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A STORY TAILORED FOR EVERY POLE. STRATEGIES FOR PRESENTING THE PROTAGONISTS IN THE MEDIA COVERAGE SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF PAWEŁ ADAMOWICZ

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Abstract

The murder of the mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz in 2019 and its circumstances formed the topic of many media reports. These events released strong emotions and reactions. The image of Adamowicz constructed by the media immediately following his death was virtually irreproachable, these positive reports being connected with the so-called taboo of death. Over the following years, one of the main topics of the discourse became the question of the moral responsibility for the mayor's death. The authors of this article concentrate on rhetorical strategies of portraying the protagonists in the media coverage, utilising concepts including those of Robert Rowland. The daily press ("Gazeta Wyborcza", "Rzeczpospolita" and "Dziennik Zachodni") and socio-political weekly publications ("Wprost", "Newsweek", "Polityka", "Sieci" and "Do Rzeczy") are analysed.

Key words: Paweł Adamowicz, rhetoric, media narrative, narrative strategy, persuasion

Introduction

Due to polarisation and politicisation, the media in Poland, as pointed out by researchers such as Beata Klimkiewicz and Marta Żerkowska-Balas, are at present not a source of objective information. They provide one-sided coverage, which is adapted to the political preferences of their recipients, directed towards strengthening their sense of identity, and also intensifies the hostility between the supporters of individual parties.¹ A clear example of this is reactions to the murder of Paweł Adamowicz in 2019. Despite a media appeal not to use hate speech, different media camps attributed to each other the moral responsibility that led to this tragedy. In the popular consciousness, the death of Paweł Adamowicz is still correlated with the language of hate and brutalisation. It is a specific symbol to which public figures make reference.

Jacek Warchala stresses that in social communication an essential role is played by emotions, which can be considered on both a micro scale (on the level of the individual) or a macro one (on the institutional level)², although it is worth pointing out that in media discourse both of these levels frequently co-occur. More and more attention is being paid in the media – especially digital – to the effects of disinformation, which is intended to introduce “turmoil” into the information environment. Anna Mierzyńska observes that in the case of disinformation, “As a rule the most important thing is to exercise control [...]: power over people and their decisions. You can have control not only thanks to winning elections, not only because you won a war, but also by bringing about fear, generating chaos, allowing aggression, violence and hate.”³

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the contemporary media constitute a distinctive platform where other mechanisms that strongly shape the message, such as competition, commercialisation, tabloidisation and convergence, both coexist and clash.

On the other hand, there is the audience, which has experienced a polarised society for many years, thus fitting into the metaphor of tribalism: “A whole range of reactions can be seen, which can be called tribal – in terms of bias based

¹ M. Żerkowska-Balas, *Konsumpcja mediów a negatywna identyfikacja partyjna w Polsce w 2015 i 2019 roku*, “Studia Socjologiczne” 2022, nr 4, p. 71; B. Klimkiewicz, *The Public Sphere and the Changing News Media Environment in Poland: Towards Structural Polarisation*, “Javnost – The Public” 2021, vol. 28, issue 1, p. 69.

² J. Warchala, *Emocjonalizacja informacji*, [in:] *Współczesne media – gatunki w mediach*, t. 1: *Zagadnienia teoretyczne. Gatunki w mediach drukowanych. Prace dedykowane Profesor Marii Wojtak*, red. I. Hofman, D. Kępa-Figura, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2017, pp. 107–108.

³ A. Mierzyńska, *Efekt niszczący. Jak dezinformacja wpływa na nasze życie*, Wydawnictwo Agora, Warszawa 2022, p. 5.

on uncritical loyalty towards some group.”⁴ This audience expects a clearly defined position that aligns with the views of the group that they identify with.

This extremely brief and necessarily simplified sketch of contemporary practices that shape media reports points to patterns of operation as well as constructed visions of a (contrasting) world.

The main aim of this article is to answer the question as to the rhetorical strategies used for presenting Paweł Adamowicz as the protagonist of media narratives.

