Rhetoric, Religion, and Politics in the Talks Between the Church and the Authorities in Poland, 1980-1989.[1]

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Religion and politics constitute, and articulate, two different, yet ultimately complementary and intersecting relationships: divinitas, the relationship to the transcendent, spiritual, and inner; and civitas, the relations that constitute people into a specific, historically existing community. These two types of relations constitute the modalities of the human being in the world. They intersect in the ethical moment, in which "transcendent" principles or moral values are rendered in terms of "political" relations and action. It is this moment of "rendering" that involves rhetoric.

Gaudium et spes, the constitution of the modern Catholic church, articulates the relationship between religion and politics as a function of the dual, at once "personal" and "social," nature of man and of his existence at the intersection of the temporal and eternal orders. It defines the specific terms of this relationship as an outcome of a historically contextualized application of the Church's ethical teaching to the civic realm (the realm that involves relations of "citizenship," those among citizens as well as among citizens and political authority).

The article examines the historical relationship between rhetoric, religion, and politics in the context of the talks between the Polish Church and the authorities during the1980s. These talks, started initially to prepare the 1979 visit of Pope John Paul II, evolved from a mechanism for addressing and resolving specific problems to a strategic partnership unprecedented in the Eastern block, in effect an experiment in shared decision-making that played a critical role in the political breakthrough of 1989.

In the context of the Church-authorities talks, the changes in the relationship between religion and politics in Poland over the 1980s consisted of, on the one hand, an increasing "colonization" of heretofore fundamentally civic relations (political authority, civic order, nature of the state) by the axiological discourse of religion, and, on the other hand, a gradual "decolonization" of "personal" and "moral" territory by the discourse of politics. In Poland today (2007), the idiom of religion is very much part of the public language of politics and permeates other areas of civic life (for instance, education or public health); before the 1980s, the languages of religion and politics were sharply separated, in fact, were generally considered incompatible. One might suggest that the general blurring of the boundaries between religion and politics, the gradual "moralizing" of the language of politics, and the loss of legitimacy (and thus authority) by political authorities led to a shift in the locus of the social bond from a deficient civic community to an ideal spiritual/moral community (embodied for many people, at least between 1980 and 1981, in the general idea of "Solidarity" as a spiritual/political community alternative to the failed political promise of real socialism). This shift constituted a fundamental, although largely invisible, transformation that formed the run-up to and the

[1] A shorter version of this paper was presented at the 16th congress of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric, Strasbourg, France, July 24-28, 2007. This paper is based on material for a South-Africa/Poland research project, National Research Foundation under Grant number 2063121.

background of the properly "political" transformation that followed. The consequences of this fundamental shift in the character of the social bond continue to play themselves out in, and haunt, the new democratic Polish republic.

Retoryka, Religia, i Polityka w Kontekscie Rozmow Kosciol-Wladza w Polsce, 1980-1989

Religia i polityka stanowia, i artykuluja, dwie rozne ale uzupelniajace i przecinajace sie zasadnicze relacje: divinitas, relacja czlowieka do elementu transcendentnego, duchowego, wewnetrznego; i civitas, relacje ktore stanowia konkretna, historycznie istniejaca spolecznosc. Te dwie relacje stanowia zasadnicze modalnosci istnienia ludzkiego w swiecie. Przecinaja sie one w momencie etycznym, w ktorym transcendentne zasady lub moralne wartosci przekladaja sie na stosunki lub dzialalnosc polityczna. Moment "przekladania" pociaga za soba retoryke.

Gaudium et spes, konstytucja wspolczesnego Kosciola Katolickiego, ujmuje wspolzaleznosc pomiedzy religia i polityka jako funkcje dwoistej, zarazem "osobowej" i "spolecznej" natury czlowieka i jego istnienia na przecieciu dwoch porzadkow: doczesnego i wiecznego. Definiuje ona zatem te wspolzaleznosc jako wynik historycznie skontekstualizowej wykladni etycznej nauki Kosciola w stosunku do porzadku spolecznego (porzadku na ktroy skladaja sie zarowno relacje "obywatelskie" jak i relacje wladzy, pomiedzy obywatelami a wladza).

Autor sledzi te historyczne wspolzaleznosci pomiedzy retoryka, religia, i polityka na przykladzie rozmow miedzy przedstawicielami Episkopatu i wladzy w latach 80ych. Rozmowy te, rozpoczate przygotowaniami do wizyty Papieza Jana Pawla II do Polski w 1979 roku, rozwinely sie z czasem z mechanizmu do rozwiazywania biezacych problemow w strategiczne partnerstwo bez precedensu w tzw. obozie socjalistycznym. W efekcie staly sie one eksperymentem we wspodzialaniu ktory odegral zasadnicza role w doprowadzeniu do rozmow "Okraglego Stolu."

W kontekscie tych rozmow, ewolucja stosunkow pomiedzy religia i polityka w latach 80ych skladala sie, z jednej strony, ze stopniowej "kolonizacji" coraz szerszych obszarow dotychczas 'politycznej" rzeczywistosci przez aksjologiczny jezyk i pojeciowosc religijna, a z drugiej strony przez "dekolonizacje" przestrzeni "osobistej" i "moralnej" przez jezyk polityki. W Polsce dzisiejszej (2007), jezyk religii przenika jezyk polityki i innych dziedzin zycia spolecznego (np. edukacji, polityki spolecznej, czy zdrowia); przed 1980 rokiem, jezyki te byly scisle rozdzielone, wrecz nieprzstosowalne. Mozna by zasugerowac, ze ogolne zamazanie granic pomiedzy polityka i religia w Polsce Ludowej jak i stopniowa "moralizacja" jezyka polityki i utrata legitymacji (i autorytetu) przez wladze polityczna w latach 80ych doprowadzily do przesuniecia srodka ciezkosci ukladu spolecznego z ulomnej wspolnoty obywatelskiej ku idealnej wspolnocie duchowo/moralnej (ucielesninej, dla wielu, przynajmniej w latach 1980-81, w idei "Solidarnosci" jako utopijnej wspolnoty duchowo/politycznej, alternatywnej wobec skompromitowanych nadziei realnego socjalismu). To przesuniecie stanowilo byc moze zasadnicza, aczkolwiek niewidzialna, transformacje ktora z kolei stala sie podstawa juz scisle politycznej transformacji ktora nastapila wkrotce potem. Konsekwencje tej transformacji wciaz sie rozgrywaja w nowej, demokratycznej Polsce.

