This is not a serious paper. I can already hear some of the more “cautious” voices. And yes, they are right. This is not a serious article. Nor anything that it is about. After all, as the dandy *extraordinaire*, Oscar Wilde, source and master (mistress?) of all-things-camp, said: (paraphrasing) Life is too serious, to treat is seriously. Or at least Susan Sontag claims it is one of his aphorisms.

Nor the Queer Theory is serious, nor grave. For many academics, feminism, lesbian and gay studies, finally queer studies are all “too ideological,” and do not belong to proper academic household. It is just one perspective, one epistemology. However, it is not the one I believe in. And what I pray to, is the pantheon of divine Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, Seyla Benhabib and Homi Bhabha, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, among others. And what you read is the prayer they taught me.

* * *
society lives at the verge of a nervous breakdown. How did it happen?

The aim of this text is not too give and answer to this question, however. It only (only?) wants to look for the possible answers, rather than present straightforward solutions. Not only because it would be unrealistic, but also because it would be against the vision of political science and against the role of queer academic, as they are envisaged in this text, as much as across all my academic projects. Political science is not set in stone and grows with the achievements of knowledge of other disciplines. This article is just another voice attempting to show how (broadly defined) “cultural” and “political” are two (of many) faces of reality we live by. What I would like to insists here is, in particular, the fact that we not only have to “think pluralism and multiculturalism,” but we also have to “act it” this way. In other wards: not only should we fight for recognition of post-modern pluralism of cultures, identities, social realities in political theory and governance – but also we, the academics, need to incorporate these in the method we do so. Here is the place where I see queer theory/ies enter the scene and can be useful for political studies discipline. And it is Poland to serve me as the case study for further examination.

In the first “Part I - Symptoms” will introduce my preliminary thoughts and describe ideas and expectations for this text. Then, in the second “Part II – Diagnosis,” I will present the analysis of the contemporary situation in Poland. Finally, I plan to close this article with “Part III – Prescription.” However, it is not the end of the text itself. Since I consider endings to be always already new beginnings, thus unfinished text of mine, should be the opening for you, my dear reader.
Part I – Symptoms

John Breuilly in his introduction to Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism* writes that: “[a]s Gellner recognises, transitions are times of fundamental conflict, when incompatible practices oppose one another, when people project competing visions of an uncertain future. Only after some sorting process (revolution, reform, warfare) can something settled emerge” (Breuilly 2002, xliii). It may sound obvious, but it is always useful to name the “obviousness” in order to realise what is not so evident any more. This fragment implies that change, process, happening are not “typical” and opposed to the everyday state of things. Like during the wartime, when “unusual” is accepted temporarily, but “everyone’ expects things to go back to “natural state” once it is finished. The invocation of something settled as normality is implied and imposed on us through various ways, but most importantly, in a wider social mode of perceiving, analysing and explaining reality. That is, throughout academic discourses and educational systems or the organisation of knowledge in our (our?) Western societies.

It was Michel Foucault, who as one of the first noticed that knowledge is the power (1980, 1998, 2000). Through examination of various subjects, themes, problems, he was always aiming at understanding the way people think and categorise their environment. Whether it was about sexuality (1998), madness (1994), punishment (1995), or philosophy (2002) *per se* – he hoped (and it is an optimistic reading of Foucault) that once we understand what we do and how we are in the world, then it will be possible to pursue better, happier life. Enlightenment, Positivism, and their manifestation of the will to

I дел - Симптоми

Џон Бреили (John Breuilly), во воведот на *Нацци и национализам* (Nations and Nationalism) на Ернест Гелнер (Ernest Gellner), пишува дека: „како што посочува Гелнер, транзициите се период на суштински конфликт, кога некомпатибилни дејности си се сретнуваат, кога луѓето планираат конкурентни замисли за несигурна иднина. Дури по некаков процес на подредување (револуција, реформа, војна) може да се јави нешто стабилно“ (Breuilly 2002, XIII). Може звучи очигледно, ама секојпат е полезно да се наведе „очигледност“ за да се увиди она што веќе не е толку јасно. Извадков подразбира промена, процес, дејства „нетипични“ и противни на секојдневната состојба. Како во време на војна, кога „необичното“ привремено се прифаќа, но „сеќо“ очекува нештата да се вратат во „природната состојба“ откако ќе заврши. Барањето за нешто стабилно како нормално подразбира и ни се наметнува на разни начини, но најбитно, во еден поширок општествен облик на восприемање, анализа и објаснување на стварноста. Односно, ширем академските дискурси и образовните системи или организацијата на знаењето во нашите (наши?) западни општества.

know, (the one that dominates our contemporary life), first introduced and settled (in deed) in the 18th century, was about categorisation (Crotty 1998, Kukla 2000). Enlighten age of reason categorised in tables, rows, species, sub-families, names, definitions, concepts. By classification we hope to order the world in an understandable way.

