with the local tradition), she was supposed to shape the tastes of local artists and improve the aesthetics of their products, elevating them to a higher level of artistic quality. We might say, therefore, that it was a case of not so much 'reviving' a dying tradition as creating a new/old one. The 'folksiness' of the Sokółka carpets was designed by a professional artist — not for the country buyer, but for the urban dweller, and one with a refined taste. This aspect is noted by Piotr Korduba, who clearly discerns the aesthetic needs of the city people. The products of the Cepelia cooperatives, modelled on, or inspired by, folk art (e.g. the furniture or textiles by the 'Ład' cooperative), were sought after by the most sophisticated, best educated customer, whereas many other city residents (many of them having only recently moved from the country) aspired to quite a different interior design style, with the high-polish wall unit remaining a prime object of desire for several decades. Another theme was socialist-realistic iconography, smoothly adapted for the Sokółka carpets and remaining in production for several decades, in what was an example of a larger phenomenon of the long duration of socialist realism in folk art. Antoni Kroh, an outstanding ethnographer and folk-culture researcher points to an important naming distinction: for the rural artists (such as the Sokółka weavers), *ludowe* ['folksy'] was what they did for the city, as opposed to *swoje* ['one's own'], meaning things they made for themselves, according to rural tastes.

Wanda Telakowska appreciated the exuberance, spontaneity and freshness of grassroots talent, which, combined with the experience and knowledge of the professional artist, were to improve the overall quality of design. Both the exhibition and the accompanying publication present the categories of folklore and folksiness as important and topical for modern artists, thus situating the subject of folk art in a wider context. Folk-art spontaneity, authenticity and honesty were values that modern art found vital. Since the end-19th century, primitive, or non-professional, art had been for the modern artist (from Paul Gauguin through Pablo Picasso to Jean Dubuffet) a source of renewal of the artistic language.

This was informed by modernity's key idea of 'regenerating reality' in its various aspects: political, social as well as artistic. Piotr Juszkiewicz writes about modernism in precisely this context (on the example, among other things, of the work of Antoni Kenar).[16] Modernisation so construed reached to the past to draw energy from it by referring to traditional elements and their associated values. This 'regenerational' attitude, as Juszkiewicz stresses, explains also the continuity of the idea of folksiness between the pre-war period and the post-war one. The sources of that energy were sought, for example, in 'primitive' cultures, and therefore also in folk culture, which was supposedly strongly imbued with authenticity, spontaneity as well as national specificity. Driven by a need to renew the language of art, the modern artist turned to its sources, to the 'childhood' of art, which meant the art of the 'other', be it the 'savage', the child or the folk artist. The notion that the 'folk artist is like a child' had been voiced in Polish art history since before the war. 'Instinctive, primal urges govern not only life, but also child art, primitive art and folk art', Ksawery Piwocki wrote in the 1940s in the periodical *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*,[17] repeating theses formulated in pre-war Poland.

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[15] Eleonora Plutyńska, *Podwójne tkaniny tzw. dywany ziemi białostockiej i sokólskiej*, 1948, typescript, Special Collection, Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences.

[16] Piotr Juszkiewicz, in *Poland — a Country of Folklore?*, in this publication, https://zacheta.art.pl/pl/mediateka-i-publikacje, pp. 82–83.

As noted by Aleksander Jackowski, simplicity, naivety, a 'childish adoration of the beauty of the world', was something that was shared by folk and non-professional artists, by naive 'freaks' and 'outsiders'[18], all shown in the famous exhibition *Others. From Nikifor to Głowacka* at the CBWA 'Zachęta' in 1965, a show underpinned by many years' research conducted by the Studio for the Research of Non-professional Art at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Art. In that and other exhibitions, in public competitions as well as in museum and private collections (e.g. those of Ludwik Zimmerer or Bolesław Nawrocki), naive art was put under one rubric with folk art. In fact, Jackowski noted that Polish 'naive' artists had clearly been inspired by folk art. The specifically Polish phenomenon of 'osmosis' between these two artistic areas was due in part to official cultural policy. Intense promotion of folk art through various propaganda channels meant that non-professional or naive artists were pigeonholed as 'folk' (e.g. the case of Stanisław Zagajewski) and included alongside folk artists in the canon of 'other art', which was being born at the time (through exhibitions like the abovementioned one, among other things). The 'folk artist' label gave them a reason to be.

Outlining a context for the dynamic socio-political changes occurring after the war, the exhibition showed what the country was for the city, and what image of the country the 'people's' government sought to convey. The show made it possible to examine the phenomenon of 'folksiness' with all its ambiguity, beyond propaganda, and to reflect on the status of folk art following its introduction to museums and galleries as well as the position of the folk artist — the 'other' artist — in the art world.

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[17] Ksawery Piwocki, 'Pojęcie sztuki ludowej', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 1/2, 1947.

[18] Aleksander Jackowski, in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*, exh. cat., Warsaw: CBWA 'Zachęta', 1965.

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Did Folklore Come to Downtown?
On Folk Motifs in the People’s Republic of Poland

Błażej Brzostek

‘The people will move downtown’. In his memorable poem, Adam Ważyk was announcing in 1950 the arrival of a new era. The common people were to liberate themselves from the ‘backstreets’, breaking the Old Town walls, inside which they had remained stuck for centuries. Quite a striking metaphor, given that at the same time the walls of war-ruined Warsaw were being reconstructed in their mediaeval forms.

But they were to surround a neighbourhood consistent with ‘modern requirements’ and filled with a ‘new, more beautiful life’.[1] In the summer of 1953, the Old Town Market Square was inaugurated, and one of the new features was a Cepelia store selling works of ‘folk art’. The common — also rural — folk thus not so much stepped out of the backstreets as symbolically entered them. The elimination of contrasts between city and country was one of the key pledges of the post-war regime. The worker-peasant alliance was to give birth to a new synthesis: national in form, socialist in content.

‘Here come the machines / Carrying the girls / And each of them is like a boy’, an amateur ensemble from Złocień sang to a folk tune in the socialist-realist comedy, *The Adventure in Mariensztat*.[2] The band members, dressed in folk costumes from the Opoczno area, rode into Warsaw on a truck decorated with national and red flags, amid vehicles carrying bricks, steel and timber for the great (re)construction of the capital. The ensemble were bringing *culture*. And so the culture of the country folk was to merge with the culture of the Warsaw folk, just as Hanka Ruczajówna from Złocień had decided to spend the rest of her life with Jan Szarliński, a champion bricklayer from Warsaw.

*

The conductor ‘told her that she probably used to ride in an oxcart before, but now she was in a streetcar. When the other passengers spoke up for her, the conductor said, “Look at them important persons from a PGR[3*]”’.[4] Described in a Warsaw newspaper in the autumn of 1952, the incident was by no means an isolated one. People grumbled that the ‘bumpkins’ didn’t know how to behave in big city. That the ‘cowherds were university students now’, which was why there was a deficit of meat. That the peasants were storing up food, so the ‘countryside had to be whipped into line’ and the ‘churls sent back to their herding’.[5] The cities saw serious food shortages, and their residents often greeted newcomers arriving in search of work with reluctance and refusal. In what was now an ethnically near-homogeneous urban landscape, the peasant was becoming the crucial ‘other’.

There was actually a paradoxical side to the streetcar incident cited above. During the Stalinist era, the profession of an urban-transit conductor was officially promoted as a perfect career opportunity for women and was often chosen by fresh arrivals from the countryside. A uniform and a service bag were attributes of urban living and their user’s a new position in social hierarchy. The mention of a state farm would suggest the speaker’s rural background, since it was among the peasants that the PGRs were particularly unpopular. Reprimanding a rustic-looking woman, the conductor may have come from the ‘gorge of Old Town’, but she may as well have been ‘from Złocień’.

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[1] *Trakt Starej Warszawy*, Warsaw: Stołeczny Komitet Frontu Narodowego, 1953, pp. 8, 15.

[2] Dir. Leonard Buczkowski, 1953.

[3] * The PGR (Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne) was a form of state-run collective farming, similar to the Soviet sovkhoz [translator’s note].

[4] *Express Wieczorny*, 31 October 1952, p. 5.

[5] Dariusz Jarosz, ‘„Pastuchy”, „okrąglaki”, „wieśniacy”. Miasto peerelowskie i jego chłopscy mieszkańcy’, *Więź,* no. 5, 2007, pp. 106–115; Błażej Brzostek, *Robotnicy Warszawy. Konflikty codzienne (1950–1954)*, Warsaw 2002, pp. 72–79.

Statistically, one in two Poles moved in the first post-war decade. During the Six-Year Plan (1950–1955), the migrations were mostly from country to city. They were stimulated by the state: special teams recruited young farmer sons for construction or factory work. In fact, Hanka Ruczajówna went to the city voluntarily, driven by emotions: she was looking for the bricklayer Szarliński, but also for a *new life*. Waiting for her were the women's brigades, which were supposed to revolutionise relationships on the construction site: the symbolic birthplace of the *new man*.

If it was a revolution, then a 'dreamt through' one, to refer to Andrzej Leder, a researcher who has been trying to describe the Polish experience from a psychoanalytical perspective. According to him, the revolution began in September 1939 and only half-ended in October 1956. It was the period of the German occupation and Polish Stalinism, when the old order had been destroyed and a new one was being built by outside violence. The experience of those changes by the majority of the population, Leder says, was 'transpassive', that is, basically passive and free from a sense of responsibility, but satisfying the (more or less conscious) longings of the popular majority.[6] In the course of this revolution, the key figures of the symbolic universe — the Jew, the landowner (nobleman) and the bourgeois — were destroyed. The post-feudal model of the imagination had come to an end, supplanted, under the pressure of a state going totalitarian, by a new one. The state championed *progress* and fought *backwardness*. Having crippled the Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL), the main opposition force in the first post-war years, the communist regime began collectivising the farming sector. This meant destroying the foundations of peasant culture, even if some of its aspects were protected and promoted. So on the one hand, the folk costume, dance or textile pattern were upheld as rightful strands of national culture. On the other hand, the state sought to modernise rural living, to eliminate illiteracy, lack of hygiene, *superstition*, in fact the very fabric of traditional life. The former goal figured in the state budget as funding for folk culture and ethnographic or art-historical field research. The latter one meant brutal collectivisation and mass-scale *awareness-raising*.

'Here come the machines / Carrying the girls': the vision of female tractor drivers synthesised the ideas of collective work and gender equality, but also of national integration. As Marcin Zaremba notes, when the term 'nation' was used in the early 1950s, its meaning was close to the Eastern Slavic *народ*, 'the people', stressing the plebeian substrate of Polish culture.[7] But unwanted traditions — the gentleman's and intellectual's contempt for the commoner (Józef Chałasiński wrote of the intelligentsia's mental 'ghetto'[8]) and the simple folk's resistance to innovation — persisted in social life. Remembering her childhood in the traditional region of Podhale, Teresa Bogucka describes the clothes her educated mother sewed for her as a manifestation of upper-class status. 'It was a doleful manifestation, for we were poor as a church mouse, but still we dressed completely different from the village kids'. Bogucka hated the stockings, fustian underwear and short coats. 'My classmates wore long skirts and shoulder scarves, but no knickers.'[9]

Hanka Ruczajówna certainly wore her knickers, be it under the village skirt, the work overalls or her Sunday-best calico dress. While the fact wouldn't be demonstrated in a 1953 movie, it was part and parcel of the ideology the film sought to convey. In itself, performing in an amateur song-and-dance ensemble was tantamount to choosing a political and civilisational path that was supposed to lead to the abovementioned synthesis. It was a path of liberation from farming and farmland as 'one's only conceivable future', to quote Wojciech Wieczorek.[10] Thinking was indeed changing. Land prices were falling as migration became an increasingly available and attractive option, reflecting hopes for *social advancement*, but also the fear of collectivisation. One migrant reminisced:

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[6] Andrzej Leder, *Prześniona rewolucja. Ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2014.

[7] Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2001, p. 175.

[8] Józef Chałasiński, *Społeczna genealogia inteligencji polskiej*, Warsaw: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza 'Czytelnik', 1946.

[9] 'Maniery demokratyczne. Opowieści Teresy Boguckiej wysłuchała Joanna Olech', *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 26 November 2006, s. 11.

[10] Wojciech Wieczorek, *Życiorysy pokornych*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Więź, 2007, p. 91.

> I couldn't . . . bear the constant visits of [tax] collectors, nor the absurd slogans that mindless zealots wrote on the walls at night: 'deliver your quotas', 'kulak', 'class enemy' etc., so I moved out . . . to Zielona Góra province, where I worked in industry just to avoid becoming a victim of the farm.

Another one, when visiting his home village near Łomża, saw the decline of farming and the fear of collectivisation, but also a drive for change: 'They asked me if it was true that a big city was being built near Kraków.'[11]

The great construction site of Nowa Huta became a symbol of the transformation. It will also come to symbolise its pathologies, due in large part to Ważyk, who abandoned the socialist realist convention:

> Distrustful soul, torn out of the village soil,
> half-awakened and already half-mad,
> in words silent, but singing, singing songs,
> the huge mob, pushed suddenly
> out of medieval darkness: un-human Poland . . .
> (*A Poem for Adults*, 1955)

It was in the heart of Nowa Huta that a Cepelia flagship store was opened. 'Folk' plates had been mounted on its faux-renaissance wooden ceiling, and photos from the mid-1950s show a coarsely dressed clientele: women in scarves and men in heavy boots crowd at the counters, surveying embroidered textiles.[12]

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Cepelia was established in 1949 as one of the *centrals* that monopolised large swathes of life. It oversaw some 200 cooperatives and ran over 100 retail outlets.[13] Folk art and handicraft featured prominently on the agendas of institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Art or the newly launched State Institute of Art. Significantly, their leaders and organisers had many years' experience, having been associated in the pre-war years with the Polish Applied Art Society or the 'Ład' Artists Cooperative, started in 1926, whose 'strivings . . . grew from a soil cultivated by the hand of the "enlightened burgher"'.[14]

The soil was national, rustic, but supposed to provide lifestyle models for a democratic society. Ład furniture became a symbol of the aspirations of young intelligentsia in the 1930s, being associated with the utilitarian and hygienic ambience of a small flat in a co-op house, filled with functional furnishings. It would be decorated with linen tablecloths from the Vilnius area or with Hutsul pottery, which were meant to replace the bric-a-brac of the *cluttered* bourgeois apartments of the previous century, but also to stave off the spectre of *alterity*, creeping into daily life with standardised mass-market products and buildings styled after Bauhaus or Le Corbusier's modernism. Modernity was supposed to be combined with elements of the peasant tradition, a tradition of 'people from out there'[15*], to quote the title of a short-story collection by Maria Dąbrowska.

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[11] *Tu jest mój dom. Pamiętniki z Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych*, Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1965, pp. 156, 268.

[12] Leszek J. Sibila, *Nowohucki design. Historia wnętrz i ich twórcy w latach 1949–1959*, Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, 2007, photos on pp. 38, 44, 46.

[13] More: Piotr Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warsaw: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013; Roman Gmurczyk, *Organizacja cepeliowska w latach 1949–2014. Fakty i ludzie*, Warsaw: Fundacja 'Cepelia' Polska Sztuka i Rękodzieło, 2014.

[14] Kazimierz Orthwein, 'Spółdzielnia „Ład" w latach przedwojennych i po wojnie. Przyczynek do zagadnienia kultury mieszkania', *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, no. 2, 1957, pp. 83–98.

[15] [*] *Ludzie stamtąd*, 1926 [translator's note].

As Dąbrowska wrote in 1938, 'Culture in Poland existed only in the countryside, be it at the manor or the peasant cottage. Our cities (partly because they weren't *ours*) bred, besides a handful of valuable workers, only stinking riff-raff.'[16]

While most promoters of folk art wouldn't probably agree with that emotional view, it did express a widespread notion, informed in the Polish context by a sense of the fundamental 'otherness' of cities in the poorly urbanised country, but one present in the European discourse as well. Oswald Spengler, one of the most influential intellectuals or prophets of the interbellum, offered similar diagnoses in *The Decline of the West*, contrasting Culture, rooted in the bucolic landscape, with Civilisation, producing a mechanised society. The industrialised city, he wrote, 'sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men'[17], whom it uproots, reproducing the 'intellectual nomad' type. From the mid-19th century, such 'anxieties and judgements of the critics of modernity'[18] stimulated, particularly in England, the leader of industrialisation, an attraction to the rustic world. Among the most influential proponents of the trend was John Ruskin, who was highly suggestive in idealising mediaeval culture, arguing that man used to realise his freedom through individual manual work, which he had been deprived of by machines. He urged a return to local community, which allows everyone to manifest their talent.[19] Ruskin's ideas informed William Morris, originator of the Arts and Crafts movement, whose ambition was to introduce finely designed objects, produced by traditional craft methods, to everyday life.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Arts-and-Crafts and post-Romantic influences gave rise to the idea, and agenda, of protecting and promoting the 'national style'. Such styles preoccupied the elites of the 'young' nations, i.e. those of recently obtained, incomplete or nonexistent statehood. The desire to prove one's individuality, and above all 'ancientness', an obsession of the era, became an ideological and political programme, meant to symbolically distinguish the Romanians and Bulgarians, Slovaks, Ukrainians as well as Poles. For most part, those were peasant societies, and it was in the folk substrate that the evidence of their originality was supposed to reside. A leading source and inspiration of the 'Polish national style' was the culture of the highlanders, which was believed to have preserved ancient elements of Polish art and whose reinterpretation would reinvest Polish culture with its 'distinctive features'.[20] On a broader scale, this corresponded with 'exoticism', a trend that ushered in Oriental motifs, stimulated ethnographic studies of 'savages' in distant lands, but also of the domestic 'others' — the peasants. Whereas the 'primitives' were basically a discursive reference (proving the colonisers' superiority), the peasants, even if the elites wished to *civilise* them, represented a cultural and political challenge, being claimed for, and inscribed in, national and state symbolism. The discovery of the folk was to be a return to the roots, serving to preserve 'authenticity' and introduce local themes to universal circulation. At the same time, a critical current was developing, which saw the stylisation of folk culture for the purpose of the elites as inauthentic and falsely democratic.[21]

Reborn after the Great War, the Polish state experienced a ten-year period of the domination of 'national' motifs in architecture and art. At the Paris Expo in 1925, Poland presented itself under a 'folklore' label, like other countries a quarter of a century earlier. It may have seemed that such stylisations didn't have much of a future.[22] But the subsequent offensive of modernism revived the Spenglerian discussions about risks faced by local or national identities, while the Great Depression saw renewed interest in the idea of preserving the original folk ways, including by stimulating rural crafts, known also as the *folk industry*.

The tradition went back some time. The Folk Industry Support Society (TPPL), founded at the beginning of the 20th century, ran shops and open-air markets in the Russian-controlled part of Poland. Local production of textiles or pottery helped to consolidate a sense of 'nativeness' based on grassroots patterns. Transposed then by artists, they were to influence the taste of the elites, which, it was believed, were too much bent on imitating foreign countries, flooding the Polish territories with mass-market produce; fears of German domination in this respect were particularly widespread. Poland, in turn, with its vast resources of timber and its original artists, could, Bronisław Mańkowski argued in 1920, conquer foreign markets with its 'exoticism', starting a fashion for *Polishness*.[23] National and economic themes combined here with public-relations purposes. There was no doubt, according to Mańkowski, that the state should support such work, and that its effects would serve the cause of national integration. If in the 19th century the folk had been largely 'nationalised', now the nation was to be 'folkified', albeit under the ideological control of the upper classes. Founded in 1907 at Count Adam Krasiński's home at Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Warsaw, the TPPL, which was ran by landowners and middle-class citizens, had half a thousand rural workshops under its patronage before the First World War.[24]

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[16] Maria Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki 1914–1965. Pierwsze pełne wydanie w 13 tomach (bez opracowania edytorskiego)*, Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Komitet Nauk o Literaturze, 2009, vol. IV, p. 105 (21 December 1938; her emphasis).

[17] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, p. 102.

[18] Cf. Jerzy Jedlicki, Warszawa: *Świat zwyrodniały. Lęki i wyroki krytyków nowoczesności*, Warsaw: Sic!, 2000.

[19] P. D. Anthony, *John Ruskin's Labour. A Study of Ruskin's Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 45–71.

[20] Barbara Tondos, *Styl zakopiański i zakopiańszczyzna*, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2004, pp. 20, 22.

[21] Lesław Tatarowski, *Ludowość w literaturze Młodej Polski*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1991, pp. 40–42.

[22] P. Korduba, pp. 22–23.

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Zofia Szydłowska, the director of Cepelia, would 'admit in confidence' that the enterprise was to be an 'enclave in the new, difficult reality'. During the Stalinist era, she was informed against for allegedly employing aristocrats, former landowners and other 'reactionaries'.[25] It was a rather paradoxical continuation: in the past, it was the elites who wanted to protect the 'folk industry', now that industry was becoming a safe haven for the former elites. In Kraków, the Maria Konopnicka Cooperative, which made folk dolls, employed blue-blooded personnel and for this reason was known as the 'patrician cooperative': 'When the communist boss entered the production room, those present would switch to French, speaking which wasn't forbidden'.[26] Staff at the flagship Cepelia stores had a working knowledge of foreign languages, a rare occurrence in the realities of a nationalised retail sector.

At the same time, the 'folk style' was used in official ceremonies, legitimating the regime's 'national' origin. Children in Mazovian folk costumes presented flowers to dignitaries, folk ensembles like Mazowsze or Śląsk performed at major galas, and the World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw in the summer of 1955 was a true explosion of folklore. Remembered as a unique event of the post-Stalin 'Thaw' era, it was a fiesta of song, dance and costume from all over the world, combining a fascination with exoticism and things foreign, so hardly available to the citizens of People's Poland, with a propagandistic image of the fraternisation of nations. In an extensive report from the previous edition of the Festival, in Bucharest in 1953, Kazimierz Koźniewski described how the different delegations moved towards the Romanian capital, covering a 'route of song and dance' and banding together on the successive borders with youth pageants. 'Then an all-out, general csárdás continued long into the night'.[27]

A metaphor of open borders could not obscure the actual state of affairs. The model of *socialist culture*, like the associated model of the state, was an exclusive one; according to Izabella Bukraba, it included 'otherness' only on the basis of assimilation.[28] That aspect wasn't new; since the 19th century, folk culture had been exploited as a means of legitimating the elites. As Roch Sulima notes, this sourcing could mean the 'opening' (integration) of folk culture or its 'closing' (conventionalisation).[29] In communist Poland, the latter approach seems to have firmly prevailed.

Folk motifs were associated with official harvest festivals, particularly the 'central' celebrations at the Decennial Stadium in Warsaw. Delegates in regional costumes 'brought the crop' to the Party leader, the 'Master of the

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[23] Bronisław Mańkowski, *Zabawkarstwo w Polsce. Możliwość jego rozwoju na podstawie przykładów państw obcych*, Warsaw 1920.

[24] P. Korduba, pp. 29–31.

[25] Ibid., p. 141.

[26] Andrzej Chwalba, *Kraków w latach 1945–1989*, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 6, ed. Janina Bieniarzówna, Jan M. Małecki, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004, p. 25.

[27] Kazimierz Koźniewski, *Siedemdziesiąt lat w dwa tygodnie*, Warsaw: Iskry, 1954, pp. 52–53.

[28] Izabella Bukraba, *Kultura ludowa na co dzień*, Warsaw: Instytut Kultury MKiS, 1990, p. 74.

[29] Roch Sulima, *Folklor i literatura. Szkice o kulturze i literaturze współczesnej*, Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1985, pp. 26–35.

Festival'. Those were symbolic acts of peasant support, coming, importantly, from a farming sector that was largely uncollectivised. A loaf of bread made from the fresh wheat crop was kissed and there followed folk dances in the field of the stadium, combined with modern accents. In September 1956, after 'Eugeniusz Kaleta, a leading farmer from the village of Władysławów', had presented, 'in the name of all Polish peasants', a wreath to Edward Ochab, then First Secretary of the Party, a helicopter landed on the pitch, bringing greetings from the armed forces.[30] Tradition was to mingle here with modernity, and internationalism with patriotism. In reality, there were deep ruptures, or perhaps 'unsolvable contradictions', even if the propaganda reserved them for the capitalist world.

Modernity turned against the past when old houses in the city and country dilapidated, even if some of them were subsequently listed or moved to open-air museums; politics turned against the past when essential topics of Polish history were censored, or exploited for political purposes. Since, as Marcin Zaremba points out, the regime, being dependent on the Soviet Union, suffered from a deficit of 'national' self-confirmation, nationalism became its means of legitimation. The 1960s offered a significant lesson here. It was an era of major film productions depicting the national victories and of historical-reconstruction military parades. Folk dances and Cepelia street sales were inscribed in the same context. So were, despite what it might seem, stands selling traditional craft products at hotels for *foreign visitors*.

Such were the manifestations of the ostensible cultural openness of communist Poland. The Cepelia dolls, baskets and *kierpce* [highlander moccasins] were exported to Western markets. A Cepelia store opened in 1960 at New York's Fifth Avenue.[31] The government in Warsaw made conciliatory gestures to the Polish diaspora, particularly in the United States, which boosted tourism revenues and stimulated cultural exchange. To some extent, the *mazurs* and *kujawiaks* were supposed to obscure unbridgeable geopolitical differences. But even if such events aroused genuine emotions, they still confirmed the exclusivist model of official culture. In a similar vein, the Cepelia exports corroborated the autarkic character of People's Poland's economy. In both spheres, the regime exploited the country's symbolic and material resources; links with the Polish émigré community were meant to legitimate the system, while exports and tourism generated much-needed hard currency. On the other hand, the large-scale production of folk dolls and traditional leather moccasins corresponded already with a mass-market, consumer-oriented, economic model.

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Shortly after the war, even before Cepelia had been launched, there emerged, amid the general ruination and a feeling of starting from scratch, a certain social and aesthetic programme, one that owed a lot to the Arts and Crafts movement and to ideas discussed before the war by social activists and *progressive* artists. It provided for the formation of the citizen according to rational principles, but was also informed by the idea that society's latent creative potential couldn't manifest itself in the former system, dominated, as it was, by private ownership and bourgeois culture. It was argued, for example, that children's toys that imitated reality (the bourgeois ones, particularly those of German manufacture) were less desirable than those offering its general approximation; a simple wooden doll, therefore, rather than a porcelain one with a painted face and moving eyes. Such argumentation had, of course, an implied meaning. German toys were sometimes presented as actually depraving; examples included 'boxer figurines that, when wound up, would batter each other with their fists', or a spring-powered cat that 'chased a mouse, its eyes sending phosphorescent sparks'.[32] Such things couldn't be allowed. The work of toy-making cooperatives was to be supervised by professionals promoting native designs and materials. The state intervened here in the social programme aimed at forming the new citizen, proclaiming the pursuit of national forms and socialist contents. Such a programme seemed possible from the late 1940s, after the 'battle for commerce', i.e. its nationalisation. In a campaign against bad taste, not only things

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[30] *Express Wieczorny*, 10 September 1956, p. 1.

[31] P. Korduba, pp. 179–182.

[32] Zofia Topińska, *Zabawki. Wskazania wychowawcze*, Warsaw: Światowid, 1947, p. 27.