Introduction

In a recent overview of the problematic of rhetoric and religion, Laurent Pernot has suggested that the relationship between rhetoric and religion is to be sought in areas where "rhetoric and religion cross paths" (253). These include the "affinities that exist between persuasion and belief and between art and the sacred" (253), religious polemic and conflict, blasphemy, and "the feeling of belonging to a community" (254). By "community" Pernot understands both religious communities per se as well as "the rhetorical community formed by the audience listening to a speaker" (254).

That communities are to a significant extent constituted through discourse and symbols has become an established tenet of sociological thought (see, for instance, Anderson, Bauman, Cohen). Rhetoric may be involved in the constitution of communities in various ways beyond "the audience listening to a speaker": it may play a role in the collective "imagining" of community (I'm referring here to the title of Benedict Anderson's seminal work); it may have a "constitutive" function (Charland); and it may play a variety of roles in the construction and articulation of collective identities (Cohen; Llobera; Ornatowski, "Topoi"; Radcliffe and Westwood). In any of these roles, rhetoric may "cross paths" with religion.

Indeed, rhetoric and religion crossed paths repeatedly in the course of the political transition in Poland. Most significant in this respect were perhaps the visits, oratory, and writings of Pope John Paul II (for an analysis of the rhetoric of John Paul II's visits to Poland, see Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership"). Less visible but also important was the fundamentally Christian inspiration behind the ideology (such as it was) and discourse of "Solidarity" (for a Christian exegesis of the concept of "Solidarity," see Tischner). Other important aspects of the Polish transition where rhetoric and religion "crossed paths" include the sermons of such "political" priests as Jerzy Popieluszko, various religious ceremonies (for instance, pilgrimages to Jasna Gora), and performances and exhibitions in churches during the 1980s. In all of these cases, rhetoric, religion, and politics participated in various ways in the constitution, or rather reconstitution, of the Polish civic/political community (or, to use Kenneth Burke's suggestive term, "congregation") (Burke, "Attitudes").

In the present reflection, I examine the relationship between rhetoric, religion, and politics in the context of the talks between the Polish Church and the authorities during the1980s. These talks, started initially to prepare the 1979 visit of Pope John Paul II, turned, after 1982, into regular contacts that encompassed an increasingly broad spectrum of social, political, and economic issues: labor and criminal law, international relations, the American embargo on the import of corn to feed chickens, and many others. Through much of the 1980s, these talks were conducted through three major avenues: the "Joint" Commission that focused on the visits of Pope John Paul II; the "Mixed" Commission that dealt with the relations between church and state and the Vatican and Poland; and individual contacts between selected bishops and selected regime officials that dealt with all manner of issues, including ones that could not be resolved within the two commissions. By 1987, these talks evolved from a mechanism for addressing and resolving specific problems to a strategic partnership unprecedented in the Eastern block, in effect an experiment in shared decision-making that played a critical role in the political

breakthrough of 1989 (Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership"; Orszulik; Raina, "Wizyty," "Cele"; *Tajne Dokumenty*).[2]

The relationship between what Franklin Littell has referred to as the "two covenants"--the religious and the political--is an important aspect of the constitution of nations and other communities. To a significant extent, this relationship determines the character of the community. In Poland, this relationship changed dramatically between the late 1970s and early 1990s (this change was reflected, among other things, in the changing public responses of Pope John Paul II's visits; see Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership"). Understanding these changes may facilitate an informed dialog about the role of religion in Polish political life today.

This discussion will begin with some preliminary general reflections on the relationship between rhetoric, religion, and politics. Then, I briefly discuss this relationship, for comparative purposes, in the American tradition. Finally, I attempt to trace, in a preliminary way, the evolution of this relationship in Poland from the late 1970s through the end of the 1980s, focusing on what we can learn about it from the Church-government talks between 1981 and 1989.

Rhetoric, Religion, and Politics: Some Conceptual Background

A recent issue of *Newsweek* magazine devoted to the global resurgence of religious fervor, noted that "[f]aith may or may not move mountains, but it is doubtless one of the prime movers in politics" (Prothero). In spite of modern talk about the "separation of church and state," within Christianity at least, religion and politics have always been intimately related. In the prophetic tradition, as in Christian witness more generally, religion *is* politics. As Charles Davis points out, "Yahweh from the beginning was a political God. Most of the images and symbols we use of god are [both] social and political in their basic meaning. . . . Jesus died, not because of his inner life of prayer, but because of his impact upon the social order" (59).