A narrative analysis of media coverage surrounding the death of Paweł Adamowicz: theoretical and methodological assumptions

At present, narrative analysis methods are popular not only in the humanities, but also in the social sciences. Researchers have observed the significant position of narrative structures in human communication and social interactions because they shape the way the world is understood.⁵ Jerzy Trzebiński notices that in the stream of events that surround us we tend to see narratives that shape “reality as a stage on which actors with specific intentions [...]” and problems perform, and those ideas inscribed in culture usually take the form of stories.⁶

It is worth remembering that in western culture research on narrative has its origins in ancient rhetoric and poetics.⁷ Narratology, which grew out of poetics, has become interdisciplinary in terms of the usefulness of its categories in the analysis of all types of text.⁸ In the mid-1960s narratologists – as Anna Burzyńska vividly puts it –

paid [...] attention to the general properties of narratives, which had been well known since Aristotle, if not always well remembered: to its constructive function *vis-à-vis* the events described, to its dynamics, to its temporal course, and finally, to its creative and often indeed causal power in relation to the events.⁹

The immense interest in narratives among researchers from various disciplines contributed to the emergence of a distinct intellectual current (the so-called

⁴ J. Piekutowski, *Cyber kontra real. Cywilizacja w techno-pułapce*, rozmowa z Andrzejem Zybortowiczem, Fundacja Nowa Rzeczpospolita, Warszawa 2022, p. 169.

⁵ K. Wyrwas, *Opowiadania potoczne w świetle genologii lingwistycznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2014, pp. 14–15.

⁶ J. Trzebiński, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Narracja jako sposób rozumienia świata*, red. J. Trzebiński, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk–Sopot 2002, p. 13.

⁷ J. Ziomek, *Retoryka opisowa*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1990, p. 119.

⁸ M. Głowiński, *Narracje literackie i nieliterackie*, Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych “Universitas”, Kraków 1997, p. 224.

⁹ A. Burzyńska, *Kariera narracji. O zwrocie narratystycznym w humanistyce*, “Teksty Drukie” 2004, nr 1–2, p. 44.

narrative turn), which in the 1970s led to the appearance and flourishing of trans-disciplinary narratology.¹⁰

It is possible to point to three main sources of contemporary narratology: Russian formalism (Vladimir Propp), American New Criticism (Northrop Frye), French structuralism (Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss) and German hermeneutics (Hans-Georg Gadamer).¹¹ Researchers on communication also used narratology to search for their own universal model that would explain human communicative behaviour. A strong influence on the development of the understanding of narrative within the discipline of communication was exerted by the reflections of Walter R. Fisher, who in the 1980s described the concept of the narrative paradigm.¹² According to this paradigm, the audience participates in the construction and evaluation of communicative messages through assessing the “narrative fidelity” (the extent to which they seem true) and “narrative probability” (the extent to which they seem coherent). In the opinion of Robert Rowland, stories belong to the most powerful forms of persuasion, because on their basis humans make diverse choices.¹³

Narrative analysis, developed by rhetorical criticism, is an approach that focuses on the persuasive aspects of storytelling. It is to this tradition that we shall particularly refer in this article. The first step in narrative analysis is to identify the protagonists and the roles they play, the scenes in which the action takes place, as well as the narrative schema present in the discourse.¹⁴ Ultimately the aim is to determine the effectiveness of narrative strategies and functions.¹⁵

This approximate method of analysis seems very useful in relation to the communication of information, which often takes the form of micro stories centred around protagonists, their motives, their aims and methods of operation. For typical of contemporary media is the combination of the informational and entertaining functions (infotainment). This is characteristic not only of television, but also information portals, which manifests in the ludic nature

¹⁰ J. Tabaszewska, „Wędrujące pojęcia”. *Koncepcja Mieke Bal — przykład inter- czy transdyscyplinarności?*, “Studia Europaea Gnesnensia” 2013, nr 8, p. 119.

¹¹ P. Pawliszak, *Analiza narracyjna dyskursu publicznego. W poszukiwaniu struktur kulturowych i procesów narzucania znaczeń formujących politykę ekologiczną*, [in:] *Analiza dyskursu publicznego. Przegląd metod i perspektyw badawczych*, red. M. Czyżewski, M. Otrocki, T. Piekot, J. Stachowiak, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Sedno, Warszawa 2017, p. 70; B. Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, SAGE Publications, London 2004, pp. 1–3.

¹² S.K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, 5th ed., Waveland Press, Long Grove, IL 2018, p. 322.