The positivist origins of the political though were no different in this pursuit. The tendency, as of many other clear-cut disciplines, was to explain the world only in its own terms and classes, with no regard to other perspectives. The mirage of self-sufficiency kept (and still is, although not always) the boundaries distinct, where the lack of openness for novelty from outside of the discipline went in hand with the lack of wish to communicate over boundaries. It may be observed when descending from general/philosophical questions of e.g. democracy, into more precise and society-grounded problems of citizenship or transition. For example, many theories of 1989 transformation in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Goldstone 1994 and Skocpol 1979, “revolution theory”, “transition theory” or “elites theory”), seem somehow too easily forget that what started in 1989 was not only about political systems and governing models, but also and first of all, about whole society living under those, and about cultures organised accordingly to those models, conveyed as political organism. Until only couple of years ago, the positivist political scientists appeared to forget that political organisation is the way people systematise and express themselves in the world. “Politics,” “democracy,” “totalitarianism,” etc. – these terms are not artificial, self-reflective modes, distinguished from social reality and cultural performance. Good example of the discussion over citizenship, and this insufficiency, can be found in Seyla Benhabib’s The Claims of Culture:
(...) The concept and practise of citizenship was analysed largely from a normative perspective (...). Usually one aspect – the privileges of political membership – was in the foreground. This normative discussion, primary about the duties of democratic citizenship and democratic theory, was carried out in a sociological vacuum. Political philosophers paid little attention to citizenship as sociological category and as a social practise that inserts us into complex privileges and duties, entitlements and obligations. Political philosophy and political sociology of citizenship went their separate ways (Benhabib 2002, 160).

However, as I have written in the opening paragraph, the essentials and positivist attitudes are no longer predominant in the field of political science. Therefore, this article is also only the proliferation of already existing strands, and is focusing on the question: how can we, queer academics, put forward ideas of greater flexibility and un-stability, further down, into the hear of political sciences. The case of Poland may a good example sup–porting my idea. None of the presented theories of trans–formation can explain what happened in Poland between 1989 and present day; neither describe the transform–ing process nor democracy models, citizenship, role of the state, nation, tradition, and modernity. The answer I suggest is that much of the political science apparatus was born in the West, stems from the West, and remains West-oriented. Even thou it claims to be open for the experiences of “The Otherness,” adopting their points
of view, it is still a “Western Political Theory” disguising itself into a “Universal Theory.” Will Kymlicka puts it straightforward:

The Western political tradition has been surprisingly silent on these [multiculturalism] issues. Most organised political communities throughout recorded history have been multiethnic (…). Yet most Western political theorists have operated with an idealised model of the polis in which fellow citizens share a common descent, language, and culture (Kymlicka 1995, 2).

One may ask: how it applies to Poland? The answer is: because Poland is from outside the West, as much as it is not within the East. (I will return to this division in due text). Thus dominating (Western) political considerations of Polish situation must fail, as these are drawn from a different context, therefore cannot adequately understand it. However, it should also be made clear, that “local” Polish traditional perspectives on the specificity of Polishes in the European context are insufficient. The traditional Polish logic, categories, and reasoning are no longer valid, nor useful. What does it meant in the context of previously identified purposes of this article?

Part II – Diagnosis: A Queer Thing Called Poland

Having introduced the main idea, let’s now turn to its more detailed exemplification. Western liberal democratic model relies heavily on the liberal notion of social contract. One of its embodiments is the “deliberative de-
The argument relies upon democratic decision-making that has come to be called “deliberative democracy.” A democratic system is deliberative to the extent that the decisions it reaches reflect open discussion among the participants, with people ready to listen to the views and consider the interests of others, and modify their own opinions accordingly. (…) In deliberative democracy, the final decision taken may not be wholly consensual, but it should represent a fair balance between the different views expressed in the course of the discussion, and to the extent recognize the decision as legitimate (Miller 2000, 3).

Deliberative model of democracy is funded on a (false?) confidence into people’s will to discuss and reach conclusion in the name of a common justice. Its positivist roots in J.J. Rousseau and J. Locke’s “Social Contract Theory” are evident here. Also contemporary liberal thinkers consider deliberative model possible. Seyla Benhabib, a prominent scholar from-within the post-colonial area of scholarship states: “I think that from the standpoint of deliberative democracy, we need to create institutions through which members of these communities [minorities] can negotiate and debate the future of their own conditions of existence” (Benhabib 2002, 185).

