

**Postcolonial Literature in
Polish Translation (1970–2010):
Difference, Similarity and Solidarity**

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I, Dorota Goluch, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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The thesis examines the Polish translation and reception of postcolonial literature between 1970 and 2010. It investigates the perceptions of postcolonial peoples and Polish self-perceptions in the context of timely debates about East European postcoloniality and, generally, contemporary global synergies and solidarities.

The Introduction presents contemporary conceptualizations of solidarity. Chapter One provides a historical background and discusses the scholarship on Polish postcoloniality, while Chapter Two explains the methodological approach – analysing relevant discourses in nearly one thousand reviews of postcolonial prose – and characterizes the Polish translations of postcolonial literature (1945–2010).

Chapters Three and Four explore the discourses on translation and knowledge: they demonstrate that translation is expected to facilitate understanding of foreign cultures through linguistic clarity and informative material, and that postcolonial texts are read as sources of knowledge (especially before 1989) and as valid, if competing, representations of socio-cultural realities.

Chapter Five investigates Eurocentric discourses of difference, which stigmatize postcolonial irrationality (mostly pre-1989), barbarity (mostly post-1989) and exoticism. Discourses of universalism are featured in Chapter Six, which documents continuing references to similarity – common humanity, communist future, global modernity – and shows them to be compromised by the perceptions of others as less developed. Finally, Chapter Seven traces references to shared historical experiences, e.g. of independence struggle (pre-1989) and displacement (post-1989). The Conclusion suggests that the perceptions of similarity signify potential for solidarity; besides, it recommends that investigation of Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonials be incorporated into debates about Poland's postcoloniality.

Overall, the thesis demonstrates that postcolonial literature and its translation were consistently – post-1989 discursive shifts notwithstanding – viewed by Polish reviewers as vital to developing knowledge of postcolonial peoples. Moreover, while the perceptions of civilizational difference remained salient, statements of Polish-postcolonial similarity were gaining currency. Enabled by the perceptions of similarity, solidarity could be forged between nationally, socially, politically and culturally delineated Polish and postcolonial constituencies.

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Introduction: Solidarity Has Many Names

In a 1989 issue of the Polish magazine *Przegląd Wiadomości Agencyjnych* (Press Agency News Review), which was published underground to avoid censorship, there is an intriguing warning note. Entitled ‘Solidarity Has Many Names’¹ and addressed to supporters of the Polish anti-communist union called Solidarity, the anonymous note states that another organization is collecting donations for a ‘Solidarity Fund’ and people donate, mistaking the organization for the Solidarity union (see Fig. 1). That other organization was the Committee of Solidarity with the Nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Komitet Solidarności z Narodami Azji, Afryki i Ameryki Łacińskiej), which used its distinct logo (see Fig. 2), but not its name, in the fund-raising. Founded in 1965, it represented communist policies towards the ‘third world’. According to Eugeniusz Szyr – the Committee’s president, a soldier of the communist International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and a high-ranking politician in communist Poland – the Committee provided support to third world nations fighting Western imperialism. It also collected money for humanitarian aid (Szyr 1982). Interestingly for my purpose, Szyr drew an analogy between, on the one hand, Poland’s fight for independence during the nineteenth century Partitions and World War Two, and, on the other hand, anti-colonial struggles of African, Asian and Latin American peoples (ibid.).

Ostensibly both those causes, i.e. collecting money for the Polish Solidarity union and for African, Asian and Latin American peoples, invited solidarity with those struggling for freedom and against oppression. However, they were divided by immediate political loyalties, as to the anti-communist Solidarity union the pro-governmental Committee would have appeared as a tool of the communist propaganda and Cold War vying for global influence. Opposing corruption and hypocrisy of the Polish communist Party, the Solidarity activists may have indeed found it disturbing that funds intended for their cause should be used to support an organization preaching international communism. At the same time, the note does not inquire whether the ‘misplaced’ donations could have possibly been used towards meaningful aid in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Generally, postcolonial peoples

¹ Unless otherwise stated in the text or in the bibliography, all translations from Polish into English are mine.

were not a point of interest in this exchange but an object of communist politics and its critique.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see a note on p. 7.]

Fig. 1 Note in *Przegląd Wiadomości Agencyjnych* from 5 May 1989, p.2. It reads, in my translation: ‘SOLIDARITY HAS MANY NAMES. For some time now, Warsaw stores have been selling donation stamps for “The Solidarity Fund”. People are buying them, thinking that they are supporting the Solidarity trade union. The joke, however, is that the stamp’s designer forgot (probably) to mention that it was for The Fund of Solidarity with the Nations of Africa and Asia [sic!]. One cannot call it an outright fraud or cheating people out of their money. After all, the stamp tells the truth. Not the whole truth, though. And a buyer should perhaps try to find out what exactly he or she is donating for’.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the links provided below.]

Fig. 2 Logo of the Polish Committee of Solidarity with the Nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Compare with the logo of the Solidarity union. Sources: Catalogue of Post Stamps website <<http://www.kzp.pl/index.php?artykul=kat-cp-1988-cp0980>>; Solidarity website <<http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/pl/logo.html>> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

The present thesis explores Polish perceptions of postcolonial peoples and the corresponding Polish self-perceptions, which can be inferred from the relevant discourses circulating between 1970 and 2010. The hypothesis is that Poles tend to see postcolonial peoples as different, viewing themselves as Europeans. However, Poles will probably perceive postcolonial peoples as similar or the same when they subscribe to a larger community or ideal, such as universal humanity or communist utopia. Moreover, Poles might see analogies between the postcolonial and Polish historical experiences of subjugation, resistance, struggle, migration and post-independence state-building. A remark to that effect by the communist politician Szyr was quoted above; the thesis explores more such comparisons and asks whether, in addition to evoking official pre-1989 ideology, they can imply that Poles look at themselves and postcolonial peoples through the same, postcolonial lens. Finally, the thesis suggests that a sense of similarity and a possibility of common identification pave the way for solidarity.

In short, the question asked in the thesis is how the Polish reviewers of translated postcolonial literature perceive postcolonial peoples and whether they come to see Polish-postcolonial similarities, which could invite solidarity. The material comprises Polish reviews of postcolonial literature, which were published in Polish between 1970 and 2010, and which concerned mostly translated literature. My

approach consists in analysing the relevant discourses appearing in the reviews and interpreting them in terms of cultural perceptions; it comprises a qualitative and a quantitative component (the method is discussed in detail in Chapter Two).

Regarding the inspirations and motivations for the project, the thought about Polish-postcolonial similarities germinated when I first read *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon's story about Caribbean immigrants in London. That book reminded me of my experiences of coming to seek summer work in London, before Poland entered the European Union. I felt that there was a similar anxiety about work, housing and staying safe from swindlers, but also a comparable sense of marginality in confrontation with the people and landmarks of a metropolis which one had long held in awe. Of course there were numerous differences but that vague thought of Polish-postcolonial similarities stayed with me. The project is also informed by recent developments in Polish literary studies and postcolonial studies, where the circumstances of post-communist Eastern Europe and non-European postcolonial countries have been compared. There is an idealistic element to the project, too, because recognition of similarity is envisaged as an invitation to solidarity, which could, perhaps, strengthen tolerance and intercultural respect, while counteracting prejudice and discord. The questions of tolerance and prejudice do not, strictly speaking, enter the academic argument in this thesis but they fuel my interest in Polish-postcolonial solidarity.

In this Introduction I, first, signal the intellectual currents informing the study, second, present some conceptualizations of 'solidarity' and, third, outline the structure of the thesis. Regarding the intellectual inspirations, the study is indebted to three disciplines: postcolonial studies, particularly colonial discourse criticism, translation studies, especially postcolonial approaches to translation, and Polish studies, with emphasis on recent debates on Poland's postcoloniality. I am also indebted to contemporary work in comparative literature – even if the rich resources of the discipline are not explicitly explored in the thesis – and I have been generally inspired by contemporary, postmodern views on otherness and sameness, identity construction, representation, power and knowledge, insofar as those views permeate postcolonial studies and today's humanities. On the most general level my work rests on the assumption that the sense of self is constructed in opposition to what is not the self, i.e. what is 'other', and that these constructs are in a dynamic relationship. The work is also preoccupied with the vicissitudes of representing, knowing and

translating otherness ('translating' both in the sense of rendering a foreign idiom in an intelligible one and in the broader sense of attempting to make something understandable). Below I summarize the main tenets of postcolonial criticism insofar as it is relevant to my project, to later engage with the relevant Polish studies and translation studies scholarship in, respectively, Chapter One and Chapter Three.

In postcolonial criticism one finds the notion that a creation of collective identity is facilitated by pitting 'us' against another group.² Edward Said (1935–2003) argued in his seminal *Orientalism* (1978) that 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image' (2003:1–2) and that the East was imagined as a locus of some of Europe's own unwanted characteristics, 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (ibid.:3). Said decided to interrogate European representations of others as a self-contained system and avoided proposing alternative, corrective representations. Consequently, he was criticized for disregarding self-representations of the 'Orientals', overlooking alternatives to Orientalism within the West and homogenizing the Orient and the Occident. Some other postcolonial thinkers focused on the colonized rather than the colonizers and destabilized divisions between the two.

Notably, Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha analysed the interdependence of the colonizers and the colonized, emphasizing the impact that perceptions of others, as well as *by* others, have on the self. Fanon (1925–61) centred on the colonized in his psychoanalytical work *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952; *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann), arguing that a black colonized man internalizes an othering gaze of a white colonizer and develops a third-person consciousness, perceiving oneself through another's eyes. This strand of Fanon's work³ inspired Bhabha's analyses of the colonizer's self. Bhabha saw it as a site of ambivalence and anxiety, which were triggered by the gaze of the colonized, their mimicry of the colonizers and their other signifying practices (1994). Bhabha looked at historical records of British colonialism in India but also at contemporary migrants in a Western metropolis, examining the phenomenon of hybridity as a heterogeneous

² For a more detailed and comprehensive overview of postcolonialism see for example the seminal *Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft et al., 1989; Ashcroft et al. 2002), as well as Williams & Chrisman 1994b; Ashcroft et al. 2007; Boehmer 1995; Loomba 1998; Mongia 1997; Ramone 2011.

³ As opposed to Fanon's revolutionary manifesto *Les damnés de la terre* (1961; *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington).

identity formation of postcolonial migrants. Centring on the figure of Saladin Chamcha, a westernized-Indian-immigrant-turned-goatman from Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Bhabha theorized migrant experience as an act of cultural translation, which cannot result in assimilation because of the sheer untranslatability of cultural difference, and which leads instead 'towards an encounter with the ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity' (ibid.:224).⁴

Bhabha's approach to his historical material provoked questions about the problematic of representation and the role of the researcher. Bhabha was interested in studying discursive practices rather than the consciousness of the colonized or colonizers. Nevertheless, his concept of colonial ambivalence begged the question of the historical subjects potentially affected by it. As Robert Young put it, 'how does the equivocality of colonial discourse emerge, and when – at the time of its enunciation or with the present day historian or interpreter?' (2004:193). According to Young, Bhabha gives both answers at different points (ibid.).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak further scrutinizes processes of representation and the task of the postcolonial critic. She points out that a postcolonial critic cannot retrieve the consciousness of subaltern subjects,⁵ who were most silenced and virtually absent from historical records, and that attempts at such retrieval are 'no more than a theoretical fiction to entitle the project of reading' (1996:213). Her own projects of reading include work on colonized women, who were typically represented by colonial or Indian men. The well-known examples from the 1988 essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1994) show women who committed suicide: due to demands of 'tradition', through the ritual of *sati*, but also because of a failed political conspiracy. The essay argues that the women's motivations for the desperate acts went unheard, as the acts were interpreted by patriarchal constituencies. Treating suicide as a signifying practice, Spivak concluded that the subaltern females could

⁴ Bhabha's figurative use of 'translation' was criticized by Harish Trivedi, who argued that Bhabha was oblivious of *interlingual* translation, thus privileging monolingualism of the metropolis at the cost of the multilingual realities of the global margins (2005). In a recent conference paper Susan Bassnett revisited Trivedi's point, suggesting that the metaphorical and the literal uses of 'translation' are hardly contradictory and should be accommodated within one research paradigm (Bassnett 2011). (Bassnett's piece is forthcoming as 'Postcolonialism and/as translation'. In: Graham Huggan (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press).

⁵ The term was previously used by the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (who used it with reference to disenfranchised groups in capitalist economies) and the Subaltern Studies group of Indian historians, committed to recovering the histories of peasant insurgents from the available archives of colonial anti-insurgency.

not speak for themselves, or, rather, had no chance to be heard. Spivak also wrote on the politics of representation in literary translation, to which I refer later in the Introduction.

All this problematizing of identity construction and representation, inspired by psychoanalysis, discourse theories, poststructuralism and deconstruction, has been criticized by Marxist postcolonial theorists. For instance, Aijaz Ahmad takes issue with Said's disregard of the liberation struggles of 'Oriental' peoples and with the Nietzschean tradition, which undermines the possibility of proper representation (1994). Benita Parry objects to Spivak's conclusions about the irrevocability of the gendered subaltern and marginalization of native female characters in canonical texts, pointing to examples of women's self-expression in historical records and the literary canon (Parry 2004:19–23). Generally, Marxist authors call for applying (rather than deconstructing) concepts of subjectivity, group identity and (self-)representation to capture and celebrate popular revolutionary movements against colonial and neo-colonial oppression. They champion the Fanon of *The Wretched of the Earth*, a call for revolution and analysis of postcolonial nation-building.

I rely on the former, non-Marxist branch of postcolonial studies, which better suits my interest in intercultural perceptions and discourses about other cultures. Another reason for this preference stems from the circumstances of my background: I began my education in Poland in 1990, when Marxism fell into disrepute and disregard, and I only came in contact with Marx's work as a postgraduate student in the UK. To systematically employ that critical idiom someone in my position would first want to thoroughly study the problems of the decades-long (mis)application of Marxism in Eastern Europe. I did not feel a need to do that, being already equipped with other postcolonial vocabularies.

Analysing the Polish reviews of postcolonial literature I seek recurrent discourses; I adopt the concept of discourse after Said, who, in turn, relied mostly on Michel Foucault. Foucault hardly elaborated a 'quotable' definition of discourse but he generally studied systems of statements and representations, their interrelations and the rules governing their emergence, or, in the words of his popularizers, bodies of knowledge and the historically specific restrictive conditions of formulating and expressing it (Grace & McHoul 1993:31,36). Said, referencing Foucault as a methodological inspiration (2003:3), studies Orientalism as a discourse, or 'a system

of knowledge about the Orient’ and ‘an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness’ (ibid.:6). *Orientalism* inspired research on discourses operating in particular colonial situations, which verified, elaborated and supplemented Said’s pioneering demonstration: the branch of research was referred to as studying colonial discourses. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, editors of the reader *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, describe colonial discourse as ‘the variety of textual forms in which the West produced and codified knowledge about non-metropolitan areas and cultures, especially those under colonial control’ (1994a:5).

Said’s use of discourse met with some criticism. Said denounces Orientalism as a possessive, ethnocentric and unsatisfying representation of ‘the Orient’ but does not univocally answer whether and how (more) accurate representations can be achieved. According to Dennis Porter, Said seems to allow the possibility of non-Orientalist representations but, Porter asks, ‘how can it be justified on the basis of a radical discourse theory which presupposes the impossibility of stepping outside of a given discursive formation by an act of will or consciousness?’ (1994:151). For Porter, Foucault’s discourses are ‘synchronic structures or period problematic, . . . embodied concurrently in verbal, social and material formations’ (ibid.:152) and as such lack historical grounding and cannot account for change. Porter also accuses Said of an essentialist view of Orientalism as a discourse stretching over two millennia, from Alexander the Great to Jimmy Carter, and unified by the same features (ibid.:152,154). The solutions Porter proposes are to shift emphasis onto a diachronic dimension of Orientalism and revisit the notion that artistic production may be relatively autonomous from systemic, discursive pressures.

Robert Young notes that Said accounts for changes within Orientalism by reintroducing individual agency into Foucault’s discourse – Said writes, ‘unlike Foucault . . ., I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation’ (Said 2003:23). But, according to Young, Said cannot explain how individuals can challenge a historically determined system in which they belong and on which they rely for forms of knowledge to conceptualize and express their experiences (Young 2004:171–73). Thus, Young argues, Said is faced with ‘the perennial philosophical chestnut’ of the relationship between individual and society, free will and necessity, or man and history (ibid.:173–76). Young opines that Homi Bhabha’s notion of

ambivalence, believed to mark the colonizers' culture, partly solves Said's aporia. In the light of Bhabha's writing, colonial discourse 'may appear to be hegemonic, but it carries within it a hidden flaw invisible at home but increasingly apparent abroad when it is away from the safety of the West' (ibid.:183).

The circumstances in which I use the category of discourse differ considerably from Said's and Bhabha's context. Unlike Bhabha's colonizers and Said's authors, scholars, artists and other agents living in colonial empires, Polish reviewers whose discursive practices I study were not locked in a direct, sustained and complex relationship of power with the objects of their discourses. Even more importantly, the reviewers were not studying or administering passive colonial subjects, but were responding to texts by postcolonial writers, i.e. to forms of postcolonial self-representation. This removal in time and space from the situations studied by Said and Bhabha bears on the diversity of discourses: colonial or Orientalist discourses had no monopoly, so the question asked of Said, how the dominant discourse could be contested from within a system, does not apply here. Instead, in the environment I study different discourses were in circulation, stemming from earlier, Eurocentric images of other continents (I identify them as versions of colonial discourses described in postcolonial scholarship), from communist ideology and Cold War politics, from academic postcolonial criticism, from academic Oriental studies, from the ideas elaborated by postcolonial authors and from other sources.

Reading the reviews of postcolonial literature, I identified certain phrases, statements and arguments as instances of particular discourses; after finding numerous instances I could argue that a given discourse was present in the reviews. While seeking instances of the discourses I had expected to find, I tried to remain open to verifying the list of relevant discourses based on the contents of the reviews. Some discourses I looked for, based on the findings of postcolonial studies, did not materialize in my material (e.g. the discourse of colonial effeminacy and, more generally, issues of gender and sexuality), while other issues were stumbled upon in the readings and added to my list (e.g. references to modernity). The classification of textual material as instances of one discourse or another was not always straightforward, especially since some of the discourses overlap.

Inevitably, some discourses will have escaped my attention, either because I did not consider them immediately relevant to my main focus or because I simply overlooked them. A sample discourse which has not been explored systematically in

this thesis but would be worth revisiting in further studies regards the question of aesthetics and literariness, which I touch upon in Chapter Four.

Regarding the choice between the Foucauldian removal of an agent and Said's return to studying the imprint of individual writers, I find Foucault's stance more suitable. This is because I am not studying substantial creative output by particular authors but short conventionalized commentaries and I am interested in the reviewers more as influential representatives of collective Polish perceptions than independent intellectual figures. Some reviews are semi-anonymous (signed with initials or nicknames), which implies that the reviewers' identity was not essential. Besides, the texts I study are regulated by the institutions and conventions of literary reviewing, press publishing and, before 1989, state censorship. Therefore, it is more viable to study the discourses employed in the texts and governed by the relevant conventions than speculate about the thoughts and individuals behind the texts. Foucault juxtaposes studying the history of thought with studying discourses. The former amounts to asking 'what was being said in what was said?' and reading allegorically, while the latter requires describing a statement in the specificity of its occurrence, conditions of existence and correlation with other statements (Foucault 2002:30).

