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Polish Weekly Magazines on Wojciech Smarzowski's *Clergy* [Kler]

John E. Richardson in his book *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* noted: "Journalistic discourse has some very specific textual characteristics, some very specific methods of text production and consumption, and is defined by a particular set of relationships between itself and other agencies of symbolic and material power. These three sets of characteristics – that is, the language of journalism, its production and consumption, and the relations of journalism to social ideas and institutions – are clearly inter-related and sometimes difficult to disentangle."¹

It is in this context that reactions to the film *Kler (Clergy)* by Wojciech Smarzowski, which premiered on August 28, 2018, accurately reflect the divisions in the Polish press market and the relationships among varying centres of symbolic power. The current article focuses on four press titles, which are considered to be the most popular weekly magazines and are traditionally distributed (therefore *Gość Niedzielny*, which is distributed mainly by Roman Catholic parishes was omitted). The examination period was also restricted to two months: September and November 2018, concentrating on the texts published directly before and following the premiere of the film. The analysis is of the four most popular weekly magazines: *Polityka*, *Newsweek*, *Sieci*, and *Do Rzeczy*.

The circulation of press titles in 2018² are as follows:

Tab. 1. Circulation of weekly magazines in 2017 and 2018

Title	Total number of copies sold		As percentages
	2017 – September	2018 – September	
<i>Gość Niedzielny</i>	118.220	107.488	-8.74%
<i>Polityka</i>	103.772	94.701	-8.74%

1 J. E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers. An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, New York 2007, p. 7.

2 M. Kurdupski, „*Sieci*” i „*Gazeta Polska*” z największym spadkami w tym roku. Zyskał tylko „*Tygodnik Powszechny*”, [on-line:] <https://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/arttykul/sprzedaz-tygodnik-opinii-i-iii-kwartal-2018-gosc-niedzielny-sieci> – 3.09.2019.

Title	Total number of copies sold		As percentages
	2017 – September	2018 – September	
<i>Newsweek Polska</i>	95.708	84.788	-11.41%
<i>Sieci</i>	55.841	41.797	-24.83%
<i>Do Rzeczy</i>	38.802	33.964	-12.75%
<i>Gazeta Polska</i>	32.630	26.513	-18.75%
<i>Tygodnik Powszechny</i>	23.879	25.647	7.40%
<i>Wprost</i>	18.102	16.369	-9.57%
<i>Przełęcz</i>	15.803	15.994	1.21%

Scrutinizing the front pages of the weekly magazines published between September and October 2018 provided interesting results. For example, *Polityka* issue 40/2018 references *Clergy* on its cover with Wojciech Smarzowski's face and information about a "bold" interview with the director in later pages of the magazine. Meanwhile, *Newsweek* devoted two of its covers to the film. One (40/2018) includes Janusz Gajos, an actor, in a bishop's costume from the film, whereas the next issue, 41, uses a picture of Catholic priests with a bold headline question: "Clergy and what now?" This front page also teases an interview with the director. Interestingly, *Sieci* weekly does not promote the film on any of its covers, whereas *Do Rzeczy* issue 40/2018, portrayed a film still of Gajos that is similar to the one used by *Newsweek*, however, the words on the cover are less ambiguous declaring "*Clergy* – the anatomy of Church-bashing."

How these weekly magazines described *Clergy* is also telling. In *Do Rzeczy*, issue 39/2018, Paweł Lisicki, the editor in chief, authored a piece entitled significantly, *Birdbrain and Propaganda*, in which Smarzowski's film is compared to the anti-church propaganda driven by Jerzy Urban, the then spokesperson of the Polish government under martial law in the 1980s. The article also criticises the film for its praise of the liberal media. Finally, the author ends his editorial with an assertion and asks rhetorically: "It is all so sad. No, not the fact that yet more artists are birdbrained. Actually, this is not their distinctive feature. Nonetheless, the ease and the tempo with which the anti-Church propaganda, so similar to that what was offered by communist spooks, is thriving and gaining support, is truly painful. Even if, to a large extent, the blame for this is to be put on the Church itself, which has been fighting the plague of paedophilia so sluggishly and with difficulty. What's wrong with Poles that they are soaking up that kind of dreck?"³