One of the factors that underlie the essentially performative character of Christian faith is that the faithful find themselves in always changing situations and circumstances (Fodor and Hauerwas). This performative character is expressed, among other things, in the fundamentally rhetorical nature of Christian theology, which, according to James Fodor and Stanley Hauerwas, consists of "the performing of a rhetoric," a constant attempt to find the right words to express

[2] The fact of continuous talks, however, does not mean that the struggle between the Church and the state diminished in intensity. The talks, at least until the mid-1980s, took place against the background of intense official offensive against the Church. This offensive took such forms as, to mention just a few, intensified attempts to recruit priests as informers of the security forces; intensified surveillance of the Church at all levels; attempts to create or intensify internal conflicts within the Church; or attempts to calculate the value of Church possessions or of the building material contained in Churches and other real property to use in propaganda that showed how "rich" the Church was in a "suffering" country and how many apartments for people could have been built with the materials used for the building of Churches and other Church properties (see "Tajne Instrukcje do Walki z Kosciolem," in Orszulik,46-50).

the Christian sense of the world as it happens to be at a given juncture. Old Testament prophets spoke or acted in, as well as in relation and response to, historic circumstances; what all Old Testament prophets had in common is that "their ministries were undertaken at critical moments in the political and religious history of their people" (Mowvley 18). The core of prophetic rhetoric is its focus on the moral foundations of collective life; in the words of Abraham Heschel, "[a]bove all, the prophets remind [their audience] of the moral state of a people" (16). Nancey Murphy suggests that moral judgment or moral discernment "has traditionally been a function of the Christian community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." (124). According to Davis, "[r]eligion has historically played both socially integrative and revolutionary roles in society" (37). These dual roles are due to the inherent ambiguity of religious language. Religious faith, Davis suggests, "by pushing us toward the Transcendent, relativizes every existing [social and political] order. In so far as any existing social order absolutizes itself, religious faith becomes subversive and revolutionary in the usual political sense" (37).

One might suggest that religion and politics constitute, and articulate, two different, yet ultimately complementary and intersecting relationships: divinitas, the relationship to the transcendent (or at least to some "transcendent" moral principle, such as "equality" or "social justice"); and civitas, the relations that constitute people into a specific, historically existing community. These two types of relations constitute the complementary modalities of the human being in the world. They intersect in the ethical moment, in which "transcendent" principles or moral values are rendered in terms of "political" relations and action. It is this moment of "rendering" that involves rhetoric.

Such a relationship between rhetoric, religion, and politics is implicit in Aristotle. Rhetoric, Aristotle suggests, "is a kind of offshoot, on the one hand, of Dialectic, and, on the other, of that study of Ethics which may be properly called 'political'" since it concerns conduct *in relation to groups* and the conduct of groups (1.2, p.9, emphasis added). In this sense, ethics is both a component of rhetoric as well as of politics. Furthermore, the presence of "moral purpose" is essential to both rhetoric as an art and to a rhetorician qua rhetorician (as opposed to a "mere" sophist). If one assumes that an ethical component, and especially the sense of a moral purpose underlying both human actions and the larger design of the world, is also central to religion, one may suggest that it is thus in "practical" ethics (ethical precepts, beliefs, or values as expressed through collective relations or conduct)--and particularly in "moral purpose"--that rhetoric, politics, and religion intersect.[3] Politics without ethics becomes at best "social engineering" and at worst cynical manipulation, just as rhetoric without ethics in the context of politics becomes mere propaganda. Pope John Paul II's appears to have had something like this in mind when he uttered the famous words in his speech in the Polish parliament during the historic 1999 visit: "History teaches us that democracy without values easily metamorphoses into open or concealed totalitarianism" (*Jan Pawel II*, 1085).

Some such relationship between religion and politics appears to be articulated in *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope), the pastoral constitution for the modern Church promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965:

[3] Here, one may recall Burke's dictum that "action" (as opposed to motion) always implies ethics (*Rhetoric of Religion*, 41).

> The Church and the political community in their own fields are autonomous and independent from each other. Yet both, under different titles, are devoted to the *personal and social vocation of the same men*. The more that both foster sounder *cooperation between themselves with due consideration for the circumstances of time and place*, the more effective will their service be exercised for the good of all. For man's horizons are not limited only to the temporal order; while living in the context of human history, he preserves intact his eternal vocation. The Church, for her part, founded on the love of the Redeemer, contributes toward the reign of justice and charity within the borders of a nation and between nations. By preaching the truths of the Gospel, and bringing to bear on all fields of human endeavor the light of her doctrine and of a Christian witness, she respects and fosters the *political freedom and responsibility of citizens*.[4] (emphasis added)

The passage conceives the relationship between religion and politics as a function of the dual, at once "personal" and "social," nature of man and of his existence at the intersection of the temporal and eternal orders. It defines the specific terms of this relationship as an outcome of a historically contextualized, and thus contingent ("with due consideration to the circumstances of time and place"), application of the Church's ethical teaching to the civic realm (the realm that involves relations of "citizenship," those among citizens as well as among citizens and political authority).

Rhetoric, Religion, and Politics in the United States

As implied in *Gaudium et Spes*, the precise character of the relationship between religion and politics has been historically variable. The end of the Constantinian era brought an end to the relatively unified (at least in theory, if not necessarily in political practice) political-cultural-religious formation known as Christendom. Over the last century in Western Europe, and longer in the United States, the two covenants--the religious and the political--have become (at least temporarily and in certain respects) separated. The reasons for this in Western Europe, include, besides post-Enlightenment rationalism and the rise of "political science," also disillusionment with the inability of religion to resist the depredations of intolerance, nationalism, and ethnic hatred (most notably in the case of the Holocaust), often under a religious cover (Friedenberg). In America, the formal separation between religion and politics has been ascribed to a number of factors, among them a desire on the part of the founders to avoid the kind of religious persecution they experienced in the establishmentarian European states and the existence of a variety of religious denominations in the new American republic.[5] Whatever the reasons, by the end of the 19th century the political orator rather than the preacher effectively dominated debate on public issues in the United States (Heimert).

Roderick P. Hart has described the relations between religion and politics in the United

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[4] **Error! Reference source not found.**, accessed June 20, 2007.

[5] See Hart and Pauley for a quick review of the various explanations for the Church-state relationship in the U.S.

