

THE IDEAS OF MODERN DEMOCRACY AND THE POLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

The answer to the question concerning the Polish political identity is represented. This is the problem considering the position of the Polish culture in the context of the idea of democracy of New Times. The ideas of this period are connected with the thought of N. Machiavelli, Descartes, Th. Hobbes, J. Locke, with nominalism and opinions concerning that unit is a measure of value. It has been demonstrated that on the basis of Polish culture are placed the thought of Socrates and the Christian doctrine, realism, which declares that values carry an objective nature. The question concerning the Polish identity is nowadays the question of the character of the free market and the face of democracy in Poland.

Key words: The National Identity, Socrates, Christianity, Sophistry, "the social agreement", N. Machiavelli, Th. Hobbes, J. Locke, J. Lelewel, A. Mickiewicz.

Wojciech Kaute. Idee współczesnej demokracji i polska tożsamość narodowa.

Autor przedstawia kwestię odpowiedzi na pytanie o tożsamość polityczną Polski. Jest to problem usytuowania kultury polskiej w kontekście idei nowożytnej demokracji. Na idee nowożytnej demokracji składa się myśl N. Machiavellego, Kartezjusza, Th. Hobbesa, J. Locke'a. Jest to nominalizm; jednostka jest „miarą” wartości. Autor uważa, że u podstaw kultury polskiej tkwi myśl Sokratesa i doktryna chrześcijaństwa. Jest to realizm; wartości mają charakter obiektywny. Jego zdaniem, pytanie o tożsamość polską jest współcześnie pytaniem o kształt wolnego rynku i oblicze demokracji w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość narodowa, Sokrates, chrześcijaństwo, sofistyka, N. Machiavelli, Kartezjusz, Th. Hobbes, J. Locke, „umowa społeczna”, J. Lelewel, A. Mickiewicz.

Войцех Кауте. Ідея сучасної демократії і польська національна ідентичність.

Представлена відповідь на питання про політичну ідентичність Польщі, яке пов'язане з проблемою вміщення польської культури в контекст ідеї демократії Нового Часу. Ідеї цього періоду пов'язані з думками Макиавеллі, Декарта, Гоббса, Лока, з номіналізмом, з поглядами на те, що одиниця є «мірою» цінності. Показано, що в основі польської культури лежать погляди Сократа і християнська доктрина, реалізм, який проголошує, що цінності мають об'єктивний характер. На думку автора, питання про польську ідентичність є нині питанням про форму вільного ринку і характер демократії в Польщі.

Ключові слова: національна ідентичність, Сократ, християнство, софістика, «суспільний договір», Н. Макиавеллі, Т. Гоббс, Дж. Лок, Й. Лелевель, А. Міцкевич.

Войцех Кауте. Идея современной демократии и польская национальная идентичность.

Представлен ответ на вопрос о политической идентичности Польши, который связан с проблемой внедрения польской культуры в контекст идей демократии Нового Времени. Идеи этого периода связаны с идеями Макиавелли, Декарта, Гоббса, Локка, с номинализмом, с взглядом на то, что единица является «мерой» ценности. Показано, что в основе польской культуры лежат взгляды Сократа и христианская доктрина, реализм, провозглашающий объективный характер ценностей. С точки зрения автора, вопрос о польской идентичности является сейчас вопросом о форме свободного рынка и характере демократии в Польше.

Ключевые слова: национальная идентичность, Сократ, христианство, софистика, «общественный договор», Н. Макиавелли, Т. Гоббс, Дж. Локк, И. Лелевель, А. Мицкевич.

Every nation creates its identity over the years. This identity is its' cultures heritage in general. The culture of a nation makes a certain archetype. This archetype consists of the whole of values, norms, patterns that make a particular system, some kind of hierarchy. They state — adopted more or less consciously

- the essence of individuals' beliefs, determine — to some extent
- the attitudes and behaviours of these individuals. In the sphere of culture of each society is expressed its' characteristic understanding of civilization, a place and a role of a man in civilization. Man, however, according to Aristotle, is *zoon politikon* — “an animal living in a state”. The system of values, norms, patterns that make the archetype of culture, is ultimately expressed in the understanding the principles of working of polis characteristic for some society. The problem of the nation's identity is in fact the issue of its' political identity. This is also the case of the Polish culture.

A large amount of writings concerning the Polish national identity has come into being. Many attitudes have been formed. However, independently from their amount and differences among them, there is one basic problem that has joined them. It is the conviction that the Polish culture archetype shows certain dissimilarity by comparison with other European countries. As Jan Adamus, an outstanding Polish historian wrote years ago “perhaps the central issue of Polish history has been the issue of this peculiarity of the way of Poland, that was going contrary to the whole Europe”¹. Towards such a state of affairs there has always existed — and it is so in modern times — the need to understand “this major enigma of Polish history”².

The culture of contemporary Europe is a specific way of understanding and reacting to the world. The imperative of freedom of an individual, the postulate of the right to this freedom belong to the essence of this way of thinking. This is the idea of democracy. If nowadays in Europe the notions as “democracy”, “democratic” are used, so — independently of doing it consciously or not — first of all in the meanings given to these notions mostly in the 17th and 18th century. The Polish national identity is ultimately the problem of answering the question of relation: the democracy rules in modern Europe and “peculiarity” of understanding the rules of polis’ functioning in the Polish culture.