I only speculate about reading 'between the lines' (i.e. interpret allegorically) in the case of selected censored texts but I could argue that the practice of signifying and receiving meanings between the lines itself became conventionalized under communism and as such belonged to the conditions of discourse. Similarly, on some occasions I note the name of the reviewer and add significant information about the status and views associated with his or her persona. This may also be said to belong in the order of discourse. I provide more information on my methodological approach in Chapter Two.

At this point I turn to the question of solidarity: I first offer a broader picture, though not an exhaustive review, of the scholarship on solidarity in the relevant disciplines, to then discuss selected conceptualizations of solidarity. A keyword search of two sizeable UK library catalogues⁶ indicates that the concept of solidarity is relatively often employed in social and political sciences: judging by the titles, attention is given to group solidarities predicated on shared national, racial, social, gender,

⁶ British Library Explore catalogue and University College London Explore library catalogue.

sexual, generational and religious characteristics or allegiances. Solidarity is also construed as a cohesive social and political force, which justifies ways of collecting and re-distributing resources in a welfare state or at supra-state level, e.g. in the European Union. Environmental issues, such as climate change and exploitation of resources, are also tackled in terms of solidarity with fellow and future inhabitants of the planet.

Solidarity is discussed in contemporary philosophy, too. Later in this introduction I engage with Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989). I am also aware of references to solidarity in the work of Jürgen Habermas (*Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas*, ed. Peter Dews, 1992) and Giorgio Agamben (*The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt, 1993) but I capitalize on Rorty because he addresses solidarity more directly and extensively than the others. Levinas's conception of individual identity has been used to reflect on the conditions of (racial) solidarity (Sealey 2012) and on rhetoric (Davis 2010) but Rorty is more useful for my purpose because he considers *collective* identities; moreover, he is preoccupied with perceptions of similarities and differences, which closely matches my interest.

Solidarity is important for left-wing vocabularies; below, I refer to David Featherstone's *Solidarity: Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism* (2012), a recent and comprehensive publication, which approaches solidarity theoretically. Within postcolonial studies solidarity is rarely theorized, although it is sometimes mentioned and advocated. Having checked indices of about twenty-five introductory, reference and otherwise general books related to postcolonial studies,⁷ I found 'solidarity' indexed in only three publications.⁸ This is a limited sample but I am confident that it reflects a general trend. Solidarity is prominent in Chandra Mohanty's book *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003), which I mention below. Below, I also quote some remarks on solidarity by Spivak because her comments chime with my concern with translation.

⁷ Including the following: Williams & Chrisman 1994b; Ashcroft et al. 2007; Boehmer 1995; Loomba 1998; Mongia 1997; Ramone 2011.

⁸ One of them mentions solidarity in the context of international alliances in popular anti-imperialist struggles (San Juan Jr. 1998), the second introduces the term to describe the idea of 'multitude', or cooperative resistance to contemporary imperialism, in the work of the post-Marxist philosophers Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (Zalloua 2011), while in the third publication 'solidarity' is used in passing to denote socio-political unity among Indian states (Maiello 1996) and American black people (Laforest 1996).

Last but not least, many publications on solidarity concern the Polish trade union, although they typically focus on direct socio-political, cultural and historical circumstances rather than theorizing the concept of solidarity (this applies to writings by the dissidents Jacek Kuroń and Adam Michnik, and, to some degree, the poet Adam Zagajewski). Therefore, I refer to the philosopher and Solidarity union's chaplain Józef Tischner, who does offer theoretical reflection.

What follows is a summary of the conceptualizations of solidarity by Rorty, Featherstone, Mohanty, Spivak and Tischner. Rorty, whose views are very valid for my purpose, contends that solidarity is to be invented, rather than merely discovered, by learning to perceive 'others' as similar to 'us' in various respects, including the capacity for feeling pain. Rorty argues that, traditionally, philosophy anchors human solidarity in the essentialist presumption that all people are endowed with some sort of core humanity, which 'resonates to the presence of the same thing in other human beings' (1989:189). According to him, the notion of essential humanity lies at the heart of Christian call for indiscriminate, compassionate love for all human beings and remains vital to the secular ethics of Immanuel Kant, who posits that as rational beings people should behave morally towards other people out of human obligation, and not other motives, such as love or friendship (ibid.:191). Rorty objects to this tradition.

He objects, firstly, because, as an anti-essentialist philosopher, he rejects the notion of essential humanity. Secondly, as a pragmatist, he believes that to take for granted people's solidarity with all other human beings is unrealistic. This is because he thinks that people tend to see themselves in more specific terms than 'human', wherefore it is daunting and difficult for them to conceptualize another as 'one of us human beings'.⁹ He suggests that the category of human beings, though delineated by contrast with 'animals' and 'machines', is notoriously blurry (as e.g. debates on abortion indicate) and too general to encompass and act upon. Rorty suggests that 'our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as "one of us," where "us" means something smaller and more local than the human race' (ibid.). Perceptions of another as 'our sort of people' can include – I am modifying Rorty's examples to suit my topic – 'a European like ourselves', 'a fellow postcolonial' or 'a comrade in communism' (ibid.:190).

⁹ Rorty references Wilfrid Sellars's concept of 'we-intentions' as his inspiration.

Advocating such localized solidarities, Rorty does not dispense with the ideal of universal, all-human solidarity. He doubts that solidarity is waiting to be discovered, thanks to shared essence, but hopes that people invent solidarity. A step in this direction, according to Rorty, is to see similarities between one's and others' potential for suffering. Rorty writes that to morally advance human beings should exercise an 'ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, custom, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation' (ibid.:192). He believes that ethnographic writing and literature, particularly the novel, provide opportunities for vicarious suffering, sharpening the 'imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers' (ibid., p.xvi). The ultimate goal of expanding one's category of 'us' would be to learn to think of 'us' as 'human beings'.

David Featherstone approaches solidarity from a political-activist perspective, which is less directly relevant for my study. He defines solidarity 'as a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression' (2012:5), underscoring the active character of solidarity. He joins Rorty in rejecting the Kantian idea of a human core as the alleged ground for solidarity. He also critiques the sociologist's Émile Durkheim's concepts of 'mechanical solidarities' – based on ties of blood in traditional societies – and 'organic solidarities', based on professional co-operation and class in modern societies, claiming that they obscure the fact that solidarities are *actively* fashioned (ibid.:20). Featherstone believes that Rorty takes credit for arguing that solidarity is constructed, although his notion of similarity and dissimilarity is too static. Featherstone writes, 'Assuming that solidarities are forged through emulation risks ignoring how likeness is actively produced' (ibid.:22).

In Featherstone's opinion, feminist authors demonstrate that solidarities are active constructions by documenting women's responses to marginalization in male-dominated organizations, such as the founding of their own unions (ibid.:20–21). He quotes Mohanty's book on postcolonialism, feminism and solidarity, which I mentioned earlier. Mohanty defines solidarity 'in terms of mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities' (Mohanty 2003:7) and she not only traces solidarities forged along the lines of gender but also questions the assumption of universal 'sisterhood' from the position of women of colour. She chooses the term 'solidarities' over 'sisterhood' to

better capture the interplay of gender and other identity aspects such as race and class. Inspired by Mohanty's and his own case studies Featherstone makes an extremely pertinent observation. Namely, he observes that through their dynamic character and favouring some allegiances over others solidarities 'can entrench the positions of some groups and further marginalize others' (2012:21).

Awareness of the problematic nature of solidarity, particularly in the area of gender, also emerges from the writings of Spivak. In 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Spivak questions Michel Foucault's and Gilles Deleuze's conviction that the oppressed can represent themselves, that 'in the First World . . . if given a chance (the problem of representation cannot be bypassed here), and on the way to solidarity through alliance politics . . . [the oppressed] *can speak and know their condition*' (1994:78; original emphasis). She thus points out that in a democratic environment the masses are necessarily represented by union and other political representatives. Afterwards, she shows that it is Foucault's and Deleuze's wishful thinking to assume that they can access self-representations of third world masses, especially, as I signalled earlier, (formerly) colonized women.

Spivak also raises the question of solidarity between the inhabitants of the first world and the third world in her essay 'The Politics of Translation'. She notes that although she focuses on gender solidarity and translation of women authors her argument applies 'across the board' (2004:380). The argument is that women's solidarity grounded solely in common femininity may be a valid 'first step' in 'approaching women with whom a relationship would not otherwise be possible' (ibid.:379) but such solidarity obscures the fact that experiences of women worldwide are diverse and not reducible to the experiences of Western feminists. She then encourages feminists to take a second step towards other women by learning their languages: 'You will . . . feel the solidarity every day as you make the attempt to learn the [other woman's] language' (ibid.). Given that not many will actually embark on language learning, literary translation remains a way of engaging with others and Spivak ponders how one can translate to, as far as possible, understand others on their own terms, rather than appropriating them for one's idiom and outlook (I return to this in Chapter Three).

Józef Tischner (1931–2000) held a universalist, Christian view of solidarity, different from the constructionist views presented earlier. In his sermons delivered to the Solidarity union followers in the early 1980s and collected in *Duch solidarności*

(*The Spirit of Solidarity*, trans. Marek Zaleski and Benjamin Fiore), Tischner examines the concept that gives the union its name. He believes that '[s]olidarity is a solidarity with people and for people; thus, it is a social phenomenon' (1984:8); he specifies that solidarity is often felt with those who suffer. Tischner singles out one sort of solidarity, which he deems to be the 'strongest' and most 'spontaneous': solidarity 'with those who have been wounded by other people, with those who suffer pain that could be avoided' (as opposed to pain caused by natural calamities, disease, etc.) (ibid.:8–9).

He gives two examples of solidarity with people who suffer pain inflicted by others: the Good Samaritan from the Biblical parable, who helps a person wounded by robbers (Luke 10:25–37), and the Polish and international community expressing solidarity with the Polish workers suffering injustice under communist government. Directly addressing the cause of the Solidarity movement, Tischner writes: 'the present-day ethos of solidarity . . . was born among workers to free human work from needless pain' (ibid.:12). Tischner's Biblical references imply that he bases solidarity in the Christian notion of shared humanity and the Christian commandment of unconditional love for one's neighbour. This can be contrasted with Rorty's long-term strategy of including others in one's circle by favouring similarities over differences. At the same time, both Tischner and Rorty believe that human suffering powerfully calls for solidary responses.

Besides, like Rorty and Spivak, Tischner believes that words, literature and art can facilitate sympathetic identification with others. Speaking in the context of the Polish Solidarity actions, Tischner announces that an important task ahead is to 'give testimony' and 'call things by their right names' (ibid.:13) to mobilize sympathy for the workers' pain. He analyses a poem by Czesław Miłosz, which was inscribed on a Gdańsk monument commemorating the shipyard workers who were killed during strikes in 1970 (ibid.:38);¹⁰ the reading demonstrates the importance of literature and art for awakening solidarity.

To recapitulate, I have outlined several ways of conceptualizing solidarity, which presuppose an essential humanity (Tischner) or insist that solidarity is constructed by accentuating one's characteristics or interests and associating them

¹⁰ 'You who have wronged a simple man/ Bursting into laughter at the crime/ Do not feel safe. The poet remembers./ You can slay one, but another is born./ The words are written down, the deed, the date (trans. Richard Lourie, quoted after Tischner 1984:36).

with those of others (Rorty, Featherstone, Mohanty, Spivak). There is an awareness that by privileging some allegiances one may marginalize other groups (Featherstone, Mohanty) and that solidarity-building involves representation – both in the sense of a proxy and a likeness – and hence is susceptible to the problems of misrepresentation, appropriation, etc. (Spivak). One can ask if solidarity is an action or an attitude: Featherstone and Mohanty suggest the former, looking at trade unions and other forms of activism, while Rorty, Spivak and Tischner lean towards the latter, calling for rethinking one's position towards others (Rorty), understanding others on their terms (Spivak) and caring for one's neighbour's well-being (Tischner). I think that even if viewed as an attitude and not action, solidarity involves certain preparedness for acting in defence or in support, if only moral or verbal, of others when the need arises. For Tischner a critical moment, which should trigger aid, is unnecessary suffering of another; Rorty also considers suffering, whether actually happening or just imagined, an incentive to solidarity. Literature and art are believed to facilitate understanding others and their plight and foster solidarity (Rorty, Tischner, Spivak). I will bear these points in mind while analysing Polish reviews of (translated) postcolonial literature and I return to them in the thesis Conclusion.

Having stated my involvement with postcolonial, translation and Polish studies and touched upon the problematic of identity, representation, knowledge, translation and solidarity, I will now outline the contents of the thesis.

Chapter One contains a historical overview of Polish representations of non-Europeans and introduces basic information about Polish history, highlighting similarities between Polish history and histories of colonialism. Moreover, the chapter provides a review of existing scholarship on the question of Polish, and East European, postcoloniality. Most research to date centres either on Polish relationships with non-European ex-colonials *or* on Poland's relationships with its former 'colonizers' (Russia, Germany, Austria) and 'colonies' (Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus): I propose to combine these perspectives by studying Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonial peoples and using the material to inquire about the corresponding Polish self-perceptions.

Chapter Two examines my methodological approach, which is to analyse discourses employed in Polish reviews of mostly translated postcolonial literature

from the years 1970–2010. The chapter explains my use of the term ‘postcolonial literature’, choice of the time frame and compilation of the corpus, and it briefly characterizes the circumstances of the Polish press in the period. Furthermore, the chapter explicates how I study perceptions of existent peoples through discussions of literary, mostly fictional, texts. It also provides an overview of the body of postcolonial literature in Polish translation from the period 1945–2010.

Chapters Three and Four constitute a transition from the method towards the study of perceptions because they demonstrate that reviewers tend to treat translated postcolonial literature as a source of knowledge about postcolonial peoples and translation itself as ancillary to the informative function of literature. Chapter Three relies on translation studies criticism to explore references to translation – including fluency of style and presence of explicatory materials – in the reviews of translated postcolonial prose, whereas Chapter Four employs such concepts as representation, power and stereotype to discuss the discourse on *knowing* postcolonial peoples.

Chapter Five focuses on perceptions of difference, which can be inferred from the discourses of postcolonial peoples’ irrationality, barbarity and mysteriousness, as well as exoticism. The chapter suggests that these discourses become less frequent and are more often subjected to criticism in the course of the years (1970–2010), even though they remain influential and evocative.

Chapter Six capitalizes on perceptions of similarity, conveyed *via* discourses of universal humanity, the communist cause and a shared modernity. The discourses occur with a similar frequency as the othering discourses but their occurrence is more constant and their usage falls only slightly in the course of the decades. The universalist discourses concern ideals which ultimately aspire to being fully inclusive but allow for temporary exclusions of groups which allegedly have not reached a required stage of progress. Such exclusions are evident in the reviews; as a result the perceptions inferable from the reviews oscillate between the sense of ultimate similarity and temporary difference.

Finally, Chapter Seven seeks perceptions of similarity not in all-encompassing ideals but in comparisons of particular experiences of Poles and postcolonial peoples. Not only do such comparisons occur – usually with regard to Polish independence struggles during the Partitions and WWII (particularly in the official discourses before 1989) and to migration (particularly after 1989) – but they have been becoming more frequent in the last decades.

In the Conclusion I revisit the literature review on Polish postcoloniality from Chapter One and discuss some questions arising from my recommendation that a study of Poland's self-image as an ex-colonized be combined with the issue of Polish perceptions of non-European (post)colonials. I also return to the theorizations of solidarity presented above and relate them to the Polish-postcolonial comparisons discussed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter 1: Representations of Postcolonial Peoples in Poland and Poland's Postcoloniality

The chapter provides context for my study of Polish perceptions of postcolonial peoples and corresponding Polish self-perceptions which emerge from Polish reviews of postcolonial literature in the years 1970–2010. It traces the main representations of non-European peoples through Poland's history to outline a tradition which is bound to have informed Polish reading and reviews of postcolonial literature. The representations are inseparable from Poland's general history, which is introduced as a background for this account and, indeed, for all passages in the thesis where historical references appear.

The second part of the chapter prepares the ground for reflection on Polish self-perceptions, particularly for the question whether Poles may have identified with postcolonial peoples due to comparable historical experiences. I discuss contemporary scholarship devoted to the topic of Poland's postcoloniality, where Poland's relationships with Russia, Germany and Austria, as well as Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine are discussed from a postcolonial perspective. Scholars are mainly preoccupied with cultural discourses and representations but their use of postcolonial tools results from their awareness of historical practices of colonialism which had not only a cultural but also a political, economic and administrative character.

To elucidate these premises I pay attention to colonial-like practices already in the first part of the chapter, in the historical account. The purpose is not to adjudicate whether Poland was a colony or a colonizer or not but to ensure a degree of consistency in applying the concept of colonialism. Although 'colonialism' is variously defined in different disciplines, I am content with a dictionary definition, combined with a meaning given by the postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a modern meaning of 'colony' is,

a settlement in a new country; a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (Anon 2013a).

‘Colonialism’ is defined as, among other meanings, ‘the colonial system or principle’, with an annotation that the word is frequently used ‘in the derogatory sense of an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak peoples by a large power’ (Anon 2013b). In Spivak’s view, ‘[w]hen an alien nation-state establishes itself as ruler, impressing its own laws and systems of education, and re-arranging the mode of production for its own economic benefit, one can use these terms [colonizer and colonized]’ (Collier et al. 2003:15). Combining these definitions, in the historical overview I shall accentuate practices of foreign settlement (whether large-scale or limited to a narrow colonial elite), economic exploitation and interventions into legal and educational systems.

Historical Outline

This part highlights historical representations of non-Europeans in Poland and conveys basic information about Polish history. For the former I use work from anthropology, history and Polish and Oriental studies, as well as postcolonial re-readings of literary representations of non-Europeans. My focus is the ‘Orient’ – Middle East, Turkey and India – and Africa, but not the Americas, Far East or other parts of the world. Generally, I demonstrate that, historically speaking, the Polish representations to a great extent followed West European trends and incorporated some colonial-time discourses about non-Europeans. Contemporary engagement with postcolonial

Having said that, it must be stressed that variations occurred due to Poland’s geopolitical location; in particular, Polish representations of non-Europeans slightly diverged from West European representations in the sixteenth and seventeenth century mainly because of direct contacts with Turkey. During the Partitions of Poland (1795–1918) the mainstream representations of non-Europeans seem to have overlapped with Western models but contemporary scholars suggest that Poland’s political dependence may have been occasionally compared to the fate of colonized non-Europeans. Last but not least, under communism Poland adopted official Soviet policies towards the ‘third world’, which led to a new tradition of relatively distinct set of representations

The overview of Polish history follows a standard narrative taught in schools,¹¹ with additional attention to potentially colonial-like practices and Polish relations with Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. The narrative is divided into the following periods and subjects: from the baptism of Poland (966) to the First Partition (1772); Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque representations of non-Europeans; from 1772 to the outbreak of WWII in 1939; representations of non-Europeans in the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Positivism and Young Poland period; from 1939 to the end of communism in 1989; select representations of non-Europeans during communism; the two decades 1990–2010, with a tentative outline of contemporary Polish representations of non-Europeans.

From the Baptism to the Partitions (966–1772)

Poland's history¹² is often told from Anno Domini 966, when a prince of the *Polanie* tribe united neighbouring Slavs and converted to Christianity. He thus founded a state, avoiding violent Christianization and virtual annihilation at the hands of Germanic knights, which befell other tribes. The prince also founded a dynasty, called *Piast*, which ruled until the second half of the fourteenth century. Although borders changed due to military and dynastic shifts, the following lands comprised Piast Poland: Wielkopolska (with Poznań), Małopolska (with Krakow) and Masovia (with Warsaw). The first Piasts ruled over Silesia in the west and Pomerania in the north (see Fig. 3) and although those lands were soon lost, that whole territory was perceived as a cradle of Polishness by nineteenth-century nationalists (Zawadzki & Lukowski 2001:3–32).