¹³ R. Rowland, *The Narrative Perspective*, [in:] *Rhetorical Criticism. Perspectives in Action*, ed. J.A. Kuypers, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD 2009, pp. 139–140.

¹⁴ K.C. Haspel, *Communication Studies And Narrative*, [in:] *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, eds. D. Herman, M. Jahn, M.-L. Ryan, reprinted, Routledge, London–New York 2010, p. 76.

¹⁵ R. Rowland, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

of the coverage and the emphasis on spectacle and sensationalism. Often reports about trivial matters are reported in a dramatic manner, making use of typical narrative schemata.¹⁶ Although media stories may take on a wide range of forms, the majority of them are characterised by such basic narrative frameworks. Frye distinguishes four conventional forms of narrative, namely romance, comedy, tragedy and satire.¹⁷

These dramatic conventions, which require elaboration, are associated with tropes, with metaphors playing a significant role. Metaphors consist in a basic semantic transformation, which is canonical in classical rhetoric, and are essential in contemporary discourse analysis because according to cognitivists (George Lakoff, Mark Johnson), metaphor constitutes the fundamental material of everyday knowledge. Tropes are also the building blocks of the structure of myths.

In a romance, the hero fulfils a task from which he emerges victorious and gains spiritual strength, undergoing a change. Thus, this is a tale about identity, and its main trope is metaphor. The hero is presented as a knight, for example, which symbolises order, while his enemies are the forces of evil. A tragedy is built around metonymy, which consists in the juxtaposition of phenomena or objects, which are close to each other in time or space. This schema reveals a crisis situation, which becomes the focal point of the narrative. Comedy tells the story of two opposite forces reaching an agreement, and the rhetorical figure that corresponds to this scheme is synecdoche. Irony, however – “the trope of scepticism” – is a specific rhetorical figure of satire, in which illusions are uncovered. The mood of comedy and romance is optimistic, while tragedy and satire are pessimistic.¹⁸

The initial stage of this analysis covered identifying the main actants and their characteristics, and a description of the relations between the main protagonist and other objects, as well as the actions they undertook and effects they brought about. At the next stage typical plots were reconstructed, with the actants involved, as well as the corresponding narrative schemata.¹⁹

The subject of this research was newspapers and magazine, which were taken from digital archives. The analysis covered the nationally circulated daily press (“Gazeta Wyborcza”, “Rzeczpospolita”, “Dziennik Zachodni”) and socio-political weekly publications (“Wprost”, “Newsweek”, “Polityka”, “Sieci” and

¹⁶ A. Naruszewicz-Duchlińska, *Inforozrywka (infotainment) w portalach informacyjnych tvn24.pl i tvp.info*, “Prace Językoznawcze” 2013, z. 15/3, pp. 65–71; J. Wasilewski, *Dramaturgia języka mediów*, [in:] *Nowe zjawiska w języku, tekście i komunikacji*, red. M. Rutkowski, K. Zawilska, t. II, Instytut Filologii Polskiej Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, Olsztyn 2008, pp. 215–216.

¹⁷ S.K. Foss, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*; B. Czarniawska, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

¹⁹ More about the mentioned categories in: P. Pawliszak, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.

“Do Rzeczy”). The selection of the titles was determined by the number of copies printed and their position in individual segments of the press. The authors of this paper were thus guided by the principle of variety in terms of world view. At the same time it should be mentioned that the first two weeks following the murder of Paweł Adamowicz were a period when this topic was never out of the headlines. The material analysed covers the period 13th to 31st January between the years 2019 and 2023.²⁰ In the case of daily publications, the research material was made up of over 200 articles, where half of them were published in 2019 and were more or less equally divided between the three newspapers. The vast majority of articles from the next few years came from “Gazeta Wyborcza”. However, in the weekly publications there were considerably fewer articles on this topic (less than 100). As in the case of daily newspapers, the great majority of them were published in 2019.

Instrumentalisation of the victim in the media

In narratives on the murder of Paweł Adamowicz, both in daily and weekly publications, there appeared numerous actants that were assessed both positively and negatively: 1) the victim and the killer, 2) many named public figures, 3) collective ones – political parties and the media. These examples first provided a profile of Paweł Adamowicz – his public achievements and elements of this private life. Secondly, attention was paid to the context of the murder, a portrait of the killer and the problem of the politicisation of these events. With time media reports, above all in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, which explored the topic the most intensively, focused primarily on two issues: responsibility for the murder and the sluggishness of the state authorities after the perpetrator was apprehended.