‘foreign’ were to be eliminated, but also those considered ‘kitschy’, especially the products made at the interface of town and village. The ‘battle for commerce’ collapsed this network of economic relations. Towns, especially smaller ones, found themselves in isolation, losing much of their previous role as intermediaries between the countryside and the larger world. The latter opened itself to young people of peasant stock, absorbing them into the centres of construction and industry. Assembly lines and steel furnaces, and not any kind of ‘folk industry’, were now the focus of imagination. The overpopulation issue had been successfully addressed, so stimulating the countryside by supporting artisans and craftsmen was no longer important. No wonder, therefore, that Cepelia products were increasingly detached from actual rural living, and control of their ‘purity’ had to assume new forms. In the 1960s, Cepelia developed ‘folksiness’ standards for the wares it sold.[33]

The ‘folk’ were disappearing. More and more rural households owned radios, and ‘Ruch’ newsagents’ kiosks were popping up everywhere. Newspapers such as *Gromada — Rolnik Polski* or *Chłopska Droga* sold many thousands of copies. Rural inhabitants learned *correct Polish*, wore mass-market clothes and dreamed of owning a motorcycle. The young ones, that is. They were the 25 percent of country dwellers who, according to a 1970 poll, were unhappy with where they lived. They missed city-style entertainment, didn’t like farming work, and considered their community as full of vengeful and envious people. Urban life was more attractive because it meant less hard work and staying with *cultured people*. In the same poll, it is worth noting, the happiest urban inhabitants were those who had recently migrated from the country.[34]

Already during the Stalinist era, researchers from the Housing Construction Institute were interested in how tenants furnished new flats at Warsaw’s housing estates. They visited working-class homes, often occupied by recent migrants. What they saw there were almost empty rooms, or, more often, haphazard arrangements of furniture, including pieces brought from the country. More striking was the tendency, rooted in rural custom, for distinguishing between the ‘black room’ (the space of communal living) and the ‘white’ one (reserved for ceremonial occasions). Often several people slept in the same bed, though that particular trend, as polls suggest, was declining.[35]

A decade later, during the era of ‘petty stabilisation’, sociologist Jadwiga Komorowska described homes at a suburban housing project. The working-class ones combined rural reminiscences with bourgeois aspirations. Over round tables, covered with crocheted tablecloths, there hung ‘bird of paradise’ feather compositions, hand-painted wedding photos, ‘stag in rut’ wall hangings and religious paintings, with beds decorated by embroidered pillows. The homes of engineers, doctors or technicians, on the other hand, were simple and utilitarian; many sported functional furniture, bright wall curtains or decorative fine-art prints.[36] This meant a demise of the culture of the kitschy wall tapestry, the *makatka*, so ridiculed during the era, but also the risk — as one contemporary commentator noted — of the proliferation of ‘modern kitsch’, an attribute of the ‘new middle class’, a product of communist Poland.[37] Cepelia’s mission was, among other things, to expand the functional canon and eliminate tawdriness by promoting ‘folk’ styles that rang a familiar bell. This sense of cultural familiarity was to be strictly controlled. As Izabella Bukraba will write, ‘Committees composed of ethnographers, linguists and art historians lecture today’s folk artists about the essence of folksiness, guarding the purity of their productions’.[38]

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‘Folklore is coming to downtown’. This 1970s newspaper headline carried a different meaning than visions from the Stalinist era. According to the official rhetoric, Poland was a *modern* state, even if a developing one. The formation of the 'new man' was no longer an issue; now there was talk of the conscious citizen, aware of his duties, but also pursuing his own cultural and material aspirations. The state was to help him in that, while at the same time ensuring a continuity with the past. Serving that purpose was the use of 'folklorism'. Introduced in Poland in the mid-1960s by Józef Burszta, the term meant 'using, in special situations of daily life, selected forms and themes of folklore, whether sourced directly from the country and transferred to a different context, or drawn from folkloristic documentation and recreated in specially arranged situations'.[39]

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[33] P. Korduba, pp. 142, 158.

[34] Halina Szostkiewicz, *Wieś i miasto w opinii społecznej. (Sprawozdanie z badań)*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Radia i Telewizji, 1974.

[35] *Osiedle Mokotów*, ed. Wanda Litterer, Warsaw: Instytut Budownictwa Mieszkaniowego, 1953; *Zmiany w zagęszczeniu mieszkań, liczbie i składzie ludności osiedla Muranów w l. 1950–53*, Warszawa: Instytut Budownictwa Mieszkaniowego, 1954.

[36] Jadwiga Komorowska, *Telewizja w życiu dzieci i młodzieży. Studium telewizji wśród uczniów szkoły podstawowej w mieście przemysłowym „N”*, Part I, Łódź–Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1963, pp. 34–35.

[37] Jacek Łukasiewicz, ‘Zmierzch makatek’, *Więź*, no. 7–8, 1960, pp. 41–42.

[38] I. Bukraba, p. 48.

Such situations were many. Buses still brought folklore ensembles to the capital, but no Ruczajówna had a chance to stay permanently, the city having long been 'closed', guarded by compulsory resident-registration regulations. (Ważyk's wall-breaking metaphor no longer applied). The myth of the female bricklayer was gone too; houses were built with prefabricated concrete slabs, and women were now assigned the roles of accountants, secretaries, canteen cooks and, of course, cleaners. The big-city mass audience had become firmly established and was enjoying the staged shows and reconstructions that were organised for it: 'The Rzeszów wedding in Warsaw demonstrates that we know how to cultivate the best traditions of folk art, custom and ritual'.[40]

'The original symbolism present in the lyrics is now empty, like in a theatre play', Burszta wrote. The performer had been fully separated from the viewer, though folk motifs in stage shows are 'authenticated' by members of the older generation, who know them from experience and are able to instruct younger people.[41] The latter, as *Panorama* reported in 1975, 'combine industrial occupations with farming work, wear ordinary clothes and listen to transistor music. Yet they eagerly grab the opportunity to sing and dance in traditional embroidered trousers, with an alpenstock and a hat with an eagle feather'.[42] Their 'authentication' notwithstanding, such shows reflected the commitment of cultural animators, who sought to preserve *perishing* folk instruments or ran Regional Rooms (there were some 1,800 of those in the late 1970s). While 'stage folklore' was selective, devoid of ritual aspects, and turned the traditional masks and props into empty artefacts, the phenomenon had a firm social basis — the Folk Artists Association was a large and active organisation — and gave the performers a sense of self-worth. Ethnographers remained committed, as evidenced by a steady rise in the number of open-air museums (from two in 1939 to about forty half a century later) or the achievements of the Polish Ethnographic Society, especially a monumental atlas of folk costumes. But they were also asking themselves questions specific to their discipline. Isn't folklore basically their own construct? Doesn't it change in the atlases and skansens into a collection of artefacts ascribable to space rather than time? In other words, isn't it so that folklorism washes folk culture out of history?[43]

At the same time, there were tendencies in academic and literary life to portray the historical evolution of the countryside and give a voice to the 'people from out there'. After 1956, 'peasant literature' emerged, a trend with analogies in other countries undergoing, like People's Poland, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Such literature was actually promoted for political purposes; it was meant to reflect the *transformation* that had occurred under communism. But the image wasn't always clear, especially that the Polish version of communism was far from being orthodox: collectivisation had largely failed, some degree of freedom of expression in the arts was observed, and there existed a theoretically independent peasant party, the Polskie Stowarzyszenie Ludowe (PSL). Though ideologically subordinate to the communist party, it maintained a protective umbrella over a distinct social space, allowing historical research, journalism or commemoration to thrive. A cult of wartime martyrdom was cultivated, providing a symbolic link between Kościuszko's scythe-armed peasant soldiers and the WWII-era Bataliony Chłopskie [Peasant Battalions].

Affiliated with the PSL was the Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza publishing house, established in the same year as Cepelia. While churning out mass-market editions of classic Polish literature, it also published historical studies or memoirs, such as the 'Young Rural Generation' series, featuring competition-selected memoirs and journals written by people of peasant stock. In terms of this kind of literary production, 'Poland holds the first place in the world', Józef Chałasiński boasted in 1964.[44] Perhaps most importantly, the LSW contributed to the popularisation of 'peasant literature', publishing authors such as Julian Kawalec, Marian Pilot, Wiesław Myśliwski or Edward Redliński. The image of peasantness such literature conveyed could be bitter, reflecting the experience of uprootedness caused by migration and career in the city. The rural world seemed a space of simple and certain values, which were being destroyed by the progress of civilisation. But also the traditional peasant existence, depicted, particularly by Redliński, in a tragicomic manner, revealed, in confrontation with the new world, its grotesque aspects. Published in the early 1970s, Redliński's best-known novel, *Konopielka*, didn't provide answers to the all-too-easy questions about the superiority of archaic tradition over modernity and its seemingly liberating effects.

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[39] Józef Burszta, *Chłopskie źródła kultury*, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1985, pp. 299–300.

[40] Press note from 1975, quoted in I. Bukraba, p. 100.

[41] J. Burszta, pp. 304–314.

[42] I. Bukraba, p. 118.

[43] Ibid., pp. 20, 27.

Such universal questions acquired a peculiar meaning in People's Poland, connecting with the problem of strict ideological control in the public sphere and central economic planning; in both areas, the possibilities of the expression of social needs were limited.

As Kazimierz Brandys wrote in 1979,

> Since the war, that is, a time when we still knew ourselves, for we had confirmed our own identity, we've been experiencing our fate beyond actual experience, knowing less and less about ourselves as a collective character. . . . We see falsehood, but truth has been increasingly hard to find. In such cases you turn towards the past; forty years ago, we were still ourselves, living an authentic life. But our past isn't true anymore either, it is our image of the past.[45]

In the same year, 1979, Tadeusz Konwicki's *A Minor Apocalyps*e was published in the underground, offering a metaphorical image of such a loss of control over reality. In his vision of Warsaw, Konwicki gave central significance to the Palace of Culture and Science, in front of which at some point there 'gambolled a multitude of buxom couples in peasant coats and sequined chemisettes, in peacock feathers and Żywiec-style laces. And the dance leader tapped his feet, singing "Krakowiak wot tak ja" in a wrong accent'.[46] It was a reminiscence of the Cepeliada festivals. From 1971, the vast expanse of Plac Defilad filled periodically with the stalls and stages of a major fest, where folk band performances combined with presentations of handicraft and cuisine, and the sale of Cepelia products. In 1977, a total of 27 such events took place in various cities around Poland.[47] The term 'Cepeliada' entered the vernacular language, but its meaning was rather ambiguous, bringing to mind mass-market 'fakelore' as well as something that Kazimierz Brandys touched upon in his writing: the issue of an unstable identity. This was something that Stanisław Bareja captured brilliantly in his comedy films, even if they had to wait years to be fully appreciated. *Miś* [Teddy Bear] (1980) presents a whole universe of People's Poland faux-folk, with girls in regional costumes presenting flowers to VIPs, grotesque *krakowiak*-style dances, and straw as a native motif, covering the roofs of cottages standing in the shadow of massive electricity pylons. There is also a straw teddy bear filled with bottles of vodka. And above all, there is Tradition, which, as one character explains, is a 'defensive wall . . . it is precisely the Christmas carol, the festive supper, the folk song, the forefathers' tongue, it is our history that won't change. And the new things arising around us are the everydayness we live in.' An everydayness whose connection with the past can barely be grasped, since the past is but an image.

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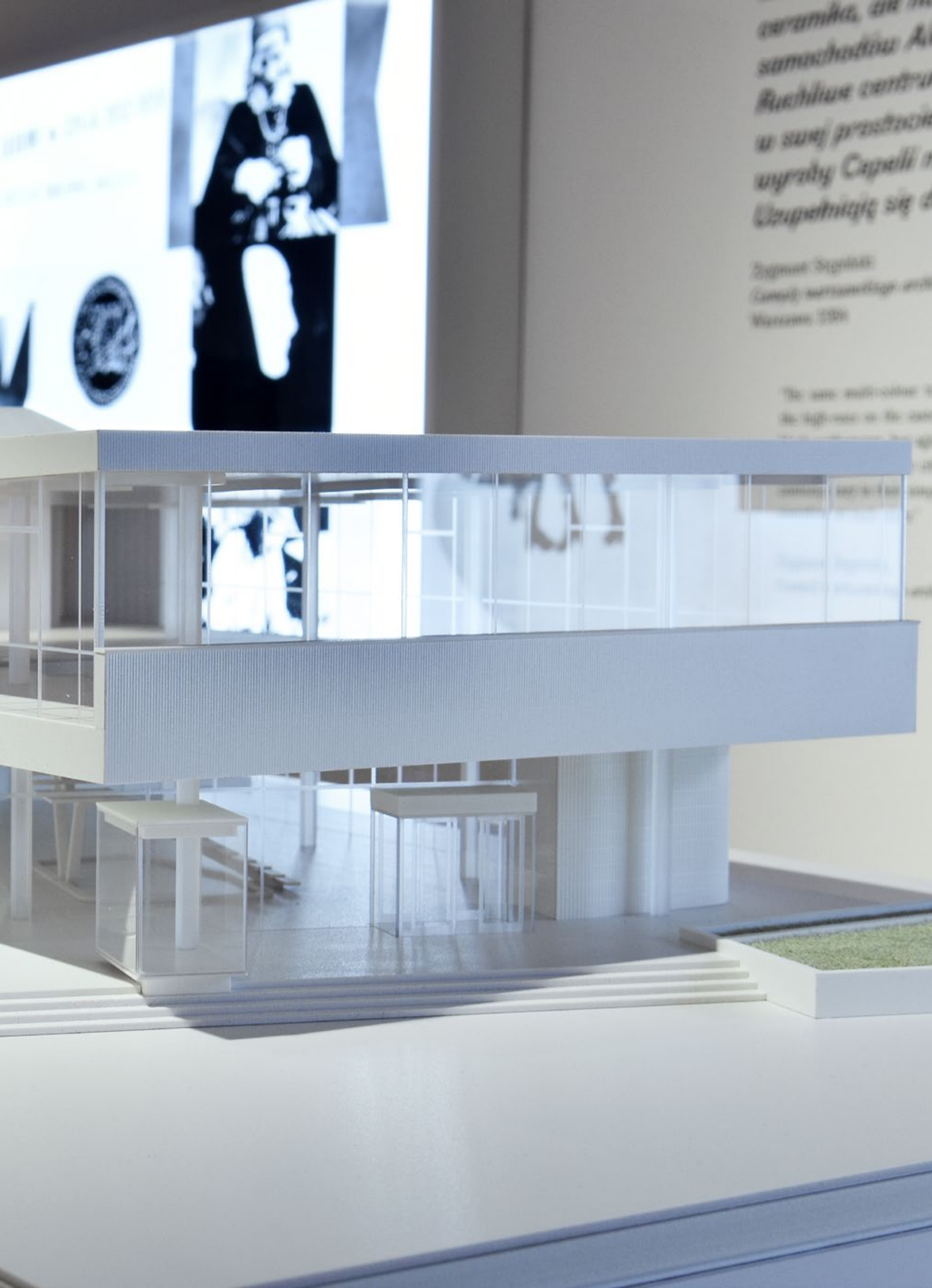
[44] Józef Chałasiński, 'Młode pokolenie wsi Polski Ludowej', in *Awans pokolenia*, Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964, p. 6.

[45] Kazimierz Brandys, Warsaw: *Miesiące 1978–1981*, Iskry, 1997, p. 69.

[46] Tadeusz Konwicki, *Mała apokalipsa*, Warsaw: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza Nowa, 1993, p. 31.

[47] P. Korduba, pp. 199–200.



The Peasant in the City

David Crowley

> The socialist capital — a city of each citizen . . . worker, peasant and working intellectual.
>
> Political slogan Poland, early 1950s

In the 1952 romantic comedy *Adventure in Mariensztat*, Hanka, a country-girl, arrives in Warsaw as a tourist. A socialist realist fairy-tale, *Adventure in Mariensztat* was the first full colour feature film in Poland and the director Leonard Buczkowski made full use of the bright fabrics of her festive dress, and the even brighter red horizons of the city. Her route though the capital's streets, conducted at an exhausting *Warszawskie tempo* [Warsaw tempo] by an animated guide motivated by the spirit of socialism, takes her from Mariensztat, a new housing district, past romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz on his plinth and Stanisław August's picturesque palace which seems to float on the surface of the lake in Łazienki Park. Her tour ends abruptly when she seems to be lost in Plac Konstytucji, the monumental showpiece of new socialist realist architecture in the city. Unperturbed, the joy of finding herself in the radiant future of socialist Warsaw is written in her smile. She is a peasant who is on the way to becoming a socialist activist. She joins a work brigade, becoming a bricklayer. The agent of her transformation was not a lecture or a political tract but the city itself. Warsaw had done its ideological work in this fable. Not only were the workers making the city; the city was making workers of peasants. Access to education, to homes of the kind being built in Plac Konstytucji and to houses of culture would, it was claimed, overcome what Marx and Engels had classed the 'idiocy of rural life' in *The Communist Manifesto* one-hundred years earlier.

Social transformation was declared to be a priority of the new political order in the People's Republic of Poland. Vice-Minister of Culture Włodzimierz Sokorski announced:

> There is progress, a constant grappling with the new life conditions, a process of transforming peasants into proletarians. And take a look at the newly accepted university students who come from the working classes of cities or villages. Look how they have to struggle, how they are initially oppressed with the dominance of the pseudo-elites that they meet at the start of their student life. How they don't give up, nonetheless, how they push themselves up to the surface and hold on tight to the positions achieved. They will be our leading and militant intelligentsia.[1]

Yet state attitudes to peasant life were contradictory. At the same time as calling for peasants to be made into proletarians, Sokorski also claimed that peasant culture was the beating heart of national life:

> Folk art formed itself in opposition to aristocratic, courtly culture. And at the same time its roots can be traced to a form of society founded on the drudgery of the masses, the feudal peasantry. When aristocratic culture severed itself from its national origins by becoming a source of docile cosmopolitanism and fossil-like formalism, peasant art nourished itself from a perpetually creative, richly national and deeply class-marked social stream.[2]

Peasant culture was 'a living movement which renews itself every day and every hour in the creative march of the Polish countryside to socialism'.[3] This claim was allegorised in countless representations of the peasant in the company of her fellow builders of socialism. Had Hanka looked up during her visit to Plac Konstytucji in Buczkowski's *Adventure in Mariensztat*, for instance, she might have even caught a glimpse of herself. The monumental arcades which flank the square to the city were decorated with mosaics created by ceramic artist Hanna Żuławska to represent the seasons. Spring features a brightly dressed peasant woman marching arm-in-arm with a miner from Silesia, a factory worker and a zetempowiec (member of the socialist youth organisation) carrying a red flag. Here was an illustration of the national unity so loudly proclaimed by the state at the time. Countless other representations — posters, magazines, and in newsreels — recreated this happy scene. Almost invariably embodied as a woman in these images, the Polish peasantry was identified with femininity and the proletarian worker with masculinity. The peasant was both romanticised and emasculated in such representations (just as the political parties which represented peasant interests had been in the late 1940s).

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[1] Włodzimierz Sokorski, 'O sztukę realizmu socjalistycznego", in *Sztuka w walce o socjalizm*, Warsaw: PIW, 1950, p. 150.

[2] Włodzimierz Sokorski, 'O właściwy stosunek do sztuki ludowej', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 5, 1949, p. 131.

[3] Ibid.

The paradoxes of official representations of the peasantry was evident to many, even if censorship meant they could not be admitted. Writing abroad Czesław Miłosz in his critical account of the Stalin years, *The Captive Mind,* accused the state of making a fetish of peasant culture at the time when it was attempting (and failing) to impose collective farms in the countryside, attacking so called 'kulaks' (wealthy peasants) and encouraging internal migration to new urban projects like the construction of the city and industrial complex of Nowa Huta:

> In the villages, where the entire former pattern of custom is to be abolished through the transformation of peasants into agricultural workers, there still remains survivals of the individual peasant cultures which slowly stratified over the centuries. Still, let us speak frankly, the main support of this culture were usually the wealthier peasants. The battle against them, and their subsequent need to hide, must lead to the atrophy of peasant dress, decoration of huts, cultivation of private gardens, etc. There is a definite contradiction between the official protection of folklore (as a harmless form of national culture designed to satisfy patriotic tendencies) and the necessities of the new economic structure.[4]

For those who could not make a permanent move to Warsaw or Nowa Huta, tourism offered an alternative. Day trips and tours to Warsaw were organised for Poles from across the country to witness the miracle of reconstruction. To serve these national pilgrims, plans were put in place for new hotel and cultural centre in the heart of the city, Dom Chłopa [Peasant's House]. First conceived in 1946 (though plans for similar structures can be traced back to the First World War[5]), Dom Chłopa was conceived as a place not only of rest but of improvement. The building was to contain not only bedrooms and a restaurant for 500 guests, but also a library, a day room and a cinema/theatres well as a medical centre, a photographer's studio and a hairdressers. Long delayed, the competition to design the building on a plot on Plac Powstanców Warszawy was not announced until May 1957. The winning scheme was designed by the most successful architect of the Stalin years, Bohdan Pniewski, and Małgorzata Handzelewicz-Wacławek. Organised around a quadrangle, their scheme provided accommodation under a rippling roof line (which earned it the nickname 'the house of the camels') and a glass-walled lobby from which all Dom Chłopa's services could be accessed. Constructed after the so called 'Thaw', the architects could take advantage of the 'contemporary style'. The open lobby was decorated with brightly coloured furnishings and largely abstract decorative schemes by artists Władysław Zych, and husband and wife team of Hanna and Gabriel Rechowicz. Attempting to produce a thoroughly modern interior, Hanna Rechowicz admits to making some compromises: 'There were strange birds there and rather funny animals or unknown plants, for that's what they wanted. Since it's a hotel where peasants will stay, they asked to be able to discern some real fragments.'[6]

Nevertheless, the Dom Chłopa presented its guests with a vision of the bright future in social, political and aesthetic terms.

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[4] Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1985, p. 67.

[5] Bohdan Rostropowicz, 'Chłopi będą mieli swój dom w Warszawie', *Stolica*, no. 22, 1959, p. 15.

[6] Hanna Rechowicz, quoted in Max Cegielski, *Mozaika. Śladami Rechowiczów*, Warsaw: WAB, 2011, pp. 164–165.

Dom Chłopa was an exceptional institution but perhaps one that had been prefigured in the writing of the Stefan Żeromski. In his last novel, *The Coming Spring* (1924), the writer tells the story of a father and son returning home from Baku after the First World War and the revolutionary events in Russia and elsewhere. It is a political *Bildungsroman*. One of the magnetic images which pulls them home to Poland is the father's descriptions of a liberated country now enjoying the benefits of modern technology. Peasant homes are now, he tells his son, made with glass walls — bright, transparent, warm and above all hygienic:

> Water cools the walls; as a result, even in the greatest swelter it's as cool there as in our cellar in Baku, but without the damp and the bad smell. The very same water constantly washes the glass floors, walls, and ceilings, bringing cool and cleanliness. . . . there is nothing that could rot or go mouldy or smell from visible or invisible dirt, since all the utensils, all the furniture and fittings — everything is made of glass.[7]

Żeromski's vision was fashioned not only from one of the clichés of progress — glass architecture, but also one of the deep rooted prejudices of modern life — the dirtiness of the peasant. Similarly, the Dom Chłopa had been shaped by the conviction that the peasant in the city needed to be improved to truly engage with the city. When not decorating the city in her gala dress, she appears to have been viewed as detritus (lit. matter out of place). Varsovian Anna Mańkowska passed her opinion of country tourists when interviewed in an article in *Stolica* in 1958: 'I see countless tours through the windows of my apartment in the Old Market Square in Warsaw. Unwashed and rumpled and carrying their cases and bundles all day and foraging for orangeade at a kiosk, I wish for the simple device of day hotels, conceived for ordinary people.'[8]

This trope of dirtiness was evident in other campaigns to improve peasant life. Writing in *Stolica* Stanisław Komornicki accused new-comers of reproducing the social spaces of the rural home in their new city apartments. The small, often meanly proportioned, kitchen was, he observed, sometimes used like the traditional black chamber in the peasant home, a multifunctional room organised around the fireplace where household labour was conducted and meals consumed. In transposition, this 'disposition' in the new Warsaw apartment left the much-trumpeted collective services like the communal laundry unused. The other, white chamber — which had been used as a site of display and for the reception of guests — was preserved as a space of display rather than self-education or other virtuous hobbies. The small, new flat, which typically accommodated a family in two or three multi-purpose rooms, was designed according to principles of utility. In effect, the design of the apartment was disregarded by its inhabitants. In the view of this apologist for the new Warsaw, this trace of the peasant disposition in new socialist spaces 'was an unfortunate memory of long-past, unhappy times'.[9] What Komornicki had in mind was not the 'private' time of biography but the epochal conception of Marxism in which life was regulated by the metre of progress: in this teleology, peasant life was destined for extinction. Ideologically correct, his article sought to raise a consciousness that would speed its disappearance.

Komornicki's criticism tapped into deep-seated town/country antipathies in Polish culture. It anticipated a good number of sociological and anthropological studies made in the decades that followed which sought to understand why newcomers to the city did not avail themselves of the cultural resources to which they now had access, or seem to have been improved by their new surroundings. Assessing the situation in Nowa Huta in the 1960s, one academic wrote 'Where the new blocks were inhabited by the families of rural origins, there were frequent problems due to incompetent use of a contemporary flat by the immigrants. It was often the case that the fittings in a flat were devastated (such as water supply and drainage, or gas heaters in bathrooms) due to incorrect use of the equipment(such as drawing water from the radiator), or using bathroom as a place to keep animals'.[10] Internalising the 'progressive' policies of the state, much of this sociology eschewed observation in favour of judgment ('incompetent use').

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[7] Stefan Żeromski, *The Coming Spring*, trans. B. Johnston, Budapest: Central European Press, 2007, pp. 85–88.

[8] Cited in *Stolica*, no. 45, 1958.

[9] Stanisław Komornicki, 'Jak urządzić nowe mieszkanie', *Stolica*, March, no. 1, 1953, p. 11.