Lisicki devoted his next editorial to *Clergy* as well in which he also mentions Jerzy Urban, who was present at the Warsaw premiere of the film. In that article, Lisicki claims that "offending Catholics' feelings is a brilliant marketing tool"⁴ because, as the author enumerates: "Catholics are galore, therefore, their resistance attracts a lot of publicity; secondly, because "they are powerless, and as a result, it is obvious in

3 P. Lisicki, "Ptasi mózdzek i propaganda", *Do Rzeczy*, issue 39/2008, p. 3.

4 Idem, "Mechanizm prowokacji", *Do Rzeczy*, issue 40/2018, p. 3.

advance their protests will be fruitless and will do no true harm to the creators.”⁵ And the louder the protest, the bigger “the hype of the lay part of the society, which is ill-disposed towards the Church.”⁶ One of the marketing strategies Lisiecki suggests is remaining silent about “the anti-Church provocations.” And indeed, *Do Rzeczy* tries to apply this strategy. Admittedly, there are three more articles directly relating to Smarzowski’s film in issue 40, but in the following weeks, neither the title of the film nor the director’s name appears in additional editorials. The only exception is “The Letters” always published on page six of the magazine, where the readers fully supported the editor in chief’s opinion on *Clergy*.

Apart from the Lisiecki’s editorial, journalists Piotr Semka, Tomasz P. Terlikowski, and Agnieszka Niwińska covered the “the topic of the week” in issue 40/2018. The first, titled *The Dark Film*, is a clear reference to the title of one of the director’s previous films – *The Dark House*. The article articulates that, according to Semka, “Smarzowski posits that the Church is a self-winding mechanism of evil. And to ‘prove’ that, he made a biased film, which is blown out of proportion.”⁷ Next, the author summarises the plot of the film in a rather detailed way, including the ending. And although the journalist can see the merits of *Clergy*, writing that the film “is skilfully made; it works with good, well-known actors, and the plot is captivating”,⁸ he still claims that Smarzowski does not know the depicted reality of Polish priests and that the director based the story exclusively on stereotypes. The magazine feature concludes that the film is inadequate because the priests and the bishops who lead such a life as the film depicts will not change, and the work of the *Traffic Department* director only evokes hatred.

Tomasz P. Terlikowski explains a slightly different perspective in his article *The Church after Clergy*. He, too, observes the exaggeration in Smarzowski’s film, asserting that one cannot “clear the atmosphere by throwing a grenade into the cesspit”⁹ while at the same time stating that this work from the *Rose* director has some true “roots, not only propaganda ones”,¹⁰ and it should make people of the Church think twice about the condition of their organisation. The article concludes that “instead of complaining about the nasty advocates of anticlericalism, getting one’s own house in order and confronting the diagnoses – even if they are made with a crowbar – is worthwhile.”¹¹

Agnieszka Niwińska wrote in *Do Rzeczy* issue 40 regarding how the film was financed.¹² The journalist begins by reiterating the accusations made by the Reverend Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zalewski against the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Piotr Gliński, that the politician allowed public money to be spent on biased, anticlerical propaganda. The minister retorted that he had not given a dime to the film and that

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 P. Semka, “Film zły”, *Do Rzeczy*, issue 40/2018, p. 18.

8 Ibid., p. 19.

9 T. P. Terlikowski, “Kościół po ‘Klerze’”, *Do Rzeczy*, issue 40/2018, p. 23.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., p.24.

12 A. Niwińska, “Kasa na ‘Kler’”, *Do Rzeczy*, issue 40/2018, pp. 26–27.

former Polish Film Institute subsidy directors Agnieszka Odorowicz and Magdalena Sroka funded more than nine hundred thousand dollars.