The democracy idea that has been formed in Europe on the verge of modern times, at its foundations places itself in the opposition to the way of understanding the world that was characteristic for a part of the ancient Greece culture, and Christian Middle Ages. The problem of answering the question if in the world surrounding a man are any objective regularities was the basic issue of European thought since its beginning until contemporary times. In relation to the polis sphere this is the problem of answering the question if there is the objective truth criterion in creating the principles of working of the individual in a society, state. In the Greek culture of the 5th and 4th century B.C. this problem was solved in two different — or even opposing — ways. One concept was introduced by sophistry. In this large school of thought it was claimed that there is nothing like the objective truth which can be experienced in a more or less close way. It is just the opposite. It is the man — the creature having specific nature — that gives the reality the status of existence. According to sophistry “The man is the measure of all things; these which exist that exist, which do not exist, that do not exist” — Protagoras of Abdera, the most eminent representative of “the school” claimed in the only preserved fragment of his treatise *The Truth*. The man — and only him — creates the bases of his own life. Within polis true is as to what there is consensus between people that it is true, then it is objectively true, so “good” and desirable. The society creates the foundations of state and law basing on the convictions of the individuals belonging to it. According to Protagoras, as it is presented by Plato in *Teajtet*: “in the matters of state, if it comes to what is beautiful and ugly, just and unjust, devout and impious, as each state settles them by law according to its own convictions, such are these things truly for each system and in these matters one individual is not wiser than the other, one state is not wiser than the other. As deciding on what is profitable for the state and what is not, co [...] the conviction of one state differs from the other [...]. Within this range [...] none of these things out of its nature does not possess some essence, but what commonly seems, [...] and so long, as long it seems”³.

The second concept of solving the problem discussed was presented by Socrates. Socrates in answer to the question whether in the world surrounding the man there are any objective regularities, rules which the man can treat as the foundation in his life, claims what follows: yes, there are. Xenophont conveys that Socrates “always when considering human matters, tried to examine what in fact is piety and what is godlessness, what is beauty and what is ugliness, what is justice and what is injustice, what is common sense and what is madness, what is bravery and what is cowardice, what is the state and what is the statesman, what is power over people and what is the ruler; and he similarly considered other things. Those who gained this kind of knowledge in his opinion have become morally perfect people, those who had no idea about it, deserved the name of slave souls”⁴.

¹ J. Adamus, *Polska teoria rodowa [Polish ancestral theory]*, Łódź 1958, p. 280.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Plato, *Teajtet*, 172 A-B.

⁴ Xenophont, *Wspomnienia o Sokratesie [The Memories of Socrates]*, I 1 16.

Conventionality does not decide of what is true, good and desirable. People, society cannot create the foundations of state and law only basin on their own beliefs.

Which rules should, according to Socrates, be treated as the foundation of human being's functioning in the society, state? Where is the source of knowledge about what is good and what is bad, what is justice and what is its lack? If you want to answer these questions, you must be aware, that this orientation of thinking that Socrates presents cannot be treated as one of many attitudes making the history of European thought. This is a particular attitude. As Leszek Kołakowski observes, "for centuries philosophy consolidated its legal validity presenting and answering the question inherited from socratean and pre-socratean bequest: how to differentiale the real from unreal, truth form falseness, the good from the evil. There is one man with whom identify all the European philosophers, even if they totally reject his ideas. This is Socrates — the philosopher unable to identify with this archetypic character does not belong to this civilization"⁵. In Socrates' reflection meet all the problems of European culture. The point is that the attitude of this thinker, who — as we know — has not written any word, contains a lot of insinuations and diversities of meaning. It has never been, and is not interpreted in explicit and non-controversial way.

In the most common expression, it has been stated and is still stated that Socrates stating that one can speak of something like "the essence" of good or justice, also makes an assumption that there exists a certain subject possessing the ability to get to know this "essence" (as the "essence" of different "other things"). This subject is "the man who knows". It is so, Socrates taught — as we know from the Xenophont's relation — because "on the ship only an experienced sailor gives the orders, the ship's owner and the other voyager obey. Similarly behaves the farmer tilling the soil, in illness — the ill, in wrestling — the wrestler, in all the other branches of life if there is something, that demands good care, then everyone on his own tries to cope with the need, if he knows that he understands it. [...] In spinning factories, he proved, even women rule over men, since they know how to spin the wool and men don't"⁶. In the Socrates' thought there is no acceptance of democracy rules, if democracy is understood as such an organization of community's life, where each individual has an equal vote in the matters of state, and decision is taken by the majority of votes. He presents an attitude, as Xenophont informs, "that it is pure stupidity to elect the chief authority in the state by voting, although nobody in the world would agree to make use of the services of the steer man, the carpenter, the flutist or any other craftsman elected by means of broad bean, although the mistakes made in their work cause much less harm than the mistakes of people ruling the state"⁷. According to Socrates the regulations of co-existence in the society, the rules of governing the state cannot be established in the way of convention. For de facto such a consensus in most part it consists in the convictions of individuals none of whom has knowledge of "the essence" of good or justice.

This orientation of thought, started by Socrates, has formed the bases of Plato's philosophy. In Plato's beliefs only ideas exist objectively. The reality in which people live is the world of disguise, the finished world of things. It is only more or less successful reflection of the being of ideas. This reality, also the polis sphere, becomes so much understandable as much it concerns this being of the idea. Their cognition and interpretation belongs to philosophy. Philosophers are this distinguished group which has the ability of distinguishing ideas, from what is not sure, truth from disguise. Only this group "knows" what is true, what is good or justice. Hence Plato's postulate "to make philosophers kings". In the further evolution of the Greek thought this trail was followed by Aristotle. Aristotle, on the one hand has decisively criticized Plato's belief of the existence of the world of ideas. He claimed that they were fictions and additionally fictions to get to know the reality — totally useless form the answer to the question of the rules of the state's organization. On the other hand, however, Aristotle did not share the belief of Protagoras according to whom — as he relates in *Metaphysics*: that "what appears to everyone, it is surely so"⁸. Aristotle also looked for "the essence of thing", and the "essence" of what he called "the best system". Nevertheless he looked for them not

⁵ L. Kołakowski, *Horror metaphysicus*, Warszawa 1990, p. 7.

