

Anthropological workshop

**Politicization, Heritagization and Sensualization
in Contemporary Catholicism**

Warsaw, 13th of November 2017
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences
Al. Solidarności 105, Warsaw, room 202

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Introduction

Anthropological reflection on modern Catholicism explores a growing range of aspects that reflect the internal complexity and dynamics of the denomination, and illustrate the way in which Catholicism becomes enmeshed with ongoing social and cultural processes. Academic explorations of Catholicism reveal a multiplicity of forms and rites, and an intense theoretical and practical engagement in political and economic life. Catholicism today is perceived as more than a religious denomination. It also functions as a source of political capital and cultural heritage. In this respect it is a highly polarised phenomenon containing liberal and inclusive varieties on the one hand, and exclusivist, nationalist-leaning forms on the other, where the nation and its religion are perceived as an organic whole. Those two tendencies are locked in a state of unpredictable cultural war, with a spectrum of possible ideas and configurations situated between the two extremes.

Our one-day workshop devoted to anthropological reflection on modern Catholicism will broaden discussion on the transformations of Catholicism, its cultural and social roles, and the analytical instruments and concepts that we can bring to bear on the phenomenon to make it easier to grasp. Starting with the concept of religious imaginaries proposed by Thomas Csordas, we will describe the way the religious sphere gets formed and filled with the content of daily life. The workshop is an invitation to reflect on the things that become part of religion, and on the ways in which this process takes place. In doing so we wish to encourage explorations of the connections between embodied religiosity and its political and cultural dimensions.

Abstracts

Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska, Department of Ethnology, The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences

NATURA SANAT: ON ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HEALING MIRACLES IN KALWARIA PAĆLAWSKA, POLAND

The subject-matter of my article is a change affecting the discourse on miraculous healings in a Catholic Marian sanctuary – Kalwaria Paćławska – run by Franciscan friars in the South-Eastern Poland and a way in which those changes affect pilgrims' bodies. In Kalwaria Paćławska there meet, intersect and compete various religious and secular discourses and they all influence emotions and bodily sensations accompanying pilgrimage to this sacred site. One

of those discourses has been introduced to Kalwaria just recently. The central element of the sanctuary is the miraculous image of Virgin Mary which is the goal of numerous pilgrimages from both Poland and Ukraine. After the publication of the encyclical *Laudato si'* by Pope Francis, the Franciscans at the sanctuary began to emphasize the influence of nature on miracles in Kalwaria. They successfully created a religious ecological discourse on nature which supports miraculous healings and make people feel the natural energy in the sanctuary. On the day of their patron saint (4th October) in 2015 Franciscans erected a new chapel of St Francis who has patronage over ecologists. Since then they have consequently continued to put the stress on the beauty of nature and its impact on sanctity of the place. Resulting from this the sanctuary is chosen by the faithful as the goal of their pilgrimage not only because of the miraculous image's fame, but also due to the natural surroundings of the sanctuary. These are believed to be supporting God's power of healing according to the Franciscans and by the faithful attending their sermons. They also describe the very place, i.e. Kalwaria, as closer to God, since its natural environment is depicted as almost original, unspoiled God's creation. Healing is no longer an exclusive matter of the miraculous image, but also of the place which has a healing potential deriving directly from the reservoir of nature which directly affects pilgrims' bodies, their feelings and emotions. The sensational forms (B. Meyer) and their influence are now interpreted not only within religious framework, but also ecological one.

Ada Biernacka, College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities, University of Warsaw (MISH),

WHAT SHOULD THE 'ONTOLOGICAL TURN' TURN TO?