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig. 3 Map of Early Piast Poland, c.1000. Source: Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:10–11.

From the late fourteenth century Polish interests leaned towards the east: in 1385 the Polish queen was married to a Lithuanian duke, Jogaila (Polish: Jagiełło), who

¹¹ I received primary and secondary history education in Poland after 1989.

¹² The outline is based primarily on *A Concise History of Poland* by Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki (Cambridge: CUP, 2001). When I summarize particular periods, I normally reference this publication at the end of a paragraph. When other publications are quoted, I provide references within paragraphs.

converted to Christianity, joining Poland and Lithuania in a personal union. Originally a tactical alliance against the expansive order of Teutonic Knights, the union survived under Jagiełło's heirs and beyond. Under the last Jagiellonian king Polish and Lithuanian nobles tightened the union, creating the Commonwealth of the Two Nations in 1569. Before the union Lithuania had acquired vast Ruthenian lands (south of ethnic Lithuania), so the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was territorially very strong, stretching in mid-fifteenth century from Gdańsk and Krakow in the west, to Courland in the north and Vyazma in the north-east, to Black Sea in the south-east and the river Dniester in the south (see Fig. 4). Gradually, the easternmost and south-eastern lands were conquered by Muscovy and Turkey but parts of today's Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania remained in Poland until mid-twentieth century (ibid.:33–65).

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig. 4 Jagiellonian Poland, 1386–1572. Source: Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:36–37.

The Jagiellonians ruled Poland and Lithuania from 1386 to 1572. By then the nobility, i.e. aristocracy and gentry comprising some ten per cent of the population, accrued extensive privileges (a form of *habeas corpus*, jurisdiction over peasant serfs and a degree of self-governance, including a say in electing the king and passing taxation). Between 1572 and the First Partition in 1772 Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was ruled by elective monarchs, including representatives of the Swedish Vasa dynasty (1587–1668), Saxon electors (1697–1763) and Polish nobles (e.g. John III Sobieski). Historical narratives of the two centuries highlight two processes leading to the Partitions. Relentless wars with Sweden, Muscovy, Turkey and Cossack rebels left the country enfeebled, despite such uplifting victories as Sobieski's in the battle of Vienna (1683). Decentralized government proved inefficient but, guarding its position, the nobility blocked reforms. The *liberum veto* right allowed nobles to single-handedly invalidate the quadrennial parliamentary gatherings. It was exercised at the instigation of conflicted factions and neighbouring countries, whereby the Commonwealth was sinking into anarchy (ibid.:66–88).

Retrospective assessments of that period in Poland's history often refer to certain characteristics of the gentry and aristocracy culture, which is known as

sarmatism. Sarmatism – a uniform culture or ethos of *szlachta*, i.e. gentry and aristocracy – developed in the seventeenth century (Tazbir 1971:9) and encompassed such main values as personal freedom and independence of authorities, as well as commitment to Catholicism. It is generally believed that these ideals in some cases led to resentment of centralized government, which in turn would have contributed to internal disorder and political weakness. Evaluations of sarmatism, in its seventeenth and eighteenth century forms,¹³ range from very negative – emphasizing anarchy, litigiousness and xenophobia – to very positive, focusing on alleged love of freedom, wide-spread tolerance and healthy self-esteem (the latter has been contrasted by Ewa Thompson (2006) with national complexes, which, in her opinion, formed later).

Interestingly for my purpose, sarmatism rested on the notion that Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian *szlachta* descended from the Sarmatians, an ancient Eastern tribe. The Sarmatians were associated in Poland with such features as valour, austerity and a certain ‘barbarity’, which were juxtaposed with more ‘civil’ values of Greek and Roman antiquity (Waśko 2001:9). According to archaeological and textual evidence, the Sarmatians originally migrated from the region of Iran and inhabited the northern Black Sea around the fourth century BC; they were depicted by Greco-Roman authors as ‘warlike nomadic tribes’ (Mordvintseva 2013:202–3). It is noteworthy that sarmatism, a foundational ideological construct of the Polish *szlachta* in the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century, rested on a claim to ‘Eastern’, as opposed to Greco-Latin or European, ancestry. That claim did not prevent Polish noblemen from following some of the West European stereotypes of ‘the Orient’ but it does suggest that Polish attitudes to the so-called East were marked by a degree of ambivalence.

At this point a comment should also be made about the status of today’s Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine within the Commonwealth.¹⁴ The wording of the 1385 Polish-Lithuanian union was controversial and although Polish nobles expected to incorporate Lithuania, Lithuania preserved its statehood, separate institutions,

¹³ Recent work suggests that one can also talk about a Romantic, nineteenth century form of sarmatism (Waśko 2001).

¹⁴ Passages on Lithuanians, Belarusians and Ukrainians are based on contemporary work by historians from those countries – Orest Subtelny, Yaroslav Hrytsak, Jan Zaprudnik and Zigmantas Kiaupa – recommended to me by East European colleagues. Although my brief account cannot capture complex, diverse viewpoints, it gestures towards considering different historiographic traditions, which is imperative to discussing history from a postcolonial perspective. I condense questions which run through the historians’ books and do not provide page references.

army and treasury. In 1569 the union tightened despite dissent of some Lithuanians but certain separate institutions were preserved. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a state comprising ethnic Lithuanians (pagan Balts, converted to Catholicism in 1385) and Orthodox Ruthenians, i.e. Belarusians and Ukrainians. Ruthenian culture, dating back to the tenth-century Kiev Rus', was adopted by some Lithuanian nobles, Old Belarusian and Latin were the official languages, while Ruthenian nobles enjoyed a high status in the Duchy. In 1569 Poland annexed Ukrainian Volynha and Polesye, breaching earlier agreements.

Lithuanian and Ruthenian nobles tended to polonize. They were drawn to the more Westernized Polish culture for its prestige and for the lure of Polish nobles' extensive privileges. Although Poland dominated the union, adoption of the Polish language and identification with the political entity did not preclude Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian nobles from cultivating a separate ethnic identity. This was partly achieved by religion: adopting Protestantism or retaining Orthodoxy. However, due to Counter-Reformation pressures and consolidation of nobility as a dominant and uniform social group, by the end of the seventeenth century most Commonwealth nobles were Polish-speaking Catholics. Moreover, in the last years of the century Polish replaced Belarusian as the official language of Lithuania (based on Kiaupa 2002; Zaprudnik 1993; Subtelny 2009). Because the elites of the Duchy of Lithuania gradually polonized and territorial and governmental separation was generally observed, one cannot talk about Polish colonization in the sense defined earlier. The Ukrainian lands incorporated into Poland in 1569, however, were subject to Polish settlement and, according to Subtelny (2009), Ukrainian nobles' autonomy was abolished. Hence, that form of domination may have been closer to colonization.

Relationships between nobility and peasantry were exploitative; in the Grand Duchy and Ukraine the exploitation coincided with ethnic division, as peasants were predominantly Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian, spoke their languages and, except for Lithuanians, practised Orthodoxy. Still, the decisive division had a social rather than ethnic character, as Polish peasants who were brought to Ukraine blended in, adopting Ukrainian and Orthodoxy (Tazbir 1971:25). Seventeenth-century conflicts with predominantly Ukrainian Cossacks also had a class basis because the Cossacks (who were free frontiersmen fighting Tatars and Turks) rebelled when they were denied nobility and forced into serfdom. Peasant serfs were exploited in a feudal manner – by bondage, increasing *corvée* and dependence on the landowner's

jurisdiction – across the entire Commonwealth, regardless of peasants’ ethnic belonging (based on Zawadzki & Lukowski 2001, Kiaupa 2002, Zaprudnik 1993, Subtelny 2009). There was also a large Jewish population, based mostly in towns, which was discriminated against by some laws but, given that by contemporary standards Poland-Lithuania was a tolerant country, was able to prosper (Zawadzki & Lukowski 2001:54,80).

Renaissance and Baroque Representations of Non-Europeans

Poles belonged to Christian, European culture and shared a conviction of their superiority towards other continents. European superiority was asserted in ancient and medieval interpretations of the Bible, associating sons of Noah with continents and vocations. Japheth was supposed to have received Europe and was chosen to rule, Shem received Asia and was to prey, whereas Ham got Africa and was to work (Tazbir 1971:79). Polish authors, such as Marcin Bielski (c. 1495–1575), traced Polish origin to Japheth (ibid.). They also claimed that Europe boasted superior scholarship and arts, supreme trade and arms, flourishing Christianity, just political systems and a moderate climate. Non-Europeans were deemed despotic, barbaric and lacking in talents, learning, even beauty.¹⁵

Negative features were associated with non-Europeans indiscriminately and inhabitants of various lands were often lumped together. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century both the Americas, chartered after Spanish conquests, and India, Japan and parts of Africa were called the New World. A word denoting primarily a black African, *Murzyn*,¹⁶ was used for East Indians and Andalusian Moors too. ‘Indian’ denoted Native Americans and inhabitants of India. Knowledge of other continents was often derived from Bielski’s chronicle (1564) and translations of Giovanni Botero’s *Relazioni universali* (1595): both texts mixed ancient and contemporary sources, repeating fantastical hearsay (Baranowski 1950:34–35).

Muslim peoples, collectively called Arabs, Saracens or Turks, were held in abomination due to hostilities over Palestine and Poland’s conflicts with the Ottoman

¹⁵ Based on Tazbir’s (ibid.) references to Bielski’s *Kronika, to jest historia świata* (1564), Aleksander Gwagnin’s *Kronika Sarmacyjej Europejskiej* (1611), Władysław Łubieński’s *Świat w swoich częściach określony* (1740), Ignacy Krasicki’s *Zbiór potrzebniejszych wiadomości* (1781) and others.

¹⁶ The word derives from a Common Slavonic (*ogólnosłowiański*) word for ‘dark’; the same stem survives e.g. in *chmura*, or ‘cloud’ (Bańkowski 2000:226). The word *Murzyn/murzyn* (Negro/negro) is still used, although in official discourse it is now replaced with *czarny/a* (black) and *czarnoskóry/a* (black-skinned). Historical, prejudiced perceptions are preserved in common informal expressions, e.g. ‘sto lat za Murzynami’ (‘hundred years behind the Blacks’, backward).

Empire. Polish princes participated in the Crusades and Poles went on pilgrimages to Palestine. In their accounts pilgrims featured religious themes, being oblivious of the locals. Exceptions included the magnate Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, who described some customs from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. Another relevant genre was pseudo-theological attacks on Islam; e.g. in Catholic sermons from 1623, Mohammed was accused of sodomy, adultery and perjury (ibid.:178).

Turkey's proximity led to diplomatic and commercial contacts but Bohdan Baranowski (1950) assesses that Poles were too prejudiced against the dangerous neighbour to gather systematic knowledge of its culture and religion. The first Polish translation of the Qur'an was accomplished by a Polish Tatar, member of a Muslim minority, but Poles obtained information on Islam predominantly from Western scholarship and stereotypes (Danecki 1988:75–76). Szymon Starowolski's 1646 text on Turkish court, translated from Italian, was also influential, mostly for spicy depictions of court harem (Baranowski 1950:155–56). Some Polish envoys produced more panoramic accounts of Turkey, e.g. Erazm Otwinowski, who criticized the slave trade witnessed in Constantinople. Generally, except for some open-minded travellers and students of Oriental languages, Poles saw Arabs through the prism of religious enmity (ibid.:168,183,200). At the same time, Poles were inclined towards Oriental clothes, armoury and lifestyle objects, which they imported mostly from Turkey. The Orientalizing tastes were reflected in the look of Polish nobles, which would strike the West Europeans who came in contact with Poles in the seventeenth century as strange and Eastern (Tazbir 1971).

Early images of Africans related to religion: devils were portrayed as dark-skinned people and there were portrayals of African saints, e.g. St Maurice and St Augustine. One of the three Wise Men, who paid tribute to baby Jesus according to St Matthew's Gospel (2:1), was shown as an African, notably on a famous late fifteenth-century altarpiece in Krakow (see Fig. 5 & Fig. 6).

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the link provided below.]

Fig. 5 Wise Men; altarpiece by Veit Stoss, in St. Mary Basilica in Krakow. Source: <<http://gosc.pl/doc/1044219>> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

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Fig. 6 Altarpiece by Veit Stoss in St. Mary Basilica in Krakow. The Wise Men scene is located on the bottom of the left panel. Source: <<http://krakow.gosc.pl/doc/1376000.Oltarz-Stwosza-pod-mikroskopem>> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

Africans were represented as Christians, or Christians-to-be, in missionary texts (Tazbir 1971:81–83) but they also appeared as naked, man-eating savages in lay travel accounts (Ząbek 2005:44). Awe-inspiring depictions of Africans who served in the Turkish army appeared in works on Polish-Turkish wars¹⁷ (Tazbir 1971:89).

Early images of India appeared in accounts of missionaries, merchants and other travellers. The first known traveller from Poland was a Jew from Poznań, known as Gaspar da Gama, who settled in Bijapur and became Vasco da Gama's interpreter and guide in 1497. The first Polish account from India is a 1596 letter from Goa by a merchant, Krzysztof Pawłowski. Pawłowski commented on luxury goods (jewels, Arab horses), wild animals (elephants, tigers), local diet (rice and vegetarianism) and poverty (Góralski 1987:3–5). In the seventeenth century there was interest in Indian Christians and literary translations privileged Christian motifs (Tuczyński 1981:28–29). The work by Botero, mentioned earlier, offered a chaotic account, for example representing Brahmins as half-wild pagans worshipping monkeys and cows (Baranowski 1950:223).

From the Partitions to the Interwar Period (1772–1939)

I am now resuming the narrative on Polish history. Taking advantage of the weakness of the decentralized and war-torn Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in 1772 Russia, Prussia and Austria signed conventions about partitioning the country and together annexed one third of its territory. The threat of further annexations urged reforms, which were collected in a constitution proclaimed on 3 May 1791. However, Russia and Prussia curtailed the attempts at Poland's revival and partitioned the country again in 1793, leaving a rump state under Russian occupation. Poles fought against the aggressors led by Tadeusz Kościuszko, who had distinguished himself fighting against Britain in the American war of independence.

¹⁷ For instance, Wacław Potocki in *Transakcje wojny chocimskiej* (1670) emphasized their racial characteristics, describing their 'swollen lips' (*wargi napuchłe*) and the contrast between pitch black jaws and snow white teeth ('. . . z czerniejszej nad szmelce/ Paszczęki bielsze niż śnieg wyglądały kielce'), in: *Poeci polskiego baroku*, Warsaw: PIW, 1965, vol.2:14; after Tazbir 1971:89.

The 1794 uprising was crushed and the third and final Partition followed in 1795 (see Fig. 7). Danzig (Gdańsk), Poznań and Warsaw became part of Prussia, Krakow and Lwów part of Austria, and Wilno and Mińsk part of Russia. For a century to come, Poles were to undertake cultural and diplomatic initiatives and armed struggle to challenge the Partitions (Zawadzki & Lukowski 2001:88–103).

Military campaigns included the service of Polish legions under Napoleon in the last decade of the eighteenth century¹⁸ and of Polish soldiers from Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815) – a semi-autonomous state authorized by Napoleon in the Prussian and Austrian Partitions – marching with Napoleon against Russia in 1812. After Napoleon's defeat, the duchy was turned into Congress Kingdom, ruled by Russia, with the quasi-autonomous Duchy of Posen in the hands of Prussia and the free city of Krakow (ibid.:103–26). Two major uprisings broke out in the Kingdom: the November uprising (1830–31) and the January uprising (1863–64). They had their unique genealogies, spectacular successes and devastating defeats but both were ill prepared, lacking endorsement of elites and support of the disenfranchised peasantry. The insurgents resisted the formidable Russian army for over a year but they failed, bringing about repressions and political emigration. The uprisings have been criticized as unrealistic and harmful but patriotic sacrifice has been celebrated in national mythology (ibid.:26–54).

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig. 7 The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century. Source: Lukowski & Zawadzki 200:94–95.

In Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian lands some of the insurgents fought for reviving a Commonwealth in which they hoped to carve out some national autonomy. Importantly, modern national consciousness had begun to form among those groups at the beginning of the nineteenth century, due to ideas of the French Revolution and Romantic interest in peasantry and folklore. However, their goals were not necessarily compatible with Polish military leaders' visions (Kiaupa 2002; Hrytsak 2000).

¹⁸ After signing peace with Austria and Russia in 1801, Napoleon, somewhat ironically, dispatched Polish freedom fighters to quash an anti-colonial uprising in San Domingo (Haiti).

Imperial governance of the former Commonwealth lands varied depending on the period and territory. In the Russian Partition and Congress Kingdom (1815–64) Polish and Lithuanian laws, schools and elements of self-government were originally retained. Yet, persecution of patriotic and democratic thought and preventive censorship, together with thwarting of economic development, were sure reminders of dependence. After the November uprising self-government was abolished, schools, including the thriving university of Wilno, were closed and punitive repressions were introduced (executions, arrests, deportations to Siberia, confiscations). After the January uprising tougher Russification followed: the Kingdom status was revoked, Russian language was imposed at all levels of education, while executions, deportations and confiscations badly affected elites and the church. Russia's losses against Japan and attempted revolution in 1905 brought a thaw in language policy.

Prussia immediately imposed its administration and laws and dismantled Polish secondary schools after the Partitions. In the Duchy of Posen some gains of the Napoleonic period were preserved, as Polish was the language of administration and education. However, the concessions were gradually rescinded after the November uprising. After the January uprising Polish territories were fully integrated into Prussia and German became the official language. Besides, Otto von Bismarck's policy of *Kulturkampf*, i.e. clampdown on the Catholic Church, was vigorously pursued in Polish lands, which led to a strong interweaving of religious and national sentiments among Poles. Another tool of Germanization was a programme of land purchase, aimed at expropriating Poles and strengthening German settlement. The Prussian Partition was relatively industrialized, with much capital in German hands, and peasants benefitted from a land reform.

If Russia and Prussia made concessions to the post-Napoleonic Polish successor states to later rescind them, Austria acted the opposite way. After 1795 the Austrian administrative and legal system, censorship and German-language education were imposed. Only the city of Krakow had some autonomy between 1815 and 1846, when it was annexed in the aftermath of a failed uprising. However, when Austria transformed into a dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the Polish territories annexed by Austria gained parliamentary representation and linguistic freedoms (Krakow and Lwów universities reinstated Polish as the language of instruction). The

Partition thus became a haven of cultural activity (Zawadzki & Lukowski 2001:109–89). At the same time, it was proverbially poor and underdeveloped.

Generally, policies in all the partitioned Polish territories aimed at maintaining imperial control and although concessions were temporarily granted, aspirations of sovereignty were stifled. Foreign educational, legal and administrative systems were imposed and foreign ruling elites settled or resided in the controlled territories. Germany also ran mass settlement projects. Moreover, the lands were underdeveloped and exploited by metropolitan centres. Although in the nineteenth century absolutist rule in Russia, Prussia and Austria was being limited and Poles gained token parliamentary representation, they remained subjugated. In the light of the definitions adopted earlier, the Partitions can be seen as colonization. At the same time, differences between the colonizers and the colonized were less prominent than in the case of overseas colonization, particularly in terms of race, which allowed Poles to assimilate if they chose to.