⁶ Xenophont, *Wspomnienia o Sokratesie* [The Memories of Socrates], III 9 11.

⁷ *Ibidem*, I 2 9.

⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1062 b.

outside the things but in the things themselves. He was interested in concrete types of societies and really existing forms of governments.

Socrates' idea — including, first of all, the belief that convention cannot be the source of knowledge about the world — was the basis of Christianity. Christianity in its starting point assumes the existence of the dualism of being. There exists the true being, eternal life, transcendental world of truth — good and justice. And there exists the reality in which the man lives, the world of the worldly things, where are different types of state and law, different government system. There is *ius*, law understood as the objective fact, the whole of the norms which are binding due to their essence. And there is *lex*, the legal rule, the whole of the norms which are binding due to the legislator's will. *Lex* must be consistent, or at least not contradictory to *ius*. Cognition of transcendental being, cognition of objective law is given only by Revelation. Only Christ, as the representative of God on earth is the source of knowledge about what is good and justice. This basic idea of Christianity is well reflected in the fable about a Good Shepherd presented in the New Testament. In St. John's Gospel we find the words: "In hereby tell you: Who does not enter the sheep-fold through the gate but enters through a different way, is a thief and a ruffian. But who enters through the gate is the sheep's shepherd. [...] I am a good shepherd; I know mine and they know me; like my Father knows me and know my Father. And I give my life for my sheep. And I have other sheep which are not from this sheep-fold. And I have to bring these and they will listen to my voice and there will be one sheep-fold and one shepherd" (J 10, 1-16). The Church is this authority which discovers and interprets the truths of Revelation. The philosophy of life of Christianity in its essence is the continuation and development of the attitude which in the sphere of cognition of world and the rules of the man's functioning in the society, state, was represented by Socrates. And so is in the contemporary thought of Catholic church.

The socratic-christian conviction of the existence of the dualism of being presented above, after many centuries of domination undergoes abnegation in the European culture. On the foundation of this abnegation a concept of democracy in the present meaning of the world will be crystalized. The first symptoms that the change is taking place are seen in the Renaissance culture. This fact was revealed by the political doctrine of Niccolo Machiavelli. The man is an autonomous creature — this was the main thesis of the creators of Renaissance. If, thus, people create the state and this state has some aims — the author of *The Prince* develops this thesis — there are also autonomous aims. There is no need or necessity to refer them to any transcendental good, justice, something which is "sacred". They are "sacred" themselves. Everything that a man intends are creates is "sacred", and at the same time it is "good" or "just". If this is so, then all the ways leading to the fulfillment of aims which people assing themselves, are also "sacred". These ways are as if *ex definitione* "good" or "just". Good or just is not what is really, truly so, but what is good or just for the state — Machiavelli claims. Thus, in application to authority — which he understands widely — „sacred” — because autonomous, human — aim, „sanctifies” naturally „the means”. The place of *ius* is taken by *lex*, the Prince's will. The essence of the breakthrough which on the verge of modern times has brought Renaissance into the culture of Europe — and this process clearly shows the thought of Machiavelli— consists in the fact that since then in functioning of the man in society, state there is observed, as a French historian of ideas Pierre Manent said, "the change in the status of the good"⁹. Such "doubt in the good", Manent remarks, is also the feature, as he says, of "contemporary mentality"¹⁰.

Renaissance opened the way for building the foundations of the mental culture of modern times. Cartesius is considered "the father" of this culture. The concept of *cogito* is the most important in his philosophy. According to Cartesius the starting point of man's thinking about himself and the reality surrounding him is his own thinking. Man's thought tantamounts to his existence and the existence of the world. He is not, however, some man "in general", but a concrete individual. This individual is an absolute in this sense that — as Kołakowski remarks "can always say, as biblical creator, »I am who I am«"¹¹. Since 1637, which is the date when Treaty about Method was published one

⁹P. Manent, *Intelektualna historia liberalizmu* [The Intellectual History of Liberalism], 1990, p. 17.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ L. Kołakowski, *Horror metaphysicus...*, p. 83.

can assume — taking it conventionally — that cogito has defined the essence of culture in Europe. All the “objective” principles governing morality, society disappear from the Cartesian world. The truth, the good or justice are recognized as predicates of consciousness of the ego.