However optimistic, I cannot stop but think what if some of the social and political actors (or, indeed, huge ma-
актери (или, дури, мнозината) не се подготвени да разговараат, туку се толку понепоколебливи колку што противникот застанува поинакви ставови? Ваков е случајот со Полска, во која дел од главните централно-десничарски политички актери („Закон и правда“ на браќата Кажински (Kaczynski), „Лигата на полски семејства“ на Роман Гјертич (Roman Giertych) и „Самоодбрана“ на Анджеј Лепер (Andrzej Lepper) - трите партии во состав на властото 2005-2007) открлаат сè што не влегува во нивната визија за општеството, „која е единствената исправна“. Меѓутоа, ни либералите ни социјалистите не се многу поинакви - и тие ги тотализираат своите гледишта како единствено исправни.

Освен тоа, делиберативниот модел подразбира и дека малцинствата како општествени актери сакаат да земат учество во демократијата; потребно е создавање основни услови во кои би играле потполно одговорна улога во демократскиот процес (Benhabib 2002, 164-5). Но, што ако граѓанското општество е слабо или „непостоечко“ (како во Полска) и малцинствата не можат да се изразат на доследен, мобилизиран и организиран начин, да речеме: да се преместат од културни на политички позиции?

Ако има што да се научи од овие две прашања, тоа би било дека расправата около либерално-комунитарните модели може да се одвива само откако демократијата довольно ќе созре за да ги разликува. Предуслов е потребата од напредна либерална демократија што би ја водела дисkusијата за која било од овие политички позиции. Полска нема ниту „напреден“ ниту „либерален“ ниту „демократски“ политички систем (ако западните демократии се врвните примери, што се навестува во разгледаните теории). Парламентарните и претседателските

Moreover, deliberative model also assumes that minorities, as social actors, are ready to take part in the democracy; what is needed, is the creation of the basic conditions from which within which they can play fully responsible role in the democratic process (Benhabib 2002, 164-5). But what if the civil society is weak or “non-existent” (as in Poland) and minorities are not ready to express themselves in a coherent, mobilised and organised ways, so to speak: move from cultural onto political positions?

If there is anything to learn for those to questions, it has to be that discussion over liberal-communitarian models can only happen once democracy is mature enough to clarify those two. The prerequisite is the necessity of advanced liberal democracy to lead discussion about any of these political positions. Poland has neither “advanced,” nor “liberal,” nor “democratic” political system (if Western democracies are the ultimate examples, what is implicitly present in the discussed theories). The parliamentary and presidential elections in 2005 showed that Poland did not manage to cope with modernism,
pluralism, and contemporary’s world process of differentiation. Political science is far too much West-centred to recognise that “[l]iberal democracy (...) is not the application of the democratic model to a wider context, as some would have it; understood as regime, it concerns the symbolic ordering of social relations and is much more than a mere ‘form of government’” (Mouffe 1996, 245).

On the other side, there are also Polish perspectives on the uniqueness of Polish situatedness in Europe and world. They form the concept of what I will call here the “Traditional Polish Paradigm/Identity.”

When looking at the field of national identities in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, the amount of literature dealing with this region presents itself as rich and satisfying (see Ichijo 2005 for general overview). Also conceptualisations on Polish national identity are numerous (e.g. Nycz 2002, Auer 2004, Romaniszyn 2005, to name a few). Although various authors analysing problems surrounding national identity in Poland focus on slightly different aspects, it is possible to identify certain core features, which appear in a vast majority of these contributions. These five factors do not pretend to form a complete or final list of features – it is just a temporal operationalisation of the otherwise vague (and even possibly non-existing) category of “Polish national identity.”

These would be:

• the strong presence of religion, and especially Catholic Church (Chrypinski 1989, Romaniszyn 2005),
• martyrdom and victimhood (Janion 2000, Zieliński 2002),
Below I will suggest that the first four elements, which may be seen as foundational, thanks to the processes of democratisation Poland started after 1989, do not denote the same reality, thus, those elements need to be deeply and thoroughly re-thought and re-conceptualised. Their importance lays not in the fact that “they are important,” but conversely, in the fact that they have lost their significance in this “new,” democratic reality, Or in the structuralist language, symbolic significant lost their real signifiers. Although non-applicable directly, they are still circulating and form the base for conservative-oriented discourses. However, because those factors rely on past which was finally discontinued and abolished in 1989 (underlying again the presumption that pre- and communist times did not differ in the construction of national identity), one can nowadays find political and social life in a queer blur of mismatched idea(ism)s.
Therefore, the first step to the better understanding of endeavours between pluralist and communitarian ideologies in Poland is to realise that although the object of interests is the same for both (homosexuality, pluralism, the EU, etc.), conceptualisations of the latter are completely different, thereby producing the common impression of a lack of communication between opponents. Indeed, in most cases it is exactly “a different language” used by each side that disables dialogue and discussion. This is especially clear when considering recent discussions over values, and supposedly clashes of Polish (communitarian) and European (liberal) ones (Krzemiński 2001, 64).

