Bohdan Dziemidok

Artistic Expression of National Cultural Identity

The turn of the 20th and the 21st century is a very interesting period. On the one hand, there is a growth of internationalist tendencies, which make us look for common values and universal culture, and on the other hand, the centrifugal tendencies lead to the revival of new forms of nationalism and national and religious conflicts.

Integrative tendencies are an unquestioned fact of every aspect of societal life: economic (emergence of the world market, rise of international exchange and cooperation, modernization of technology, popularization of Western patterns of consumption, great development of transport and means of communication, etc.), political (expansion of liberal democracy, creation of an united Europe), and in culture, which succumbs to a tendency to create global and universal mass culture (mass media, tourism, fashion, show business, etc.). It turns out, however, that neither international commerce, nor the blossoming systems of communication and transport, provide us with the common feeling of identity or belonging. At the same time the need for those does not cease to exist. As a result, »people rediscover or create a new historical identity«, since they feel uprooted and »need new sources of identity and new forms of stable community, new systems of moral imperatives, which could give them a sense of a meaningful and purposeful life« (Huntington, 1997, pp. 132, 133).

One of the most important forms of collective and cultural identity still turns out to be the national one. The prophecies of the end of the era of nations have not come true.

»The strength of national sentiments – writes Jerzy Szacki – even if changeable in time and diverse in space, does not show any symptoms of clear decline, (...) the era of nations keeps lasting and nothing predicts it will end soon« (1997, p. 58).

In 1882, Isaiah Berlin called nationalism »the neglected power«, having at the same time supposed that »nationalism can dominate the last part of our century to such a degree, that no movement or revolution will have any chances of success unless allied with it« (1982, p. 206).

In the eighties, Berlin's convictions might have seemed exaggerated. Some claimed that nationalism would either become a merely historical term

or would function on the peripheries of the 'civilized' world – somewhere in the third or fourth world, and definitely would play no part in the unified communities of Europe. Truly, during the Cold War, international conflicts were mainly of an ideological flavor and many observers thought the situation to be unlikely to change quickly. However, the end of the Cold War brought a radical change of situation. One of the main reasons (but not the only one) for that, was the collapse of multinational states like the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia, and binational ones like Czechoslovakia. The problems of nationalism, xenophobia, ethnic conflicts, national identity, autonomy, and national culture became the center of attention in the social sciences. This happened not only because of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe and in the East, but also due to the growing separatisms or claims for cultural autonomy in Belgium, Spain, Canada and Great Britain. »With the end of the Cold War – writes Will Kymlicka – the demands of the ethnic and the national groups have taken over the center stage of political life both domestically and internationally« (1995, p. 193). The same author in another paper underlines that »a striking fact of 20th century history is tenacity with which ethno-national groups have maintained their distinct identity, institutions, and desire for self-government« (1995, p. 164).

Before one can begin dealing with the question of artistic expression of national cultural identity, one has to deal with several fundamentals. What is »identity«, what is »nation« and »nationalism«, and, finally, what is »collective identity«.

The issues of nation, national culture, international coexistence, national conflicts, nationalism, patriotism and national identity are still crucial and complex. The complexity is to a large degree caused by the lack of clarity of the terms themselves (national identity, nationalism, patriotism) which greatly adds to the difficulty of the academic discourse. For the purpose of this paper, some working distinctions between those terms are made below.

I believe that an attempt to identify the term 'nationalism' should be our point of departure. Ernest Gellner, an outstanding expert in the field, coined a well-known and popular definition of nationalism. According to him, »nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent« (1983, p. 1). This definition seems to be, on the one hand, too narrow for it does not cover some forms of nationalism (*e.g.* cultural nationalism); and, on the other hand, too broad, since it follows that all supporters of nation-states would be nationalists, regardless of the fact that some of them are opposed to nationalism as an ideology.

Consequently, it can be argued that Gellner's definition is insufficient.