On the verge of modern times the man in the European culture is recognized as an autonomous being in this sense that he is an autonomous individual. A human being is a sovereign self. It exists beside other sovereign selves. According to the thought of Hugo Grotius contemporary to Cartesius, each ego is “by nature” entitled to the whole of rights, and none can deprive him of them. Since then this rights are called “subjective laws”. However, in the 17th century culture it was noticed that the existence of an ego “beside” some other ego, demand a certain organization, order. Otherwise there is a risk of conflict of particular egos’ egoisms, “the war of everyone with everyone”. The theory of such an ordering was created by Thomas Hobbes, whose main work *Leviathan* is a clear adaptation of *Treaty about Method* by Cartesius, This is his concept of “social agreement”. In the Hobbes’ model each individual and all equally resign from the part of one’s freedom, sovereignty for the common subject, which is the state, *Leviathan*. This resignation is expressed in the norms of law. *Leviathan* is not the emanation of some transcendental good; it does not place itself beyond or over an individual. Its reason for existence is only the part of autonomous rights and sovereign egos. In the concept of modern state, so as it is described by Hobbes — Manent remarks — “law has taken place of the good. This positive accent, exceptionally strong moral approval which the ancient — both pagans and Christians — have given to good, the modern, following Hobbes, have given to law, the law of individual¹². The category of “social agreement” makes the foundations of the modern democracy concept, is its essence. This concept, in its essence, refers to the way of reasoning — distant towards it in time — sophistry. The most known form of modern democracy is liberalism. The “social agreement” concept, characteristic for liberalism, was formed by John Locke. In the starting point of his attitude Locke claims that the basic, most natural need of man is the will to survive. Survival is possible under the condition of satisfaction of hunger, and all other needs, that are connected with survival. An individual satisfies hunger individually. Here each individual is separated from other individuals. The man satisfies hunger through making use of what exists in the surrounding world, what the nature has created. He gains the goods of nature through his effort, work. As a result of work the goods of nature become the subject of property of the one who gained them. The fundamental condition of any consumption, and so the survival, is property. Property, *habere*, is the primary, basic fact in the Lockean concept. The right of possession, belonging to every human being, is earlier than society. So it is earlier from moral rules established by the society. Property is beyond any moral evaluation. It cannot, thus, be referred to any transcendental idea of good or justice. It is just the opposite. The attitude to property makes the foundations of morality. Good or just is not what is so “objectively”, “as a matter of fact”, but what was considered to be “good” or “just” in the free exchange of the objects of the right of possession. Market, money creates the convention which may be described as a “social agreement”. State, government in such a convention’s conditions have one task: the guard of widely understood property.

This understanding of freedom that is characteristic for the European culture since the beginnings of modern times, has not found its’ place in Polish culture. It was so in the past and many circumstances show that it is so nowadays as well. The archetype of Polish culture consists in this great school of thought, started by Socrates. This is the philosophy of realism. The man is not “the measure of all things”. In the paradigm of Polish culture the base of thinking about society, state is socratean-christian conviction of the existence of the transcendental world of truth — good and justice. “Many a time they tell you — Adam Mickiewicz warned — that you are among the civilized nations and you have to learn civilization from them, but remember that the ones that tell you of civilization, do not understand themselves, what they say. The word civilization meant citizenship, from the Latin word *civis*, a citizen. The citizen was called the man who sacrificed himself for his homeland. [...] [However] later in an idolatrous jumbling up languages civilization were called fashionable and smart clothes, tasty cooking, comfortable inns, beautiful theatres and wide roads.

¹² P. Manent, *Intelektualna historia liberalizmu...* [The Intellectual History of Liberalism]..., p. 30.

[...] So don't be surprised at the nations, that are well-off, or are thrifty and well-governed. If a well-off nation, and eating and drinking well can be most respected, so respect among yourselves people who are most fattened and the healthiest. Even animals have these attributes; but it is not enough for a man. [...] For civilization, truly suitable for the man, must be Christian".¹³

In the Polish culture there is no consent for contestation of the conviction of the existence of the dualism of being, which has taken place in the modern Europe's culture, and what was expressed by the Machiavelli's thought. In Poland the maxim that the aim justifies the means has no application, as the aims which a human being states, are not fully autonomous. There is no agreement for "a change in the status of good", for *lex* to take the place of *ius*. In the archetype of Polish culture there is no conviction of the identity of thought and being. The world of thinking and acting of a man is not identical with his self; there is no agreement for *cogito*. The mind of a man is not the only criterion of the legal validity of norms that control the life of society. The Polish culture is not Cartesian. As a result of this state of affairs in the archetype of Polish culture there is no consent for creating the rules of community life's organization in the way of "agreement" among the individuals autonomous towards the transcendental world of values and sovereign towards themselves; there is no agreement for "law taking the place of good". Convention is not the only and ultimate source of making rules, according to which functions the society, state; The lack of acceptance of "the social agreement" idea is in the Polish culture also connected with the fact that here is no approval of the attitude which considers becoming the owner of things, *habere*, the basic fact in human life. There is no acceptance of the situation where the only and ultimate criterion deciding of what can be treated as "good", "just" is market, money and price, The right of possession is not the foundation of everything, and isn't completely beyond the moral judgment. The archetype of Polish culture by comparison with this European culture, that has been formed in modern times, shows a fundamental difference. In the middle of 19th c. Joachim Lelewel, one of the greatest authorities in the Polish historiography, wrote: "Strangers think of us from themselves, and their [...] we could defy the conceptions through the explanation of the truth [...]. We, on the other hand [...] reason in French, oblivious, by us [...] [was] quite different than in France."¹⁴ He is against "an analogy falsely caught"¹⁵ from the West. According to him Poland by comparison with the western Europe countries "shows a different picture in history for consideration."¹⁶

The conviction that liberal democracy has been created on the basis of the fact of the community's disintegration, belongs to the archetype of Polish culture. This fact is negatively valued in Poland. The picture of Polish culture consists in the unanimous opinion that no organization of the community's life can deprive people of their humanity. The political system of the state must take into consideration the good of the society. This is the idea of "solidarity" characteristic for Polish culture. In the tradition of Polish culture there is no full acceptance of the principles that compose the foundations of capitalism. In this tradition prevails the opinion that realisation of such principles leads to serious disproportions in the standard of living (here to pauperization of pretty large part of society). The way of thinking predominant in Poland is expressed in the conviction that the processes taking place in the market, cannot be the usual resultant of the multiplicity of individual enterprises, The undertakings of each individual must stay in agreement with the economic business of all the individuals. Different forms of self-government are supposed to serve this aim. In Poland market has a human face. The state in Poland is not the state of law, if law is understood as *lex*. The state in the interpretation of the Polish culture archetype is the state of justice.