Other portraits of the persistence of rural habitus in the city were more sympathetic. They include the social documentaries produced in the second half of the mid-1950s. During the Thaw, film-makers freed themselves from the task of producing propaganda and began to explore the impoverished conditions of everyday life. Known as the Black Series, their short films — sometimes involving actors and re-enactments but mostly assuming an observational style — took their viewers to the building sites and workers' dormitories of Nowa Huta to witness the hooliganism and alcoholism there (*Miejsce zamieszkania* [Place of Residence], dir. Maksymilian Wrocławski, 1957), and the depopulated towns and villages in the Polish countryside (*Miasteczka* [Towns], dir. Krystyna Gryczełowska, 1956). Another significant theme was the on-going housing crisis in Poland where many still lived in ruins ten years after the Second World War had ended. Made in the second wave of these social portraits, *Miasto na wyspac*h [City of Islands] (dir. Jerzy Dmowski and Bohdan Kosiński, 1958), a 8-minute film made for Documentary Film Studio, features one of the new clichés of the era, the image of the city as the countryside. New buildings were being constructed in Warsaw in small clusters with vast dusty plains in between. The clearance of the ruins had allowed nature and even small-holdings to occupy the city. Sometimes in Dmowski and Kosiński's film, this lends itself to a picturesque contrasts: a tram crosses a grassy meadow; and a tethered cow appears with building site in the background. Other shots are more desperate, showing dilapidated shacks and their inhabitants scratching a meagre living by recycling the debris of the pre-war city.(And Dmowski and Kosiński intercut stills from the crowded streets of the pre-war city, decorated with advertising, to emphasise the contrast between urbanity and rurality). Despite the rhetoric of turning peasants into proletarians, it looked as if the village had come occupied the city. This was not the romantic image of the village populated with happy peasants favoured but a landscape of desperation. These scenes might also have come from the pages of Żeromski's *The Coming Spring.* When the son arrives in Poland — still carrying his now late father's images of peasant modernity in his mind — his disappointment is palpable: 'Cezary gazed with cheerless eyes at the miry streets pocked with bottomless potholes; at the houses of all different, heights and colours and degrees outward filthiness; at the pigsties and the puddles, the outbuildings and the charred ruins.'[11]

Dmowski and Kosiński were making a point, demanding that the post-stalinist state to make good on its promises of improved housing and welfare for all. This argument was taken further in *Architektura*, the mouthpiece of the professional association of architects in Poland. In 1963 Jan Minorski published an article entitled which interpreted data about life on the fringes of the city generated by the Economic and Technological Academic Council of the Praesidium of the National Council. Entitled 'Architektura samorzutna' [Spontaneous architecture], it explored the ways in which improvised homes were made from cheap and often scavenged materials on narrow plots of land overlooked by the planners. Minorski's portrait of such unsupported and largely illegal attempts to 'meet the needs of human life' was surprisingly sympathetic.[12] He had been a loyal champion of Socialist Realism and then, after 1956, of the modernist revival in Polish architecture. Often represented as antinomies, both shared a confident belief in the civilising mission of architecture. Yet, in this article, he expressed a genuine interest in what Bernard Rudolfsky called 'architecture without architects'.[13] Minorski provided detailed maps of social relations in these households; sympathetic photographic portraits of the inhabitants of these shacks; and positive descriptions of the resourcefulness and creativity involved in making their homes and running small business in the suburbs. Perhaps to offset the doubts of his readers, he asserted:'It's an architecture that is: spontaneous, as the result of impulsive action, concrete, design-less, variable, "tachistic" if you will.'

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[10] Stanisław Panek, Edmund Piasecki, 'Nowa Huta. Integracja ludności w świetle badań antropologicznych' in *Materiały i Prace Antropologiczne*, no. 80, 1971, p. 30, cited in Ewelina Szpak, 'Between Farm and Factory. Peasants in Urban Space in Communist Poland', in Luďa Klusáková, Laure Teulières, *Frontiers and Identities: Cities in Regions and Nations*, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2008, p. 248.

[11] S. Żeromski, p. 126.

[12] Jan Minorski, 'Architektura samorzutna', *Architektura*, no. 4, 1963, p. 133.

[13] This was a title of an exhibition curated at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1964–1965) which surveyed the diverse faces of vernacular building traditions around the world.

Some of these homes and workshops were the product of urban expansion, sweeping former villages into the orbit of the city. Others were the product of tragedy: Minorski, outlining the lives of these householders, points to the dark catalogue of war and destruction that had necessitated this kind of domestic creativity. Moreover, it is clear — from the descriptions of their households — that they are predominately populated with women or as Minorski puts it, 'the hierarchy here is epitomised by the great-grandmother'[14] — the gendering of the peasant is, in this case, less a matter of ideology than of tragic fate. But his point is that these homes might also contain lessons for architects and urban planners too: they 'are subject to constant change. Their spatial development is dynamic.' 'In spontaneous construction,' he continues, 'you can see that what is good comes from heroic efforts to provide a roof over one's head. What evil has its roots in the lack of financial, technical, legal, organisational support by the state.'[15]Perhaps little more than a footnote in the history of Polish architecture and urbanism, Minorski's article did more than any other representation in the period to fill in the details of the figure of the peasant in the city, albeit on its very fringes. Her appearance here was not a fantasy in gala dress or a crumpled figure in need of improvement but was an attempt to understand her concrete existence.

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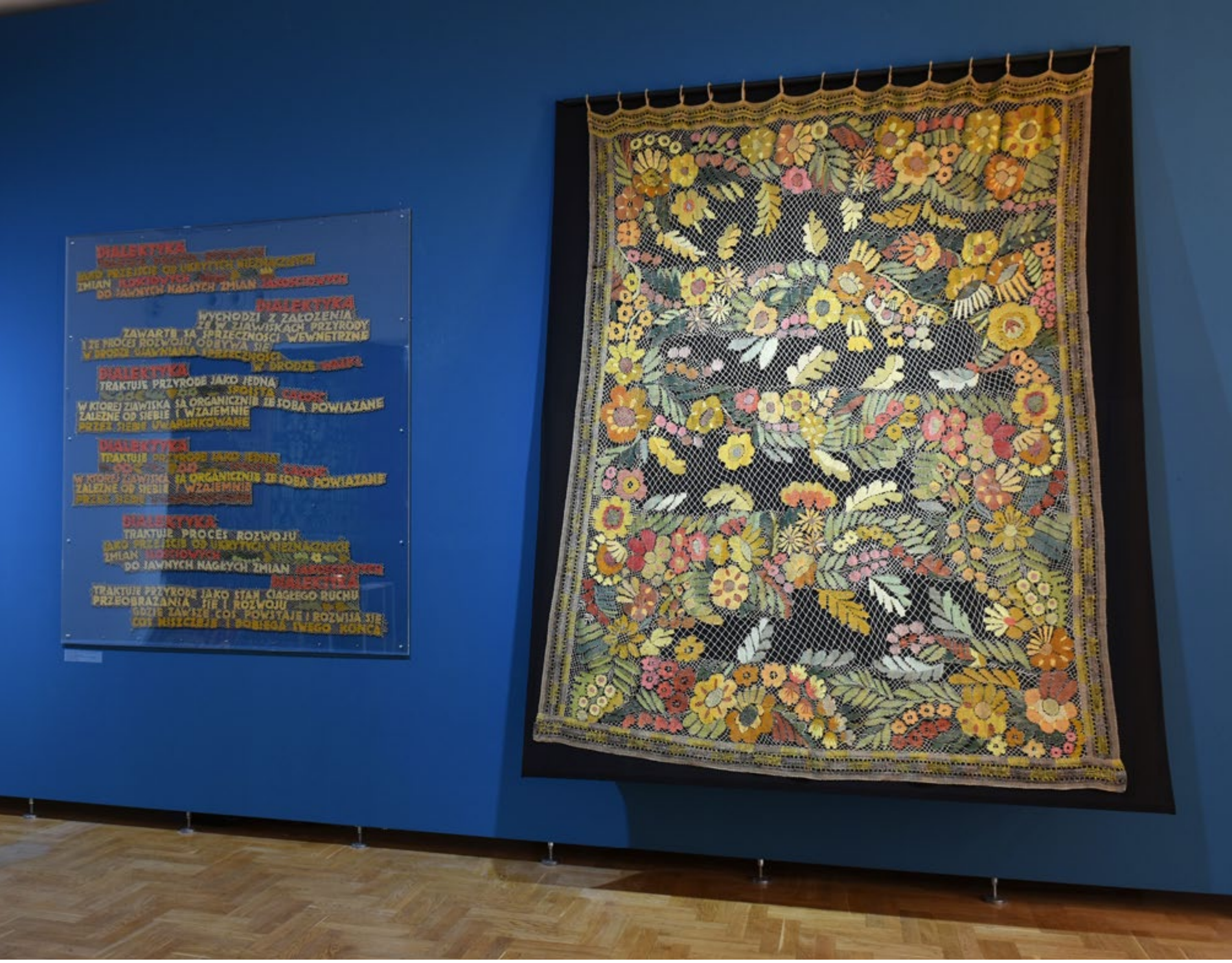
14 J. Minorski, p. 118.

15 Ibid., p. 115.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W DRODZE
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GDZIE ZAWSZE COŚ POWSTAJE I ROZWIJA SIĘ
COŚ NISZCZEJE I DOBIEGA SWEGO KOŃCA

Folklorism in Big City.
On Several Exhibitions at the CBWA ‘Zachęta’

Piotr Korduba

> The same bright textiles, but seen against the background of the high rises on the eastern side of Marszałkowska Street. The same black pottery, but against the background of the dense traffic in Aleje Jerozolimskie. The busy city centre and the Cepelia products, highly contemporary in their simplicity, do not compete with each other here. They are perfectly complementary.[1]

According to the above opinion, voiced in the context of the launch of a Cepelia flagship store at the corner of Aleje Jerozolimskie and Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw, a goal pursued since before the war had been achieved: folk art and handicraft had come downtown! The moment, described in a style spectacularly reflecting the desired relationship between contemporary life and traditional or tradition-inspired products, was but one of the many developments, and certainly not the last one, in the promotion of folklorism, that recurring notion in 20th-century Polish arts and crafts, decorative arts and design.[2] Among those developments were several exhibitions, significant for Polish interior architecture and design in general, that had taken place over nearly thirty years at the Zachęta gallery (then known as the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions). These included the 1st National Exhibition of Interior Design and Decorative Arts (1952), *The Thirty Years of ‘Ład’* (1956/1957), the All-Polish Exhibition of Interior Design (1957), *Visual Artists from the Cepelia Circle* (1973), and *Folk Culture — National Culture* (1978). While from today’s perspective they were all part of the ‘People’s Poland era’, they took place over nearly three decades, in widely different conditions not only artistically and politically, but also economically and technologically. Thus they offer an image of the design and production capabilities of People’s Poland during that time, as well as reflecting the propagandistic and idealistic expectations towards homes and their decor. What all these exhibitions share is a prestigious venue, clearly granting them the status of an official communiqué, and therefore a disconnection from the actual market realities, which forces us to perceive them as designer manifestoes, as collections of prototypes or uniques which stood little chance (unless on highly rationed terms) of practical use.[3]

Initiating those shows, as has been said, was the 1st National Exhibition of Interior Design and Decorative Arts in 1952.[4] It wasn’t the first presentation of this kind after the war; the catalogue introduction mentioned that it expanded on previous, similarly profiled, exhibitions organised in 1946 at the National Museum in Warsaw by the Crafts Department of the Ministry of Culture and Art[5], and in 1948 by the Production Aesthetics Supervision Bureau. The exposition comprised several sections, including those devoted to landscaping and architectural composition (gardens, plazas, memorials), event architecture (ceremonies, festivals, exhibitions), stage and theatre/film costume design, as well as two connected with interior design: public and home furniture and small everyday articles (including toys). The latter two featured individual designs as well as those by worker and peasant designer teams.[6] The point of departure here was the correct recognition that, from macro scale (urban space, open-air events) to the private home, and in both daily life and festive experience, aesthetics pervades the social life of individuals, shaping the style and look of our days.[7] Tastes and fashions are therefore a direct expression of the style of social living, making the artist/designer an organiser and renderer of its contents: 'Promoting material culture to the rank of artistic production is a matter of great significance and political-ideological importance, a matter crucial to the formation of a new lifestyle and new type of individual in People's Poland'.[8]

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[1] Quoted in: Zygmunt Stępiński, *Gawędy warszawskiego architekta*, Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1984, p. 93.

[2] What I mean by ‘folklorism’ is the sometimes mass-scale production of home-decor accessories and garments inspired by traditional folk arts and crafts, made by their authors not for their own use but for sale, and that primarily to the urban clientele, and sometimes used also by institutions, on which cf. Piotr Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warsaw: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.

[3] On the short supply of home accessories at the time, cf. Błażej Brzostek, ‘Wokół Emilii’, in *Emilia: meble, muzeum, modernizm*, ed. Katarzyna Szotkowska-Beylin, Kraków–Warsaw: Karakter, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, 2016, pp. 77–83

[4] *I Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz i Sztuki Dekoracyjnej*, exh. cat., Warsaw: CBWA ‘Zachęta’, 1952.

[5] Anna Masłowska, *Kronika wystaw MNW*, vol. I: 1862–1962, Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 2002, p. 125.

In the interior-design section of the show, though it was by no means a presentation of folk products, virtually everything, apart from furniture and glass, referenced folklore. The jacquard woven textiles, kilim wall hangings, Gobelin tapestries, pottery, wickerwork, metalwork, were all informed by a style developed before the war by the 'Ład' artist cooperative;[9] by the special relationship between work and material, a transposition of decorative media and motifs related, in various degrees, to folk handicraft.[10] Most of the jacquards[11] had been made precisely at the workshops of 'Ład', which now operated under Cepelia's auspices, while the other textiles had come from workshops or teams organised by the Institute of Industrial Design and from Cepelia cooperatives. Press reviews argued that the show succeeded precisely in those sections that were related to folklore, that is, where the exhibits were a result of collaboration between professionals and folk artists[12], or where folk inspirations were evident.[13] Furniture, in turn, least 'folksy', though also hearkening back to the pre-war aesthetics of 'Ład' and in most cases signed by the same designers, was criticised. Paradoxically, the criticism was directed against the pieces' very aesthetics; they were deemed too unique, over-aestheticised, too sophisticated, of weak construction, and thus deficient in utilitarian value.[14] At the same time, it was admitted that they had their own style, distinct from the sham pretence of their pre-war counterparts.[15] It was proudly proclaimed that, 'the consumer of art in People's Poland has always demanded simple and quiet furnishings, noble in design and strong in construction. Furnishings that, providing maximum utility, introduce an atmosphere of warmth and satisfy our aesthetic sense.'[16]

These conflicting voices (e.g. weak construction vs. strong construction) reflected not so much differences of opinion as the degree to which the critics adhered to the official propaganda narrative and its theses, for there is no doubt that the exhibition was meant to present the 'ideal' home of the 'new man'. The main thrust of the show's strategy went against pre-war interior-design aesthetics, 'probably the perishing bourgeoisie's most enduring influence on the victorious proletariat', as one author wrote in *Odrodzenie* in 1950.[17] Such petty-bourgeois aspirations were manifested in a tendency to buy impressive but impractical articles and to create cluttered, heavily decorated living rooms. The 'simple and quiet' furniture, 'noble in design and strong in construction', and an interior furnished with domestic, usually folklore-inspired, handicraft, were to be remedy for the public's unwelcome habits and former aspirations. If we deduct the post-war propaganda narrative, such propositions were indistinguishable from those formulated by the moderate avant-garde before 1939[18], and their aesthetic effect, promoted in the earliest post-war exhibitions, including the one in question, was virtually identical, which is hardly surprising, given that the designs were usually by the same authors.

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[6] Cf. also Wanda Telakowska, 'Projektanckie kolektywy robotnicze, chłopskie i młodzieżowe', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 1, 1952, pp. 7–12; ead., *Twórczość ludowa w nowym wzornictwie*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sztuka, 1954.

[7] *I Ogólnopolska Wystawa . . .*, p. 8 and following.

[8] Ibid.

[9] *Spółdzielnia Artystów „Ład" 1926–1996*, vol. I, ed. Anna Frąckiewicz, Warsaw: Muzeum Akademii Sztuk Pięknych, 1998.

[10] On which Ewa Klekot analytically in '„Ład" i lud. Twórcy sztuki ludowej a twórcy „Ładu"', in *Spółdzielnia Artystów „Ład"*, vol. 2, ed. Anna Frąckiewicz, Narodowe Centrum Kultury [in print].

[11] The furniture too, cf. Józef Grabowski, 'XXX-lecie „Ładu"', in *Ład XXX*, exh. cat., Warsaw: Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, 1956, p. 20.

[12] 'Sztuka służy potrzebom mas', *Wola Ludu*, no. 143, 14–15 June 1952; 'Meble, gobeliny i wyroby ceramiczne', *Słowo Powszechne*, no. 128, 31 May–1 June 1952.

[13] Nina Gubrynowicz, 'Artyści plastycy — ludziom pracy', *Głos Pracy*, no. 137, 9 June 1952.

[14] 'Bliżej życia — obywatele architekci', *Życie Warszawy*, no. 142, 14 June 1952; 'Więcej piękna na co dzień', *Głos Olsztyński*, no. 133, 5–6 June 1952.

[15] Z. Grzybowski, 'Wnętrza nowoczesnych domów Warszawy', *Stolica*, no. 13, 1 July 1952; [H. S.] 'Architektura wnętrza mieszkalnego', *Słowo Powszechne*, no. 162, 9 July [June] 1952; 'Więcej piękna na co dzień'.

[16] 'Estetyczne meble', *Express Wieczorny*, no. 143, 14–15 June 1952.

[17] Jerzy Bogucki, 'Gęśliki i skrzypce', *Odrodzenie*, no. 11–12, 1950.

Still, it is worth nothing that what the 1st National Exhibition showed was not utterly abstract in the context of the interior-design practices of post-war Poland, though certainly not the mass-scale ones. An aesthetic aimed at the urban intelligentsia and promoted since before the war had finally reached its target, becoming an actual trend. This is a view that is echoed in the reminiscences of Felicja Uniechowska, who for years ran the 'My Home Is My Hobby' column in the popular monthly *Ty i Ja*,[19] and one that was voiced even more emphatically by the fashion and aesthetics critic Teresa Kuczyńska, who in the late 1970s described the decor of Polish homes from thirty years earlier in a way that might as well portray the 1952 show:

> Ład furniture, pottery, particularly the grey variety so loved by the era, woven jacquard textiles, wrought-iron chandeliers and fine-art prints on the walls comprise the paragon of the Polish home at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s. This style was embraced by the intellectual elite who wanted a 'modern' interior.[20]

Another exhibition, held at the turn of 1956/1957, presented the achievements of the 'Ład' artist cooperative.[21] Besides recounting the thirty years of its history, it showed the cooperative's recent designs, including several furniture sets for public institutions, printed and painted textiles, glass and painted faience. But press reviews tended to focus on Ład's past and its significance for the history of Polish design, with some critics hinting that the enterprise was past its prime.[22] The moment wasn't particularly favourable for it; absorbed by Cepelia, it had lost its distinct identity, and the exhibition itself demonstrated that while there was a lot to show, Ład had always been a rather exclusive brand. As a much-cited guestbook entry bluntly put it, 'Thirty years of existence and so little impact on the Polish home.'[23] What was meant here was not that the Ład designs lacked cultural influence, but that they were elitist and exclusive. While official press reviews stressed the cooperative's contributions to the struggle against the bourgeois style[24], the more spontaneous remarks put by audience members in the guestbook rubbed in the fact that it was actually an ivory tower and its products were hardly available due to high prices and short supply. It was noted that the Ład designs for public institutions were more attractive than those meant for the home, though critics saw no real difference between the aesthetics of the older productions and the more recent ones. They were all finely designed, but rather impractical, they said, asking worried questions about the future of Ład and suggesting that such interesting designs should be slated for mass-market production; Ład was also advised to embrace modern materials such as plastic. The final entry in the exhibition guestbook was no less blunt than the one mentioned before: 'For God's sake, start producing!!! Enough exhibitions! We finally want these furnishings, textiles and pottery in our homes.'[25]

'This is no longer just a struggle against the old, it's a fully-fledged modernity',[26] Stanisław Ledóchowski wrote in his review of the All-Polish Exhibition of Interior Design in 1957. Indeed, it was almost generally agreed that the show was a very strong voice in the pursuit of modernity.[27] Its purpose was to relate the issues involved to contemporary realities, for it 'should present the desired design and functional solutions by attempting to discover a path towards new forms corresponding with the new contents'.[28] The exhibition rules stated clearly that the entries had to conform to building-industry standards and meet floor-area norms as well as respect ideological principles and those of modern technology. Preparations for the exhibition had taken three years, with the entries reviewed by a reportedly rigorous qualifying committee, and few of the exhibited furnishings were mass-market products. Consequently, the show featured not only individual objects, but also, and above all, complete interior designs of the exemplary small flat (30.5 square metres), submitted by outstanding designers. Some, like those by Władysław Winczy and Olgierd Szlekys, were more traditional, with heavily furnished rooms that lacked airiness, but there were also more avant-garde ones, e.g. those by husband and wife Zofia and Oskar Hansen or Zbigniew Ihnatowicz, appealing in their integration of the living space, which could be divided merely with multicolour curtains, and their use of bright colours.[29] Considered as modern were those designs that allowed for the rearrangement of the space and its elements, including by means of sliding curtains, by connecting the kitchen with the living room, or by employing removable upholstery fitments that changed the function of furniture pieces depending on needs. Colour played a special role in the show's experience of modernity.[30] Absent in such a degree from earlier exhibitions, and above all from market furniture, it now surprised with its functions, integrating rooms, influencing the psychophysical perception of space or minimising its flaws (e.g. cramped conditions). As Aleksander Wojciechowski noted, this new, bright, aesthetic countered the tradition of the 'grey', monotone, interior, perceived as cosy.[31] The show, he argued, marked a significant change in the understanding of space and interior design: for the first time in the Polish context, the focus was on construction and the visual perception of space rather than on decoration; on finding such elements in the domestic environment that could arouse emotions (e.g. the Problem Room, Wojciech Zamecznik). How much the exhibition was different was suggested by doubts, never voiced before, whether the designs weren't actually *too* modern for public tastes, boiling down to the pertinent question whether a working-class or white-collar family would move into the interior designed, for example, by the Hansens.[32]

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[18] On which more extensively in P. Korduba, pp. 81–112, 229–251.

[19] 'Pomieszanie Ładu z Cepelią — z Felicją Uniechowską rozmawia Piotr Korduba', *Wysokie Obcasy*, no. 48, 13 December 2014, p. 39.

[20] Teresa Kuczyńska, 'Za progiem', in *Polski dom*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Watra, 1979, p. 30. In a conversation with this author, Kuczyńska confirmed that she had decorated her own post-war home in this fashion (conversation from 13 May 2016).

[21] *Ład XXX*.

[22] 'Piękno na co dzień', *Gazeta Zielonogórska*, no. 305, 22–23 December 1956; 'Piękno na co dzień', *Gazeta Robotnicza*, no. 305, 24–25 December 1956; Stanisław Ledóchowski, 'O nową architekturę wnętrz', *Słowo Powszechne*, no. 15, 18 January 1957.

[23] Guestbook, Zachęta archive.

[24] 'Piękno na co dzień', *Gazeta Zielonogórska*, Stanisław Ledóchowski, 'O nową architekturę wnętrz'.

[25] Guestbook.

[26] Stanisław Ledóchowski, 'Opowiadamy się za nowoczesnością', *Słowo Powszechne*, no. 93, 18 April 1957.

The show featured no folk products. Even if folkloristic echoes appeared in certain items (e.g. jacquard textiles), they were of secondary importance, just as individual pieces were less important this time than harmoniously and functionally designed interiors. Given the overall character of the exhibition, this absence of folk-inspired design was significant. Let us note that such design was present in the 1952 show, devoted, among other things, to the 'decorative arts'. If the 1957 All-Polish Exhibition was virtually devoid of it[33] and featured no folklore-inspired exhibits, then it's easy to guess that they were considered as precisely such decoration, a decorative 'costume' superimposed on interiors, unrelated to either their architecture or function. The folklore project, though regenerative before the war and in the early post-war years, didn't match the profile of the 1957 show, which was meant to 'reflect the character of the present day'.[34] Even more interestingly, this significant absence wouldn't last long.

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[27] Józef Grabowski, 'Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz', in *Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz*, exh. cat., Warsaw: Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, 1957, pp. 6–15; *Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz 1957*, ed. Józef Grabowski, Warsaw: Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, 1958; cf. also: Irena Huml, *Polska sztuka stosowana XX wieku*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1978, p. 185; Anna Frąckiewicz, 'We Want To Be Modern. A Glipse of the Future: the 1950s and 1960s Style', in *We Want To Be Modern. Polish design 1955–1968 from the collection of National Museum in Warsaw*, ed. Anna Demska, Anna Frąckiewicz, Anna Maga, exh. cat., Warsaw: National Museum in Warsaw, 2011, p. 28.

[28] *Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz 1957*, p. 6.

[29] Beata Sowińska, 'Skok w nowoczesność. Ogólnopolska Wystawa Architektury Wnętrz', *Stolica*, no. 17, 28 April 1957.

[30] Aleksander Wojciechowski, 'O Wystawie Architektury Wnętrz', *Przegląd Kulturalny*, no. 18, 1–8 April 1957.

[31] Ibid.

[32] B. Sowińska, 'Skok w nowoczesność . . .'.

[33] There was a decorative arts section, but not mentioned in the title, presented in a separate part of the show at the Redoubt Rooms of the Grand Theatre, and described as 'extra'; cf. Józef Grabowski, 'Ogólnopolska Wystawa . . .', p. 13.

[34] Ibid., p. 7.

Organised in 1973, on Cepelia's 25th anniversary, the exhibition *Visual Artists from the Cepelia Circle* differed from the other ones discussed here. Though it presented an array of interior-design ideas no less diverse than its predecessors, it was, as the title suggested, limited to the production of Cepelia, a firmly established industry leader. While it wasn't for the first time that the enterprise would stage a major exhibition of its achievements[35], the 1970s were a decade when Cepelia enjoyed particular prosperity, as production levels grew sharply while the element of artistic innovation was downplayed.[36] Cepelia's extremely broad product range, featuring items that were often beyond the financial reach of the ordinary citizen, not only inscribed itself smoothly in what would later come to be known as the 'decade of luxury'[37], or, as Piotr Piotrowski preferred, of 'festival'[38], but was actually inherent to it. This feeling was aptly epitomised by Lech Zahorski's satirical cartoon, published in *Kultura*, which ironised that Cepelia products may be on show in Poland, but can be bought only in the United States![39] The exhibition featured over 1,500 items of all kinds, made of all possible materials and using various techniques. It reflected the power of Cepelia's visual and aesthetic influence, suggesting that the time had come for Western-style consumerism[40], while heralding, as Irena Humlowa noticed, the arrival of the era of the object.[41] Though it might seem that a Cepelia exhibition would be dominated by folklore and folklorism, that wasn't the case. As the title indicated, it mainly featured professional, academically trained, artists, which the public clearly noticed. The show revealed a disproportion between Cepelia's 'folk' production and its 'artistic' output, attesting to a decisive domination of the latter. Without calling things by name, or rather brushing aside the propagandistic significance of folk art and handicraft in the enterprise's profile, one critic wrote that the folksy style — the 'straw, grey pottery, striped rugs and linen doilies' — had long ceased to be its main focus.[42] Folklore, it was noted, remained invariably present in the Cepelia products, but only as a source of inspiration.[43] It needs to be stressed that while the show captured the enterprise's contemporary position and role in a broad context, it was not so much a breakthrough in its profile as precisely a presentation of what had been noticed and discussed on other occasions, in Cepelia's own publications and critical reviews. The first issue was a change in the philosophy underpinning the promotion of folk art and handicraft and products inspired by them; another, related, question asked about Cepelia's role in their preservation and promotion, and thus about the condition of Polish rural crafts in general. Whereas early on in Cepelia's history the official position on why folk art mattered in the contemporary interior boiled down, in various versions, to the slogan, 'Folk beauty instead of cosmopolitan kitsch',[44] in the following years this tension got weaker and weaker, supplanted by a philosophy of eliminating kitsch from daily life[45], and of smoothly introducing folk art and craft to modern homes for the purpose of creating a pleasant and individually tailored decor. Seemingly relieved from its ideological duties, with time folk art officially gained a decorative function. A company leaflet, titled, significantly, *At Home with Cepelia*, admitted that decorating a home in an individual style, not copied from friends or neighbours, was a 'real challenge', but then went on to say that 'with the great richness of folk art and handicraft, Cepelia can be helpful in making your dreams come true.'[46] Folk and folksy products were, therefore, no longer a means of countering cosmopolitan and bourgeois aesthetics in the name of tradition and nativeness, but something that satisfied personal desires, served a practical purpose and added an element of innocent pleasure to one's life:

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[35] E.g. an exhibition on the 25th anniversary of Cepelia at the Palace of Culture of Science at the turn of 1965/1966; cf. P. Korduba, pp. 189, 249–250.

