

TEMATY REGIONALNE

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Cultural Aspect of Regional Patriotism Fostered in the Nineteenth-Century Literature of Autochthon Upper Silesians

Kulturowe oblicze regionalnego patriotyzmu krzewionego w XIX-wiecznym piśmiennictwie rodzimych Górnolązaków

Słowa kluczowe: Górny Śląsk, wiek XIX, śląscy literaci, patriotyzm, tożsamość kulturowa
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Observing the contemporary world, in particular, advancing social diversification processes, including intensification of nation-building movements and the drives towards autonomy among ethnic minorities and the development of regionalisms, the researchers assumed the thesis based on the existence of collective identities (Bokszański 2005: 56–63)¹. The most important type of collective identity, considered in categories of “otherness” or “homeliness” of a given culture in relation to other cultures, is the category of cultural identity. It is manifested in culturally defined behaviour and products of a given culture (*Słownik socjologiczny* 1997: 228; Duć-Fajfer 2006: 436).

Regional patriotism referred to in the title of the paper fits within the broadly understood social identity. This type of civic consciousness, intensively developing since the 19th century under the form of ideological patriotism, was to lead to

¹ Representatives of humanities, particularly sociologists, were not able to decide for long whether the category of identity related to consciousness of an individual can be related to larger communities. They believed that identity is conditioned by thinking, which is the feature of a person and not a group, since an individual in the process of socialization formulates ideas that can be referred to as “individual consciousness”, but clusters of people do not have any common organ of self-knowledge. The objections gave rise to predicted problems related to “anthropomorphisation” of the collective identity category, as well as an assumption that there exists something that can be classified into the category of “collective consciousness”.

the identification of people from lower classes with the nation, and from the end of the 19th century, under regionalism emerging in the province of France (a cultural and social movement aiming at making peripheral areas independent from central metropolises) in order to create ties with the homeland².

These general European ideas were creatively used by Polish-language writers, journalists and press publishers in Upper Silesia, emerging from young autochthon intelligentsia, brought up in the ultraquist school, briefly admitted to this land as a result of postulates demanding that the Polish language and care for this language should be guaranteed, submitted to the Prussian National Assembly during the Spring of Nations, among others by Rev. Józef Szafranek. Like the 19th century famous authors from the lands of the former Republic of Poland, Upper Silesians rendered their pens to the romantically understood mission of the literature entering the civic discourse. They started to shape it with the intention to produce national senses and, above all, they explained to their compatriots that they constituted a part of the Polish nation. The power of their words had their source in the content provided, as they combined them with the hope to produce in their home environment social beliefs that could bring desirable patriotic results in their family community and under specific local conditions³. The writers presented their preaching as “common good”, and since they belonged in great numbers to the clergy, the feeling of an apostolic mission to their compatriots, towards whom they appeared their only carers and guides following their Romantic convention⁴, was familiar to them.

² Developing the knowledge of cultural identity in individuals and in social groups became at that time the task of many institutions of culture, activated at that time, first of all with a school implementing the educational duty. In all of those places where school was ethnically and ideologically alien, this role was played by literature, and the-then scientific associations and museums established to assume patronage over the culture of the nation, in particular over its past considered the welfare of the entire community. Those indications were observed in the programmes of Romantic regionalism promoting spirituality and specific actions aiming at promotion and protection of home tradition. The escape from hard experience towards intensified interests in an honourable past (giving to the human existence holy dimensions of space and time) belonged, in a broad perspective, to the need of history in the 19th century Europe, where ideological patriotism, one of the indispensable conditions for transforming the crowd into citizens, was being built.

³ Assigning a purpose to an utterance belongs to the field of the effective action theory (praxeology). The causative function of language, suggesting that by using words, one can realize intentions towards various aspects of reality surrounding the human being, was investigated by John Langshaw Austin. The researcher examined those issues, as he believed that the structure of language reflects the structure of the world. The philosopher, in the first places, focused on performative utterances (making a change by merely saying something, e.g. the phrase “I take you to be my wife” or giving somebody a name). In his investigations, he divided speech acts into locutionary (with the meaning due to their phonetic aspect), illocutionary (of certain conventional power, e.g. by informing, asking) and perlocutionary utterances (aiming at exerting a certain specific effect through convincing, surprising or cheating somebody).

⁴ Due to the significant role of the clergy in the culture of the region, a variant of 19th century transformation that manifested itself in a critical attitude, focused on Christian piety remote from

Taking up the socio-political game, they directed the historical and literary imagination of readers towards building national life in a region where literature was to show to people the way for the “spirit’s wandering towards perfection” (Walas 2006: 103). Despite founding their activities on Romantic thought, they treated literary works in Taine’s manner, as they saw in them “a ‘human document’, and not [...] strictly literary work of art, described through poetry and rhetoric” (Walas 2006: 107)⁵. They chose this path because of their good knowledge of nuances in the literary culture in the region, also including their own place within it, and because of proper evaluation of assets brought by the institutionalization of culture, as a result of which they efficiently carried out their work, which indirectly fostered the growth of readership among compatriots⁶.