The same accusatory tone is used in a column written by Wojciech Reszczyński in issue 42 of *Sieci*, which was the last article in the second of the Rightist magazines, where Smarzowski's film was mentioned. Reszczyński explicitly attacks Krzysztof Zanussi but also predominantly the two directors from The Polish Film Institute, who subsidised *Clergy*. In his column, Reszczyński asserts that the Institute awarded an anticlerical film a grant, instead of giving money for works of art dedicated to the church watchmen of "the Polish independence"¹³ just like, for instance, Archbishop Zygmunt Szczęsny Feliński. That column was the final article related to *Clergy* that appeared in the *Sieci* weekly magazine. In previous issues of editor-in-chief Jacek Karnowski's magazine, there had, however, been thirteen various mentions of the film in one way or another.

The debate was ultimately initiated by Łukasz Adamski and his article entitled '*Clergy*', i.e. '*Traffic Department*' in *Clerical Collars* which was published in *Sieci* issue 39. The author writes that they appreciate the artistic merits of Smarzowski's work, writing that "*Clergy* is a well-directed film with skilful acting. Especially, that the priests characters, played by Robert Więckiewicz and Arkadiusz Jakubik, are neither wooden nor one-dimensional."¹⁴ Adamski also asserts that it is "a ferociously anticlerical film,"¹⁵ and defends the director of the feature film's right to show the distorted image of reality, which is typical of works of art. Nonetheless, the author regrets that Smarzowski's film is so exaggerated, lacking the subtlety of films like *Doubt* (2008) by John Patrick Shanley or *Spotlight* (2015) by Tom McCarthy, and that: "even a substitute of the intellectually sublime anticlericalism of Fellini's or his disciple's – Sorrentino's – is missing. However, there is this in-yer-face method. The Church is bad. [...] From Smarzowski's perspective it is not a holy Church where there are sinful people; it is an unholy Church where the just are negligible."¹⁶

In the next issue of *Sieci*, this balanced analysis was set against a series of articles with a different suggestiveness. In issue 40/2018, where there are as many as seven references to *Clergy*, on page eight, in a column entitled *For a Start*, Krzysztof Feusette criticises the film arguing mainly *ad personam*. Meanwhile, the author of *Hiding in Plain Sight* claims that Smarzowski needs therapy and his films are a form of self-healing for his obsessions, which he performs by flinging "a bucket of mud not at these ones (this one?) whom he owes his phobias but at everyone around. Preferably at a random, however, always half-dead-because-of-booze-and-hatred 'Pole'."¹⁷

Janusz Gajos, playing Archbishop Mordowicz in the film, also becomes the object of the columnist's attack for supporting the anticlerical vision of the director. The actor was criticised in this issue of *Sieci* several times. In the column entitled *Whistle-blower Informs*, containing short news items from the previous week, there is, for instance,

13 W. Reszczyński, "Kościół – filar państwa", *Sieci*, issue 42/2018, p. 106.

14 Ł. Adamski, "'Kler', czyli 'Drogówka' w koloratkach", *Sieci*, issue 39/2018, p. 71.

15 Ibid., p. 70.

16 Ibid., p. 71.

17 K. Feusette, "Najciemniej pod latarnią", *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, p. 8.

such a statement, “Janusz Gajos, who is using his talent in *Clergy* for the benefit of the evil, for which he will receive a proper reward in heaven, is jumping to the rhythm of post-colonial drums”,¹⁸ And in Konrad Kołodziejski’s article *Engaged Artists*, the actor was placed among artists such as Jerzy Stuhr, Krystyna Janda, Stanisław Tym, and Zbigniew Preisner, whose attitudes, according to the author, “comprise rather a pathetic image of artists who had engaged too intensively in a political war and are not able to comprehend why they are no longer widely loved or accepted.”¹⁹ The actor is also attacked by a columnist whose article is published in the next issue, Aleksander Nalaskowski, who writes, “It is really a shame that his career is bounded by two hideous agitki – a communist, Janek Kos on the one hand, and the Catholic archbishop Mordowicz, on the other.”²⁰ Interestingly, even in issue 39 of *Sieci*, Gajos was praised by Łukasz Adamski²¹ and Piotr Zaremba²² for the role in *Kamerdyner* (*The Butler* – 2018) by Filip Bajon, which premiered a week before *Clergy*.