It seems that the definition of nationalism should be descriptive, and as axiologically neutral as possible. Such an approach would allow us to avoid the impoverished vision of nationalism as only aggressive, expansionist and xenophobic. This narrow, clearly pejorative understanding of nationalism is, for example, very popular in the Polish language. The meaning of this term should be broad enough to cover all its most distinguished forms. Its definition should integrate not only ethnic nationalism (also called 'ethno-nationalism'), but also civic as well as (political) nationalism (present both in liberal democracies and in autocracies), cultural nationalism (the necessity to distinguish this particular form of nationalism is mainly argued for by the Canadian philosophers W. Kymilcka, 1995, and K. Nielsen). It should also reflect the differences between imperialistic and liberationist nationalism, as well as between aggressive, »hot« (in its exclusive and inclusive, expansionist form) and banal nationalism (see M. Billig), specific for the developed nation-states of the West (*e.g.* USA or UK).

Andrzej Walicki approaches nationalism as an ideology »centered around the concept of nation, promoting national ties, national identity, national consciousness and nation-state« (1997, p. 32).

Also Isaiah Berlin thinks that »'nationalism' is not only a state of mind but also a self-conscious doctrine« (1991, p. 206). Nationalism »is an elevation of values of unity and self-determination of a nation to the position of the highest good« (1991, p. 202).

A similar definition of nationalism can be found in the book by Peter Alter: »Nationalism exists everywhere, where individuals feel belonging above all to the nation and where sentimental ties and loyalty to a nation trump all other bonds and loyalties« (1983, p. 9, see J. Szacki, p. 27).

The quoted definitions of nationalism are formulated in such a manner, that the term 'nationalism' can be substituted by that of 'patriotism'. Still, most authors believe that it is rational and right to distinguish the two related terms. I would like to analyze three out of many venues to draw the line between them. The simplest approach is the one declaring »patriotism as a feeling and nationalism as a doctrine« (see J. Jedlicki, 1997). This simple distinction does not get us far, since even if nationalism is mostly treated as an ideology or a doctrine, we still can speak about nationalistic feelings or behaviors which do not construe an ideology. Patriotism is indeed very often seen as love of the homeland and the nation or »strong emotional ties with the nation« (M. Waldenberg 1992, pp. 18-24). Antonina Kłoskowska defines patriotism as a »strong, emotional attachment with one's own ethnic group« (1996, p. 16). Morris Janovitz distinguishes patriotism from xenophobia and

hatred for foreigners as »the persistence of love or attachment to a country« (1983, p. 194).

Patriotism understood in such a way is opposed to nationalism in a narrow sense. Consequently, patriotism is seen as a synonym for love of homeland or nation but lacking aggressive sentiments towards other countries or nations. At the same time nationalism represents primordial aggression, irrational exclusion, xenophobia, and fanaticism. This picture of patriotism and nationalism as two different sentiments or states of mind cannot be seen as satisfactory. As A. Kłoskowska and M. Billig rightly point out, in practice it is hardly possible to distinguish one from another. There is a popular tendency to call one's own nationalism 'patriotism' and to treat the patriotism of others as 'nationalism'. »The problem is how to distinguish in practice these two allegedly very different states of mind. One cannot merely ask potential patriots whether they either love or hate foreigners. Even the most extreme of nationalists will claim the patriotic motivation for themselves« (M. Billig, 1997, p. 57).

The third method of telling nationalism and patriotism apart is suggested by Andrzej Walicki and Charles Taylor. As opposed to nationalism connected with »nation«, patriotism is linked to the concept of »patria« defined politically, i.e. »without reference to a prepolitical identity«. Patriotism is »a strong sense of identification with polity«; it is »a strong citizen identification« (C. Taylor, 1997, p. 253).

Walicki sees patriotism as »a territorial concept which can be separate from nationality« (1997, p. 34).