Their activity in the civic field was inspired by the ideals of the Spring of Nations (in particular, by a social trend aiming at improving the living conditions of people from the lowest classes and the national trend encouraging them to fight for the recognition of minority rights in the hegemon state). Those tendencies were additionally reinforced by the climate of Romantic Messianism. Transferring these ideas into the Upper Silesia reality, representatives of the oppressed mi-

the church life, was not observed here. Quite contrary, along with the process of industrialization and construction of subsequent workers’ settlements, material symbols of attachment to religion increased. This included strengthening of the worship of St. Barbara among miners and St. Florian in the group of steelworkers, the construction of new churches for new parish communities organized in new settlements, funding shrines for patron saints and a great revival of the pilgrimage movement (Kossakowska-Jarosz 2014: 35, 165–185; Kossakowska-Jarosz, Rev. Górecki 2018: 178–190).

⁵ This was the case, e.g. with the reception of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski’s poem *Witoloranda*, in which Lithuanians saw the manifesto of “Lithuanian identity” and “domestication”, while in Warsaw, the work was evaluated only in the aspect of “objective literary values” (Duć-Fajfer 2006: 433–434, 438).

⁶ The Silesian reader market was highly praised by Stanisław Stojałowski, who in 1895 in Lvov “Gazeta Narodowa”, after the Silesian peregrination claimed that: “In Prussian Silesia, people work and make things. It was started by late Karol Miarka, and others came after him, and working in the same spirit, led to the situation that the journal »Katolik« alone has more than 19 thousand readers, while »Nowiny Raciborskie« and »Gazeta Opolska« journals have four to five thousand, therefore, together, they have more than 25 thousand readers per one million of Polish population. Has Prussian Silesia not outdone Galicia, where perhaps not only popular but all Polish journals together would only gather 25 thousand readers?” The success in preserving the readership in Upper Silesia was perceived not only externally. This argument was also brought up by local educational activists, among others Jan Karol Maćkowski, the publisher of “Nowiny Raciborskie”, who strongly rejected allegations of Germans about neglected “mental life of Silesians”: “Ask, Liberals, booksellers from Poznań and Kraków, how many books they send every year to Upper Silesia. You will learn from them that Upper Silesians are the best reading public of Polish books and in Upper Silesia many more books are bought than in other Polish districts. Enter the households of our wealthier farmers and workers, and you will find there poems by Mickiewicz, Lenartowicz, Krasicki and many other poets”. Therefore, it was not enough for Silesians to only read classics; they were also tempted to have their own book collection, and many of them wanted to have their own home libraries. The largest book collections included up to three thousand volumes, gathered by their owners with their small revenues, at the same at the cost of their living expenses (Kossakowska-Jarosz 1999: 162–163, 167).

nority, because of its domination by strangers, mobilized their fellow countrymen to leave the oppression, and presented to them the causes of their bad situation and ways to prevent the failures suffered. They started this battle because, according to the self-evaluation developed in the local environment, they protected the benefits of a morally and spiritually valuable group. At the beginning of the social activities conducted, emerging from the spirit of both above-mentioned currents, they put forward the slogans for the protection of homeliness. They believed that fostering the tradition would immensely contribute to emancipation of Silesianity. They paid particular attention to keeping this decision, although the stubborn, loyal attachment to their cultural heritage made Upper Silesians “the tribe of martyrs”, which was confirmed by Juliusz Ligoń in the poem *Jestem śląskie dziecko* [*I am a Silesian Child*]. The artist undertook this task to break the image of “ni to Niemce ni Poloki” [neither Germans nor Poles]. Norbert Bonczyk in *Góra Chełmska* [*Chelm Mountain*] warned Upper Silesians against expressing a passive attitude towards this accusation and against failing to clearly opt for their Slavic identity. The programme of schooling implemented soon brought desirable effects, Upper Silesians successively matured to Polish awareness, declared from the second half of the 19th century in the identity portrait of many local artists (such testimonies were given e.g. by Józef Lompa, Juliusz Ligoń, Konstanty Dąmrot, Norbert Bonczyk, Wawrzyniec Hajda, Aleksander Skowroński, Augustyn Świder)⁷. Their works confirm that they fostered Silesian-Polish awareness, placing in the group welfare in the focal point in order to develop subjectivity in social relations. Aiming towards implementation of the assumed project, they started first to develop their “own voice” – their own vision of the matters of fellow countrymen, which permitted them to act as spokespersons for their interests and undertake the task of popularization of these matters, and at the same time, they contributed to the education of compatriots. In the next stage of profiling their subjective consciousness, the writers presented to them examples of oppression towards native and Polish heritage, so that, with this self-knowledge – they could oppose the plans of the hegemony and, above all, they could resist inevitably occurring methysation. This concept was to minimize the process of German culture absorption.