During the time of the Partitions, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarusians experienced national and cultural revival, led by a new intelligentsia of peasant origin. Finding themselves not only under Polish domination but also under Russian, Prussian and Austrian rule, they manoeuvred between the two. Russia granted them cultural freedoms in exchange for loyalty but did not spare them during intense Russification. Poles were for them co-conspirators against a common enemy and potential partners in a federation state but Poles hardly sympathized with independence aspirations other than their own. Conflicts of national interests crystallized in the Austrian Partition, where Poles acquired autonomy but did not share it with Ukrainian political parties and organizations. Besides, by abolishing serfdom, the Russian tsar and Austrian emperor won some support of non-Polish peasants and aggravated the class-turned-national antagonism towards Polish landowners. The tensions escalated when the nations fought for sovereignty during World War One (Kiaupa 2002; Hrytsak 2000; Zaprudnik 1993). Among Polish Jewry modern parties also developed and the Zionist movement had some following (Polonsky 2009).

Poles fought in WWI (1914–18), hoping for a new international order; so did Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Belarusians. In 1918, after the defeat of Germany and Austria, Poland emerged as a sovereign country (see Fig. 8). Led by Marshall Józef Piłsudski, Poland also defended itself in a life-or-death war against the Bolsheviks in

1920. Poles temporarily escaped the fate of a Soviet province. Piłsudski's vision of including Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in a Poland-led federation failed as Lithuanians managed to create an independent state, while eastern Ukraine and Belarus, despite fierce resistance, was swallowed by the Soviet Union. Poland retained western Ukraine and Belarus and seized Wilno from Lithuanians, who were a minority in the city itself but considered it a historic capital (Kiaupa 2002:331).

After independence Poles faced the challenge of unifying and industrializing the lands of three Partitions, balancing foreign policy to survive between aggressive neighbours and dealing with ethnic minorities. Poland was parliamentary democracy but there were few stable governments. In 1926 Piłsudski seized power, after which Poland was ruled in an authoritarian manner.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig. 8 Rebirth of the Polish state, 1918–23. Source: Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:198–99.

Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians were treated in an inconsistent fashion but for most part they were under pressure to assimilate, had restricted access to education in their languages and were excluded from civil service, while Poles maintained positions of privilege and wealth in the 'eastern provinces'. About 200,000 Polish military personnel were settled there to monitor the Soviet threat but also control the minorities (Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:190–225). This treatment can be seen as colonization, because Poles imposed an educational, legal and administrative framework; as landowners they also benefitted economically. At the same time, except for the new military settlers, Polish presence in the territories often originated from Polonization of local families rather than settlement.

Enlightenment, Romantic and Modernist Representations of Non-Europeans

In the eighteenth century the Orientalized tastes of Polish nobles were strengthened but also refined when West European fascination with the Orient spread to Poland. According to Jan Reychman, the 'heavier', simpler and more military taste of the seventeenth-century Polish 'sarmatians' was slowly replaced by a fashion for

lighter and finer Oriental luxury items. Poles were most influenced by the Islamic Orient. Gifts from Turkish diplomats prompted a fashion for coffee, sorbets, delicate fabrics and Arab horses. Partly due to direct contacts with Turkey and partly because of the Western vogue, Polish nobles also took a fancy to Arabic perfumes, Indian tea, shawls and spices, as well as Far East-style lacquer furniture, china and pagodas. They decorated their manors with Oriental servants: some acquired ‘Turks’ or ‘Negroes’, others made their peasant servants wear pseudo-Oriental clothes and blackened faces.¹⁹ Impersonating Orientals was also common during masquerades and theatre performances with Oriental themes (Reychman 1964:16–180).

During the Enlightenment, Polish elites joined West European thinkers in their search for Oriental ideas, which would serve as a veiled rationalist critique of European conditions (ibid.:181–225,266–89). French versions of Arabic tales, *Les Mille et une nuits* (1704–17, trans. A. Galland), and Persian and Indian fables,²⁰ led to a proliferation of Polish translations, adaptations and imitations in the second half of the eighteenth century.²¹ Such prominent authors as Ignacy Krasicki used Oriental models for didactic purposes, satirizing folly and hypocrisy, and teaching virtue. Figures of just viziers, wise mandarins or astute animals were a guise for political satire, whereby Polish advocates of political reforms after 1772 targeted alleged narrow-mindedness, political myopia and disorder which plagued the country.²²

Jean Jacques Rousseau’s concept of the noble savage – idealizing non-civilized peoples and critiquing Europe for removal from natural goodness – also resonated with Polish thinkers.²³ Sympathy for the ‘savage’ was expressed by reinstatement of their humanity and condemnation of slavery, e.g. by Stanisław Staszic and Krasicki. Polish authors compared the yoke of black slaves and Polish serfs, protesting the inhumanity of both systems (Tazbir 1971:92), although these views co-existed with pragmatic apologies for slavery (Ząbek 2005:46–47). Generally, the reformers

¹⁹ King Sobieski had black servants, as did many magnates, e.g. Jerzy Ignacy Lubomirski, and even the less affluent gentry (Tazbir 1971:88–89).

²⁰Notably, *Esope en belle humeur*, trans. Charles Mouton (1707), and *Contes et fables indiennes de Bidpai et de Locman*, trans. Denis Dominique Cardonne and Antoine Galland (1778).

²¹ The first Polish version was *Ezop nowy polski* by J. S. Jabłonowski (Leipzig, 1731) (Reychman 1964:187).

²² For instance, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz’s fable ‘Sowa, zięba i krogulec’, where birds represent contemporary political entities, was subtitled as ‘a translation from Persian’. In *List turecki* (1790), ascribed to Jan Potocki, a Turkish pasha is a mouthpiece for critics of Polish politics (Reychman 1964).

²³ For example, in Krasicki’s utopian novel *The Adventures of Mr. Nicholas Wisdom* (1776; trans. Thomas H. Hoisington) the protagonist learns wisdom from a primitive tribe.

idealized non-European religions and societies as a repository of alternative socio-political solutions.

In the Age of Reason, Orientalist interests gained a scientific grounding with the separation of philology from theology, which traditionally informed study of Oriental (Biblical) languages. In Poland studying Oriental languages was a passion of enlightened magnates, such as Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski, who learnt Turkish, Arabic and Persian, exchanging correspondence with William Jones, a pioneering philologist and a colonial official in India. Academic centres developed in Protestant Danzig (Gdańsk) and in Wilno, among others. Study of Islam also advanced, moving beyond ignorant attacks (Reychman 1964:226–65).

Despite the reformist ideas, Europe's civilizational advantage over other peoples allowed and *de facto* legitimized overseas colonization. Although in the second half of the eighteenth century Poland was on the verge of political annihilation, a nobleman with Polish origins, Maurycy Beniowski, busied himself with colonizing Madagascar. The question of Beniowski's nationality is complex: born in Habsburg Hungary (today's Slovakia), he fought with Poles against Russia and after deportation to Kamchatka, escaped via Madagascar to France, where he obtained Louis XV's support to colonize the island. That he did, returning to Madagascar under a French banner in 1774. However, he was elected a ruler by local chiefs and, being familiar with Polish elective monarchy, he may have considered himself an independent king; he died fighting the French in 1786 (Bialas 1997:18–20). His popular French memoirs convey an Enlightenment mixture of patronizing and sympathetic attitudes to the Malagasy and praise for civilizing mission (Ząbek 2005:49). In Poland, Beniowski was later celebrated as a Polish traveller and conqueror.

Polish Romantics²⁴ continued the Enlightenment idealization of the Orient, seeking alternatives to European civilization but also a refuge for rebellious spirit and genealogy for Slavonic folklore. They preserved interest in the Islamic Orient, evident in Adam Mickiewicz's translation of George Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) or Mickiewicz's *Crimean Sonnets* (1826), written after his voyage to the Crimea. Izabela Kalinowska suggests that the sonnets emanate with ethnocentric Orientalism, as Polish travellers generally sought to reassert their Europeanness (2004:3), but

²⁴ Polish Romanticism: from 1822 (the first poetry volume by Adam Mickiewicz) to 1863 (January uprising). Source: *Encyklopedia PWN* online (Anon 2010a).

Mickiewicz was also sympathetic with Oriental peoples, granting a Tatar guide an important place in the poems. Kalinowska mentions an interpretation, presented e.g. by Jerzy Świdziński, that Mickiewicz's openness towards a local expressed solidarity with fellow victims of Russian imperialism (Crimea was conquered by Russia in the nineteenth century) and as such was a vehicle for an anti-imperialist message. This interpretation is interesting for my inquiry into the question of potential solidarity between Poles and non-European (post-)colonial peoples. Yet, Kalinowska finds it reductively political, suggesting instead that Mickiewicz was animated by the humanist ideal of respecting other cultures, which was part of Orientalism even if it conflicted with Eurocentric practices (ibid.:42–46). Besides, academic study of Arabic developed, allowing direct translations into Polish (Danecki 1988:78).

In the nineteenth century Polish poets and scholars 'discovered' India. The impulse came from translations of Sanskrit texts,²⁵ Orientalist study²⁶ and German literary thought, especially Friedrich Schlegel's praise of the Indian tradition. Johann Gottfried Herder proclaimed kinship of a pure and gentle Indian spirit with the Slavonic spirit, triggering studies of affinities between Slavonic folklore and Indian mythologies, as well as Slavonic languages and Sanskrit (Tuczyński 1981:33–110). Mickiewicz, born in Lithuanian Belarus, believed that Lithuanians descended from Indians, whom he admired for preserving the connection with nature and deity. His drama *Forefathers* Part II, named after a pagan custom of providing food offerings to the dead, apparently contains elements of Vedic animism (Tuczyński 1970:46), while Słowacki's poetry resonates with the concepts of pantheism and metempsychosis, e.g. in *Genesis from the Spirit* (1866, trans. K. Chodkiewicz, 1966) (Tuczyński 1981:75–81). Both poets were actively interested in Indian thought. One should also mention works on history: Joachim Lelewel's *Dzieje starożytne Indii* (1820, Ancient History of India) and a translation of J. Michaud's *Histoire des progrès et de la chute de l'Empire de Mysore , sous les règnes d'Hyder -Aly et Tippoo-Saib* (1801) by Franciszek Karpiński, whose preface, interestingly for my purpose, introduces a parallel between Indians' loss of independence and Polish Partitions (Tuczyński 1981:56).

²⁵ Notably, Jones's English translation of *Shakuntala* (1789), Charles Wilkins's English *Bhagawadgita* (1785) and Antoine-Léonard Chézy's French rendition of passages from *Ramayana*. Polish translations were rare and indirect, e.g. passages of *Ramayana* were translated after Chézy.

²⁶ Such centres as Fort William College in Calcutta or Paris university were source of materials and inspiration for Polish Orientalists in Wilno and Warsaw.

During the era of Positivism,²⁷ in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, there was interest in exploration of Africa, consolidating the ideology of the civilizing mission and introducing elements of civilizational evolutionism.²⁸ A major Warsaw weekly, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, published accounts of European explorers, such as David Livingstone²⁹ (Gołaszewski 2010). A Polish expedition to Cameroon (1882–84) was led by Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński (see Fig. 9), who had the support of such public figures as the writer Henryk Sienkiewicz. His aims were to advance science and found a Polish colony: the colonial project failed when Germany claimed Cameroon at the conference of European powers in Berlin (1884–85) but Szolc-Rogoziński delivered geographic and ethnographic descriptions, which were publicized in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (ibid.:42). Generally, *Tygodnik's* articles on Africa showcased African strangeness and savagery or praised Africans' physique and receptiveness to civilization. 'Scientific' information about distinct peoples transcended old clichés of African demons etc., but also consolidated European power over the continent.

By far the best-known text about Africa before WWI – and perhaps until today – was Sienkiewicz's 1911 adventure novel *W pustyni i w puszczy* (*In Desert and Wilderness*, trans. Max A. Drezmal, 1912).³⁰ Set in 1885 in Egypt, it follows the fourteen-year-old Pole Staś and a little English girl, Nel, who are kidnapped by Mahdi (leader of a historical Islamic rebellion against the British). Sienkiewicz's Arabs are treacherous and sinister infidels but the children luckily escape and travel through the continent to re-unite with their fathers, who work for Britain as engineers (Staś's father is an exile from the Russian Partition). On the way Staś and Nel defeat cannibals and wild beasts, saving the lives of a black man called Kali and a black girl, Mia, who become their companions and servants. Kali, a Man Friday character, is a likeable primitive, whose ungrammatical speech and peculiar morality – if Kali

²⁷ The current was characterized by advocacy of social and scientific development, inspired by scientific positivism, philosophical utilitarianism and literary realism (Anon 2010b).

²⁸ According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: an assumption in early anthropology that all cultures undergo the same linear evolution at varying speed, whence contemporary peoples can be classified as representatives of different evolutionary phases (Anon 2013c). I return to this assumption in Chapter Six, where I refer to it as the discourse of progressivism.

²⁹ Accounts from his 1865–73 expedition in south-east Africa appeared in July 1874 (Gołaszewski 2010).

³⁰ According to Jan Rybicki, the translation was revised by Mirosław Lipiński in 1994. Another translation of the novel appeared in 1912, *Through the Desert*, by Mary Webb Artois, but it received less attention (Rybicki 2012a). (I am grateful to Dr Jan Rybicki for sharing a version of his article when I was unable to secure access to the book publication; for that reason my references lack pagination).

steals a cow, that is good; if someone steals Kali's cow, that is bad³¹ – have been associated with Africa until today.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the link below.]

Fig. 9 Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński. Source: <<http://bi.gazeta.pl/im/3f/e7/c7/z13100863Q,Stefan-Szolc-Rogozinski.jpg>> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

Postcolonial re-readings of this immensely popular story demonstrate its affinities with colonial literature. In the novel, Africa is perceived as a pristine paradise to be explored and possessed, while native characters are stereotypically constructed and described through racial features (Cichoń 2004:98–101). The patriarchal, evolutionist hierarchy places a European man, however adolescent, at the top, before a European female, Arabs, an African man and, at the very bottom, an African woman. Staś and his father function in the novel as white Europeans, although critics ask if their Polishness and experience of Partitions impacted on their attitudes to non-Europeans. Anna Cichoń believes that despite being 'a member of a colonized nation', Staś's father ultimately adopts a West European perspective on Africa. She explains it with Sienkiewicz's respect for British civilizing zeal – like other Positivists, Sienkiewicz was an educator at heart – and his hope for Britain's diplomatic support for Polish independence (ibid.:105). Anna Kłobucka notes that Staś inquires into the reasons of Mahdi's rebellion but an adult Englishman makes him accept the British viewpoint (2001:252), preventing him from exploring a 'Polish-African interplay of identities' (ibid.:248).

Another notable development was interest in Indian thought in the period of Young Poland.³² The idea that the Orient holds solutions to Europe's problems, encapsulated in the phrase *Ex Oriente Lux*, existed in Positivism but gained prominence in Young Poland. Hindu and Buddhist ideas of monism, pantheism, illusion of existence and release from existence – in Arthur Schopenhauer's pessimist interpretation or an affirmative interpretation popularized by Rabindranath Tagore –

³¹ Interestingly, after Kali's moral relativism is reported, Sienkiewicz's narrator announces that in Europe similar views are held by politicians and entire nations (the comment is probably directed against the powers which deprived Poland of independence or accepted the Partitions). That the peculiar morality is said to occur in Europe does not, however, alter the fact that it is first and foremost ascribed to Kali.

³² A modernist current, characterized by aestheticism, impressionism and symbolism in literature and arts, as well as Romantic and folklorist inspirations; prominent between c. 1890 and 1918 (Anon 2010c).

intrigued major poets, e.g. Jan Kasprowicz (1860–1926), Leopold Staff (1878–1957) and Bolesław Leśmian (1877–1937). The ideas informed their poetic treatment of such themes as nature and death, and such moods as decadence, affirmative humbleness or vitality. Indian thought was available through translations of Indian texts,³³ influence of European philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and work of Polish Orientalists (Grabowska 1988:97–100; more detailed account in Tuczyński 1981:111–80).

The Polish reception of Tagore also indicated an intense interest in India. The first translations appeared in magazines in 1913, the year of Tagore's Nobel Prize for Literature (Grabowska 1988:98), and about thirty book translations were published in the independent country between 1918 and 1939 (Walter 2006). Translators worked from Tagore's English versions and from German translations (*ibid.*), and some poetry was translated by distinguished poets, notably Kasprowicz and Staff. Several translators labelled their products as having been 'recreated' or 'paraphrased', rather than strictly 'translated' (*ibid.*:106), which implies a free approach to texts.

Agnieszka Kowalska argues that Tagore's Polish translations were infused with mannerisms of modernist Poland, obscuring the simplicity of his English (Kowalska 1961:267). The translations contributed to a perception of Tagore as an 'Indian mystic', which denied his intellectual clarity, perpetuating Eurocentric views of India (*ibid.*:274,278). Polish journalists repeated invocations of mystical genius after West European criticism, although informed articles by Polish Orientalists also appeared (Kowalska 1961). Interestingly, writing about French translations of Tagore, the critic Edward Leszczyński mused that Polish was best suited for translating Tagore because of similar sensitivities and a 'religious', 'knightly' and 'wistful' character of Polish poetry, stemming from ancient Slavonic legacy (E.L. 1913:151). Leszczyński's comparison resonated with the Romantic ideas of Slavonic-Indian kinship, although his view of Tagore as a 'poet-mystic' followed the reductive Western perceptions.

The most influential images of non-Europeans in the first half of the twentieth century derived from children's and youth literature. This includes Sienkiewicz's novel, translations of such adventure classics as Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), H.

³³ Notably fragments of *Mahabharata*, *Nali Damajanti* (J. Leciejewski from German, 1884; A. Lange from Sanskrit, 1906) and *Shakuntala* (from German: J. Grabowski, 1861, and T. Krasnosielski, 1871; from Sanskrit: K. Strzelecki 1905), as well as *Bhagavadgita* (1910) and *The Upanishads* (1913), translated from Sanskrit by S.F. Michalski (Grabowska 1988:97–98).

Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Princess* (1905) and Karl May's novels.³⁴ Another impactful representation of Africa emerged from Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1902), which was first translated into Polish in 1930.³⁵ There were also influential new Polish texts, especially the comic-style books about monkey Fiki-Miki and little Murzynek (Negro) Goga-Goga (1935–36) by Kornel Makuszyński and Marian Walentynowicz³⁶ and Julian Tuwim's poem 'Murzynek Bambo' (1935; Little Negro Bambo). Written by eminent authors, these two texts have been immensely popular.³⁷ The books show the monkey and the boy travelling the world and escaping adversities thanks to wit, skill and kindness. The poem depicts a black boy and his daily routine, not dissimilar to that of Polish children (see Fig. 10 and caption).

Today, one is struck by exaggerated racial characteristics in the illustrations and descriptions: Goga-Goga's protruding lips and eyes contrasted with black face (see Fig. 11) or seven references to colour in the eighteen-line 'Bambo'. Scholars also find characters' names stereotypical due to onomatopoeic links with drum-beating (the rhythmic 'Bam-bo') and baby's babble (Polish *gaworzenie*, often shortened to *ga-ga*) (Sosnowski 2005; Moskalewicz 2005). Moreover, scholars argue that the 1930s texts for children dramatize processes of civilization and socialization rooted in European Enlightenment ideals: Miłosz Sosnowski convincingly interprets Fiki-Miki's and Goga-Goga's travels as ascent from wildness/immaturity towards civilized rationality/adulthood, while Marcin Moskalewicz takes tenets of postcolonialism and psychoanalysis to the extreme to read Africa (symbolized by Bambo) as Freudian id resisting the super-ego, which operates through the figures of mother and Western education.

³⁴ Seventeen titles by Kipling, sixteen by Stevenson and ten by Haggard appeared in the Interwar period (*Kim* had four editions). However, May, the German author who created the popular Native American character Winnetou, led the way with sixty-nine titles (Wnęk 2006).

