

## Otherness in Representations of Polish Beauty Queens: From Miss Baltic Coast Pageants to Miss Polonia Contests in the 1950s

From the end of the Second World War to the onset of the 1980s, all-Poland beauty pageants were held only twice, in 1957 and 1958. During several following decades, Miss Polonia contests were not organized, subject to a ban by the authorities, and they were revived as late as in 1983. The phenomenon of the two beauty pageants that were held in Poland in the 1950s has been, so far, neither acknowledged nor analysed in the scientific literature available. Despite the fact that in many respects Miss Polonia pageants were based on American and western European models and formed a part of a wider phenomenon that defies being limited to state or national borders, they were unique due to the context in which they took place. What is more, although the subject of beauty pageants in the United States and western Europe has been analysed from numerous perspectives (power relations, standardization, morality, ideology, local and national identity; see e.g. Cohen et al. 1996), the contests in the countries behind the iron curtain have not yet been studied from the point of view of the mechanisms of constructing otherness. This chapter is an attempt to fill this gap.

Although in the 1950s, the finals of the local and national contests in Poland took the form of live on-stage events, the present text is largely based on an analysis and interpretation of their accompanying visual materials—juxtaposing various forms of visibility and visual perception and, thus, a variety of the types of gaze. I devote a separate subchapter to the reflection on the gaze, as I consider it to form one of the basic mechanisms of constructing otherness with regard to beauty pageants and the emergence of the new Other. The chapter is also an attempt to present the ways in which the “New Woman”—a participant of postwar beauty pageants—was imagined and pictured within the framework of multimedial representations that developed in Poland in the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> In a parallel manner to live shows, it was precisely the media that generated additional spaces where the new Other was considered and constructed. In my analysis I used press photographs from the Polish newspapers *Kobieta i Życie* (‘Woman and Life’), *Przekrój* (‘Cross-Section’), *Dziennik Bałtycki* (‘Baltic Daily’), *Express Wieczorny* (‘Evening Express’), and *Gazeta Kujawska* (‘Kuyavian Newspaper’) and a fragment of *Polska Kronika*

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<sup>1</sup> The visual material used in the present analysis comes from the period 1956–1958.

*Filmowa*<sup>2</sup> ('Polish Film Chronicle'), which presented a several-minute account of the Miss Polonia contest from 1958.

According to Karla Huebner, who analysed the visual representations of modern women in Czechoslovakia, "the New Woman, of course, was no more monolithic in her conception than she was anywhere else. She could encompass elements generally regarded as positive, elements admired by some and feared by others, and elements of dubious desirability. Some of these were international and others more local" (Huebner 2011: 235). The term *New Woman* has a slightly different meaning, depending on time and place, yet most frequently, "[the] New Woman refers to a nontraditional woman, often but not always feminist" (Huebner 2013: 440, footnote 1). Also in relation to the postwar Poland of the 1950s, the concept of the New Woman was not uniform and had at least several facets. In my opinion, the participants of the beauty pageants, who were in principle unrelated to the feminist movement, represented one of the facets.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the dominant idea of femininity, promoted by the authorities in Poland after the end of the Second World War and connected with the image of the working woman, was not entirely antithetic to the prewar notion of the traditional woman.<sup>4</sup> Despite the official emancipation of women and new legislative solutions that made them equal with men from an economic and a social point of view, in practice, "they were trapped both by the new political system and the old system of tradition. ... In the public eye the ideal woman continued to be a hard worker, a faithful wife and a good mother" (Moskalenko 1996: 64). The idea of womanhood promoted by the authorities after the end of the Second World War was mostly aimed at supporting the ideological regime. Although in the 1950s the official images of the working woman did not form an opposition to the visual representations of a participant of the postwar beauty pageants, an in-depth analysis justifies undertaking the subject from the perspective of the studies on cultural otherness.