[36] Ibid., pp. 195–201.

[37] As construed by Andrzej Szczerski, 'Dekada luksusu. PRL i hotele w latach 70. XX wieku', in idem, *Cztery nowoczesności. Teksty o sztuce i architekturze polskiej XX wieku*, Kraków: DodoEditor, 2015, pp. 143–168.

[38] Cf. Piotr Piotrowski, *Dekada. O syndromie lat siedemdziesiątych, kulturze artystycznej, krytyce, sztuce — wybiórczo i subiektywnie*, Poznań: Obserwator, 1991, pp. 10–11.

[39] *Kultura*, no. 29, 22 July 1973.

[40] A. Szczerski, p. 153.

[41] I. Huml, p. 191.

[42] 'Salon sztuki stosowanej', *Kulisy*, no. 30, 29 July 1973.

[43] Paweł Kwiatkowski, 'Plastyka na co dzień: urok przedmiotów', *Nowa Wieś*, no. 34, 26 August 1973.

[44] 'Piękno ludowe zamiast kosmopolitycznej tandety', *Stolica*, no. 24, 1952, p. 9.

[45] Archiwum Akt Nowych: Cepelia 1962–1981, 2/1, Zjazd Delegatów Związku Cepelia — XII, 1962 rok, Protokół ze Zjazdu Delegatów Związku Spółdzielni Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego „Cepelia" 11–12.12.1962 w Pałacu Kultury w Warszawie, p. 7.

> 'Let's not be afraid of the brilliant colours of kilims, bedcovers, striped runner rugs, scarves and other authentic folk textiles. We are a country where winter lasts long enough for the greyness of nature and lack of sunlight to be felt. Let Cepelia's bright products help you arrange a cheerful and functional home decor.'[47]

The company addressed its message in the 1970s also at those who had greater aspirations but were unsure of what they wanted: 'If you like being in vogue, try folk textiles. They are always a convenient choice when you hesitate between the modern and the stylish', another commercial leaflet proclaimed.[48] Cepelia's folk art and handicraft were thus meant as a remedy for issues in home decor. Such an opinion was emphatically voiced, and as part of a major debate about the condition of Polish folk art, inspired by the exhibit in question, by the ethnographer and art historian Aleksander Jackowski, who defended Cepelia: 'In the new socio-cultural set-up, folk art is becoming a beautiful decoration of our life, a bunch of flowers enlivening the home and lending it charming and familiar colours. Folk art is becoming a style.'[49]

Press reviews didn't really criticise the designs on display, but, as it was noted, the show had become an incentive to re-asking certain fundamental questions. A transcript of the ensuing debate was published by *Kultura* under the general title, 'What Should Be Done with Folk Art'.[50] Asking whether folk culture was alive, Andrzej Osęka stressed how hard it was to judge Cepelia's record in this context. He pointed to the already familiar phenomenon of rural craftsmen making things the 'folksy' way for Cepelia's sake. Jadwiga Jarnuszkiewiczowa noticed a dangerous marriage of folk art and mass culture, a result of the enterprise's aggressive marketing. Such views weren't being expressed for the first time. They could be traced back to a conference devoted to the condition of folk art and its preservation, organised in December 1969 by the periodical *Polska Sztuka Ludowa* and the Non-Professional Art Research Studio at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Art.[51] According to Jackowski, the purpose of the now-unmasked and precisely described mechanism was the transformation of the folk style into a Cepelia style, serving the company's identity- and image-building and the aesthetics it promoted.[52] The relationship between Cepelia's activities and the condition of folk crafts had been debated since then.[53] But the conclusion — if as such we consider Jackowski's statement in the *Kultura* debate — was actually that, all the reservations and doubts notwithstanding, Cepelia was needed, because it offered best-quality home accessories.

The last one of the exhibitions discussed in this essay, *Folk Culture — National Culture*, was organised on the 60th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish state. While it wasn't accompanied by a catalogue, it featured some 1,000 exhibits, the selection and arrangement of which were to demonstrate that folk culture and national culture were inextricably connected, and drawing from folk inspirations was the source of that culture's successes at various historical moments.[54] Such an agenda, and the very title of the show too, brought to mind the ideological guidelines of socialist realism, which saw folk culture as the foundation of national culture and encouraged 'drawing extensively from its source'.[55] In reality, the exhibition was largely free from such pesky and by now firmly outdated propaganda. It was by no means an interior-design show. Of its six sections, only one was devoted to the decorative arts, including by professional artists. The remaining five showed the relationship between folk culture and mainstream Polish culture in the fields of the visual arts, literature, music and theatre; original folk art works were also exhibited. The influence of the folk tradition on interior design was demonstrated on textbook examples, starting with the end-19th century. This meant the Zakopane-style works of Stanisław Witkiewicz, designs by Stanisław Wyspiański or the products of artist collectives such as Towarzystwo Polska Sztuka Stosowana [The Polish Applied Art Society], Warsztaty Krakowskie [The Kraków Workshops] or Spółdzielnia Artystów 'Ład'. By juxtaposing original 19th-century highlander furniture with pieces by Witkiewicz or Wojciech Jastrzębowski, with Szlekys and Winczy's furniture set from the 1930s and Cepelia's contemporary production, the show not only traced the nearly century-long history of the phenomenon, but also captured its dynamic moments and qualitative changes. This highlighted, among other things, the caricatural and undiscerning admiration of peasantry underpinning the earliest designs[56], so different from the synthetic and frugal productions of, for example, Ład.

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[46] *Z Cepelią w domu*, Warsaw: Cepelia, 1975 [leaflet].

[47] Ibid.

[48] *Dotknięcie ręki. „Twórczość Mazowiecka" Spółdzielnia Pracy i Rękodzieła Ludowego i Artystycznego*, Warsaw 1977 [leaflet].

[49] Andrzej Osęka, 'Co zrobić ze sztuką ludową', *Kultura*, 31 July–5 August 1973.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Cf. *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 3–4, 1970.

[52] Aleksander Jackowski, 'Funkcje sztuki ludowej i twórczości niezawodowej', in *Tradycja i współczesność. O kulturze artystycznej Polski Ludowej*, Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970, pp. 167–187; idem, *Cepelia. Tradycja i współczesność*, Warsaw: Cepelia, 1999, pp. 67–68.

[53] Cf. for example Marek Arpad Kowalski, 'Mecenas czy byznesmen?', *Kultura*, no. 51, 1971, and a reply: Bożena Karoniowa, 'Raczej mecenas…', *Spółdzielczość Pracy*, no. 5, 1972. In a similar tone: Marek Arpad Kowalski, 'Kolberg na traktorze', *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, no. 27, 1974, p. 1.

Like the previous exhibition of the Cepelia artists, also this show provoked experts to raise questions concerning the condition and role of folk crafts in the contemporary Polish space. The answers sounded honest and didn't try to suggest any particular intellectual or even emotional connection. Andrzej Osęka put it bluntly: 'Folk art enters the standard contemporary housing-block apartment as something that enlivens, adds colour to greyness, counters monotony'.[57] It did so, Osęka made it clear, in the shape of a mass-market product. This softening[58] of the propagandistic narrative surrounding the issue was true for all aspects of the exhibition, and authors of the more in-depth reviews admitted openly that folklore was but a fragment of national culture.[59]

The above-described five very different exhibitions — two surveys (1952 and 1957), two anniversary shows (1956/1957 and 1973) and a mixture of both (1978) — can be considered as a reflection of the condition of folklore over three successive decades. Folklore, which in the first show presents itself as a revitalising force, with the successive ones moves ever closer to mere decoration. Only once, in 1957, it is not only absent, but is actually perceived at the time as an anti-modern factor. In the 1970s, folk returns on a mass scale, due, on the one hand, to its de-ideologisation[60] and, on the other, to growing production capacities, mainly on the part of Cepelia. It seems that it was more in tune with the pseudo-luxury of the decade, but at the time it stood as but one of several stylistic propositions. A new style of the 1970s, it was being portended, was in the making, different both from cold modernism and from a folksy-antiquarian interior aesthetic.[61]

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[54] Władysław Serwatowski, 'Sztuka ludowa — narodowa', *Wiadomości*, no. 1, 4 January 1979; Ewa Zielińska, 'U źródeł naszej kultury', *Kurier Polski*, no. 245, 16 November 1978.

[55] Włodzimierz Sokorski, 'O właściwy stosunek do sztuki ludowej', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 5, 1949, p. 133.

[56] Wiesław Rustecki, 'Dwa nurty jednej rzeki', *Barwy*, no. 12, 1978.

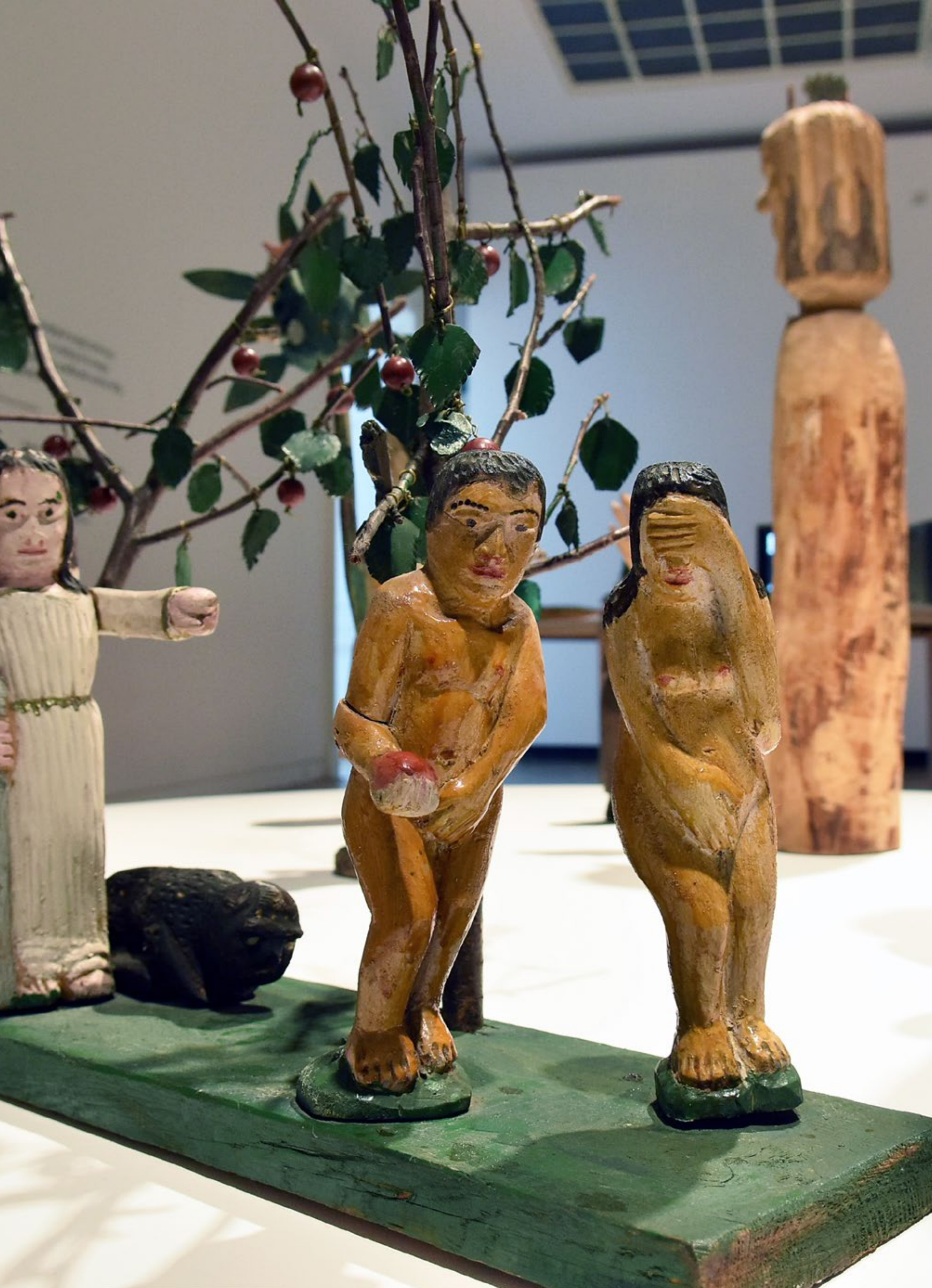
[57] Andrzej Osęka, 'Miejsce sztuki ludowej', *Polska*, no. 4, 1979, p. 28.

[58] Also in the official Party daily newspaper, cf. Ewa Garztecka, 'Ludowa i narodowa', *Trybuna Ludu*, no. 290, 7 December 1978.

[59] Lech Wieluński, 'Czy koza jest ludowa', *Perspektywy*, no. 47, 24 November 1978.

[60] An interesting example of which is *Awans* [Promotion] (dir. Jerzy Zaorski, 1975), a comedy film where the main protagonist, having returned from his studies to his home village, urges its inhabitants to start making on folklore.

[61] Teresa Kuczyńska, 'W stylu lat siedemdziesiątych', *Ty i Ja* (1970), no. 3, pp. 8–11; ead., 'Mieszkanie z oddechem', *Ty i Ja* (1970), no. 8, pp. 36–39; ead., 'Czyżby ostatni z wielkich stylów', *Ty i Ja* (1973), no. 1, pp. 18–19.



Folk Culture Without Rusticity

Antoni Beksiak

Marian Sobieski, one of the pillars of Polish musical ethnography, so wrote about the All-Polish Folk Music Festival held in Warsaw in 1949,

> In yesterday's, pre-war, Poland, it would have been unthinkable to put folk music on stage in its primitivism, performed by actual country folks, and to put it on a par before the Warsaw audience with symphonic music or renowned soloists.
>
> At best, there were such 'concerts' where there sat on stage an ensemble of trained instrumentalists, dressed in peasant smocks made by a Warsaw tailor, to play 'in the folk style' or to perform what was known as 'folk medleys', accompanied by a formally dressed gentleman singing couplets. That was folklore in white gloves, mawkish folklore, more or less of the kind that Chopin said was rouged but legless, that is, out of touch with its native soil. . . .
>
> Today's Poland approaches musical folklore from its most significant and objective side, exploring its primitive melodies to find a basis for the further development of folk music and for the work of Polish composers. This was evidenced by the Folk Music Festival, where the folk performers, brought straight from the rural communities, passed in throngs through the stages of some of the capital's finest venues, enchanting the listeners with their untrained music that was in no way inferior to trained, composed, music. The fact that the festival had attracted the interest of the highest state authorities, that the President was present at the final concert at the Teatr Polski, demonstrates that Polish musical folklore enjoys special protection today, facilitating its further development and popularisation.[1]

(What is interesting from today's perspective is not only the text's share of ideological rhetoric, but also Sobieski's use of terms that disparage the very subject he wants to dignify).

Summarising the Polish People's Republic's policy towards traditional culture, Wojciech J. Burszta said 60 years later,

> It's only seemingly a paradox that a state that promoted a worker-peasant alliance and institutionally cultivated the rural tradition had actually brought it to ruin. In keeping with the Marxist doctrine, peasants were considered as a doomed class. . . . The communists needed elements to reformulate the national ethos. The countryside was their perfect reservoir — the peasants had colourful costumes, sang and danced, weren't particularly encumbered by historical consciousness, and weren't prejudiced against the Soviet regime. All kinds of shapes could be moulded out of their culture. Peasants were told to be ashamed of 'backwardness', while those elements of their culture that could be petrified in an impressive costume — e.g. a national folk ensemble — were picked up on their behalf.[2]

The hopes of Marian Sobieski and his wife Jadwiga, stirred by the 1949 Festival and the Musical Folklore Collection Campaign (1950–1954), a major action supported by the Polish Radio, while shared by many others, turned out to have been at odds with official cultural policy (Bolesław Bierut's presence at the concert notwithstanding). Tomasz Nowak writes convincingly about this in the *Report on the Condition of Traditional Musical Culture*:

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[1] Marian Sobieski, 'Ogólnopolski Festiwal Muzyki Ludowej', in Jadwiga Sobieska, Marian Sobieski, *Polska muzyka ludowa i jej problemy*, ed. Ludwik Bielawski, Kraków: PWM, 1973, pp. 536–537.

[2] Wojciech J. Burszta in conversation with Łukasz Grzymisławski, 'Kultury ludowej już nie będzie', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 March 2008.

> The purpose of the 'cultural offensive' (Bierut . . .) was to 'remove' 90 percent of society from 'regressive influences' [i.e. traditional culture, among other things — AB], and thus to replace that 'non-artistic' music by an artistic one, or to 'blur the boundaries' between folk culture and artistic culture ([Zofia] Lissa). . . . The popularisation of cable radio and a mass artistic movement in small towns and villages were to serve that goal.[3]

And so the progressive People's Poland could legitimate itself through peasant culture, but only after very precisely sifting away its 'regressive' elements, particularly the ceremonial customs, and forcing it into a proper framework. The result was to be a new, mass-scale phenomenon, officially regulated and rejecting a 'museological' approach to folk culture, a phenomenon manifesting the changes brought about by socialism, the social advancement of peasantry — in the shape of countless folklore ensembles.[4] 'In the world of real socialism, there was no room for folk culture', Burszta says.[5] Moreover, Nowak argues after Ludwik Bielawski that Jadwiga and Marian Sobieski, striving to comprehensively document and academically map out the rural musical culture, were so terrified by the prospect of its on-site transformation that they urged the Ministry of Culture and Art to set up a 'reservation of musical folklore where it's still strong', suggesting that 'at least until recordings have been made, no efforts should be undertaken to enter there with the amateur artistic music movement'.[6]

Some of the characteristic features of that movement included excessive for-stage stylisation, incorporation of non-folk repertoire, oversimplification of compositions and national, or even international (e.g. the World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw, 1955), unification. Jan Stęszewski mentions the following flaws on the part of folk ensembles: wrong melodies, too many performers on stage, poor arrangements, putting on airs, caricatural choreography, operatic tendencies.[7] Fundamental institutionalisation had taken place, and wide-ranging support for a new model of folklore was tantamount to its appropriation: instead of spontaneous socio-cultural life, the 'central authorities or monopolistic social or economic organisations were the actual owners of the numerous folk ensembles'.[8]

The difference between the 'Mazowsze' State Folk and Dance Ensemble, founded in 1948 (or the similar 'Śląsk', started in 1953), and micro-regional practices could be huge, but 'the former remained the model. It is commonly believed that Mazowsze was based on a Soviet concept, and that was officially the case (it was meant to emulate the Pyatnitsky Russian Folk Choir), but in reality the ensemble's creators had been inspired in the first place by the rich pre-war tradition, for the folk-and-dance ensemble was by no means a socialist import in Poland. 'They drew . . . on their own experience of pre-war operetta, cabaret and ballet'[9], Tomasz Nowak writes, which makes us aware yet again of the vast distance that separated Mazowsze from actual rural bands.

Still, it is worth situating 'Mazowsze' and similar groups in context. My mother, Joanna Papuzińska (b. 1939), remembers that during the Stalinist years, the radio played mainly propaganda songs (in Russian or Polish), so the introduction of Mazowsze's native repertoire to the programme was greeted with relief, enthusiasm and patriotic hope: during a visit to relatives near Radom, she was placed on the table and made sing *Hej, przeleciał ptaszek*, while the adults wept with joy.

Also featuring prominently on the radio were stylised folk bands such as Feliks Dzierżanowski's Polska Kapela Ludowa (founded in 1933 and famous even before the war) or Tadeusz Wesołowski's Zespół

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[3] Tomasz Nowak, 'Działalność zespołów. Instytucjonalizm a spontaniczność',in *Raport o stanie tradycyjnej kultury muzycznej*, ed. Weronika Grozdew-Kołacińska, Warsaw: Instytut Muzyki i Tańca, 2014, p. 88, available at imit.org.pl (accessed 27 June 2016).

[4] Piotr Dahlig, *Muzyka ludowa we współczesnym społeczeństwie*, Warsaw: WSiP, 1987, p. 58.

[5] W. Burszta.

[6] Ludwik Bielawski, 'Działalność Jadwigi i Mariana Sobieskich na polu dokumentacji i badań polskiej muzyki ludowej', in Jadwiga and Marian Sobieski…, p. 26.

[7] Jan Stęszewski, 'Rola folkloru muzycznego w kulturze polskiej', in Piotr Dahlig.

[8] Ludwik Bielawski, *Tradycje ludowe w kulturze muzycznej*, Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 1999, p. 37.

[9] T. Nowak, p. 89.

Harmonistów. This illustrates the character of the changes: the Kapela's obereks, forfeiting an ancient feeling, rhythmic nuancing, melodiousness and individuality on behalf of motoricity, virtuosity and collective performance, were secondarily introduced to the repertoire of rural musicians. This was a token of the decline of the mazurka in the countryside, something that is clearly revealed by field research, including from recent years.

Folklore-inspired classical music thrived during the socialist-realist era. The hierarchy of the arts, it needs to be remembered, was far stricter than today, and folklorists regularly addressed their comments at academically trained composers. Socialist realism in music, decreed at the Congress of Composers and Music Critics in Łagów in August 1949 by Culture Minister Włodzimierz Sokorski, ended abruptly in 1956 (some believe that Sokorski permitted the founding of the Polish Radio Experimental Studio in 1957 as a kind of compensation). Before that happened, the initiator of post-war musicology and department director at the Culture Ministry, Zofia Lissa, preached the Marxist method of musicological research that, thanks to its revolutionary principles, was to help define objective laws of musical development, which composers would comply with. At the same time, *Ruch Muzyczny* was publishing articles such as Josif Ryszkin's 'Arnold Schönberg — a Liquidator of Music'.[10]

In terms of composition, the production of the era ranges from the banalisation characteristic for socialist realism to things of value, even if their style is controversial. Let us add after Piotr Dahlig that the manifestation of national feelings through traditional inspirations was a natural reaction to the German occupation.[11] Traditional materials were usually sourced from adaptations, particularly transcriptions, whose usefulness in conveying the original is problematic. There were exceptions, of course, such as Włodzimierz Kotoński's in-depth studies of Podhale music, but even in Karol Szymanowski's oeuvre there can be found examples of 'simplistic' transpositions, as if he completely didn't 'feel' the original. The legacy of the era includes also a petrification, as it were, of the traditional music-inspiration model, as well as a socialist-realist 'stamp'.

Quoting Jadwiga Sobieska, Ludwik Bielawski so writes about the breakthrough brought about by the post-Stalin 'thaw':

> The times of often artificially stimulated enthusiasm for things folk are long past. A sharp turn has taken place in composition. In the pursuit of a modern musical language, the breaking away from the normative aesthetics of the previous period has also meant a complete turn back from folk music. The documentation of folklore fell sharply on the agenda of the central institutions. . . . I am writing in the name of my completely depressed husband and my own. Put shortly, the situation is tragic.[12]

Meanwhile, the radical debuts of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (*Epitaph*, 1958) and Krzysztof Penderecki (*Strophen*, 1959), as well as the presence of some of the most eminent international avant-garde composers, had made the Warsaw Autumn contemporary music festival an important place on the cultural map of the world. Contemporary Polish composers were having their heyday, and folklorism had been marginalised as a remnant of the previous era. It is worth noting, though, that in reaction to the academic radicalism of his colleagues, Wojciech Kilar came forward with his *Krzesany* (1974).

A fixation on the West meant that Poland failed to generate such original adaptations of traditional music as in the East, where — and rightly — rootedness was associated with identity, but also with originality. Today, the compositions of Avet Terterian stand out far more distinctly against the background of Western European music than those of Witold Lutosławski. Bulgarian folk ensembles, which actually employed a much greater proportion of authentic rural musicians than their Polish counterparts, represented, it cannot be denied, a highly original school of composition and arrangement; in comparison, 'Mazowsze' appears rather sentimental and artsy. As Anna Czekanowska wrote in 1990:

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[10] *Ruch Muzyczny*, no. 24, 10 October 1949.

[11] P. Dahlig, p. 78.

[12] Ludwik Bielawski, 'Działalność Jadwigi i Mariana Sobieskich na polu dokumentacji i badań polskiej muzyki ludowej', in Jadwiga and Marian Sobieski, p. 56.

> This is especially true in the case of the music of recent decades; contemporary composers have not devised new proposals for the proper stylisation of folk material and apart from a few attempts have remained aloof from this music and its inspirational power.[13]

The scenario of the Central Harvest Festival at the Decennial Stadium in Warsaw in 1969 mentions a 'polonaise for 720 pairs in regional costumes from Kurpie, Wielkopolska, Lubusz Land, Warmia, Kaszuby, Rzeszów, Silesia and Opoczno'[14], combined with Penderecki's *Threnody* portraying 'life in the occupied country (barbed wire, prisoner columns, forced labour)'[15], mass songs, Czerwone Gitary and No To Co. The model of cultural unification was obviously in full swing.

The socio-cultural changes taking place worldwide in the 1950s left a strong impact on Polish pop music, while in the countryside native musical traditions were nearly lost; from then on they would remain but a margin of spontaneous cultural life, even if the influence of central cultural policy continued to be felt in all those fields: as late as the 1980s, despite the state-sanctioned eruption of rock and pop music, the mass media kept promoting the outdated 'festival' model. At some point, the cultural authorities shifted their focus to pop bands, which incorporated staple lyrics and melodies (No To Co, Skaldowie), offering what Weronika Grozdew calls a Polish variety of American folk revival music. In fact, most of that 'sampling' was from the culture of the gorals [*górale*, highlanders], though there is no room here for touching upon the subject of the stereotypical identification of the Polish rural musical tradition with that of the highlanders, particularly those of the Podhale region, that is, with a relatively exotic phenomenon.[16] Any folk musician met at a festival, whatever regional costume he might be wearing, is immediately taken for a 'goral'. Bielawski aptly sums up the aberrational presence of the rural substrate in Poles' everyday, spontaneous, singing repertoire: 'an extreme case here is the famous song, *Góralu, czy ci nie żal*, which is an example of an extreme accumulation, and in every respect, of features contradicting the characteristics of Polish folklore, and goral folklore in particular.'[17]

Yet even the more or less countercultural examples of the genre in the 1970s and 1980s, bands playing what today we would call 'folk' or 'new age' music, were hardly inspired, in any serious way, by domestic traditions. 'Unlike in Hungary or Italy, Polish counterculture didn't refer to the sources of its own folklore, which had been appropriated by the state cultural apparatus and, in a deformed shape, exploited by official propaganda. "The radio played Mazowsze and Śląsk, while Osjan explored the archaic roots of our civilisation."', Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj quotes Jacek Ostaszewski.[18]

The launch of the annual Festival of Folk Bands and Singers in Kazimierz Dolny in 1967 and of a network of related festivals (particularly after the administrative reform of 1975) signalled a certain change in policy, affirming an authentic form of music-making, albeit invariably in an 'on-stage' format. 'The very fact of referring to them [the singers] as "performers" is telling, for in their natural habitat they were basically a kind of "guides" or "leaders" of the musical situation',[19] write Ewa Grochowska and Mazur-Hanaj. Let us remember that not much later, in the early 1970s, Hungary will see the emergence of a grassroots traditional-culture revival movement based on counterculture (inspired by the beatniks and hippies), a broad movement of renewed interest in traditional culture that had ballroom (rather than on-stage) dancing, the principle of participation, and respect for traditional musical styles at its core.