Nalaskowski also examines Smarzowski’s work in *Sieci* issue 40/2018. Characteristic of conservative weekly magazine narratives, there is a mention of the fact that: “This is an edgy film, with good acting performance, [...], [but] Smarzowski, unlike Wajda, is only all the same everywhere. If we got rid of the impact of the new cinema technology, we would have a typical socialist realist, run-off-the-mill film made to order.”²³ Further in the text, the suggestion is made that the film had been made “to order”, which “would please the salon, some Lemanskis, former priests, and undoubtedly, Urban, [...] based on a screenplay with Benny Hill’s finesse” and “made by the folk for their own folk. A film in bad faith, for the applause and mammon”²⁴ but it will not threaten the position of the Church in Poland.

A similar type of argument appears in an article by Marek Markiewicz – *On the Issue of Clergy*, serving to defend the Church against the attacks which, according to the author, are dirty tricks, “which my grandmother would not allow, therefore, on her behalf, I cannot allow them either.”²⁵ The author sees some imperfections, however, he thinks that “even if a few, a dozen or so, maybe even a few hundreds of priests let people down, there is still a long way to condemn the whole Church – Our Mother – and yet the way is so short for some.”²⁶

In the article entitled *Anticlericalism 2018* by Stanisław Janecki, published in *Sieci* issue 40, the author tries to show Polish history through anticlerical movements, which seems to be most noteworthy. However, the very vivid and explicit setting of the ending to Smarzowski’s film against the contemporary political situation appears to be most interesting. The author writes: “That is the reason why Smarzowski’s film

18 “Sygnalista nadaje”, *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, p. 7.

19 K. Kołodziejski, “Artyści zaangażowani”, *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, pp. 46–47.

20 A. Nalaskowski, “Fenomen”, *Sieci*, issue 41/2018, p. 108.

21 Ł. Adamski, “Kawał kina!”, *Sieci*, issue 39/2018, p. 76.

22 P. Zaremba, “Polski oddech Viscontiego”, *Sieci*, issue 39/2018, p. 69.

23 A. Nalaskowski, “Sami swoi”, *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, p. 92.

24 Ibid.

25 M. Markiewicz, “W sprawie kleru”, *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, p. 74.

26 Ibid.

was treated as a kind of manifesto with a moral innuendo. Clericalism equals being evil and corrupt, anticlericalism, good and liberated. And since the contemporary ruling power is clerical, anticlericalism is tantamount to opposing that power, which seems to turn on the left-wing liberal intellectuals and artists. Thus, *Clergy* became a sort of a plebiscite: for or against the ruling Law and Justice party.²⁷ Janecki clearly states what in other analysis is camouflaged or expressed in a mocking, satirical manner. The reception of *Clergy* has little to do with the artistic merits of the film but is a part of a political fight and it is mainly treated just as a political manifesto. In this context, it becomes obvious that the first articles on Smarzowski's film were – especially in Rightist weekly magazines – much subtler, or even like Terlikowski's or Adamski's text – approving, than the ones that started to appear in the following issues of the magazines when the popularity of the film was rising, and the daily papers reported the new box office attendance records beaten by *Clergy*. Thus, an article by Piotr Skwieciński (issue 41/2018), the title of which calls the film “a spiritual opus of Department IV”,²⁸ was engaged in the surveillance of clergymen milieu. The text compares Smarzowski to Grzegorz Piotrowski, the murderer of the Reverend Jerzy Popiełuszko, because both are driven by, according to Skwieciński, identically motivated dislike of the Church.

