Media Manipulation of the Tragedy at Smoleńsk: 
*Nasz Dziennik’s* and *Gazeta Wyborcza’s* Coverage of the 2010 Crash

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of
Slavic and Eurasian Studies in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This project focuses on the debate over Poland’s national significance and future political path argued in the Polish media in the wake of the 2010 Smoleńsk crash. It draws on the primary sources of Nasz Dziennik and Gazeta Wyborcza to represent the most diverse political viewpoints in Poland today. Nasz Dziennik voices the perspective of the conservative right addressed to a national audience and Gazeta Wyborcza presents a popular liberal view modeled on such Western publications as the New York Times. My methodological approach to this project was informed in some ways by the principles of discourse analysis as I analyzed coverage of the crash (news reports, editorials, interviews) in the period from April 10, 2010 through October 2011; I read approximately eight hundred articles from each publication in the original. My analysis of this debate is organized by what I found to be key themes: issues of authorship (featured authors, their orientation and style), the significance of the crash in Poland’s national history and present relationship with Russia, and Poland’s place in the European community.
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Beth Holmgren, whose feedback and support through this process has been tremendously helpful. I would also like to thank my readers, Professors Krzysztof Jasiewicz and Jehanne Gheith for their significant contributions and support.
Introduction

April 10, 2010 was to be the seventy-year memorial service for the Polish victims of the Katyn massacre, but when the presidential plane Tu-154 crashed on its descent into the Smoleńsk airport in Russia, the date gained significance as another Polish tragedy. Among the ninety-six victims of this crash were the Presidential couple Lech and Maria Kaczyński, numerous government and military officials, and family members of the Katyn victims. It is clear from media coverage in the wake of the crash that although Poles were initially united by a shared sense of mourning and feeling of national loss, they were also divided on questions of how to move forward and how to understand the impact of the crash. The ways in which news sources across the conservative-liberal spectrum presented the crash in the emotionally charged weeks that followed illustrate divergent views of Polish national identity and Poland’s position in the world. The crash was used by some as an opportunity to educate youth about Poland’s past and celebrate Poland’s history, and by others as an opportunity to break free of Poland’s socialist and nationalist past and focus on the nation’s future potential.

To look at the most diverse viewpoints on national identity and national destiny, I chose two papers at opposite ends of the current political spectrum in Poland, Nasz Dziennik and Gazeta Wyborcza. Not only are the views expressed by these papers quite different, but the style, agenda, and target audience differ as well. The paper Nasz
Dziennik, associated with the conservative Catholic radio station Radio Maryja, started publication in 1998 and has an agenda that is conservative, nationalist, and religious in nature. According to the publication’s own website,

Niesiemy motto: Veritatis splendor (Blask prawdy). Jesteśmy istotnym źródłem informacji o Polsce i Kościele oraz świecie. Przedstawiamy bieżące wiadomości oraz ciekawe artykuły na temat polityki, kultury, gospodarki, wiary i religii, historii i przyszłości. Publikacje "Naszego Dziennika" wywołują żywe reakcje i dyskusję. Drukujemy teksty znanych i lubianych autorów polskich i zagranicznych.¹

We bear the motto: Veritatis splendor (Splendor of truth). We are an essential source of information about Poland, the Church, and the world. We present current news and interesting articles about politics, culture, the economy, faith and religion, and history and the future. The publications of Nasz Dziennik evoke lively reactions and discussion. We print texts by known and liked Polish and foreign authors.

Nasz Dziennik makes clear that the Church is both a prominent area of focus as well as an influential source. The claim that the publication sparks lively debate is likely a euphemistic way of saying that often articles and opinions are criticized, and even attacked, by those not sharing the beliefs of the paper. Despite any such criticisms of the paper and its articles, this statement regarding lively reactions is an affirmation of Nasz Dziennik's firm belief in its ideology, i.e. the paper is happy that it leads to public, often heated, debate and will not change its position despite any backlash against its articles.

The final claim in this statement, that *Nasz Dziennik* publishes the work of “known and liked” authors, indicates an appeal to a wide audience via popular culture. At the same time, *Nasz Dziennik* asserts that the talent of Poland’s own authors is comparable to internationally renowned authors by linking Polish and foreign authors as they do. Similarly, by claiming some sense of authority over who or what is ‘liked,’ *Nasz Dziennik* asserts itself as a dominant influence in shaping public opinion and implies some sort of homogeneity in their target audience. In appealing to its audience, *Nasz Dziennik* projects its vision of the ‘ideal Pole’ so as to foster this vision among its readers. In doing so, *Nasz Dziennik* hopes that its community of readers— the ‘nasz’ in *Nasz Dziennik*— will embody its values.

In contrast to the image *Nasz Dziennik* projects of itself, critics of the publication describe it much more harshly. Marcin Starnawski writes in his piece “Nationalist discourse and the ultra-conservative press in contemporary Poland: a case study of *Nasz Dziennik*” that *Nasz Dziennik* is “one of the major Polish newspapers to disseminate a far-right discourse that combines a concept of ‘national identity’ with radical Catholicism.” Starnawski’s use of far-right and radical as descriptors along with the quotations around ‘national identity’ suggest that *Nasz Dziennik*’s views are too extreme.

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to represent the average Pole and that the paper’s conception of ‘national identity’ is tailored to an equally far-right, radical crowd. The two elements that Starnawski mentions, national identity and Catholicism, certainly are prominent features of the paper, and their role in Nasz Dziennik’s coverage of the Smoleńsk crash will be explored in this project.

To contrast the conservative perspective of Nasz Dziennik, I chose to analyze the coverage of Gazeta Wyborcza as a representative of popular liberal sentiment. Gazeta Wyborcza began publication in May, 1989 and prides itself on its ideological foundations. Gazeta Wyborcza’s parent company, Agora SA, writes

"Gazeta Wyborcza” powstała w 1989 roku jako platforma pierwszych demokratycznych wyborów do parlamentu. Założyła ją grupa dziennikarzy i byłych działaczy niezależnej prasy wydawniczej demokratycznej opozycji. Od momentu powstania "Gazety” stanowisko redaktora naczelnego pełni Adam Michnik, intelektualista i wybitny działacz opozycji demokratycznej w latach 1960-80.3

Gazeta Wyborcza was established in 1989 as a platform for the first democratic elections for parliament. It was founded by a group of journalists and former activists of the independent, democratic opposition’s press. Since the establishment of Gazeta Wyborcza, the position of editor-in-chief has been filled by Adam Michnik, an intellectual and prominent activist of the democratic opposition in the years 1960-1980.

