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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at exhibiting a convergence between particular 'religious sensibilities' that would require, according to prominent anthropologists, a transformation of the way in which freedom of speech is usually understood under Western secular-liberal law. In particular, Saba Mahmood's anthropology gains from revealing its potential, but also its limitations, in the Eastern-European context that could require an effort of 'cultural translation'. Could some Muslims' relation to images of Muhammad be founded not only on representation, but also on attachment and cohabitation with Muhammad himself? Probably, but then it is necessary to underline that it is also the case, for instance, of Polish Catholics in their relationship to (images of) the Virgin Mary. This parallel is all the more interesting to explore in the case of the dominant political current in Poland, supported by several pro-government intellectuals, which perceives the European law on freedom of speech as too 'Western'.

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> "[I]t is in fact rather surprising that the insight that images 'want' something from us and/or 'do' something with us, as if they were a particular kind of living beings, is presented time and again as a new discovery or insight" (Verrips 2018: 284).

September 2020 marked the start of the trial of the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre that occurred in January 2015. On this occasion, on 2 September, the weekly newspaper republished several satirical drawings related to Islam, including the controversial cartoon from the *Jyllands-Posten* depicting Muhammad with a bomb on his head. On 10 September, Al-Qaida threatened the redacting committee and more globally the French citizens: "If your freedom of expression respects no limits, get ready to face the freedom of our actions." (*Le Monde* 2020a). The so-called Islamic State (ISIS) did the same. On 25 September, a man stabbed two people outside the former Paris office of *Charlie Hebdo*. According to authorities, he had previously shown interest in a hard-line Pakistani Islamic group (*New York Times* 2020). Taking a much more moderate stance, Al-Azhar University condemned the massacre of January 2015, but also stated that they "totally reject[ed] and strongly condemn[ed] the French *Charlie Hebdo*'s republication of the cartoons [in September 2020]" and called on to the international community to "take a firm stance on the encroachment on Muslims' sanctities and symbols" (*Al-Azhar* 2020).

In France, debates were reactivated. Some intellectual and media figures considered that these cartoons should not have been published again, as they were fuelling anger. Other media personalities considered that, on the contrary, all newspapers should have republished them so as not to leave *Charlie Hebdo* isolated (*Le Monde* 2020b). Intermediary positions were also expressed: for instance, senator Esther Benbassa, a former Religious Studies professor, underlined that *Charlie*'s editorial choice was highly questionable, because it did not live up to the journalistic commitment to "respecting people". But she also reminded the public that the newspaper should in no way be held responsible for the potential religious wrath thus provoked: therefore, it deserved "unconditional support".[1] On 16 October 2020, a teacher was beheaded near Paris after studying controversial *Charlie* cartoons with his pupils. Thirteen days later, three people were killed in a church in Nice. President Macron tried to explain the principles of freedom of speech on *Al-Jazeera*, but other states adopted a different stance, such as Russia, a country where the mere existence of a newspaper like *Charlie* would be impossible according to the Kremlin's spokesman, Dimitri Peskov, who describes Christianity as Russia's "fundamental religion". According to him: "It is unacceptable to insult the feelings of believers and at the same time it is unacceptable to kill people. Both are absolutely unacceptable" (*The Moscow Times* 2020). This declaration reminds us that 'religious sensibilities' offended by images (cartoons, paintings) are not only Islamic, but also Christian, for instance.

The present paper aims at exhibiting a convergence between several expressions of particular 'sensibilities' that would require, according to prominent anthropologists, a transformation of the way in which freedom of speech is usually understood under European law. Could some Muslims' relation to images of Muhammad be founded not only on representation, but also on attachment and cohabitation with Muhammad himself (Mahmood 2013)? Probably, but then it is necessary to underline that it is also the case, for instance, of Polish Catholics in their relationship to (images of) the Virgin Mary. This parallel is all the more interesting to explore in the case of the dominant political current in Poland, supported by several pro-government intellectuals, which perceives the European law on freedom of speech as too 'Western'. The nationalists in power are trying to give an Eastern-European identity to the country in the wake of a history marked by domination, or even "enslavement" – as political leader J. Kaczyński put it – by foreign powers. In this perspective, "liberal ideologies" (freedom of conscience, of expression, of sexual orientation) are readily perceived as a Western cultural assault damaging to Polish cultural authenticity.

In order to understand East-European 'wounded sensibilities', it is useful to compare them to Muslim sensibilities as described by anthropologist Saba Mahmood (1961–2018). She did not study Poland as such, but according to her, many Muslims offended by *Charlie*'s or *Jyllands-Posten*'s cartoons are animated by a "mimetic faith" that also exists within Christianity. Therefore, Mahmood's anthropology gains from revealing its potential, but also its limitations, in an Eastern-European context that, without being strictly post-colonial – unlike many Muslim countries – could require an effort of "cultural translation" in the sense established by Mayanthi Fernando:

> Translation here does not simply make strange worlds familiar, in a process [Talal] Asad calls domestication. [...] Saba [Mahmood] explicitly takes up the matter of translation in *Religious Difference in a Secular Age*: anthropology, she writes there, entails not so much "understanding" an other but, instead, "juxtaposing the constitutive concepts and practices of one form of life against [those of] another in order to ask a different set of questions, to decentre and rethink the normative frameworks by which we have come to apprehend life" (Fernando 2019: 16)

My purpose will thus be to "decentre and rethink the normative frameworks" in the light of some Polish religious sensibilities that castigate Western liberal law. The comparison with Muslim sensibilities described by

Mahmood will then enable us to better understand the political consequences of her work and more generally of the Asadian understanding of secularism, which remains highly debated (Shook 2020). To this end, the paper is built around three axes. After explaining the main notions tackled by Mahmood as well as their place in the debate surrounding the *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie* affairs, I will synthesize the input of Mahmood's work as well as some criticisms that were addressed to her, notably regarding the political consequences that she thinks can be drawn from her analysis: those criticisms are enlightening for the study of the Polish case because they address general questions relating not only to anthropology, but also political theory. Finally, the paper will confirm that the forms of Muslim piety identified by Mahmood are in no way specific to Islam (which she herself admits but without drawing every possible consequence from it), so that a puzzling paradox appears: it is hard to oppose 'Muslim sensibilities' to a political liberalism of Judeo-Christian genealogical descent, unless one is also ready to accept, by symmetry, the specificity of some Polish Catholic sensibilities and their bonds with Eastern-European far-right movements. That is, I suggest, a blind spot of Mahmood's anthropology.