The two remaining weekly magazines represent a totally different viewpoint on *Clergy*. Both *Newsweek* and *Polityka* have a distinct liberal (or leftist-liberal) character, clearly object to the contemporary government, and try to oppose the conservative narrative of the rightist media. Interestingly though, and at the same time understandably, they devote less attention to Smarzowski's film than *Sieci* and *Do Rzeczy*. On the other hand, both left-liberal (modern-liberal) weekly magazines interviewed the director. There was an interview – *What's Bugging Me* – by Aleksandra Pawlicka in *Newsweek* issue 41/2018²⁹ and an interview by Janusz Wróblewski in issue 40/2018 of *Polityka* with the director of the *Rose's* photo on the cover.³⁰ In these two interviews, Smarzowski rather clearly showed a critical attitude towards the Church. Of course, he also mentioned the problems with producing the film, its reception, the audience award that he was given at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia, and the reaction to the film of some (predominantly rightist) press. The sentences *The Traffic Department* director uttered in these interviews were quoted many times by conservative media columnists.

Looking at the articles concerning *Clergy* that appeared in *Newsweek*, characteristically there is a short mention in issue 40/2018, published in a fixed column entitled *Ups and Downs*, where Smarzowski is depicted as a person who is “going up.” The whole notice read, “Wojciech Smarzowski – the director of the film *Clergy*, which nobody has seen yet but everybody has been talking about.”³¹ The same issue

27 S. Janecki, “Antyklerykalizm 2018”, *Sieci*, issue 40/2018, p. 44.

28 P. Skwieciński, “Duchowe dziecko IV Departamentu”, *Sieci*, issue 41/2018, p. 30.

29 A. Pawlicka, “To, co mnie wkurza. Smarzowski o klerze i o ‘Klerze’”, *Newsweek*, issue 41/2018, pp. 10–14.

30 J. Wróblewski, “Wstajemy z kolan”, *Polityka*, issue 40/2018, pp. 16–18.

31 “Notowania”, *Newsweek*, issue 40/2018, p.8.

contains a sort of printed trailer of the new film including a cover with Janusz Gajos dressed as an archbishop, but also an article by Janusz Tomczuk devoted to the actor, which meaningfully tells the reader that the actor “reveals why he decided to play in Smarzowski’s film”,³² however, only a small part of the text concerns *Clergy*. Issue 41/2018 not only includes an interview with the director, but also a few other texts relating to *Clergy*. Already in the editorial, Tomasz Lis, the editor-in-chief, makes a clear reference to the film. Lis claims that the film posits three crucial problems, “the issue of the church corporation, the issue of the Church as a community of believers, and the issue of the Church-state relation.”³³ However, the editor-in-chief suggests that “one should not throw the baby out with the bathwater, not seeing all the good in the Church,³⁴ but still “it was Smarzowski’s right to exaggerate all the sins and deviations.”³⁵ There is no other criticism of the formal or fable part of the film in the text, but rather some general questions concerning the contemporary situation of the Catholic Church in Poland. Interestingly, the interview with Smarzowski published in issue 41/2018 is placed next to Paweł Reszka’s text entitled *Twenty One of Them and God* with a meaningful subhead that announces “a reportage on the good Church”³⁶ and a lead that reads, “The church has committed many sins, nonetheless, it is not true that the clergymen are all cormorants and paedophiles.”³⁷ The reportage introduces contemporary clergymen who help the homeless and the needy.