Both authors claim that patriotism understood in such a way was present in both the American and the French Revolution. »The concept of Frenchman (...) was shaped under the influence of territorial and state identity« (A. Walicki, 1997, p. 34). This profile of patriotism is/was present in binational states like Czechoslovakia or multinational ones like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and the USA. As a result, if patriotism is merely a political/territorial phenomenon, »nationalism can provide fuel for patriotism, can be one basis for patriotism but not the only one« (C. Taylor, 1997, p. 253). This situation makes them difficult to distinguish from one another, however, although this distinction should be clearly made, »if we want to understand our history« (C. Taylor, 1997, p. 253).

A similar understanding of patriotism is shown by Will Kymlicka, who thinks that »we should distinguish patriotism, the feeling of allegiance to state, from national identity, the sense of membership in a national group« (p. 13). The necessity to distinguish those concepts justifies the relation between patriotism and national identity of the Swiss. Kymlicka says with respect to

Switzerland: »National groups feel allegiance to the larger state only because the larger state recognizes and respects their distinct national existence« (1995, p. 13).

All three approaches towards the divisive line between patriotism and nationalism can be argued for and against. The latter one, however, seems to be most precise.

As is well known, the concept of identity has two important meanings: one is »remaining the same« (sameness) and the other differentiation (distinctiveness) from other subjects of individual or collective identity. Neither can be overlooked in reflecting on national cultural identity. There is no »we« without »they«. Some authors (e. g., F. Barth and Z. Bokszański) are even of the opinion that it is not the tenacity of national tradition or culture, nor the collective memory and a feeling of commonality of fate, but precisely the borderlines between »us« and »them« which are the most important for collective identity.

In contemporary theories of the nation and nationalism, alongside the anthropological and cultural constructions of nation and national identity (B. Anderson, J. Armstrong, A. Kłoskowska, W. Kymlicka, Y. Tamir and others) there is also a political or »civic« way of defining a nation (its origin and functioning) and nationalism (E. Gellner, L. Greenfeld, E. Hobsbawm, M. Ignatieff and others). In both these approaches what is stressed, however, is the importance (although different) of culture (variously understood by different thinkers) in shaping the nation and national identity. The national cultural identity is usually treated as a very important form of collective identity because of its tenacity and axiological essentiality.

The question of collective identity is an equally controversial and vexing problem. This is so because it is neither quite clear who, and in what sense, is the subject of the collective identity, nor what is the role of the subjective and the objective indicators of that identity.

It would be interesting to propose some fresh answers to these questions, but as I need to get to the question of artistic expression of national identity, I will base my fundamental distinctions on the findings of other authors.

The problem of a culturally defined national identity is one of the most crucial (urgent and controversial) issues discussed today within the domain of social sciences. The notion of »national identity« should be distinguished not only from the notion of »patriotism«, but also from that of »nationalism«. Even staunch adherence to a given national identity does not necessarily lead to nationalism. After all, it follows from the sociological research carried out by Antonina Kłoskowska and her associates that, »individual cases prove

that there is no necessary connection between strong, assertive national identification and ethnocentric nationalism« (1996, p. 468).

Research carried out by scores of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, historians and social psychologists demonstrates that national identity is one of the most important and most stable forms of collective identity. Most research workers believe today that ethnic identity and national identity are rooted in culture which serves as the main bond within a group. Some authors go so far as to use interchangeably in some contexts the notions of »national identity« and »cultural identity«, since any national or ethnic identity could be largely reduced to cultural identity. For example, according to Kłoskowska, both ethnic and national groups are »corporate bodies in the form of communities determined by the relative identity and relative separateness of their cultural traits« (1996, p. 36), since »a common national culture constitutes a stronger, more tenacious and more effective determinant of social bonds than a common government« (1996, p. 27). The persistence of national culture endows the national community with a sense of continuity which is a prominent element of any identity.