Silesian authors were not isolated in their path towards forming ethnical and cultural orientation. On the contrary, they followed the path of criticism practiced in the 19th century by national minorities recognized in the contemporary postcolonial discourse as “the voice of periphery” (Duć-Fajfer 2006: 438). The thinking of Silesians therefore corresponded to the phase of national consciousness maturity in conquered peoples, as well as in tribal-language groups that never had a state identity. It was them, who accentuating differences of their tradition from

⁷ I quoted numerous extracts from their texts in another paper (Kossakowska-Jarosz 1994b: 97–109).

the worlds that colonized them, relied on regaining the native internal subjectivity to build the feeling of ethnical-national community on such foundations.

Cancelling the rhythm of bitter, cursed current history of the native population, became an important aim in the undertaken educational activity (Witkowska 1971: 13). A campaign was started to defend compatriots against unjust, unfair and discrediting stereotyping of the region in Prussian-German literature, focused on political instrumentalization of “otherness”, in which Upper Silesia was assumed to be presented as a backward province. Such an image of the land was stigmatised by the Protestant criticism of Catholicism, applying Tylor’s evolutionary orientation in comparative analyses, permitting to perceive and evaluate it through the prism of “barbarian” peripheries and modern centre⁸. The German standpoint, founded on the regional-tribal thought, vivid at those times in Germany, included the conceptualisation of social and religious “otherness” alongside the widely-held beliefs concerning “national characters” (Surynt 2006: 58–61; Duć-Fajfer 2006: 434)⁹.

Domestic writers argued against this geopolitical system in many works. Lompa in the poem *Pożegnanie* [Goodbye] addressed “nice, despised Silesian Poles”, and in *Przestroga do przeciwników narodowości polskiej w Szląsku pruskim* [Warning for Opponents of Polish Nationality in Prussian Silesia] (Pisarze śląscy 1963: 126–127) he appealed to “the German brother” for “honest” evaluation of facts and for rejecting the attitude of “a sworn enemy”, reminding that Silesians “were born into the world out of the Slavic blood”. Obviously, this message reflected Slavophile tones and the Romantic vision of the world as a confederation of nations fraternized in the name of freedom and equality, but what was of primary importance was to depict the region as an area of borderland where competition between the values of two different national cultures would give rise to an unstable national attitude, but also antagonize co-citizens of the region¹⁰. To prevent such problems, Upper Silesians almost simultaneously with activists from other countries, shaped in people the knowledge of their cultural roots, demonstrating their differences. Since they based the development of the regional cultural

⁸ The founder of evolutionary anthropology, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, used the criterion of uneven development of culture to describe, e.g. poverty in Ireland (Paluch 1990: 25).

⁹ Silesians did not remain silent towards this charge, quite contrary: Miarka published in “Katoлик” *Powiadki z życia Irlandczyków* [Tales from the Life of Irishmen.]. Texts of “apparently” random content, in view of the analogy of accusations, became updated in terms of ideology and gained new meanings, thus increasing their persuasive capacity. Stanisław Belza did not understand this measure, criticizing Karol Miarka for alien motifs in 1890, while suggesting to Bronisław Koraszewski the programme for the newspaper, focused on “historical, familiar matters, mainly wartime issues”, on tales based on the history of the region and the biographies of heroic kings (Tobiasz 1938: 34 and 39).

¹⁰ Multiple tales and theatre plays written by the pioneers of literary life depicted characters, who, surrendering to ambivalence, experienced the crisis of their cultural identity and the feeling of alienation from their own tradition, as exemplified, among others, by Karol Miarka’s *Kulturnik* or Piotr Kołodziej’s *Obieżyśasi*.

identity on group and territorial identification, they undertook in their work topics facilitating self-cognition. This purpose was to be achieved by the following questions: Where am I from? Which group do I identify with? Who is “one of us”, and who is a “stranger”? It was an important step in initiating the process leading to dissemination of self-knowledge in the region. With certain reservations, they also started to support the sphere of “imagined” identifications, since they started teaching autochthonic cultural content, with which the fellow countrymen should identify, and stimulated recognition of senses, which were strange to them. Formulating regional cultural identity, they initially took into account the so-called “permeating” identities (religion, language, family traditions, local group and with time also nationality) and in the subsequent stage, complex, situational identities, taking into account the fact that Silesians, surrounded by German culture, constantly had a choice of different identities. Making the compatriots aware of those regularities, educating and them and raising their awareness of local conditions, the activists wanted them to consciously resign from “balancing” between ethnic possibilities and to reject temporary profits from alternation offered to them.