The column *A Week with...* in issue 41/2018 titled *Clergy, Lies, and TVP Cut Outs* completes the topic in a way. The reader learns that TVP Kultura (a public TV channel) broadcast the Gdynia Film Festival awards ceremony with a few minutes of delay and that Smarzowski’s comment on Jacek Kurski, the chief executive of TVP, was cut. The second news item concerns not giving the film the Złoty Klakier Award [Golden Claquer], which had been previously given to the film with the longest applause during the Gdynia Film Festival. Since *Clergy* had been that film, the chief executive of Polskie Radio Gdańsk [Polish Radio Gańsk] decided not to give the award, justifying that fact with problems in measuring the duration of the clapping. The third, short news item concerns the fact that *Clergy* has been a box office hit and some cinemas are organising even up to twenty screenings a day. “And all that despite – writes Ćwieklak – the attempts to withhold the screenings in a few towns.”³⁸ In the next issues of the weekly magazine, the subject was mentioned only twice. Marcin Meller’s text, perversely entitled *This is not a column on ‘Clergy,’* indeed, concerns rather not the film but the rightist journalists’ reaction to Smarzowski’s picture. Meller cites the texts written by Elżbieta Królikowska-Avis, Piotr Lisiewicz, Tomasz Sakowski, the

32 J. Tomczuk, “Zawód – aktor”, *Newsweek*, issue 40/2018, p. 10.

33 T. Lis, “Kler i Polska”, *Newsweek*, issue 41/2018, p. 4.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 P. Reszka, “Dwudziestu jeden i Bóg”, *Newsweek*, issue 41/2018, p. 18.

37 Ibid.

38 D. Ćwieklak, “Kler, kłamstwa i co wycięło TVP”, *Newsweek*, issue 41/2018, p. 6.

Reverend Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski, Piotr Semka, Michał Karnowski, and Tomasz Terlikowski, however, he only deemed the latter noteworthy.³⁹

In *Polityka* the first article concerning *Clergy* is in issue 39/2018. Aneta Kyzioł published a feature on Janusz Gajos. Contrary to the journalists from *Sieci* or *Do Rzeczy*, the author does not focus on his role in Smarzowski's film, to which only two paragraphs are devoted.⁴⁰ The same issue (39/2018) contains a big article by Janusz Wróblewski, entitled *Cold War on Hot 'Clergy'*, the lead of which says: "The jury's decision and the awards in Gdynia were overshadowed by the reception of Wojciech Smarzowski's newest film, who turned from a meritorious to the Polish right hero into an object of hatred."⁴¹ These two sentences summarise the entirety of the article meaning. Wróblewski, whose article was meant to be coverage of the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia, focuses mainly on *Clergy*, described, however, not within an artistic paradigm, of which the author barely mentions, but within a political one. Wróblewski juxtaposes his opinion of the film with the opinions expressed by the Reverend Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski, Krzysztof Feusette, or the Reverend Andrzej Luter.

In the 2018 *Polityka* issue 40, not only is the interview with Smarzowski included, but there are also a few references to the film. Much print space has been devoted to the film, for instance, by the editor in chief, Jerzy Baczyński, who runs a column *The Editor in Chief's Footnotes*. In *Our Daily Clergy*, the author compares the role that the director of *Volhynia* has in contemporary Polish culture to the role Andrzej Wajda had for a few decades. Baczyński emphasises that the two directors use different film languages, nevertheless, he points out the strong political aspects of their films. The editor-in-chief also notices the attacks the right-wing journalists and politicians made on *Clergy*. He writes: "The irritation of the ruling authorities is easily understandable because Smarzowski has hit the most important member of the coalition of 'the united Right.' The institutional Church."⁴²

In the next issue of *Polityka*, Sławomir Mizierski mentions *Clergy* in his column, which concerns not the film itself, however, in the interview Reverend Małkowski gave to the portal *Frona.pl*, in which not only does the well-known Reverend attack the film *Clergy* but also the Vatican contemporary leadership.⁴³ Daniel Passent, another columnist of the weekly, also mentions Smarzowski's film, however, just like Maziar-ski – he focuses not on the picture itself but rather on Piotr Semka's article concerning it, which was published in *Do Rzeczy*.⁴⁴ In issue 41/2018, there is a separate article on Smarzowski's co-workers – the producer Jacek Rzehak and his brother Wojciech Rzehak, who was the screenwriter of *Clergy*. The text reveals problems with the making of the film. The last article mentioning Smarzowski's film in *Polityka* between September and October 2018 was a column entitled *Clergy and Nina* by Renata Lis