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[13] Anna Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 63.

[14] *Program uroczystości Dożynek Centralnych w Warszawie na Stadionie X-lecia w dniu 7.IX.1969 roku*, typescript, p. 9.

[15] Ibid., p. 2.

[16] I wrote about this in 'Skok w nadtożsamość', *Konteksty*, no. 1, 2013.

[17] L. Bielawski, *Tradycje ludowe…*, op. cit., p. 130.

[18] Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj, 'Orient i orientalność we współczesnej muzyce inspirowanej tradycją w Polsce', *Andante*, no. 95, 2014 (in Turkish), muzykatradycyjna.pl (in Polish), accessed 14 July 2016.

[19] Ewa Grochowska, Remigiusz Mazur-Hanaj, 'Warsztaty i kursy. Działalność instytucji i stowarzyszeń oraz inicjatywy indywidualne', in *Raport o stanie tradycyjnej kultury muzycznej*, ed. Weronika Grozdew-Kołacińska, Warsaw: Instytut Muzyki i Tańca, 2014, p. 269, available at imit.org.pl, accessed 27 June 2016.

At the Kazimierz festival, rural musicians were introduced and a model of artistic-merit supervision had been developed, though not without certain abuses and the historical falsifications. Such activities in many cases kept rural musicians active; Andrzej Bieńkowski's research sheds light on interesting differences between those who continued playing and those who stopped when rural demand for their services had collapsed. Sobieska and other authors praise certain aspects of the festival movement, such as the 'Big–Small' (master–student) competition in Kazimierz Dolny, while Dahlig compares the tournaments, feasts and festivals to the former 'fiddler duels'. Yet suffice it to say that from the time of the youngest traditional wedding musicians (born in the early 1930s) until the appearance of their continuators (in the broad context of the 'dance house' movement), we won't meet any fiddlers who have mastered mazurka rhythms enough to represent the idiom. The authentic remains at the sidelines of folklorism. It is worth noting that the song-and-dance ensemble movement, estimated to number some 8,000–10,000 groups today, has been intentionally distinct and doesn't constitute a continuation of rural music, from small local groups, where instructors force musicians into often caricatural arrangements (polyphonic singing, grotesque tempos, mannerisms), to hugely popular ensembles such as Mazowsze, focused on professionalism, spectacularity and technique. There is always a tendency to strip the original of certain — excellent — features and adapt it to tastes from another area of culture, as well as to turn it into an on-stage product for a consumerist 'seated' audience. Meanwhile, 'popularisation movements have found authentic Polish folk melodies difficult to perform and stylise'[20], while arrangements have often been 'at odds with the inherent characteristics of folklore', resulting in the production of 'homogeneous pseudo-folk kitsch'.[21] Such arrangements suggest that their authors lack a 'feel' for Polish rural music aesthetics, their artistic preferences being located elsewhere. The good things, such as spontaneousness, expressiveness or vitality, things that those longing for freshness would find delightful, have been replaced with 'safe values', with sentimental pretences that are precisely what the youth wanted to break away from.

> Yielding to the pressure of social conditions, a vast majority of rural bands have devoted themselves entirely to this kind of repertoire (festive, popular, religious, patriotic). . . . Has it therefore proved impossible in Poland, despite a long-standing tradition, to develop effective methods of presenting musical and dance folklore to the broad audience?[22]

When I was growing up in the 1980s, keenly interested in pop music, Polish rural music was at the very bottom of the hierarchy, and contact with its sources was virtually nonexistent (Dahlig informs us that in 1987 original traditional music accounted for 1 percent of the overall broadcasting time of radio and TV). 'The poor condition of contemporary folk culture is, to a large extent, a result of communist-era policies', Burszta notes.[23] The image of rural culture was summed up by the band Perfect: 'Empty field behind the barn / Peasants drinking / What a jive!', and folklorism was epitomised by Wańka Wstańka and the Ludojades, a band that, amid malty fumes, presented stereotypical, primitive punk parodies of the repertoire of song-and-dance ensembles.

'It is worth stressing that there exists . . . a well-developed and functioning system of instruction, the only — but very significant — drawback of which is the lack of direct contact with the origins of the adaptations and stylisations', writes Nowak.[24] The music of the Polish countryside seems to be a tempting taboo: Polish culture has been circling around it, sniffing, but has preferred to deal with it through intermediaries rather than directly. Regardless of the political climate, a patronising, class-prejudiced (whatever this might mean, including in People's Poland), 'boor-o-phobic' attitude has prevailed.

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[20] A. Czekanowska, p. 63.

[21] J. Stęszewski, p. 95.

[22] T. Nowak, pp. 93–94.

[23] W. Burszta.

[24] T. Nowak, p. 93.

Lasting Images of Folk Things

Ewa Klekot

In 1991, the periodical *Lud* [Folk], the organ of the Polish Ethnological Society, a respectable organisation founded in 1895, published a major discussion concerning the notion of 'folk culture'. Most of the speakers were academics or museum professionals, and their statements dealt primarily with the meaning of the term and its applicability in sciences informed by fokloristics: ethnology, ethnography, folk studies and cultural anthropology. The discussion showed clearly that the concept of 'folk culture' was entangled in a very complex problem of representation. As Michał Buchowski wrote, 'folk culture" is neither myth nor reality. It is a myth to imagine that our notion is a reflection of reality, whereas in fact it is but an abstract means of organising our perception of it.'[1]

Underlying each such 'means of organising our perception' are the discourse-configuring relationships of power, and 'folk culture' as well as 'folklore' were and continue to be used as discursive tools to exoticise and aestheticise the countryside and its inhabitants. 'Folklore' and 'folk' are also representations based on the selective use of material that the researcher deemed worthy of documenting. Thus folk is constructed as the Other of the modern intelligentsia, and the folk artist as the Other of the trained artist.

Aleksander Jackowski noted in the same discussion: 'The notion of folk culture is defined "from outside", from the position of an observer', and considering the relationship between the namer and the named as crucial for the construction of meanings, 'the history of the term "folk culture" is above all a history of those who looked and named', rather than a history of that *which* they named; it is a history of how urban intelligentsia construed the phenomena they observed in the countryside, a 'history of illusions and myths'.[2]

The viewers of urban presentations of folk culture or art will, therefore, learn more about themselves than about the countryside represented by the folklore. The folk-related 'illusions and myths' prove to be rooted in the metanarratives of modernity, particularly the metanarrative of authenticity and its link with primitiveness, with nature as the opposite of culture, with the savage, the epitome of humanity's childhood. Going on for several decades within the related disciplines, the discussion about the construction of folklore and folksiness has generated such descriptive terms as 'folkloristic ideology', 'orientalisation', 'folklorisation' or 'self-folklorisation'. It has been noted that 'folk culture — mythologised by politics and tradition — and additionally mythicized by the very academic discipline meant to describe it — has often become convenient material for furthering various political agendas',[3] and that folkloristic descriptions should be read 'as an expression of conventionalised "urban talk" about the peasant'[4] rather than to find out who the peasant really was. The representations of rural culture as 'folksy' were shaped mainly within such disciplines as folk studies, ethnography or folklore studies. The art-historical discourse joined them only in the first half of the 20th century, when, having rebelled against academism, the eye of the era allowed members of the intelligentsia to recognise the attractiveness of the woodcuts, paintings or sculptures, the main constituent of the rural iconosphere. Academic research is a keystone of one Lyotard's master narratives of modernity: that concerning the truth. The humanities and social sciences have relativised it, calling the realism of scholarly representations into question by demonstrating its conventional character and identifying the selective mechanisms used to construct them. Piotr Kowalski argues that folklore studies 'manipulate images', producing 'long-lasting images of folk things'[5] that enter the common imagination.

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1 Michał Buchowski, 'Kultura ludowa — mit czy rzeczywistość?', *Lud*, vol. 74, 1991, p. 181.

2 Aleksander Jackowski, 'Kultura ludowa — sztuka ludowa?', ibid., pp. 188, 186.

3 Piotr Kowalski, 'Folkloryzm nauk o kulturze ludowej', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa — Konteksty*, no. 1, vol. 46, 1992, p. 25.

4 Zbigniew Libera, 'Lud ludoznawców: Kilka rysów do opisania fizjognomii i postaci ludu naszego, czyli etnograficzna wycieczka po XIX wieku', in *Etnologia polska między ludoznawstwem a antropologią*, ed. Aleksander Posern-Zieliński, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Drawa, 1995, p. 138.

5 Piotr Kowalski, *Popkultura i humaniści*, Kraków: Wyd. UJ, 2004, p. 153.

1. 'Land of One's Childhood': the Countryside and the Frustrations of Modernity

Andreas Bedenstedt calls the attitude that rural areas should 'serve' the city, and that their inhabitants, 'unless appearing in the role of the hospitable owners of vacation cabins', are a 'rather irritating and inconvenient element of the landscape', an example of 'urban chauvinism'.[6] That is precisely what happens when an image of the 'picturesque countryside' is constructed, for the very category of 'the picturesque' provides for an aestheticisation of reality, and, as the Irish art historian David Brett rightly notes, the relationship between the aestheticising and the aestheticised is an uneven one. It allows the aestheticising subject to assume the position of an impartial observer whose right to look entails no responsibility whatsoever.[7]

According to Fernand Braudel, European towns 'ruled their countrysides autocratically, regarding them exactly as later powers regarded their colonies, and treating them as such.'[8] The European urban centre is, therefore, the source of both modern thinking about civil liberties and representative government and of treating the countryside as a 'backup facility' whose only role is to supply the city (which in this schema is the equivalent of the colonial metropolis). The economic and political dominance of the city over the country is one of the foundations of modernity, whether in its capitalist version or the communist one. At the same time, modern Europe construes the countryside as a repository of precious moral values. This happens under the influence of Romanticism, which agrees with the Enlightenment-era philosophy of history according to which myth is challenged by the Logos and the world is increasingly 'disenchanted', but — unlike the Enlightenment — views this process as unfavourable. It therefore seeks to restore the ancient: the primitive innocence of the Savage, the simplicity of rural life, the Christian virtues of the mediaeval knight, which it perceives as values lost to rationalism. The idea that values are to be sought among the 'simple, uneducated folk' had important consequences for the city–country dichotomy. In this way, the 'city' constructs the 'countryside' as an archaic treasury, untouched by modernity, of tradition (which the Enlightenment despised) and primal wisdom.

When modern national communities were (re)inventing their traditions during the 19th century, they were doing so precisely with the material that the city had 'salvaged' (or so it thought) from the country. Many modern national ideologies are founded upon a concept of folk proposed by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, one that the gentry/intelligentsia audience assimilated through the Romantics. Herder not only viewed the country folk as carriers of tradition (i.e. orally transmitted folklore), but actually equated folk art — which he argued was anonymous and communal — with national art, thus establishing and emphasising a direct connection between the folk tradition and the national polity. The Herderian 'folk' couldn't possess a modern historical consciousness, for their knowledge was based on tradition, which Locke had delegitimised in both epistemology and politics; besides, they didn't produce written sources, the basis of the modern historian's research. Herder, therefore, deprives the peasants of historicity by turning them into 'folk'.

But how could have the alienated resident of the modern city, disappointed with modernity as he was, come to consider the rural tradition as his own, and feel a nostalgia for the community that carried that tradition? Country nannies telling fairy tales to children in the city become a physical link between two worlds, creating connotations (firmly supported by the reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau) between country and childhood and between country and femininity. The merging of the notions of the countryside, nature and family led to a kind of religious union that breathed a new life into a modernity based on the alienation of the self-reflecting subject.

> But it did so by neutralising almost everything on which the culture of reflection is based. Heimat is childhood in adulthood, the feminine in the masculine, reason without consciousness of alienation

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[6] Quoted in Izabella Bukraba-Rylska, 'Biorąc kulturę poważnie, czyli wiejskie dziedzictwo Polaków', *Kultura Współczesna*, no. 47, 2006, p. 59.

[7] David Brett, *The Construction of Heritage*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1996, pp. 38–51.

[8] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century, Vol. 1: The Structures of Everyday Life*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1992, p. 510.

> (if such an irrational reason can be imagined), nature without death. . . . Those having a Heimat are the lucky ones (or the limited ones) for who, as long as they are in their Heimat, neither self nor perception nor reason can unfold its power for differentiation.[9]

Heimat is a German concept, hardly translatable into other languages, in English often rendered as ‘home’ or ‘homeland’.

In its origin, the romantic expresses, according to Peter Blickle, an aversion to all that is modern: capitalism, industrialisation, the politicisation of social life. With its powerful emotional load and its inability of critical differentiation, the romantic was often exploited by modern national ideology, despite the fact that it is its actual antithesis. Heimat, Blickle argues, is a fundamentally modern concept, whose function was to remedy the ailments of civilisation and to provide ‘consolation and promise of happiness for those who no longer wish to participate in (the illusion of) the dialectical push forward into the ever new. But by no longer wishing to participate, they are part of the new and are participants in the dialectic.’[10] Heimat is the spatial dimension of the romantic side of modernity, an expression of the positive emotions directed by the urban dweller towards the countryside where he discovers his roots. It connects clearly with the romantic idea that the ‘country folk’ are part of the natural world. Of course, there also recurs in it the sentimental and romantic topos of the stability and invariability of rural life, but its utopianism goes further: Heimat becomes a place where ‘the imaginary and a supposed reality are not separated; subject and object are reconciled.’[11]

Evoked ‘on this Paris street’,[12*] the Mickiewiczian construction of the ‘land of childhood’ was not so much to alleviate the issues triggered by modernisation — which the rural regions of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had hardly experienced by the 1830s — as to provide a myth that would soothe the bitterness of defeat after the November Uprising and unite the conflicted émigrés. It turns out, however, that references to childhood as a period spent under the protective care of women, whether mundane (the ‘weeping mother’), divine (the ‘Holy Virgin who . . . shines in Ostra Brama’) or symbolic (‘motherland’s breast’), and to a suggestively described local landscape, comprise a set of connotations good for all the maladies of modern living. But for Mickiewicz, the combination of childhood, nature and family with an aestheticisation of the rural landscape has a different function than that ascribed by Blickle to Heimat. Rather than an emotional utopia that allows a rest from modernity by suspending the imperative of dialectical existence and introducing a kind of pre-established non-differentiation, it is supposed to be a political and social utopia, embodied in the myth of the feudal social order. In this myth, it doesn’t matter who collected the ‘three stacks of wheat . . . which the thatch could not fully contain’, or who stabled Tadeusz’s horses: the people behind these acts remain invisible. The purpose of the Mickiewiczian vision of a ‘country without peasants’ is to create a myth of feudal order and its justice: a countryside without peasants is a countryside without their degradation Such a portrayal is only possible when the peasants are instrumentalised as an element of the rural infrastructure, necessary for the functioning of the ‘gentleman’s manor’ that stood ‘in a grove of white birches’. The vision of the countryside without the exploited peasantry was of key significance from the perspective of the formation of a modern nation able to establish an independent nation state. The tradition legitimising it had to be constructed so as to present the strangeness between the landlords and the peasants — who were to form the nation and build the nation state together — as an internal differentiation of a larger whole bound together by mutual interests, rather than as a dialectical difference between two wholes having completely different interests. This absolutely crucial, instrumental, role in the construction of the Polish national identity in the 19th century, when the priority was to neutralise the fundamental social conflict between the gentry and the folk, was played by the concept of the ‘rural folk’.

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9 Peter Blickle, *Heimat. Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, Rochester: Camden House, 2002, pp. 37, 39.

10 Ibid., p. 32.

11 Ibid., p. 40.

12 * All quotations from *Pan Tadeusz, or The Last Foray in Lithuania*, transl. Marcel Weyland [translator’s note].

2. 'Like the Piast Kings of Old': on Folkloristic Allochrony

'Folklorists', writes Stanisław Węglarz — an ethnographer, i.e. folklorist, himself — 'were, at least for the first hundred years after the discipline's inception, almost exclusively members of intelligentsia of various descent and status.'[13] All of them subscribed to the general worldview of the educated elites, for which, as Bolesław Prus wrote, the life of the common folk was an 'unknown America'.[14] Consequently, folklorists were attracted in the first place to the exoticism and otherness of the rural folk, characteristics that, after Herder, they perceived as an archaicness conveying the ancient origins of the nation, and, according to the paradigm of social evolution, as a manifestation of the primordiality of the lower stages of development.

Analysing the folkloristic writings, we will notice the same mechanisms of exoticisation that the 19th-century anthropologists used to describe the colonial 'savages', with the difference that the Other of the folklorists was not geographically but socially distant. Critiques of the language, rhetorics and research tools of anthropology have demonstrated the ethnocentric and colonial prejudices of its representations of otherness and an inscribed inequality between the researcher and the researched. One of the principal mechanisms of exoticisation applied to the research subjects in constructing a scholarly narrative describing and interpreting the material collected during anthropological field research was that of allochrony. Coined by Johannes Fabian[15], the term refers to a situation where, in rendering a textual representation of the researched reality, the ethnographer doesn't inscribe the research subjects in his historical time, requiring the use of a past tense, but describes them in the present tense. Despite the fact that the field trip had ended, that it had lasted for a very short time compared with the time the given people had been in existence, the anthropologist described his findings as a permanent situation; the research subjects lacked historicity (which the anthropologist enjoyed) as 'peoples without history', immersed in the eternal 'now', or extreme slowness, 0f the 'time of nature'. Allochrony is a situation where two persons participating in research, that is, meeting in the same place at the same time — the researcher and the researched — become temporally distinct in the anthropological text. Fabian suggests that modern anthropology, as an empirical science, constructs its representations according to the order of observation, that is, visuality, which means that they are untouched by the flow of time. In this way, the researcher distances himself from the Other, forming his object of study, that is, of observation, and then its representations. According to Fabian, the evolutionistic metanarrative that organised the world of modern anthropologists made travel in space a travel in time, and the researched had the status of living fossils. That was possible because in the place of research time seemed not to exist, and the researched were 'peoples without history'. The present tense of ethnographic descriptions was a key means of producing an Other immersed in a rhetorical *praesens etnographicum*. Through the narrative, the anthropologist — and the reader with him — also immersed himself in this temporally different world, retaining, however, the consciousness of his own historicity.

Another allochronic device, though in a different way, was the aestheticisation of the countryside. The distinct (non-modern) temporal condition of the history-less folk gave it access to a timeless (according to the modern theodicy) world of artistic values and universal laws of art that placed it above the relativity of cultures. The aestheticisation of the countryside means that folksiness becomes a matter of the aesthetic judgement and social distinction of those who are able to notice and appreciate it in rural inhabitants. From this perspective, the countryside becomes subject to processes occurring in the field of art, functioning as a collection of forms and styles of expression, which are ascribed meanings and values characteristic for the modern art discourse and modern artistic practices. In consequence, it is affected by the same appropriations and assimilations as 'primordiality' or 'primitivity', its forms becoming an inspiration for modern artists seeking means of expression that will break down the academic canon, and its authors the bearers of a 'natural sensitivity to beauty' and 'authenticity'.

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[13] Stanisław Węglarz, 'Chłopi jako obcy. Prolegomena', in *Pożegnanie paradygmatu? Etnologia wobec współczesności*, ed. Wojciech J. Burszta, Jerzy Damrosz, Warsaw: Instytut Kultury, 1994, p. 88.

[14] Quoted in ibid., p. 89.

[15] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

In descriptions of the folk, allochrony played yet another function: the ahistorical folk it generated was construed not only as 'ancient' in terms of evolutionism but also as 'eternal'.

> Already the 19th-century folklorists, fascinated by folk culture, moved among the peasants like the later tourists. Equipped with pre-learnt knowledge, with techniques of description, bowing to the pressure of literary narration as well as motivated by the desire to discover truths deeper than those offered by casual observation, saying they were discovering, they were in fact producing folk-type labels.[16]

The folk constructed within the gentry/intelligentsia folkloristic discourse were a typical 'people without history' — suspended in an eternal 'ethnographic present', they were exempt from the historical changes and tensions of modernity. Thus the folklorist stripped the folk of modern subjectivity, which he himself possessed, and at the same time constructed them as strangers in the modern world: the rural folk are the Other of urban modernity.

3. **Folklorisation and the Folkloristic Ideology**

The selection of the characteristics that made it possible to produce a representation of the countryside as folklore and the peasants as folk was informed by the folklorists' cultural background, part of which were the research methods, the askable questions as well as the attractiveness of the received replies. At the same time, it needs to be remembered, the folk were to be an Other who would be included in the national identity; they couldn't, therefore, bear characteristics that might cause internal conflicts. The otherness of the folk was to strengthen the national construction rather than disrupt it. The folkloristic ideology developed alongside modern national consciousness and played a significant role in the shaping of the traditions underpinning the modern nation state. The folkloristic concept of the folk as archaic and living in the 'time of nature', that is, devoid of history, was also extremely important from the vantage of national unity, fundamental for the stability of the state. In Poland, the 19th- and early-20th-century discourse had to solve a conflict, going back several centuries, between the landed gentry and the peasants, a consequence of early-modern-era refeudalisation of rural relationships in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. 'Folklorism' played a role as crucial as it was instrumental, providing the Polish national ideology with a tool to neutralise that fundamental social conflict. The transformation of the 'commons', 'peasants', 'plebeians' into the Polish folk was to perform the 'miracle' prophesied by Krasiński in his *Psalm of Love*. 'Folk' needs, therefore, to be understood as a utopia which the national ideology could be founded upon. The task wasn't a simple one, for on the one hand Sarmatism construed the social difference between master and serf as an ethnic difference (the nobility being purportedly descended from a different ethnos than the common people), and on the other hand the peasants' sense of injustice was stronger than any sense of ethnic loyalty, so Polish peasants were prepared to 'slay and slaughter' Polish landlords. Besides, in the eastern parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (and in eastern Poland at the time of the folklorists and ethnographers), the country folk were indeed of different ethnic origin than the landed class that bred the folklorists themselves.

In his *Anthropology of 19th-Century Polish Rural Culture* (1986), Ludwik Stomma analysed the contents of the seven volumes of Oskar Kolberg's *Works* in terms of thematic categories, finding that 84 percent of the descriptions were devoted to 'merry activities, mostly performed in leisure time', such as annual festivals, family rituals, singing and dancing, legends or games. In Kolberg's portrayal of rural culture, folklore was not only the basis of representation, but also constituted the vast majority of its content. 'We are not presenting these statistics', Stomma continued, 'to lambast a priceless classic. It's worth being aware, though, of the assumptions which a significant majority of the subsequent literary (let alone filmic) portrayals of the countryside were predicated on; portrayals that had rather effectively shaped not only the intelligentsia public opinion but even the subconsciousness of some of the ethnographers'.[17] The suggestive power of Kolberg's image of the countryside, which in fact echoed much older Polish literary and cultural topoi of the 'quiet country, merry country', can be compared to the mythmaking power of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. The difference is that the great poet wrote his class-informed myth as a literary epic; Kolberg, in turn, was, in theory at least, documenting reality, creating the subject of an area of study known as folkloristics.

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[16] P. Kowalski, p. 105.

Węglarz discerns two types among the proponents of the folkloristic ideology: the 'philanthropist' and the 'apologist'. The former gets 'interested in folklore to learn the mentality of the peasantry for the purpose of demonstrating the falseness of folk knowledge and that of "straightening the commoners' distorted notions" by bringing proper education to the countryside', while the latter is, according to the former, a 'bat-like apologist of ignorance', i.e. a Romantic who believes in 'living truths' rather than in the 'wise man's looking glass and eye'. Both, however, legitimise a programme that, from the vantage of its authors, is to contribute to the emancipation of the folk and their inclusion in the national project. In the vision of the former, this is to happen through education; in that of the latter, subjectivisation and emancipation will occur by virtue of the folk's spiritual and creative potential, an expression of which is the 'common song'. Both attitudes, though each in a different way, bring about the phenomenon of folklorisation, which, instead of emancipating, produces mechanisms that replicate the social status quo. 'The institutional folkloristic movement is proof that the peasant has to remain a peasant. Such is the construction of the folkloristic ideology'.[18] This ideology legitimises a programme that, from the vantage of its authors, is to contribute to including the peasants-come-folk in the national project and their appreciation: the peasant's subjectivisation and emancipation occurs through the spiritual and creative potential of the folk, the only expression of which is folklore. Stripped of folkloristic archaic and picturesque features, the peasant becomes terribly strange (and dangerous in this strangeness) — like the peasants barking in the ditches in Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*.

'We declare a war on the doctrinists of the apostles of cosmopolitan socialism', Jan Ludwik Popławski wrote in 1886 in the Warsaw weekly *Głos*, 'who forget that our folk have their own notion of happiness, one that won't fit into abstract or foreign formulas, i.e. their own culture, the components of which can be considered as lower forms of the respective categories of our culture'.[19] Thus the folk could contribute their 'lower forms' of culture, i.e. folklore, to 'our culture', i.e. the shared 'national culture' constructed by intelligentsia. The reduction of social differences to the level of aesthetics and 'leisure activities', that is, recognising folklore and folk art as the true and proper representation of the countryside, made it possible to efficiently manage those differences. The folklorisation of the countryside proved extremely important from the perspective of building the modern nation. It was first necessary, however, to persuade the rural inhabitants themselves to accept such a representation of their world, to convince them that folklore and folk art were the most precious elements of the peasant reality. The success of this representation of the countryside among rural inhabitants has been due to its intense promotion by both the educational system and most factions of the peasant movement, since the early 20th century, through the interwar period, to the communist era and today. It was recommended, for example, that agricultural colleges should be decorated in the folk style, 'which in practice meant equipping them with Zakopane furniture, decorating the walls with paper cut-outs, and dressing the students in woollen waistcoats'.[20] Thus the peasant learned from the (well-meaning) member of the intelligentsia what in rural life was worthy of the name 'culture' and how he could use that 'folk culture' to further his own emancipation.

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[17] Ludwik Stomma, *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.*, Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1986, p. 236.

[18] S. Węglarz, p. 96.

[19] Quoted in Aleksander Wojciechowski, *Elementy sztuki ludowej w polskim przemyśle artystycznym XIX i XX wieku*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1953, p. 43.

[20] Mirosława Drozd-Piasecka, 'Społeczne funkcje sztuki ludowej. Sztuka ludowa w życiu społeczeństwa II Rzeczpospolitej', *Etnografia Polska*, no. 1, vol. XXVII, 1983, p. 57.