The activists started to construct the civic community by self-learning their own cultural reality. This process took different forms. One of the strategies initiated by Józef Lompa consisted in initiating ethnographic journeys into the country to diagnose the identity of fellow countrymen expressed in oral folklore, followed by popularization of folk motives processed into various stories based on the local history¹¹. Karol Miarka, Juliusz Ligoń¹², Józef Gallus and many others contributed huge folklore collections. This, by its very nature a Romantic way of searching for national traditions in Upper Silesia, gained importance as the method for supporting current axiological decisions. Moreover, it was particularly important since the government prohibited folk practices in the region, as the Prussian authorities

¹¹ Many available examples include here the novel by Józef Lompa *Historia o pobożnej i błogosławionej Petroneli polskiej pustelnicy na górze Chełm u S. Anny w górnym [sic!] Śląsku* [A Story about Pious and Blessed Petronela, a Polish Hermit at Chełm Mountain at St. Anna's in Upper Silesia] and *Zamek w Głogówku. Powieść historyczna* [The Castle in Głogówek. A Historical Novel], as well as tales by Karol Miarka, such as: *Petronela: pustelnica z Góry św. Anny. Historia jej żywota* [Petronela: a Hermit from St. Ann Mountain. The Story of Her Life], *Górka Klemensowa. Powieść z czasów zaprowadzenia chrześcijaństwa na Śląsku, oparta na podaniach ludu* [Klemens Hill. A Story from the Times when Christianity was introduced to Silesia, based on Folk Tales], *Husyci na Górnym Śląsku czyli powieść o zamordowaniu kapłana Walentego, założeniu kościoła jankowskiego i oblężeniu Żorów w roku 1433 z ustnego podania ludu* [Hussites in Upper Silesia or the Novel about Murdering Rev. Walenty, Establishing the Church in Jankowice and Siege of Żory in 1433, Based on Oral Folk Tales], *Szwedzi w Łęczinach. Powieść górnośląska z czasów 30-letniej wojny* [Swedes in Łęcziny. An Upper Silesian Novel from the times of the 30-Year War], or *Żywce zamurowana. Powieść górnośląska podług starej kroniki* [Walled-In Alive. An Upper Silesian Novel according to an Old Chronicle], as well as excerpts from *Stary kościół miechowski* [The Old Church in Miechów] (Bonczyk 1987: 105, 127–128).

¹² This activity was also continued in the interwar period by his grandson – Stanisław Ligoń – a famous radio journalist, known for popularization of Silesian humour.

considered them dangerous for the plans of Germanisation. Gathering folklore with the aim of its re-introduction to circulation, Silesians contributed to the growth of national self-knowledge of compatriots, but – which should be emphasized – they constructed a model of massed culture, in which “folk nature” was an unquestionable ideological aspect. Since the strategy of building the popular culture market and local conditions for its development was well known to them, they started with seeking for appropriate content to be provided in journals intended for Silesian peasants. This programme was outlined by Józef Lompa in the letter to the editor of “Dziennik Górnśląski”, when he asked him to promote correct Polish and to provide historical information concerning the history of Silesia, both its past and present times. Lompa assumed that by gaining this knowledge, a Silesian would know that “his homeland is not only the land where he was born”, but also that “its great past belongs to him, in his spirit he is linked to the bones and ashes of his ancestors, the greatness and fame he inherited” (*Pisarze śląscy* 1963: 130–131). “Playing” the European game, Silesians on one hand saturated their works with values by taking up the subject of political location of the region and the civic life of compatriots (this content helped them to build strong links with their own land, founded on the feeling of conscious pride, later transformed into Polish historical beliefs)¹³, while on the other, through adjustment to the (then) emerging tourism industry, they undertook the effort to popularize, among rural and lower middle-class population, trips to the places of the cults of saints, and to magnificent material evidence of the Polish culture archaic quality (preserving religious customs, they responded to travelling trends and to a growing need for protection of monuments as well as the willingness to see them). Visiting them supported the promotion among Upper Silesians of the love for their political homeland (at that time not existing on the maps) – the homeland of the entire nation to which they also belonged, and of citizenship ties with the homeland and Poles divided by borders. In travel advertisements and in reports describing the journeys, they treated monuments as symbols of the former splendour of Poland, as places emanating with their genius and becoming through that – as it was called in the Romantic regionalism – memory curators. After all, religious trips also brought polyvalent senses, since pilgrims also experienced the great national past there. Therefore, they could be used as well in the political mode to shape community and even national attitudes among Silesians. In Upper Silesia, patriotic initiation was almost similar to the religious initiation, which was determined by the

¹³ Initially, the national discourse was dominated by an important problem of language closed in the idealistic formula of the Gospel, later, by putting forward this postulate in many works, the proselytization of “freedom” was sanctioned with the universal ethic norm, close to priests and derived from the theological discourse of inherent (natural) right, creating a moral reason for the fight to maintain nationality, therefore for Miarka it provided a philosophy of national being, medium for continuing “tradition of forefathers”, grounds for disseminating Polish historicism, a platform to build unity with the nation divided through partitions. Slogans about political emancipation did not come to the fore of the argumentation until World War I, and in particular, the time of insurrections.

educational programme of Karol Miarka presented in 1882 in the memorial to the Committee of “*Macierz Polska*” (Miarka 1974: 93–97). Miarka in this extent followed the path of Polish Romanticists, who formed the portrait of a Pole-Catholic in the atmosphere of patriotic religiousness. Standing on the ground of the Polish-centrism, they assumed in extreme situations that religion, even more than ethnic origin or language, draws a line for forming the Polishness. This doctrine in the popular form, later on referred to as the “religion of the homeland”, through the patriotic attitude demonstrated by some clergy in temples and outside them, developed the feelings of love to mother-homeland, associating the metaphysics of love with the concept of duty towards native land and compatriots (faithfulness to religion – religion of faithfulness)¹⁴. It is worth noting that “cultural pilgrim” was an important link in the modern process of developing “contemporary tourist” not only in Upper Silesia, and emphasizing that local writers and at the same time activists, efficiently used the possibilities developed at the then market of European culture by pioneers of social engineering. The efficiency of Upper Silesian authors was proven by the unquestionable respect they enjoyed among compatriots, which translated into the success of the purpose of the undertaken activity.