### Beauty Contests and Beauty Queens

The nineteenth century emergence of contemporary beauty pageants,<sup>5</sup> first in the United States and slightly later in Europe, has remained, from its onset, in a close

<sup>2</sup> *Polska Kronika Filmowa* was the newsreel broadcast in Poland in the period 1944–1994 by Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych ('Documentary Film Studio'). The newsreel, which registered contemporary events, was an official government propaganda tool during the time of the People's Republic of Poland.

<sup>3</sup> A lot has been written about women in the People's Republic of Poland, e.g. in the context of the rights to education, vote, work, and many others. This article is an attempt to look at women from a different perspective and to give readers new insight into the situation of Polish women in the 1950s.

<sup>4</sup> On the subject of visual representations of the working woman in the Polish press of the 1950s and the manner of their reconstruction, see e.g. Sztandara 2015: 390–401.

<sup>5</sup> Some authors express the opinion that, historically, beauty contests have deep roots extending back into Greek mythology (see e.g. Pomeroy 1975; Berger 2008).

relationship with the development of consumer market and visual entertainment marked by continuous excitement. Photography, press, advertising, and film had a decided influence on the feminine visibility in the public space. Visual media also had a direct influence on beauty contests' coming into existence. The history of these events, which began overseas, has been studied by American scholars.<sup>6</sup>

Here it might be worth merely pointing out that when in 1854 a showman, Phineas Taylor Barnum, decided to organize a contest during which beautiful women would compete on stage, presenting themselves in front of a jury, he could not find any candidates who would agree to participate, despite an award intended for the winner (a dowry for an unmarried girl, a tiara for a married lady). In the end, Barnum decided to modify his idea and asked women to send in their photographic pictures instead. Barnum planned to present display cases with daguerreotypes as substitutes for live female bodies and the visitors to such an exhibition would choose "the most beautiful" one. Ultimately, he did not manage to finalize his project; the story, however, was far from over. Barnum's idea was picked up in the 1880s by editorial offices of newspapers, which in a short time managed to popularize photographic beauty contests and conducted them successfully over the next several decades. In the 1920s and 1930s, beauty contests began to be organized in other countries as well. Still, the Miss America pageant (the first such national contest was held in 1921) remained a kind of model for the organization of numerous national pageants, which in 1951 were unified as a result of the initiation of the Miss World pageant and, in 1952, of the Miss Universe pageant (Cohen et al. 1996: 3–5).

Other transformations that took place in the nineteenth century also affected the development of such contests. According to the research of Hannu Salmi, it was in those times that self-reflection became an important element of bourgeois lifestyle; reflection on a human being as a psychological and physical entity, which was expressed, among other ways, through an increased attention to appearance, behaviour, and the body. Apparently, it was no accident that the nineteenth century Europe noted a significant demand for mirrors. Mirrors, similarly as posing in front of a lens of a photographic camera, "taught" people to see "through the others' eyes", while the habit of composing family albums caused bodily identity to gain its historical continuation. All of these positively influenced the development of personality, the process of objectivization of individuality (Salmi 2010: 101–102).

On the other hand, easier availability of mirrors, photography and, later on, film images contributed to an increased acceptance for treating the subject (espe-

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<sup>6</sup> On the subject of the history of contemporary beauty pageants in America, see e.g. Banner 1983; Deford 1971; Bivans 1991. At the same time, it is worthwhile to note that a resistance to beauty pageants has an almost equally long history and became one of the major means for the articulation of rules promoted by the American feminist movements (see e.g. Corrigan 1992; Deford 1971; Riverol 1992).

cially, female one) as an object for inspection: the view. According to Carla Rice the advertising market gradually deepened women's image consciousness by way of, for instance, reminding women of the critical gaze of others, especially men. "Positioned as objects of an outsider's gaze, female viewers of commercial culture were, for the first time, invited to see themselves as recipients of evaluative looks" (Rice 2014: 235).

Having traced the history of contemporary beauty pageants in the United States and Europe, one may notice their gradual development and the fact that over the years they gained increasing popularity, spreading in range from local to transnational contests. The social attitude towards this type of contests and their participants had also evolved (the interwar period and the Second World War were of particular importance; see *Ibid.*: 237), gradually creating increasingly more space for beauty queens to develop and articulate new meanings of womanhood.