Religiousness used to be perceived as shaping the morals and ethics of everyday life, but also as a factor directly incorporated into the notion of Polish national identity (Chrypinski 1989, 241). It was reflected by one of the League of Polish Families Party MPs, when he referred to the Christian (Catholic) cross during his speech in the parliament (paraphrasing): only under this sign, a Pole was the Pole, and Poland could be Poland. Religious institutions also helped to transmit other cultural values over time and space, such as language or customs and habits, which often could not find other way of being spread as through relevant independence of the Catholic Church (Auer 2004, 68-70).
not always are accompanied by the amelioration of religious life” (Brzoza and Sowa 2003, 793). On the other hand, religion sneaked into public life through the back door: as institutionalised political actor. What was once a “religious aspect” of/in national tradition became “The (Catholic) Church” marching into politics arm in arm with Solidarity workers movement (Auer 2004, 69-70). The institutionalisation of religion is not a new occurrence, what is then important in the Polish context and 1989 revolt, is the fact that since Polish monarchy lost its administrative “being” as a state in 1795, so did Catholic Church its institutional connection to Poland. Throughout the following years, up until 1989, it was the catholic religion that was binding people together, forcing catholic values as the Polish ones (as opposed to Orthodox Russian, or Protestant German ones). When (liberal) democracy was “installed” in Poland after 1989, new values came into play, strongly enough to push religious ones apart of public life. That was the moment when the Catholic Church “reinvented” itself and re-established in public and political life not through values, but (simply) as the institutionalised actor. Hence we no longer talk about religiousness on the nation, but about the role of The Church in the democratic state politics.

Primacy of the collective over the individual (Martyrology) took various shapes, mainly the form of fighting with a (real of imagined) “Oppressor.” How one would define it – whether as an invader, occupier or political opposition is not important. The stress was on the duty to give up one’s personal life and happiness in the name of The Polish Nation (Janion 2000, 24). It was also about a fight for independence or struggle for survival, cultural as
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much as political. Finally, the romantic idea of Poland as the Christ of nations, offering itself at the altar of world’s freedom (see, for example, Janion [1989, 7] on Polish messianic 19th century literature; or Zubrzycki 2007, 131) is the best example of developing from that moment on, a myth of injustice and victimhood in the national ego (Zieliński 2002, 108). These features intensified and took very precise shape in the 19th century, exactly at the moment of a birth of nationalism as ideology (Haywood 2003, 155-87), slow establishment of liberalism in Enlightened (Western) Europe, and the disappearance of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania from the political map of Europe (Romaniszyn 2005, 156).

This component collapsed quicker than anyone would have expected. The unity of victorious Solidarity Trade Union was “wrecked” by its own members in the first fully free parliamentary elections of 1991. Small party interests won over unitary politics.¹ This was the first sign of pluralism entering the political scene, as much as the reaction to communist totalitarianism, or just a sign of the new socio-political situation in Poland. “Tearful,” “over-angelic” and “full of martyrdom” Polish Messianism (Szrett 1990, 36) had to give space to other problems that came with the abolishment of communism. No longer only were “people” subjects of the nation, but also “became” citizens of the state. People had moral duties towards their nation, whereas with the growing stress on democratisation (as morally neutral process), citizens “became” subordinated rather to the legal regulations of the state. The emergence of “new” identities and social movements (e.g. greens, feminists, lesbians, and gays) and their activities have also pushed the relation between the state and its inhabitants towards more “neutral” sphere of citizenship rights (Flam 2001). Overall, the stress after 1989 was/is on state/citizen pairing,

¹
whereas before it was more about Poland/nation; a shift from “cultural” to “civic,” where civic became to play greater role (as the processes of (liberal) democratisation require), which doesn’t exclude the previous (pre 1989) organisation. Or simply, as Seyla Benhabib wrote: “Citizens are not prisoners of their respective states” (2002, 172).

**Ethnic diversity.** The Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania of the pre-partition period (until 1795) and the Second Republic (1918-1939) were inhabited by many ethnic populations. As Krystyna Romaniszyn states: “[t]he ethnic mosaic comprised Ukrainians, Jews, Belarusians, Germans, plus smaller numbers of Lithuanians, Russians, Slovaks, Czechs, Tatars, Roma, and folk populations identifying themselves as ‘indigenous’” (2005, 160). Overall, they composed more than 30 per cent of the total population (Dylągowa 2000, 143-144). Ultimately, Polish culture was founded on these multiethnic roots bonded together by the civic political idea(ism)s of unity (Walicki 1997, 233).