Following the path of the modern communication system, they made literature “the torch of history”, revealing to the nation – as indicated by Maurycy Mochnacki – those futures from its past, which would help fellow countrymen understand their current condition. Therefore, from the end of 1850s, in their local works, they combined Silesianity with Polish national consciousness. They authenticated this feeling both in the geographical sense (demonstrating the unity of Silesia with other lands of the former Republic of Poland), as well as in the historical-humane sense. In this latter aspect, the following arguments were put forward: community of customs, common cultural heritage, including the exclusiveness of Polish in texts written during the times of Prussian/German statehood – a dialect was used only by immigrant authors of German/Protestant origin (Obrączka 2002), but also developed historical memory focused on common Piast country and clichés of Polish glory – mainly on the Grunwald victory, the defence of Częstochowa, the cult of Kościuszko or the relief of Vienna. It was believed that this heroic past of Poles, and their glory in the battlefield, is of high importance for levelling out critical opinions on Polishness, disseminated by Prussians in school teaching and in the local German press. The writers also assumed that such a message would contribute further on to deepening the hubristic attitude, to increasing the feeling of pride emerging from belonging to the community of

¹⁴ Buildings and all monuments that Upper Silesians were to be seen during the trip, played the role of “external” memory, which as a result of proper interpretation in sermons delivered in the places of worship or in explanations of guides directing them along the monuments, and first of all in their descriptions in the Upper Silesian press and in stories printed on their pages, were to be transformed into the “internal” or individual memory of “each” fellow countrymen, shaped as “our true” memory of the regional community (Kossakowska-Jarosz 2014: 165 and subsequent).

Poles, and therefore to increasing the opinion concerning their own importance. This *residuum* of cultural memory of Poles, reminding Upper Silesians of the images of past Polish glory, already in 1870s started to replace the initial set of events included in book calendars and annuals, which rather linked Silesia with the tradition of the Prussian-German statehood. This transformation of content remarkably confirmed the success of Upper Silesians in the field of building the cohesion between the identity of the inhabitants of the region and their ethnical identification (Kossakowska-Jarosz 1994a: 9)¹⁵. From that moment, the power of the process of (re)gaining their conscience for the Polish national interest only strengthened.

The literature of Silesians is characterized by a specific description of the world from the regional and private perspective. Pioneers started their creative activity from reciting occasional poems intended for a specific group of people, with content related to specific events. They were to honour both local jubilees and national anniversaries. Along with those works, some of them (particularly local teachers) prepared textbooks for fellow countrymen (of historical, geographical and linguistic content) developed from the perspective of regional ideas and interests. Frequent motifs in their texts included the topic of homeland, its topography and everyday life, which only reinforced the thesis of their Romantic-Biedermeier worldview (typical for many ethnic groups struggling for independence). Poems by Norbert Bonczyk *Stary kościół miechowski* [*The Old Church in Miechów*] and *Góra Chełmska* [*Chelm Mountain*] provide a spectacular evidence of this approach, as they are saturated with images of the beauty of the homeland, the fertility of its fields and areas abundant with minerals (due to which huge industry could develop, earning wealth only for newcomers), the land of honest, pious, and devoted people, although not free from their vices, which, however, does not prevented them from being attached to the local tradition, language and faith. The promotion of being enclosed within one's own community, a family village, in the world of friendly nature, resulted from the need to praise native culture. Promotion of homeliness supported the task assigned to the countrymen for continuing "a phalanx of peasants" as guardians of former models of life (the criterion of the value of land reported by Damrot in the poem *Moja ojczyzna* [*My Homeland*])¹⁶.

¹⁵ For more than half a century, the idea of the unity between the region and other Polish areas, in the opinion of contemporary researchers, was considered to be the benchmark of "the most honest national intentions". According to Aleksander Kwiatek, Rev. Alojzy Ficek started promotion of this concept by publishing Karol Antoniewicz's journalist work in "Tygodnik Katolicki", but it emerged earlier, during the Spring of Nations (Kwiatek 1992: 182).