³⁵ The novella has been translated into Polish at least six times to date (Biblioteka Narodowa catalogue search at <http://alpha.bn.org.pl/>). My study of Polish reviews of postcolonial literature, presented in the thesis, confirms that Conrad's title and imagery have become a major point of reference in Polish thinking about Africa.

³⁶ Three books: *Awantury i wybryki małej małpki Fiki-Miki, Fiki-Miki dalsze dzieje: kto to czyta ten się śmieje, Na nic płacze, na nic krzyki koniec przygód Fiki-Miki*. An English translation: *The Adventures of Piki-Miki*, by E. A. Arthurton (1946).

³⁷ The first 'Fiki-Miki' book has been re-edited at least thirteen times and the later books at least eight times. This includes twenty-first century editions. Source: Biblioteka Narodowa catalogue, at <http://alpha.bn.org.pl/>. 'Murzynek Bambo' was included in the most used twentieth-century school primer by Marian Falski and is considered a 'microelement' of Polish culture (Moskalewicz 2005:262).

After regaining statehood some Poles hoped to join a colonial race and began to brandish colonial banners: demands for colonies were concomitant with patronizing attitudes towards non-Europeans. The agitation was led by the Maritime and Colony League (*Liga Morska i Kolonialna*), whose president announced, ‘[t]he sea programme is extremely closely linked to . . . an *overseas* programme’ (Głuchowski 1928:27; emphasis added). According to Głuchowski, Poland should obtain colonies *per se* or condominium to be harnessed to the Polish economy (but not administration). In the worst case, Poland should manage emigration, so that overseas settlements preserve links with the Motherland. The rationale was nationalistic: for a healthy development Poland needs raw materials, overseas trade and settlement space to tackle overpopulation and high concentration of Jewry (*ibid.*). The idea of resettling Polish Jews overseas was regularly raised by the League. In a contemporary article, Grażyna Borkowska notes that the demands resembled those of Germany, even if Poles claimed that their nationalism was less aggressive (2007:21).

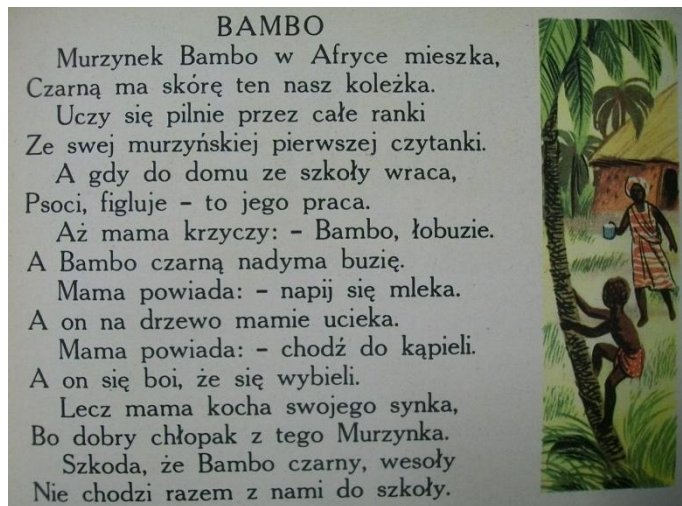


Fig. 10 ‘Murzynek Bambo’ in Marian Falski’s primer, edition from 1959, p.161. My unrhymed, philological translation of the poem: Little Negro Bambo lives in Africa./ That friend of ours has black skin./ He studies hard all mornings / From his black-children’s Primer./ And after coming home from school/ He studies pranks and frolics – that’s his job./ Finally, Mum shouts, Bambo, naughty boy!/ And he just puffs out his black cheeks./ When Mum says, Come, have some milk,/ He runs away and climbs a tree./ Mum says, Come, take a bath./ And he’s afraid that he will whiten./ But Mum loves her little son./ Because he’s a good black boy./ What a pity that merry black Bambo/ Doesn’t go with us to school.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the link below.]

Fig. 11 Cover of *Awantury i wybryki malej malpki Fiki-Miki*. Source: <http://merlin.pl/Awantury-i-wybryki-malej-malpki-Fiki-Miki_Kornel-Makuszyński/browse/product/1,173275.html> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

The League vigorously promoted colonial aspirations, so much so that ‘from an ephemeral organization, comprising several thousand people . . . , [it] became a mass organization of a million members in the late 1930s’³⁸ (ibid.:2007:16). It published colony-themed articles in its monthly *Morze* (later *Morze i Kolonie* – see Fig. 12). It also organized country-wide ‘Colonial Days’ celebrations (see Fig. 13), educational activities,³⁹ and paramilitary units for future colonial service. Moreover, the League supported reconnaissance expeditions to settlement destinations, publishing of travel reports and international lobbying. Angola, Cameroon, Ecuador, Madagascar, Nicaragua and other places were actively considered (Jarnecki 2010; T. Białas 1983).

The claims were legitimized with exploits of Polish discoverers – had Beniowski represented an existing state, Madagascar would be Polish, or so the argument went (Głuchowski 1928:29) – or right to succession after post-1918 Germany. Głuchowski argued that Poles had served in the German colonial police, so Poland deserved a percentage of German colonies. Borkowska stresses that League ideologues capitalized on Poles’ participation in the German imperial project and not, as one tends to think today, Poland’s oppression under Germany (2007:18). The League was not a governmental body, although some politicians endorsed it and its projects were debated in the parliament (Borkowska 2007).

³⁸ The population was nearly 32 million according to 1931 census (Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:207).

³⁹ For instance, school children were invited to submit a model of Polish colonial settlement or essay on colonial policies; prizes included trips to the seaside, which must have been quite attractive (*Morze i Kolonie*, 4(1939):24). Is this journal refernecing system consistent with bibliography?

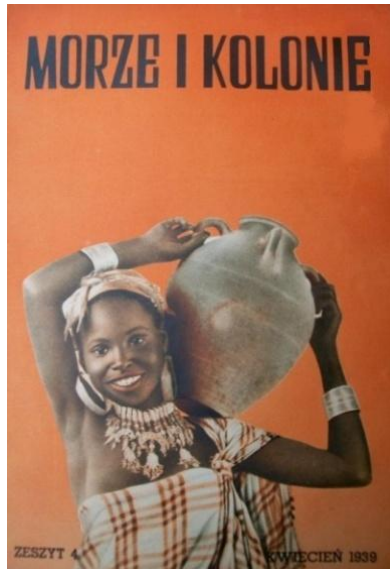


Fig. 12 *Morze i Kolonie* cover, April 1939.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig. 13 Colonial Days celebrations in Katowice, 1938. The banner reads: ‘We demand overseas colonies for Poland’. Source: *Karta* 2011 (69):36, at www.ceeol.com.

The League’s rhetoric signalled imperial sentiments, not least in the perceptions of non-Europeans. *Morze* and the books published under the League’s aegis abounded in colonial stereotypes and echoed old Polish representations of Africans (Kwiatek 2011). For example, native Angolans were described as a ‘black throng of half-naked citizens, flashing snow white teeth and the whites of their eyes’,⁴⁰ which resembles seventeenth-century depictions of Africans, quoted earlier. Africans were also associated with devil and cannibalism, and shown to be lazy, carefree and immature.⁴¹ Kwiatek concludes that Poles identified with Europe’s colonial project to enhance their self-esteem, prestige and economy (ibid.:37,46). The League’s legacy was hardly known in post-war Poland.

From World War Two to the End of Communism (1945–1989)

On 1 September 1939 Hitler attacked Poland and Stalin’s attack followed seventeen days later: the ensuing six-year extermination, violence and occupation are

⁴⁰ A. Paszkowicz, *Wśród Murzynów Angoli*, Lwów & Warsaw, 1932:32, after Kwiatek 2011:34.

⁴¹ Kwiatek (2011:37) quotes the following, emphatic statement: ‘in the name of human rights, Negroes must be under our guardianship until . . . a new psyche of the black race emerges’, by Franciszek Lyp, ‘Międzynarodowa kontrola nad Liberią’, *Morze* 1931(10–11):43.

a traumatic time in Polish and, of course, Jewish memory. Poland bore the brunt of the German Blitzkrieg after which the country was partitioned, its western parts incorporated into Germany or administered by Nazis as Government General and eastern territories mostly annexed by the USSR. Under German and Soviet occupation Poles were murdered (at the outset of the war Polish elites in particular were targeted, which led to the secret executions of Polish army officers by the Soviets and incarceration of Krakow academics by the Nazis), sent to concentration camps, terrorized, deported and used as slave labour. Besides, education was severely restricted and organizations were outlawed, although state structures and an army (Home Army) functioned underground. The Nazis planned to use Slavs for labour, while Jews and the Roma became victims of genocide (Lukowski & Zawadzki:225–49). Timothy Snyder estimates that three million Polish Jews were killed during the war, many of them shot, others gassed in death camps (2010:275). The death toll of (non-Jewish) Poles was also estimated at around three million people.

In the eastern territories of pre-war Poland the USSR fuelled ethnic conflicts, granting Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians rights and pitting them against Poles, particularly the landowners and former administrators. The freedoms were later withdrawn and indiscriminate Sovietization followed. After Hitler's offensive against Stalin in 1941 the territories fell under ruthless German occupation but after the victory of Stalingrad in 1943, Stalin re-established his grip to eventually incorporate them into the USSR. For Belarusians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians the incorporation shattered hopes for statehood; in Poland it was remembered as a loss of Polish *Kresy* (Fringes or Borderlands). Mutual violence between Poles and Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians under Nazi and Soviet occupation left scars on later relationships and reinforced nationalist views of the common past. Despite Poles' contributions to the Allied success, their hopes were frustrated too. Stalin wanted Poland as a nominally independent satellite country with a reduced territory, to which Britain and the USA agreed at the Yalta conference (1945). Poland was to be 'compensated' with ex-German territories, inclusive of Silesia and Pomerania.

According to the historian David Furber (2004), the Nazi occupation of Poland can be viewed as attempted colonization, where a 'ruling minority of expatriates depended upon support from the metropolis while disdaining the host culture as inferior to the imperial culture' (ibid.:578). Germany implemented settlement

policies and restructured the entire economy for its profit, not least by introducing slave labour. Furber notes differences from the overseas model – e.g. cultural proximity, particularly evident in the former Prussian Partition, which Germans tried to erase by rigorous racial classifications – but he also demonstrates that explicit colonial terminology was used in the German discourse on Polish lands, e.g. in the diaries of Hans Frank, governor of the Government General (ibid.:551–52).

Poland emerged from the war reshaped territorially, devastated and dependent on the USSR (see Fig. 14). In the following paragraphs I subdivide the period 1945–89 into: Stalinism (1945–56); Wiesław Gomułka’s party leadership until 1970, Edward Gierek’s leadership until 1980 and General Wojciech Jaruzelski’s rule until 1989.⁴² The landmark dates – 1956, 1970, 1980 – mark protests, followed by replacement of party bosses and short-lived thaws, followed by growing repressions and culminating in another anti-communist outburst. Poland between 1945 and 1989 is often called ‘communist’, although full communism was never introduced. I use this convention but I also use ‘PRL’, i.e. the acronym for *Polska Republika Ludowa* (People’s Republic of Poland), which is common in Polish.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7). Please see the reference below.]

Fig.14 Poland’s ‘move to the west’, 1945. The territories marked with dark grey were transferred from Germany to Poland; the light grey territories were incorporated by the USSR. Source: Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:246–47.

Sovietization of Poland, aided by indoctrination and terror, was at its peak under Stalinism. A small Polish communist Party, comprising mostly Moscow-trained communists, established itself in 1944 and created shadow government and institutions, which lacked legitimacy but had the Red Army’s backing. In the first post-war years there was a degree of pluralism, the country was being rebuilt and several million people were being resettled. Poles from the former eastern provinces were moved to ex-German territories, from where Germans were removed westwards. However, by 1948 communists had defeated anti-communist Home Army guerrilla units, annihilated or co-opted legal opposition and rigged elections, giving the party a power monopoly. Protest against the dire economic situation,

⁴² The remaining part of this section is based on Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:250–89 and Paczkowski 2003.

terror and Red Army brutality were checked by force, further terror and police infiltration.

Enforced nationalization strengthened, as did Marxist indoctrination: schools adopted Soviet curricula and taught Russian as a foreign language to all pupils, citizens of all ages were drafted into committees and organizations, their participation and enthusiasm scrupulously monitored, the church was prosecuted, while artists were made to churn out works of social realism: conservative in form and crudely didactic. The communists appreciated the power of Polish patriotism, hijacking historical symbols for their propaganda. Imposition of the new order was overseen by an exuberant security apparatus, politicized judiciary and ubiquitous censorship, and by Stalin, who controlled the Polish Party and army. Stalin died in 1953. In the following years, Party leaders in the USSR as in Poland condemned the Stalinist terror. In Poland discontent with poverty and Soviet influence led to mass protests in Poznań in 1956: although the Party brutally dealt with protesters, to appease the society it promised a new beginning with Gomułka as the first secretary.

The thaw of 1956 brought much-welcomed changes although hopes for democratization proved premature. Concessions were made to the church, while control of cultural production and foreign travel was eased. Gomułka re-negotiated some points of Polish-Soviet relations, e.g. removal of a Soviet commander-in-chief from the Polish army. However, Gomułka opposed substantial reforms and soon clamped down on independent thought. The economic situation worsened and discontent grew, vented at patriotic and religious occasions such as celebrations of a millennium of Polish Christianity in 1966. The church provided a base for expression of oppositional sentiments.

Another crisis erupted in 1968, when student-led protests broke out after a staging of Mickiewicz's *Forefathers* was banned for anti-Russian content. Besides, vying for power within the party, the hard-liners launched a nationalist campaign, using anti-Semitic slogans (the immediate context for the anti-Semitism was the severing of diplomatic relationships with Israel after the 1967 Israeli-Egyptian war). The shameful campaign led to expulsion of about 13,000 of Polish Jews.⁴³ Besides, in 1970 strikes erupted on the coast, in response to food prices increases, and after

⁴³ These events are depicted for example in a 2006 Polish-language film, *Rachela na Dworcu Gdańskim*, directed by Ewa Szprynger.

workers were shot down, protests spread. Again, a leadership change and promises of reform prevented escalation of the conflict.

Throughout the 1970s – which is the period included in my study of reviews – the party was led by Edward Gierek, who initially implemented liberalized policies but frustrated hopes for long-term change. Welcomed by many as an energetic, well-travelled technocrat, Gierek invested huge Western loans in heavy industry. With the influx of money, living conditions temporarily improved; Poles also benefitted from liberal cultural politics and opportunities for contact with the West. Yet, in the mid-1970s poor economic results and the burden of paying interest on the loans brought another crisis. Gierek tried to hide information about the crisis and silence criticism by strengthened censorship and mendacious success propaganda.

In the second half of the decade the relationships between society and government worsened and new forms of opposition emerged. In 1976, food shortages and price rises triggered new strikes. An underground Committee for the Defence of Workers was formed to help the persecuted strikers (one of the members was Adam Michnik, whose article on postcolonial literature is discussed later). The Committee brought together workers and intellectuals. In 1976 underground publishing emerged, supplying uncensored press and books. In 1978 the archbishop of Krakow Karol Wojtyła became Pope John Paul II: his Polish pilgrimages drew millions and his sermons nurtured an oppositional spirit. In 1980 strikes swept across the country and protesters joined forces, creating a nation-wide trade union ‘Solidarity’ (*Solidarność*). ‘Solidarity’, led by Lech Wałęsa, turned into a tremendous social movement of over ten million members within a year.⁴⁴ Gierek resigned.

The 1980s opened with the fanfare of ‘Solidarity carnival’ – over a year of public life liberalization – and ended with a victory of the anti-communist movement; in between were long years of political tension. In 1980, Solidarity won some concessions, including legalization of the union, and the thaw allowed intellectual and grass root activity to flourish. It came to an end with the imposition of martial law in December 1981, detention of Solidarity activists and suspension of social organizations. General Jaruzelski proclaimed the move as necessary to avoid Soviet intervention. Martial law ended in mid-1983, followed by years of political

⁴⁴ The population of Poland in 1980 is estimated at 35.7 million people (*Encyklopedia PWN* online, at <<http://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/4575071/polska-ludnosc.html>> (last accessed 20 July 2013)).

stalemate. Solidarity continued clandestine activities and Wałęsa's 1983 Nobel Peace prize and papal visits in 1983 and 1987 were enthusiastically received.

In the late 1980s the Soviet *perestroika*, or restructuring of economy and government, together with economic crisis made the Polish Party agree to restore political pluralism. In 1989, Solidarity was re-legalized and granted a share in the government. Although the Party retained guaranteed parliamentary seats and offices, Solidarity's victory in the free elections in June 1989 signified the end of a one-party system. In December, the official name of People's Republic was eschewed and the constitutional guarantees of socialism and Soviet 'friendship' were expunged. Near half a century of Soviet domination and socialist economy was over and the country was entering a period of transformation.

Scholars have mobilized postcolonial criticism to ponder Poland's relationship with the USSR. The criteria mentioned earlier – an alien state seizing power, imposing laws, education and the mode of production – fit in many respects. Yet, the USSR did not rule Poland directly but, in the name of international socialism, maintained control over the *Polish* ruling party. Therefore, one cannot draw a clear line between 'alien' rulers and the ruled, even if originally Polish communists were treated as Soviet agents and later Party elites were estranged from society and referred to as 'they'. Still, up to a million citizens were party members, whether for ideological or pragmatic reasons. Unlike in overseas colonies where ethnic difference precluded confusion between the rulers and the ruled, and native collaborators of the colonizers could not join their ranks, in Poland there was no immediate external – i.e. racial, ethnic, national or linguistic – difference between a communist and non-communist. Regarding Poland's relationships with Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians, they were officially correct because the nations were part of the USSR.

Communist Period Representations of Non-Europeans

Poland's position as a Soviet satellite determined new, official attitudes to the 'third world' but pre-war perceptions lingered on. The amount of relevant representations grew rapidly and I can only present a selection of what I consider the salient images. I should note that the representations appeared in censored media (some implications of the fact are discussed in Chapter Two). My study of reviews of postcolonial literature contributes to understanding Polish perceptions of non-Europeans in the period.

As a satellite country Poland adopted the Soviet vision of comradely solidarity with developing countries. The PRL policy towards developing countries was summarized as ‘solidarity and aid’ (Pałyga 1986:111): it involved economic help and spreading Marxist ideology (ibid.). Polish delegates demanded the end of Western colonialism at United Nations forums and diplomatic relationships were established with postcolonial countries. Poland also offered technologies, such as plants or refineries, expert help and training of local personnel (see Fig. 15, Fig. 16 & Fig. 17). The aid often consisted of interest-bearing credit, where payment for Polish goods and expertise was deferred and the conditions were relatively profitable for the Polish economy (R. Bass & E. Bass 1964).⁴⁵ Besides, participation in the aid programmes benefitted Polish professionals, posted in developing countries by the state-run agency ‘PolSERVICE’. For example, in Nigeria Poles could indulge in a lifestyle reminiscent of ex-colonizers’ comforts – comprising luxurious housing, servants or consumer goods – which were unattainable in shortages-stricken Poland. Supposedly, Poles differed from the former colonizers in their more egalitarian attitude towards Africans (Ząbek 2005:56).



Fig. 15 From Jerzy Stępowski’s article ‘Made in Poland in the Third World’. The caption reads: Nearly forty Polish doctors are now in Africa. Surgeon Dr Sierpiński and nurse M. Siejka during treatment in a hospital in Thysville, Congo. *Kontynenty* 1964(6):3.