### History of Miss Polonia Contests in the 1950s

Against a broader background, the history of beauty pageants in Poland appears to constitute a fragment of a significantly longer process in the development of a certain phenomenon in the spirit of the modern times. Nevertheless, due to a special social and political situation that formed in Poland after the end of the Second World War, the history of Miss Polonia contests in the 1950s, not yet examined, and the related process of constructing cultural otherness are both worth noting.<sup>7</sup>

After the Second World War ended, power was taken over by the communist government and the war-ravaged country found itself in the sphere of the Soviet influence. Apart from terror and indoctrination, a process of intense reconstruction was initiated, accompanied by social and economic changes. Including the gender equality into the set of central rules of its ideological and political policy (legislative regulations were introduced in June 1945), rulers acted against the tradition

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<sup>7</sup> The idea to organize Polish beauty pageant appeared for the first time in 1888 (during the suspension of sovereign Poland). It was organized in Warsaw as a photographic exhibition (*Tygodnik Ilustrowany* ["The Illustrated Weekly"], no. 279, March 10, 1888, p. 156). The history of Miss Polonia pageants (the name was chosen by a member of the jury, Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński) began in the prewar period. The first contest was initiated in 1929 by the editorial offices of three newspapers—*Express Poranny* ("Morning Express"), *Światowid* ("Svetovid"), and *Kurier Czerwony* ("Red Courier")—as a result of the need to select a Polish representative for the Miss Europe pageant. In 1929 and 1930, the eliminations were based on the evaluation of candidates' photographs—the newspapers published photographs sent by women and on the basis of the votes of the readers the contest's leaders were selected. Only the finals involved women's personal presentation in front of the jury. The candidates needed to meet specific criteria: age 18 to 25, unmarried, impeccable reputation. After the 1931 scandal, when Zofia Batycka vetoed the organization of the contest wishing to keep her title for one more year (the first winners of Miss Polonia did not receive the "royal insignia"—the tiara and the ribbon), in the following years (until the last prewar pageant in 1937), the choice of the most beautiful woman was made in France by members of the Miss Europe committee on the basis of photographs of women published on the covers of Polish magazines. Both during the Second World War and for many years after its end, Miss Polonia contests were not organized (Z Archiwum Miss, last accessed on: November 11, 2015).

and influences of the Catholic Church. In contrast to their own slogans, however, they did not reject the old social division based on gender stereotypes—they only reshaped it, attempting to reconcile the revolutionary promise of gender equality with the prewar tradition (Fidelis 2010: 23). In the early 1950s, due to rapid industrialization, women were encouraged to apply for positions that had been previously reserved solely for men. Yet, shortly afterwards, such positions started to be seen as discrepant with female nature. The year 1956 turned out to be a groundbreaking moment: in effect of “the October Thaw”, Poland experienced a change of top authorities, combined with an announcement of future reforms. Although “the Thaw” did not last long, Poles hoped for liberalization of the system also in the sphere of social freedom. Meanwhile, gender differences were accentuated much more strongly than only several years before. In my opinion, the approval of the government for a temporary reactivation of beauty pageants (in 1956 the editorial offices of the *Dziennik Bałtycki* and *Express Wieczorny* dailies announced the organization of a local beauty contest and, in January 1957, the editorial offices organized a regional Miss Baltic Coast pageant) was not arbitrary and served to emphasize a different model of femininity—such contests promoted an ultra-feminine image. “Gender politics was a powerful instrument in negotiating the political and national legitimacy of communist regimes” (Ibid.: 3).