¹⁶ The criterion of values of one's land, which made Silesians think about it with noticeable pride, was actually seen in the glorification of own heritage, and, against this background, in absolutization of cultural boundaries, expressed under the slogans of the obligation to continue "a phalanx of peasants" guarding former patterns of life. The apology of "homeliness" had great mythisation powers, as unmasking the fall of good life patterns was used for developing a self-stereotype of honest and despicable Silesians. In the Romantic spirit, it was believed that by postulating collective re-

Guarding frozen borders of one's own culture was to be used for the sake of desirable development of the region. Those intentions can be read from the poem *Stary kościół miechowski* [*The Old Church in Miechów*] by Bonczyk, in which the poet, referring to Mickiewicz's formula, "wanted to return to the ages of childhood and homesteads", as he hoped that this turn towards the past will permit to "close the door to the 'Europe of noises'" (Zielonka 2006: 316). Preserved family values should provide a foundation for rational modernity, as only then – as it was considered – could they subjectively situate the Silesian ethnic group within the history of the world. Therefore, poets did not want to encourage isolation of consciousness, but wisely used collective memory about own heritage. Thus, the authors used the sign of local identity in order to promote a specific concept of life, in which regional tradition became a synonym of decent everyday life at present and safe future. By placing its image as an opposition of modernity, they could convince the readers that without maintaining their tradition, autochthon Silesians would not remain themselves, and thus, they could not exist¹⁷. The memory of its own past reflexively sacralised Silesianity, added up to its value and prestige. "Long ago – therefore – is a synonym of duration and indirectly justifies the right to exist" (Szacka 2006: 48).

sistance towards transformations, the source of which was the "despicable" community of the town, it would be possible to preserve original Silesian decency, to build on this base successful future of the land. Women living in cities were the first ones to be accused of opening to novelties too fast. This line of thinking is fully demonstrated by excerpts from the Upper Silesian journalism, quoted in my numerous publications (e.g. Kossakowska-Jarosz 2009: 229, 231–232, 246).

¹⁷ The writers made the order to maintain the traditional approach a duty for an individual, as it was seen as an indispensable condition for the group to survive. For realisation of this work, support was sought among Poles living beyond Silesia, as the spontaneous increase in national self-knowledge or independent implementation of task was not considered possible (Wrzesiński 1988: 132–133). First of all, appeals were made to publishing offices of important Cracow, Poznan and Warsaw journals, and to well-known writers. Appeals to them were continued to be published, even when they complained about being forgotten in the motherland. Silesians long and bitterly commented on the external indifference for the matters of the "Silesian beloved homeland". They emphasized that the attitude of Wincenty Pol, who "did not mentioned a word about Silesia" in *Pieśń o ziemi naszej* [*Song on Our Land*] ("Gazeta Opolska" 1891, No. 82) was a telling manifestation of this indifference. Such a complaint had been previously reported by Norbert Bonczyk in the poem *Góra Chełmska* [*Chelm Mountain*] (Bonczyk 1985: 21) and Konstanty Damrot in the poem *Moja ojczyzna* [*My Homeland*]; and later by Maksymilian Jesionowski in the poem *Mazur* [*A Mazurian*], and Rev. Emil Szramek, who in his work titled *Śląsk jako problem socjologiczny* [*Silesia as a Sociological Problem*] confirmed the permanent disappointment of Silesians using the following words: "No land is as praised as Silesia, although Wincenty Pol completely forgot about it in 'Song on Our Land'" (Szramek 1991: 63). Obviously, these are not all exemplifications of reproofs. The grudge of Silesians against Pol was justified, as the writer was aware of the situation of their region, for instance after a visit he was paid by Józef Lompa. In his report from this visit, Lompa referred to Pol as the "present time Mickiewicz from Cracow" and the "professor". In turn, Pol could talk with Lompa with full awareness, as he got acquainted with Silesia during journey (from Mikołów along the Oder River through Koźle to Opole, and then from Wrocław to the Karkonosze spa) taken even before the Spring of Nations (Pol 1974: 229–232).

Obviously, encouragements to isolate oneself from modernity were not only the domain of Silesians, as they were a typical feature of the 19th century Polish countryside. However, here, the tradition and (formulated within its boundaries) the myth of Silesianity took on the role of modern identity, the most significant source of self-cognition in the conditions of unfavourable activity of “strange” neighbours, treating Polishness as the synonym of peasantry, commonness and ignorance. It was devastating for family community, especially that social advancement of individuals, which automatically was combined with Germanisation, had the same meaning.

Protection of the home tradition belonged to the ideas of the Romantic world. Following this path, local activists called for selection of authenticity preserved in Silesianity juxtaposed with non-authentic mythisation, occurring as a result of the pressure of alien ethnic (coexistence with Germans) and civilisation patterns (a cosmopolitan city)¹⁸. Consequently, they pragmatically used the figure of “past times”, since they assumed that it would be used for revalorizing preserved values in order to emphasize historical continuity, but also for “installing modernity in the costume of tradition” (Sulima 2001: 147). Observing the ruins of the former life, they enclosed their vision of transformation in an optimistic version of tradition founded on the assumption that Silesian culture was an organized world and the society of relatively permanent structure, independent of the individual. Therefore, they wanted their works to act as identifiers and a tool to support the resistance against the oppression and mythisation of colonised Silesianity. Consequently, they formed the figure of Silesianity in opposition to external “others”, but also internal “others”, considering that workers’ culture of the cosmopolitan city colonises their land following the conquistador’s model. Without shaping the