States in terms of the metaphor of "contract." This "contract," according to Hart, comprises four major implicit assumptions or "agreements": that "the guise of complete separation" between the government and religion "will be maintained by both parties"; that "the guise of existential equality" between the government and religion will be maintained by both parties, but the religious realm shall be solely that of the rhetorical"; that political rhetoric will "refrain from being overtly religious" and religious rhetoric from being "overtly political"; and that neither political nor religious leaders will "in any fashion whatsoever, make known to the general populace the exact terms" of this contract (Hart and Pauley 44). The public controversy that surrounds occasional lapses from these terms either by religious or political leaders, may be taken as a sign of the implicit public expectation of the continuation of this contract, even though it remains largely below public awareness. This "contract" implicitly defines the relative roles of religion and government in public life and forms the foundation of "civic piety": public manifestations of religious sentiment that are a part of the American political scene.

Robert Bellah has famously (and controversially) characterized such manifestations as the "American civil religion." This "religion" consists in "certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share" and that are "expressed in a set of [professed] beliefs, symbols, and rituals" in the political sphere, including religious references in political speeches, religious accents in state ceremonies, religious elements on public edifices, White House Prayer Breakfasts, and so on (3-4). This "civil religious" dimension of public life provides, according to Bellah, transcendent legitimation for political authority, a transcendent grounding for civil rights, and a transcendent goal for the political process (expressed most vividly, in the American political tradition, in the notion of "manifest destiny").

Robert Friedenberg has suggested that American political leaders do not have much of a choice but to observe the terms of Hart's "contract" between religion and politics, given the current political, religious, and cultural specificity of the American context. To engage in "overtly religious" rhetoric they would have to use "faith-specific" rhetoric, which, Friedenberg notes, would be difficult in an increasingly religiously diverse country such as the United States. On the other hand, the rhetoric of religious leaders would have to be "policy and candidate specific" to be thought of as "overtly political" (122). American civil-religious rhetoric is thus generally devoid of specific content of practical policy, dealing rather in general symbols and images; it lacks, as Hart put it, a "truly prophetic God" (Hart and Pauley 72). Its "rhetorical energy" derives rather from its "capacity to ennoble ideas" and to be supportive of national myths that "allow average Americans to transcend the banalities of day-to-day life" (Hart and Pauley 83).

The role of religion, as well as the relationship between religion and politics, in the Polish tradition and context have been, in most of these respects, quite different. While the role of the Church in Polish history has "never been solely religious" (as one of the bishops pointedly noted in a conversation with a government official during the Church-government talks of the 1980s[6]), the relationship between religion and politics in Poland became even more complex during the decade of transition. The visits of Pope John Paul II to Poland between 1979 and 1987 (and, arguably, the 1991 visit) were truly prophetic both in spirit and in their historic impact

[6] Orszulik 303.

(Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership"). During much of the 1980s, the authority of Polish Church (unlike perhaps anywhere else in the Western world in recent times), while different in kind, was in effect greater than that of political "authorities." Since Poland is 95 percent Roman Catholic[7] and much less culturally and religiously diverse than the U.S., the potential choices for Polish political and religious leaders are almost the reverse of those in the U.S.: religious references by Polish politicians are almost by definition faith-specific, thus automatically becoming "overtly religious" by American political standards. At the same time, due to the Church's involvement in the political transition, religious rhetoric inevitably became "overtly political" by American standards, both in being as it were forced to deal with fundamentally political issues and in having to address specific policies, proposals, and arrangements directly. The effects persist on the Polish public scene, with the relative roles of the Church and secular authority, and the discourses of religion and politics, in a complicated and tense relationship.

Rhetoric, Religion, and Politics in Real-Socialist Poland

In periods of political stability, the relationship between religion and politics stabilizes, whether in a relationship of mutual legitimation (as in the United States and Western Europe today) or mutual antagonism (as during much of the period of real socialism in Poland). In the mid-1970s, Hart described the relationship between religion and civic authority in the United States in the following terms:

> "[O]rganized religion sets a certain 'tone' in the U.S., a respect for faithfulness, and a commitment to higher values. Government is an unimaginative, spiritless oaf in contrast. Government builds roads, outfits people for battle, regulates the country's shipping, subsidizes its farms, computerizes its tax forms. Religion, in contrast, posits transcendent verities, takes a stand on other-worldly issues, discourses about the intangible, points citizens toward over-arching ethical standards, and retrieves them from the miasma of ordinary existence. In short, religion gives people faith in faith." (Hart and Pauley 50)

Hart's description (which he confirmed in a 2005 reissue of the book) conveys a fundamental complementarity (in spite of occasional conflicts over specific issues) of spiritual and civic dimensions of collective life, articulated in the respective functions of religious and political authority--a complementarity confirmed through manifestations of civil piety expressed in the "civil religion." The contrast to the situation in real-socialist Poland could not be greater.

In the decades preceding the 1980s, the relationship between politics and religion in Poland might best be described as having moved from a "hot" war to a "cold" war. The period of open war on religion came to a close with the end of the Stalinist era; the Church had turned out to be too powerful to be annihilated or rendered irrelevant. Yet, any "religious dimension" was absent from the political realm. Neither the Church nor the authorities could effectively interfere

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[7] The other major denominations include Orthodox (1,5 percent) and Protestant, mainly Evangelical (1 percent). (Data from portal Poland.pl http://www.poland.pl/info/information_about_poland/society.htm, August 10, 2007)

in the sphere proper to the other, although both tried. Both the Church and the real socialist regime refrained from publicly acknowledging the legitimacy of the other party; at the same time, both shied away from direct ideological confrontation (*Tajne dokumenty*; Orszulik; Rajna, *Cele*).