The ontological turn – as described by Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen – is an methodological approach in the contemporary anthropology that is gaining more and more attention among various researchers. Its success results from the fact that it offers a comprehensive explanation of the relationship between a fieldwork and an anthropological theory. It answers the questions about the epistemological status of scientific knowledge, which emerged due to the postmodern crisis. However, at the same time the ontological turn struggles with various troubles, namely the question of its scope, criterion of correctness and also lack of definitions of some basic concepts (e.g. “alterity” and “ontological assumption”). My speech will be devoted to an exposition of these problems and a suggestion of some possible solutions. I will use my ethnographic fieldwork in a community of Catholic Charismatic Renewal (carried since 2015 to 2017) as a base for my considerations. I'll show how ethnography can inspire theoretical solutions and contribute to a greater methodological awareness of our scientific field.

Zofia Bizacka, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw

RELIGION AND SEXUALITY OF FEMALE AND MALE RESIDENTS OF PRZEWORSK AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

What do abortion, in vitro fertilization, contraception, euthanasia, practicing natural family planning methods, purity, fertility have in common? What does connect these concepts? In this speech I will try to answer those questions. Base for this considerations is my fieldwork in Catholic communities in Przeworsk and its surroundings, conducted in 2015-2017. I will analyze practices and narrations concerning sexuality and religion. To explain relations between the issues mentioned above I will use semiotic ideology - a category proposed by Webb Kean - which I will refer to the emic „openness to life” category. I will show, how it is shaped, embodied and realized in practice.

Iuliia Buyskykh, Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Kyiv, Visiting fellow of 'Prisma-Ukraina – Research Network Eastern Europe', Forum Transregionale Studien, Center for Literary and Cultural Research, Berlin

FORGIVE, FORGET OR FEIGN: EVERYDAY DIPLOMACY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF PODKARPACIE

The paper is based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Przemyśl, Poland and several surrounding villages in 2015-2017. While conducting my research on a set of religious practices and pilgrimages in confessionally and ethnically mixed localities, I faced many challenges that changed the main course of my initial research plan. During my interaction with people here themes came to light that seemed little related to religiousness. My status as a researcher from Ukraine and even more so, my being a young single woman from Ukraine, gave rise to a number of other topics that my interlocutors, both of Polish and Ukrainian origin were eager to discuss.

One of the most important themes in these conversations was the Polish-Ukrainian relations in the interwar period, during WW II and after it. Not wanting or intending to, I was involved in discussions about reciprocal traumas and the bloodiest pages in Polish-Ukrainian history, like the ethnic cleansings and forcible resettlements of 1944-1947. These discussions were very difficult for me, too. Still, the material I received helped me to better understand the complexity of factors contributing to religious identity of average persons, including post-memory phenomena. It is well known and has been thoroughly described that anthropologists have been seen as being 'betwixt and between'. Diplomacy in the field was a huge trial for me. I could observe the imaginary borders between me, as a 'foreign other', and several ethnically and religiously diverse groups of neighbours, who have been forged together by their memories of 'alien locals' or 'domestic others'. This observation could become the starting point for a further stage of research.

Thus, in this paper I intend to use the concept of "everyday diplomacy" as forms of interaction and exchange that occur over religion in borderlands contact zones (Marsden, Ibanez-Tirado, Henig 2016). These everyday encounters serve as a means to know and engage *otherness* by maintaining trade, civility, cosmopolitan and ecumenical outlooks, and often ambiguity. The "everyday diplomacy" refer to a set of practices that hold social relations between categorically different social actors together in a specific context (Henig 2017). A focus on "everyday diplomacy" enables anthropologists to engage in comparative research that moves beyond nation-state or confessional frames to consider how historicity and politics shape religious practices, memory issues and perceptions of history more broadly.