Another dimension of the folklorisation of the countryside was the commercial aspect: folklore was something that could be sold in the city and abroad. Folklore for sale as an element of socio-economic policy is, as Piotr Korduba has demonstrated, an earlier concept in Poland than Cepelia, traceable to the pre-war government policy of supporting folk crafts. The promotion of the sale of rural products on urban markets was to constitute, to some degree at least, a form of economic support for the overpopulated and impoverished rural communities of pre-war Poland. At the same time, the ideological and aesthetic values of folk art were to popularise it among the urban middle class as a luxury commodity or contextualise it in modern interiors.[21] This philosophy of folklore had to be connected to some form of 'product quality control', for the folk-art canon comprised things carefully selected from the rural material universe. Country dwellers, it was believed, didn't have such refined tastes as the educated promoters of folk art, and didn't always know that the beauty of their artefacts stemmed from a 'noble simplicity' (which was often due to material shortages). Nor did they regard folk art as their own, even if they were the producers of 'folk stuff': the country weavers of Janów applied the term 'folk' to the carpets they made for export to the city, woven according to patterns designed by Eleonora Plutyńska, an academically trained artist and co-founder of the 'Ład' artist cooperative, whereas those meant for the rural market, made with artificially coloured yarn to patterns imitating industrial jacquards (for that's what the locals loved), they called 'their own'.[22]

Folklorised rural culture is also commercially attractive in the function of its identity potential. Due to the folk's participation in the construction of the national ideology, folklore and folk art provided a range of forms and motifs that were to connote national identity, whether as high-brow art styles (e.g. the Zakopane style or the national style of the 1925 Paris Exhibition) or in the folklorised version of communist People's Poland, a country that advertised itself in Orbis Travel Agency posters as a 'land of folklore'. A truly golden era for folklore instrumentalised as an identity-for-sale came with the development of regional policy following Poland's administrative reform and the country's accession to the European Union; contemporary ethnographers promote folklore and folk culture as a source of regional identity, advising, to the best of their academic knowledge, how to modernise Kurpie embroidery by placing it on the smartphone case, or what versions of 'traditionality' (in the contemporary regionalistic discourse the term 'folklore' has been seldom used due to its ideological subtext, and young-generation ethnographers forgo it altogether) can be used to promote regions transferred to Poland after the Second World War, where the continuity of local traditions had been broken.[23] The folklorisation of rural culture and the self-folklorisation[24] of rural inhabitants are phenomena that remain a permanent and crucial component of Polish national, social, cultural and economic policies throughout the 20th century, regardless of the makeup of government or even the political system itself.

4. **'The Folk Think in Figures', or the Folk as the Other of the Modern Artist**

The fascination with the the folk as an artist was for a long time limited to the sphere of lyrics and music. The reasons for that are complex and lie in the dynamics of the processes that shaped the modern art field and the related judgement of taste as an instrument of social distinction, processes that developed somewhat differently in the respective fields of the fine arts, literature and music. Still, from the very beginning the art of the country folk had been entangled in the procedures of the folkloristic discourse and ideology, and constructed with the whole benefit of allochrony and the Herderian concept of folk art as national art. Depriving folk artists of historicity, inseparably connected with the condition of the modern artist, allochrony situated them in an archaic world without history, equipping them with a natural 'divine spark', a childish freshness of ignorance and closeness to nature. The distinctness of the folk's creative attitude from the practices of the authors of the Polish modern art discourse describing it was constructed throughout the 19th century according to the Mickiewiczian opposition between the 'feeling and faith' of the common people and the 'wise man's looking glass and eye', an antinomy that had gained the power of a topos. Of crucial and topos-making significance for the reflection of the turn of the centuries and the first half of the 20th century — a period when both the vision of the folk fine artist and the foundations of the relationship between 'folk art' and 'applied art' were shaped — was Cyprian Kamil Norwid's *Promethidion*, first published in 1851 but popularised only later, on the wave of modernist fascination with the work of the 'fourth national poet'. The 'simple folk', humming songs with their 'hands brown with mud', is a carrier of a creative attitude which Norwid regarded as crucial for the renewal of art. With him, in the Romantic topos of art as a field where it is possible to transgress a sense of alienation from the world, a legacy of the 'dead truths' of rationalism and intellectual cognition, 'feeling and faith' are replaced by 'manual labour'. This extremely important shift, supplanting the 'spiritual truths' of the Romantic eschatology of art with the 'truth of material', is bound up, of course, with wider revaluations in the modernist theory of art, which highlights the significance that the modern art discourse had for the 'images of folk things'.

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[21] Piotr Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warsaw: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.

[22] Aleksander Błachowski, *Ludowe dywany dwuosnowowe w Polsce*, Toruń: Muzeum Etnograficzne w Toruniu, 1990.

[23] Anna Weronika Brzezińska, 'Rola społeczności lokalnej w kreowaniu świadomości regionalnej', *Twórczość Ludowa*, no. 1–2, vol. XXV, 2010, pp. 17–21.

[24] Ewa Klekot, 'Samofolkloryzacja. Współczesna sztuka ludowa z perspektywy krytyki postkolonialnej', *Kultura Współczesna*, no. 1, 2014, pp. 86–99.

But Norwid devotes more space in *Promethidion*[25] to describe the folk's creative attitude and their artistic practices, writing more unequivocally and specifically in the 'Epilogue': 'The difference between the folk word and the written and learned word is that the folk think in forms, whereas the learned man adds forms to his thoughts.' This statement construes the difference between the folk artist and the academically trained one on the basis of the relationship between 'thought' and 'form'. In the case of the folk, this relationship has the character of an organic whole ('the folk think in forms'), while in the 'learned man' it is secondary and artificial. Disappointment with the contemporary artistic practices of the educated classes has Norwid searching for socially exotic practices that would be better than his own, that wouldn't break the continuity between idea and form, that is, wouldn't consider the incorporeal mind as superior to matter.

Norwid's formulation that the 'folk think in forms' found a further reflection in the concepts of the 'idea-plasticity' of folk art or its 'conceptuality', notions that embedded folk art in discussions about the conventionality of naturalism. The lack of naturalism in the visual representations produced by folk art was thought to be the result of looking at reality in a non-modern way. Research into the art of 'others' — children, mental patients, 'primitives' etc. — also contributed considerably to relativising the pictorial idiom developed by the European Renaissance. In this context, the anti-intellectualism of folk art, stemming, it was believed, 'from the deepest spiritual layers, almost without the participation of intellect and reflection'[26], resounded very strongly. This anti-intellectualism was often described using nature-related metaphors, stressing folk art's allochronic embedment in natural time: 'The folk weave colourful yarn like the bird builds its nest. They don't think in order to make, but they think, for they create by making.'[27] At the same time, we need to remember about the connection, present in the modernist art discourse, between the logic of art and the logic of nature, a connection founded on the Freudian concept of repression and culture as a source of suffering, according to which nature is the desired condition of freedom from culture and its constraints. Moreover, in the modern scientific discourse nature was construed as subject to fixed, immutable laws, whereas culture, reflecting the diversity of human societies and ways of living, was construed as relative, hence the striving to connect the logic of art with the logic of nature was a striving to exclude artistic truth from the relativity of cultural truths.

As the 'other' of the modern artist, the folk artist shared the features of other 'others' — 'primitives', madmen, children — all those in whom there hadn't occurred an artificial separation of thought from matter and repression of the primal urges uniting art with life. For this reason, the creative process of the 'learned' artist was completely different from that of the 'folk' one: 'The artist doesn't "toy" when he makes art; quite the contrary, his psyche in marked in those moments by seriousness and solemnity. The folk play and rejoice when making art and they no other way'[28]; on such premises were based the educational and artistic activities of Antoni Buszek. The difference between the folk artist and the professional one was also construed as an opposition between the individualism of the intellectual and the collective character of folk art. A focus on formal values (an approach completely strange, of course, to the folk artist himself) led to the formulation of the concept of the 'folk style'; the definition of its features confirmed the sense that folk art was autonomous and distinct from other styles of art. Such an approach led however — as elsewhere — to the canonisation of folk art and a subsequent stylistic petrification of the objects made by folk artists for the 'external' market, i.e. the city. At the same time, now recognised as folk *art*, the works of rural artists became part of the modern art discourse, which meant an universalisation of their values and their authors' inscription in the artist-emancipating modern discourse. For an object made in the context of rural peasant culture, 'formal attractiveness' always meant a decontextualisation, i.e. extraction from the rural inventory, and recontextualisation, whether through scholarly description, museification, or by serving as a source of motifs or a language of forms to be artistically transposed.

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[25] Cyprian Kamil Norwid, *Promethidion. Rzecz w dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*, Paris: L. Martinet, 1851.

[26] Ksawery Piwocki, *Drzeworyt ludowy w Polsce*, Warsaw: Wyd. Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości, 1934, p. 10.

[27] Stefan Szuman, 'Psychologja twórczości artystycznej ludu. (Kilimkarstwo)', *Przegląd Warszawski*, no. 45, 1925, p. 282.

5. **The Communist Legacy: Continuity and Rupture**

In the communist People's Republic of Poland, folklorism maintained and petrified the city/country hierarchy, reinforcing the social function of folklore as a device to camouflage social (and ethnic) inequalities under the guise of picturesque diversity. At the same time, as a nation state, People's Poland instrumentalised folklore in a similar way as the pre-war Second Polish Republic, exploiting it as a repository of images embedded in the national ideology and serving to affirm its statehood, in both domestic and foreign policies. It also employed pre-war models of supporting country crafts as 'rural industry', and, taking advantage of the means provided by the central control of a nationalised economy, brought to life the Cepelia enterprise, a behemoth that the pre-WWII activists of the Folk Industry Support Society wouldn't even dream about.[29] It was through Cepelia that the totality of the folkloristic representation of the countryside reached its apogee.

At the same time, however, the communist ideology offered new perspectives on folk and folklore, other than that of the folkloristic ideology. First and foremost, the communist insistence of folk participation in culture determined the approach to the country fair and feast, while the nationalised economy encouraged industry to directly employ folk artists as designers (unlike the earlier activities, undertaken also by Cepelia, with regard to the so called folk industry). The latter was realised in the work of the 'designer collectives' organised by Wanda Telakowska[30], active in the field of textile design, and in the incidental employment of rural and working-class women painters for the decoration of factory-made pottery. Yet these modes of action neither became a fixed feature of the repertoire of Polish design, nor — more significantly — did they find a theoretical reflection in the folklore and folk-art discourse, dominated, as it was, by the folkloristic ideology.

The folk fest, regarded by Anatoly Lunacharsky as the 'principal artistic product of the revolution'[31], during which the 'unorganised' masses of the viewers mingle with the 'organised' performers, overcoming and revoking another contradiction of bourgeois society, in People's Poland remained a show. While early post-war cinema newsreels suggest that there may have been attempts to organise May Day as a festivity that truly involved the masses and blurred the distinction between performer and audience, the Harvest Festival [*dożynki*] — like the presidential celebrations in Spała before the war — was from the very beginning a carefully directed show meant for viewing. In this version, the folkloristic ideology and statist communism together performed an instrumentalisation of folklore, building an image of social harmony in the popular/democratic nation state, where it wasn't the peasants or villagers but representatives of local 'folk cultures' — the Kurpie, the *góral* highlanders — that were passing in a pageant through the pitch of the Decennial Stadium to the rhythm of the (lordly dance of) polonaise.

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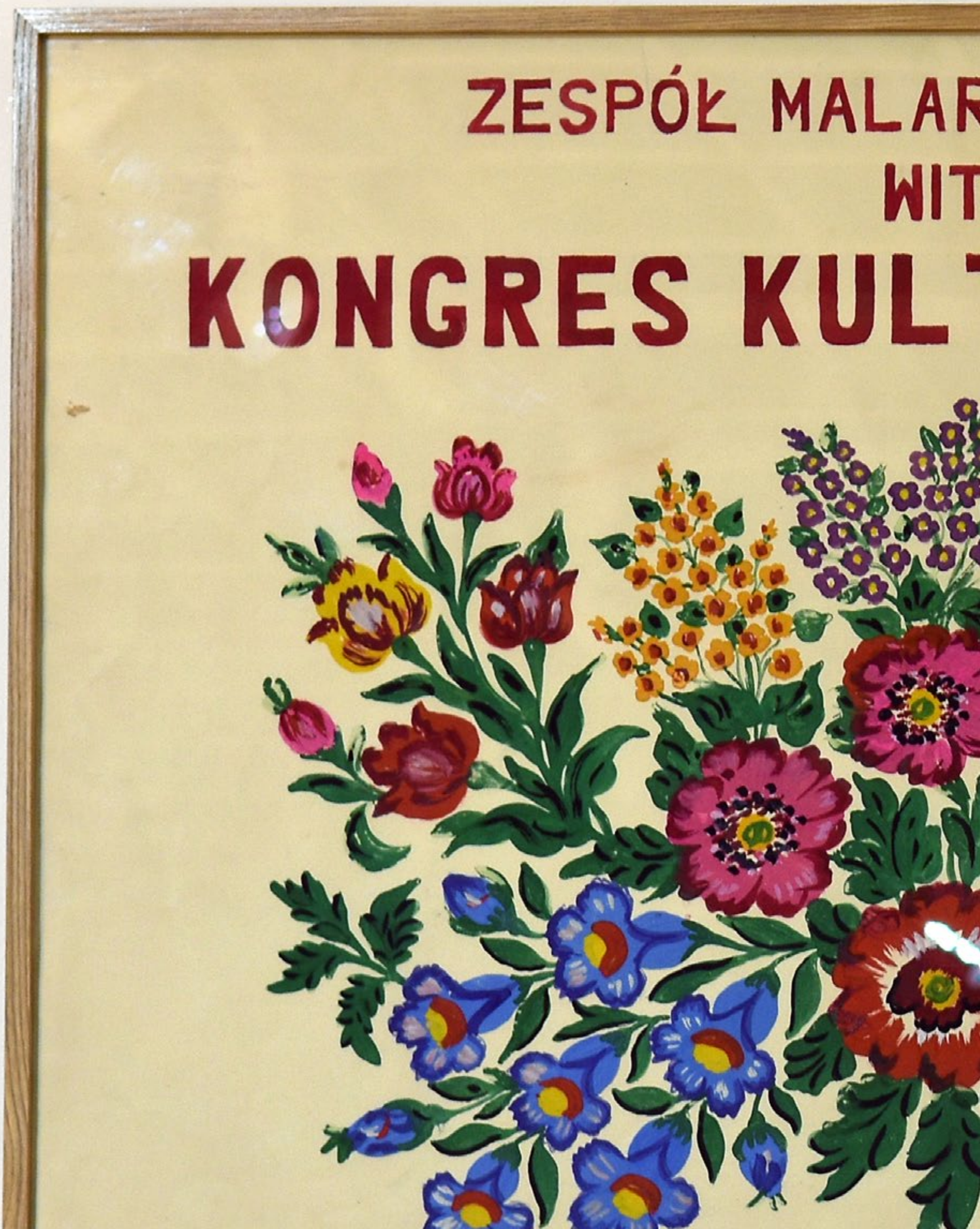
[28] Ibid., p. 288.

[29] Piotr Korduba writes about this extensively in *Ludowość na sprzedaż*.

[30] Wanda Telakowska, *Twórczość ludowa w nowym wzornictwie*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sztuka, 1954.

[31] Anatoly Lunacharsky, *O massovyh prazhdnestvah, ėstrade, tsirke*, Moskva: Isskustvo, 1981, p. 84.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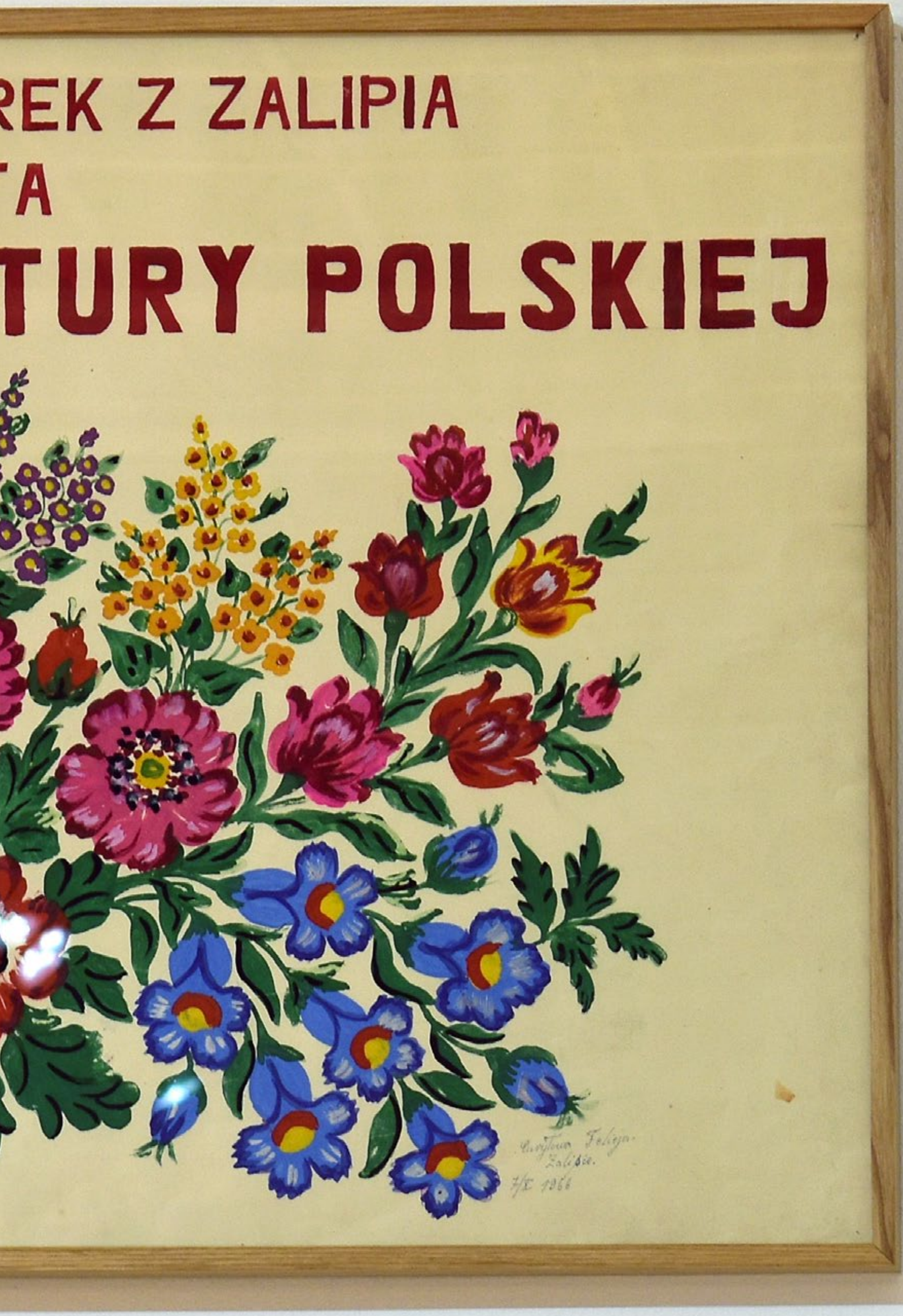
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‘I Want to Go to the Country’

Monika Weychert Waluszko

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the greatest demographic shift ever observed took place. The industrial revolution gave rise to the urban working class, architecture and urban planning saw sweeping changes, and culture was transformed. People were no longer bound to a specific place. To the land.
As Michel Foucault wrote, ‘The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space’.[1] Cities have also become symbols of the social diagnosis of a changing world.[2] The countryside has been reduced to the subordinate role of a ‘back-up’ to cities: ‘a source of basic resources to be consumed by metropolitan peoples . . . an area of service facilities for leisure and recreation . . . a dumping ground for the “wastes” of metropolitan living — nuclear waste, garbage, criminals, and the elderly.’[3]

Relationships between the city and the country have become complicated, assuming various forms: antinomy, assimilation of urban elements by the country (or vice versa) or apotheosis of rural life. The countryside has aroused ambivalent feelings. This is aptly reflected by John Russel’s reflections on surrealistic objects:

> Where everything is familiar, the individual components of the object have neither proper weight nor a raison d’être; where everything is offensive, the effect is insulting. The highlighted components and those that make us think, that cause us to woo and sneer at the same time, to be seduced and abandoned with a sense of embarrassment, as if one the edge of the road.[4]

On the one hand, the countryside has been mythologised since the times of sentimentalism; on the other, it disgusts us and irritates with its archaicness. So how has it been found by artists going on out-of-town retreats?

‘I want to go to the country’, a pop singer Urszula Sipińska sang in a 1980s pop hit. To the country, that is exactly where? To ‘where time has stopped in the field.’[5] Writing about nostalgia, Svetlana Boym discerns two kinds of it: restorative and reflective.[6] The latter is about the pain of loss, about reminiscing and being aware of the irreversibility of processes. Restorative nostalgia is different: it strives to reconstruct, focusing on the *nostos*. That is why it easily connects with resentment or nationalism; it can be exploited as a political narrative. It causes the rural space to be perceived as an image of the nation’s historical past. ‘New’ (i.e. restored, invented) traditions are ‘characterised by a higher degree of symbolic formalization and ritualization than were the actual peasant customs and conventions after which they are patterned.’[7] Wojciech J. Burszta has proposed the term ‘national postfolklorism’:

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[1] Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias’, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, October 1984 (*Des Espace Autres*, March 1967, transl. Jay Miskowiec).

[2] A great example of this is Marshall Berman’s book *All That Is Solid Melts into Air. The Experience of Modernity*. In his reflections on the crises of modernity, Berman writes about St. Petersburg, Paris or New York, examining their spaces as a mirror of change and field of analysis.

[3] William P. Kuvlesky, James H. Copp, *Rural America: The Present Realities and Future Prospects*, p. 28, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED206918.pdf, accessed 30 October 2016.

[4] John Russel, ‘Métamorphoses de l’objet (Objet cubiste — Objet futuriste et métaphysique — L’objet et Dada — L’objet surréaliste — L’objet d’aujourd’hui)’, *Chroniques de l’Art Vivant*, no. 19, April 1971; cf. Joanna Dąbkowska-Zydroń, ‘Wyobcowanie i oswojenie. Dzieło sztuki wobec rzeczywistości’, in *Awangarda w perspektywie postmodernizmu*, ed. Grzegorz Dziamski, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, 1996, pp. 83–97.

[5] Lyrics by Andrzej Kuryło, music by Wojciech Trzciński (1980).

[6] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

[7] Ibid., p. 42.

> the postfolkloristic phase is however marked not just by a maximum simplification of the message and its cultural load, but by its utter disconnection from the original context. This is a stereotype of the second degree. It no longer has anything in common with its source, i.e. peasant culture.[8]

According to Rifkin, the phenomenon can be interpreted in the context of hypercapitalist culture: the exploitation of local cultures by market forces degenerates the condition of communities that used to live in a world of values, which are now being transformed into marketable commodities.[9] As a result, trust, empathy, bonds with other people and with nature are inevitably eroded. This situation provides for the exploitation of 'folk culture', for turning it into both a commodity and a symbol of the worker-peasant alliance, albeit in a museified, abstracted form, sometimes externally imposed, while failing to accept the authentic development of peasant culture — the fun-fair, festive, plastic, kitschy art — and its functioning within contemporary culture. As Izabela Kowalczyk notes, 'In such a case, the local and quotidian, constructed anew as a simulacrum, appears as a kind of zombie'.[10] On this discriminating refusal of the right to history, and therefore to the present and future of the countryside, was superimposed the Polish reception and great popularity of the theories of Mircea Eliade[11], who studied folklore as the source of culture. In the religious context, archaic, rural, communities appeared also as 'granaries' of values, as 'time capsules' of a special kind. Attempts to go beyond history and seek the sacred in the contemporary world pointed to a mythical time, cyclical time, regulated by the rhythm of nature. Both perspectives refused the countryside the right to participate in the modern project. The real and symbolic space of rural culture became ahistorical.[12] For this reason, going to the country meant travelling in space — but also in time, or rather to a place where time had stopped.

Culturally superior mythologisation and aestheticisation of rural culture are not only the elements comprising its image in Poland. Ignorance, superstition, naturalism, mud — these are the keywords. Successive generations raised on the literary scene where Rozalka dies, having been put into the oven for a 'few Ave Marias' to be healed, generations frightened by stories of the Mazovian plait or the Podlasie *whisperers*. The centre legitimates its power over the peripheries by presenting its own culture as superior and that of the colonial subjects as inferior, treating that superiority in terms of a civilising mission or an ideological doctrine of justification.[13] Describing the phenomenon of 'folklore for sale', Piotr Korduba stresses that despite ideological differences, the cultural policies of People's Poland in rural areas were a continuation of the pre-war mechanisms with their patronising attitude (e.g. folk art as something to be 'overseen' by folklorists and ethnographers).[14] The same was true for the rural space and its inhabitants. As Józef Burszta put it,

> it was not just that the folk were exploited, poor and ignorant, but also that their culture was inferior, backward and superstitious. . . . Hence, of course, a practical approach to that culture as a whole: it needs to be studied in order to be transformed — elevated, improved, shed of obscurantism, 'enlightened', to put it shortly, and brought closer to elite culture.[15]

Today we don't hesitate to discuss Polish rurality in colonial terms. For folklorists and their successors, it was equivalent to exotic or archaic Otherness. In the catalogue of *Others. From Nikifor to Głowacka*, a major exhibition held at the Zachęta in 1965, Aleksander Jackowski wrote, 'The "otherness" of the primitive is always a matter of a limitation, a distinctness from the surrounding world.'[16] And in social terms? Jan Sowa points to the 'Sarmatian' myth, according to which the gentry and the common folk were of different origins, and to two types of colonisation: internal (landlord–peasant) and external (Poland–Ukraine). Those divisions in fact overlapped with the social ones.[17] Following the post-war land reform, the parcellation of landed estates, peasants were 'eligible' for social advancement, e.g. through education, from country to city. Yet, to quote Andrzej Leder, 'the other side of the "Polish pride" is a culture of contempt, where one's *desire of ecstasy* is satisfied by humiliating and despising others. That is what the Sarmatian ideology was for.'[18]

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[8] Wojciech J. Burszta, 'W obliczu współczesności. Trzy przykłady funkcjonowania wyobrażeń kulturowych', in *Pożegnanie paradygmatu? Etnologia wobec współczesności*, ed. Wojciech J. Burszta, Jerzy Damrosz, Warsaw: Instytut Kultury, 1994.

[9] Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life Is a Paid-For Experience*, Tarcher/Putnam, 2001.

[10] Izabela Kowalczyk, *Mikroutopie codzienności*, Toruń: CSW *Znaki Czasu*, 2013, p. 47.

[11] And not only the reception accompanying the Polish hippie movement in the 1970s, but also the early reception within the Marxist framework; cf. Beata Skarżyńska, *Mircea Eliade w Polsce. Recepcja religioznawczo-kulturowa*, Warsaw: Neriton, 2010.

[12] Cf. Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Oakland: University of California Press, 1982.

[13] Jürgen Osterhammel, K*olonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*, Munich: Beck, 2003, p. 19.

[14] Piotr Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warsaw: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.

[15] Józef Burszta, *Kultura ludowa — kultura narodowa*, Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1974, p. 160.