Unlike in Western Europe and the U.S., in real socialist Poland the state was seen as fundamentally alien in terms of the basic premises underlying the Catholic religious persuasion. (The term "persuasion" is more rhetorically productive here than "conviction" or "belief," since, rhetorically, religious belief may be seen in terms of persuasion as well as self-persuasion; in addition, religious "beliefs" may serve as convenient cover, or argument, for fundamentally political commitments, and vice versa.) Marxist-Leninist ideology considered religion as opposed in principle to the materialist and strictly rationalist philosophy of the socialist state. For the authorities, religion represented the "opiate of the people," a recalcitrant remnant of the old order, in basic contradiction to the ideology of social liberation through a revolutionary movement of the proletariat. For the Church, religion constituted a fundamental and inalienable dimension of the human experience, as well as a matter of individual conscience. Hence, attempts by the authorities to discourage church attendance, drive religious instruction from the schools, or limit church construction were treated as violations of the "freedom of conscience" and thus of a basic "human right."

Its fundamentally "ethical" focus and mass following, in the context of a totalitarian (some might perhaps prefer to say "authoritarian") state, infused religion with "political" character. Moreover, the sphere associated with religion and the Church (including Church-sponsored activities, associations, publications, and physical spaces) provided the only remaining public, in effect civil, space beyond the control of the state. For many people "politics," rather than religion as such, was the actual reason to go to church, participate in religious ceremonies or events, or otherwise manifest "religious" affiliation. Such blurring of boundaries between the "religious," the "political," and the "civic" was characteristic of the period of real socialism in Poland.

This blurring of boundaries also had another aspect. The language of real socialism, qua language, was symbolic and "negative" (as is the language of religion) in Burke's sense of being a "translation of the *extra-symbolic* into *symbols*," which, Burke argues, is always a "translation of something into terms of what it is not" (*Rhetoric of Religion* 22). As a specific symbolic system, the language of Marxism in its calcified, post-Stalinist Eastern European variety represented a set of internally consistent semantic operations and "linguistic maneuvers" (Burke's term, *Rhetoric of Religion*) manifested, in rhetorical practice, through highly formalized and ritualized verbal formulas (Glowinski) and universally applicable "terministic screens" (Burke, *Language*, 28, 44-62). In those terms, the relationship between religion and politics was one of confrontation, on the specific terrain of Polish history and under concrete historical circumstances, of two "theologies": a transcendental moral vocabulary of the "universal" Church based on the eschatology of eternal salvation, against a "strong," self-contained interpretive system based on an eschatological utopian vision with pretensions (in spite of its avowed historicism) to ahistorical universality. These two "theologies" competed for the consciences (or, as a confidential party memorandum once put it--with characteristic omission of any "spiritual" terminology--for the "hearts and minds") of the Polish people.

The relationship between religion and politics in Poland in the late 1970s may thus be said to have been characterized by a general blurring of boundaries, a "politicization" of "religious" attitudes and actions, a convergence of "private" and "public" through a politicization of the very notion of "conscience," a politicization of religious space, and a "theologization" of public discourse (not in the sense of making this discourse religious, but in the sense of attempting to provide an alternative "transcendent" political "faith").

Rhetoric, Religion, and Politics in the Negotiations Between the Church and the Authorities, 1981-1989

The imposition of martial law on Dec. 13, 1981 brought further changes in this relationship. The violent suppression of "Solidarity" and of the hopes associated with it destroyed whatever credibility the authorities had in the wake of the Gdansk Accords of August 1980. The deepening political and economic crisis that followed led to attempts by the authorities to regain "social trust" (Pol. zaufanie spoleczne) and to "activate" the people (Pol. aktywizacja spoleczenstwa). That is where the authorities (or at least the Jaruzelski faction, since the party was divided on how to address the situation in the country) realized they needed the Church. As the only major "independent" social institution (that is, independent of the party's control), the Church possessed a capital of public credibility, and it was this credibility that made the Church a desirable partner in addressing the country's problems.

The initial articulation of the mission of the Church in Poland in the new circumstances was provided by Pope John Paul II in a letter to General Jaruzelski written five days after the imposition of martial law. In this letter, the Pope appealed to Jaruzelski's "conscience" to "stop the actions that bring with them the spilling of Polish blood" and contextualized the events of December 13 in the "last two hundred years" of Polish history, during which "much Polish blood was spilled in attempts to dominate our homeland," specifically mentioning "the last war and occupation that brought the loss of about six million Poles who fought for their own sovereign homeland." This contextualization conveyed a specific evaluation of the events of Dec. 13. This evaluation was at odds with the official justifications for martial law, which saw it as, one, necessary for the reestablishment of "social peace" in the face of presumed social and economic "chaos" brought about by the "Solidarity" movement and, two, as necessary to preserving Poland's sovereignty (presumably in the face of an imminent Soviet intervention). Most importantly, the Pope called for "dialog" between the authorities and the people for the "good of the people," and positioned the Church as a "spokesman" for the "general human desire for peace." This "desire," John Paul II proposed, "suggests that the state of 'martial law' in Poland not be continued" (quoted in Orszulik 13-14). The ambiguous syntax of the text[8] made the Church the spokesman for both this "general human desire for peace" (thus grounding its mission as spokesman in properly "religious" general moral terms and concerns) and for the specifically political proposition that martial law not be continued. The latter represents what

[8] John Paul II wrote: "The general human desire for peace suggests that the state of 'martial law' in Poland not be continued. The Church is the spokesman for this desire" (quoted in Orszulik 14).

Friedenberg would call a "policy-specific" articulation, thus, by contemporary American standards of public discourse, already an impermissible "political" intervention on the part of "religion."