OFFENSE, FREE SPEECH AND 'JUDEO-CHRISTIAN' SENSIBILITIES

Public debates about 'offending images' depicting religious figures are underpinned by contrasting interpretations of the freedom of speech. In France, this freedom can only be limited if it becomes a pretext for offending a whole national, ethnic or religious group. Concretely, the Pleven Law of 1972 protects people's ethnic, national, or racial background, but also their religion. In principle, there can only be an offense if the followers of a certain religion are targeted *as persons*. However, according to anthropologist Jeanne Favret-Saada, the Pleven Law remains ambiguous insofar as "protecting people's religion" means that some expressions can be judged discriminatory, slanderous or offensive[2] when they target "groups of people" without specifying what delimitates these groups. In other words, it is sometimes difficult to designate with certainty the individual or collective target of the supposed offense. In the case of *Charlie Hebdo* that had depicted in 2006 the character of Muhammad complaining that "it's hard to be loved by morons", it was admitted that the newspaper was only targeting Islamic terrorists. Similarly, the drawing representing Muhammad on a cloud, shouting "Stop, we have run out of virgins!" was targeting the perpetrators of suicide bombings (Favret-Saada 2015). But things are sometimes more complex than that: French tribunals consider that a representation of Muhammad wearing a bomb-like turban (Westergaard's cartoon from the *Jyllands-Posten* republished in 2020) "appears *in itself* and *on its own* to be likely to offend all followers of this faith [...] insofar as it likens them – without distinction or nuance – to followers of a teaching of terror" (Court of Paris, 22 March 2007). It remains that, according to the Court, the *context* and *circumstances* "appear to exclude any deliberate will to directly and knowingly offend the whole Muslim community".

In fact, Favret-Saada's position is more liberal that the Court's one. She claims that even the drawing representing Muhammad with a bomb in his turban cannot be judged "in itself and on its own" (*supra*) as offensive for all Muslims: "Does the Prophet know he has a bomb in his turban, of which the wick is lit? Does he want this? The Prophet's interrogative look may mean that he doesn't know what to think of all this mess." (Favret-Saada 2016) Moreover, Muhammad's face is less caricatured than it is *drawn*, under the appearance of a rather stern but nonetheless realistic person: the proportions of the face are, so to speak, 'normal'. In short, the artist "has chosen not to link violence (the lit wick) to the figuration of the face" (*ibid*.). Therefore, if the link between the bomb and Muhammad's intentions remains uncertain, then how does Westergaard's cartoon offend *in itself* a "group of people on the grounds of their origin or of their membership or non-membership of a specific ethnic group, nation, race or religion" (Pleven Law, art. 24)?

In sharp opposition to this analysis, Mahmood claims that the Europeans' relationship to liberal law should try to better take into account the cultural specificity of Islam. According to her, even though it is obvious that not all Muslims have the same religious sensibility, it is nonetheless true that from a genealogical point of view, Islam has less cultural affinities than Christianity with the liberal rule of law that found its completion in a Judeo-Christian – and more crucially Protestant – context. The author then shows that drawings that would not seem offensive from a western perspective, may very well be offensive to some people raised in a non-Protestant cultural area. European citizens could, for example, realize that it is less natural in a Muslim context to make a sharp distinction between the representation of a religious character (cartoon, painting) and the object of this representation (the Prophet). Indeed, according to the anthropologist, many pious Muslims are animated by an "economy of signification [in which Muhammad] is a figure of immanence in his constant exemplariness, and is therefore not a referential sign that stands apart from an essence that it denotes" (Mahmood 2013: 70). It would thus be possible to better understand the violent reactions of some Muslims after the publication of the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons.

Undoubtedly, this analysing is enlightening. However, although Mahmood does not call for a transformation of the "secular-liberal protocols of free speech", her

invitation to "transform [...] the cultural and ethical sensibilities of the Judeo-Christian population that undergird the cultural practices of secular-liberal law" (Mahmood 2013: 83) remains highly controversial (Joppke 2016). Mahmood asks the following general question: if the principles of political liberalism are historically linked with the emergence of particular nations that have themselves been shaped through conflicts or compromises made with particular religions, then should we not conclude that some of them are not as universal as they might appear? More specifically, supporters of political secularism say that the state must be neutral and separated from all religious institutions in order to respect individual liberties; but is that not a 'republican' or 'secular-liberal' perspective that can only work in *some* contexts, mainly Protestant ones (USA) or ones marked by a sharp confrontation with a hegemonic Catholicism (France)? Political secularism would thus still be invested today by the main religions that have contributed to its implementation in a given cultural area.

This is a heuristic thesis: it is true that the American separation between Church and State (as Jefferson put it) is marked by Protestantism, just like French republicanism is marked by (its historical opposition to) Catholicism. But to what extent are political principles soluble in their individual evolutions? Mahmood tried to sum up what is at stake.

> It is only in the modern state and not only in Islamic societies that you get this sense that the state is really the arbiter of creating a morally religious compliant society: so Iran is an example, Saudi Arabia is an example, and these states are not less modern than other states of Europe and America. Now, of course there are differences between them. Clearly the Iranian state embraces Islam as its political ideology in a way that, let's say the American state does not. However, even in America Protestantism is a very crucial aspect that informs all laws and practices: it has a different structure that is not the same as, [the structure] let's say of the Iranian state, but nonetheless you cannot therefore say that it is any less or more secular than other kinds of modern states. (Mahmood 2016)

First, this is a rather vague statement, since 'secular' can mean three things according to Mahmood herself, following Talal Asad: a historical *process* (secularization), a political *ideology* (secularism) and a cultural *phenomenon*. In this last understanding, secular means everything related to human affairs, and more precisely to 'this-worldly affairs'. Thus, it is possible to say that Saudi Arabia is very oriented towards this-worldly affairs, as a state well integrated to the global capitalist economy (petrodollars, Western weapons, etc.). In this respect, Saudi Arabia is indeed just as 'secular' as the United States. But is that the meaning of 'secular' as Mahmood defines it? It is not likely, for if the thesis were only about saying that every society is oriented towards this-worldly affairs, it would not be very original (anthropologically speaking). And yet, Mahmood's work is recognized as original, not to say radical. So the author must have meant something more. She refers to the US laws, which indicates that she is thinking about *political* secularism too. But if that is the case, her statement becomes highly questionable: is it really impossible to say whether the United States are "any less or more secular than other kinds of modern states"?[3] Although anthropologically enlightening, Asad's, Mahmood's and their continuators' theses seem less convincing as far as political theory is concerned.