The ethos of the protagonist was elaborated, and his image was constructed in various ways. This included both his private and public life. In the first case, the reader’s attention was drawn “to the motif of the death of a loved person, the father of a family. A drama was created around the event, which destroyed an individual family’s ideal of happiness and tore people who loved each other, a happy family, apart”. In the case of his public life, the “narrative focused on the violation of the prototype of a happy society – a person had died, who was a true leader, [...] [was known for his commitment to social issues – P.S., E.T.], served the citizens and democracy”²¹, supported culture and promoted international collaboration.

²⁰ The detailed analysis covers the time period indicated in the text, but also examines material from a broader period. This allows for context to be outlined.

²¹ P. Sarna, E. Tyc, *Śmierć prezydenta Gdańska Pawła Adamowicza w nagłówkach polskich dzienników i tygodników*, “Res Rhetorica” 2020, nr 1, p. 12.

Thus, categories were emphasised that were linked to such spheres as:

- competencies – both character attributes and experience as the town's leader – “A good person, an experienced councillor”²², courage in his activities, for example personal involvement in helping victims of the war in Syria²³; a patriotic attitude which promotes local values, including those linked to Gdańsk's European heritage – “He loved Gdańsk, he was a Polish, and at the same time European patriot in his heart and soul”²⁴, “Of himself he said that he was a Catholic, a resident of Gdańsk, a Pole, a European, a husband and a father”²⁵, “Gdańsk was his mission and his passion.”²⁶
- trust – he represented the “spirit of solidarity”, “openness to other people, he understood and supported them”²⁷, “A great leader who cares about the inhabitants of Gdańsk”²⁸, he was presented as a person who was open and tolerant: “[...] as a politician he went beyond conservative boundaries: he supported in vitro programmes, and he pursued immigrant-friendly urban policies [...]”²⁹;

²² UJ, *Trzecia rocznica śmierci Pawła Adamowicza. Prezydent Wrocławia złożył kwiaty: „To mógł być każdy z nas”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 13.01.2022, <https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,27997953,trzecia-rocznica-smierci-pawla-adamowicza-prezydent-wroclawia.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

²³ D. Karaś, *Msza w rocznicę śmierci Pawła Adamowicza. „Nie bał się tego, co nowe”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2020, <https://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,25599631,msza-w-rocznicze-smierci-pawla-adamowicza-nie-bal-sie-tego.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

²⁴ wyb. kaf., *Donald Tusk wspomina śmierć Pawła Adamowicza: „Zaczynam ryczeć jak dziecko”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 13.01.2020, <https://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,25574441,tt-niegotowe-tusk-wspomina-smierc-adamowicza-zaczynam.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

²⁵ M. Sandecki, *Msza ekumeniczna w intencji Adamowicza. „Jego śmierć to wezwanie do wyrugowania języka pogardy”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2022, <https://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,28003784,msza-ekumeniczna-w-intencji-adamowicza-jego-smierc-to-wezwanie.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

²⁶ Polityka.pl, *Gdańsk był jego misją i życiową pasją*, “Polityka”, 14.01.2019, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/1778466,1,gdansk-byl-jego-misja-i-zyciowa-pasja.read> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

²⁷ A. Dobiegała, *Druga rocznica zamachu na Pawła Adamowicza. Adam Bodnar: „Nienawiść, nowe cele i kolejne polowania z nagonką”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 13.01.2021, <https://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,26681132,druga-rocznica-zamachu-na-prezydenta-gdanska.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

²⁸ *Timmermans: Jestem wstrząśnięty brutalnym atakiem na Pawła Adamowicza*, “Wprost”, 13.01.2019, <https://www.wprost.pl/polityka/10183396/timmermans-jestem-wstrzasniety-brutalnym-atakiem-na-pawla-adamowicza.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

²⁹ Polityka.pl, *Gdańsk był jego misją i życiową pasją, op. cit.*

- sympathy – he was presented as a person who easily connects with people – “He was a democrat through and through, but above all he loved people, he knew how to talk to them and fulfil their needs”³⁰, “[...] a person with a heart of gold.”³¹

As a result, Adamowicz came across as a competent person, trustworthy and at the same time warm, genuinely friendly and highly empathetic.