Literature on this and related issues abounds in different, although often convergent, justifications of the special status of national identity. For example, Walicki notes that »the nation [...] possesses a powerful, historically shaped collective identity, encompassing both past and future generations, which is constantly bolstered even while it is being contested, and finds expression in the shared perception of a communion of anxieties, of a shared responsibility for the past and the future« (1997, p. 45).

Other factors which highlight the importance of national identity are discussed by Kai Nielsen, who states that it is »indeed a very important identity, an identity essential for many people to give meaning to their lives, vital for their sense of self-respect, essential for their sense of belonging and security – all things of fundamental value to human beings« (1996-97, p. 43).

An interesting vindication of the importance of national and cultural identity for individual human beings may be found in the works of W. Kymlicka and the Israeli researcher, Yael Tamir, who emphatically state that an individual cannot function outside his/her cultural context. It therefore follows that his/her autonomous decisions must depend on the cultural context. The instrumental value of national identity is largely based on the above observation. The cultural-national background plays a crucial role in the shaping of human axiological vistas and orientations, guiding individuals in their choice of appropriate conceptions of good, lifestyles, preferences and interests. And in particular, in shaping »their self-esteem demand on their ties with a lively and well respected community« (1998, p. 111).

But it is in the work of Kymlicka that one may find the most comprehensive appraisal of the value of national and cultural identity. I will limit myself to a presentation of only two of her main arguments. First and foremost, it is this identity which is particularly important from the point of view of an individual's personal freedom. For freedom cannot be simply reduced to the possibility of having a choice. Actually, freedom involves making a thoughtful, sensible choice out of »various options«. It is thanks to their allegiance to their national culture that »people have access to a range of meaningful options« (1995, p. 83), if only because allegiance to a culture and »familiarity with a culture« determines the limits of human knowledge and imagination. Broadly understood societal culture, which »tends to be a national culture [...] provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both the public and the private sphere« (1995, p. 76). Secondly, »cultural identity provides an anchor for people's self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging« (1995, p. 98). The point is that identification ensured by national identity »is based on belonging, not accomplishment« and such form of identification, independent of an individual's personal accomplishments, »is more secure, less liable to be threatened« (1995, p. 89).

Some contemporary authors, writing on national identity, claim that inevitable modernization processes and the liberalization of social life must result in the diminishment of inherited national identity, which today increasingly often becomes a matter of free choice. In this context some authors mention individuals who, opting for a cosmopolitan identity, try to find happiness precisely in the possibility of functioning between different cultures and making use of their divergent values, and who, not feeling any need for being firmly rooted in one culture, change their national identity at will (cf. J. Weldron).

W. Kymlicka and A. Walicki disagree with such views and defend the importance and persistence of national identity, which in their opinion may not be a question of free choice. First of all, the processes underlying national identity changes are of a highly individual and idiosyncratic character. They function over long time periods and are often difficult and even painful for the persons concerned, a fact which can be verified by any Czech who tried to become a Frenchman, or any Pole who wanted to be an Englishman, or a Vietnamese who would like to become Japanese. Secondly, it is not necessarily true that modernization of the world and liberalization of social life must inevitably endanger national identity. In some countries of the West (e.g. Canada, Belgium or Great Britain), »far from displacing national

identity, liberalization has in fact gone hand in hand with an increased sense of nationhood« (W. Kymlicka, 1995, p. 88). The pro-autonomy aspirations of the Flemish, the Scots and the Quebecois constitute more than adequate evidence for this suggestion. The fact that »culture became tolerant and pluralistic has, in no way, diminished the persuasiveness or intensity of people's desire to live and to work in their own country« (*ibid.*, p. 89).

Claiming that modernization does not constitute a threat to the persistence of national culture and national identity, Kymlicka nevertheless completely agrees with Samuel Huntington, in spite of the obvious differences between their views, on such issues as multiculturality, the role of immigration and ethnic minorities in America.