In 1957, *Dziennik Bałtycki* announced the reactivation of the Miss Polonia contest, taking on all the efforts related to organization of the event.<sup>8</sup> The finals were held in the assembly hall of the Gdańsk shipyard (the birthplace of the later “Solidarity” movement), with the participation of an audience of many thousands. In effect, in order to be able to enter their own candidates for Miss Polonia, many (though not all) regions of the country had held their own local beauty contests. The winner of the contest was an acting school student, Alicja Bobrowska. Thanks to the high organizational and artistic level of the all-Poland event in Gdańsk, but also as a result of its enormous popularity among the Poles, the Miss Polonia pageant was repeated in 1958.<sup>9</sup> This time, the finals were held in Warsaw’s Torwar Hall (an ice-skating rink) and the event watched by over eleven thousand “very unruly” spectators—as noted by the newspapers of the time—turned into a fiasco: people started throwing tomatoes at the new miss, Zuzanna Cembrowska, a dancer from Warsaw Operetta. The Citizens’ Militia had to intervene and part of the audience left the hall even before the coronation took place (*Przekrój*, no. 702, September

<sup>8</sup> The jury consisted of Janina Jarzynówna-Sobczak (choreographer), Magdalena Samozwaniec (writer), Elżbieta Duńska-Krzesińska (sportswoman), Kazimierz Krukowski (theatre director), Anatol Kobyliński (filmmaker), Leszek Verocsy (sculptor), Władysław Jackiewicz (painter), Mieczysław Martula (vice-editor in chief of *Express Wieczorny*), Tymoteusz Ortyń (jury’s secretary), Włodzimierz Mroczkowski (vice-editor in chief of *Dziennik Bałtycki*) (see *Dziennik Bałtycki*, no. 185, August 6, 1957, p. 3).

<sup>9</sup> The jury consisted of, among others, Kazimierz Rudzki (actor), Jan Brzechwa (writer), Jerzy Kawalerowicz (director), Adam Hanuszkiewicz (actor, theatre director), Magdalena Samozwaniec (writer) (AleHistoria, ep. 100, last accessed on: November 16, 2015).

21, 1958, pp. 20–21). After 1958 events, the reputation of the contest was ruined. The communist authorities had already been looking for an excuse to ban the organization of such pageants—which is precisely what finally happened. Another reason for abandoning the pageant was the rumour, which spread all over the country three months after the contest, claiming that the audience's favourite, the second runner-up, had been murdered. It was suspected that some of the rumours were spread by members of the government of Władysław Gomułka (AleHistoria, ep. 100). In 1978, attempts were made to reactivate the contest, with the support of Bobrowska. Finally, however, the authorities did not allow the gala evening to take place, despite all the advance preparations and regional eliminations that had already been completed.

### Otherness in Polish Multimedial Representations of Beauty Queens

Multimedial representations created in the 1950s served to construct popular visual imagery of the New Woman—a participant of the postwar beauty pageants—often making her a sign of modernity. The Polish press, from 1956 to 1958, published photos of the candidates for the Miss Polonia pageant (apart from photos from the local contests), oftentimes juxtaposing them with the reprinted photos of beauty pageant participants and winners from other countries (mostly from Europe and the United States). Photographic images were during that period one of the most significant means of imagining Polish beauty queens' style, elegance, sensuality, and energy. The very reference to the western standards and the model of femininity promoted in countries characterized by liberal democracy and the free market already testified to an attempt to break with the image of the working woman, in whose construct "physical beauty was never a subject for competition" (Moskalenko 1996: 74, footnote 8).

According to Gillian Rose, when analysing visual representations it is worth paying attention to two spheres of creating meaning—the sphere of *the image itself* and the sphere of its *reception* (Rose 2010: 138). Among the press titles I analysed, *Gazeta Kujawska*, *Dziennik Bałtycki*, and *Express Wieczorny* were daily newspapers, covering both the news and journalist features. They had all been published since the mid 1940s and had a readership of thousands, especially in the area of Pomerania (a northern region of Poland). In these black and white dailies, the pictures and information on the subject of the beauty queens was published among photographs and articles on domestic and international events. What is interesting—only the daily newspapers published photos of Bobrowska in a national costume (typical for Cracow area), taken during the Miss Universe pageant in the United States in 1958 (Fig. 18). This was related to the politics of national identity. The sociocultural weekly *Przekrój* was first published in 1945. It constituted one of the major culture-forming factors during the time of the People's Republic of Poland, promoting western culture and providing many Poles with "a window to the world around them". *Przekrój* published colour photographs of women who competed