Today, this third element is not present any more. WWII, geographical relocation, and communism had virtually ethnically homogenised the population of the Third Republic. The gap, however, was never filled with new creative supplies. The richness of Polish culture, founded on its pre-1945 diversity, was somehow detached from its roots, but no new sources of inspiration were introduced. Or at least they are not recognised as being so. Thus in the 1990s, many cultural critics were constantly complaining about the poor condition of Polish cultural activity and general crisis (Brzoza and Sowa 2003, 798-
The disappearance of ethnic minorities has given Poles the false impression (because it is based on ethnic representation, but do not take into account other, non-ethnic and “new” identities and attitudes) that Polish society is a homogeneous organism. This false conviction systematically forms a background for conservative-oriented attitudes, especially when discussing “recent” problems of Polish society, such as xenophobia and discrimination (Umińska 2006).

Presence of Jews and the East/West divide. Although Polish-Jewish relations are part of problems around the status of cultural and ethnic minorities in Poland, they are also so much in the heart of both, that it is necessary to distinguish this (love-hate) relationships (Zubrzycki 2007). Until WWII, the Jewish minority living in Poland comprised a significant 10 per cent of the whole population; the Shoah reduced the number to a fraction of a percentage (Romaniszyn 2005, 167). But it was only in March 1968 that the cultural bond between the two was cut. As Stefan Auer writes:

“[i]t is a telling irony of Polish history that the last significant step towards ethnic homogenization of the country took place in March 1968, when the communist leadership instigated an anti-Semitic campaign which effectively resulted in the expulsion of some 15,000 members of the small remaining Jewish community in Poland” (2004, 64; also Biskupski 2000).

Once an irreducible element of the cultural and social landscape, Jews are now present in Polish culture in a more indirect way. Anti-Semitism, since its direct object has virtually vanished from the territory of Poland,
evolved into a general form of xenophobia. Many commentators (see Umińska 2006, 3-4; Graff 2006) point towards the fact that there is a parallel between Jews and gay people in the role they serve in the Polish society, that homophobia is the 21st century anti-Semitism. The metaphor may be useful. However, even though issues of homophobia and anti-Semitism stem from the same xenophobic roots, they still encompass many different problems, and thus must not be taken without criticism and re-assessment.

There are two other nations of particular importance to the Polish sense of identity: Germans and Russians (Romaniszyn 2005, 166), which *pars pro toto* symbolise longing and repulsion towards West(ern Europe) and East(ern borderlands) at the same time. It was ideally summarised by Polish cartoonist, Andrzej Mleczko, who on one of his satirical cartoons draw God ordering the world order. When it came to Poland, he would say (paraphrasing): Poland... Let us make fun of them... And put them between Russia and Germany! This may be considered a sharp, but accurate summary of Polish resentment towards its neighbours. Poland’s geographical position in the centre of Europe always played an important role in identity shaping processes (Auer 2004, 65); throughout the centuries Poles were struggling to find their own way between oriental and occidental cultural influences.

Finally, the last characteristics of “traditional Polishhood” – the East/West divide – is rather doubtful. After 1989, Poland entered world processes of globalisation. The trans-national economy, world politics, popular culture, fast and easily accessible modes of transport, to name a few – all these modern day phenomena could not bypass the CEE (Forrester, Zaborowska and Gapova...
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It is especially clear when approaching the problems of Polish relations with its neighbouring countries, most significantly with Germany and Russia. Poles feel inferior to the former, and with the latter, the opposite – superior and “better” (Lipski 1990, 59; Szrett 1990, 37-8). Jan Józef Lipski critiques this duality of the “Polish soul”, providing a well-documented account of events and facts from history proving inadequateness, concluding that such Polish attitude is “grotesque” and “pitiful” (1990, 60). In recognition that there is no “us” without “them,” Józef Szrett states that “[i]t is in our interest to liberate ourselves [Poles] from oppression by others, and at the same time liberate ourselves from resentments and complexes” (1990, 38). Thus, it would enable the process of the re-evaluation of the national identity. Lipski wants even more from his fellow nationals, and writes that “[p]atriotism is not only respect and love for tradition; it is also the relentless selection and discarding of elements in this tradition, and an obligation to this intellectual task” (1990, 54). That means not only leaving the past and complexes behind, as Szrett suggests, but actively dealing with the own ghosts of this past, facing the challenge of the Other by the recognition of the Other within ourselves.
This idea seems to be very important also for Ryszard Nycz in his analytical provision of two concepts of “home” as “fatherlands,” found in Czesław Miłosz and Witold Gombrowicz’s writings. Elaborating on the “Polish soul” as a “mysterious union between the community spirit and the spirit of place” (2002, 14), “home” as *genius loci* (idealised in Romanticism) becomes a fundamental issue for the notion of national identity in Poland. While reading Miłosz, Nycz calls the poet’s vision a “settling-in strategy” (2002, 20). It would be characterised by a regional and ethnographic approach and an attempt at re-discovering small and “new” homelands. Especially when the “home,” Poland, does not exist (as during the partition period), or is occupied (actually, as during the WWII or metaphorically, during the communism). “Home” then, becomes a national identity that cannot be stable, therefore according to Miłosz, we may only look for small and provisional nests.