Second, by saying that "the Iranian state embraces Islam as its political ideology", Mahmood eschews describing the Islamic Republic as one that seeks to turn citizens into something they do not want to be, with fatal consequences for those who protest the theocracy. According to historian Aziz Al-Azmeh, this is because "what Asad and Mahmood describe as the norm are not normal Muslims, whatever these may be; they are Muslim beings who are 'pre-eminently and determinatively religious', in fact, super-Muslims, virtually performed by the scholar" (Al-Azmeh 2020: 44). This has regrettable consequences as far as political theory is concerned. The fact that Muslims are represented, under European laws, as citizens like other citizens, however humanly imperfect the system, seems to be uninteresting to Asad and Mahmood, who continuously emphasize the Judeo-Christian descent of Western secular liberalism. From this perspective, Muslims cannot be satisfactorily represented in Europe, and this is why Mahmood's anthropological edifice is geared towards traditionalism and the deliberate construction of minorities (Al-Azmeh 2020: 48).

This is not to say that Mahmood's position is uninteresting. Her wariness towards secularism echoes other studies on the issue of 'offending pictures', notably those which stress that "in today's increasingly diversified societies with a strong presence of various religions, a secularist stance should not be taken as default, but subjected to detailed scrutiny" (Meyer 2018: 363). Mahmood is also right in showing that secularism can be mobilized by conservative voices in a process of 'othering' Muslims. However secular one may be, one cannot just tell those offended, angry or protesting Muslims that they are "oversensitive" or that "they shouldn't take religion too seriously" for the sake of keeping a healthy critical distance from their religious commitments (Baumgartner 2018). Hence I do not have any ideological hostility towards Mahmood's position. But I deny the supposed specificity of Islamic faith that she tries to emphasize in her work. One can find very

similar traits in different cultures, including Polish super-Catholics, "virtually performed" by far-right scholars and politicians as belonging to the norm, in a process that fuels traditionalism and the construction of a (Catholic) minority supposedly threatened by Western secular liberalism.

IMPLEMENTING CULTURAL TRANSLATION IN THE EASTERN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

To sum up, the feeling of attachment to the figure of the Prophet could highlight the 'moral injury' experienced by some Muslims during the affairs of the *Jyllands-Posten* or *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons, but this "relation founded not only on representation but also on [...] attachment and cohabitation" (Mahmood 2013: 64) is not Islamic as such. As Mahmood herself puts it, it is related to an

> understanding of *icons* that not only was operative among Muslims who felt offended by the cartoons but also has a long and rich history within different traditions, including Christianity and ancient Greek thought [...]. [An icon] refers not simply to an image but to a cluster of meanings that might suggest a persona, an authoritative presence, or even a shared imagination (p. 68).

That is why I contend that, as "a form of relationality that binds the subject to an object or imaginary" figure, the anthropological understanding of icons would gain from being completed by considering similar cases in other (non-Muslim) contexts. The Polish context is particularly interesting. The feeling of attachment is very much present in Polish Catholic believers who felt hurt by a 2019 representation of the Virgin Mary with a LGBT-like rainbow halo (see ***Picture 1***). Indeed, the Virgin is considered by these people as a fully-fledged member of their family, with bonds of *lived cohabitation*, including in the faithful's home. According to several historians and philosophers, it would thus be necessary to rethink the Western principles of freedom of expression in order to avoid offending believers who see themselves as relatives of religious figures, and notably consider Mary a mother (Kurcharczyk 2019; Skrzypczak 2019). Though more roughly expressed, these *political* consequences are quite similar to those carefully advanced by Saba Mahmood (or Judith Butler as we will see). Therefore, putting Mahmood's theses to the test by confronting them with Polish Catholic sensibilities will allow us to better understand them in their anthropological *and* political aspects.

But is it possible to compare the cartoons from the *Jyllands-Posten*, republished in September 2020 in *Charlie Hebdo*, with a poster of the Virgin Mary that triggered a case of "insult to religious feelings" in Poland in 2019? More precisely, can we compare the drawing of Muhammad with a bomb on top of his head to a poster of the Virgin Mary with LGBT colours above her head?

Of course, the two cases are not strictly comparable: more or less violent reactions, different international responses, drawing *vs* pastiche, etc. Furthermore, it is by identifying the Judeo-Christian basis of European liberalism that Mahmood invites us to modulate our relation to freedom of speech so as to better take into account particular religious (Muslim) sensibilities: why, then, would it be necessary to mention particular Catholic religious sensibilities? Shouldn't they be included in this Judeo-Christianity? Actually, there is nothing less certain, for the hurt Muslim and Catholic sensibilities I will discuss here are expressed in such a similar way that it becomes difficult to see the true specificity of this all-encompassing Judeo-Christianity.

In fact, these hurt Polish sensibilities are *opposed* to Judeo-Christianity as it is captured by Mahmood, insofar as they call into question the principle of a sharp distinction between "the referential sign" and "the essence that it denotes" (Mahmood 2013: 70), thus making possible a "mimetic faith", a "lived cohabitation" and a "living relationship" with religious figures. Besides, many self-proclaimed spokespersons representing these Muslim or Catholic hurt sensibilities (political leaders, religious representatives, intellectuals) have a similar

Picture 1 The Rainbow Black Madonna and Child of Częstochowa.

propensity to denounce "Western secular liberalism" as a facilitator of "islamophobia" or "christophobia".[4] Of course, one could object that a bomb is intrinsically more violent than LGBT colours. But let's imagine a picture of Muhammad 'wearing' a rainbow: it might easily be interpreted as 'the Prophet is not straight' or 'the Prophet is pro-LGBT', hence wounding many religious sensibilities, all the more so that homosexuality or sexual freedom is often viewed as a Western degradation. Moreover, the rainbow refers to the field of sexuality, which is extremely sensitive in many currents of Islam and Christianity, and hence "able to trigger very negative sentiments, thoughts, and behavior toward imagery that people experience as transgressive, as well as toward its producers and their potential supporters." (Verrips 2018: 291).