In the paradigm of Polish culture it is assumed that because the man lives in the finished world, in the world of half-truth. Facing the world of transcendental values individual is helpless. And it is helpless exactly to the same extent as all the other individuals. So there is not such a criterion (as

¹³ A. Mickiewicz, *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [The Books of Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrims], Wrocław-Kraków 1956, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴ J. Lelewel, *Uprzednia myśl czyli słowo do poszukiwań wstępne*, [w:] *Polska, dzieje i rzeczy jej* [The Introductory Thought so the Word Introductory to the Quest] [in:] [Poland, its History and Objects] v. III, Poznań 1855, p. 8.

¹⁵ Idem, *Uwagi nad dziejami Polski i ludu jej*, [w:] *Polska...* [The Remarks on the History of Poland and its People] [in:] [Poland...], p. 434.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 437.

for example property, *habere*), that in the most crucial sense can differentiate the human beings' situation in society. Who then in the expression of the archetype of Polish culture is the subject of authority? In Polish culture there is no place for authority that realizes everything that "results" from "social agreement". The authority does not articulate the aspirations of majority, as well. And there isn't even that — as Benjamin Constant supplemented the liberalism concept — these are the aspirations of majority, considering to the same extent what the minority wants. In the Polish culture paradigm power expresses certain expectations of particular individuals. It is not, however, the resultant of their entitlements to possess things (and everything that is connected with it), understood in the culture of modern Europe as subjective laws. This is their will. The humanity of man, each individual is the best manifested through it. The power, articulating it, expresses the majority's will and minority's at the same time, and also each individual's separately. It is not, however the will of majority beside the will of minority and each concrete individual. And it isn't their sum. It is the will of all the individuals put together in all the possible aspects. At the same time this is the will in all possible aspects of each individual separately. In Poland functioning of authority consists in the fact that none of the citizens distinguishes his being from the being of the other citizens. And the being of the state is not distinguished from the being of each concrete individual. Such is the Republic. And there is one will of the Republic. J. Lelewel characterising the functioning of authority in the First Republic defined the state model's essence as supremacy of people. The rule of people is articulated by the public spirit. This is such functioning of the state where individuals-citizens act for the common good (so — ultimately — in their own business) in this way that any initiative, articulating the will of each individual, comes from this individual and all at the same time. The organization of the state in Poland results as Lelewel states, "from the idea of the crowd."¹⁷ Here decides "the scolding crowd, without curb, but taught the rudiments by experience."¹⁸ The Republic manages "without a guide, acts in crowds through understood principle."¹⁹ "The crowd" is the whole, not a part of the society even if this is the majority. In Poland the will of majority has no importance.

In the culture of modern Europe apart from liberalism the other concept of democracy has been formed. This concept introduced in 18th century Jean Jacques Rousseau. The man is an autonomous creature, claims Rousseau. He is a free human being, sovereign towards other individuals. He is vested in non-transferable subjective rights. The point is that the man in modern times lives in the society whose rules are not in agreement with his nature. Here the man estimates the others only through his business. In the conditions of liberal democracy, the human being is not a citizen participating in the life of the community, state — apart from other people participating in this life — but becomes a townsman reduced to the mechanism of exchanging products. He cannot realize his humanity, his will. The idea of "social agreement", presented by Rousseau, in such a society, state, where appears what he calls a common will. It consists of each individual's will and all the individuals' will at the same time; the will not business. Democracy, according to Rousseau is such an organization of the society's life, where no individual distinguishes its existence from the life of all other people. And the common will is not distinguished from the will of each particular individual. There is one common existence; one will. A number of things show that the understanding of freedom in Polish culture is the same way of reasoning, as the one represented by Rousseau. And not accidentally Rousseau in his *Considerations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* very positively commented on the mechanisms of the nobility's democracy functioning in the old Poland. In his approach the virtue specific to the Republic' citizens is the guarantee that common will will stand above the "private business", so above the "business" of each individual separately. It is assumed here that the power of demos has its limitations. The fact, however that in the Polish culture — as in the doctrine of Rousseau — there is no agreement for the situation, in which the man functioning in the market, created by the modern society, has found himself, does not mean, that freedom in Poland and in the thought of Rousseau is the same freedom. In the model of Polish culture the man, by contrast to it's stating by The Social Agreement's author, never remains separated from the transcendental world of good and justice.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 253.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 255.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 254.

The autonomy of a human being has its limits. The concept of common will is not the same as the idea of public spirit. The latter one not only has not much in common with the right. It also has not much in common with the left.

The understanding of a state in the Polish culture, built on the metaphysics of realism, stays in distinct opposition to this way of its understanding as has been formed in the culture of modern Europe. The foundation of the modern democracy is nominalism (here is included Cartesian rationalism as well as Lockean empiricism). In the European culture has, however, emerged the direction, that has undertaken an effort of creating something in-between the two attitudes presented above. Such a way of reasoning was market out in the second half of 18th century by the thought of Immanuel Kant, On the one hand Kant admits that good or justice cannot be “in its essence” the object of experimentation, proof. The object of general notions belongs to the world of names. On the other hand Kant states, that a human being in its recognition and acting cannot limit itself to phenomenon. Noumen exists. You cannot treat the morality bases only as the consciousness’ predicates. In the matters fundamental for functioning of a society you cannot rely on “social agreement’s” decisions. Kant defends and pronounces himself against realism as well as nominalism. According to him good and justice exist objectively. Their existence and interpretation are the matter of belief, the object of the postulate. This postulate has a formal character and it is expressed by the cathégorial and practical imperative. According to such a way of reasoning “the relationship of people based on the pure laws of virtue, according to the rule of this idea, you can call the ethic society, and if these laws are public, also ethic-civil (in opposition to legal-civil).”²⁰ The thought of Kant (and neo-kantism) has found its expression in the programs of different currents of social-democracy.