3 “Gazeta Wyborcza”<http://www.agora.pl/agora/1,110780,9274931,Gazeta_Wyborcza.html>
This emphasis on Gazeta Wyborcza’s roots in the democratic opposition suggests that the paper has long been a significant and reliable news source in Poland. This claim is further supported by the mention of Michnik as editor, as many will recognize his name in connection with Solidarity and as a long-time leader of the opposition movement in the People’s Republic of Poland, imbuing him with a sense of moral and political authority. Gazeta Wyborcza’s wide circulation speaks to its popularity in Poland (so, too, does the publication’s availability in English online speak to its international appeal) and outside sources refer to the newspaper as “one of the most influential in Poland.”

Although Gazeta Wyborcza is not described as far-left or radical in any way, it serves as a significant counter-example to Nasz Dziennik, as the political system in Poland is not divided strictly in terms of right and left, but in terms of culturally conservative and traditional versus culturally liberal and modern. The two present opposite political perspectives as well as different relationships with traditional Polish Catholicism (Gazeta Wyborcza does not presume the same alliance with the Church as Nasz Dziennik), and therefore project different visions of Polish national identity and national future.

In looking at the differing claims of Nasz Dziennik and Gazeta Wyborcza, I will focus specifically on three aspects of their coverage: the voices showcased in the

coverage, temporal contextualization of the crash within Poland’s history and future, and global contextualization. The first section will look at how the authorship of each paper is a reflection of the voices and points of view that each paper wishes to project, while also considering how these voices engage each paper’s target audience and promote each paper’s vision of the ‘ideal Pole.’ The next section will look at the temporal focus of each paper to examine in what ways each does or does not tie the crash to historical events and whether a Romantic vision of Polish history is deployed. The last section will focus on how each paper situates Poland in the global context and will examine the significance of which international relationships each paper chooses to highlight. These three lenses will be used to analyze early coverage of the crash, covering the period of April 10, 2010 to April 20, 2010. This period was chosen to show how early coverage of the Smoleńsk crash captured the Polish audience at an intense, emotional moment, as well as show the divergence of opinions that emerged almost immediately. The debate regarding the crash and its surrounding events and issues (how the crash fits into Polish history, the debate over Polish identity sparked by the crash, etc.) continued long after April 10, 2010, in some ways even continuing today, but the focus of this paper is to highlight key elements and narrative trends at the start of that debate. The underlying goal of this analysis is to identify how Nasz Dziennik’s and

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5 Using approximately 100 articles from Gazeta Wyborcza and approximately 300 articles from Nasz Dziennik
Gazeta Wyborcza’s initial coverage of the April 10, 2010 crash in Smoleńsk projected different visions of Polish identity and Polish nation, and the significance in the differences of their projections.
Voices

The question of authorship is one of the basic factors distinguishing Nasz Dziennik and Gazeta Wyborcza from one another. Nasz Dziennik is immediately set apart by the significant number of articles written by members of the Catholic clergy. From homilies and sermons for all victims to words in remembrance of the religious figures who died in the crash, Catholic voices form a very strong presence in Nasz Dziennik’s coverage. Such articles urge the Polish nation to turn to prayer and trust in the power of God and Jesus Christ. Catholicism and its teachings are identified as a source of peace and hope, and Poles are therefore encouraged to lean on their faith during this period of loss and mourning.¹ It is often repeated that the crash was part of ‘God’s plan’ and that those who died did not do so in vain. The abundance of such pieces authored by priests, bishops, and others associated with the Catholic Church highlights Catholicism as a significant part of the Polish nation and identity. Articles urge readers to view the crash and other tragic national events (namely the events that occurred at Katyń seventy years prior) through the lens of their Catholic faith, making religion integral to mourning.

Moreover, a number of parallels are made between the crash and the death of John Paul II five years earlier. By equating the two in terms of feelings of loss and

mourning and comparing a national tragedy (the crash) with a tragedy having both national and religious significance (the death of John Paul II), *Nasz Dziennik* and its authors (religious figures or otherwise) inextricably link the Catholic faith to the crash and to Poland on the global scene. The strong link between Poland and the Catholic Church is further emphasized by the absence of articles and condolences written by representatives of other faiths in *Nasz Dziennik’s* early coverage of the crash.

A second characteristic of *Nasz Dziennik’s* coverage which distinguishes it from *Gazeta Wyborcza* is the significant voice given to the average Pole. In the week following the crash, *Nasz Dziennik* published a number of pieces that consisted of opinions compiled from people on the streets or from online fora. From teens to fifty-somethings, political opponents and supporters of the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość or PiS, the conservative, traditional party of Kaczyński), those who gave their names and those who hid behind the anonymity of the internet, *Nasz Dziennik* shared the thoughts of average citizens in their own words. Many discussed their shock upon hearing of the crash, describing their anger and grief, while others reflected on the late Lech Kaczyński. One comment from forty-nine year old Zbigniew Kasprzak is representative of nearly all the quotes selected by *Nasz Dziennik* in numerous collections:

Z powodu tej tragedii czuję ogromny żal, dlatego że zginęli ludzie, ojcowie, matki, osoby pracujące dla Polski. Ich praca była wykonywana dla naszego dobra, by nam się lepiej żyło. Prezydent Kaczyński był moim prezydentem, głosowałem na niego, nigdy się tego nie wstydziłem. Ale śmierć otworzyła...
wszystkim oczy i teraz widzą, że to był ciepły, miły, życzliwy człowiek, patriota, który stawiał sobie za cel różne zadania, nie patrząc na popularność medialną.²

Because of this tragedy, I feel great sorrow, for human beings, fathers, mothers, and people working for Poland perished. Their work was being done for our good, so that we can live better. President Kaczyński was my president, I voted for him, I was never ashamed of that. But death opened everyone’s eyes and now they see that he was a warm, kind, friendly man, a patriot who pursued different tasks, without regard for media popularity.