In rhetorical terms, the letter shows the Pope negotiating the boundary between universal values ("peace" with all of its spiritual, political, and psychological connotations) and the immediate "political" demands of the historical context. In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Kenneth Burke locates his "logological" investigations in the analogy between "words" and "The Word," in what he calls the realm of "transformations" between the secular and "theological" meanings and deployments of terms (8). The Pope's deployment of the term "peace" is located precisely at the intersection of the theological/spiritual and secular/political meanings. In the immediate context of martial law, the latter implied, and in effect demanded, a cessation of violence (an implication made "present"[9] for the audience by the tanks and soldiers in the streets) and restoration of social harmony and order. At the deepest semantic level, the plea for the restoration of harmony and order may be read as implying a restoration of "normalcy." The reference to the "general" human desire for "peace" contextualizes the Polish situation as at once "abnormal" (contrary to "general" standards) and yet as capable of being judged by standards that transcend specific ideological and geopolitical conditions. Such a "universalizing" move (with the implication that the entire period of real socialism was highly "abnormal") was characteristic of John Paul II's rhetoric in Poland between 1979 and 1987 (see, Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership").

Other major terms deployed by the Church that functioned "logologically" (that is, at the intersection between the "theological" and the secular/political) include "conscience," "hope," "motivation," "conditions of life and work," "values," "suffering," "respect," "human rights," "sovereignty," and "dignity." Burke argues that the "logological" perspective reveals the full scope of "language as motive" (10). Although my argument here is not concerned with logology as such, the presence of such "transformations" in the major terms deployed by the Church reveals the specific workings of religious language as "motive" in the talks between the Church and the authorities (in the "dramatistic" spirit, I'm using the term "motive" as an adverb rather than a noun).

The differences in the "motive" force of words as used by the Church and the authorities may be seen in the different interpretations and deployments of the word "dignity." The Church interpreted "dignity" as a transcendent quality inherent in the human individual, of which the individual in a totalitarian system was deprived as it were by definition by virtue of being an object rather than agent of action. This was a fundamentally ethical and Christian interpretation, and one that infused the ethical core of the ideology, such as it was, of "Solidarity." As used by the Church, "dignity" was thus a fundamentally axiological quality that pertained not only to individuals but extended to the foundations of the civic order. It "motive" force in the discourse of the bishops was to question the quality of the human relations underlying the civic order. The authorities, on the other hand, were very sensitive about "dignity" as a function of appearance and perception; thus, for instance, they objected to the Church-sponsored initiative of soliciting international aid on the grounds that such solicitation amounted to "begging" and thus was

[9] I'm using "presence" here the rhetorical sense suggested by Perelman.

detrimental to "national dignity" (an interpretation focused on self-interest rather than ethics). As used by the authorities, "dignity" was an artifact of politics understood as manipulation of perceptions, thus of propaganda.

It is important to emphasize again that both sides avoided direct ideological confrontation (Orszulik), which would have ruined the very possibility of dialog. In the face of fundamental ideological differences between the partners, after an initial period of mutual uncertainty and "feeling" each other out, a set of general propositions (or premises) emerged that allowed both sides to negotiate specific issues while keeping the dialog "containable."

Aristotle suggests that, within general *topoi*, "the speaker, whether deliberative, forensic, or epideictic, must be supplied with propositions" regarding such things as "the possible and impossible," "whether a thing has or has not occurred, is or is not to occur," or "the greater and the less," for instance "in arguing which is the greater or the lesser good, a greater or lesser act of injustice," and so on (1.3, 1359a). Such propositions are more specific than *topoi*; rather then providing, as *topoi* do, potential general frameworks for arguments (as, for instance, in the *topos* of "more or less"), they circumscribe argumentative possibilities while still leaving a space for interpretation, contention, and deliberation.

One such proposition, or premise, was that "no Polish blood should be spilled." This premise served the authorities as the general rationalization for having imposed martial law in the first place (otherwise, the official syllogism went, the Russians would have invaded, Poles would have resisted, and Polish blood would have been spilled), as well as for many of its provisions (for instance, by keeping people from engaging in "subversive activity," provisions such as the prohibition on public gatherings prevented the spilling of Polish blood in street clashes and other potential disturbances). The Church, on the other hand, used the premise that "no Polish blood should be spilled" to argue against the more drastic provisions of martial law (such as the death penalty for those accused of armed subversion). The premise that "no Polish blood should be spilled" thus provided a space for deliberation on and negotiation of a variety of issues, as well as potential rationalizations for different actions and proposals (thus for "saving face"), while giving both sides the assurance that the discussion was containable within certain general limits (for instance, that nobody would advocate armed resistance, which might lead to civil war and Soviet intervention, thus to the "spilling of Polish blood"). Such assurance, in turn, provided a measure of trust between participants and allowed for a degree of candor in the talks (within the mutual realization that a high-stakes game between fundamentally implacable opponents was being played).[10]

Other major propositions (or premises), of this kind that emerged during the talks included "the good of the nation is paramount," "economic and political reform is necessary"; "the crisis must be addressed through political (as opposed to military) means"; "state security

[10] In this connection, it is interesting to note that pronouncements addressed specifically and non-publicly to party members, and especially to the inner circle, articulated matters quite differently, demonstrating a degree of cynical removal, or perhaps simply of "faith-specificity," in being couched in dogmatic ideological terms, quite different from the articulations during the confidential talk with the Church.

and sovereignty must be ensured"; "the 'constitutional order' and 'alliances' (the geopolitical order, specifically the alliance with the Soviet Union) must not be questioned"; and "there is a need for a new 'social compact'" (Pol. porozumienie spoleczne). Some of these premises functioned as both "boundary conditions" on and preconditions for the dialog. For instance, the regime side insisted on the premise that "the constitutional order will not be questioned" (the Church opposed the term "socialism" instead of "constitutional order") as a precondition for engaging in any talks at all; other potential partners could join in only after accepting this premise. On the other hand, the Church posed the premises concerning "no spilling of Polish blood" and "addressing the crisis only through political means" as preconditions for its participation. Both of these premises originated in John Paul II's initial letter to General Jaruzelski.