Now, stemming from *anthropological* insights, three approaches may be considered as far as *political* consequences are concerned. The first one consists in taking into account some Muslim sensibilities to rethink the Western cultural conception of freedom of speech, while also considering that Polish Catholic sensibilities, even though they can be hurt in a very similar fashion, do not require such adjustments since they belong to the Judeo-Christian area. The second approach invites us to rethink Western cultural sensibilities underpinning political liberalism by considering Catholic and Muslim sensibilities in the same way: the fight against islamophobia would then go hand in hand with the fight against christophobia (which is very popular in Poland). Lastly, the third approach claims that the specificity of some religious sensibilities does not constitute sufficient grounds for rethinking Western cultural sensibilities underpinning judicial practices relating to freedom of speech. So the following question needs to be addressed: are the "contradictions of secular law" important enough to require "a strong critical move that seeks to combat a sustained and consequential hegemony within the law" (Butler 2013: 119)?

EASTERN MIMETIC FAITH *VS* WESTERN BELIEF?

Before that, we need to assess more precisely Mahmood's contribution to the debates surrounding the *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie* affairs. Her thesis is an ambitious one: she proposes to redefine modernity as it is understood in Western countries. Does Western secular modernity include Islam? Is this or that drawing islamophobic? Is it "an incitation to religious and ethnic hatred" (*Le Monde* 2006)? Should we rethink some typically Western solutions to better take into account the complexity of possible situations regarding offenses or "moral injuries"?

THE CASE OF MUHAMMAD'S DRAWINGS AS INFLICTING A MORAL INJURY

The anthropologist starts by questioning the notion of freedom of expression: it "presuppose a semiotic ideology in which signifiers are arbitrarily linked to concepts, their meaning open to people's reading in accord with a particular code shared between them" (Mahmood 2013: 64). One can find a salient version of this conception in the Saussurean model of language that posits a distinction between language and things, or more precisely between the signifier and the mental representation of something (the signified). But this would be a *typically western* vision of the way in which images and words operate in the world. It would rely on an idea of Protestant origin, in line with the thoughts of reformers like Calvin who contributed to separating material reality from the transcendence of God. In the Calvinist conception, God cannot be influenced by prayers or even good deeds: He has decided from the start who will be saved and who will be damned. The material world is then invested by individuals in such a way that material signifiers (texts, images) are *arbitrarily* linked with – then somewhat separated from – the essence of what they refer to: Jesus for instance.

Mahmood then endeavours to analyse the various reactions to the Danish case by giving them anthropological depth. As we know, the manifestations of anger of Muslims across the world after the publication in the *Jyllands-Posten* shocked a big part of the Western public opinion. According to Mahmood, this can be put in parallel with "the shock experienced by proselytizing missionaries when they first encountered non-Christian natives who attributed divine agency to material signs" (Mahmood 2013: 64). Of course, signs might be offensive to Protestants, but it is widely assumed, at least in principle, that their status as signifiers belong to the material world, as distinct from the essence that they denote (Jesus, etc.). Hence a tendency of Western people, especially non-Muslim, to consider that the outbursts of anger of some Muslims are due to an erroneous interpretation in that it does not make enough distinction between the holy status attributed to Muhammad on the one hand (the signified) and the drawings representing Muhammad on the other hand (as signifiers).

> The dismay that Protestant Christian missionaries felt at the moral consequences that followed from native epistemological assumptions [...] has resonances with the bafflement many liberals and progressives express at the scope and depth of Muslim reaction over the cartoons. One source of bafflement emanates from the semiotic ideology that underpins their sense that religious symbols and icons are one thing, and sacred

> figures, with all the devotional respect they might evoke, another. [...] [But] Muhammad, in th[e] understanding [of many Muslims shocked by the Danish cartoons], is not simply a proper noun referring to a particular historical figure, but the mark of a relation of similitude. In this economy of signification, he is a figure of immanence in his constant exemplariness, and is therefore not a referential sign that stands apart from an essence that it denotes. (Mahmood 2013: 67, 70)

Should we then take up the missionary project of the 19th Century that consisted in teaching indigenous people to 'better' distinguish between objects, humans and the divine, by instilling in them a Protestant conception of the relationship to signs? It would obviously be absurd (and colonial). Therefore, it would rather be necessary to reform the way in which we understand the diverse modes of perception of images. To do so, Mahmood mentions some extracts from statements of Muslims who felt "personally insulted" by the Danish cartoons.

> "I would have felt less wounded if the object of ridicule were my own parents" [...] "What really upset me was the absolute lack of understanding on the part of my secular friends (who are by the way not all White, many are from Pakistan and Bangladesh) at how upset people like myself felt on seeing the Prophet insulted in this way. It felt like it was a personal insult!" (p. 69)

Then, Mahmood sketches out a model of what she calls "mimetic faith" which consists in "integrating", or even "ingesting the Prophet's persona into oneself". Other words are used: "cohabitation", "living relationship" with the Prophet. In this perspective, "for many Muslims, the offense the cartoons committed was not against a moral interdiction (Thou shalt not make images of Muhammad), but against a structure of affect, a habitus, that feels wounded" (p. 72).

These elements enable us to better understand the variety of religious experiences in Islam: Mahmood provides keys for a better "translation" between different conceptions of the relationship to images. However, to what extent can her ethnographical observations be generalized? All of this remains to be cleared up, all the more so because her accusation is a very serious one. Not only does she call into question the liberal legislation that, according to her, fails to take into account specific forms of religiousness ("misrecognize the kind of religiosity at stake in Muslim reactions to Danish cartoons"), but she also recommends a "transformation of the cultural and ethical sensibilities of the Judeo-Christian population that undergird the cultural practices of secular-liberal law" (p. 83). I contend that the Polish case might help us to deepen our understanding of what is here (too extensively) described as "the Judeo-Christian population" in its relation to "secular-liberal law".

SOME CRITICISMS ADDRESSED TO THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGY OF ISLAM

Granted, Mahmood's focus on the 'moral injury' induced by the cartoons is interesting because it does not validate the religious concept of blasphemy: in order to understand the angry reactions of some Muslims, she invites her readers not to reason in terms of infringed law. Yet according to political philosopher Andrew March, her position is not justifiable politically speaking. As citizens, we feel concerned just as much by the pain of 'doctrinal' Muslims (who most of all want to ensure compliance with Islamic law as they conceive it) as by that of 'pietist' Muslims (who rather feel like they are cohabitating with the Prophet); just as we feel concerned by the "subjective pain of conservative Christians who notice the progressive replacement of their conception of marriage by a new, fairer and more inclusive one for all forms of love and attachment" (March 2011: 815). The parallel with Christian 'wounded sensibilities' is enlightening: feeling *concerned* by someone's pain should not have much impact on the relevance of liberal laws, such as equal marriage for same-sex couples, on the pretext of taking into account the subjective pain of conservative Christians. The same conclusion should thus apply regarding freedom of expression related to religions, whatever they may be.