One of the main motives of Huntington's seminal book was his constantly voiced opposition to the conception of the globalization of culture and Westernization of the world. In his opinion, Western civilization is not a universal civilizational model, and Westernization is not a necessary precondition for modernization. Even if the inevitable advent of modernization does destroy old authorities and communities, thereby uprooting people, this is not necessarily concomitant with the loss of the need for a separate identity. It often turns out that people need »new sources of identity, new forms of stable communities and new systems of moral norms, which would provide them with a sense of life and meaningfulness« (1997; p. 132). Modernization is not to be equated with Westernization, and at times it may even oppose it. The adoption by non-Western societies of »Western democratic institutions rouses nativist and anti-Western political movements« (1997; p. 127).

It follows from Social Identity Theory that »people determine their identity on the basis of who they are not [...] on the basis of what makes them different from others« (S. Huntington, p. 85). In the usual circumstances in this capacity they rely on stereotypes, both those describing members of their own community and those of others. »To achieve this positive identity, groups will tend to compare themselves positively with contrasting outgroups, and they seek dimensions of comparison on which they feel they fare well. For instance, nations will produce flattering stereotypes of themselves, and demeaning stereotypes of those other nations with which they compare themselves. The dimensions on which they pride their own qualities will be accorded importance. The flattering stereotypes, held by the ingroup about itself, and the unflattering ones about outgroups, will maintain the positive self-identity, which is necessary for the group's continuing existence« (M. Billig, p. 66).

Thus it is absolutely impossible to avoid national stereotypes in the

determination, articulation and consolidation of national identity. But if this is true, then there is only one small step from the defense of national identity to nationalistic xenophobia. The existence of national stereotypes is a universal and inevitable phenomenon. »One might conceivably argue,« notes American anthropologist Allan Dundes, »whether or not there is such a thing as national character [...] but there can be absolutely no question that there is such a thing as national stereotypes« (1983, p. 250). The same author, a renowned expert on folklore, writes further: »Folklore provides one of the principal sources for articulation and communication of stereotypes. An individual may gain his first impression of a national or ethnic or religious or racial group by hearing traditional jokes or expressions referring to the alleged personality characteristics of that group« (1983, pp. 250-51).

Today folklore no longer plays the important role it used to have in the past, but there exists a quasi-folklore in the form of mass culture which popularizes its own national stereotypes (usually xenophobic) to an extent quite comparable with that of traditional folklore. But what is even worse, it is not only folklore and mass culture but also official culture and authentic high art which contributes to the consolidation of national stereotypes. It is beyond the slightest doubt that national literatures have considerably contributed to the shaping of national identities. The classical example in Poland are the novels of Henryk Sienkiewicz, particularly his *Trilogy* and *Teutonic Knights*. A similar role was played by Walter Scott, Alexander Dumas, Lev Tolstoy, Alois Jirasek or Mor Jókai. They all glorified the magnificent past of their nations, and did not shun stereotypes in their literary missions. The first part of Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy* is absolutely cluttered with positive and negative national stereotypes, a fact which the Ukrainians were quite justified to criticize, pointing out both the glorification of Polish knights and the simplified, obviously negative image of the Cossacks. However, Sienkiewicz's Cossacks are almost angels compared to the Polish gentry as represented in Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. We may of course say that Sienkiewicz is »a first-class second-rate writer«, but we would certainly not venture a similar remark about Tolstoy. And yet we will also find out that in *War and Peace* negative characters are almost exclusively foreigners, while Russians epitomize all virtues. The same might be said about the works of Mikhail Bulgakov. Negative characters are invariably foreigners (Poles, Jews, Ukrainians), while Russians are always presented in a positive light.

I think that in our times, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, art in a broad sense (comprising both 'high' and 'low' art) can, and indeed does play a very important role vis-à-vis reviving aggressive nationalism and a real need to preserve national identities.

The problems of reviving or strengthening national identities and of the phenomenon of reviving authentic and radical nationalisms that, unfortunately, often accompany it, are – as evidenced by the number of publications on this subject – the object of much contemporary research conducted by historians, philosophers, sociologists and political scientists. These important current problems only to a slight extent attract the interest of aestheticians and other art students, though art has been and still is efficiently used in these two related but so different matters.