Kasprzak’s words raise a number of issues common among other responses. First, he expresses his sorrow for the victims of the crash, a sentiment that appears in some variation in all of the other responses. Second, Kasprzak generally recognizes the contributions of those on board the plane and their service to Poland. The words that follow these standard and generic phrases are what tie Kasprzak’s words into the broader discourse taking place in Poland. The fact that Kasprzak felt compelled to state that he was never ashamed of voting for and supporting Kaczyński speaks to the widespread criticism Kaczyński faced while alive, while the claim that the tragedy opened people’s eyes to the truth about Kaczyński speaks to the heightened sense of community and unity in Poland after the crash. Nasz Dziennik helped to play up this feeling of unity and the sense that Kaczyński’s death allowed his harshest opponents to

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finally see him in a positive manner, thus finally understanding the ‘truth’ about him and recognizing the personal qualities which made him both a good patriot and a good man.

Even when talking about those who were opponents of Kaczyński during his lifetime and who finally recognized his greatness after his death, *Nasz Dziennik* is still careful to control just how oppositional these voices seem. *Nasz Dziennik*’s coverage of this opposition is best represented by the statement of one anonymous Pole taken from the internet. *Nasz Dziennik* shares, “Byłem politycznie przeciwnikiem Pana Prezydenta. Lecz...to, co usłyszałem jest dla mnie szokujące i dramatyczne. Pan Prezydent był dla mnie polskim patriotą, porządnym człowiekiem... To wielka strata dla Rzeczypospolitej” (“I was a political opponent of Mr. President. But...what I heard is for me shocking and dramatic. Mr. President was for me a Polish patriot, a decent man...This is a great loss for the Republic”).³ No information is given as to why this person opposed Kaczyński, but the statement reinforces the argument presented by Kasprzak that only after Kaczyński’s death did political opponents appreciate his greatness. It is important to note that these words from a ‘political opponent’ of Kaczyński were taken from the online discussion platform Prawicy.net (literally ‘on the

right’. net), a website targeted at and popular amongst Poland’s political right, so this anonymous commenter was likely not the best representative of Kaczyński’s party’s opposition. For this reason, it is clear that the comments selected for these compilations were carefully chosen to support Nasz Dziennik’s objective in its coverage of the crash (the triumphing of Lech Kaczyński as a Polish hero, the greatness of the Polish state, etc.).

The pursuit of these objectives, though, is not so overt as to diminish the process of mourning. By printing public comments and therefore giving voice to the grieving of an average Pole, the paper promotes emotional and self-indulgently positive discussion about the events that occurred and feelings people may have. In many ways, the publishing of these comments and the general tone of its coverage appeal to a broad audience, given the fact that all are in mourning and can relate to the thoughts expressed in these pieces even if their views wouldn’t otherwise coincide with Nasz Dziennik’s conservative ideology.

The voices published in Gazeta Wyborcza are certainly not those of the ‘typical Pole,’ so defined by Nasz Dziennik. Collections of public thoughts like those published in Nasz Dziennik are absent in Gazeta Wyborcza. In many ways, Nasz Dziennik’s coverage of the crash and funeral through the use of Polish voices (via comments collected from various websites, funeral attendees, etc.) helped relay the human experience felt as a
result of these events, whereas *Gazeta Wyborcza’s* more emotionally distant voices describe the events only. In the one article that perhaps most closely mirrors the form of *Nasz Dziennik’s* publication of personal internet commentary, *Gazeta Wyborcza* publishes not the comments of grief-stricken Poles, but takes comments collected by the Russian news agency RIA Novosti, that is, presenting comments about the Poles, but not by them, most likely with the goal of bettering Polish-Russian relations.\(^4\) Headlines such as “We, the Russians, Cry Together with the Poles” further evidence this point.\(^5\) In this case, the author, a journalist on the *Gazeta Wyborcza* staff, identifies herself as “a Russian living in Poland for a few years.” She reiterates the compassion Russians feel toward the Polish people and emphasizes how helpful the Russians are being through this tragedy. Although the author lives and works in Poland, she leads by declaring her Russian identity, offering her voice on behalf of the Russian people.

In sharing Russian rather than Polish comments, *Gazeta Wyborcza* minimizes, or at least shifts focus away from, the emotional trauma being experienced by Poles. Perhaps the editors reasoned that the publication of Russian voices and assurances that Russians mourn the tragedy just as much as Poles promotes a more tempered approach to Polish mourning in that Poles can not lay sole claim to the grief associated with the


crash. The significance of the crash can’t be the same for Russians because they did not lose their leader and country’s historical figures, yet Gazeta Wyborcza still puts forward the claim that their suffering and grief can correspond to that of a native Pole. This claim is further supported by the limited quotations of Poles at Kaczyński’s funeral which help construct a carefully balanced view of mourning. Gazeta Wyborcza quotes one Polish student in attendance at the funeral as saying “somehow I do not feel the community here” (“ale jakoś tu nie czuję wspólnoty”).6 Whereas Nasz Dziennik used public commentary to help illustrate an increased sense of community and shared loss, Gazeta Wyborcza seems to utilize such comments (however sparingly) only when they agree with the generally non-nationalist tone of the paper’s coverage of the crash.

Another factor contributing to Gazeta Wyborcza’s emotionally distant coverage (relative to Nasz Dziennik’s) was its choice to focus on the crash’s impact on foreign relations rather than its impact on the Polish people. To this end, Gazeta Wyborcza’s guest authors, i.e. those outside its regular reporters, represent a more professorial crowd. Where Nasz Dziennik ceded page space to any leader of the Catholic Church wanting to publish a sermon or comforting words for the Polish people, Gazeta Wyborcza seemed to extend the same opportunity to professors, leading intellectuals, and analysts. Even on

the rare occasion that a voice from the Church is published, the thoughts expressed are in some ways analytical rather than entirely spiritual as in *Nasz Dziennik*. In an interview published on April 19, 2010, Jesuit priest Wacław Oszajca indirectly counters some of the claims made by religious figures in *Nasz Dziennik*. Unlike the claim promoted in *Nasz Dziennik* that the crash was part of God’s plan, Oszajca states: “nie jest dobrze, gdy ktoś się stawia w miejscu Pana Boga z przekonaniem, że trafnie odszyfrowuje Boskie plany” (“it is not good when someone puts himself in God’s place with the conviction that he can accurately decipher God’s plan”). Oszajca also speaks to claims in *Nasz Dziennik* which draw parallels between the death of Kaczyński and the death of Pope John Paul II. He asserts that it is not advisable to look for similarities between two tragedies or deaths and thus dismisses what is put forth in *Nasz Dziennik*. While the interview does provide some spiritual comfort, it also strives to analyze basic beliefs of the Church (such as the concept of Hell and role of God) and question how religion can help in the face of tragedy. The interviewers also incorporate political issues into their discussion with Oszajca, thus shifting the focus of the interview away from being an entirely spiritual one.

