

## **The Language of Political Discourse in Post-totalitarian Poland**

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A country that was governed by a communist party for as long as several decades and only now has embarked on the construction of a democratic system, seems to need a new type of language as an essential instrument to be employed in formulating messages related to the development of a democratic political regime and in communicating within a multi-party structure and among a pluralism of beliefs, programs and values. The democratic transformation of Poland involved, among other things, liberation from the mental patterns generated by the communist newspeak. At the outset of the political transformation process, there were grounds to believe that the emergence of a new reality would result in not only liberating people from the structures of the police state but also in liberating the human mind from false stereotypes; and that it would be reflected in the language of political discourse. Freedom of speech was, after all, one of the cornerstones of the new reality. The last two decades, however, have showed that the democratization of language appears to be going in a somewhat different direction, and that the current political discourse has assumed a number of rather disappointing properties which are likely to shatter the hopes of those who once initiated the citizen-led movement for state reform.

As it turns out, some of the most useful tools for analyzing the properties of the language of political discourse have been elaborated in philosophical and philological studies of Homer's and Plato's writings (M. Parry, E. Havelock, W. Ong). These methods will be applied in examining statements delivered by Polish politicians in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The outcomes of this reflection will be presented in this paper.