Besides, what was actually insulting in the Danish cartoons? It is easy to understand the pain of doctrinal Muslims who felt that it was a transgression of the law that forbids 'blasphemy'. But in the case of those Muslims described by Mahmood who favour attachment and cohabitation with the Prophet, we are at a loss to know, since the experience of a 'lived relationship' should not be so easily shaken by foreign drawings (in this instance, Danish ones). Finally, Andrew March deplores a lack of clarity:

> What "transformation of the cultural and ethical sensibilities of the majority Judeo-Christian population" do we wish to see exactly – that they purify themselves of racist attitudes towards fellow citizens of Muslim cultural backgrounds, that they not misuse the secular license to insult religion as an alibi for creating a hostile environment for fellow citizens of Muslim cultural backgrounds, or that they actually commit to *never* offending distinctly religious sensibilities held by Muslims? [...] We will someday live in a society where brute anti-Muslim prejudice is regarded as in the same bad taste as racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and homophobia [...]. I am not sure whether in such a society *The Satanic Verses* or the Danish cartoons would fall afoul of this sensibility,

> but many far more vicious forms of expression presently circulating in Western societies directed at Muslims certainly would. (March 2011: 820)

Rather than focusing on questionable goals (never to offend), the aim is then to defend the principles of political liberalism that, although shaped by specific national contexts, make possible the presence of Muslims as citizens in Europe.

One could answer to these criticisms that Mahmood does not oppose two cultural blocks, since she mentions the existence of Christian practices that can be analysed in terms of mimetic faith. Take the cult of the Virgin Mary: it is not necessarily about 'believing' in her existence, but about accompanying her, talking about her, considering her as a model. This effort suggested by Mahmood to bring Islam and Catholicism closer together is welcome, but does it not create other problems? Indeed, within European societies themselves, the situation remains ambiguous regarding 'offensive images' and 'blasphemy'. In Poland, convictions for "insult to religious feelings" are regular: between 30 and 40 a year on average. The situation could change, since this country is influenced, in spite of its current political leaders, by a Western, more secular conception of freedom of expression. Or perhaps will it be necessary, on the contrary, to rethink the secular-liberal approach so as to prevent offenses to Polish Catholic sensibilities expressing a mimetic faith towards Mary?

MUHAMMAD AND MARY, A SIMILAR COMBAT?

A post-colonial outlook may lead us to consider, quite surprisingly, that the Polish cultural proximity to Western Europe makes Polish Catholics more capable than 'Muslims' to accommodate the norms of secular modernity. However, it depends on the way in which we view cultural proximity. Admittedly, Poland is historically Catholic (just like France), but there is no reason to compartmentalize religions (Islam and Catholicism), all the less so that Poland has also been a country dominated by Protestant (Germanic) and secular empires that, in the case of Communism, promoted a secular-atheistic ideology. The three successive partitions of Poland between Russian, Austrian and Prussian Empires led to the official disappearance of the country (in 1795), which became independent again in 1918, then was torn apart anew in 1939 (this was the 'fourth partition', decided by the Hitler-Stalin pact). Likewise, placing the country under Soviet tutelage until 1989 was part of a domination process orchestrated by foreign powers that did not care much about preserving Polish religious specificities. It would thus "be a shame to see [Mahmood's work] rejected or ostracized due to the fact that her postcolonial approach annoys some researchers in France" (Marzouki 2015: 48), but it would also be a shame not to explore its potential extensions and limits in a country that, although non-Muslim, expresses mimetic religious sensibilities that are very much alive. In other words, unless one considers that Muslims and Catholics are in no way comparable because they are living in two irreconcilable worlds, there is no reason not to look at Catholic and Muslim 'wounded sensibilities' from the same angle if they have similar characteristics.

Besides, the fact that Poland belongs to the West is a matter of dispute. The will of the political majority, embodied by the ultra-Catholic PiS (Law and Justice Party), promotes a distancing from liberal Europe, perceived as too conciliatory in its stance towards homosexuals, immigrants, or Muslims as citizens. The last presidential election, which reinstated the PiS at the head of the country, has been called a "clash of civilisations" by its leader J. Kaczyński:

> It was a confrontation with those who want to open Poland to a sort of revolution that is occurring in the West, to a so-called progress that destroys family and the Christian foundations of our civilisation, leads to an oligarchisation of society and turns individuals into slaves, depriving them of all identity. (Kaczyński quoted by Pacewicz 2020)

Would this not be a matter for cultural translation? Yes indeed, if we come back to the Polish case of the rainbow Virgin that has spurred international reactions (Amnesty International for instance) and echoes that of the *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie Hebdo*'s drawings:

1) A pictorial representation of a religious figure (The Virgin Mary) has been seen as an 'insult to religious feelings' liable to criminal prosecution: up to two years in prison according to the applicable law.
2) As with the *Jyllands-Posten*'s drawings, what is offensive about the image is not obvious at first glance (at least to a 'Westerner') since it is only a Virgin Mary with a rainbow-coloured halo evoking an LGBT flag.
3) In reaction to the liberal approaches that have been taken in Europe regarding the inviolability of the principle of freedom of speech, conservative Catholic voices have made themselves heard in Poland, invoking their experience of similarity, cohabitation, and lived relationship with Mary. It is a 'mimetic faith' very similar to the one described by Mahmood. Strongly anchored in the Polish religious heritage, it generates an economy of signification where Mary, in her constant exemplariness, is not a referential sign that stands apart from an essence that it denotes. In other words, she is an *icon,* in the sense specified by Mahmood above.

On the other hand, we can find historical, cultural or contextual differences between the Mary and Muhammad cases. But these differences are contingent and they do not preclude the possibility of comparison.