for the title of most beautiful in different countries, juxtaposing them with photos of exotic people or illustrations of Polish patriotic and religious celebrations, thereby creating a mix that formed a look that was both modern and sophisticated. On the other hand, high circulation weekly *Kobieta i Życie* was first published in 1946 and was directed mostly at women, focusing on social and cultural subject matter. Apart from the photographs from Miss Polonia pageants, this glossy magazine often republished photographs from foreign beauty pageants that were frequently accompanied by critical textual commentaries (e.g. *Kobieta i Życie*, no. 17/425, June 10, 1958, p. 16, no 18/426, June 20, 1958, p. 16).

In the Polish press of the 1950s, the participants of beauty pageants were presented as self-confident women who posed in front of the camera lens. Their images in swimsuits, high heels, and sleeveless dresses created an image of women who were modern, proud of their physicality and slightly coquettish (Figs 8 and 15). The majority of photos presented the participants of beauty pageants on stage. In front of the camera lens, they posed in costumes, with the prerequisite smile, exposing their femininity for public viewing (Figs 1, 4, 5, 19). Photographs from “behind the scenes” (the changing room, the corridor) showed women preparing to go on stage, the candidate’s tiredness, or their relaxed poses in underwear or dressing gowns (Figs 2, 16, 17). Such types of presentations significantly differed from the previous ones, as they presented women who were putting a lot of effort into prospective victory and who were determined to achieve their goal. The photographs illustrating the life of Miss Polonia created the image of independent women who travelled abroad, established international contacts, and participated in meetings and promotional events (Figs 10, 11, 13). However, in contrast to the images of working women, beauty pageant participants were rarely photographed against their families or when performing their professional activities (Fig. 9). In the photos they were presented individually or in the company of other contestants or men.

Despite seemingly positive aspects that could result from such a representation, a proper reading of such image making should be related to the distinctive context of Poland in the 1950s, including its dominant ideology, mechanisms of patriarchal control and organization, social convention, and, finally, the manner in which media operated through visual codes. Constructing cultural otherness with respect to the new womanhood took place in at least several ways—through juxtaposing the photos of beauty queens with the photos of working women, devoid of physiognomic femininity, labouring hand in hand with men, and raising children.

The media, forming one of the most important tools of the propaganda, actively participated in the process of othering.<sup>10</sup> “Just as images are both representations and producers of the ideologies of their time, they are also factors in relations of

<sup>10</sup> Reproducing the images that present specific norms of beauty and aesthetics often becomes an element of the “normalizing gaze” (see Foucault 1979).



power” (Sturken & Cartwright 1983: 72). Within the sociopolitical system, whose proponents (conversely to what they declared officially) attempted to maintain the existing institutions, the model of the new womanhood, with all its consequences, was an undesirable element.

In the sphere of *reception* of the image, visual representations never offered the viewer an insight into the world seen from the perspective of beauty queens. The contestants were shown exclusively as persons who are being looked at. Meanwhile, according to Mieke Bal who examined images through analysing the visual relation of gazes and perspectives of seeing, a strong identification of a spectator with an image may take place only when the external viewer (focalizer) can look at the same things in the same way as the focalizer in the picture (Bal quoted in Rose 2010: 69). A lack of such a possibility led to objectification of the watched figure and, in effect, to situating it in a position subordinate not only to the creator of the image but also to the viewer. This was one of the mechanisms supporting the existing gender power relations and depriving the woman of her “voice”.