¹⁸ The fear of ethnical variety was the reason why writers were barely able to combine benefits derived from modernization with preservation of “good traditions”. In Upper Silesia, for the fact that national division overlapped the class division, social clichés permeated national ones. Advancement from a peasant to a qualified worker, and even more to a caretaker in the factory in an industrialized city, was highly tempting, but at the same time, it let to abandoning “one’s own” local tradition for the sake of entering the circle of the “alien” culture of the dominant society. The social success was here something more than improvement of the life status, as it forced assimilation with Germany. The plutocracy and intelligentsia in the region consisted mainly of Germans. A quite opposite standpoint as regards evaluation of the Prussian administration of this area and benefits for its inhabitants was presented by Germans. They – understandably – mentioned only advantages. This introduces duality in the vision of the region. Germans depreciated everything that was Silesian, while Polish writers glorified the native world. Those views were reflected in the construction of the presented world in prosaic and scenic works published at that time by autochthon authors. They revealed in them amplified fear against a cosmopolitan city (*de facto* an ideological fear – immersed in the concept of the world, and here, additionally also in the ethnic situation), as living in its space in the Silesian way of thinking became tantamount to the total loss of links with one’s own customs, one’s own heritage. It was seen as a settlement characterized in many ways by the lack of continuation. Without the protests of Upper Silesian authors, continuity and change in the culture of the region would not remain in an acceptable relation, but the dynamics of those determinants would undergo radical breakdown, since at the threshold it would be linked to complete the transformation.

“other” as demonstrating different features than “our beloved compatriot brothers”, it would be impossible to capture dialogic relations, determining the visions of “others” from the ethnocentric point of view, but also forming the community out of “fellow” inhabitants who want to preserve the protected heritage.

The strategy of the need to “talk about oneself” had a persuasive meaning, built on the mythised figure of “Silesian rural nature”. From this perspective, specific notions focused both on depicting “landviews” of the region, pleasing the eye and warming the heart of the observer, but also on illustrating the striving towards maintenance of local traditions. Those both components made together the “aesthetic of the canon”, as described by Jurij Łotman. A previously observed turn towards the past associated with the folk culture took fundamental meaning in the method of depicting the nature of the Silesian land, despite noticeable changes in the economic and cultural situation of the region (violent industrialization and urbanization). For these reasons, Upper Silesian writers in the 19th century associated their land almost exclusively with the folklore formed in the family village. Therefore, they transformed the image of Silesianity in a manner referred to by Roland Barthes as “distorting and bending” (Barthes 2008: 261), and by Eric Hobsbawm as “inventing” (Hobsbawm 2008). Shaping an emotional relation of Silesian readers to their own place and its past, they also implemented guidelines observed in the programmes of Romantic regionalism, promoting spiritual messages of homeliness and supporting specific activities aimed at popularization and protection of home tradition. Silesianity located in the countryside in the social process of marking the space regained its authenticity and achieved Arcadian harmony based on unity of the human being and the nature (according to the historical-philosophical vision of the world by Jean-Jacques Rousseau), while a civilized, and thus emancipated from the bosom of nature, city was demonstrated as the space of departing from the balanced rhythm of every day, based on cosmic order of day and night, as well as on corresponding order of work and rest (e.g. Bonczyk 1987: 37–38, 127–128). A sentimental vision of the countryside and positively characterized images of the past (as a manifestation of Romantic apology of homeland continued in the Biedermeier spirituality, at the same time demonstrating regional nostalgias and neuroses), in particular the fear against breaking cultural isolation, assumed in the programme, which was easier to maintain in the province, were the reasons why the widely-held vision of Upper Silesia as factory area was not configured right away. Pioneers, including Miarka, Damrot and Bonczyk, depicted the process of introducing smoking chimneys and furnaces bursting with flames into the rustic landscape in their literary works from the perspective of harmonious symbiosis between nature and industry (Bonczyk 1987: 172–173), which could superficially suggest that they did not see the disastrous effects of industrialization for long. However, those depictions of the local reality can be combined with characteristic features of the Biedermeier literature, with its romantic relation to native scenery, experiencing small, even insignificant things,