It is worth noticing again that the premises insisted on by the Church (such as "no spilling of Polish blood," initiated in the Pope's letter) appear to have been axiological in their basic character with "secondary" political implications, while the premises insisted on by the authorities (such as the need to refrain from questioning the "constitutional order" or "alliances") were primarily political. A similar tendency characterized the way the Church posed problems and strategized its moves. For instance, in a discussion of the Church's proposal to legalize faith-based associations, one of the bishops asked a dissenting official whether rulers have the right to forbid organizations that do not threaten the established socio-political system but through which people wish to express their concern about their country in ways other that those approved by the ruling party? (Orszulik 257). The question is general, "philosophical" and ethical in character, and concerns the ethics and limits of government; it is the kind of question that could never arise, or be posed, publicly in real socialist Poland. Another example is provided by "Communiqué 214" of the Conference of the Polish Episcopate, in which the bishops called on the authorities to seek a permanent solution to the problem of political prisoners and to seek social and legal solutions to the problems facing the country that would enable citizens to take part in public life independently of political parties (which meant, practically, outside of the ruling party and its "allies"). Since the Conference of the Episcopate was a legal institution, the authorities had to admit that its communiqué did not violate the law, even though it articulated a sentiment that went against accepted political thinking and accepted ways of talking about politics (Orszulik 257). To the objection that the existing "legal order" must always be respected, the bishops replied that if that were indeed the general principle than no revolution, including the Russian October Revolution, would ever be possible; "the law," one of the bishops suggested, "must consider social reality" (Orszulik 258).

Hart has suggested that what he calls "religiously-political rhetoric" "reduces inordinately complex issues to their most basic, patently religious, understructures" (46). While Hart's description captures the basic character of the Church's rhetorical strategy, it makes religious rhetoric sound as if it merely "reduced" political issues to "religious" formulas, and thus fails to adequately convey its potential for rhetorical and historical agency. Through the strategies described above, the Polish bishops succeeded in gradually broadening what Robert Oliver once referred to as the "realm of the discussable," pushing the conjunction between religion and politics from the problematic of individual "freedom of conscience" to that of the limits of law, the nature of legitimate civil disobedience, the ethics of governance, the legitimacy of political authority, and, by early 1989, the very "nature of the state" (Orszulik 459), all the while keeping

the Church's credibility intact and maintaining the delicate balance between pragmatism and principle required to keep the talks moving forward.

The authorities countered such "politicization" of religion by making religion a "private" matter, thus departing from one of their major ideological tenets. In the wake of the watershed Xth Plenum of the party (December 1988), religion was declared the "personal business" of party members; "The party's task," as a party official put it in conversation with the bishops, would no longer be "the atheization of society" (quoted in Orszulik 458). In May 1989, parliament enacted legislation guaranteeing "freedom of conscience," including freedom of religion.

One might suggest that, at least from the context of the Church-authorities talks, that the changes in the relationship between religion and politics over the 1980s consisted of, on the one hand, an increasing "colonization" of heretofore fundamentally civic relations (political authority, civic order, nature of the state) by the axiological discourse of religion, and, on the other hand, a gradual "decolonization" of "personal" and "moral" territory by the discourse of politics. My argument is not, of course, that "political" matters or civic relations do not or should also have "moral" character; as a rhetorician, I am interested in tracing the shifts in the idiom in which these matters are articulated. In Poland today (2007), the idiom of religion is very much part of the public language of politics and permeates other areas of civic life (for instance, education or public health); before the 1980s, the languages of religion and politics were sharply separated, in fact, were generally considered incompatible.

One important aspect of this process of "moralization" of the civic and political realm was the shift in the nature of the relationship between the citizen and political authority. In the United States and Western Europe, one of the functions of religion (in the form of civic piety or "civil religion") is to confer legitimacy on political authority, thus also on the civic order. In real-socialist Poland, this legitimacy was withdrawn (one of the signs of this withdrawal was lack of official diplomatic relations—of a Concordat--between socialist Poland and the Vatican). Also symbolic of this withdrawal was the choice of the figure of St.Stanislaw[11] by Pope John Paul II as the slogan for his first visit to Poland in 1979—a choice that was vigorously disputed by the authorities.[12] The citizens, especially religious ones, thus found themselves, theoretically at least, in a situation of divided loyalties: to spiritual authority on the one hand and civic authority on the other. During the 1980s, as civic authority carried less and less moral "authority" in the wake of the imposition of martial law and loss of credibility, this division of loyalties increasingly became a political issue. The Church lent its credibility, and thus legitimacy, to the process of "national dialog," but at a price: the price was, in effect, political authority.

The emblematic case here is that of the eleven leaders of "Solidarity" imprisoned after the imposition of martial law who remained in prison after amnesty freed lesser "fry." The authorities were anxious, for the sake of "national reconciliation" and domestic and international

[11] Symbolic, in Polish history, of the conflict between religion and secular authority.
[12] For an analysis of the Pope's choice and of the dispute, see Ornatowski, "Spiritual Leadership."

propaganda, to put the issue of political prisoners behind them. Putting the "eleven" on trial would highlight the "problem of political prisoners" in the eyes of public opinion and further exacerbate the situation in the country; on the other hand, releasing them unconditionally would simply return them into leadership roles "underground." The solution, negotiated in 1984 between the authorities and the Church, was to have the prisoners personally foreswear political activity for a given period of time to the Primate of Poland, upon which they would be released.