The film *Polska Kronika Filmowa* added the element of movement, imposing specific sequences of gazing onto the viewer through montage. In the case of *Polska Kronika Filmowa*, the construction of the gaze was based on the same conventions of seeing as in the case of press photography. Meanwhile, camera movement and the points of view it assumed during individual takes allowed the gaze a fuller and more sophisticated structure in comparison with an immobilized photographic image. The montage evolved to include sequences of close-ups, which began to appear frequently, revealing individual parts of a female body. “The film suggests that beautiful women are composed of legs, arms, faces, and torsos that work together” (Grout 2013: 60). It had influence on the power onto the bodies of participants of beauty pageants. On the other hand, such a manner of representation resulted from new technological possibilities and formed a part of a different convention that influenced the process of othering but also served to constitute a model of femininity different from the dominant one.

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### Power of the Gaze<sup>11</sup>

According to such scholars as Michael Argyle and Mark Cook, the gaze can be interpreted in three (combinable) ways: in terms of information (the gaze informs), in terms of relation (gazes are exchanged), or in terms of possession (by the gaze, I touch, I seize, I am seized). Moreover, the gaze plays an important function in establishing and maintaining social hierarchies (Argyle & Cook 1976: 3).

I devote this subchapter to the gaze because it played a significant role in the context of beauty pageants (since they were first initiated). The concern, however,

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<sup>11</sup> Although in the common sense, *to gaze* means to look or stare, in psychoanalytic film criticism, “the gaze is not the act of looking itself, but the viewing relationship characteristic of a particular set of social circumstances” (Sturken & Cartwright 1983: 76).



is not limited merely to the fact that such contests began to develop as visual entertainment for the masses.<sup>12</sup> In my opinion, the gaze was one of the most basic mechanisms for constructing otherness and for the emergence of the new Other as a nontraditional woman.

The changes noticeable in the long term and related to the organization of beauty pageants, attitudes of women who were their participants, and the social reception of such events constituted one of the manifestations of the development of the modern era. Miss Polonia pageants, while taking into account their distinctness, ought to be treated as a stage in the development of a broader phenomenon, which in the 1950s was in its transition phase—the phase of a struggle for women's right to a public display of female physicality.<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary beauty pageants formed a perfect example of providing an audience with a possibility for gazing at female bodies and for conscious exposure of femininity to the evaluative gaze of others. John Berger analysed the cultural construct of male gaze. Such a way of looking was based on an assumption that the man is an “ideal” spectator and that an image of a woman is supposed to cater to his visual pleasure, an assumption that reflected the social relations of power and the process of establishing and maintaining the difference between the sexes (Berger 2008: 47). The concept of a male gaze (at least in its basic assumptions) dominated in patriarchal Polish society of the 1950s. According to this perspective, looking at the participants of beauty pageants can be associated with the multidimensional process of objectification (see e.g. Grout 2013; Figs 6, 7, 12). However, what is more significant, the male gaze was written into not only the majority of male/female relationships but also into women's attitudes towards themselves. A woman brought up in a patriarchal society and taught since childhood that physical beauty is not a real value, that she should not stand out, that a woman ought to be modest, kind, and submissive, had this male gaze stamped into/onto herself. This gaze was continually nurtured and confirmed by the environment, which supported the existing social institutions and structures (both by men and by women). In this context, a woman who decided to present herself on stage, opposing the dominant conventions of looking, had first to perform a huge work herself. Her effort required self-dialogue that would lead her to oppose the officially relevant criteria constituting a position from which she was judged by herself and others—required exposing and integrating the elements that used to be unappreciated, turning them into something of value and, finally, manifesting this change to the outside world. In this context beauty pageants were one of the forms of legitimization of the female gaze.

<sup>12</sup> Beauty pageants formed one of the parallel spaces that were developing during the modern era, where the New Woman was imagined and pictured (other such spaces are e.g. film and advertising).

<sup>13</sup> Although feminist organizations continued to protest against such events, the true breakthrough accompanied the Miss World pageant in London in 1951. Since then, presentation of the candidates in swimsuits became an obligatory element of every beauty pageant.