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The focus of this and other articles, then, is not on providing comfort during the mourning process. Rather than providing inspiration, articles tend toward a critical analysis of the events surrounding the crash and offer theoretical approaches as to what these events mean. Marcin Kula, a history professor from the University of Warsaw, for example, compares Kaczyński’s death and social function to that of Great Britain’s Princess Diana.8 While Kula asserts that the case of Kaczyński is more complicated than that of Princess Diana, he makes the general claims that death erased the past errors and flaws of each and that, as national figures, they fulfilled some kind of father/mother role to society and their deaths were mourned as such. The tone and language of the article, clearly critical of Kaczyński, suggests that Polish experience following April 10, 2010 was in no way unique and goes so far as to imply that the Polish people were simply going through the motions of responding to a national tragedy. The author’s critical approach to the mourning process thus treats mourning merely as an object to be studied in a general context, ignoring any element that may be typical only of the Polish experience. Articles like this therefore create distance between Gazeta Wyborcza and the individual experience of reacting to the crash, though this, too, may be considered some form of mourning.

The selection of voices and which point of view to spotlight is a significant contributing factor to the tone of each paper’s coverage and also serves as a reflection of each paper’s objectives. The prominence of religious voices in Nasz Dziennik confirms Catholicism as a foundational part of the Polish identity and upholds its importance as such. Gazeta Wyborcza’s abundance of voices from the intellectual community, on the other hand, promotes fact-based rather than emotional coverage, suggesting that this tragedy should not consume all aspects of life.
Temporal Presentation and the Use of Historical References

Another distinction in the presentation of the Smoleńsk crash by *Nasz Dziennik* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* lies in how they interpret its historical significance. The difference between the two, in the broadest terms, lies in the fact that *Gazeta Wyborcza’s* reaction to the crash is entirely forward looking (what will happen next, how the investigation will proceed, etc.), while *Nasz Dziennik* seizes the opportunity to look back (the historical influence and activities of the victims, how the crash relates to other events in Polish history, etc.) and argues that Poland today and its future trajectory are significantly influenced by this past. The temporal orientation of each newspaper’s coverage also indicates how each paper positions Poland vis-a-vis Russia. *Nasz Dziennik’s* emotional and historically motivated coverage makes limited references to past and present relations with Russia as the paper tries to establish Poland’s historical tradition of independence while distancing the nation from Russia. *Gazeta Wyborcza’s* coverage, on the other hand, is forward looking and often pragmatic, highlighting a desire for improved relations with Russia. The temporal presentation of the crash and the way in which the crash is contextualized in Polish history by each source is therefore significant to understanding how each paper conceives of contemporary Poland.

*Nasz Dziennik’s* early coverage focuses on connections between the crash and moments in Polish history with the goal of emphasizing the accomplishments of the
Polish people as well as their strength and independent spirit. The paper’s historical reflections reach back to the days of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as Kaczyński’s burial at Wawel provides the opportunity to recall the kings and other Polish heroes buried there. *Nasz Dziennik*’s march through Polish history in its coverage of the crash also focuses on the events in the Katyn forest, Poland’s government-in-exile throughout the period of the People’s Republic of Poland, the Solidarity movement, and the tenure of Pope John Paul II. These events not only celebrate Poland’s history and greatness, but also serve to educate Poland’s youth about these events (particularly about Katyn and Wawel) and, in general, reinforce these events in the national collective consciousness.

In the days immediately following the crash, but prior to the funeral, discussion regarding the legacy of the victims leads to a number of articles about Solidarity and Poland’s government-in-exile. Friends and supporters of President Lech Kaczyński who published articles in *Nasz Dziennik* after the crash wrote of Kaczyński’s involvement in Solidarity while highlighting Solidarity’s accomplishments and impact in Poland. Sejm representative Antoni Macierewicz, who referred to Lech Kaczyński as “the greatest Polish statesman since Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski,” wrote

Dziś można śmiało powiedzieć, że bez Lecha Kaczyńskiego wolne związki zawodowe nigdy by nie powstały. Zapewne dlatego został głównym doradcą strajkujących stoczniowców podczas wielkiego strajku sierpniowego. Dziś mało się o tym mówi, przypominanych jest wiele innych
nazwisk, a zapomina się o Lechu Kaczyńskim, który związkowcom przekazywał podstawowe informacje dotyczące prawa pracy i który współkształtał związek "Solidarność" jeszcze w okresie narodzin związku, podczas strajku.¹

Today, one can say with certainty that free trade unions would never have arisen without Lech Kaczyński. Surely this is why he became the chief adviser to the striking shipyard workers during the great August strike. Today, little is said about this and many other names are remembered in this connection, but Lech Kaczyński, who passed on basic labor law information to the unionists and who helped shape ‘Solidarity’ as it was being born during the strike, is forgotten.

Macierewicz thus identifies Kaczyński as a key player in the formation of Solidarity while lamenting the fact that he is not widely recognized as such. Arguing that Kaczyński’s name should be remembered alongside better know Solidarity figures such as Lech Wałęsa or Adam Michnik (among others), Macierewicz attempts to reclaim the Solidarity spotlight for conservatives. Solidarity is recognized as a great moment in the struggle for independence in Poland, and crediting Kaczyński with a part in its creation reinforces the image of him as a “great patriot” and hero of the Polish people. Other crash victims are named in connection with Solidarity (Anna Walentynowycz, Sejm Marshal Maciej Płażyński, and Sejm representative Arkadiusz Rybicki), but none are lauded as much as Kaczyński. While advertising Kaczyński as a great hero in Poland’s

past struggles for independence, Nasz Dziennik uses Solidarity to support the Romantic myth of Poland’s past, present, and future greatness. Solidarity is discussed in Nasz Dziennik as a nationalist rather than labor movement, and by discussing Kaczyński in this context, Nasz Dziennik therefore inserts Kaczyński into this great Polish tradition.