⁴⁵ Robert and Elizabeth Bass report that East European countries tended to offer loans repayable over four-five years at 2–7 per cent interest rate. As the USSR offered better conditions, the authors suggest that the satellite countries sought economic gain in a “capitalist” fashion. I am not able to assess this claim, as the authors do not mention the conditions of capitalist countries’ aid. + have anti-comm. agenda

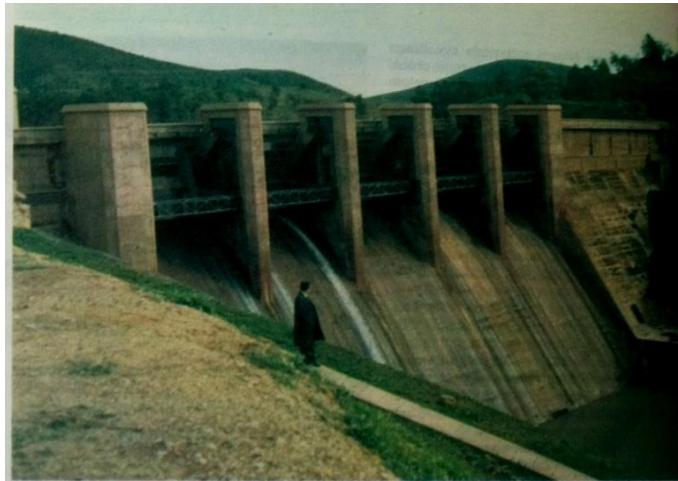


Fig. 16 From Genowefa Czekala's article 'Through Polservice to Africa'. The caption reads: Many dams and water bodies were built during engineer Marciniak's stay in Morocco. *Kontynenty* 1977(4):12.



Fig.17 From Bożena Jasińska's article 'Four hundred [Africans] with our student ID's'. The caption reads: Malians on an internship in a cement plant in Chełmno [Poland]'; *Kontynenty* 1977(4):39.

Regarding the ideological underpinnings of the aid, in Polish articles the exported goods and services were presented as testimony to the technological and economic advancement of socialism (Czekala-Mucha 1977; Stępowski 1964). Developing countries were referred to respectfully as partners but I think that there was also a self-congratulatory note, echoing both contemporary socialist propaganda and older discourses of European seniority and civilizing mission. Interest in African and Asian countries was also pursued through the activities of the Committee for Solidarity with African, Asian and Latin American nations, mentioned in the Introduction, the Society of Polish-African Friendship (Szyr 1977:4) or the Society for Polish-Libyan Friendship, which published a monthly *As-Sadaka*. More attention was lavished on the countries which were inclined towards socialism, for example

Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser (ruled 1954–70) and Libya under Muammar al-Qaddafi (ruled 1969–2011), although the ideological criterion was not decisive for economic contacts.

The whole Soviet policy of ‘aid’ to the third world can be variously assessed. Monica Popescu states that ‘scholars are still debating whether this assistance was completely disinterested or whether winning the gratitude of new states helped to augment or buttress the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War’ (Popescu 2012:183; after Matusevich 2008:55). It may be unrealistic to expect any state policies to be ‘completely disinterested’ but the question remains, to what extent Polish and Soviet interests coincided with the interests of the third world countries included in the aid projects.

Popescu (2012) pioneers in looking at Cold War rivalries from the perspective of postcolonial authors and suggests that – despite the commonly held view that the third world was but a pawn in the imperial game – in fact these authors skilfully seized the opportunities offered by both sides. She studied the account of Lewis Nkosi, a South African author, from his stay in Warsaw in the 1980s, demonstrating that while Nkosi was invited by the communist government, he retained independent judgement in his perceptions of communism and Poland. He noted both the Party’s corruption, the warm reception he experienced in the country and the patronizing or racist treatment he received too (and sometimes found amusing). Subscribing to Popescu’s general point about the complexity of Cold War relationships, I would imagine that in Poland the official notion of solidarity with third world countries may have rung hollow resonating with communist propaganda but, in one form or another, for some people it may have been a meaningful ideal.

Oriental studies institutes functioned at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and the University of Warsaw: drawing on pre-war traditions, they expanded to include more areas and modern languages and literatures. They embraced new opportunities for academic exchange, facilitated by the PRL’s cordial diplomatic relationships with some non-European countries, although, like the whole academia, they suffered from governmental control. In addition to Indian and Arabic studies (and other areas of Oriental studies which are not included in this account), the African Studies Institute was founded at the University of Warsaw in the 1960s to foster contacts with decolonizing Africa. The Institute offered mandatory

postgraduate courses for Polservice employees posted to work in Africa (Winid & Słojewska 1977).

Polish contacts with other cultures were informed by textual representations, both by pre-war ‘classics’ such as *In Desert and Wilderness* (which was made into a successful film in 1973) and contemporary writing, including a youth series by Alfred Szklarski and reportage by Ryszard Kapuściński. Translations of postcolonial writing are an important part of this development and I discuss them in Chapter Two.

Szklarski’s series about young Tomek captivated generations of adolescent readers. It resembles *In Desert and Wilderness*: Tomek and his father also travel to other continents as exiles from partitioned Poland. In both novels ‘Africa . . . is a place where boys become men’ and assume command over natives (Rybicki 2012b). Regarding the question whether Tomek and his father feel solidarity with colonized peoples, contemporary critics give different answers. Mirosława Buchholtz argues that the father talks about (Australian) natives with sympathy, of which only people ‘who fell victim of colonization themselves’ are capable (2009a:121). In Rybicki’s view, Szklarski writes ‘in the spirit of optimistic nineteenth-century colonialism’, irrespective of communist-style political correctness, and his characters strongly identify with European civilization (2012b).

In addition to fiction, travel writing or extended reportage was an important vehicle of representing distant cultures. Ryszard Kapuściński (1932–2007) was a master of the genre and an authority on things postcolonial. As a journalist Kapuściński travelled to third world countries and reported on revolutions and coups; he also described the upper echelons of governments and ordinary people in his books.⁴⁶ His work espouses communist revolutionary values and communist ideals of solidarity among people struggling against poverty, injustice, imperialism.

He also voiced the ideal of Polish-postcolonial solidarity, when he pondered why Poles subscribed to racist stereotypes, which Western countries had created as alibi for slave trade and colonization:

Poles did not participate in either of those practices . . . In fact, in the nineteenth century our situation resembled that of Africa more than

⁴⁶His books include: *Cesarz*, on the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie (1978; *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*); *Szachinszach*, on the last Iranian shah (1982; *Shah of Shahs*); *Imperium*, on the former Soviet Union (1993; *Imperium*); and *Heban*, on Africa (2001; *The Shadow of the Sun*). The first two books were translated by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, the latter two by Klara Glowczewska.

Switzerland or Holland, for example: we were a colony of the neighbouring powers. Tanganyika, Poland, Rwanda-Burundi: those were colonies ruled from Berlin at that time. Why didn't the common experience bring solidarity? (Kapuściński, *Lapidarium III*, after Domosławski 2010:411)

The assurance that Poland had no colonies confirms official condemnations of colonialism (activities of the Maritime League were conveniently forgotten) and Kapuściński's choice of Germany as Poland's colonizer in this example may partly stem from an ideological allegiance which prevented him from targeting Russia. His views aligned with the PRL foreign policy and although he left the Party during the martial law in 1981 he never denounced leftist ideals of international solidarity. Allegedly after 1989 Kapuściński adapted his vocabulary in public but still talked about 'imperialism or 'reactionary forces' in private (ibid.:309). Kapuściński's calls for international solidarity are consistent and seem meaningful even if their ideological purport coincided with crude propaganda.

Kapuściński's oeuvre is marked by ambivalence as solidarity coexists with Orientalist attitudes to his subjects. He was praised for portrayals of postcolonial countries, for instance by Salman Rushdie, but criticism also surfaced. For instance, a *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer wrote, '[Kapuściński's] writing about Africa is a variety of latter-day literary colonialism, a kind of gonzo orientalism' (Ryle 2001; see also Domosławski 2010:409–10; Janion 2006:228–41). The accusation was strengthened by the Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina, who finds Kapuściński guilty of homogenizing and exoticizing Africa but also of racism. Alluding to Achebe's claim that Conrad was a racist, Wainaina expresses concern that readers are 'entranced by [Kapuściński's] Polish-flavoured, left-leaning, Rider Haggard world of strange, voiceless, dark peoples doing strange, voiceless, dark things' (2007). Wainaina implies that Polishness and socialism, which Kapuściński treats as grounds for solidarity with postcolonial countries, only gave the author a minoritarian halo and a license to write irresponsibly with impunity.

Agnieszka Sadecka (2012) finds ambivalent attitudes to non-Europeans in other reportages or travelogues from the period. She analyses travelogues on India by Jerzy Ros (*Indyjskie wędrówki*, 1957) and Wojciech Giełżyński (*W kraju świętych krów i biednych ludzi*, 1977), to find that both authors reviled European colonialism and advocated socialism and international solidarity. Yet, they also conjured up visions of exotic mystery, referring to such Orientalist classics as *The Arabian*

Nights, and exhibited a sense of their superiority and modernity as Europeans. On the whole, the travel writing of Kapuściński and others captures the co-existence of entrenched patronizing views and a new discursive framework of socialist solidarity.

From 1989 to 2010

Post-1989 reforms were rapid, bringing political independence, makeover of drab Polish streets with colourful advertisements and new shops, as well as new social divisions. Privatization benefitted many but dissolution of inefficient state-run companies caused unemployment. Some resented that, as part of the transition deal, former communists and secret police informers were not removed from public life and were able to profit from privatization. In the first half of the decade post-Solidarity candidates were elected: Wałęsa was President until 1995 and right-wing and Christian parties created several short-lived governments. Catholic viewpoints were influential, which meant, for example, that religion became a school subject and abortion was criminalized. In the second half of the 1990s a leftwing, post-communist party became successful: Aleksander Kwaśniewski was elected President twice (1995–2005) and the socialist party's rule alternated with the rule of post-Solidarity parties. In 1999 Poland was admitted to NATO, which crowned a decade of pro-Western foreign policy (Lukowski & Zawadzki 2001:280–89).

In the first decade of the twenty-first century⁴⁷ Poland participated in the USA-led 'war on terror', sending troops to Afghanistan (after the perpetrators of the anti-USA terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 were linked to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan) and to Iraq in 2003, after reports of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, which later proved untrue. The invasion was criticized in Europe and Poland, although some Polish intellectuals, notably Michnik, defended it as liberation of Iraq from a dictator. In 2004 Poland joined the European Union. Freedom of movement and labour allowed large numbers of people to emigrate, notably to the UK. In 2004 Kwaśniewski also supported pro-democratic revolution in Ukraine, posing as a mediator between 'Europe' and Ukraine. Regarding internal affairs, the left ruled in the first half of the decade, while in the second half a new right-wing party known for conservative, nationalist rhetoric, ruled in coalition with populist ultra-right-wingers. Afterwards, a new centre-right party, known for a more liberal, pro-European rhetoric won elections. A split between followers of the two main parties

⁴⁷ This paragraph is based on my media-derived knowledge of some major events of the past decade.

has been mapped onto post-1989 social divisions between the less affluent, nationalist conservatives and middle class, pro-European liberals.

Recent Representations of Non-Europeans

It is difficult to make synthesizing statements on representations of non-Europeans between 1989 and 2010 because the period is very recent and is characterized by a proliferation of media. Therefore, I only signal some salient trends. My detailed study of reviews of postcolonial literature from the period should contribute to a better understanding of the representations and perceptions of non-Europeans in the period. The body of translated non-European writing is also significant – I characterize it in Chapter Two.

Since 1989 Poles have absorbed popular Anglo-American culture, which, generally speaking, contains stereotypical representations of non-Europeans but also features work of artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds. European integration projects, travel and migration meant more exposure to cultural and ethnic diversity. According to Ząbek, in the 1990s Africa was demonized as a theatre of wars, cataclysms and AIDS, while Polish involvement in Western aid projects paved the way for patronizing images of African victimhood (2005). Popular images of India seem predicated on its alleged spiritualism, exoticism and poverty. Although a trip to India or Africa is not affordable for an average Pole, it is more attainable than in the PRL. Arabs have been associated in the media predominantly with terrorism and religious extremism and while the Polish middle-class visits Egypt or Tunisia, it is often on package holidays, where contacts with locals are limited.

Older representations are still circulating – e.g. a new film adaptation of *In Desert and Wilderness* appeared in 2001 – but they are being re-examined. A much-publicized theatre production on images of Africa entitled *In Desert and Wilderness* was preceded by blog discussions on the topic of Poland and Africa.⁴⁸ The foundation *Afryka Inaczej* (Africa Differently) published online lesson plans for school teachers, encouraging, for example, comparisons of the Scramble for Africa and Polish Partitions. The legacy of Polish attitudes to Africa is also problematized in a 2011 novel *Murzynek B.* (Little Negro B.) by Artur Daniel Liskowacki, a first person narrative of a Polish-Nigerian growing up in Poland. It accentuates a life-long

⁴⁸ By Bartosz Frąckowiak and Weronika Szczawińska; the premiere was in 2011 but the blog was launched in 2010.

sense of otherness, emerging in confrontation with pejorative or ambivalent Polish symbols of Africa – from the title poem ‘Murzynek Bambo’, to Sienkiewicz, to a made-up Polish actor playing a black character in a PRL serial, to a contemporary Polish footballer of Nigerian origin. B. also discovers the paternal Igbo lineage and Jewish origins of his mother, which adds to his identity quandary. Like Salim in Rushdie’s seminal *Midnight’s Children*, B. is born in the year of independence – 1989 – and his coming of age poses the question whether the country itself has matured in its attitudes to otherness.

This general account of Polish representations of Africans, Indians and Arabs, together with an account of the Polish translations of postcolonial literature (Chapter Two), will provide a background for my study of Polish perceptions of postcolonial peoples emerging from the reviews of postcolonial prose.

Scholarship on Poland’s Postcoloniality

In this section I present scholarly conversations about Poland’s postcoloniality, which have been developing since Polish and Slavonic scholars engaged with ideas of postcolonialism⁴⁹ after the fall of communism (i.e. an arguably colonial-like regime). Scholars based in the Anglo-Saxon academic world had relatively unrestricted access to the developments of postcolonial theory and they sometimes acted as brokers, introducing the theory in Poland and suggesting relevant applications, as did some Polish and English studies Poland-based scholars who became interested in postcolonialism during their visits at Western universities. While some Poland-based scholars read postcolonial theory in English, translations into Polish have been an important aspect of introducing the theory in Poland and they have allowed a more widespread discussion about postcolonialism and Poland’s postcoloniality. In this section, I shall characterize the emerging scholarship on ‘postcolonial’ Poland – originating both in Poland and in Polish studies centres abroad – and summarize avenues of research, selected examples and meta-level commentary. I will also signal the dynamics of translating postcolonial criticism into Polish. Last but not least, reporting the postcolonial reflection on Poland, I shall seek references to non-European postcoloniality.

⁴⁹ I use the term ‘postcolonialism’ to refer to critical and academic reflection and ‘postcoloniality’ to mean the conditions of countries which underwent colonialism.

Texts on postcolonial Poland appear generally from 2000 but an inquiry into the question of *East European* postcoloniality was initiated in the 1990s. Although I do not systematically discuss that work here, it is important to note that discussions on Poland's postcoloniality took place in the context of debates on the whole of Eastern Europe. Seminal works on East European postcoloniality included *Inventing Eastern Europe* (1994) by Larry Wolff and *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) by Maria Todorova, which showed that West European discourses on Eastern Europe resembled Orientalism in their internal consistency, frequency, pejorative character and binary structure (including, indeed, specific binaries such as civilization/barbarity, culture/nature, masculinity/femininity).

Moreover, Marko Pavlyshyn wrote about Ukraine as a former Russian colony and welcomed the postcolonial, irreverent mode of postmodern literature (1992; 1998), Stephen Tötösy de Zepetnek focused on the former Habsburg empire, insisting that Central and East European countries find themselves 'in-between' national cultures, the West and internalized Soviet influence (1999; 2002), while Roumiana Deltcheva explored representations of Bulgaria in European literature and analysed postcolonial/postmodern Bulgarian prose (1998; 1999; 2000; 2002). Perhaps symptomatically, most of if not all the scholars working on East European postcoloniality mentioned so far are based in the West.

In 2001 an oft-quoted article advocating study of Eastern Europe from a postcolonial perspective was published by the USA scholar David Moore. Moore astutely emphasized that the ontological question whether or not a region 'is' postcolonial is less pertinent than a skilful application of the framework (Moore 2001). The project was also endorsed by Spivak, who used the broad definition of colonialism I noted in the beginning of the chapter and stressed her interest in the gendered subaltern (Collier et al. 2003:15–17; see also Spivak 2006; Spivak 2003:84). More reflection followed, including e.g. work on the Baltic states (Kelertas 2006a), post-Soviet Ukraine and Poland (Korek 2007) and on Russia as a self-colonized space (Etkind 2011).

Within the broader context of the inquiry into East European postcoloniality one can locate scholarship on 'postcolonial' Poland. Early work was conducted by scholars working outside of Poland and important discussions followed a wave of translations of postcolonial criticism into Polish in the decade 2000–2010. Before I outline these developments, however, I should mention a pioneering text, which

appeared in Polish as early as 1993. In a collection on pedagogy Tomasz Szkudlarek (1993) presented an argument on identity formation in post-1989 Poland: he suggested that before 1989 Poland adopted a subaltern position towards an idealized 'West' (while the West treated the Berlin Wall as a divide between the self and the other). After the Wall fell, Poles indulged in mimicry of the West and turned away from Eastern neighbours as their 'others'. Szkudlarek advocated a pedagogy that reflected on discursive identity formation and, wary of appropriating others, strove to respect otherness. Although Szkudlarek's analysis strikes me today as very apt, it did not have any following in the 1990s, perhaps due to lack of available translations of postcolonial criticism and, more generally, established intellectual context.

At this point it is worth outlining the process of translating aspects of postcolonial criticism into Polish. Although Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (1961) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) were translated into Polish earlier (Fanon 1985; Said 1991), only in the 2000s did translations of postcolonial criticism begin to flow steadily. They included translations of Said's *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* and *Culture and Imperialism* and a re-translation of *Orientalism* (2002; 2009; 2005, respectively), Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (2010), interviews with Spivak *The Post-Colonial Critic* (2011) and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2011a), as well as academic introductions to postcolonial theory (Loomba 2011; Young 2012; L. Gandhi 2008). Cultural and literary magazines, *Czas Kultury*, *Er(r)go*, *Literatura na Świecie* and *Recykling Idei*, published texts by Helen Tiffin, J.M. Coetzee, Chinua Achebe, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Stuart Hall, Neil Lazarus and others, whereas Spivak's essays were anthologized in a literary theory reader (ed. A. Burzyńska and M. P. Markowski) and a translation studies reader (ed. M. Heydel and P. Bukowski). Judging by the relevant publishers' profiles, the texts have been addressed mainly to students, academics and circles of social activism and critique.

Alongside translations of more or less canonical texts on non-European postcoloniality, innovative texts about Polish postcoloniality were appearing, mostly in English and in Polish (relevant English texts have been translated into Polish and *vice versa*, even though, in tune with the general power relations between the two languages, translations from Polish into English have been less frequent). Ewa M. Thompson's seminal book *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* appeared in English in 2000 and was translated into Polish in the same year.

Thompson, a Polish Slavonic scholar living in the USA, pronounces Russia a colonial empire, which oppressed contiguous lands but created a façade of unification in its literary and scientific discourse. Russian literature silenced, ridiculed or erased non-Russian imperial subjects.⁵⁰ Thompson posits that Russian colonialism differs from Western colonialism in three respects: it is directed against neighbouring lands, it constructs the opposition between the rulers and the ruled based on national, not racial, difference and, finally, it is not advanced through cultural superiority – rather, Russia was regarded culturally inferior by some of its colonies (Thompson introduces the term ‘culturally reverse’ colonization).