In Poland in the 1950s it was no longer surprising that the contestants participated in presentations in swimsuits, subjecting their physicality and femininity to the judgment of the jury and the audience. For the ordinary, attractive women to appear on stage, it required courage, awareness, overcoming social models and stereotypes imposed from the outside and constituted a manifestation of female modern thinking and independence (additionally constituting a prerequisite for meeting their rivals on the European and American stages). The New Woman embodied the desire to see and to be seen. Thus, beauty queens were not only the passive objects of party-state or gender policies. The beauty pageants enabled them a new articulation of meanings of womanhood (Figs 3 and 14). For numerous young women the beauty pageants became a powerful vehicle of identity transformation, providing them with an opportunity to establish their personal autonomy via emerging from the confinements of traditional communities and the model of a disciplined individual (mother, wife, activist, worker).

### Conclusion

The process of constructing multimedial representations of the New Woman in the context of Polish beauty pageants in the 1950s was of short duration (1956–1958), yet it deserves attention. The emergence and evolution of beauty pageants and attitudes related to them, treated from the perspective of a phenomenon that crossed state and national borders, allows us to see Miss Polonia pageants (including the local and regional contests) as one of the elements constituting a much longer process, and possessing local particularities. Within this process, in which beauty pageants formed one of its numerous possible manifestations, nontraditional women were undertaking a struggle against structures and standards that limited them and were developing a new female agency, frequently contributing to the construction of other, new norms and standards, which also came to limit them (although in a different manner).

The case of the Polish beauty pageants is interesting because it concerns an iron curtain country. Visual imagery of Polish beauty queens from the 1950s has not evolved, due to the short period over which it appeared. Beauty pageant participants were imagined and pictured as modern young women. As it was suitable for the communist authorities' immediate interests to start emphasizing a different model of femininity, the official images of the New Woman did not emerge in opposition to the images of the working woman. Nevertheless, their juxtaposition in the media of the time formed one of the mechanisms for the construction of a new Other. This role was played by the nontraditional woman who opposed the standards supporting the to-date social structures and the ideological regime.

In conclusion, the development of the concept of the New Woman in the context of Polish beauty pageants held in the 1950s was a process within which it is possible, in my opinion, to distinguish three basic phases. The first phase consists in the emergence of the New Woman, who attempted to escape the structures

existing in the patriarchal and ideologized world. The second phase relates to the struggle in which the New Woman, as nontraditional woman, was perceived as the new Other by those who relied on the older standards. The last phase should end with the establishment of the New Woman and her agency; yet in the context of the Miss Polonia pageants in the 1950s, this last phase was interrupted. The ban on organizing beauty contests, sustained in Poland for the following several decades, was aimed at a further strengthening of the dominant ideological and patriarchal structures.

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**PRZEKRÓJ**  
 NUMER 702  
 CENA 3 ZŁ  
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24  
 strony i  
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Zdjęcia:  
 ST. MAKOWSKI  
 O wyborach  
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 STRONA 20-21

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    |    |    |
| Zuzanna Cembrowska<br>(Warszawa) miss Polonia                                       | Krystyna Zajkowska<br>(Łódź) wicemiss Polonia                                       | Krystyna Zylówna (Kra-<br>ków) wicemiss Polonia                                     |
|    |    |    |
| Mirosława Leszczyń-<br>ska — miss Poznań  | Danuta Korolkie-<br>wicz, miss Szczecin   | Lucyna Okrucń-<br>ska, miss Pomorze   |
|   |   |   |
| Monika Szmił,<br>miss Wrocław   | Wiesława Pudłówna,<br>miss Rzeszów  | Domicela Gorzkow-<br>ska, miss Katowice   |
|  |  |  |
| Teresa Saczyńsk-<br>na, miss Gdańsk   | Beata Opoczyń-<br>ska, miss Łódź  | Jadwiga Kempa-<br>ra, miss Uroda  |

- 2 Candidates for Miss Polonia contest behind the scenes  
A. Wiernicki, S. Makowski, *Przekrój*, 1958, September 21.



- 3 Candidates for Miss Polonia contest  
A. Wiernicki, S. Makowski, *Przekrój*, 1958, September 21.