1) The Polish cult of images has no equivalent in Islam. However, Mahmood herself claims that anthropological knowledge about the Christian *iconic* relation to images is a resource for "cultural translation" since it helps explain the pain experienced by many Muslims. That is why Judith Butler describes Mahmood's undertaking as "politics of the icon" (Butler 2013: 114). Butler also claims that Mahmood's analysis has important *political* consequences because "exposing the contradictions of secular law is clearly a strong critical move that seeks to combat a sustained and consequential hegemony within the law" (*ibid*.: 119). Therefore, it is important to assess the consequences of the Polish "politics of the icon" as a challenge to secular law.

2) Polish people are incidentally (mostly) white, while a majority of Muslims are darker-skinned, so that Mahmood's attempts at linking religion and race by imagining categories that "cut across such distinctions" (such as the notion of islamophobia) would not be easy to apply in the Polish case. In other words, Muslims are racialized in Western countries: that is why islamophobia, contrarily to christophobia, echoes a form of racism. Of course, anti-Polish prejudices exist too, just as anti-Irish racism used to be widespread in the USA, but they are by far not as striking as anti-Muslim prejudice. Therefore, I do not deny that linking religion and race, in the specific case of Muslims, may be a heuristic attempt. However, I maintain that it is not absolutely relevant to the issue at stake, because religion logically does not have anything to do with people's phenotype. Religion might be protected as a collective identity under European laws on indirect discrimination, but it is also, *unlike* race, a matter of choice protected under the European Convention on freedom of thought, conscience and religion (McCrea 2018).

3) It could also be objected that the comparison between Catholic and Muslim sensibilities does not hold up due to the colonial history of Muslim countries. Indeed, colonial powers redefined Islam in a manner that fitted their own conception of the relationship between secular and religious powers, which partly explains why today's Muslim revivalism wishes to emancipate itself from all Western influence through decolonization processes (March 2019). And yet, as I have already suggested, a violent redefinition of religion by secular powers also occurred in Poland (the Soviet example is paradigmatic). Moreover, if today's Islamic revival relies on relationships to the law (*sharia*) that encourage believers to take the first imagined Muslim communities (surrounding Muhammad) as a model, a particular history similarly exists in Poland, encouraging people to take Mary as a model – the supposed protector of the country and its religion against foreign interferences.

CATHOLIC MIMETIC FAITH AND TRANSFORMATION OF WESTERN SECULAR SENSIBILITIES

The rainbow Virgin affair started with cardboard boxes placed around the symbolical tomb of Christ in a church in Płock, on which were written the following 'sins' that every Catholic – according to many religious authorities – is supposed to fight against: treason, LGBT, gender, scornfulness, selfishness, homo-perversions, lies, jealousy, rejection of belief, assault, theft, (etc.), topped by a crucifix with a white and red ribbon wrapped around it (the colours of Poland) and a red inscription: *Protect us from the flames of unbelief*. This mixture of criminal offenses, misdeeds, opinions and identities could have been seen as an incitement to hatred requiring a police intervention, if only to remove the installation. But it was not the case.

From then on, locals (non-Catholics, liberal Catholics, LGBT rights activists) expressed their disagreement by protesting around the church with signs indicating, among other things, that 63% of homosexual teenagers have suicidal thoughts: the objective was to make people understand that this 'religious' way of fighting against homosexuality was not really in line with the Christian doctrine of loving one's neighbour, because it risked aggravating these teens' suicidal ideation. In order to drive this message home, an activist named Elżbieta Podleśna decided to stick up posters of the Madonna and Child of Częstochowa with halos painted in the six LGBT colours (replacing the usual golden colour) all around the city of Płock: on trees, posts, buildings, etc.

According to the *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a liberal Catholic weekly newspaper, the desecration did not lie in the rainbow Virgin's image, but in the initial fact of decorating the tomb of Christ with messages inciting hatred. However, the Minister of Internal Affairs and his police decided otherwise by sending a team of six officers to search the activist's home at 6 am, confiscating all her computers, phones and external hard drives; then taking her into custody 100 kilometres from the capital (where she lived) under the law forbidding "insult to religious feelings" for which she could have been sentenced to two years in prison. As soon as she was arrested, the Minister Joachim Brudziński declared:

> I want to thank the Polish police forces for their efficient work in identifying and arresting a person suspected of desecrating the image of the Mother of God, that has been holy to Polish people for centuries. No rambling about freedom and 'tolerance': NO ONE has the right to insult the religious feelings of believers. (Brudziński 2019a)

A week prior, the spokesman for the Episcopacy had already declared: "The desecration of the image has caused immense pain […] We ask people to respect the

religious feelings of believers". However, the activist's conviction proved hard to implement in a context of international pressure in favour of Podleśna, including in newspaper articles worldwide (*Le Monde, The Guardian, The New York Times*). The Minister intended to resist this western pressure: "If I had to stop the police or any other service from acting for fear of what international media could write, inspired by movements that are very influential in our country, then I would be a very cowardly politician" (Brudziński 2019b). In this context of well-organized civil protests, the Court did not pronounce the sentence the government wanted and found Podleśna not guilty – but validated the legality of her brutal arrest by the police. At the beginning of the year 2020, Amnesty International was still asking why it was not deemed sufficient to summon the suspect, by means of a letter for instance, to the local police station.

The initial context is thus quite different from the Danish case: it does not involve a newspaper, but posters displayed in public places; it is not about drawings, but a pastiche; it is not the call of a newspaper (*Jyllands-Posten*) to a union of cartoonists, but a response to heinous words exhibited in a place of worship. And yet some points of convergence appear: if the initial objective of the *Jyllands-Posten* was to open up a debate about religious representations and the potential self-censorship of journalists confronted to the perceived violence of some Islamic movements, Podleśna catalysed a questioning about the way Mary could be represented, as well as about the way freedom of speech can work in a climate of intimidation created by religious and political authorities who are particularly touchy. A semiotic similarity is also present: in both cases, religious figures have something unpleasant above their head (a bomb or LGBT colours) without seeming to be aware of it.[5]

How could we interpret these facts from an anthropological point of view? Mahmood's theoretical arsenal could be enlightening, since the Virgin in question is not just any Virgin. It is the Virgin of Częstochowa, that arouses in some Catholics a mimetic faith just like the one described by Mahmood regarding some Muslims who experienced a 'moral injury' after the publication of the Danish cartoons. Like Mahmood, the anthropologist Anna Niedźwiedź uses interviews in order to understand the mimetic faith of pilgrims who visit the original painting of said Virgin at the Jasna Góra sanctuary.