In building on Poland’s past greatness and the Polish people’s willingness and ability to challenge the government and, in a broader context, attempt to curtail the influence of the Soviet Union, Nasz Dziennik also gives a significant amount of attention to Poland’s past government-in-exile. In the week following the crash, Nasz Dziennik published an abundance of articles on the government-in-exile’s last president, Ryszard Kaczorowski. Although the significance and role of the government in exile was functionally minimal during Kaczorowski’s presidency, Nasz Dziennik highlights it to show that the desire for independence and freedom is a critical historical part of the Polish character. Moreover, attention to the government-in-exile through mourning Kaczorowski implies support for the tradition of anti-Soviet feelings and the more recent continuum of anti-Russian sentiments. Thus, by looking backwards at the government-in-exile, Nasz Dziennik also speaks to Poland’s current and potential future relations with Russia, therefore imbuing the very idea of the government-in-exile with increased significance. In the first week following the crash, Ryszard Kaczorowski received more attention than any other victim, save for Lech Kaczyński. The majority of articles written
about Kaczorowski present him as the symbol of the government-in-exile and Polish independence. As Wiesław Jan Wysocki, a history professor and known Catholic, wrote on April 12:

II Rzeczypospolitej Ryszard Kaczorowski, który na emigracyjnym wychodźstwie stanowił symbol trwania przy imponderabiliach wolności, suwerenności i niepodległości, i taki pozostanie w pamięci zbiorowej. Do końca utożsamiał narodową tęsknotę za tym, co w naszych dziejach najpiękniejsze, największe i najświętsze... Prezydent Kaczorowski do końca pozostawał w służbie Niepodległej.2

The Second Republic’s Ryszard Kaczorowski, who in exile symbolized perseverance through the imponderabilia of freedom, sovereignty, and independence, will remain as such in the collective memory. To the end, he identified a national longing for all that which is most beautiful, sacred, and greatest in our history...President Kaczorowski served an Independent Poland to the very end.

Here, Wysocki identifies independence and freedom as the primary historical desires of the Polish people. Moreover, Wysocki portrays Kaczorowski as the poster child for these ideals and depicts him as a true Polish hero. The portrayal of the relationship of Kaczorowski to the government-in-exile is in many ways parallel to the portrayal of Kaczyński’s relationship to Solidarity. As previously noted, Nasz Dziennik stresses, and perhaps exaggerates, Kaczyński’s involvement in Solidarity to show that he had long been a champion of the Polish people. According to Wysocki, whose words are

representative of many of the articles published on Kaczorowski, Kaczorowski’s role in the government-in-exile was key to preserving the struggle for independence, and he, too, is made out to be a champion of the Polish people. Although one cannot argue that these men did not make significant contributions to the Polish state, *Nasz Dziennik’s* emphasis of their involvement in the fight for Polish independence only serves to increase the significance of the crash and stress the loss that Poland must endure as a result. And while Kaczorowski’s passing was also addressed in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, it did not draw the same attention as it did in *Nasz Dziennik*. Only in *Nasz Dziennik* was Kaczorowski glorified as someone “most fully embodied the Polish dimension of the idea of independence understood as an element of socio-historical memory and inspiration for actions labeled ‘patriotism for tomorrow.’”

Whereas *Gazeta Wyborcza* mentions Kaczorowski’s passing as the loss of a great Pole, *Nasz Dziennik* discusses his death as the loss of a generational ideological symbol for the ages.

As *Nasz Dziennik’s* coverage begins to focus more on the funeral of Lech Kaczyński, the paper attempts to educate Poland about the history of Wawel and Katyń. *Nasz Dziennik* describes Kaczyński’s funeral and entombment at Wawel as a “true history lesson” for Poland’s youth and stresses the fact that many young students were

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3 “...uosabia się chyba najpełniej polski wymiar idei niepodległościowej rozumianej jako element społeczno-historycznej pamięci oraz inspiracji do działań określanych mianem ‘patriotyzmu jutra’.”


in attendance. One April 15 article summarizes what children were told regarding the significance of Wawel so that they would better understand why being buried there was "the greatest reward that a president could be given,"

To miejsce święte dla Polaków. Pamięta ono koronacje królów Polski i skrywa w sobie ich szczątki. Tu zostali pochowani prawie wszyscy koronowani władcy Polski: 17 królów - od Władysława Łokietka do Stanisława Leszczyńskiego. Archikatedra to miejsce spoczynku rodzin królewskich, ale również wodzów i wieszczów narodowych... Tam jest kolebka narodowości i patriotyzmu... Tam chodzi się po śladach świętych, królów oraz rządzących Polską. To zatem miejsce modlitwy i wiecznego spoczynku wielu wybitnych Polaków. Nie tylko tych sprzed wieków, ale także nam współczesnych. Wielkich patriotów.

This is a sacred place for Poles. It remembers the coronations of Polish kings and hides their remains. Here almost all of the crowned Polish rulers were buried: seventeen kings, from Władysław the Elbow-high to Stanisław Leszczyński. The cathedral is the resting place of the royal families, but also of national leaders and bards... That place is a cradle of nationality and patriotism... There one goes in the footsteps of saints, kings, and rulers of Poland. It is therefore a place of prayer and the resting place of many prominent Poles. Not only of those from centuries past, but also our contemporaries. The resting place of great patriots.

Apart from listing those entombed at Wawel, *Nasz Dziennik* stresses the emotional significance of Wawel. Identifying Wawel as "a cradle of nationality and patriotism" and the resting place of past and present Polish heroes helps to highlight the importance

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of Kaczyński being buried there. In emphasizing the idea that Kaczyński’s funeral affords a great educational opportunity to young Poles about Wawel while at the same time emphasizing the historical importance of those entombed there, *Nasz Dziennik* is implicitly enforcing a link between Kaczyński and past Polish royalty.

Like the education on Wawel which *Nasz Dziennik* promotes, its articles on educating children about Katyn also convey the paper’s nationalist agenda. That is, while the discussion of Wawel allowed *Nasz Dziennik* to highlight Kaczyński’s merits for being buried there, the discussion of Katyn allows the paper to focus on the strained history of Poland’s relationship with Russia. In an April 19 article reporting on the generational range of those in attendance at Kaczyński’s funeral, *Nasz Dziennik* shares one family’s thoughts on the lessons the events of the crash inspired,

Konrad Ostapowicz, najstarszy syn, chwali się, że w ostatnim tygodniu na lekcjach wiedzy o społeczeństwie dokładnie poznał historię Katynia, tę z 1940 roku. - Dowiedziałem się, że Rosjanie wymordowali tyle Polaków, polskich oficerów, księży - opowiada. - Dla naszych dzieci ta uroczystość to lekcja patriotyzmu. Pan Prezydent był kimś bardzo ważnym. Chcemy, by o tym wiedziały - mówi pan Ostapowicz.