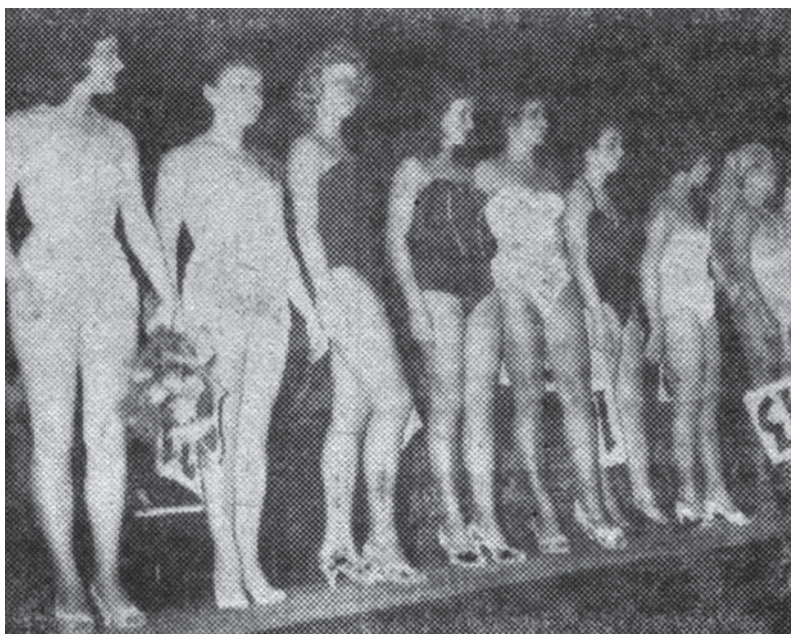






Czy Seleniusz  
Przewodniczący Państwowych  
Uczelnian  
Alicja Bobrowska

5 ..... Alicja Bobrowska during Miss Universum contest in USA  
Dziennik Bałtycki, 1958, August 8.



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**The audience**

7 ..... Z. Kosycarz, *Dziennik Bałtycki*, 1957, August 6.



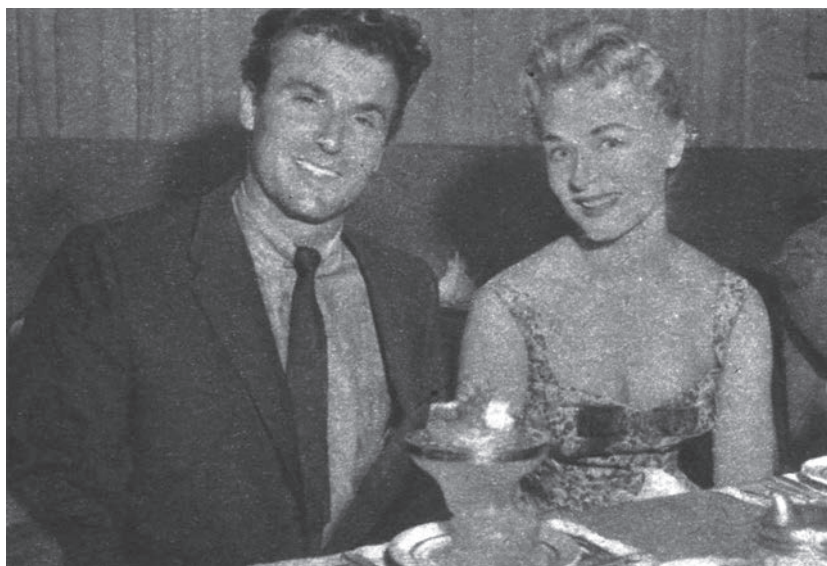
Alicja Bobrowska during Miss Polonia contest

J. Kopeć, *Dziennik Bałtycki*, 1957, August 7.





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Alicja Bobrowska in USA with Karl Larsen

*Przekrój*, 1958, September 28.

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Miss Polonia 1958 accompanied by I and II runner-up  
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Alicja Bobrowska during photographic session in Gdańsk  
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