The myth for centuries determined the attitude to the 'colonised savages'. Nor was it easy to get rid of the label of a member of the 'other culture', as popular TV series such as *Doktor Ewa* [Doctor Ewa] (dir. Henryk Kluba, 1970), *Daleko od szosy* [Far from the road] (dir. Zbigniew Chmielewski, 1976) or *Dom* [Home] (dir. Jan Łomnicki, 1980), and movies such as *Konopielka* (dir. Witold Leszczyński, 1981), *Bardzo spokojna wieś* [Very quiet village] (dir. Janusz Kidawa, 1983), *Kogel-mogel* (dir. Roman Załuski, 1988) or the films of Wojciech Smarzowski, clearly showed. The centuries-long tradition of a chasm between the despised 'peasantry' or 'bumpkins' and the elites of bourgeois or noble descent, has survived despite sweeping changes in the social structure. Alexander W. Motyl describes the contempt many Russian speakers in Ukraine have for Ukrainophone speakers, whom they regard as 'second-rate' citizens, an 'supremacist'.[19] The same could be said of the attitudes experienced by persons of rural descent in communist Poland. And perhaps in today's as well?[20]

Bożena Kowalska wrote, 'after 1966, artistic retreats been became what can be termed a mass phenomenon in Poland'.[21] While previously painters would go to the country to work en plein air alone, now such retreats turned into trips to 'exotic' places organised by artists, students, scientists and art theoreticians to isolate themselves from the hustle and bustle of civilisation. Teodora Pawełko-Kwiatkowska, who organised such retreats, so commented on the phenomenon: 'The comfort of the participants, the actual venue — they're unimportant; what matters are commitment and the creative act.'[22] In the post-'thaw' situation, alongside famous symposiums and meetings, e.g. the Golden Grape Symposium in Zielona Góra (from 1963), the retreats in Osieki on Lake Jamno (1963–1981), the Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg (1965–1973) or the Wrocław '70 Symposium, such meetings acquired a different significance, becoming 'temporary autonomous zones'. Sometimes by accident, due to a dispute between the organisers[23] or the fact of taking place far from the decision-making centres.[24] It was also a time of the 'negotiation of the criteria of artistic greatness'.[25] The pre-war masters had been 'erased'. Experiments going beyond the rigid modernist canon weren't tolerated: 'The pseudo-avant-garde is a dangerous thing for Polish culture',[26] Wiesław Borowski would warn as late as 1975. 'That under the guise of universalism the modernist criteria were sexist, that they were anachronistic and supporting a very peculiar notion of high-brow art, disconnected from the everyday, banal and common, is obvious for us today'.[27]

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[16] Aleksander Jackowski, in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*, exh. cat., Warsaw: CBWA 'Zachęta', 1965.

[17] Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą*, Kraków: Universitas, 2011; S. Boym.

[18] Andrzej Leder, *Prześniona rewolucja. Ćwiczenia z logiki historycznej*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KP, 2014.

[19] Alexander J. Motyl, 'Soviet-Style Imperialism & the Ukrainian Language', *World Affairs Journal*, 11 February 2013; http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/soviet-styleimperialism-ukrainian-language, accessed 5 September 2016.

[20] Cf. *Etnografia/Animacja/Sztuka. Nierozpoznane wymiary rozwoju kulturalnego*, ed. Tomasz Rakowski, Warsaw: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.

[21] Bożena Kowalska, *Polska awangarda malarska 1945–1970: szanse i mity*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1988, p. 169.

[22] Teodora Pawełko-Kwiatkowska, *„Tęczowy plener"w Sandomierzu*, exh. folder, BWA Sandomierz, non date.

[23] Luiza Nader, 'W stronę krytyki wizualności. VIII spotkanie artystów i teoretyków sztuki w Osiekach', in *Awangarda w plenerze: Osieki i Łazy 1963–1981*, ed. Ryszard Ziarkiewicz, Koszalin 2008, pp. 66–92.

[24] Konrad Schiller, *Awangarda na Dzikim Zachodzie. O wystawach i sympozjach „Złotego Grona"w Zielonej Górze*, Warsaw–Zielona Góra: Stowarzyszenie 40 000 Malarzy, BWA w Zielonej Górze, 2015.

[25] Anna Markowska, *Dwa przełomy. Sztuka polska po 1955 i 1989 roku*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012.

[26] Wiesław Borowski, 'Pseudo-awangarda', *Kultura*, no. 12, 1975, p. 12.

[27] A. Markowska, p. 61.

While on a retreat, artists remained 'suspended', as it were, beyond the rural space, becoming agents of the cultural centre in backward, archaic and timeless peripheries. They had no dealings whatsoever with the locals, unless they needed them to legitimate certain community/educational projects, such as during the travelling exhibitions organised by the Muzeum Sztuki Łódź or the CBWA 'Zachęta'.[28] But once the pictures for documentation had been taken, that was it. The peripheral social world was utterly ignored. The most characteristic attitude were various manifestations of separation. Even local artists were perceived as 'others'. During one of the retreats in Osieki, the participants were divided into 'artists', 'critics' and 'Koszalin'. If such centre-periphery divisions existed between the artists themselves, the distance separating them from the peasants and their culture must have been huge. On top of the ivory tower, however, there could be an incredible degree of integration. Particularly famous for that were the Retreats for Artists Employing the Language of Geometry, organised from 1983 by Bożena Kowalska; in a commemorative monograph, all their participants describe themselves as a 'family', [29] which further emphasises bonds within the group and its separation from the outside world. In their recollections, there is virtually no mention of the local people, as if distance erased them completely, leaving a vast empty space perfectly suitable for campfires, hiking and swimming. 'I see long rosaries of mushrooms hung out to dry on the balconies of our guest rooms. Rotten trunks of huge trees behind the Orthodox monastery in Jabłeczna. The landscape, the place, is something that also matters'.[30] Interestingly, retreat participants often stressed that such occasions were a way of spending their free time: 'I couldn't participate in all of them, it was hard to find the time for that, though a symposium could always be treated as a form of leisure'.[31]

As Witold Chmielewski wrote about his experiences in the 1970s in the village of Lucim in north-central Poland,

> . . . to go there on weekends and vacations, and enjoy nature with your artist friends. Living in the world of art, to immerse yourself from time to time in the exotic world of rural life. For a short while, noncommittally, as a sort of plein-air diversion. The peasants can at best be used as suppliers of locally made delicacies or as exotic guests of the evening parties, entertaining the bored urban company with their 'good savage' simplicity. That's the usual attitude of the big-city intellectual, most often of rural descent, for whom a dacha, cottage or manor house are a necessary attribute of their newfound class status.[32]

Reading the classic authors of postcolonial criticism, such as bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Homi K. Bhabha, we can easily correlate the accounts and theses contained in their books with the experience of peasants in the Eastern Bloc. The institution of the 'artistic retreat' has always embodied the essence of the city-country relationship, and particularly so during the Gomułka era, when, in a move away from socialist realism, artmakers turned to the 19th-century myth of the artist as someone standing above social duties, above society.[33] In conclusion of this — necessarily cursory and by far incomplete — overview, I would like to point out the ignored issue of modern artists' 'colonial attitude' to folklore and rural culture, a phenomenon that needs to be studied using the tools of postcolonial criticism in universally applicable commentaries that acknowledge local difference.

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[28] Julia Leopold, *Centralne Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych w latach 1949–1955*, unpublished, p. 26.

[29] Bożena Kowalska, *20 plenerów spod znaku geometrii*, Elbląg–Katowice: Centrum Sztuki Galeria EL, Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA, 2013.

[30] Andreas Liden, 'Spotkanie geometrycznej rodziny', ibid., p. 76.

[31] Jürgen Weichardt, *Znaczenie sympozjów*, ibid., p. 46.

[32] Witold Chmielewski, 'Inspiracje i działania plastyczne w Lucimiu', *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 1–2, 1985.

[33] This is confirmed by the survey 'Visual Artists 1984–1986', conducted by the Art Historians Association shortly before another breakthrough and paradigm change. Funded within Wrocław University's 'Study of 19th- and 20th-Century National Culture' project, the survey team included Marek Beylin, Wojciech Cesarski, Nawojka Cieślińska, Marcin Giżycki, Jarosław Krawczyk, Ewa Mikina, Bożena Stokłosa, http://artmuseum.pl/pl/publikacje-online/aleksandra-sciegienna-ankieta-stowarzyszenia-historykow-sztuki, accessed 5 September 2016.

TRINITRON

‘Others’ in the Canon of Modernity

Gabriela Świtek

In October 1964, Aleksander Jackowski, head of the Non-Professional Art Research Studio at the Polish Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Art, approached the Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions (CBWA) in Warsaw with a proposition to organise an exhibition of ‘naive’ art: ‘It seems that the state of our knowledge and the presence of a large number of very interesting artists fully justify such a major show.[1] This wasn’t the first initiative to stage a presentation of non-professional art at the CBWA. In August 1958, the venue had housed the exhibitions[2] of Nikifor, of the Janów Group of amateur painters affiliated with the Wieczorek Coal Mine (Teofil Ociepka, Paweł Stolorz, Paweł Wróbel), and of the sculptures of Leon Kudła, one of the country’s best-known naive artists, whose works were collected by Karol Tchorek, among others. In that context, there was some discussion about whether the ‘social status’ of artists should be taken into consideration in such cases; the scenario of the 1958 show asked whether Felicja Głowacka (‘a dentist from a middle-class family’) or Hel-Enri (Helena Berlewi, the mother of Henryk Berlewi) should be featured as well.[3]

In early 21st-century ethnology, the exhibition curated by Jackowski, *Others. From Nikifor to Głowacka* opened on 9 July 1965, has been remembered as one of the more famous Polish presentations of naive art[4], while researchers of Silesian art have stressed that the ‘non-professional artists from Silesia won a lot of acclaim’[5]; among those featured were Eugeniusz Bąk, Teofil Ociepka, his wife Julianna, Paweł Stolorz, Paweł Wróbel and his cousin, Leopold Wróbel. The term ‘other art’ has today become a synonym of non-professional artistic work,[6] and for this reason alone the history of the show’s title merits a more detailed discussion.

The choice of the title was preceded by the curator’s reflection on the significance of naive art in the context of contemporary artistic phenomena, which were often controlled as part of a ‘cultural policy of Marxist provenance’.[7] As Jackowski noted in a letter from 1964, ‘the show’s title should go beyond . . . the word “naive”. Maybe “in the circle of naive poetics”, “naive and inspired” — or perhaps something less pretentious’.[8] The preserved hand-over reports suggest that the final title hadn’t been adopted before early July 1965, although in the correspondence with the Ministry of Culture and Art there appears an additional explanation: ‘an exhibition of folk/primitive art’. Earlier documents (from March 1965) mention working titles such as ‘an exhibition of naive painting and sculpture’ or ‘a nationwide exhibition of naive art’.[9] Jackowski explained his terminological choices in the introduction to the catalogue:

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[1] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, ‘Inni’ folder, 1965, Zachęta, *Do Centralnego Biura Wystaw Artystycznych w Warszawie* (4 October 1964). This essay has been written within the Minister of Science and Higher Education’s National Programme for the Development of Humanities, project *History of Exhibitions at the Zachęta — Central Bureau of Artistic Exhibitions, 1949–1970* (no. 0086/NPRH3/H11/82/2014).

[2] I use the plural ‘exhibitions’, for such a term appears on the CBWA invitation. Cf. Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, ‘Zachęta’ folder, *Wystawa 1958: Nikifor, Ociepka, Stolorz, Kudła*. Cf. also studies of the Silesian amateur artists: Seweryn Aleksander Wisłocki, *Janowscy „kapłani wiedzy tajemnej”. Okultyści, wizjonerzy i mistrzowie małej ojczyzny*, Katowice: Muzeum Śląskie, 2004; idem, *Mit, magia, manipulacja i orbis interior. Śląska sztuka nieelitarna*, Katowice: „Śląsk” Sp. z o.o. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2008.

[3] Zachęta — National Gallery of Art, Documentation Department, Ewa Śliwińska, *Nikifor — Ociepka — Stolorz — Wróbel* exhibition scenario, Wydział Oświatowy (31 May 1958).

[4] Cf. for example Alicja Mironiuk Nikolska, ‘Artysta i kolekcjonerzy. O złożoności relacji — na przykładzie Bazylego Albiczuka i Ludwiga Zimmerera’, *Etnografia Nowa*, no. 5, 2013, p. 194.

[5] Cf. Maria Fiderkiewicz, *Śląscy „pariasi” pędzla i dłuta (1945–1993)*, Katowice: Muzeum Śląskie, 1994, p. 19.

[6] Cf. Sonia Wilk, ‘Obrazowanie rzeczywistości i nierzeczywistości jako opowieść o człowieku. Refleksje na temat sztuki „innej”’, *Etnografia Nowa*, no. 4, 2012, p. 95.

[7] From a review of the 1958 CBWA exhibition; cf. Zygmunt Kałużyński, ‘Wśród malujących w niedzielę’, *Polityka*, no. 38, 20 September 1958.

[8] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, ‘Inni’ folder, 1965, Zachęta.

[9] Ibid. *Protokół z posiedzenia dotyczącego spraw organizacyjnych, związanych z przygotowaniem do eksploatacji w gmachu „Zachęta” Wystawy Malarstwa i Rzeźby Naiwnych* (19 March 1965); letter to the Ministry of Culture and Art’s Fine Arts Unit (3 July 1965).

> Some say: Sunday painters, seventh-day artists. And this doesn't mean much. . . . If you read their biographies, you will realise that art occupies all their time, except those moments that by necessity they have to devote to earning money, sleeping or eating.
> Naive? Yes, that would be more fitting. But 'naïve' is a relative term. . . . it seems to aptly describe the work of Kudła, Płaskociński, Korsak, Dynda, Adamczewska, even Nikifor, but in each of those cases the very material of that 'naivety' is different.
> And so 'others'. Others, for every one of them has their own world, delimited by a unique set of experiences, feelings and views that determine the character of their paintings or sculptures.[10]

The exhibition curated by Jackowski was preceded by two publications: Andrzej Banach's *Ociepka, malarz dnia siódmego* [Ociepka: a seventh-day artist] (1958) and Ignacy Witz's *Wielcy malarze amatorzy* [Great amateur painters] (1964), whose authors struggled to define what 'non-professional art' meant in the Polish context; let us remember that the term, adopted for the name of a research studio at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Art, had been coined by Andrzej Ryszkiewicz.[11] In 1975, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe published *Dziwny świat współczesnych prymitywów* [The strange world of contemporary primitives], a book by Ksawery Piwocki, ex-director of the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw (1956–1967), who consistently inscribed non-professional, folk and naive art in art-historical research.[12] Analysing a long list of terms used in art history since the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. the 'sacred heart painters' of Wilhelm Uhde, the famous German art dealer, discoverer of Henri Rousseau and Séraphine Louis, Anatole Jakovsky's 'Sunday painters' or the German appellation *Laienmaler* [lay painters]), Piwocki notes that 'Jackowski's "others" is an apt term, albeit one that is too wide-ranging: every true artist today wants to be different'.[13]

In the publication *Plastyka nieprofesjonalna* [Non-professional fine arts] (1980), the exhibition *Others* is mentioned several times, including in the context of terminological dilemmas: 'When Aleksander Jackowski had prepared an exhibition for us several years ago . . . a clever trick was used. The show was called *Others*, which evaded the difficulty of defining its subject . . . while reflecting that very difficulty.'[14] In 1995, Jackowski publishes *Sztuka zwana naiwną. Zarys encyklopedyczny twórczości w Polsce* [Art known as naive. An encyclopedic outline of work in Poland], containing biographical entries on and reproductions of works by 91 artists, 21 of whom had been featured in the 1965 exhibition.[15] The figures show that *Others* had marked a breakthrough in the study of Polish non-professional art, although not all of the featured artists (according to the catalogue, there were 52 of them, showing a total of 512 works) were included in *Sztuka zwana naiwną*.

During preparations for the exhibition, Jackowski reconsidered not only the list of artists but also the selection criteria. As he wrote in 1964, 'The proposed scenario of the show would be consistent with the formula that I adopt in the upcoming book and employ in my research practice at the Non-Professional Art Research Studio at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Art.'[16] It's hard to say from photographs today how much the show's actual layout reflected the topics suggested by Jackowski (he stressed himself that this would be possible ‘in the catalogue rather than the exhibition’; ultimately, an alphabetical order of biographical entries was adopted in the catalogue). But the selection of the artists and the themes of their works correspond in many aspects with the following list:

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[10] Aleksander Jackowski, [introduction], in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*, exh. cat., Warsaw: 'CBWA' Zachęta, 1965, n. pag.

[11] Cf. Jackowski, 'Miejsce i rola plastyki amatorskiej w naszej kulturze współczesnej', in *Plastyka nieprofesjonalna*, ed. Aleksander Jackowski, Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, 1980, p. 27.

[12] Cf. thematic issue, 'W kręgu inspiracji twórczością Ksawerego Piwockiego', *Etnografia Nowa*, no. 4, 2012.

[13] Ksawery Piwocki, *Dziwny świat współczesnych prymitywów*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1975, pp. 6–7.

[14] Marcin Czerwiński, 'Refleksje socjologa na temat swoistości plastyki nieprofesjonalnej', in *Plastyka nieprofesjonalna*, p. 19.

[15] A. Jackowski, *Sztuka zwana naiwną. Zarys encyklopedyczny twórczości w Polsce*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krupski i Ska, 1995. The 21 artists mentioned in both the book and the *Others* exhibition catalogue: Felicja Głowacka, Franciszek Janeczko, Maria Korsak, Leon Kudła, Jan Lada, Jan Lamęcki, Dorota Lampart, Maria Lenczewska, Marta Michałowska, Łucja Mickiewicz, Edmund Monsiel, Nikifor, Teofil Ociepka, Józef Piłat, Bronisława Piprek, Leokadia Płonkowa, Bronisław Surowiak, Jędrzej Wawro, Paweł Wróbel, Stanisław Zagajewski, Adam Zegadło.

[16] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, 'Inni' folder, 1965, Zachęta, *Do Centralnego Biura Wystaw Artystycznych w Warszawie* (4 October 1964).

a. tradition of the existing phenomenon;
b. ‘naivety’ growing out of (figurative, naturally) folk art;
c. art made by workers, miners in particular;
d. great individualities, art as a projection of distinct creative personalities;
e. ‘naives’ whose work exploded when they were already of mature age and usually as a result of some mental trauma or tragedy;
f. ‘naïve’ art as an influence and inspiration.[17]

Jackowski doesn’t make it clear in the catalogue which works can be considered as being most representative for the abovementioned phenomena. But it seems that ‘tradition’ includes a Passion painting by an anonymous Silesian artist (18th–19th century), but also the history, described in detail, of a sectarian movement, led by Wacław Hruszka, active in Silesia, among other places, in the early 20th century, whose members go into trance and ‘experience . . . the shakes, as well as gaining the ability to draw and paint symbolic flowers, allegedly growing on other planets, usually Mars and Jupiter’.[18]

‘Naivety’ connected with figurative folk art can be related, for example, to the paintings of the Zalipie-born Zofia Barańska-Dzięciołowska (*St. Barbara and the Lilies*) or those of Franciszek Janeczko (*Janosik*). Analogies between naive art and folk art were also noticed by a critic: ‘Sculpture stems from the folk root. It is probably the most beautiful part of the show. No one needs to be convinced about the appeal of the works of Kudła, Wawra or the young Zegadło. Rich and synthetic in form, full of poetry in the naive drawing’.[19] Viewing the photographic documentation today, one can hardly disagree: the wooden figures were shown as a monumental group of a dozen or so objects, albeit on separate plinths of various height. The exhibition’s architecture as well as poster and catalogue had been designed by Henryk Tomaszewski, although the curator had also been considering other names (Stanisław Zamecznik, Julian Pałka, Adam Kilian).[20]

The ‘art made by workers, miners in particular’ was represented by the paintings of Eugeniusz Bąk (*The Szopienice Zinc Works*), Paweł Stolorz (*Katowice I*), Paweł Wróbel (*Ice Rink*) or Leopold Wróbel (*Janów*). These artists, mentioned in the catalogue, weren’t included in a list presented by Jackowski as early as October 1964; Teofil Ociepka featured in it from the very beginning. The subject of how non-professional — both folk and naive — art was pulled into the realm of political propaganda is too complex to be exhaustively presented here; it was doubtless analysed using a ‘language of class distinction’.[21] Biographical manipulations, interference with subject matter or various reprisals have all been described by contemporary researchers of Silesian non-professional art or by the monographers of Nikifor.[22] Let us only note that Piwocki disagreed with the idea, appearing in academic literature since the 1930s, that naive art was predominantly ‘proletarian’; ‘the percentage of workers among naive artists is minimal’, he wrote, adding that ‘this art usually has nothing in common with working-class ideology.’[23]

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17 Ibid.

18 ‘Sekta Hruszki’, in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*.

19 Dobrochna Strumiłło-Olkiewicz, ‘Inni’, *Projekt*, no. 4 (49), 1965, p. 16.

20 Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, ‘Inni’ folder, 1965, Zachęta, undated memo (before 20 April 1965).

21 Magda Szcześniak’s term, ‘Sztuka bez klasy? Uwagi o badaniu polskiej sztuki czasów transformacji’, in *Założenia przedwstępne w badaniu polskiej sztuki najnowszej*, I Seminarium Dłużewskie, 6–8 February 2014, ed. Jakub Banasiak, Warsaw: Fundacja Kultura Miejsca, 2015, p. 130.

22 Cf. e.g. *Mit, magia, manipulacja i orbis interior*; A. Jackowski, *Świat Nikifora*, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria, 2005.

23 K. Piwocki, p. 12.

The category of 'greatest individualities' is the most difficult one to define here, since the curator noted that his 'intention was to present a broad selection of interesting, and sometimes actually intriguing, artistic individualities'.[24] He decided not to show too many works by Nikifor and Kudła — 'pretty well known by now' — stressing instead the uniqueness of the embroidered landscapes of 'our grandma Moses', as he calls Łucja Mickiewiczowa.[25] '"I'd give her a degree in painting for these", Professor Nacht-Samborski exclaimed. "Without hesitation!" "Excellent!", added Jan Cybis, rarely a man to enthuse unnecessarily'.[26] The comments were made when Jackowski was showing the two professional artists around the exhibition.

It seems that by showing 'great individualities' Jackowski meant presenting not only art works but also the images of their authors. One of the most intriguing features of the exhibition — besides the impressive sculpture section — were full-size photographic portraits of the artists hanging in the middle of the space. This unusual formula had been presaged in the already quoted document from 1964: 'To an exhibition of this kind I would introduce additional accents — showing people, how they look like, sometimes their notes or work tools'.[27] The curator had also compiled a specimen letter to be sent to the featured artists: 'In connection with the exhibition . . . and upcoming publication, we hereby ask to you promptly provide photographs of yourself, possibly on glossy paper suitable for reproduction. These may be pictures taken indoors, on whatever occasion, just please make sure that your face is visible clearly enough. As a last resort, an ID photo may be used.[28] The photographs weren't published in the catalogue, but were used in the exhibition, where the viewers walked around the large-format prints, meeting the 'others' virtually face to face. Moreover, the show's organisers made efforts to ensure that the featured artists would be present at the opening reception; the Ministry of Culture and Art's Fine Arts Unit offered to a subsidy of 4,000 zlotys to cover the travel costs of participants from the areas of Kielce and Rzeszów, from Bielsko-Biała, Katowice, Tarnów, Wrocław, Hrubieszów, Zawoja and Lublin.[29]

Let us now return to Jackowski's preliminary scenario and the category of naive artists who became active late in life or a result of 'some mental trauma'. The biographical entries contained in the catalogue often stressed the significance of art-making as a compensation strategy. Examples included Nikifor, but also Dorota Lampart, 'living in poverty, alone, seriously ill, unable to work', or Maria Lenczewska, who, after losing her son and daughter, took up painting in order to 'fill a void in her life'.[30] Among the featured works were *Figures* and *Masks* by the famous Edmund Monsiel, a schizophrenic artist whose major show (over 500 exhibits), initiated by the psychiatrist Jan Mitarski, had opened in Kraków in 1963.[31] Biographical writing, or the demystification of biographies, acquires a special significance in the research of naive art; it wasn't by accident that Piwocki titled one of the chapters in his book, 'Who are the naive artists, the contemporary primitives?': 'The dates and CVs are often missing. This applies in particular to artists from the exotic countries, but not only to them. Other résumés are very extensive, but usually written for a commercial purpose, to dazzle the potential buyer'.[32]

The last theme suggested by Jackowski was 'naive art as an influence and inspiration'. In this case it's not possible either to list specific works illustrating it, but the curator's intentions shouldn't be construed so literally. The traditional categories of influence developed in the context of art history, e.g. the master-student transmission, usually didn't apply to non-professional artists. As Ignacy Witz argued, 'Amateurs are . . . fringe artists. They don't establish schools, and can have neither disciples nor followers nor continuators who would expound their theories. For they have no theory.'[33] Still, some community connections were present in *Others*, e.g. between the artists from Silesia. Family ties mattered too , e.g. in the case of the sculptors Adam Zegadło and his son, Henryk, who from 1957 studied at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts ('the father started making art under the son's influence'[34]), or that of Leon Kudła, who, 'perhaps inspired by his son', Antoni, graduate of the Warsaw academy, 'took up wood carving'.[35]

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[24] A. Jackowski, [introduction], in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*, op. cit., n. pag.

[25] Ibid.

[26] A. Jackowski, *Sztuka zwana naiwną*, p. 125.

[27] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, 'Inni' folder, 1965, Zachęta, *Do Centralnego Biura Wystaw Artystycznych w Warszawie* (4 October 1964).

[28] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, 'Inni' folder, 1965, Zachęta, specimen letter (18 June 1965).

[29] Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, archive of Aleksander Jackowski, 'Inni' folder, 1965, Zachęta, Ministry of Culture and Art, Fine Arts Unit (3 July 1965), PII-830/7.

[30] Cf. Dorota Lampart, Maria Lenczewska', in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*; A. Jackowski, *Sztuka zwana naiwną*, pp. 108–111.

[31] Cf. 'Edmund Monsiel', in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*; A. Jackowski, *Sztuka zwana naiwną*, pp. 130–131.

[32] K. Piwocki, p. 20.

Another, and more important, question is that of the influence of naive art on the shape of Polish artistic life in the 1960s and 1970s. As Juliusz Starzyński noted,

> Amateurs attract a lot of interest these days, with exhibitions of naive and 'other' artists (particularly abroad) fascinating the public, pulling crowds, even becoming major cultural events, e.g. the exhibition *L 'Art brut* organised in Paris by Jean Dubuffet in 1949, *Der Kunst der Naiven* in Munich (1974), *Others* at the Zachęta in Warsaw (1965) or the 1st Triennial of Non-Professional Art in Szczecin (1974).[36]

Notwithstanding the exhibition boom of non-professional art in Poland at the time, a phenomenon doubtless stimulated by the central authorities — the Ministry of Culture and Art or the Central Unit for Culture Propagation Methodology, which co-organised the Szczecin Triennial — Piwocki heralded the trend's decline as early as 1975: 'the phenomenon of mass naive art as an important, after all, contemporary trend, will pass away and vanish'.[37] It needs to be stressed, however, that *Others. From Nikifor to Głowacka* was a unique event in the CBWA's exhibition calendar — the only group show (barring the 1958 exhibition mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Nikifor's solo show in 1967 or the exhibitions of Felicja Głowacka, Maria Korsak or Leon Kudła) that not only literally reflected the results of many years' research into non-professional art in People's Poland, but also contributed to making the trend part of art history's scope of interest at a time when the modern paradigm was emerging.