For this unusual "deal" to work, the negotiators established a set of interrelated and interdependent relationships of good faith (since the attendant obligations were not enforceable by any existing legislation or civic covenant): a "political" relationship between the Primate of Poland and the authorities, on the basis of which the authorities would free the prisoners following a public appeal from the Primate, and a "purely moral relationship" (Orszulik 123) between the prisoners and the Primate, on the basis of which the latter would use his authority (and potentially put it at risk) to appeal to the authorities to free the prisoners after the latter had made their declaration. By not making the pledge to the authorities, the prisoners remained, in terms of their own political struggle, undefeated and untainted--still credible as representatives of the people. The "purely moral relationship" of the prisoners to the Primate, thus to spiritual and moral authority, in effect replaced their allegiance to political authority, severed by the latter's violation (through the violence of martial law) of the "social contract."

I do not wish to overstate my case, especially on limited evidence, but one might suggest that the general blurring of the boundaries between religion and politics, the gradual "moralizing" of the language of politics, and the loss of legitimacy (and thus authority) by political authorities led to a shift in the locus of the social bond from a deficient civic community to an ideal spiritual/moral community (embodied for many people, at least between 1980 and 1981, in the general idea of "Solidarity" as a spiritual/political community alternative to the failed political promise of real socialism). The case of the "eleven" provides a symptomatic example of this shift, of an explicit, overt, and in effect legitimated—by the exigent needs of the political moment—replacement of political allegiance (however tenuous) by spiritual/moral allegiance (with explicitly political consequences). Compare the ubiquitous Gierek-era slogan which proclaimed the "political-moral unity of the nation" (Pol. jednosc polityczno-moralna narodu). While the emphasis in the slogan was on the "political," with the "moral" aspect representing a specific, politicized "socialist morality" (Pol. moralnosc socjalistyczna), during the 1980s the center of gravity had decidedly shifted to the "moral," with the "political" as its increasingly questionable, uncertain, and open aspect. This shift constituted a fundamental, although largely invisible, transformation that formed the run-up to and the background of the properly "political" transformation that followed. The consequences of this fundamental shift in the character of the social bond continue to play themselves out in, and haunt, the new democratic republic.

Conclusion: Toward New Dialog Between Religion and Politics

Increasingly, the global context appears to be permeated by the political deployments of religious discourse, by what appears to be a new convergence of religion and politics. This development warrants new attention to the relationship between religion, politics, and rhetoric.

My aim in these preliminary reflections was to examine the relationship between rhetoric, religion, and politics at a "revolutionary" moment in recent Polish history, to reflect on the "political" work of religion and religious discourse in the course of the reconstitution of the Polish "community."

The relationship between religion and politics is always historical, changing and unstable. The essence of "religion" is the moral imperative that, typically, has a transcendent foundation. This moral imperative takes different political forms and is articulated in different terms in various historical contexts. In periods of political stability, many of these become "sedimented" (I'm adapting the term from Husserl, via Ernesto Laclau)[13] in the routine "beliefs," standard practices, and rhetoric of the community, including official "political" rhetoric.

What was interesting about the situation in Poland in the 1980s is that, for a historical moment, a beleaguered political regime, one ostensibly non-religious, even anti-religious, was in dialog—in effect in historic partnership--with the Catholic Church to attempt to solve social and economic problems. Surely, no Western Church in recent times, even in a cultural/political climate where official references to God abound, in effect played such a direct and profoundly consequential political role. Hart cites an anecdote in which "a British prime minister" presumably once said: "politics is for getting things done; if you want transcendence go see your archbishop" ("God, Country, and a World of Words" 185). During the 1980s, Polish politicians, at least a leading faction of them, indeed headed—albeit perhaps not very willingly or in completely good faith--to the archbishop.

Such explicitly political role of the Church was not uncontroversial. Jan Rulewski is cited as opposing the "deal" in the case of the eleven "Solidarity prisoners on the grounds that the Church was playing a dangerous game (Orszulik 154). The potential consequences of the historically unique "arrangement between the cassock and the uniform," as Rulewski referred to it, still remain to be examined (quoted in Orszulik 154).

Post-communist democracies such as Poland have only recently entered the age of dialogue regarding matters of religion and politics (even today it is difficult to talk about these matters with any distance). For this dialog to begin in earnest, it is necessary to examine and better understand the historic relationship between religion and politics. In the Polish context, this relationship includes the formal relationship between church and state, the rhetoric and activity of Pope John Paul II, the activities and rhetoric of other religious figures (i.e. Father

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[13] By "sedimentation," Laclau designates, borrowing the term from Edmund Husserl, the sense of "objective" givenness of social reality that results from a forgetting of origins, of the manner in which social reality was constituted.

[13] Laclau suggests that to reveal the moment of constitution of social reality is "to reveal the moment of its radical contingency—in other words, to reinsert it in the system of real historic options that were discarded . . . by showing the terrain of the original violence, of the power relations through which that instituting act took place" (34). Thus, Laclau suggests, "[t]o understand something historically is to refer it back to its contingent conditions of emergence" (36).

Jerzy Popieluszko), the contacts (both formal and informal) between political authorities and religious authorities, the activities and involvements (both political and religious) of the laity, and the more general and changing affiliations of the population—not to mention the nature of the social contract that underpins the political/civic community.

In the wake of the fall of communism and the radically changed relationship between church and state, Poles, both religious and secular, Christian and non-Christian, are only beginning to explore the full meaning of secular government and of true freedom of conscience. This freedom—both in regard to religion and to politics--had been denied to at least two generations of Poles, to the detriment of their ability—as a society, not necessarily as individuals--to exercise both capacities to their full extent, perhaps even to understand the nature of democratic government, religious liberty, and their complex relationship. Richard Neuhaus has posed a question that seems very much current for Poland today: "Our question," Neuhaus suggested, "can certainly not be the old one of whether religion and politics should be mixed. They inescapably do mix, like it or not. The question is whether we can devise forms for that interaction which can revive rather than destroy the liberal democracy that is required by a society that would be pluralistic and free" (quoted in Medhurst 158).

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