Konrad Ostapowicz, the eldest son, boasts that last week in social studies class he learned the more specific history of Katyn in 1940. “I learned that the Russians murdered so many Poles, Polish officers, and priests,” he said. Mr. Ostapowicz says “for our children, this ceremony is a lesson in patriotyzmu.”

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patriotism. The President was someone very important. We want our children to know about it.”

The language that young Konrad uses indicates a bias in either the way he was taught about Katyń or in his understanding. He says that the Russians (Rosjanie), rather than the Soviets (Radzieccy), killed the Poles. This choice is significant in that Konrad does not actively make a distinction between Russia’s past and present. It is not possible to determine whether he was taught about Katyń using this language, i.e. that the language originated from his teacher, or if it is simply his own understanding of what he was taught and he is not aware of the distinction between Rosjanie and Radzieccy. By publishing Konrad’s use of Rosjanie in this instance, Nasz Dziennik perpetuates the idea that today’s Russians are in some way responsible for the Soviets’ past crimes (a claim which is, conversely, continually rejected in Gazeta Wyborcza).

While Nasz Dziennik uses historical events and a backward looking approach to comment on current issues, Gazeta Wyborcza’s gaze is entirely forward looking. As Gazeta Wyborcza focuses on what will come next, the paper pays significant attention to the joint Polish-Russian investigation of the crash. Discussions about the investigation are used as a platform for discussions of Polish-Russian relations and provide Gazeta Wyborcza the opportunity to highlight the connection between the Polish and Russian peoples. In an
April 11 article entitled “Putin Pays Tribute to the Victims,” Gazeta Wyborcza focuses on today’s Russia:

Rosyjski premier zapewnił, że chce, by śledztwo w sprawie tragedii zakończyło się szybko i było prowadzone we współpracy ze stroną polską. Trwają ustalenia, na jakich zasadach będzie się ono odbywać. Putin nagrał specjalne orędzie do Polaków. "To nie tylko tragedia Polski i narodu polskiego, ale to też nasza tragedia. Odczuwamy wielki ból razem z wami i przeżywamy to tak samo jak wy" -mówił rosyjski premier....

Tragedia w Smoleńsku jest od rana głównym newsem w telewizjach rosyjskich. Relacje są utrzymane w duchu współczucia i zrozumienia. Podkreśla się zasługi prezydenta Lecha Kaczyńskiego dla zwycięstwa demokracji w Polsce, jego działalność w podziemiu. Taktownie przemilcza się, że nie był łatwym partnerem dla Moskwy. Główne kanały telewizyjne podają imienną listę ofiar, nadają żałobną muzykę i pokazują dużo materiałów z Warszawy.7

The Russian Prime Minister assured everyone that he wants the investigation of the tragedy to be concluded quickly and be conducted in cooperation with the Polish side. Discussions are underway about how the investigation will be conducted. Putin recorded a special message for Poles. “This is not only a tragedy for Poland and the Polish people, but also our tragedy. We mourn as much as you do and are experiencing [this tragedy] in the same way,” the Russian Prime Minister said...

From daybreak on, the tragedy in Smoleńsk has been the main news on Russian television. Relationships between the two countries are being maintained in the spirit of compassion and understanding. [The Russian media] emphasizes the merits of President Lech Kaczyński in establishing democracy in Poland and his activities in the underground. It tactfully remains silent about the fact that he was not an easy partner for Moscow. The main television channels give the list of names of the victims, broadcast mournful music, and show a lot of material from Warsaw.

The language and tone of these paragraphs are indicative of much of what was published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* in the period immediately following the crash. The first sentences regarding the investigation employ neutral language and are agent-less, outlining the objectives while providing little detail. The passage then goes on to quote Putin, whose words emphasize the compassion of the Russian people toward the Poles, uniting the two peoples in suffering. In discussing Russian media on the crash, *Gazeta Wyborcza* seems to praise Russia for its restraint in discussing the tense relations between Kaczyński and Russian leaders, a fact that “tactfully remains unspoken.” In putting so much emphasis on moving forward with the investigation, *Gazeta Wyborcza* shies away from giving much attention to the reason for the President’s trip to Smoleńsk or even the general significance of Smoleńsk and the history of Katyń that ties Russia to this event beyond mere geographical factors. Reflections on Katyń and its significance emerge later in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, but are generally lacking during the earliest days of crash related coverage.

The manner of emphasizing “shared pain” and “Russian solidarity with the Poles” in certain aspects minimizes the effect of the tragedy for the Polish people. It could even be argued that *Gazeta Wyborcza* spotlights Russian mourning more than Polish mourning, a move that was surely intended to make the two peoples feel closer, but in fact may have had a bit of an alienating effect on Polish readers. Nearly every
article written about the crash in the week following April 10 makes some mention of Russia, Putin, collaboration on the investigation, or improving relations. By doing so, Gazeta Wyborcza does not allow any time for the shock of the tragedy to be absorbed and for the Polish people to mourn their loss. Instead, the paper projects the idea that a terrible event has occurred, but the Polish people mustn’t dwell on it, and should move forward as a way of healing these, and older, wounds. The crash, in fact, is viewed as a way to heal these older wounds, namely the historically strained relations between Poland and Russia, and improve these relations moving forward. Though Gazeta Wyborcza doesn’t posit during the initial week of coverage what these future relations will look like, the belief that relations will improve in some way is emphasized.

Another stark contrast between the two papers lies in the discussion of Wawel and Kaczyński’s entombment there. While Nasz Dziennik used Kaczyński’s funeral as an opportunity to emphasize the historical significance of Wawel and link Kaczyński to great Polish heroes, Gazeta Wyborcza questioned the legitimacy of Kaczyński’s burial there. Interestingly, Gazeta Wyborcza raises these concerns through comments from Kaczyński’s supporters. An April 13 article offers an assortment of opinions on the matter and includes this quote from a retired teacher: “Głosowałam na prezydenta Kaczyńskiego. Potem mnie trochę zawiódł, mimo to bardzo go ceniałam. Ale Wawel? Obok marszałka Piłsudskiego to już przesada” (“I voted for President Kaczyński. Then
he disappointed me a little, yet I still valued him greatly. But Wawel? [Burying him] next to Marshal Piłsudski is taking it too far.”