In the context of the settlements presented above one should, as we can think, consider that the archetype of Polish culture cannot in any case be associated with the attitude of Kant. If realism may be considered the essence of this culture — so to such a way of thinking of the world that underwent abnegation in modern times in Europe — which means that in Poland there can’t be agreement of this attitude’s synthesis with nominalism. Such a synthesis would, thus, be equal with the agreement — in a smaller or greater extent — for cogito. So it is not accidental that the way of reasoning of the Critics’ author who, as J. Lelewel wrote “told the object to turn round the philosopher”²¹ — has never met a wider response in Poland. In Polish culture there aren’t premises for the doctrine of social democracy, understood in the most serious sense, which means such as exists in Western Europe.

In the most common approach the conviction presented above, that “peculiarity” of Polish culture archetype can resolve itself into the fact that in it there is no place for such an understanding of freedom that has been characteristic since the beginning of modern times for the culture of West European countries, exhausts the essence of the matter. Such a conviction in built on a more or less consciously taken supposition that the concept of autonomy and sovereignty of each human being, expressed in the “social agreement” doctrine — which, thus, is the foundation of democracy — is a simple opposition of socratic-christian understanding of the world. One can think that, such an approach does not exhaust the essence of the matter. What is more, it leads to certain double meanings. For if you take the realism of Socrates (and Christianity) and the democratic way of thinking as two completely different visions of the world and the man, so you can state that the concept of Socrates (and Christianity) on the level of reflection on polis creates the premises for such forms of authority that are opposite to democracy. And this means totalitarianism. And as it was already said, the way of thinking of Socrates has created the starting point for the philosophy of Plato. This was his concept of “the philosophers’ rule”, the ideal of the philosopher-king, the one “who knows” what is the truth, good and justice. The vision of the state introduced by Plato the most frequently has been and is just interpreted as a model of the totalitarian state. The most classic example of such an interpretation of this vision is a well-known work by Karl Popper *The Open*

²⁰ I. Kant, *Religia w obrębie samego rozumu* [Religion in the Sphere of the Mind itself], Kraków 1993, p. 120.

²¹ J. Lelewel, *Pisma metodologiczne* [Methodological writing] [in:] *Dzieła* [Works], Vol. 2 (2), Warszawa 1964, p. 835.

Society and its Enemies. This is not all. If it is claimed that the ideas of modern democracy stand in radical opposition to the Plato's attitude (and so of Socrates), so it must be acknowledged that "open society" at its foundations remains in opposition to the Christian philosophy of life. This means that in democracy there is no place for objective moral principles. Under the conditions of "social agreement" — calling the worlds of Fiodor Dostoyevsky — "everything is allowed".

As it seems, the removal of appearing double meanings depends on deciding what K. Popper called "the problem of Socrates"²² in the work mentioned above. Here finds its confirmation the attitude of L. Kołakowski, that Socrates is "the archetypic character" in the European civilization. The position of Socrates in the European culture is interpreted, generally speaking, in two different ways. The most common interpretation is the one which reduces this position to the conviction presented above that the object of moral values, and at the same "the essence" of life organization's principles in a society, exist objectively. Frederick Nietzsche went this way in the analysis of the thought of Socrates. "What means [...] — Nietzsche put a question — the reaction of Socrates, that advised dialectic as the way to virtue, and ridiculed this, when morality couldn't excuse itself logically?"²³ And answers: "This means the disintegration of Greek instincts, when the ability to lead was put as the main condition of personal courage in virtue. [...] The great notions „good«, »just« are detached from their foundations which they belong to, and as liberated »ideas« become the object of dialectic. Some truth is searched beyond them, they are taken form the beings or the signs of beings: the world which they inhabit, which they come from is composed... In summa: impropriety comes to its height even by Plato... And now was felt the need to invent also the abstractly perfect man; good, just, wise."²⁴ The science of morality, represented by Socrates, remains according to Nietzsche in a clear discord with the humanity of man, with his nature. "The result of the moral values' degeneration, was creation of the degenerated type of man — »only good«, »only happy«, »only wise«"²⁵ — Nietzsche claims. According to him "Socrates is the moment of deepest perversion in the history of values."²⁶ And this way of thinking is characteristic for Christianity. According to Nietzsche Christianity, understood as the learning of the disciples of Jesus and the Church, this is "a poison". This "poison" is according to Nietzsche the belief "in reality of the highest moral values, understood as God: through it all the values have been denied and basically understood as valueless. That is how came to the throne, what is opposite to nature. With relentless logic it came to the absolute demand to neglect the nature."²⁷

However, in the European culture functions also the other interpretation of the way of reasoning of Socrates. And what is characteristic, it functions in the thought of many authors parallel to the one that has been presented; somehow beside it, not as its opposition. And we deal with such a situation in the reflection of Nietzsche at full length. In the conviction of the author of *The Joyful Knowledge* the philosophy of Socrates cannot be limited to the metaphysics of realism. Socrates, accepting the existence of the being's dualism, stated — as Plato relates in *The Defence of Socrates* — that although the object of the notions within the scope of morality exists objectively, a human being — taken statistically — has no ability to learn this object. Neither "politicians" nor "poets" (although they partly possessed such an ability) nor the whole of people, "craftsmen", have it. From the statements of Socrates immediately there seems to result that in his opinion the only subject, the one, "who knows", what "in its essence" is "good" or "justice", is himself, Socrates. However, it is only seemingly so. On the one hand Socrates states, that the knowledge of the groups of people mentioned above (and this is practically the whole society) of the essence of moral notions characterizes ignorance. On the other hand, he emphasizes the fact, that he does not possess such a knowledge, too. What makes him different from other people is — as he speaks of himself — "as I do not know

²² K.R. Popper, *Spółeczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie* [The Open Society and its Enemies], Warszawa 1993, v. 1, Urok Platona [The Charm of Plato], p. 234, 330 and below.