Adam Michnik³², sketching the profile of Paweł Adamowicz as a hero that brought people together, reached deep into the history of Gdańsk and, describing his pedigree, made use of numerous analogies important for the ethos of “solidarity” – in both the revolutionary and intellectual senses. It is worth quoting a passage from his article at length:

Hate has stabbed freedom in the heart. Paweł was an outstanding figure in Polish democratic and local government circles. He continued the best traditions of Gdańsk, a city for which he did a lot. To this tradition belong the myths of heroic Westerplatte, the magnificent rebuilding of the city from the ruins of war, the memory of the revolt of December 1970, the traditions of negotiations between the strike committee and the government delegation in August 1980, which finished with the signing of an agreement and the founding of “Solidarity” led by Lech Wałęsa. There are also the strikes of 1988, which paved the way for the Round Table Talks and the elections on 4th June 1989. Paweł embodied Gdańsk and Polish patriotism, the patriotism of Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski and Lech Wałęsa.³³

In narratives about crime it is important how the victim is presented. It was emphasised that the mayor of Gdańsk was an innocent victim and that the violence was totally unprovoked, for example: “[...] he suffered death, while spreading good.”³⁴

As far as the question of responsibility for the murder is concerned, daily newspapers concentrated only initially on the murderer himself, while later the focus shifted to supposed indirect perpetrators. In the second case, such terms

³⁰ M. Chołódowski, *Prezydent Białegostoku w rocznicę śmierci prezydenta Gdańska: Paweł Adamowicz przede wszystkim kochał ludzi*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2022, <https://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/7,35241,28001349,bialystok-prezydent-tadeusz-truskolaski-pawel-adamowicz-przed.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

³¹ P. Nodzyńska, „To był człowiek o złotym sercu”. Tak gdańszczanie żegnali Pawła Adamowicza 3 lata temu, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 13.01.2022, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,82983,27996149,to-by-l-czlowiek-o-zlotym-sercu-tak-gdanzczanie-zegnali.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

³² The editor-in-chief of “Gazeta Wyborcza”, one of the main opposition activists during the period of the Polish People’s Republic.

³³ A. Michnik, *Michnik o Adamowiczu: Żegnaj, drogi Pawle*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2019, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75968,24362800,zegnaj-drogi-pawle.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

³⁴ rd, *Aleja Pawła Adamowicza w Łodzi? Jest wniosek radnych*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 16.01.2020, <https://lodz.wyborcza.pl/lodz/7,35136,25606853,aleja-pawla-adamowicza-w-lodzi-jest-wniosek-radnych.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

as “political terrorism” were used, which are difficult to define unambiguously³⁵, but at the same time they arouse emotions: “Paweł experienced hate speech and physically became the victim of political terrorism.”³⁶ As early as January 2019, the front page of “Gazeta Wyborcza”³⁷ carried a lengthy text “Adamowicz as the target”, which was built around the part played by Telewizja Polska (TVP, the Polish public broadcaster) in a smear campaign against Adamowicz.³⁸ Many titles contained the word “hate”, which was used in various collocations: “Stop hate speech”³⁹ or “Stop hate.”⁴⁰ Whereas in material from 2019 one notices that the label “hate” was employed primarily to accuse public media, and this was done mostly in an allusive manner, in the subsequent years public media and the ruling coalition without doubt became the main negative protagonist. A frequent tactic was to quote, without editorial comment, the opinion of a person or a representative of a group of people, such as in an article by the organisers of a meeting in Szczecin, who wrote “In Częstochowa the memory of the mayor of Gdańsk has been honoured. ‘Stop hate!’ ‘Hate kills’: ‘We are convinced that it is hate from these media that killed the Mayor.’”⁴¹ In numerous articles the theme of the various forms of injustice that Adamowicz experienced was developed. In “Gazeta Wyborcza”, the topic of the Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth) was brought up several times. In 2017 this organisation issued political death certificates to city mayors who had decided to help refugees. The article reminded readers that this was not regular criticism, it was hate speech⁴².

³⁵ T. Wąlek, *Pojęcie, geneza i klasyfikacja zjawisk terrorystycznych*, “Securitologia” 2018, nr 2, pp. 110–124.