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[33] Ignacy Witz, *Wielcy malarze amatorzy*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Związkowe CRZZ, 1964, p. 24.

[34] 'Henryk Zegadło', in *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*.

[35] K. Piwocki, p. 27.

[36] Juliusz Starzyński, 'Wartość sztuki samorodnej dla kultury artystycznej', in *Plastyka nieprofesjonalna*, p. 10.

[37] K. Piwocki, p. 233.

Folksy, Childish, Primitive, Modern. The Ceramics of Antoni Kenar

Piotr Juszkiewicz

Announcing Pablo Picasso's visit to the World Congress of Intellectuals in the Defence of Peace in Wrocław, the 24 August 1948 Polska Kronika Filmowa newsreel showed the artist as a ceramicist. Images of Picasso, naked torso and all, adding wood to the fire at the Madoura studio in Vallauris or painting plates prior to firing alternated with frames showing a local potter at work and with shots from an exhibition of Picasso-decorated earthenware, examples of which the artist presented for the camera himself. In the same year, 1948, the Spanish artist presented the National Museum in Warsaw with a small collection of ceramics, individual items of which are valued today anywhere between $1,000 and $2 million. Viewers of the PKF newsreel could see dishes covered with images of great stylistic variety: from motifs that brought to mind the art of antiquity to stylisations informed by primitive art or children's drawings.

Almost at the very same time, in June 1948, Antoni Kenar moves with his wife, Halina Micińska, whom he'd met in France, to Zakopane, to a house known, due to the fact that a pottery with a kiln operates there, as the 'ceramic house' [ceramika]. The house was owned at the time by Wojciech Łukaszczyk who had inherited it from his brother-in-law, Stanisław Sobczak, a folk potter like him.[1] It was there that Kenar created a series of over 100 ceramic works, today in the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw, the Kenar Museum in Zakopane as well as in private hands. The majority of the items were made by Wojciech Łukaszczyk and decorated by Kenar, but some he made himself, hand-sculpting or using a potter's wheel. He decorated them with abstract motifs as well as images of people, animals, flowers and plants, balancing, like Picasso, between folksiness, primitivity and child art, with emphasis perhaps on the latter.

I am noting this coincidence not in order to consider it in terms of 'influence' and suggest that Kenar had been inspired by Picasso's ceramics. While the Polish artist may have well seen the 1948 newsreel, there is no reason to believe that it held any fundamental significance for him. A far more important common element, and one crucial for understanding Kenar's choice and artistic motivations, is the fact that both he and Picasso remained and worked within the modernist idiom. It is precisely the specific character of this idiom that makes us realise the role and meaning of the abovementioned concatenation: folksy, primitive, childish and modern. This specific character serves, on the one hand, as a broad interpretative framework for a singular artistic phenomenon, i.e. Kenar's ceramics series, and, on the other hand, as a point of departure for modifying this general model in the light of aspects significant for a particular locality — artistic, cultural and historical.

Putting aside all the different definitions and periodisations, let us — most briefly — note that the term 'modernism' has the most obvious meaning here, denoting the era and diverse artistic response to a multifaceted and complex process of modernity that transformed human reality, dismantling, shifting and sometimes ruining traditional societal structures, both material and spiritual. It needs to be stressed, however, that the broad and complex modern movement has, from the perspective proposed here, its own inner historical dynamic, that it is not a unilinear sequence of events progressing evenly for several centuries as a result of modernisation impulses such as secularisation, technological and scientific progress, democratisation and liberalisation of social and political life. A fundamental shift, which internally historicises the process of modernity, is connected with the fact, as Roger Griffin points out, that from the 1860s modernity starts to be construed in terms not of development and progress, but of a fall of the world and the ongoing degeneration of many of its aspects.[2] Rather than a domination of escapism or a sense of decline, what mattered here was a sense that the hasty and violent 'first' Enlightenment modernity had caused that fall, breaking the foundations of the traditional order and marginalising the main principles of establishing and maintaining it, in return offering only a condition of social anomia, i.e. the absence of a clear socio-normative order, which led to social chaos. It seemed a necessary reaction at the time to try and constitute an alternative modernity, for the task of the forces of new progress was to lift the world from its fall, that is, to bring about a regeneration of reality in all its dimensions: physical, spiritual, societal, political, economic and so on. Manifestations of this regenerative myth begin to permeate the European reality, animating a great number of regenerative movements and ideologies as well as social, political and artistic agendas, the abundance of which will climax during the First World War and shortly afterwards. Let us stress that within this regenerative activism there is no talk of nostalgia or escapism. Quite the contrary in fact: we can observe a huge proliferation of activistic programmes aimed at fundamentally transforming the human reality — in terms of both the material environment and of social structures — resulting in the emergence of a new type of man. What is very characteristic here is a change in the thinking of time, which means that the concept of regeneration cannot be reduced to yet another version of the idea of eternal return. This time, Griffin argues, we are dealing with a temporalisation of utopia: the task of the radical transformation of reality for the purpose of ensuring social well-being is placed in a predictable, not-too-distant future, and presented as feasible, provided that the supporters of the regenerative effort have the sufficient financial and political means at their disposal. Another, extremely important, issue is a regenerative attitude to the past, characteristic for alternative modernity. The past becomes in this case not an escapist paradise which man simply wants to return to, but a territory of fundamental, though forgotten and forsaken, principles that need to be re-embraced in the modern world. Not in order to hinder modernity in its temporal and civilisational progression, but to intensify that progression, albeit in a different way — one that wouldn't result in social chaos, moral disorientation and omnipresent degeneration of the human world. One of the most distinct examples of regenerative thinking — Marxism — didn't postulate a return to primitive communism, but called for the re-introduction to the degenerate reality of capitalism, so convincingly conceptualised by Marx and so vividly described by Engels, of the principle of classlessness, which would eliminate social strife and pave the way for a harmonious society of the future, of the kind designed for both philosophers by William Morris in his novel *News from Nowhere*.

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[1] Zofia Dubowska-Grynberg, 'Artysta nieznany', in Urszula Kenar, *Antoni Kenar 1906–1959*, Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2006, p. 436.

[2] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of the Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Basingstoke, New York 2007.

In the perspective outlined here, modernism is thus nothing but a trend, an artistic reaction to the alleged necessity of establishing an alternative modernity, free from the unwelcome aspects of its Enlightenment predecessor. This means that art more or less focused on itself ceased to be an instrument of designing, approximating and implementing elements of a new reality. Artistic modernism adopted, too, the above-described modern attitude to the past. Contrary to popular incantations and historiographic patterns, modern artists usually took the past for their point of departure, not to negate it, however, but to analyse it in search of forgotten rudiments that would serve to produce strictly modern patterns and models. Thus the artistic tradition became not so much a reservoir of ready-to-use forms as a resource of regenerative energy making it possible to renew the foundations of artistic ideas, goals and procedures. As a result of those investigations, the resources of regenerative energy were concretised more clearly, in reference to certain moments in the history of art or the given community, but also located beyond the strict bounds of the European artistic tradition.

This perspective explains the weight and power of attraction that the primitive — one of the key referents of modernism — held for modern artists. The regenerative perspective makes it possible to understand this ostensible paradox and, at the same time, to strengthen a sense of the discursive nature of modern 'primitivism', which was a kind of intellectual and ideological construction, often detached from ethnographic concretum. As Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten point out, primitive art was regarded as a reservoir of values and qualities forgotten by modern civilisation. On the one hand, as an autonomous form of creativity, aimed at self-replication and subject neither to development nor to outside influence, it had been excluded, it was believed, from the civilisational progress that had impacted so negatively on European culture. The evolutional model presented primitive art as a younger sister of her more civilised counterpart, still possessing the fresh creative spirit or youthful artistic zeal that the latter had already lost. On the other hand, as a product of savage peoples, primitive art became valuable due to its irrational element and ability to express instinctive urges. The spontaneity and crudeness of primitive art, later identified with folksiness and folk art, fascinated modern artists, who saw it as an opportunity to spiritually revive the vital roots of European art, ruined by civilisational progress.[3] This general principle was subject, of course, to various modifications. The primitive was searched for on distant continents, but also in domestic folklore, in the work of amateurs, children or the mentally ill. The purpose of this searching was defined in various ways: it could be to find regenerating pictorial inspirations, to discover the roots of the national style or to develop methods of destroying canonical art and the related visual culture.

The post-war Polish discourse of native primitive art — i.e., folk art — was basically an emulation of the key themes of the pre-war period. Like then, so after 1945 two distinct positions emerged: the 'ethnographic' one and the ' modern' one. Both shared two common points of of departure. One was a criticism of Stanisław Witkiewicz's views on the role of 'folk art' and his 'applicative' practice with respect to it. The other was a sense that the long-time tradition of that art had produced fine artistic value. The key difference between the two positions consisted in the perceived relationship between folk art, on the one hand, and high-brow art and pop culture, on the other, with an emphasis on the protection of traditional forms from the unfavourable impact of contemporary civilisation and modern culture.

In an essay featured in the catalogue of the 1st National Exhibition of Ceramics and Artistic Glass (1954), Janina Orynżyna returned to the pre-1945 ethnographic position, placing it firmly, however, within the modernist idiom and updating it for the realities of People's Poland. Thanks to a thousand-year-old tradition, she argued, folk ceramics had achieved mature, self-restrained artistry. It was a result of interaction between noble formal simplicity, decoration logically informed by the choice of medium and the properties of the material, and the function awarded to ornamentation in emphasising the tectonics of the ware.[4] Yet this aesthetic ideal had been given the modernist blessing. For, Orynżyna believed, the perfection of folk art was an effect of a patient practice combining an utilitarian purpose with an understanding of the character and potential of the material, which was transformed using a medium suitable for its nature. The new socio-economic system had created new possibilities and new functions for folk art, as well as new duties towards it. The main application of traditional ceramics should be the decorative function: in homes, shops, inns, community centres, culture clubs. But the didactic function, construed in Morrisian terms, mattered too: the jugs and bowls, playing both utilitarian and aesthetic roles in urban homes, would, according to the author, bring to the city the principle of folk culture, whereby all everyday objects are also works of art.[5] This sublimating dimension of folk art and its forms became the principal reason why Cepelia, acting on behalf of the state, should protect traditional patterns, and even revive them if they had been discontinued.

This wasn't, of course, an isolated case of a protective, ethnographic approach to folk culture. It was accompanied by other voices, e.g. that of Roman Reinfuss, who in 1955 warned that the introduction of new forms in the production of 'folk ceramics for the city' was often detrimental to the older, traditional forms.[6]

Other signals were coming from Wanda Telakowska, representing the Production Aesthetics Supervision Bureau (BNEP), and later the Institute of Industrial Design (IWP).[7] Although, like the advocates of the ethnographic approach, Telakowska was critical of the 'pseudo folk' that, she said, dominated during the interwar period, but of the four modes of using folk art that she'd discerned she clearly preferred those that made it a starting point for a new art, for which folk art would be but an inspiration. At the same time, it is clear that while the Ład idea of applying old compositional principles in design work was still valid for Telakowska, it no longer represented the most creative approach to folk art. Instead, she proposed two complementary concepts: of artists creating new forms out of admiration for folk art, out of an inner experience of its principles and values, and of collective artistic work that would make it possible to 'combine the experience and skill of fine artists with the unbridled imagination, fresh ingenuity and prolificacy of grassroots groups.'[8] In both cases, therefore, the folk inspiration was understood broadly as a result of interplay between the emotion it generated and the author's own inventiveness. Folk art wasn't supposed to be a source of patterns, but of a peculiar synergy of a professional and conscious, and thus modern, control of visual means and the refreshing energy of the tradition of folk art, suitable also for active folk artists, who, like their professional counterparts, should be moving away from already crystallised visual formulas towards those emerging as a result of the development of their creative individuality.

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[3] Mark Antliff, Patricia Leighten, 'Primitivism', in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson, Richard Shiff, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, pp. 217–233.

[4] Janina Orynżyna, 'Zagadnienia ceramiki ludowej', in *I Ogólnopolska Wystawa Ceramiki i Szkła Artystycznego*, exh. cat., Wrocław: Muzeum Śląskie we Wrocławiu, 1954, p. 55.

[5] Ibid., p. 64.

[6] Roman Reinfuss, *Garncarstwo ludowe*, Warsaw: PIW, 1955, p. 47.

[7] Wanda Telakowska, *Twórczość ludowa w nowym wzornictwie*, Warsaw: Wyd. Sztuka, 1954.

This modern attitude to folk art was also shared by Kenar. Antoni Rząsa reminisced how Kenar encouraged him to take up interest in folk art due to its wise use of material, simplicity of composition and visual 'efficiency'; he did so using the example of the non-imitative reinterpretation of folk culture by Fryderyk Chopin and Karol Szymanowski. This approach, as noticed by the latter, had already been present at the Zakopane school during Karol Stryjeński's tenure as its director:

> What I saw at the woodcarving school instead of the terrible edelweisses, alpenstocks and bog-stars of old were wooden figurines of strange shapes, so modern in their simplified yet distinct contours, unexpected succinct abbreviations and flawless stylisation, yet deeply permeated by the primitive and moving appeal of the wayside-shrine wood-carved saints of the Podhale region.[9]

In her text, Telakowska placed particular emphasis on the subject of 'designer collectives', i.e., teams of non-professional (rural and working-class) artists that, working under professional guidance and official patronage (first of the BNEP, then of Cepelia) and designing patterns for large-scale production, would help to eliminate poor design and kitsch and revive tradition by preserving old patterns and developing new, powerful principles of composition.[10] Inspired by the pre-war concepts of Antoni Buszek and activities of Eleonora Plutyńska, the idea of stimulating the creative abilities of the broad masses combined the activistic passions of the Polish intelligentsia with a reformulation of the modernist productivist utopia. Let us note that Telakowska, like Nicolai Tarabukin before her, argued that the movement of the working-class, peasant and youth designer collectives shouldn't be allowed to develop in a spontaneous, chaotic, unorganised fashion; rather, the collectives should serve to marry the spontaneous talent of peasants or workers, their intimate knowledge of the materials, tools and machines, with the oversight of a conscious professional artist, among whose tasks would be to avert the danger of 'pseudo-folk tackiness'[11] worming its way surreptitiously into the creative spontaneity of the working masses. Describing collectives initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Art's Department of Production and later by the BNEP, Telakowska paid attention to the Zakopane milieu, where Antoni Kenar had started a toy-making collective (from the 1948/1949 school year) and, almost simultaneously, a ceramics team (until April 1949). A special, highly valuable feature of Kenar's collectives was their experimental character, consisting in the fact that they were comprised of students, and mostly of peasant stock.[12]

Before, however, taking note of one of the inspirations of Kenar's ceramic works, namely, the activities of Wanda Telakowska[13], we turn to the subject of his pedagogical views and keen interest in the creative spontaneity of the child, let us again take a closer look at Kenar's ceramics.

Kenar in most cases decorated typical, traditionally-shaped ceramics, which were covered with slip and then painted with coloured slips using a cone. He also made, though in a far smaller number, ware of non-traditional design and proportions, in this sense loosening the connection between shape and functionality, and even joking about it visually, such as by sculpting jugs reminiscent of bird figures and adding proper decoration to strengthen the suggestion. His ashtrays, figurines or candlesticks also remained outside the folk canon. But the visual 'trademark' of Kenar's ceramics are the paintings that he decorated typical ware as well as his own pottery with. These paintings are perhaps the single element distinguishing his work most clearly from traditional folk ceramics. And not only because he usually opted for human or animal shapes, unlike the folk artist, fond of geometric or floral patterns and only incidentally representing the human figure.[14] The principal difference lies in such a stylisation of Kenar's paintings that they evoke associations in the first place with other primitive artforms, i.e. child art and prehistoric art. In fact, the two notions were frequently connected in the discourse accompanying Kenar before and after the war. But before we characterise this discourse in greater detail, let us look at the pottery paintings in question. There are basically three types of them. Firstly, there are the simplest abstract ornamental elements: stars of crisscrossing lines, sometimes encircled, or simply just circlets. The second type are schematic, linear renditions of the human figure. The third type is dominated by a monochromatic closed contour representing a simplified silhouette, or such a silhouette is suggested by a group of elements surrounded by a contour. The artist differentiates the individual parts of the human figure or animal silhouette, whether for colour or texture, usually by filling an outlined element with small, irregular circlets.

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[8] Ibid., p. 11.

[9] Z. Dubowska-Grynberg, p. 428.

[10] W. Telakowska, p. 12.

[11] Ibid., p. 21.

[12] A similar experiment: Jan Samuel Miklaszewski at the Szkoła Przemysłu Drzewnego woodworking school — glass painting, or at the Podhalańska Żeńska Szkoła Odzieżowa school of clothing design (1950) — decorative and garment textiles, ibid., pp. 16–17.

[13] Zofia Dubowska-Grynberg states that Kenar's ceramics had been directly commissioned, and subsequently acquired, by the BNEP; ead., p. 435.

Such a gradation of visual forms corresponds with a well-known classification, still cited by Polish pedagogues and psychologists, proposed by Stefan Szuman, who published his main work on the development of children's drawing in 1927.[15] The key dynamic principle identified by Szuman was a transition in children's drawing from an internal model (younger children) to an external one (older children). Without going into the details of the notion of the model (something that mediates between object and concept), close in its approach to gestaltism, though framed by evolutionistic thinking, Szuman's theory equalled that transition with a shift from the stage of the ideoplastic to that of the physioplastic, or, in other words, from knowledge of the object to its visual imitation. Consequently, Szuman discerned the following stages in the evolution of the child's drawing skills: 1. the doodling stage (schema formation); 2. the schematic stage (ideoplasticism); 3. the post-schematic stage (the development of a type as the perfect schema and evolution towards physioplasticism). The principle of this evolution is a gradual shift, similar to perceptual dynamics, from a general, schematic image to detailed observation, which makes it possible to introduce new details and integrate them with the originally perceived whole.

Kenar's simplest ornamental paintings would thus refer to the drawing efforts of the youngest children trying to trace the basic shapes ('doodling'), through the so called cephalopods (combining linear schemas with closed shapes), to the beginnings of the post-schematic stage, which Szuman located approximately at the age of ten. This kind of (stylised, of course) painting, most frequently found in Kenar's ceramics, he considered as the most interesting and valuable, because 'in the European cultural environment, the child . . . is informed too soon by book illustrations, photography and cinematography', causing its creativity to gradually dwindle.[16] Children's art loses its freshness of emotion and expression when, in their teenage years, they start trying to imitate 'adult' visuality. Whereas,

> the adult soul is like a suburban garden. There are worn paths there, trodden by everydayness, trees that have stopped growing, and papers that have littered the garden. In comparison, the child's soul is like a garden in spring. Full of young sprouts . . . Free from litter and dusty paths . . . .[17]

Before we mention the educational reforms that Szuman advocated to prevent the loss of the fundamental values of children's art, and how that was connected to Kenar's pedagogical practice, let us note how the evolutionistic approach, popular in both pre- and post-war discourses, allowed Szuman to indicate a close linkage between child art, folk art and primitive art.

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[14] R. Reinfuss, pp. 56–57.

[15] Stefan Szuman, *Sztuka dziecka. Psychologia twórczości rysunkowej dziecka*, Warsaw 1927.

[16] Ibid., pp. 79–80.

[17] Ibid., p. 112.

The discerning of the development stages of art, the transition between which Szuman compared to the growth of a plant, made it possible to apply the resulting schema to all of man's artistic activity by placing its given manifestation at the appropriate level. The author ascribed the specificity and values of folk art to the fact that it remained between the schematic and post-schematic stages, enriching schematism with diverse decorative and ornamental values, preserved and developed for generations.[18]

Interestingly, Szuman considered the art of the 'primitive peoples' as being somewhat more advanced, situating it at the stage of typicality, where a developed, fundamentally correct schema is used. Yet the primitive artist doesn't progress towards physioplasticism, because,

> the child and the primitive man appreciate drawing as a means of expression and of beautifying the world. To reproduce nature in a super-realistic way is too difficult for them, for the methods leading to such drawing are too intellectual, abstract. They lie too far for the primitive mind to reach for them by itself.[19]

For the same reasons, however, children's art and primitive art share an immanent sense of ornamental balance and order; at the same time, both are expressionistic as a strong, enhanced form of experience, which the viewer should approach with contemplative naivety. Modern artists, Szuman noted, had awoken in themselves a flair for primitive and folk art, thus bringing about a revival of decorative arts and high-brow art, now able to shed the 'shackles of extreme naturalism'. Still, he warned the contemporary artist against 'toying' with artificial primitiveness, against naively imitating what is natural for the child and the primitive man; instead, he should study those artforms to understand their compositional principles, the simplicity and ornamental orientation of which can revive the modern decorative arts as well as figural compositions.

Szuman consistently called for such a kind of education that wouldn't quench the natural and fresh creativity of children by confronting them too soon with the task of faithfully imitating real objects and the pressure of visual patterns present in the contemporary iconosphere. He also stressed that the child should be allowed to 'pass fully through the naive stage . . . up to certain perfection', so that it could develop its internal model as well as precisely and consciously choose the moment of moving on in the educational process to the external one, leading to imitative art. The student has to know that he is not copying a model, that he is not a photographic camera, a visual reproduction apparatus, but that, drawing, he captures the model with his mind.

This approach, focused on the protection of the child's natural, innate creativity, was bound up during the interwar period with the — very modern then and intensely promoted — 'personalistic pedagogy' movement, its principles developed by numerous pedagogues and education theoreticians, notably Sergiusz Hessen, Janusz Korczak, Karol Mazurkiewicz, Henryk Rowid and Szuman himself. Generally speaking, the personalists were interested in, as Henryk Rowid put it, the creative personality as a product of an individually animated spiritual process, i.e., self-creation. The goal of education, therefore, should be to,

> release the child's psychophysical energies and develop its ability of personal self-expression. . . . to awaken the forces lying dormant in the child's soul . . . to initiate the creation of material and spiritual values and to understand and acknowledge the child's personality as well as respect its rights.[20]

In this perspective, schooling is expected to create conditions for the self-creation process to progress smoothly, to be supported by an attentive teacher, aware that the students' attempts to express their personality in various ways shouldn't be suppressed.

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[18] Ibid., p. 77.

[19] Ibid., p. 93.

[20] Edyta Bartkowiak, 'Uczeń (dziecko) w pedagogice personalistycznej okresu Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej', in *W kręgu dawnych i współczesnych teorii wychowania. Uczeń — szkoła — nauczyciel*, ed. Katarzyna Dormus, Ryszard Ślęczka, Kraków: Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. K. Hoffmanowej, 2012, pp. 94–95.

Views like these — concerning the stimulation of the student's individual development — resonated with Kenar as a continuator of Karol Stryjeński's ideas from the time of his tenure as director of the Zakopane school. Stryjeński stressed the principle of individual creativity and sought to organise the school as an 'enclave', to protect the students from negative outside influences.[21] As a pedagogue and teacher at the same school, Kenar went even further, believing that attempts to exploit the folk art heritage as a basis, as Stryjeński wanted, for a new national style might hinder the students' artistic development. He himself declared,

We don't teach production in this or that scope, we don't drum the intricacies of sculpting technique into the student, we avoid correctness — our goal is to educate a sculptor by awakening in him a passion for the art and a need for constant personal and professional self-perfection.[22]

The visual formula employed by Kenar in his slip decorations thus combined aspects most vital for modernism: the primary character of artistic inspiration, where visual values were bound up with ethical ones; autonomous transformation of the inspirational impulse, making it possible to achieve new artistic value; and — by reaching for the folksy, primitive, childish — an ambition to create a language that would provide universal access to meaning. The latter — the modern artist's greatest dream — is attested to by the fact that Kenar used this childish/primitive visual idiom not only in other types of work, but also in the highly personal booklets he drew and wrote for his several-year-old daughter.

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[21] Halina Kenarowa, *Od zakopiańskiej szkoły przemysłu drzewnego do szkoły Kenara. Studium z dziejów szkolnictwa zawodowo-artystycznego w Polsce*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1978, p. 244.

[22] Ibid., p. 245.

The Smolna Street Studio. Leon Kudła's Travelling Wardrobe

Joanna Kordjak

> It needs to be said that only an art work stemming from the phenomena of the imaginary world can truly move us. This phenomenon reigns supreme in the art of the child, but seldom, in exceptional circumstances only, retains its power in the art of the adult man. Then such art ceases to be irrelevant to us, reminding us of the imaginary world of our childhood, a world we have lost and to which there is no return,

sculptor Karol Tchorek wrote in the context of the work of his friend, Leon Kudła. For years, he steadfastly promoted and financially supported the artist, who after the war had found himself in particularly dire straits, having lost his son (Antoni, painter, whom Tchorek had met during his studies at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts), home and all his works. Tchorek noted that it was due to the 'earnest, naive, childish imaginary world' that 'Kudła's sculptures will move even the most hardened cynic to tears.'[1] That was also noticed and appreciated by none else than Pablo Picasso, who, on visiting Poland for the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Peace in 1948, had the opportunity to view Antoni and Leon Kudła's exhibition at the 'Nike' Art Salon in Warsaw. Strongly impressed, as Tchorek remembered, the painter proposed organising Kudła's show in Paris, which didn't happen for political reasons; nor did a major exhibition, conceived after 1956, at New York's Bradley Gallery, which Tchorek was to curate. Bearing witness to the latter's original interests and modern attitude as an arts patron were his curatorial activities at the 'Nike' Art Salon, an antique shop and art gallery he ran (with interruptions) in 1943–1951 in the ruins of a house at the corner of Marszałkowska Street and Piękna Street, as well as his own studio, with a collection of art works, Kudła's sculptures in particular, which were displayed next to Henryk Stażewski's abstract paintings or African woodcarvings. Folk and naive art — the domestic version of primitive art — had been an important inspiration in his own work since before the war, when he documented folk art and artists in the Kurpie and Huculszczyzna regions on behalf of the Folk Industry Support Society or prospected for exhibits for the Polish General Exhibition in Poznań in 1929.

The presence of folk art in Karol Tchorek's studio (from Kurpie paper cut-outs to a massive collection of sculptures) and his long-time friendship with Leon Kudła, who was a regular guest at 36 Smolna Street, added to the specificity of the place in which there grew up Tchorek's son, Mariusz, the later co-founder of the Foksal Gallery (the 'bridgehead' of the Polish avant-garde), art critic, author of texts about Henryk Stażewski, Władysław Strzemiński or Edward Krasiński. In his writings, the art of Leon Kudła occupies a particularly prominent place. Following his father's death in 1985, Mariusz Tchorek registered the Karol Tchorek Collection and proposed establishing a foundation named after him. Launched in 2007 by the British artist Katy Bentall and housed at the Smolna Street studio, the Foundation's aim is to preserve the legacies of both Karol and Mariusz Tchorek.

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[1] Karol Tchorek, typescript, artist's archive, Tchorek-Bentall Foundation.

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curator: Joanna Kordjak
collaboration: Michał Kubiak, Katarzyna Kołodziej
and Jacek Świdziński, Marcin Lewicki
academic collaboration: Ewa Klekot
music project within the exhibition:
Antoni Beksiak
exhibition design: Matosek/Niezgoda
exhibition production: Krystyna Sielska
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