²³ F. Nietzsche, *Wola mocy* [The Will of Power], § 235.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, § 216.

anything, so it does not even appear.”²⁸ Socrates is the wisest of people in this sense that — by contrast with the others — „knows that does not know anything”. Nietzsche writes in this context: “I admire the competence and wisdom of Socrates in everything that he did, said — and didn’t say. This sneering and enamoured monster [...] was not only the wisest chatterer that has ever existed: so great he was in silence.”²⁹ The Author of *The Antichrist* referring to the description of Socrates’ death, that was presented in Plato’s *Phaedo* attracts attention to the last words of Socrates in which he ascertains that he owes a rooster to Aesculapius, the god of health. “This funny and terrifying »last word« means for the one that has got ears »oh, Crito, life is an illness!« — Nietzsche writes. It’s possible! The man, as him that lived happily and in the eyes of all as a soldier — was a pessimist! He was making the best of a bad bargain of life and living hid his ultimate judgement, the most inner feeling! Socrates, Socrates felt the pain of life!”³⁰ Nietzsche shares the intuition of Socrates that existence, life understood as the whole of relations between people is only “an illness”. As Pierre Hadot remarks “in this case the illness wearing away life would be the socratic clarity of perception, the socratic moral attitude.”³¹ The deepest conviction of Socrates and also Nietzsche can be limited to stating that about “health” understood as the state opposite to “illness”-life, you can only keep silent. The ambiguity of Nietzsche in the interpretation of the position of Socrates leads, as a consequence to the fact that his attitude towards Christianity does not limit to critique. This aspect of this outlook on life that in the thought of Nietzsche is not recognised as “a poison” so the way of thinking of Jesus himself; this what Nietzsche calls “the primary Christianity”. Such a Christianity means for him “the warmth of passion”, “love” (on the basis of hearty sensuality).³² In his opinion to the essence of „what started the Christian movement” belongs “a total indifference to dogmas, cult, priests, church, theology.”³³ According to him practising of Christianity, in the above understanding “is not any peculiarity, as practicing of buddhism isn’t it at all: it is the means to become happy...”³⁴ The philosophy of life of Jesus that is “the philosophical way of living” of Socrates, expressing itself in “joy of life and your own »self«”³⁵, Nietzsche interprets this “way of living” not as the whole of opinions, the area of thought and language, but as an attitude. The attitude of Jesus towards reality — as well as the silent Socrates’ attitude to it — it the attitude of an anti-realist. And in this context Nietzsche sees the analogies of the outlook of Jesus with the behaviour of Buddha.

According to the spirit of the same way of reasoning “the problem of Socrates” is settled by K. Popper. Popper states that the ideals of “open society” are not in conflict with the metaphysics of Socrates. In conflict with the attitude of Socrates remains only Plato’s philosophy (and more precisely: the thought of “later” Plato, presented in *The State*). “What a monument of human littleness is that idea of philosopher-king! — K. Popper writes. — What a contrast between it and simplicity and humanitarianism of Socrates, who warned the statesmen against revelling in their own power, perfection and wisdom and who tried to teach them what is the most important, that we are all fragile human beings.”³⁶ It is Plato, not Socrates who opens the list of human freedom’s “enemies”. And also Christianity, understood in the most essential sense does not create the circumstances for totalitarianism. According to Popper democracy, liberal democracy cannot dispense with the transcendental ideas of good and justice. This is in accordance in its essence with the Christian outlook; not “everything” in it “is allowed”. Popper even claims that the thought of the sophist Protagoras to which refer the ideals of modern democracy is not contradictory to Christianity.³⁷ A similar interpretation of the philosophy of Socrates in the context of the reflection on politics was suggested by Hannah Arendt. Socrates in her formulation represents the most valuable tradition

²⁸ Plato, *Obrona Sokratesa* [The Defence of Socrates], VI D.

²⁹ F. Nietzsche, *Wiedza radosna* [The Joyful Wisdom], § 340.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ P. Hadot, *Filozofia jako ćwiczenie duchowe* [Philosophy as a Spiritual Exercise], Warszawa 1992, p. 106.

³² F. Nietzsche, *Wola mocy* [The Will of power], § 119.

³³ *Ibidem*, § 102.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ *Idem*, *Wędrowiec i jego cień* [The Wanderer and his Shadow], § 86.

³⁶ K. Popper, *Spółeczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie...* [The Open Society and its Enemies...], p. 179.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp.259-260.

of democracy. The most precious in the metaphysics of Socrates is in her opinion the fact that lie “was not teaching anything for such a simple reason that he had nothing to teach; was »barren« as the midwives in Greece whose progenitive age is over.”³⁸ “Thinking”, cogito — what makes the core of democracy, in her opinion can be neither called nor taught. At the foundation of modern democracy here first of all at the foundation of liberalism, you cannot speak of erosion of socratic-christian way of thinking about the world and the man. On the contrary. The ideals of democracy are built on the philosophy of Socrates, although this one — however strange it sounds — does not fully give in to conceptualization and verbalization. This is the sphere of silence.