Przemysław Gnyszka, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw

HOSPITAL CHAPEL AS A CONTROVERSIAL SPACE. CONFLICT ABOUT RELOCATION OF THE DISTRICT HOSPITAL IN SOUTH-EASTERN POLAND

This paper is analyzing the conflict (engaging part of local self-government politicians, citizens, hospital workers and clergy) concerning relocation of the catholic chapel in district hospital in Przeworsk, southeastern Poland. I conducted ethnographic research of this case between August 2015 and October 2016, spending in the field about a month. Interviewing people with different attitudes about the relocation of the chapel, analysing official documents and local newspapers articles and considering my observations and experiences, I try to answer following questions: what were the reasons of the disagreement? What actions have people taken to prevent relocation and why they did it? What stands behind the specific narrations of people engaged in the dispute, and what does it tell us about these people's perception of functioning the place of worship in the space of the hospital? To answer those

questions, I want to speak on current discussions in social anthropology and sociology of religion areas, concerning the issues of secularization, secularity and secularism, which – going beyond “traditional” view on the secular and religious as binary oppositions – allows me to show how those categories are constructed in particular context and how blurred are borders between them. Crucial in this case are my observations about the perception of the space of hospital and chapel, attitude to self-government and clergy and local historical context.

Monika Golonka-Czajkowska, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Jagiellonian University,

POLITICIZATION OF RELIGION OR SACRALIZATION OF POLITICS? A CASE OF MONTHLY MEMORY CELEBRATIONS OF THE SO-CALLED SMOLEŃSK CATASTROPHE IN CRACOW

Organized every month in Krakow memory celebrations of the tragic flight of the presidential plane to Smoleńsk (10 April, 2010) are a special case of politico-religious rituals. While for external observers the gathering around the so called The Katyn Cross appears to be a kind of political manifestation primarily, it means something more for its participants. For them it is the most important way of periodically renewing and reaffirming the coherence of one's own group, which despite its internal diversity is still able to function as a well-knit and ready for political fight ideological community. The point of this proposed analysis is to describe the place of religion in these ritual, to indicate both official manifestations and hidden religious elements that contribute to and support the phenomenon of Smolensk monthly celebrations.

Emilia Jaworska, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw,

CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF EVIL, ACTS OF THE EVIL SPIRIT, SPIRITUAL THREATS AND EXORCISMS IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES IN RZESZOWSZCZYŻNA

In my paper I describe how the inhabitants of Przeworsk and Jarosław define demonic beings. Inspired by the approach of Thomas Csordas (2002), I start the analysis of field material with the experiences of my interlocutors, who claim that they were witnesses of demonic manifestations. I also use Charles Taylor's theory of porous self (2007), which allows me to explain the interlocutors' cognitive perspective related to the relationship between demons and people.

I present an outline of beliefs referring to demons - their characteristics and attributes. Basing on the interlocutors' narratives, I present how demons can interfere with human being's life and involve people in states such as temptation, oppression, harassment and possession. I analyze the issues of spiritual threats, in other words, the ways people can open up to diabolic interference. I refer to the interlocutors' objections to the common use of the demonic motives in popular culture. I also describe how the activity of local exorcist influences the perception of evil among the interlocutors. In the final part of the article I invoke the methods of protection against demonic activity presented to me by the group being researched.

Thomas M. Landy, Director of the McFarland Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture, The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester MA USA

CATHOLICS AND CULTURES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCE AND TEACHING TOOL

The Catholics & Cultures website [www.catholicsandcultures.org] engages the global diversity of lived Catholicism through country case studies and thematically linked sections on lived Catholic practice. The paper will introduce the site and reflect on how it can be used to further ethnographic research and teaching that considers Catholicism as a dynamic and evolving religious tradition with multiple geographically specific iterations.

Magdalena Lubańska, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw

THE POROUS SELF AND MULTISENSORY RELIGIOUS IMAGERIES OF PILGRIMS FROM PRZEWORSK ARRIVING AT THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION AT JODŁÓWKA, POLAND

My paper will provide an account of the religious imageries (T. Csordas) and practices of Catholic devotees from the Basilica of the Holy Spirit with whom I made pilgrimage on foot to the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation at Jodłówka in August 2017. My account positions those imaginaries and practices within a broader contextual spectrum in order to move beyond events or conversations which were directly connected with the pilgrimage.