> The religious experience of the holy picture erases the limits between the image and the character. [...] For the majority of my interlocutors, the painting is invested with the power of the person it represents and, in the religious experience, it becomes a "person who is present" and real in the painting and through the painting. What is said about the painting is evidence of this: the limit between the effigy and the character disappears and a lot of my interlocutors experience the painting as an encounter with the Virgin herself, who appears as a real and living person: "When I see the Częstochowa painting, I see something more than just the painting – I see the Virgin". Numerous other testimonies describe the same intense sensory experience "of an encounter with a person" that is realised through the painting. [...] At the moment of contact with a believer, the character of the Virgin Mary represented on the painting comes to life: the Virgin looks at the visitor, wants to speak, gives a sign of greetings, blinks, smiles, cries and bleeds. (Niedźwiedź 2010: 318)

The statements of the faithful underline the family ties of cohabitation: my Mother, Mother, Mama, Little Mother. And it does not only concern pilgrims, since a copy of the painting circulated in the 1960s in order to make the divine Mother come into homes *herself*.

> One of my informants told me that, while the painting was in his house, "We could talk to the image alone, face to face, come to her with our problems. It was a personal encounter with the Virgin". "When the painting was at my place," another one told me, "it was like the unusual visit of an honoured guest to whom you can tell about your pains, and talk about your problems". (Niedźwiedź 2010: 323)

The peregrinations of the divine Mother were not to the taste of the Communist authorities who decided to, so to speak, arrest the Virgin by confiscating the copy of the painting. From then on, only the frame circulated between believers' homes or during processions, with a potentially even stronger effect: "One of my interlocutors told me: 'I still remember the procession and the empty frame. Everybody felt as though the painting was still there, as though it had never been taken out of its frame. Each of us could see her!'" (*idem*).

Once again, let's not put too strong an emphasis on the parallel with the Danish or French 'West-European' cases. The character of the Virgin Mary follows in a Polish tradition of worshipping images that does not exist in Islam. But the parallel allows us to explore what Mahmood herself calls the *iconic* relation to material signs which – as she underlines – is not specifically Islamic. Furthermore, the so-called 'iconoclast' specificity of Islam should be put into perspective in comparison with Christianity. Pictures of Muhammad used for learning (e.g. to accompany literary texts) or devotion purposes are not unheard of in Islam, notably in Shiism between the 13th and 18th. Men of religion now navigate between a fundamentalist reaction against a supposed Christian counter-model, and compromise in our societies that are now all saturated with images. For instance, a Qatari TV series in

which actors play the Prophet's closest companions has been approved by the reference theologian of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf Al-Qaradhāwī (Avon 2020).

CHRISTOPHOBIA: RESPECTING THE WOUNDED POLISH SENSIBILITIES

As suggested above, the arguments of those who call for a rethinking of Western sensibilities (and judicial practices) underpinning freedom of speech are similar in the Muhammad and Mary affairs. They were reactivated in the case of the rainbow Virgin in order to highlight a religiousness that conflicts with a secular liberalism perceived as Western, christophobic, and unsuited to the specificities of Polish devotion. Niedźwiedź's anthropological approach, unlike Mahmood's, does not invite at all to transform the cultural and ethical sensibilities underlying the practices of secular-liberal law. It only describes the modalities of part of the Polish people's mimetic faith. However, Professor Robert Skrzypczak, who teaches at the Papal Faculty of Theology in Warsaw, explains why the wounded Polish sensibilities must be respected.

> For us, the portrait of the divine Mother is important because it concerns the intimate relationship between man and God as well as between man and the divine Mother. It refers to the most important human affairs. It is an image that accompanies man in moments of intimacy with God, with Mary, during prayer. Desecrating this reality is like desecrating the portrait of the person who is dearest to the heart of the believer: their mother, father, child, husband. (Skrzypczak 2019)

This echoes the examples given by Mahmood about the intimate bond between "the Prophet" and the pietist faithful (e.g.: "I would have felt less wounded if the object of ridicule were my own parents"). According to Skrzypczak, the objective of the non-Catholics or "false Catholics" is less to desecrate images than to make the Virgin *herself* silent so that she cannot call out to them: "Some people probably prefer to destroy a symbol, so that it does not cry out, does not shout, does not call for conversion". From this point of view, which blurs the line between the symbol (that cannot shout) and the represented object (that can only shout in a fictional mode), the potential message of the author of the pastiche is ignored since the only thing that matters is the believers' sensibility, and they are the only ones who can assess the injury inflicted upon relatives: "You can run someone over on a crosswalk without feeling any pain or guilt. What matters is the feeling of the person who was hit, not of the one who caused it to happen." (*idem*)

The postulated equivalence between the thing that represents a character and the character who is represented is developed by Marian Waligóra, the cleric in charge of the sanctuary of Jasna Góra, where the original painting of the Virgin is kept. In 2018, Waligóra was decorated with the Cross of Honour of the Republic of Hungary by the autocrat Victor Orbán. One of the services he was rewarded for was the organization of pilgrimages at the Jasna Góra sanctuary from Budapest. This prominent cleric gives the same kind of explanation as above: attacking the image of the Virgin would be equivalent to attacking our own mother.

> None of us would want their own mother to be thus maligned. As believers, as Catholics, this is how we comprehend Mary's presence in the secret of Church life. Mary was given to us as a mother by Christ Himself, which is the reason why we feel wounded. (Waligóra 2019)

This statement echoes what Nilüfer Göle – following Mahmood – states about the specificity of Muslim believers for whom "insulting somebody's mother and insulting the Prophet is the same thing" (Göle 2015: 142). She goes on to say that the image of Muhammad with a bomb on his head "is a blasphemy in itself" and "reveals the hidden desire to get rid of Islam by killing its Prophet" (p. 137). Quite similarly, Professor Grzegorz Kucharczyk, an historian at the University of Poznań, explains how the cohabitation-like faith supposedly works within (his conception of) Polish Christianity. He makes a distinction between the image and the Mother only to push it aside later, since the believers' feeling is that *their own mother* has been insulted.