This quality of modern democracy was also emphasised by Nietzsche. In the believe of Nietzsche in the culture of modern Europe the fact of decline of the realism’ s metaphysics has taken place. God has died! According to him the process of death of the transcendental values of truth, good and justice, was started by Renaissance. “Do you want to understand what the Renaissance was?” — he asks a question. And answers: “The alteration of Christian values, by all means [...] of all the genius understood trial of helping to victory of the opposite values, the dignified values...”³⁹ In this process of the God’s death an important role was played by the doctrine of modern democracy. If in a democratic state, writes Nietzsche, “there is not perceived [...] nothing else, but the instrument of people’s will, nobody »at the top« in relation to »at the bottom«, but only the function of the only autocrat, people”⁴⁰, and at the same the state, and the law created by it lose their traditional authority. The sphere of the individual’s sovereignty wins. “Contempt, fall and death of the state — claims Nietzsche — liberation of a private person [...] is the consequence of the idea of democratic state.”⁴¹ Democracy is not such a system of community’s life organization where “everything is allowed”, in the sense that here moral relativism prevails. Just the opposite. Only now, having rejected all the embarrassing forms of culture — here mostly such or other forms of power, as formed polis in Europe so far — the man gains the possibilities of self-realisation. This is the articulation of will; not interest. The modern times are “the epoch of the cyclops’ buildings.”⁴²

In the context of this second interpretation of social philosophy of Socrates is must be stated as follows: the conviction characteristic for the way of thinking of the Pole that convention is not the only source of morality and the right to posses is not the only foundation of humanity, do not have to stay in opposition to such an understanding of freedom that is characteristic for modern Europe. The fact of a difference in understanding the rule of demos in Polish culture by comparison with the ideas of modern democracy loses here its expressiveness. The most important feature of Polish culture is the distance towards all the forms of civilization, and towards all that is connected with the sphere of polis. Thinking and acting of each individual in every situation and time should be related to the transcendence sphere. But in the Polish culture expression there is silence kept about this sphere. The contemporary catholic intellectual Joseph Tischner characterizes the Polish psyche as “a tenderness”. It is in them, he writes, “the factor of detachment from the current reality of the surrounding world and turning the attention of the thinking being [...] towards a colourful Utopia.”⁴³ “In the notion of tenderness — Tischner ascertains — we discover [...] nostalgic content.”⁴⁴ Simultaneously, emphasizes Tischner, one can observe here “some tears coming to the eyes and as a distant echo, undefined qualm of conscience, the source of the whole escape.”⁴⁵ It is not easy to answer the question of how manifests itself realism of whose subject in culture nothing is pronounced with absolute certainty. Probably this “nostalgic content” and “qualm of conscience” composing the Polish psyche are well presented in art; e.g. Chopin’s music, the poetry of Mickiewicz, painting of Jacek Malczewski, films of Andrzej Wajda. The distance to some kind of forms of the moral relativism of the state and law — as it results from the reflections presented above —

³⁸ H. Arendt, *Myślenie* [Thinking], Warszawa 1991, p. 236.

³⁹ Idem, *Antychryst* [The Antichrist], § 61.

⁴⁰ Idem, *Ludzkie, arcyłudzkie* [Human, Arch-human], § 472.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Idem, *Wędrowiec i jego cień* [The Wanderer and his Shadow], § 275.

⁴³ J. Tischner, *Chochoł sarmackiej melancholii* [The Capsheaf of the Sarmatian Melancholy], “Znak” 1970, no. 196, p. 1247.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

is not unknown to the cultures of Western countries; also for the culture of the United States. The foundations of these cultures are marked by nominalism, which does not mean that in their approach a conviction is presented that the objective criterion of truth does not exist. The idea of public spirit does not have to stand totally in opposition to the fundamental principles of democracy (here also the liberal democracy).

The argument that modern democracy in Europe and the understanding of the power of demos, are two different orientations in the comprehension of organization of society's life, and the conviction that they are very close, at the same time and to the same extent agree with the real state of affairs. However, these two interpretations of the archetype of Polish culture exclude each other. In the reflection over the Polish political identity there has always been some insinuation. The Poles, as they were characterized by J. Lelewel, "taking the etiquette of the West have dressed it with the expression of dignity; if they learned something of pageantry or servility of the East, they ennobled it and erased its origin."⁴⁶ The problem of answering the question of how "the dignity" characteristic for the Polish archetype should be understood, is this "major enigma of Polish history" of which wrote J. Adamus quoted above. This, not easy to present, "peculiarity" of political culture in Poland with a particular power stressed Nietzsche in his works. So Nietzsche, as it has been already said positively evaluated the changes in the culture that the thought and practice of modern democracy was leading to. In his opinion the modern culture has reared "a breed of herd animal, something good-natural, morbid, mean, contemporary European."⁴⁷ Democracy, according to the principle: "more and more money and more and more diligence"⁴⁸, gains power in an individual "against its ultimate profit"⁴⁹, against its nature. According to Nietzsche — who liked emphasising the presumed relationship of his "instincts" with the Polish character (among others with the most spectacular in Polish history manifestation of public spirit, that was the institution of liberum veto) — in Europe only Polish culture can stand in opposition to this process. In the letter to "the dignified Poles" he wrote: "I belong to you, I am even more a Pole than God, I want to honour you."⁵⁰

The matter of the Polish political identity has very rarely been stated as the expression of curiosity alone. Most often this problem remains in connection with the concrete problems of the current politics. Nowadays it is connected with the discussions on building free-market and the bases of democracy in Poland. Here is concerned the answer to the question of how in the context of changes in this direction can be placed the understanding of Polish functioning principles that composes the tradition of Polish culture. As it results from the above considerations, the reflection on the essence of democracy, and here its understanding in the archetype of the Polish culture, goes far beyond the considerations within political sciences, understood *s. stricto*.

⁴⁶ J. Lelewel, *Uwagi nad dziejami Polski i ludu jej...* [The Remarks on the History of Poland and its People...], p. 279.

⁴⁷ F. Nietzsche, *Poza dobrem i złem* [Beyond Good and Evil], § 62.

⁴⁸ Idem, *Wiedza radosna* [The Joyful Wisdom], § 21.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ Idem, *Listy* [Letters], Kraków 1994, p. 393.