To gain a better understanding of the religious needs of the pilgrims I spent time with some of them afterwards. Among other things, I attended masses involving healing services and charismatic prayer meetings. This way I was able to observe the importance of sensory-based practices related to a belief in the "porous self" (Ch. Taylor). The devotees express that belief by, on the one hand, viewing themselves as being vulnerable to evil powers, and, on the other hand, by believing that they can remedy this danger by opening up to the influence of the Holy Spirit and by using water or exorcised oil blessed during a healing service. My paper will demonstrate the various ways in which belief in the porous self becomes objectivised, and its importance within the religious imageries of that group of devotees.

Ewa Maciejewska-Mroczek, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw

BETWEEN RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION, POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND INTIMATE EXPERIENCE. GRANDPARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO WERE CONCEIVED USING IN VITRO FERTILIZATION IN POLAND

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is not allowed by the Catholic doctrine. This rule is expressed in such documents as *Donum Vitae* or *Humanae Vitae*. IVF is interpreted as being against human nature, immoral, and destructive for the family. Catholic bishops, clergy, and Catholic journalists broadly and publicly express this stance, and their voice is very strong in the Polish public discourse.

IVF has been subject of a heated discussion in Poland since the end of 2007. The issue became a running theme in both the last presidential and parliamentary elections while politicians of all options regularly refer to it, as do journalists and this discussion's main protagonist, the Catholic Church.

This politicized debate over IVF influences private, intimate experiences of Catholics in contemporary Poland, which leads to various tensions in families. In this paper, basing on my research on families with the experience of infertility, I examine how Catholic grandparents of children who were conceived using IVF relate to this meaningful fact of their family life. I

analyse how religious and political discourses act in such an intimate sphere as (grand)parenthood, how they are managed, negotiated and adjusted by social actors in order to keep consistency of family life.

Anna Niedźwiedz, Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Jagiellonian University

URBAN HERITAGE, NATIONAL POLITICS AND GLOBAL CATHOLICISM: THE 2017 CATHOLIC WORLD DAY IN KRAKÓW

In this paper I will discuss how various local, national and religious politics and imaginaries were created and expressed during the 2017 Catholic World Youth Day in Poland. Combined with an official visit by Pope Francis to Poland, WYD brought more than one million pilgrims to the city of Kraków. This massive religious event - which lasted one week and gathered Catholic people from different countries and continents - triggered various debates and conflicts as well as questioned ideas about what "Catholicism" means. It also generated national and local discourses about "Polish Catholicism" and Kraków's "religious heritages" and their (ir)relevance to global pilgrims.

Basing on ethnographic fieldwork - conducted before, during and after WYD - I will examine the varying discourses and attitudes expressed by Kraków's inhabitants towards the event and specifically towards international pilgrims arriving in their city. I will discuss how and to what extent "global" Catholicism found its way into "local" homes and how intercultural encounters challenged Polish discourses about Catholicism. I will also explore the official image of the city of Kraków and its "religious heritage" presented by the city council and WYD organizers, and how this image was reshaped by the visitors' spontaneous practices.

Elżbieta Przybył-Sadowska, Institute for the Study of Religions, Jagiellonian University

THE SENSES AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SACRED (PRESENTED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHOSEN TESTIMONIES OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS SERVANTS OF THE CROSS)

In my speech I analyse the ways of experiencing the contact with God, in which the senses take the vital role. The main emphasis will be put on the sense of sight, because a big part of the analysed material comes from the texts of Mather Elżbieta Czacka, the blind founder of The Society for the Care of the Blind and the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross in Laski, and her Concept of the Spiritual Blindness.

Mathew Schmalz, The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester MA USA

SENSUALITY, SANCTITY, AND STIGMATA: THE CASE OF AUDREY SANTO

This paper examines the sensualization of imagery in the case of the Massachusetts stigmatist, Audrey Santo [d. 2007], who remained mute and comatose from the age of three until her death. Audrey Santo was considered by devotees to be a "victim soul" who vicariously took on the sufferings of others, particularly through the stigmata and other sympathetic illnesses. Her home became a pilgrimage site with claims of miraculous occurrences such as statues weeping oil and blood along with Eucharistic hosts bleeding in her proximity. The paper will address how sanctity is sensualized through a specifically Catholic aesthetic of intimacy.