> Some members of the [Christian] family are saying that there is nothing to worry about. After all, the "artist" (as they say) has not written anything filthy on *our Mother*. And yet, we feel that someone has barged into our life, into the most intimate sphere of our feelings [...]. Indeed, this is about *our Mother*! Would all those who "did not feel insulted" by the desecration of the image of the divine Mother of Jasna Góra have reacted the same way if pictures of *their own mother* had been subjected (in the name of "artistic freedom") to a computer-aided graphic treatment, as it has been done recently to the icon of the Virgin? Would they have said, in the same way, that nothing had happened? (Kucharczyk 2019, emphasis mine)

We can clearly see that this comment, although coming from an historian, intends to be religiously prescriptive. Christians who did not feel the above-mentioned feelings are barbarians: "Those who treat the Holy Image of the Queen of Poland as Photoshop material or consider that the case is not important, are the true contemporary barbarians." Between the supporters of Podleśna siding with Amnesty International and the

conservatives in power, there are other stakeholders who are in principle in favour of Western political liberalism but are trying to make compromises: they thus use a kind of 'cultural translation' when dealing with devout Catholics. The former President of the Polish Republic, Bronisław Komorowski, who is considered to be at the liberal end of the political spectrum (opposed to the PiS's conservatism), confesses that he initially thought the pastiche was "very good, very pretty. It may be the sign that a conviction is emerging in many Polish Christians, according to which the Mother of God gathers together in her heart all those who need her, whatever their sexual orientation may be" (Komorowski 2019). The former President did not approve of the prospect of a two-year prison sentence for insult to religious feelings. But upon reflexion, he considered that it was "not proper to use the image of the divine mother as a political weapon".

CONCLUSION

Did Mahmood develop a convincing model to help us understand why many Muslims felt offended by those drawings? Yes, from an anthropological point of view, she did, just as Niedźwiedź helps us understand the crucial workings of many Poles' mimetic faith in Mary. But it also seems that the argument of the 'cohabitation' or of the 'specific relation between the signifier and the signified' is a means for devout believers, supported by intellectuals and politicians, to have their demands satisfied at the expense of liberal law. In this respect, the fight against 'christophobia' heralded by the Polish government is similar to the calls of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to fight against 'islamophobia' and the 'defamation of religions and prophets'.

Indeed, the defence of hurt religious sensibilities is expressed through similar modalities whatever the cultural boundaries; and so is freedom of speech. This point is important because some might object to my demonstration that those Danish citizens who depicted Muhammad do not belong to the Muslim culture, whereas Poleśna, although an LGBT activist, was born within the Polish (Catholic) culture. But then, would this mean that citizens should have different rights depending on their closeness to a given culture? Cognitive anthropology has suggested that every individual is estranged from 'their own' culture and must make an effort of interpretation to appropriate it (Sperber 1985). Moreover, examples of Muslims offending other Muslims are numerous. For instance, the Iranian magazine *Tavana* caricatured Mohammad Khatami, former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, considered as a descendant of Muhammad, which is of key importance in Shiism. The will to get around the ban on 'defamation of religions and prophets' is thus not an exception in countries where a majority of the population is Muslim.

Secular voices can also be heard beyond cultural boundaries, such as those that called into question the anti-Danish mobilisation in 2005. The Jordanian newspaper *Shihane* reproduced three of the twelve Danish cartoons accompanied by the headline "Muslims of the World, Be Reasonable!". Like many other journalists, the author of those lines was threatened, then arrested, and had to make public apologies. Obviously, intimidations are more pernicious in Lebanon, Jordan or Poland, than in France or Britain. But the European responses to the *Jyllands-Posten* events were themselves diverse. Many heads of state –including the President-in-Office of the European Union – and religious leaders, chief among them the Pope, condemned the publication of the Danish cartoons. In fact, the 'wounded religious sensibilities' express themselves in the public space at international level through the intervention of diplomats, ambassadors and other political leaders.

Mahmood was probably aware of these issues, but she proposed to focus on other aspects, notably the specific modalities of faith (mimetism, perception of images) that would strongly question the secular-liberal law that tends to prevail in Western Europe. The purpose of this paper was to try and show that her model deserves to be fully thought through. It enables us to understand specific non-Muslim modalities of faith that are, for their part, fully supported by the Eastern European far-right movements, wary of the 'Western' political liberalism. Mahmood's thesis is thus enlightening from an anthropological point of view, but its consequences are not clear on the level of political theory. Indeed, if we follow the path paved by Mahmood regarding secular-liberal law, we also must recognize the presence of ethically (or even legally) reprehensible 'christophobia' in the colours of the rainbow Virgin: they would then express the way some Polish citizens picture Christianity without sufficiently taking into account the 'mimetic faith' of Catholics who felt wounded by an insult to their own mother with whom they are 'cohabitating'.

Would it then be suitable to invite the Polish defenders of freedom of speech, supposedly influenced by a 'Western' liberal conception, to make an effort of 'cultural translation' in order to better understand the 'moral injury' experienced by angry Catholics and to rethink the Western way of considering freedom of speech? Such a solution is only viable if one is ready to encourage the Polish far-right which is spreading throughout Europe, as was made clear in July 2021 when Jarosław Kaczyński signed a joint anti-liberal declaration with Victor Orbán, Marine Le Pen, and many other far-right leaders. Of course, it could be objected that, in a post-colonial perspective, the Polish example is not really enlightening insofar as it does not concern different 'civilisations' or 'cultural areas'. Yet, it is not certain that Poland is perceived – including by the political leaders in power – as part of the strictly Western area, which is often seen

as a foil. More crucially, Polish Catholicism remains very different from the Protestant sensibility emphasized by Mahmood when she refers to 'Judeo-Christianity'. Therefore, comparing 'wounded sensibilities' in several religions enables us to better evaluate the scope of anthropological works that call for a transformation of liberal 'Western' cultural sensibilities that undergird the practices of secular-liberal law.

NOTES

1 BFMTV, 5 September 2020.

2 In the sense of violating laws, as distinct from the "effect of a deed or an event: the offense that someone takes at something" (Baumgartner 2018: 319).

3 "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble" (Excerpt from the First Amendment of the Constitution of the USA).

4 I chose to use the term 'christophobia' instead of 'christianophobia' to stay closer to the original Polish word *krystofobia*.

5 Of course, the LGBT colours are in no way unpleasant to non-homophobic people. The liberal priest Adam Boniecki declared: "For those who consider the Mother of God as their own mother: a rainbow halo, it's like kissing your mother. Every mother loves her child who is disliked by others all the more tenderly" (*Tygodnik Powszechny*, 10 August 2020).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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