Another seminal text appeared in 2003 in the journal *Teksty Drugie*. The USA Slavonic scholar and translator Claire Cavanagh called Poland a ‘white spot’ on the map of postcolonial theory and advocated mapping out Polish literature in postcolonial terms. She argued that Polish(-born) authors, from Joseph Conrad to Tadeusz Borowski, to Czesław Miłosz, to Ryszard Kapuściński, display a ‘distinctively Polish but unmistakably postcolonial sensibility’, speaking against the violence and hypocrisy of empires (2004:88).⁵¹ In the same year Aleksander Fiut warned that presenting Poland as a colony could feed into a detrimental paradigm of national martyrology and suggested using postcolonial tools for Poland’s relationship with Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus instead. Alongside theoretical debates, re-readings of Polish works through a postcolonial lens began to appear, e.g. Anna Cichoń wrote on Sienkiewicz and Izabela Kalinowska on nineteenth-century poetic travelogues (both authors have been quoted earlier).

The question of Poland’s postcoloniality gained visibility outside academia in 2005, when the weekly *Europa* published Thompson’s articles. Thompson suggested that Poland’s inferiority complex stemmed from the colonial trauma of the Partitions, even though Poles never looked up to Russia but treated the West as a ‘surrogate hegemon’. She argued that Polish intellectuals might treat a postcolonial label as an

⁵⁰ For instance, she shows how the narrative of colonized Poles is absent from Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, noting that the support for Napoleon’s 1812 campaign among Poles in the Russian Partition is edited out. In Tolstoy, ‘on Napoleon’s way to Moscow there was no opposition of the colonized people to Russian rule. Indeed there were no colonized people to begin with: the Russian empire was a unified entity’ (Thompson 2000:102).

⁵¹ Conrad speaks against Belgian and British colonial empires in *Heart of Darkness*, among others; other example/? Borowski against a Nazi empire-under-construction in his short stories (*This Way For the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, trans. Barbara Vedder); Miłosz against Russia and European extermination of Native Americans in *The Captive Mind*; and Kapuściński against neo-colonialism. (The article first appeared in Polish but I am referencing an English version from 2004).

affront to their Europeanness but without addressing Poland's postcolonial status they would never stop imitating the West. She also urged intellectuals to develop stronger national solidarity with the less educated and more conservative masses.

The questions that crystallized in those early texts were expanded in an increasingly vivid debate after 2005. Between 2006 and 2012 a number of introductory and/or semi-programmatic texts appeared in Polish and English, including, for example, Skórczewski (2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2011), Grossman (2007, 2010), Kołodziejczyk (2010), Thompson (2011). Edited collections and dedicated journal issues were published in Polish, focusing on Polish literature and culture (Gosk & Karwowska (eds) 2008; Stępnik & Trzeźniowski (eds) 2010; *Teksty Drugie* 2007 (4) and 2010 (5)) and on global (post)colonial writing, including Polish travel writing (Buchholtz (ed.) 2009b). English language publications brought together essays on Poland and other East European countries, notably in a volume edited by Janusz Korek (2007) and a 'post-communist' issue of the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 2012 (2), edited by Dorota Kołodziejczyk.

In addition to Thompson's 2000 book, a few more book-long studies on Poland's postcoloniality have appeared to date, including works by senior literary scholars with long-standing interest in identity, otherness and history, who combine postcolonial criticism with the critical vocabularies of narrative theory, new historicism, anthropological approaches, psychoanalysis, gender studies, etc.;⁵² a work by Skórczewski (2013), comprising his wide-ranging analyses of Polish literature and his arguments for locating national identity at the centre of Polish postcolonial study; a PhD dissertation offering a postcolonial reading of the Polish-language poet Jerzy Harasymowicz (Staćzyk 2012); and an ambitious historical study mobilizing, broadly speaking, political theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis and postcolonial theory to discuss Poland's current problems with modernity (Sowa 2011).

Besides, 'postcolonialism' made occasional appearance in non-academic press, for example in the monthly *Wiedza i Życie*, a popular digest of scientific ideas (Nowicka 2007; Stanisławski 1999). The term has also been used by right-wing

⁵²Aleksander Fiut's *Spotkania z Innym* (2006; Meetings with the Other), Maria Janion's *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna* (2006; Uncanny Slavdom) and Hanna Gosk's *Opowieści "skolonizowanego/kolonizatora": W kręgu studiów postzależnościowych nad literaturą polską XX i XXI wieku* (2010; Narratives of 'the Colonized/Colonizer': Post-Dependence Studies of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Polish Literature).

commentators and politicians to denote a syndrome of mental and political dependence.⁵³

Poland as the Colonized

Discussing Poland and postcolonialism scholars attempted to clarify, as Władysław Bolecki put it, ‘who colonized and who was colonized, and by what methods’ (2007:12). I will now present selected examples for their arguments that Poland be seen as a former colony of Russia, Germany, Austria and, in a sense, the West. In the following sections I will also outline the notions of Poland as a colonizer and that of internal Other.

The view of Poland as a former colony of Russia and the USSR was endorsed by Thompson, Cavanagh and Korek – referenced earlier – as well as Dariusz Skórczewski (2006a; 2006b; 2007a), Krzysztof Kowalczyk-Twarowski (2008), Ewa Domańska (2008) and others. The general rationale is that Russia controlled and exploited Polish territories, even though, unlike in the overseas model, it did not impact on Polish culture. As mentioned earlier, Thompson calls it ‘culturally reverse’ colonization and considers it a specificity of Russian colonialism.

Grażyna Borkowska, however, treats cultural influence, combined with the power over representations, as *sine qua non* of colonialism. She provocatively asks: ‘Is an uncivilized savage capable of a conquest? Yes. But is he capable of colonization . . .? In my opinion, no’ (2010:46). She argues that Russians never stripped Poles of opportunities for self-representation, as, adept at circumventing censorship, Poles represented themselves through literature (and Polish authors, including Eliza Orzeszkowa and Sienkiewicz, were also popular in Russia). Zdzisław Najder makes a similar point, noting that Poles managed to flag up the Polish cause in nineteenth-century France (2005).

Thompson (2011) responds to Borkowska that Polish cultural production was curbed by the colonizer, as under foreign rule and threats of Russification there was no space for sustained cultural productivity. Rather, Russian discourses – disseminated internationally through renowned literary works and still perpetuated in Western academia through Russocentric Soviet and Slavonic Studies – usurped

⁵³ For instance, the ex-premier Jarosław Kaczyński protested against reducing obligatory hours of history classes in schools, arguing that it would make Poland ‘a postcolonial country’ with little national self-awareness or pride and a cheap labour source for the West (PAP 2012). ‘Postcolonial’ here connotes weakness and internalization of a subservient role.

control over representation of Poles and other imperial subjects. According to her, the tremendous disproportions in Polish and Russian powers to (self-)represent could not be shifted by means of translating a few authors into Russian, just as translating *The Upanishads* into English did not alter the fact that India was a British colony.⁵⁴ Thompson adds that having worked for many years at an American university she sees just how much Poland is marginalized as a sort of extension of Russia, even if Poles living in Poland are unaware of that.

It is interesting to observe how Borkowska's and Thompson's divergent views – that Poles succeeded in representing themselves despite Russian rule and that Russia represented Poles to the (Western) world – correlate with their perspectives, Poland and USA, respectively. The divergence dramatizes the venerable question who decides whether a speech act constitutes a valid self-representation and on what basis it does so. Borkowska and Thompson, rightly in my estimation, put emphasis on self-representation being heard and heeded by others, even though they disagree on their measurements of the reception.

Other responses to the question of Polish-Russian cultural delineations emphasize a degree of permeability, claiming that Russian culture and discourses had more impact than Poles like to admit. For example, Gosk demonstrates an underlying presence of imperialist Russian discourses in post-Partitions and post-Soviet Polish literature. For example, in *General Barcz* (1923) by Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski the characters in charge of building an independent Polish state use language of political surveillance, which they learnt under tsarist Russia (2010:41–48). Gosk also turns to depictions of Polish women's romances with Russian soldiers in such novels as Kazimierz Brandys's *Wariacje pocztowe* (1972) and Paweł Huelle's *Castorp* (2004; trans. Antonia Lloyd-Jones). The romantic liaisons give the lie to notions of cultural and national purity, although the authors depict the romances from the viewpoint of male Polish narrators as taboo and doomed, thus subjugating discourses of romantic fulfilment to the patriarchal, patriotic discourse (Gosk 2010:23–40).

Inquiries into Polish-Russian relationships have been supplemented with work on the (post)colonial relationship between Poland and Germany. The most

⁵⁴ Translation studies research has shown that translations from India and other (formerly) colonized countries were appropriating (Bassnett & Trivedi 1999:7–8) or exoticizing (Jacquemond 1992) and as such contributed to reasserting pre-existing images of the source culture rather than fostering self-representation. It would be interesting to investigate how Polish texts were translated, presented and received in Russia.

straightforward argument presents the Prussian Partition of Poland as a colony. Unlike Russia, German colonizers had for Poles the allure of modern civilization and advanced culture,⁵⁵ which makes the German colonization more similar to the overseas colonization models. On the other hand, the historian Jan Kieniewicz observes that overseas colonization targeted peoples from different civilizational circles, whereas Germany belonged to the same Latin-Christian civilization as Poland (after Gosk 2009).

Scholars have convincingly shown that German expansion was presented as civilizing mission in Germany. Leopold Neuger posits that during the Partitions Germans treated their border with Russia (or Russian Partition of Poland) as demarcating civilization from barbarity. The Prussian Partition was ‘perceived as a wild but borderland terrain, more or less receptive to civilizing experiments’ (2007:24). Neuger quotes prominent German travellers, who represent Polish peasants as uncouth, dirty and promiscuous primitives.

According to Neuger, these Orientalizing perceptions reign supreme both in Enlightenment and Romantic writing – exemplified by Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Heinrich Heine, respectively – even though Romantics value otherness more. For example, Fichte describes Polish women with revulsion: ‘so slovenly, . . . so inviting and so dirty’ (Fichte 1967:175, after Wolff 1994, in Neuger 2007:24), whereas Heine characterizes Polish women in an appreciative but patronizing tone as ‘cheerful children’ who ‘live so gaily, in light-hearted and seductive simplicity’ (Heine 1884:199–200, after Neuger 2007:24). The sexualized descriptions of colonized females serve here an othering and deprecating purpose.

Izabela Surynt completed a revealing study of representations of Polish lands in the work of Gustav Freytag (1816–1895), a German author born in the Prussian Partition (2007; 2004; 2006). She demonstrates that Freytag portrays nature in the Partition as wild and lush: both ominous and inviting for resourceful settlers. Native inhabitants are shown as primitives, lacking energy and skills to manage the land properly. Surynt also notices exoticizing devices: the land is rendered as bush or desert and Poles as uncivilized peoples (2007:39–42). Situating Freytag’s work in the wider context of German nationalism, she documents comparisons of German expansion eastwards and overseas colonization. For instance, the philosopher

⁵⁵ Skórczewski (2008) observes that the author Bolesław Prus expressed respect for German civilizational achievements.

Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) wrote that in accordance with historical laws the Anglo-Saxon peoples conquered America, France conquered Algeria, England ruled India, while Germanic peoples claimed the Slavonic land (Lassalle 1919:33; in Surynt 2007:36).

Early Slavonic-German relationships are featured in Maria Janion's original investigation of possible historical triggers of Polish complexes (2007). Janion suggests that a rapid, violent Christianization of Slavs by the order of Teutonic Knights and other Germanic knights – accompanied by eradication of pagan traditions, imposition of Latin liturgy and Germanic church hierarchy, and, in some cases, colonization of land – must have left a traumatic mark on the Slavonic psyche. That scar is apparently the source of frenetic, uncanny and essentially pagan elements in Polish folk tradition, repressed after Christianization and partially recovered by Polish Romantics (e.g. the custom of communing with ancestral spirits in Mickiewicz's *Forefathers*). Janion wonders if the millennium-old civilizational violation, which resulted in a virtual loss of pre-Christian mythology and severing of cultural memory, could have contributed to Poland's uneasy self-location between the West and the East, and a 'postcolonial' vicious circle of superiority and inferiority complexes.

Janion makes connections between the early Germanic eastward expansion on the one hand and nineteenth-century Partitions and Nazi plans of winning space in the east, on the other hand. Wolfgang Wippermann, whose early research Janion briefly references (2006:19) discusses German concepts of the East, including both Slavonic lands and the non-European 'Orient', in a relatively recent book (2007). He suggests that the notion of colonizing the East (*Ostkolonisation*) was constructed at the end of the eighteenth century, when Prussia acquired part of Poland. Medieval migration and settlement (Wippermann does not mention the aggressive politics of Teutonic Knights) were then re-invented as a historical colonization model. For instance, a twelfth-century song about eastward migration, ascribed to an unknown Flemish author and later called in Germany 'Lied der Ostlandfahrer', was made into a symbol of colonizing tradition and included in school readers until 1945 (ibid.:53). As mentioned earlier, some historians of WWII also argued that the Nazi occupation in Eastern Europe was envisaged as a prelude to large-scale colonizing action (Furber 2004).

The third partitioning power, Austria, has inspired less ‘postcolonial’ research to date, although in principle scholars list it as a relevant topic. One reason for that disproportion may be the collective belief that compared to the fierce deculturation in the Russian and Prussian Partitions, the late, multi-national Habsburg Empire allowed more freedoms. Thompson protests against such idealization in her analysis of Stefan Żeromski’s novel *Popioły* (1904; *Ashes*, trans. H. Stankiewicz, 1928), which is set in the Austrian Partition. To Thompson, it is ‘a novel about people and territories forced, in spite of bloody resistance, to become the periphery of an empire’ (2012). One aspect of colonial subjugation, Thompson argues, is the sorry fate of Poles who fight for the national cause. She juxtaposes *Ashes* with Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (1863–69)⁵⁶ to show that the virtues of military valour and patriotic sacrifice, which are glorified and rewarded in the plot of Tolstoy’s imperial epic, cannot but lead to devastating defeats, followed by stigmatizing and criminalizing treatment by the colonial authorities, in the novel by a colonized author – Żeromski.

Russia (USSR), Germany (Teutonic Knights, Prussia), Austria: although this list should exhaust historical instances of Poland’s ‘colonizers’, some scholars expand it to include ‘the West’ as a ‘surrogate hegemon’ (Thompson 2010). Thompson construes East European susceptibility to Western influence as a result of their low cultural prestige, which, in turn, is blamed on the stifling conditions of Russian, German, Austrian and Ottoman colonization. Physical subjugation to neighbouring colonizers and psychological dependence on ‘the West’ are also interconnected in the work of Deltcheva. Besides, the phenomenon is picturesquely acknowledged in Moore’s programmatic essay: ‘post-colonial desire from Riga to Almaty fixates not on the fallen master Russia but on the glittering Euramerican MTV-and-Coca-Cola beast that broke it’ (2001:118). It may be added that ‘the West’ has not, to put it euphemistically, held Eastern Europe in high esteem,⁵⁷ which, within postcolonialism-inspired criticism, has been diagnosed as a form of Orientalism. I think that the cultural and psychological aspects of the Western

⁵⁶ Thompson notices that the novels deal with a similar period and Żeromski is known to have been reading Tolstoy while working on his novel. The novels have been compared before, due to their panoramic scope (Borowy 1936:407).

⁵⁷ It is beyond the scope of this study to explore evidence for this statement; sample references include Milosz 1989 and Murawska-Muthesius 2006. Besides, Paulina Gaşior (2010) suggested that the patterns of translation, publication and reception of Polish literature in(to) English imply an exoticizing and Orientalizing view of Poland, while Joanna Rostek and Dirk Uffelmann (2010) argued that Polish immigrants in Britain might be conceived of as subalterns due to their difficulties with self-representation.

hegemony cannot be dismissed but one should clarify that the Western influence is exerted through cultural hegemony or globalization, or multinational market control, but there are no forceful interventions in the administrative, legal and educational systems, nor is there enforced settlement. Hence, it does not constitute colonialism *per se*.

Poland as the Colonizer

Postcolonial criticism has been applied to shed light on Poland's dominance over the lands of today's Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. The impulse came from Fiut's 2003 text. Regarding Lithuania, Fiut is suspicious both of equating the Polish-Lithuanian union with colonization and of Polonocentric views that Lithuanians welcomed Polish culture. Fiut tentatively proposes the term "“velvet” colonization" for characterizing Polish-Lithuanian relationships.

Several scholars explored the colonial character of the discourses on *Kresy*, i.e. Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian lands constituting the eastern provinces of pre-war Poland. Bakula points out that the very term *Kresy* conveys national nostalgia and colonial appropriation (2006). *Kresy* is the plural form of the common noun *kres*, denoting 'end', 'edge' or 'fringe'; therefore, *Kresy* (Fringes) characterizes a terrain by means of its distance from and dependence on a centre. Bakula suggests that the word *pogranicze* (literally 'borderland') is more neutral because it denotes the land itself, situating it between many centres but not subjugating it directly to one of them.⁵⁸

Scholars point out the abundance of literary material that lends itself to a postcolonial reading: inspired by *Orientalism*, they observe that representations of the eastern territories accentuate natural, rather than historical or cultural, qualities, lapsing into what Bakula calls, after Said, 'ethnographic presence'. Representations of the inhabitants are often deprecating or at best patronizing, concealing colonial violence under a veneer of an immemorial intimacy between servants and masters. Moreover, Polish presence is legitimized by images of the Polish manor as an oasis of civilization and military posts as a defence against barbarian threat from the east

⁵⁸ It is difficult to convey this distinction in English because *Kresy* is conventionally (and somewhat misleadingly) translated as 'Borderlands'. In an English translation of Bakula's article, included in Korek (ed.) 2007, Tadeusz Z. Wolański indeed uses 'Borderlands' for *Kresy*, rendering the other term, *pogranicze* (literally: 'borderland') as 'marches'. He does not explain the problem, though.

or south-east, i.e., at different points, Turks, Muscovy or Soviets (Bakula 2006:17–19; Gosk 2010:51–83).

Scholars focus on works written after the independence of 1918, because during Partitions authors relied on a ‘different concept of Polishness and its right to existence’ (Bakula 2006:118).⁵⁹ In the Interwar period management of the eastern provinces was discussed in terms of national security. Gosk reads a passage from Zofia Nałkowska’s novel *Niedobra miłość* (1922), where Polish officials believe in a need to control separatist minorities but sense that the minorities’ national aspirations resemble Poles’ own aspirations before independence (2010:55). As I proposed earlier in the chapter, it seems justified to talk about Polish colonial policies in that period.

After WWII the lands were considered ‘lost’; the *Kresy* discourse marked a colonialism devoid of its colonial object, operating through ‘words and symbols only’ (Bakula 2006:15). The discourse was repressed during communism, when the Polish landowning class, idealized in the discourse, was vilified and animosities within the Bloc were played down.⁶⁰ The *Kresy* discourse could develop on emigration and after 1989. Narratives revisiting a *Kresy* childhood proliferated after 1989, conjuring up an idealized pre-communist past. In postcolonial studies such phenomena are discussed as the construction of collective identity around gestures of reinstating continuity with a pre-colonial past and erasing the time of subjugation. It is understandable on a personal level that some Polish authors depicted the lands from which they were forcefully resettled and which they had been forbidden from remembering. On a collective level it is somewhat ironic that to put behind them a past of having been ‘colonized’ by the Soviets, Poles cherish memories of *Kresy* but overlook the question of Poland’s domination.