Konrad Siekierski, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London

THIS PLACE HAS BEEN CHOSEN BY MARY: MIRACULAR SENSITIVITY IN CATHOLIC APPARITION SITE

“This Place Has Been Chosen by Mary”: Miracular Sensitivity in a Catholic Apparition Site
Drawing on the example of the apparition site dubbed as a “Little Fatima” and located in the village of Mazury in south-eastern Poland, in this paper I discuss certain aspects of what Jacek Ołędzki and Andrzej Hemka (1989) called a “miracular sensitivity” of Polish folk Catholicism. In this discussion, I focus on two periods: 1) 1949, when Marian apparition in Mazury took place, attracted mass attention, and was suppressed by the communist state apparatus; and 2) the last decade, which has witnessed a revival of this apparition site, initiated by lay believers and contested by the Catholic Church authorities. Regarding the former, I examine the apparition as a specific form of religious response to difficult socio-political conditions under the Communism and trace dialectical relations between divine interventions and anti-religious policies. As for the latter, I discuss this renewed interest in the apparition site as a modern expression of miracular sensitivity, embedded in a currently ongoing re-enchantment of Polish Catholicism, which is stimulated, at least partially, by the spread of the Catholic charismatic movement.

Catherine Whittaker, University of Edinburgh

FEASTS AS RESISTANCE: ON THE POLITICAL WORK AND AMBIGUITY OF SACRIFICE IN ‘INDIGENOUS’ MEXICO

“*Somos bien fiesteros* - we are party animals,” Milpa Altans say with pride and shame in equal measure. Festivities have often been described as one of the definitive features of Milpa Alta in the south of Mexico City: No less than 700 public festivals of hybrid Catholic-Aztec tradition take place in various parts of this municipality every year. These festivals powerfully symbolize a number of ways in which Milpa Altans are viewed by outsiders and have come to understand themselves, including the discriminatory label of “backwardness”. What drives all this fervent merry-making? I will argue that, while each feast and its specific motivations are different, as a whole, Milpa Altan feasts constitute a world-making project: a politico-economic vision for a vital, cohesive, and equal society of kin, which drives the local politics of indigeneity, and the construction of indigeneity through these.

However, Milpa Altan feasts, and the sacrificial actions that characterise them, are also fundamentally ambiguous (cf. Adorno and Horkheimer 1944): the conspicuous, euphoric wasting in the vein of Bataille’s *depense* at once resists the wasteful consumption entailed by the palpable and yet imagined, violence of “gore capitalism” (Valencia Triana 2010), but also mimetically reproduces aspects of this imagined gore capitalism in certain ways. Therefore, my ethnography complicates romantic notions of indigenous “resistance” in Latin America, and follows Deborah James (2014) in critiquing easily drawn distinctions between “capitalism” and “gift economy”.

DOCUMENTARY MOVIE “Nie sądzić”/“NOT TO JUDGE” 34’56’(directors Pawlina Carlucci Sforza, Magdalena Lubańska) <https://web.facebook.com/NotToJudgeMovie/>

This daring film is an honest exploration of the interplay between history and religious sensibility. The 40-year-old Piotr and the 60-year-old Henryk are preparing to appear as Jesus and Judas in a religious Passion play. Their role in the Easter pageant pushes them to confront some tragic events that once took place in their native town of Przeworsk. What will happen to the two men as they touch the open wounds of a past that refuses to die?

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKqt_SPN3-s&feature=youtu.be

The film was nominated to:

1. The Jan Machulski Award of the Polish Independent Cinema in the “Best Directing” category <http://janmachulski.pl/nominacje-2018/>
2. The World Independent Short Film Awards Grand OFF 2018 in two categories: “Best Documentary” and “Best Polish Movie” <http://www.grandoff.eu/index.php/en/>

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