³⁶ R. Robaszewski, *Rocznica śmierci Pawła Adamowicza. „Tak jak on wierzę w symfonię szcunku Polaków do Polaków”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2022, <https://olsztyn.wyborcza.pl/olsztyn/7,48726,28003651,rocznica-smierci-pawla-adamowicza-tak-jak-on-wierze-w-symfonie.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

³⁷ A. Kublik, K. Katka, *Adamowicz na celowniku TVP*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 22.01.2019, <https://www.press.pl/jedynki/pokaz/3/2019-01-22> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

³⁸ P. Sarna, E. Tyc, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁹ B. Chrabota, *Stop mowie nienawiści*, “Rzeczpospolita” – archiwum, 16.01.2019, <https://archiwum.rp.pl/2019/01/16> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

⁴⁰ M. Warszawski, „*Stop nienawiści*”. Czerwona kartka dla Telewizji publicznej, zdjęcia: M. Kosiński, montaż: M. Szyszka, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 16.01.2019, <https://wyborcza.pl/10,82983,24371719,stop-nienawisci-czerwona-kartka-dla-telewizji-publicznej.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023]; TK, *Dominikanin o. Ludwik Wiśniewski na pogrzebie prezydenta Adamowicza: Trzeba skończyć z nienawistnym językiem! Nie będziemy dłużej obojętni!*, “Dziennik Zachodni”, 19.01.2019, <https://dziennikzachodni.pl/dominikanin-o-ludwik-wisniewski-na-pogrzebie-prezydenta-adamowicza-trzeba-skonczy-cz-nienawistnym-jezykiem-nie-bedziemy-dluzej/> ar/13820956 [accessed: 3.05.2023]; P. Sarna, E. Tyc, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴¹ M. Mamoń, *W Częstochowie uczczono pamięć prezydenta Gdańska Pawła Adamowicza. „Stop hejt! Nienawiść zabija”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2023, <https://czestochowa.wyborcza.pl/czestochowa/7,48725,29359147,w-czestochowie-uczczono-pamiec-prezydenta-gdanska-pawla-adamowicza.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

⁴² az, „*TVP atakowała go średnio pięć razy dziennie*”. *Manifestacja w rocznicę zabójstwa Pawła Adamowicza*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 14.01.2023, <https://szczecin.wyborcza.pl/szczeci>

In a similar way, the theme of responsibility for the death of Paweł Adamowicz was covered by some weekly magazines.⁴³ In January 2019, the topic on the covers was hate, presented as the main motif behind the perpetrator's actions. "Do Rzeczy" asked the question: "Who is spreading hate? What will politics be like after the murder of Paweł Adamowicz?".⁴⁴ "Wprost" appealed for the hate to stop⁴⁵, and a strong link was made between hate and politics that generates negative social attitudes: "Hate. It won't stop itself."⁴⁶

With time, the attention of some weekly magazines shifted strongly towards accusing TVP and TVP president Jacek Kurski, e.g.: "Beating around the bush: TVP on Paweł Adamowicz."⁴⁷ About public television journalists they wrote "The innocent ones from TVP, i.e. propagandists, celebrate the anniversary of Adamowicz's death"⁴⁸, while about Jacek Kurski: "Kurski's cynicism: watching TVP could have saved Adamowicz."⁴⁹

Attention should also be paid to an article, whose very headline "Back off from Paweł"⁵⁰ strongly signalled the irritation and anger brought about by TVP's documentary about Paweł Adamowicz ("You are a destructive mechanism"). Accusations against the government were formulated explicitly:

the goal is to vilify, and as a consequence to achieve permission from society to destroy once and for all not only political opposition to PiS, but also circles that oppose

n/7,34939,29358933,tpv-atakowala-go-srednio-piec-razy-dziennie-manifestacja.html [accessed: 3.05.2023].

⁴³ It is worth pointing out that the weekly magazine "Sieci" was the only one to publish an edition devoted to Paweł Adamowicz's murder. This was edition 3/2019. Subsequently the magazine did not handle this topic directly.