The other approach, an “alienation strategy” is found in Gombrowicz (2002, 21). Gombrowicz, according to Nycz, believes that the modern world is ultimately unsettled, therefore people are forced to self-create themselves; to establish identity factors within oneself. But this is not only the opportunity to be free from certain constraints, it is also and most of all, the obligation to acknowledge and respect every Other (who is ultimately in the same position as the “Self”) (2002, 19-20). We have, therefore, in Miłosz and Gombrowicz, two strategies of being in the world with oneself and the Other that shape the national identity, but in fact, just one vision of the relation between the “Self” and the “Other.” The recognition of the “Other” must lead us to the abolition of the imperial self, acceptance of our own boundaries and the existence of the Other. Or in Nycz’s words, both
authors in their writings postulate the shift “from the defence of one’s independence thanks to the effort of being different from everything else to the recognition thereof in the otherness found in oneself” (2002, 20). This statement is very important for me, as it shows that their understanding of identification is similar to the one found in Queer Theory. It is precisely the same thought that may be found in the writings of Judith Butler (who draws on the French philosopher Immanuel Levinas (Butler and Mizielińska 2006, 27-28)) and other Queer theoreticians. Also the fact that we can put Gombrowicz and the Queer Theory next to and in the relation to each other is very promising and significant in this context.

To sum up, the transformation of Polish national identity is very much about the re-conceptualisation of the basic values underpinning it. As I have tried to show, certain key features of identity do not correlate with the post-1989 reality and therefore there is an “obvious” need to re-think what constitutes Polishness in a democratic, European, globalised world. One of the most general, and significant, fields is the move from communitarian and conservative to pluralistic and liberal ideologies that are predominant in Western (EU) politics, and the blur and the chaos of real attitudes, theoretical standpoints, and possible positions.

Still, in the same time we should not believe that having sharp, clear-cut categories is better then the “chaos.” We must resist the need for ordering the world around us into finished set of norms. Such practises, originating in the 18th century philosophy, are deadly for the richness of our existence. We must follow Foucault’s words that search for commonly acceptable “morality” must
ness of their adaptation for the study of Polish context is left to the reader, in the act of active engagement towards which queer ethic urges us both – the writer and the reader.

At this point, there is the urging need of explanation what is understood by queer approach and queer ethics. The term “queer approach,” and shortened “queer,” are used as an adjective, noun, and a verb. Thus, each time it embeds and puts upfront different aspect of itself. The flexible use is meant to adjust, modify and apply the meaning of “queer” to the particular situation, in which it is used (sentence, problem, function, philosophy, event from past, ongoing activity, etc.), and merge it with the surrounding context. Therefore, it is already the first example of a queer epistemological approach, developed on the grounds of Foulcauldian power/knowledge hierarchies. It is though to escape normalising effects of categorisation, and hence prevent harmful exclusion of “non-subjects” of the categorisation. This is the second feature of the queer project: to establish itself as ethical perspective concerned about non-oppressive approach to knowledge creation. To apply queer theory, born and developed in Western academic circles, to the analysis of the post-communist transformation evokes and interpellates its own queerness, and insubordination.