This comment is mild compared to the heated debate that emerges in the days leading up to the funeral and continues afterward, but the use of such quotes from Kaczyński’s supporters is important to Gazeta Wyborcza’s argument. Just as Nasz Dziennik used quotes from Kaczyński’s opponents to help show how great and respected the late President was, Gazeta Wyborcza uses claims from Kaczyński’s supporters to bolster its claims against him.

Gazeta Wyborcza adds further evidence to its case against Kaczyński’s entombment at Wawel– an act considered to be a political maneuver– using varied arguments. Andrzej Romanowski, a professor of literature at Jagiellonian University, provides a list of five arguments against Kaczyński’s burial at Wawel:


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First, none of the Polish presidents are buried at Wawel, neither Mościcki nor Narutowicz. It is a royal necropolis. Second, we must openly ask whether Lech Kaczyński is the same kind of national hero as Piłsudski. I am not sure whether the majority of people share this opinion. Third, when our most tragic leader, Stanisław August, was symbolically buried in Poland in the 90s, no one but a handful of people thought to bury him at Wawel, although it is the cemetery of kings. Fourth, we have always heard from the ecclesiastical authorities that there is no longer space at Wawel. Fifth, our national heroes Piłsudski and Sikorski were not buried with their wives.

Romanowski thus uses history to argue against Kaczyński’s burial at Wawel. Whereas Nasz Dziennik argues that Kaczyński is connected to these great Polish heroes, Romanowski points out the significant disconnect between Kaczyński and these figures. His third claim regarding Stanislaw August implies that Wawel is so sacred and significant that even a former king was not deserving of Wawel based on his title alone. Therefore Kaczyński does not deserve Wawel based solely on the fact that he was president. Romanowski further argues that Kaczyński does not deserve Wawel because he was merely a president (i.e. lacking any link to royalty). Romanowski’s fifth claim, though not the argument most readily used in objecting to Kaczyński at Wawel, is significant in the implication that although Kaczyński is inferior to those already entombed at Wawel (following the logic of the second claim), he somehow receives a benefit denied to those others (burial alongside a spouse). Moreover this final claim raises the question that if Kaczyński’s own burial at Wawel is being questioned, how can his wife’s burial there be at all valid?
The opposing positions of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Nasz Dziennik* on the issue of Kaczyński’s entombment at Wawel are indicative of the different ways in which each paper relates the crash to Polish history. *Gazeta Wyborcza* rejects the idea of connecting Kaczyński to heroic historical figures and in general rejects using the crash as a means to only reflect on the past. *Gazeta Wyborcza* instead uses the crash to promote a new phase of improved relations with Russia and moving forward past grievances. *Nasz Dziennik*, on the other hand, places the crash on the continuum of Polish history (using its discussion of Wawel as well as other issues), arguing that one must understand the past in order to truly understand the significant loss that resulted from the crash. Essentially, *Gazeta Wyborcza* uses the crash to reflect on what will be while *Nasz Dziennik* reflects on what has been and what that means today.
Poland in the Global Context

Despite vast differences in tone and coverage in terms of authorship and temporal framework, *Nasz Dziennik* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* both use the crash to focus attention on Poland’s international relations and global positioning. It should be noted, though, that beyond this coverage of the global conversation regarding the crash, *Gazeta Wyborcza* is the only paper of the two to appeal to an audience outside of Poland through its creation of an online English-language version featuring select articles in translation. This is significant in that *Gazeta Wyborcza* is inserting itself into the global conversation and positioning itself to influence the opinion of the English-speaking world, whereas *Nasz Dziennik* merely observes that this global conversation is occurring. *Nasz Dziennik* illuminates the ways in which the crash garnered international attention for Poland and argues that the crash allowed the world to learn the truth about the history of Katyń. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, on the other hand, uses the crash to focus specifically on the nation’s complicated relations with Russia, coverage of which is undertaken in such a way as to suggest that the global community is just as concerned with the relationship as it is with the crash. Thus, while both papers turn their attention globally, their objectives in doing so remain quite different.

*Nasz Dziennik*’s promotion of the crash as a major international event is evidenced by the paper’s inclusion of translated foreign media in its own publication. In
the week following the crash, *Nasz Dziennik* routinely published Polish translations of foreign news reports about the crash as well as condolences from foreign leaders. Among the sources of these quotes are agencies based in America (CNN, Fox, *The Washington Post*), France (*Le Monde, France24*), Great Britain (*Reuters, The Daily Telegraph, BBC News*), Russia (*RIA Novosti, ITAR-TASS, Vesti*), and Germany (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*). The nature of these foreign news clips ranges from general commentary on the crash and Lech Kaczyński’s presidency to more specific comments on the reactions of Polish communities in foreign countries, as well as comments from British papers on the past work of Ryszard Kaczorowski and the Polish government in exile.

*Nasz Dziennik* also published words of condolence from foreign leaders across the globe. The collection of these messages was published on April 12, 2010 and included words from North American, European, and Asian leaders, as well as the heads of the U.N. and N.A.T.O. and various officials from the E.U.¹ All of these comments expressed support for the Polish people and sadness at the loss of life, but a number of leaders went beyond the requisite expression of sympathy to affirm the close relations of their countries with Poland or to praise Kaczyński specifically. While all of

these comments were no doubt carefully selected by *Nasz Dziennik* as excerpts from longer statements, the thoughts shared by each of the following leaders contains some use of the word *friend*, be it the ‘close friendship’ between the two countries or the fact that Kaczyński was a ‘close and loyal friend’ to a country’s people: Czech President Václav Klaus, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvile, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaité, Latvian President Valdis Zatler, Slovakian President Ivan Gašparovič, U.S. President Barack Obama, Hungarian President László Sólyom, and Italian President Giorgio Napolitano. With the exceptions of Italy and the U.S., the remaining countries from this list identifying themselves as friends of Poland have a shared history with Poland as members of the Warsaw Pact, and all (excluding Georgia and the U.S.) are currently members of the European Union along with Poland. These ‘friendships’ thus help to ground Poland in the European context, while ‘friendships’ with Georgia and the U.S. highlight Poland’s larger global appeal.

The same article shares condolences from EU leaders which serve as further evidence of Poland’s Europeanness. As José Barroso, President of the European Commission, states “I worked very closely with President Kaczyński in the spirit of loyalty and hold him in esteem as a true Polish patriot, who at the same time was very committed to the European Union, and also to such values as freedom and solidarity.”