The argument about the future shape of Europe concerns, among others, the issue whether this will be a commonwealth of citizens, or a commonwealth of nation-states, each of them preserving its distinctive autonomous culture. It is hard to tell what the final results of the unification process will be. At the moment, though, the opinion that the lesser stress put on national identity, the more European the entity becomes, does not stand the confrontation with reality.

There is no doubt that in many European countries one can presently observe a visible revival of nationalistic ideologies. This revival may be a result, among others, of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and regaining of independence by such countries as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Armenia, Georgia, Belorussia, Moldavia and Ukraine; the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and the regaining of greater autonomy by Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania. In all the countries which have recently gained autonomy the issue of national identity became paramount. In different countries the situation does not seem to be the same. It is different in countries with a strong national identity and a long history of independent statehood (e.g. Poland or Hungary), and different in countries which have a history of national statehood but which were subject to Russification over the last 50-70 years (e.g. Armenia, Lithuania, and Ukraine). Still different is the situation in the countries lacking a history of past statehood (e.g. Belorussia, Moldavia and Slovakia). In some of these countries the national identity has to be rebuilt and strengthened (e.g. Ukraine), in others it has to be built from the scratch (e.g. Belorussia or Moldavia).

Taking this into account, artists, scholars, journalists and other creators of culture may and should play an important role. They have to discover how to contribute to the rebirth of their national culture and identity, and how to support the validation of true national values without falling, at the same time, into radical nationalism and isolationism.

If we abandon the vague idea of *Volkgeist* which, according to Herder, can be found in national culture and collective behavior, then one may say

that national identity is a specific form of collective identity« and that the factor constituting this identity is, first of all, the existence of national culture and collective historical memory. »National identity – writes Leszek Kolakowski – requires *historical memory*. [...] The thing is that no nation can exist without being conscious of the fact that its present existence is an extension of the existence in the past, and that the further back these real or imagined memories reach, the better grounded its national identity is. Apart from historical knowledge, the past is also stored in various symbols, means of self-expression, in old buildings, temples and graves« (1995, p. 49).

It follows, then, that the historical memory is consolidated by monuments of the national culture. »The national culture is a repository, *inter alia*, of classificatory systems. It allows 'us' to define ourselves in opposition to 'them', understood as those beyond the boundaries of the nation« (P. Schlesinger, 1991, p. 174).

The importance of historical memory is also stressed by Michael Billig. According to him, »national identity is not only something natural to possess, but also something natural to remember. This remembering, nevertheless, involves a forgetting, or rather there is a complex dialectic of remembering and forgetting« (1997, p. 37). »Every nation must have its history, its own collective memory. This remembering is simultaneously a collective forgetting: the nation which celebrates its antiquity, forgets its historical recency. Moreover, nations forget the violence which brought them into existence« (p. 38).

The importance of the role of national culture for preserving national identity is consequently stressed by Antonina Kłosowska (see A. Kłosowska, 1996).

The formation, retention and reconstruction of national identity is not a single act, but a continuous process. In some historical periods the formation of national identity was a part of the nationalistic program. »However, once the political boundaries of the nation-state have been achieved, a national identity, with all the accompanying mythico-cultural apparatus, may be in place and is not necessarily identical with nationalism as such.« (P. Schlesinger, 1991, p. 168)

One can easily notice that at the turn of the 20th and the 21st century also the disciplines of philosophy and aesthetics face new important scholarly challenges. How can one find common denominators and combine the universalizing tendencies with the wealth of regional and national cultures? How can one preserve the variety and identity of national cultures without giving up integration and a search for a better mutual understanding and closer ties between nations?