39 M. Meller, "To nie jest felieton o 'Klerze'", *Newsweek*, issue 42/2018, p. 37.

40 A. Kyzioł, "Mówi, a ludzie słuchają", *Polityka*, issue 39/2018, p. 97.

41 J. Wróblewski, "Zimna wojna o gorący 'Kler'", *Polityka*, issue 39/2018, p. 100.

42 J. Baczyński, "Kler nasz powszedni", *Polityka*, issue 40/2018, p. 6.

43 S. Maziar-ski, "Czy państwo ma problem z głową", *Polityka*, issue 41/2018, p. 5.

44 D. Passent, "Cyrk polski", *Polityka*, issue 41/2018, p. 95.

(42/2018). The writer uses the famous title to bring the readers' attention to and compare *Clergy* to the film *Nina* (2018), directed by Olga Chajdas.⁴⁵

Four general conclusions based on this analysis are:

1. Although there is a culture section in every analysed weekly magazine only one article focuses on the artistic merit of Smarzowski's work – it is Łukasz Adamski's article, published in issue 39 of *Sieci*. The political aspect does not prevail in the description of "the making of" the film, that is in an article by Urszula Schwarzenberg-Czerny, in which the Rzehak brothers are the focal point.

2. *Clergy* was treated by all sides of the journalistic argument mainly as a political demonstration, meeting the expectations of the so-called "Polish-Polish War." Both the conservative-right-wing media (*Sieci, Do Rzeczy*) and the left-liberal outlets (*Newsweek, Polityka*) primarily identified by ideological meaning and judged the film according to its "political" aspects. The assessment of Smarzowski's film depended only slightly on the critics' taste; it chiefly mirrored the political alignment of the publication.

3. Contemporary Polish media (nonetheless, it does not seem to be typical only of Poland) are "self-referential media."⁴⁶ In all the arguments in *Sieci, Do Rzeczy, Newsweek, and Polityka*, the journalists more often referred to the opinion of others on the film than to the picture itself. The authors from *Sieci* wrote on what – according to them – stupid things – the leftist critics had written apropos the film. Marcin Meller (and other liberal journalists) devoted an entire column to what the rightist journalist had written on *Clergy*.

4. The concept of "filter bubble"⁴⁷ introduced by Eli Pariser, originally referring to isolating the public from information through personalised settings of Internet browsers or social media, can now be changed (not only in Poland) into "information bubbles." The polarisation of political and ideological positions forces the media, also, and perhaps above all, the "traditional" platforms, to depart from the principle of "declared objectivity" that had previously been instituted. Although full "objectivity" is only a theoretical postulate, it was nevertheless a symbolic dogma underlying contemporary journalism.

The readers of specific titles live in their own "information bubbles." No criticism of *Clergy* can be found in liberal media; on the other hand, only one dominant narrative is present in conservative ones, and there was not a single review of Smarzowski's film that did not refer to it as being anticlerical. It seems the media of today have ceased to satisfy the informative function; the media has instead started to satisfy the expressive-phatic function. News outlets now provide the opportunity to express feelings and to maintain contact between members of the group that shares similar opinions.

45 R. Lis, "Kler i Nina", *Polityka*, issue 42/2018, p. 92.

46 W. Nöth, N. Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, Berlin–New York 2008.

47 E. Pariser, *The Filter Bubble. What Internet is Hiding from You*, New York 2011.

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Abstract

The article is an analysis of the reception of the film *Clergy (Kler)* directed by Wojciech Smarzowski in four of the most popular Polish weekly magazines. The author analysed the texts that appeared in *Polityka*, *Newsweek*, *Sieci* and *Do Rzeczy* in September and October 2018, just after the premiere of the film. The most common ways of conducting discourse on the subject of *Clergy* have been pointed out. Discourse which are associated with the divisions characterizing the contemporary press market in Poland and with the most important trends appearing on this market.

Keywords: *Clergy*, Smarzowski, opinion weeklies, Polish media, press market.