⁴⁴ „Do Rzeczy” nr 4: *Kto sieje nienawiść? Jaka będzie polityka po zabójstwie Pawła Adamowicza?*, "Do Rzeczy", 20.01.2019, <https://dorzeczy.pl/kraj/90766/do-rzeczy-nr-4-kto-sieje-nienawisc.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁴⁵ *Przyjaciele wspominają Pawła Adamowicza. Artyści chcą przerwać nienawiść. Co w nowym „Wprost”?*, "Wprost", 19.01.2019, <https://www.wprost.pl/tylko-u-nas/10184667/o-czym-piszemy-w-nowym-numerze-tygodnika-wprost-zapowiedz.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁴⁶ E. Wanat, *Nienawiść. To się samo nie zatrzyma*, Wprost.Info, 11.08.2019, <https://info.wprost.pl/okiem-wprost/10241093/nienawisc-to-sie-samo-nie-zatrzyma.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁴⁷ R. Socha, *Odwracanie kota ogonem. TVP o Pawle Adamowiczu*, "Polityka", 22.01.2022, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/2151828,1,odwracanie-kota-ogonem-tvp-o-pawle-adamowiczu.read> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁴⁸ M. Kowalczyk, *Niewiniątka z TVP, czyli propagandyści obchodzą rocznicę śmierci Adamowicza*, "Newsweek", 15.01.2021, <https://www.newsweek.pl/opinie/w-tvp-rocznica-smierci-pawla-adamowicza/d7e3q4c> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁴⁹ *Idem*, *Cynizm Kurskiego: oglądanie TVP mogło uratować Adamowicza*, "Newsweek", 25.02.2021, <https://www.newsweek.pl/opinie/kurski-o-adamowiczu-ogladanie-tvp-moglo-uratowac-adamowicza/ek5ys99> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁵⁰ T. Lis, *Odpieprzcie się od Pawła*, "Newsweek", 21.01.2022, <https://www.newsweek.pl/opinie/dokument-o-pawle-adamowiczu-w-tvp-komentarz-tomasza-lisa/x2e5pms> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

the authorities or those not controlled by the government, such as the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity [an annual charity event, much criticised by PiS – translator's note].⁵¹

As mentioned previously, an important topic that focused the attention of columnists was the claim, which started to appear in 2020, that the state authorities had been sluggish at every stage after the perpetrator was apprehended. Various types of expert were cited in this context. In January 2020 "Gazeta Wyborcza" directly accused the prosecutor's office of deliberate delays to the investigations because of political motives before the parliamentary elections: "We have revealed [...], that the investigation into Stefan W., the murderer of the mayor of Gdańsk, is being drawn out deliberately."⁵²

Two weekly magazines also concentrated on this topic, "Newsweek" and "Wprost". In the first, the question "Why is there still no indictment for the killer of Mayor Adamowicz?"⁵³ was asked more than once. However, in "Wprost" the course of the proceedings and the frequent interviews with Piotr Adamowicz (brother) and Magdalena Adamowicz (wife) were monitored meticulously. They wrote about this case, showing impatience: "Two years have passed since the death of the mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz, who died from knife wounds inflicted by Stefan W. The investigation has been dragging on and there is no indictment against the perpetrator [...]."⁵⁴

Over the whole period and in all the press headlines that form the subject of this paper, the theme of tragedy dominated. Its prototype was myths about the sacrifice of a hero, a violent death and human isolation. This was most noticeable during the period after 2020, when the theme of the investigation that was dragging on emerged. Normally doubt as to whether the crime would be judged fairly was emphasised. This theme was also present in articles in which the focus was on responsibility for the crime. The tale was woven around metonymy, which manifested, for example, in the construction of the stage where

⁵¹ C. Michalski, *Telewizja Polska, czyli fabryka nienawiści*, "Newsweek", 22.01.2019, <https://www.newsweek.pl/szukaj?q=celem%20jest%20zohydzenie,%20odcz%C5%82owieczenie,%20a%20w%20konsekwencji%20uzyskanie%20spo%C5%82ecznego%20przyzwolenia%20na%20ostateczne%20zniszczenie%20nie%20tylko%20politycznej%20opozycji%20wobec%20PiS> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁵² K. Włodkowska, *Dziesiątki świadków, którzy nic nie wniosą. Prokuratura spowalnia śledztwo w sprawie śmierci Adamowicza*, "Gazeta Wyborcza", 15.01.2020, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,25599603,dziesiatki-swiadkow-ktorzy-nic-nie-wniosa-prokuratura-spowalnia.html#S.related-K.C-B.1-L.1.zw> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