As is well known, art broadly understood is often treated as a source of knowledge about cultures different from our own. Indeed, art in general (and literature and film in particular) can be employed as a very effective (»objective« and suggestive) form of presentation of another culture: of a different system of values, different attitudes and different mentality. In this respect, art can be a very useful and helpful means of mutual understanding between people of different cultures. On the other hand, however, it can also be used very effectively to achieve the opposite objective: namely, the presentation of a one-sided, tendentious – shortly, false – picture of a different culture and of the representatives of a different system of values. Thus, instead of enhancing understanding, it becomes a source of misunderstanding, cultural prejudices and hostility.

I am interested in the question of how and when such a distortion is possible in the case of a novel or a film which at the same time is aesthetically valuable. This again raises the need to answer the following question: what is the mutual relationship between the cognitive, the aesthetic and the artistic values of a work of art and its ideological function? Is there any dependence or some other kind of regular link between the cognitive, the aesthetic and the artistic values of a work of art and its ideological and political effectiveness? Is it possible to make a work of art which presents an alien culture in a false, one-sided way, but at the same time does it so suggestively that to the majority of beholders the work in question may seem aesthetically and cognitively valuable?

I have no doubts that in such artistic domains as, for example, literature and the cinema, there exists a mutual connection between the cognitive aspects of a work and its artistic value, i.e. possible cognitive values of a literary or cinematic work enhance its artistic value. There is also a relation between the work's aesthetic attractiveness and the effectiveness of its ideological function, i.e. the higher the aesthetic clarity and suggestiveness of a work, the greater is its ideological impact.

The relationship between the truthfulness of the message carried by the work and its artistic status and ideological effectiveness is much more complex. This is so because the knowledge which we derive from the arts is, in comparison to scientific knowledge, less systematic, less profound and specific, not always equally well founded and as thoroughly verifiable and, as a rule, much more ambiguous. Consequently, it is much more difficult to separate the truth from the falsehood in a work or art. Hence art may very efficiently misinform us and very convincingly and suggestively present various false and groundless historical and political claims, interpretations and evaluations. It seems quite probable that in many national cultures one

could identify artworks which have played a significant role in shaping this nation's consciousness and identity, which are placed in the pantheon of national culture despite the fact that the picture of history or society they contain is, according to historians or sociologists, very one-sided, tendentious or evidently false. Hence one could risk the claim that even in those arts in which the cognitive values are very important – because they contribute to the value of the work itself (like in, e.g., literature or the cinema) – the cognitive (e.g., historical) falsity does not always disqualify the work of art *qua* work of art, provided that the work is distinguished by its formal perfectness and is not without some philosophical or psychological cognitive value.

In our discussion I propose, however, to concentrate on still other, equally fundamental and difficult questions which will highlight further aspects of the questions of national identity, collective consciousness, etc. These questions will deal with the role of art and artistic expression in shaping (structuring, sustaining, changing, etc.) the collective identity of nationals. Here I will try to specify the following problems:

1. What is the specificity, importance and value of national identity, not only with respect to a nation and a country but with respect to an individual, too?
2. Is it possible to combine one's loyalty to national values with national openness and, additionally, with axiological and cultural pluralism?
3. Is it possible to have a double or even triple cultural identity? Can one simultaneously feel Bavarian, German and European or Kashubian, Polish and European?
4. Can one speak of regional (subnational) and supranational cultural identities? Is there, for instance, on the one hand, a Moravian or Silesian cultural identity and, on the other, a Central European, European, Latin-American, Slavonic or Islamic identity?
5. What are the relationships between one's national identity and the symbolic culture, and especially with its broadly understood artistic means of communication (proper not only to high art but also, to some extent, to mass media)? Can various forms of artistic expression only express (reveal and bring forth) and preserve, or also shape and even construct someone's national identity?
6. What is the relationship between national values and artistic values? I ask here not only whether art can strengthen a national culture, popularize a set of national values and strengthen one's national loyalty, but also whether the national values may enrich art, and especially, whether in the situation of the emergence of a global culture and market economy

(which has also left its imprint on art) the national character condemns art to parochialism and provincialism. Is it true that, in order to endow a piece of art with universal values and ensure for it an existence on the international art market, one has to necessarily mineralize its national provenance, its ethnic coloring and dress it up is a cosmopolitan way? And, finally, is it true that in all arts and on all their levels the situation is exactly the same?