as long as it serves the approach of “collecting” impressions and “fostering” memory (Kossakowska-Jarosz 2014: 33). They deliberately chose the version of the harmless city which does not disturb the local ideal in the assumed literary geography – for their orientation towards creating a harmonious, idealized image of the homeland. The choice of such geopolitics was motivated by the programme advanced by Miarka. He recommended that literature should be free from the criticism of negative phenomena in the life of the region, reserved for press genres, which was significantly reflected in the writer’s decisions. A “shady” city was depicted by Silesians mainly in journalistic descriptions, where they accused fellow countrymen of surrendering to alien novelty, ruining Silesianity and provided descriptions of the mimesis taking place¹⁹. In the press and in the scenic images, concerned about building patriotic attitudes of Upper Silesians, they listed catastrophic risks posed to native customs by the space of an anonymous city, predisposing towards alienation from the local tradition. The process of transformation was demonstrated first in departures from local dialect, in adopting urban clothes associated with welfare and prestige, and in introducing novelties in family meals, followed by custom and religious redefinitions, and finally in a deep, ethnic and cultural conflict (Kossakowska-Jarosz 2001: 31–49; 2009: 228–250). The risk of giving up local models of life was growing along with the development of the world of chimneys, slag heaps and mineshafts full of simple workers, performing their work without proper protection devices and without social protection in an unpleasant, stinking and unfriendly environment. Domestic critics of culture believed that the zone of difficult existence, full of hardship and dirt, contributed to “bad habits” of workers (Kossakowska-Jarosz 2012: 233–247), and therefore to hybridization of the local Silesianity. The city experienced in this manner horrified the writers. In the press debate (since popular periodicals were the most effective means to prefabricate imagination of compatriots than literature, although it was so popular here), they created the map of the conceptual city, finding its extension in the spatial myth of “black” Silesia. They mixed this content, growing from conservative views of a rustic and xenophobic tone, with the cult of the region and the dispute of the nationality. Silesians were not isolated in their vision of the town as an area threatening an individual and a group; also in this regard they participated in the polyphony of ethnic minorities (Rybicka 2006: 474–480). The odium was removed from the Upper Silesian cities only when they played the role of the Polish culture centres. Upon being given such significance, they gained a flattering opinion of publicists, particularly when they greatly contributed to forming Polishness in Upper Silesia, with an intention to create “better living conditions” for its native inhabitants.

¹⁹ The concept of mimesis was made present by literary postcolonial studies, focusing on ethnic differences. Their theory was formed by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, while the standards of dynamically developing postcolonial criticism were built by Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Wilson Harris (Duć-Fajfer 2006: 436, 440–441).

To summarize the cultural role of the 19th century literature by autochthon Upper Silesians in fostering regional patriotism, it should be emphasized that the space of their works, filled with cultural values, acquired features of ideological space, mythical space and symbolic space. Promoted attitudes and personal assets became a causative force, which fundamentally contributed to the development of frameworks for the Upper Silesian *imaginarium*, a set of ideas describing and explaining Upper Silesian cultural reality. Description of the homeland reality undertaken by the writers was used at the same time for persuasion purposes. For this reason, the images they promoted were so constructed as to combine images and beliefs, forming an entirety in terms of meaning, which constructed a kind of a spiritual map, a plan of actions and internalized understanding of the world. Local writers continued their chosen perspective for generations, as the aim was far-reaching. The content they promoted attributed Silesia to Poland, and Polishness, and finally Poland, to Silesians. Based on those ideas, they formed a national community with Upper Silesians (“beloved old comrades” – as Damrot wrote in the programme poem *Nasze hasło* [*Our Slogan*]), by first rooting them in their own tradition, and later, after rapid consolidation of this success, by attributing them to Polishness. Disclosing to compatriots the historical and social truth about them, previously distorted in Prussia, and the knowledge of their humanistic features, the writers built the identity of fellow countrymen. They also fostered knowledge of the current geopolitical situation of the region by presenting examples proving colonisation of their homeland, which brought an equally important effect. Without their intensified effort, Upper Silesians would most probably not join in the fight in Silesian uprisings for including their land to the Republic of Poland reborn after partitions, or would not respond in great numbers in the years of the plebiscite and uprisings with their actions for Poland. They were spurred on to significant explosion of national declarations at that time by the slogan derived from Mickiewicz and popular at that time: “Raczej żelazo rozpalone w dłoni / Niżli krzyżacką prawicę uściskać” [You’d rather carry red hot iron / than shake the Teutonic hand] (Heska-Kwaśniewicz 1999: 29).

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Summary

This text is part of the author's research on the literary culture of the nineteenth-century Upper Silesia. The author shows that at the forefront of modern Europe (at the beginning of industrialization and urbanization of the continent) the autochthon writers of Upper Silesia undertook actions aimed at fostering cultural awareness amongst their compatriots, who were considered to belong to a national minority, in order to instil patriotic feelings in them. In the current post-colonial discourse their struggles are recognized as the “voice of the periphery”. Striving to achieve civic maturity in their Polish ecumene, these writers demonstrated considerable knowledge of their own Polish roots as the inhabitants of this region. They assumed they must be aware of their distinctness from the dominant society in the Prussian state. The messages conveyed to their compatriots consisted in emphasizing the common history of Silesians and Poles and remembering the glorious past of the latter. These were the foundations for shaping the sense of identity as well as for creating strong ties with their own land. The development of such an emotional attitude towards the place and its past among the readers allowed for effective building of patriotic attitudes, which was confirmed by contemporary observers of the writers' efforts. They continued coming to Upper Silesia from other regions of the former Polish Republic to learn about ways of writing “for people.”