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2 Leaders listed by their April 2010 titles
Barroso entertains the idea that Kaczyński can be both a ‘true Polish patriot’ and qualify as European. While this notion of a multi-layered identity appears in Gazeta Wyborcza, it is interesting that its presence in Nasz Dziennik emerges from a non-Polish source. Nasz Dziennik’s discussion of and references to the EU during the week of mourning after the crash avoided political commentary, and Poland’s membership was brought up primarily to show Poland’s increased prominence in the world and to a lesser extent to show how much Poland had evolved from its socialist past.

Gazeta Wyborcza’s coverage does not include such commentary from foreign leaders and the foreign press and thus does not project the same idea that the crash brings significant global attention to Poland. Whereas Nasz Dziennik proves that Poland is in the global spotlight, Gazeta Wyborcza is far more focused on improving Poland’s position regarding a single country, Russia. The crash, and more specifically, the plans for the investigation following the crash, allows Gazeta Wyborcza to pay considerable attention to the relations between Poland and Russia. The paper entertains both arguments that the Smoleńsk crash sparked improvement in the two countries’ relationship and that relations had began improving well before the crash. Regardless of which version various scholars and articles promote, the discussion is still concentrated on Polish-Russian relations. Gazeta Wyborcza even publishes a piece by the paper’s editor-in-chief Adam Michnik in both Polish and Russian alongside a picture of Tusk and Putin.
embracing. The article stresses the shared history of the Polish and Russian peoples and thanks the Russians for their sympathy, understanding, and assistance. The very inclusion of a Russian version within the text, the only article of its kind in either newspapers’ coverage, emphasizes Gazeta Wyborcza’s consideration of and spotlight on Russian responses.

Other articles, too, stress Poland’s connection to Russia, noting that the Polish-Russian relations of today should not be confused with Polish-Soviet relations of the past. A number of articles in Gazeta Wyborcza include quotes by Russian leaders confirming the fact that Stalin and the Soviet Union were responsible for the Katyń massacre. At the same time, such coverage of the massacre carefully distinguishes Soviet leaders from the current Russian people. Gazeta Wyborcza reprints a quote from Polska The Times, where Professor Zbigniew Mikolejko supports making this distinction: “mam nadzieję, że teraz będziemy inaczej patrzeć na Rosjan. Ich reakcja na naszą tragedię powinna uzmysłowić nam także, że to nie oni wymordowali Polaków w Katyniu. To zrobili Sowieci” (“I hope that now we will look differently at the Russians. Their response to our tragedy should make us realize that they did not murder Poles in Katyn.”)

The Soviets did that”). Unlike *Nasz Dziennik*, which quoted a child as saying the “Russians murdered the Poles” in Katyń without clarifying the statement, *Gazeta Wyborcza* emphasizes the distinction to show that current attitudes toward Russians should not be based on animosities from the two countries’ socialist pasts.

Though some element of international focus is present in each newspaper’s coverage of the crash, the direction of each paper’s focus is quite different. *Nasz Dziennik* focuses on global coverage of the crash as an opportunity to expose the truth about Katyń, also using this global attention as an affirmation of Poland’s position in the world. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, on the other hand, focuses its attention on the cooperation of and condolences from Russia with the aim of bettering Polish-Russian relations. In this way, *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s coverage is more pragmatic, as it attempts to elicit a change in Poland’s foreign relations, rather than just draw attention to a list of Poland’s friends and allies.

Conclusion

If one were to read only Nasz Dziennik or Gazeta Wyborcza in the week following the crash at Smoleńsk, one would reach very different conclusions about the impact of this tragedy on the Polish people and state. The three aspects discussed in this paper help to explain the different interpretation that each publication offers. The Catholic voices and personal anecdotes filling the pages of Nasz Dziennik relay the spiritual and emotional process of mourning taking place across Poland, thus building a sense of community. The overwhelming volume of such articles speaks to Nasz Dziennik’s relationship with the Catholic Church as well as its evaluation of Lech Kaczyński as a Polish hero. Nasz Dziennik’s coverage of the tragedy goes beyond just the events surrounding the crash, as its reporting also includes significant attention to how the crash relates to other historical events in Poland. This celebration of Polish history is used not only to educate Poles about the history of their nation, but also to celebrate Lech Kaczyński’s greatness, linking him to the foundation of Solidarity and, through his burial at Wawel, to Polish royalty and historic figures. In honoring the victims of the crash, Nasz Dziennik affirms that their deaths were not in vain for they helped reveal the truth about Katyń to the world. In doing so, Nasz Dziennik asserts that Poland is the focus of global attention and seizes the opportunity to highlight Poland’s prominent position within the European, as well as global, community. Overall, Nasz Dziennik’s
coverage depicts Poland as a strong, Catholic country deeply affected by the tragedy and as a nation with increasing significance in the global arena.

The coverage of the tragedy in *Gazeta Wyborcza* leaves one with a very different impression of the impact of the crash. The more intellectual and professorial voices featured in *Gazeta Wyborcza* provide factual analysis of the crash and its effects on domestic and foreign politics rather than dwelling on the crash’s emotional impact. *Gazeta Wyborcza* is far more reserved than *Nasz Dziennik* in mourning and celebrating the life of Lech Kaczyński, as *Gazeta Wyborcza* is focused on what will come next rather than on the past. Instead of focusing on Kaczyński’s legacy as a ‘hero,’ *Gazeta Wyborcza* focuses on the ‘heroic’ actions of Tusk and Putin in moving the investigation forward, highlighting the possibilities for improving Polish-Russian relations now that Kaczyński is removed from the political stage. Instead of dwelling solely on the tragic aspects of the crash, *Gazeta Wyborcza* promotes hope for improving Poland’s future.

Ultimately, the reader of *Nasz Dziennik* finds spiritual inspiration, community, and the chance to reflect on Poland’s past triumphs, while the reader of *Gazeta Wyborcza* finds factual information, analysis, and the framework to ponder Poland’s political future. While *Gazeta Wyborcza* might seem to provide a more politically responsible, globally savvy representation of the crash and Poland’s future, the impact of *Nasz Dziennik* should not be underestimated for the comfort and cathartic
outlet it provided. That is, although *Nasz Dziennik* is often criticized by *Gazeta Wyborcza* and others for the way it pushes its ultra-conservative, Catholic agenda, *Nasz Dziennik* offers itself up as a forum for mourning the crash, thus serving the Polish people in a way *Gazeta Wyborcza* does not.
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