I hope that a thorough discussion of the above questions can throw more light on the role of the arts in shaping the national (collective) identities of peoples.

Bibliography

Alter Peter (1989), *Nationalism*; London.

Anderson Benedict (1985), *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.

Armstrong John (1982), *Nations before Nationalism*; North Corolina Press.

Berlin Isaiah (1982), *Nationalism, Past, Neglected and Present Power*; quotations from the Polish edition of his essays *Dwie koncepcje wolności*, Warszawa, Respublica 1991.

Billig Michael (1995), *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage Publications.

Bokoszyński Zbigniew (1997), *Stereotypy a kultura* (*Stereotypes and Culture*), Wrocław: FNP.

Dundes Alan, *Defining Identity through the Folklore*, in Anita Jacobson-Widding (ed.); *Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural; A Symposium;* Uppsala 1983.

Gellner Ernest (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Greenfeld Liah (1992), *Nationalism – Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Hobsbawm Eric (1990), *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huntington Samuel (1996), *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*, quotations from the Polish edition *Zderzenia cywilizacji*, Warszawa: Muza S.A. 1997.

Ignatieff Michael (1993), *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Farrer: Strauss and Giroux.

Jacobson-Widding Anita, *»Introduction« to Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural; A Symposium*; Uppsala 1983.

Jnowitz Morris (1983), *The Reconstruction of Patriotism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jedlicki Jerzy (1997), *Nacjonalizm, patriotyzm i inicjacja kulturowa* (*Nationalism, Patriotism and Cultural Initiation*), *Znak* r. XLIX, no. 502, pp. 51 – 61.

Kłoskowska Antonina (1996), *Kultury narodowe u korzeni* (*National Cultures at the Grass Roots Level*), Warszawa PWN.

Kołakowski Leszek (1995), *O tożsamości zbiorowej* (On Collective Identity); in Krzysztof Michalski (ed.), *Tożsamość w czasach zmiany* (*Identity in Time of Change*); Kraków: *Znak*.

Kymlicka (1996 a), *Multicultural Citizenship*; Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kymlicka Will (1995 b), »Misunderstanding Nationalism«, *Dissent* (Winter 1995).

Nielsen Kai (1996), *Cultural Nationalism, Neither Ethnic nor Civic*; *The Philosophical Forum*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1 – 2 (Fall–Winter 1996–97) pp. 45 – 52.

Periwal Sukumer (ed. 1995), *Notions of Nationalism*, Budapest: CEU.

Schlesinger Philip (1991), *Media, State and Nations: Political Violence and Collective Identity*, London.

Szacki Jerzy (1997), *O narodzie i nacjoanalizmie* (*Of Nations and Nationalism*), *Znak* r. XLIX, no. 502, pp. 4 – 31.

Tamir Yael (1993), *Liberal Nationalism*; Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Taylor Charles (1997), »The Nationalism and Modernity«, in Robert McKim and Jeff McMaham (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism*, New York: New York University Press. pp. 31 – 51.

Tazbir Janusz (1998), *W pogoni za Europą* (*Chasing Europe*), Warszawa: Sic!.

Walicki Andrzej, *Czy możliwy jest nacjoanalizm liberalny*? (Is Liberal Nationalism Possible?), *Znak*, r. XLIX, no. 502.

Waldenberg Marek (1992), *Kwestia narodowa w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej* (*National Issues in Central Eastern Europe*), Warszawa: PWN.

Waldron Jerremy (1992), »Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative«, *The University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 25, pp. 751-793.

This paper has been prepared as part of the research project »We – The Good People« and the »Dreadful They« funded by the Research Support Scheme of the Open Society Institute (RSS No 23/1996).