There is also another issue of terminology. In the existing literature on the subject of sexuality and/or postmodern philosophies, “queer” is identified as either a “queer theory” or a “queer activism.” I propose to use “queer approach” as the better expression for what is being described under both motioned terms. One of the main ideas of the queer approach is to dismantle dichotomies of social and ideological organisation, which are rooted in the essentialist perspective and implemented by the

Во моментов неминовно е објаснувањето што се подразбира под квир пристап и квир етика. Терминот „квир пристап“, или скратеното „квир“, се корisti како придавка, именка и глагол. Значи, секоијата наметнува и истакнува некоја своја поинаква страна. Ваквата флексибилност има за цел да го прилагоди, видоизмени и примени значењето на „квир“ во конкретната ситуацијата (реченица, проблем, функција, философija, минат настан, тековна дејност, итн.) и да го вклопи во околниот контекст. Така, веќе претставува прв пример за квир епистемолошки пристап, развиен врз основа на фукоовските хиерархии моќ/знаење. Тешко е да се избегнат нормализаторските ефекти на категоризацијата и со тоа да се спречи штетното искучување на „непредметните“ на категоризација. Ова е втората карактеристика на квир проектот: да се воспостави како етичка гледна точка која ја интересира неутнетувачкиот пристап кон создавањето знаење. Да се примени квир теоријата, родена и развена во западни академски кругови, во анализата на посткомunistичката преобразба ја повикува и преиспитува нејзината квирност и непокорност.

Постои уште еден терминолошки проблем. Во постојната литература на темата сексуалност и/или постмодерни философи, „квир“ се поистоветува или со „квир теорија“ или со „квир активизам“. Пределагам употреба на „квир пристап“ како подобар израз за она што го опишуваат двата посочени термини. Една од главните замисли на квир пристапот е да ги растури дихотомиите на општествена и идеолошка организација, кои влечат корени од есенцијалистичкото...
totalising perspective of patriarchy. Hence separating activism from theoretical reflection is to act against the very core notion of the described/analysed stance. The “queer approach” blurs fake distinctiveness, and insists that it is not possible to build active engagement into “real” politics without theoretical reflection on a reality. Accordingly, the philosophical contemplation cannot occur in the social, cultural void of “the real.” Using the term “queer approach” hence, may be seen as more accurate practice of bringing the idea of queerness to the fore. In the same time, the reader must remember that queer brings only “better” result, yet never “the best one;” and that it is in constant flux, hence never terminates on “the one” solution. Therefore, as Sandra Harding proposed to use plural when talking about feminist standpoint(s), I will insist on the plural use of queer approach(es). Therefore, what is “queer approach” in this article, is only important at this particular occasion, serve this meticulous purpose, and as far as possible, other users should define queer according to their own needs, aims, and contexts.

The first queer aspect I want to evoke in the context of Polish transformation and political theory, is the call for the recognition of new, fluent and often undefined, factors shaping identities, together with consideration of a multiplicity of them. All together performing identities as unstable constructs, and directing our attention to the process of identification, rather than towards “identity.” (A good overview and insight can be found in Jenkins 1996). For example, in the Polish socio-political context, the recognition of gender and sexuality as such new identity forming features. Following, is the acceptance of
rodot i seksualnosti kako takvi novi karakteristiki koj gрадат идентитети. Потоа прифаќањето на „несигурност“: во смисла, општествениот поредок е во постојан тек, зазема облици во зависност од ситуациите, општествените интереси и контексти, а не е „општество“ создадено „еднаш засекогаш“.

Понатаму, се бара поникало поимање на „малцинство“. Наместо традиционалните есеницијалистички термини за идентитетот, малцинство е општествен конструкт кој ги отелотворува избраните идентитети за конкретната намена. Ова неминовно повлекува ваквинот поим да одразува една нова, постмодерна состојба, наместо да е утврден во старите заостанати значења. Категоријата малцинство беше воведена за да се надгледуваат оние кои од некои причини биле издвоени од множинството во општеството. Тогаш се налагаше нивна контрола со тоа што им се доделуваше множество права и обврски. И конечено, чуване на восставениот status quo. Ако се согласиме дека овие три точки беа суштински во улогата која малцинството ја игра/играше во општествената организација, мора да прифатиме и дека истите не може да важат и во современиот свет (почнувајќи во 1960 година со движењата за оспорување). Поимот „малцинство“ мора да се промени така да ги одразува новиве идентитети и начините на кои се создадени. Значи вредност веќе не е стабилноста, туку флуидноста; оттука со сместување на малцинствата „надвор“, нема да се спречи преобразбата. Модерниот status quo се состои од постојана промена, а не од вкаменета состојба на нештата. Освен тоа, „малцинство“ не може да дејствува како алатка за контрола: таканаречените „права“ и „обврски“ служеле за оваа цел, но мора да се олабават за да се ослободиме од општествената контрола. На крајот може да бидеме принудени и сеосема да ја укинеме оваа категорија, да ја прекратиме животот. Можеби дури тогаш ќе “uncertainty:” in the sense of social order being in a constant flux, taking shapes depending on situations, social interests, and contexts, rather than done “once and for all” “society.”