⁵³ M. Świąchowicz, *„Gołym okiem widać, że się przygotował”. Dlaczego wciąż nie ma aktu oskarżenia dla zabójcy prezydenta Adamowicza?*, "Newsweek", 4.10.2020, <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/zabojstwo-pawla-adamowicza-dlaczego-stefan-w-zabil-kiedy-trafido-wiezienia/70sklh8> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁵⁴ E. Olczyk, *Piotr Adamowicz: Rządzący przeciągają śledztwo. Nie na rękę im zeznania zabójcy Pawła*, "Wprost", 14.01.2021, <https://www.wprost.pl/tylko-u-nas/10408114/piotr-adamowicz-o-zabojstwie-brata.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

the events took place. Numerous names of towns where Adamowicz had been remembered were listed. Among other techniques metonymies and analogies were used in headlines in order to emphasise the elegiac convention of paying tribute: “Gdańsk showed it goodness, Gdańsk showed its class”⁵⁵, “Paweł Adamowicz. He was rebellious, just like Gdańsk [...]”⁵⁶ or “Let Gdańsk show us how to live.”⁵⁷

The epic theme was visible in articles mostly from 2019, which appeared straight after the murder. Their prototype was myths about the birth of a hero, his resurrection, about defeating evil. In stories that follow this schema, it is the figure of Adamowicz that is idealised most strongly, and it is also predicted that the crime will be judged fairly and his legacy will endure. The most important trope of the stories was metaphor: the warrior who conquered evil.

Conclusions

For daily newspapers, above all “Gazeta Wyborcza”, the biography of Paweł Adamowicz was a combination of two distinct archetypes of “Solidarity”. As Anna Peck stresses, the narrative on the topic of “Solidarity” that is widespread in western studies presents the figures of Lech Wałęsa and Adam Michnik as dichotomous opposites, whose only common denominator is the principle of not using violence. Wałęsa is an example of a folk hero, a person suffering for his cause and democracy. Michnik, on the other hand, represents the type of the detached intellectual.⁵⁸ In the narrative of “Gazeta Wyborcza”, Adamowicz embodies both these traditions of “Solidarity”. The weekly magazines also approached the topic in various ways. “Do Rzeczy” focused on the “correct” course of the proceedings. “Wprost”, “Newsweek” and “Polityka”, however, in almost the same number of articles accused the government of politicising the crime. Aside from occasional mentions, “Sieci” did not address this topic directly.

The narratives surrounding the death of Paweł Adamowicz in this paper are characterised by remarkable evocativeness, which shows itself not so much in how the topic is portrayed as in the way that devices are selected that are

⁵⁵ G. Kubicki, *Gdańsk podzielił się dobrem, Gdańsk pokazał klasę*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 17.01.2020, <https://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,25608423,gdansk-podzielil-sie-dobrem-gdansk-pokazal-klase.html> [accessed: 3.05.2023].

⁵⁶ R. Grochal, *Wizjoner i lider. Był niepokorny tak jak Gdańsk, którym rządził dwadzieścia lat*, “Newsweek”, nr 4/2019, p. 20.

⁵⁷ K. Skrzydłowska-Kalukin, *Niech Gdańsk pokaże, jak żyć*, “Wprost”, 19.01.2019, <https://www.wprost.pl/tygodnik/10184614/niech-gdansk-pokaze-jak-zyc.html> [accessed: 15.04.2023].

⁵⁸ A. Peck, *Konstruowanie historii. Prezentacja i percepcja Polski w amerykańskich podręcznikach akademickich i szkolnych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2010, pp. 154–158.

intended to influence the audience's emotions. In the articles that appeared throughout the years and in all the press headlines under discussion, the model for the narrative was tragedy. The murder of the president of Gdańsk contributed to the construction of a narrative about crisis. The media created an image of the world in which the blame lies on one side and this is not open to debate. This was highlighted at strategic points of the texts through expressive headlines, evocative titles and straightforward conclusions. The concept of communication demonstrated in the moralistic and agitational approach of the authors of the texts is also significant; this concept was intended to shape in the reader the need to take a specific position with regard to the views presented. In such an antagonistic view of the world, there is a strong reinforcement of the audience's sense of bonding with the group with which they identify. This a far cry from aiming at objectivity, reliability and maintaining journalistic neutrality.

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