Another plea is for a different conception of a “minority.” Instead of traditional essentialist identity based terms, we should name minority as social constructs, embodying chosen identities for the particular aim. This necessarily requires this concept to reflect new, post-modern situation, instead of being clamped to the old relict meanings. Minority category was established to monitor those, who for some reason were put outside of a majority of the society. Then it was about a control of those, by ascribing particular set of rights and obligations to them. Finally, it was about preventing the settled/established status quo. If we agree that these three points were crucial in the role minority play/played in the social organisation, we must also agree that they losing its legitimacy in modern world (beginning in the 1960 with the contestation movements). The concept of “minority” must be changed, so it can reflect these new identities and ways they are formed. So stability is no more a value, but fluidity; hence putting minorities as “outsiders” no longer prevent the transformation. The modern status quo is about constant changing rather then the frozen state of things. Furthermore, “minority” cannot operate as the controlling tool: so called “rights” and “obligations” were serving this purpose, but has to be loosen up, so we can free ourselves from a social control. Finally, we may be forced to abolish this category at all, cease it in existence. Maybe only then we will acknowledge that minorities are no longer outsiders of/to the society, but constitute its core element. That there are no Others, thus no need for the monitoring tools, such as the very term “minority.” I understand it may be utopian idea, nonetheless I insist
one should try to go for the limits. In deed, that is what all the activists do, why couldn’t we, academics, do it the same way?

This last point invites and introduces the incorporation and acknowledgement of the fact that the ideology and standpoint of each of us is not against the science, as still many (positivist-inspired) want to see it. It is against the false conviction about the objective science. Clearly expressed point of view can only help in better understanding of someone’s achievements or mistakes. We must all stop believing that the “objective knowledge” is possible. (How many times have we already heard that plea? How many times are we going to hear it again?). That was 18th century ideology; today we should have our lesson and reject any totalitarian pressures for the unity. The need of the social sciences to open for other disciplines, to give up the conviction of objectivity and neutrality may lead us to discover that being “vague,” “undefined,” or “imprecise” does not mean being “non-theoretical” or “non-academic.” We may successfully incorporate these into the way we think about the science thus discover completely new perspectives. If we do so, it is very likely to find out that meanings are popping-up from the context; each time one use the term, one create it and thus do not restrict the outcome to pre-defined sets of meanings. The acceptance would mean different approach to the world. Instead of going into the world with definite expectations and then just categorise it (top-bottom) – we would find ourselves in a truly unique position. If we start acting the other way round: from bottom, without expectations and categories, up to the top, we may see the world being completely different. Again: it may be a utopian vision,
but I believe it is not impossible.

It also leads to another postulate: theorists should believe their work might change the world. In other words: we ought to adopt activist point of view. It is not important whether the change will happen thanks to me, but if only I consequently pursue my vision, once started, it will continue (as domino or snowball effect) and one day the change will happen.

Finally, all what is written above has deeply ethical dimension, which is extremely important in the science. While researching, we seem too often forget, that we write not about numbers, figures, actors, players or cases. We talk about people’s lives, which involve pain, loss, joy, tears, pleasure, satisfaction, and so on. Thus, if we involve not only our brains but also hearts, we may find our work more joyful, profitable, accurate, and more meaningful.

As Joanna Mizielińska (2006) writes, the queer ethics would opt for diversity of moral orders; not nihilism or relativism, but pluralisation of moral domains and codes of behaviour (214). It would also be characterised by the relationship between the “I” and the “Other:” not through difference, but sameness – it should be the relation of responsibility for each other (219-220). Finally, the queer ethics domain would be anti-fundamental (opposing any claims that want to establish itself as the only ones, including those made by many minority groups) (213), and open for the redefinition of a “family” (imposed by many discourses as the most important site of intertwining various issues and problems needed for establishing social order), as chosen kinship relations rather than in-born blood dependencies (217). Overall,
Mizielińska clearly states that there is a need of the “queer ethics” (220), which not necessarily must be understood in traditional terms (as anything queer), and that its originality does not stem from the novelty of features, but from the uniqueness of the mixture of many already existing issues that produce new and original quality.

This turn into queer ethics implies that those who embrace queer as the active strategy of everyday life, are not only concerned about sexuality, but as mentioned, about many other, not-sexual dimensions, influencing possibly the life of others. In this light, it is important to note that this is the perspective adopted in this project. Therefore, influencing not only the life and notion of the object/subjects of the research, but equally, the reader as the (silent) participant, the (implied) addressee, who is asked to take the responsibility for the outcomes in their own life.

Notes:
1. The first “free” elections on the 27th October 1991 led to enormous fragmentation on the political scene: the parliament was composed of 29 parties, with only two of them securing 12 per cent of voters support (Chwalba 1999, 814).
References:


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