A few examples, narrated after the scholars, illustrate the colonial character of the *Kresy* discourse. Gosk reads Zofia Kossak-Szczucka’s memoir *Požoga. Wspomnienia z Wołynia 1917–1919* (1922, *The Blaze; Reminiscences of Volhynia, 1917–1919*, trans. Francis Bauer-Czarnomski, 1927). She notes that Volhynia is

⁵⁹An English translation of Bakula’s essay can be found in Korek (ed.) 2007 and in the online journal *Postcolonial Europe* at <<http://www.postcolonial-europe.eu/en/studies/68--colonial-and-postcolonial-aspects-of-polish-discourse-on-the-eastern-borderlandsq>> (last accessed 12 January 2013). I decided against using it because it contains a few errors and occasionally lacks immediate clarity.

⁶⁰Authors may have written about the lands but used different geographical names; this argument was made by Jan Walc about Tadeusz Konwicki’s *Sennik współczesny* (1963; *A Dreambook For Our Time*, trans. David Welsh) (Kaniecki 2010:85).

represented as an idyllic, natural landscape in Kossak-Szczucka's description of her family's estate: 'We lived as though in an abyss of green, superb and free, surrounded on all sides by beauty' (Kossak-Szczucka 1927:10, quoted in Polish in Gosk 2010:59). The land is inscribed with cultural significance through enumerations of Polish landowners' names: 'Lashki could be seen before us . . . the ancient abode of the Glenbockis, rich in legends and tales. . . . Beyond Lashki was Semerynki, immemorial house of the Chechel family . . . and many other properties bearing the traditions and history of a couple of centuries' (Kossak-Szczucka 1927:11–12). The Polish right to the lands is reinforced by connoting the centuries-long and history-making presence of Polish gentry, while Ukrainian geographic names are absent from the account. Furthermore, Gosk notes that Ukrainians figure in the text as an impersonal mass, which speaks a dialect rather than language, and has an air of malleable simplicity about it. Signs of the peasants' political activity and resistance to Polish governance meet with Kossak-Szczucka's surprise but are still perceived in terms of nature: as natural cataclysms or awakening of primeval lupine instincts (Gosk 2010:68–70).

Bakuła pinpoints the lasting influence of the *Kresy* discourse, quoting from a 2001 memoir about Lwów childhood by a film director, Janusz Majewski. In the passage Majewski reminisces about a Ukrainian servant,

Her name was Wikta, I think, or maybe Ołena. She was one of those Ruthenian *malankas*, as father called them . . . [She] tried to teach me how to read but, alas, she mixed up Latin letters with Cyrillic. . . . My dependence on Wikta – and I definitely was dependent on her – may have had a subconsciously erotic basis: I liked being pressed to her breasts, which were big like loaves of rustic bread (Majewski, *Retrospektywka*; Warsaw: Muza, 2001:8, quoted in Bakuła 2006:18).

In Bakuła's opinion, Majewski strikes a self-aggrandizing pose of a young master and objectifies a servant by dwelling on her gender and ethnic otherness. The servant's name and individuality are disregarded and she is remembered for her sexuality and dubious literacy, which are tied up with ethnic foreignness: rudimentary knowledge of Cyrillic affects her ability to read Latin script, whereas '*malanka*', denoting a carnival party in Ukrainian, is a derogatory term connoting unrefined eroticism of local females (Bakuła 2006:18–19).

Self-criticism can be found in Polish texts, too, although it is aimed at improving Polish treatment of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians but not

acknowledging their right to statehood. Gosk discusses the following authors, for instance: Ksawery Pruszyński (reportages collected in *Podróż po Polsce*, 1937), Józef Mackiewicz (reportages *Bunt rojstów*, 1938), Andrzej Chciuk (memoirs written on emigration, *Atlantyda. Opowieści o Wielkim Księstwie Bałaku*, 1969). In Pruszyński Gosk also spots signs of a subversive counter-discourse of the colonized. There is a scene where a French lady, visiting Volhynia with Pruszyński, talks to a young Ukrainian shepherd and he can answer questions in broken French because he learnt it in a Polish school. The shepherd then tells Pruszyński, in Polish-Ukrainian dialect, that now he even summons his cows in French.⁶¹ Pruszyński senses defiance, interpreting the statement as mockery of a discriminatory system, which teaches Ukrainians foreign languages but does not give them prospects beyond tending cows.

Gosk (2010:64–66) reads the exchange using Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry, i.e. mimicry of the colonizers by the colonized, which unsettles the former because they feel threatened in their uniqueness and mocked (imitation allows space for subversion). She considers the shepherd's display of his French an instance of mimicry, which is received by Pruszyński as mockery, or 'peasant sneer' (*chłopskie szyderstwo*) (ibid.:64). It is an interesting application, although a complexity of this situation could be further explored as the shepherd is not trying to pass for a Pole but gives a prompted performance in a language Polish colonizers seek to imitate themselves (but as a lingua franca, not a tool for assuming a Gallicized identity). In addition to searching for the voices of the 'colonized' in Polish sources, scholars propose incorporating Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian self-representations and viewpoints, although they recognize that Polish scholars usually lack linguistic and cultural competence for that (Bakula 2006).

Thinking about Poland as a colonizer and purveyor of othering representations of the subjugated peoples, one should also mention the relationships between dominant Polish groups and various minorities, which can be described as internal 'Others'. Indeed, postcolonial tools have sometimes been applied to examine the situation of Jews, the Roma people and the Lemkos in Poland. Although the broader topic of minorities in Poland falls beyond the scope of the thesis and outside of my

⁶¹ I am grateful to Tetyana Dytyna, a Lviv-based researcher working on Ukrainian translations of postcolonial literature, for her help with translating the sentence from what Gosk called Polish-Ukrainian dialect.

competence, I shall summarize selected works which examine the situation of Polish minorities through a postcolonial lens.

It would be no exaggeration to state that historically Jews were in Poland the closest and perhaps the most conspicuous ‘Other’, despite various cases and degrees of assimilation and, possibly, cultural cross-fertilization. Eugenia Prokop-Janiec (2010) mentions some postcolonial scholars who pointed to synergies between postcolonial and Jewish experiences, mobilizing such concepts as hybridity (Bhabha 1998), diaspora (Gilroy 1998) and internal colonization and counter-narrative (Heschel 1998). Prokop-Janiec (2010:139–42) also outlines some applications of postcolonial criticism to studying Polish-Jewish relations. She first summarizes the views of Moshe Rosman (2007), who works on the Jewish history in pre-Partitions Poland and argues that a mainstream understanding of hybridity – implying hierarchical dependence of a minority culture on majority cultures – is not necessarily relevant to that historical context. Instead, he proposes to see the Jewish cultures of pre-Partitions Poland as relatively self-efficient and dynamically related to Polish cultures.

Moreover, Prokop-Janiec finds the postcolonial concept of re-writings – i.e. revisionist works written from the perspective of the (formerly) colonized and intertextually evoking canonical works of a (former) colonizer – applicable to some works by Polish Jews. For instance, she names some re-writings of Adam Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*, the so-called Polish national epic, which foreground the character of the Jewish musician Jankiel.⁶² In addition, she engages with Jadwiga Maurer’s (1996) critical re-reading of Mickiewicz’s biography, which offers some archival evidence suggesting that the poet may have had Jewish parentage (Prokop-Janiec 2010:142–44).

Finally, Prokop-Janiec (ibid.:144–45) narrates an example which points to a sense of similarity and perhaps solidarity between some Polish Jews and colonized Africans. Namely, in an article entitled ‘Egzotyki ludzkie’ [Human Exoticisms] published in the periodical *Przegląd Społeczny* [Social Review] in Lwów in 1934 (No 7–8, p.159), a Jewish journalist, Debora Vogel, criticized racist and exoticizing comments made by contemporary Polish journalists, who called Jewish districts of

⁶² For example poems by Leo Belmont published in the periodical *Odrodzenie* in 1906 (No 14, 15 and 18).

Warsaw a ‘dark continent/land’ (*czarny ląd*). At the same time, she protested against racist treatment of Africans, which in her view was inherent in those comments and in contemporary sources on Africa, for example in some Polish travel writing. As Prokop-Janiec reports, Vogel concluded that the people of various ‘dark lands’ of Africa, America and Europe were waiting for a revision of prejudices.

This comparison is of great importance to my inquiry because, first, it seems to exemplify the sense of similarity and solidarity of the ‘colonized’ that I seek to explore. Secondly, it is a reminder of a certain duality, or, more generally, complexity, of Poland’s position *vis-à-vis* ‘colonized’ peoples: while I am suggesting that contemporary Poles may forge solidary relations with postcolonial peoples due to comparable histories of suffering, in this example Poles emerge as *colonizer-like* figures and their arguably prejudiced attitudes make a (Polish-)Jewish woman call for solidarity with Africans and other victims of discrimination.

In debates about Poland and postcoloniality some attention has also been given to the situation of such minorities as the Lemkos and the Roma in post-war Poland. Helena Duć-Fajfer (2013) proposes to read Lemko literature as a response to hegemonic discourses of the Polish centre and a form of subaltern self-representation, while Ewa Stańczyk (2012) uses the categories of cultural identity, as elaborated by Paul Gilroy, and contact zone, as defined by Mary Louise Pratt, to re-interpret the work of the poet Jerzy Harasymowicz (1933–1999). She demonstrates that contrary to dominant pre-1989 readings, which took for granted Harasymowicz’s ‘Polishness’, Lemko culture had a profound influence on ‘the poet’s perception of Self, home, belonging, gender, history, religion and other components of his complex, shifting sense of identity’ (ibid.:4). Last but not least, some postcolonial categories are being applied in studies of the Roma minority in Poland (Kledzik 2013).

Disciplinary Meta-Commentary

A glimpse into a meta-level discussion about applying postcolonialism to Poland reveals that scholars are concerned with global mechanisms of knowledge production. The UK-based comparatist Elwira Grossman (2007; 2010) advocates incorporating novel approaches – including postcolonial, gender and memory studies – into Polish studies. Echoing Spivak’s call for supplementing comparative literature

with the linguistic and cultural know-how of area studies (2003), Grossman states that ‘local’ knowledge is vital because at present a ‘generalist-globalist’ gets away with mechanical application of metropolitan theories to unknown localities (2010:493). Poland-based scholars call for creative adaptation, as opposed to indiscriminate import, of postcolonial criticism (Bolecki 2007; Domańska 2008; Skórczewski 2006a, Skórczewski 2006b; and others). There are also queries why East European topics have been overlooked by international postcolonial scholarship. Thompson (2011) and Skórczewski (2006b; 2011) find postcolonial studies too reliant on Marxism to notice Soviet imperial policies, while Kołodziejczyk (2010) suggests that postcolonial scholars lack regional knowledge, while area or Slavonic studies specialists have different ideological sympathies. Generally, scholars have guarded against the unchecked, one-way spread of metropolitan theory.

Gosk (2010) eschews the actual term ‘postcolonial’ to write about ‘post-Partitions’ (i.e. post-1918) and ‘post-dependence’ (i.e. post-1989) Poland, while still using postcolonial theory. The gesture was supported by others, including Kołodziejczyk and Fiut, who founded a centre for post-dependence studies. Its theoretical programme is still crystallizing but is likely to be eclectic. Gosk uses the term ‘post-dependence’ as a near synonym of ‘postcolonial’, although her readings rely on a much wider theoretical basis. Kołodziejczyk (2010) finds ‘post-dependence’ to be a ‘more productive and independent research category’, which can enter into dialogue with postcolonialism (ibid.:38). An English studies scholar well-versed in postcolonial theory, Kołodziejczyk aptly recapitulates tenets of postcolonialism, such as critique of European modernity and interrogation of nationalism and other group identities. She finds them pivotal for post-dependence studies too. Moreover, she disapproves of using postcolonialism to trumpet narratives of national liberation and criticizes a belief that the act of proclaiming Poland ‘postcolonial’ will ‘magically right wrongs done in history’ (ibid.:36).

Thompson (2011) criticized the terminological innovation as a symptom of the scholars’ own colonized outlook. She accuses them of timidity, reasoning that they do not dare modify categories *within* postcolonial studies and withdraw to create a separate research strand because they remain paralyzed by Western surrogate hegemony. I find it unhelpful for scholarly discussion to merely diagnose unconscious ideological determinants in other scholars but even on Thompson’s terms I would see branching off postcolonial studies as an act of intellectual

independence. Thompson also disagrees with Kołodziejczyk's programme, stating that Polish postcolonial studies should reappraise nationalism. She contends that Polish intellectual elites remain under the spell of the Western hegemony and their mental decolonization would mean putting 'national solidarity' first. However oxymoronic it sounds, Thompson also wants a Polish version of postcolonialism to forego critique of Europe because, to her mind, a pro-European orientation is in Poland's national interest. This polemic suggests that the questions of Polish 'postcoloniality' resonate not only with meta-disciplinary alertness to global knowledge production but also with *de facto* political differences between Thompson's national and Kołodziejczyk's post-nationalist outlook.

Non-European Postcolonials and Postcolonial Poland

I outlined, first, Polish representations of non-European postcolonial peoples and, second, views of Polish history and literature in terms of (post)colonialism – as I indicated in the introduction, I am intent on seeking connections between the two strands. Cavanagh's early article, mentioned earlier, is structured around the idea that Conrad, Miłosz, Kapuściński and others sympathized with victims of Western colonialism because they experienced imperial oppression themselves. As noted earlier, Cichoń, analysing *In Desert and Wilderness*, and Buchholtz and Rybicki, reading Szklarski's stories, ask if Polish characters associate the Partitions of Poland with colonization in Africa. Besides, in his article on the Polish playwright and painter Witkacy (1885–1939), Daniel C. Gerould (2002) raises the question of Witkacy's Polishness as a factor in his perceptions of non-Europeans. Based on available records of Witkacy's 1914 travel to Ceylon – *nota bene* in the company of the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski – and on Witkacy's plays, Gerould argues that Witkacy's portrayals of non-Europeans partly overlapped with but in many respects transgressed commonplace Western perceptions and prejudices.

Yet, such comparisons of Poles and non-Europeans are few and far between. Skórczewski's stocktaking is symptomatic: he observes that Polish scholars study *either* texts on non-European topics *or* on Poland (Skórczewski 2007b:683–84). He refers to the former, which include 'Murzynek Bambo' or *In Desert and Wilderness*, as texts 'which could have been written in any other language' (*ibid.*). Clearly, this

remark does not encourage connections between Polish perceptions of non-European (post)colonial cultures and Poles' own conditions.

References to non-Europeans appear in accounts of Polish perceptions of Ukrainian or Belarusian peasants and of German perceptions of Poles. Gosk quotes a remark by Pruszyński, where he compares Ukrainian poverty and familial relationships with those of 'Negros', saying that men fish and hunt like 'subtropical chiefs', while women grind grains. Surynt and Janion quote authors who liken Poles and Slavs to Native Americans, Africans and Asians, considering *Ostkolonisation* equivalent to overseas expansion. Surynt also identifies Polish reactions: e.g. the author Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–87) announced that despite their pseudo-civilization *Germans*, not Poles, were barbarians like American Indians. Surynt shrewdly notes not only the anti-colonial flavour of the statement where Kraszewski gives Germans a taste of their own medicine, but also the fact that Kraszewski uncritically borrows a rhetorical figure indicative of racial prejudice: '[he] remains faithful to a Eurocentric (colonial) viewpoint, applying the term "Indians" to discredit (ridicule) Germans' (2007:45).

A few scholars observe or anticipate Polish identification with Europe and dissociation from non-Europeans. Skórczewski remarks that the Polish general public would find comparisons to Africa or Asia counter-intuitive and unwelcome (2010). Kelertas's article on the Baltic peoples contains a similar hypothesis that 'the Balts find being lumped together with the rest of the colonized humanity unflattering, if not humiliating, and want to be with the "civilized" part of the world' (2006:4). Magdalena Nowicka (2007) makes a valid point in a non-academic digest of ideas on Poland's postcoloniality in the monthly *Wiedza i Życie* and reprinted by the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. She gives the example of Finland, which, like Poland, could be seen as 'postcolonial', but where contemporary surveys reveal racist prejudice against immigrants. Her tentative hypothesis is that a formerly colonized people dream of having colonial control over others and she speculates that the phenomenon occurs in Poland too. I return to these examples and consider the question of Polish postcoloniality in the light of Polish perceptions of postcolonial peoples as similar and/or different in the thesis Conclusion. The question of Polish perceptions of non-Europeans will be explored in my study of reviews in the course of the thesis. Before commencing my account of the study, in Chapter Two, I elaborate on my methodological approach to studying the perceptions.

Chapter Two: Polish Reviews of Postcolonial Literature (1970–2010)

My approach consists in a discursive analysis of Polish press reviews and other articles on (translated) contemporary postcolonial prose, which were published between 1970 and 2010. I examined recurrent discourses in the articles to infer the reviewers' perceptions of postcolonial peoples, in particular the perceptions of difference and similarity. I argue that certain discourses are present in the reviews because I find recurring phrases, statements and arguments which I classify as exemplification of an overarching discourse. Inevitably, my classification of the discourses is partly subjective and corresponds with my interest in intercultural perceptions; I am aware that my lens allows me to see some discourses but must make me turn a blind eye to others.

The analysis comprises both a qualitative and a quantitative component, as I carried out close readings of selected reviews and counted instances of the appearance of particular discourses in successive decades.⁶³ The former allows me to pinpoint features of particular discourses as they find expression in particularly suggestive and elaborate examples, while the latter provides insight into the varying frequency and intensity of the discourses in the course of time. As some instances did not lend themselves to straightforward categorization, the decision whether they should be counted as examples of particular discourses was in the end a matter of interpretation and choice. This means that the quantitative part should be treated as no more than an estimation of general trends.

I choose the period 1970–2010 because it comprises two decades before and after the socio-political transformation of 1989, allowing me to capture potential changes in discourses and perceptions of postcolonial peoples after that landmark date. I decided that it would be impractical in terms of time and word limit to analyse

⁶³ I entered instances of particular discourses in an Excel spreadsheet. Sorting functions could then be used to count numbers of relevant occurrences in particular decades, in articles on particular authors, etc. I did not create a searchable digital corpus because it would have been difficult to convert the photographs I had taken of older newspaper articles (often printed on low-quality paper and sometimes damaged) into text and it would have been time-consuming to scan and convert hundreds of images. Besides, I needed to read and manually analyse all articles to verify and modify my initial list of discourses. A digitized corpus could be convenient for verifying findings and extending the study but it was not viable to create one within the scope of this project.

reviews from 1945 until 2010 within the space of the doctorate and I assumed that the discourses from the years 1970–89 would be representative of the whole communist period, even if they are likely to be less ideologically orthodox and more diverse than in the years 1945–69.

Below I delineate the scope of ‘postcolonial literature’ for the purpose of the study, specify how the corpus of reviews and articles was compiled and add background information on the Polish press and censorship. Afterwards, I broaden the background by commenting on Polish translations of postcolonial literature to which the reviews refer. Finally, I address the advantages and limitations of the method.

Scope of ‘Postcolonial Literature’

Constructing a category of postcolonial literature is, on the one hand, advantageous because a body of texts thus labelled can challenge and oust a colonial canon as a set of literary depictions of the formerly colonized countries. On the other hand, such construction rests on a categorization derived from the very colonialist tradition it seeks to displace and it downplays a plethora of alternative grounds for classification. I decided to introduce the category of postcolonial literature because of its revisionist thrust, which can help to invigorate a debate about Eurocentric prejudices in post-1989 Poland, especially after the terms of third worldism were rejected together with the legacy of Polish communism. The terms employed by Polish reviewers with reference to the bodies of texts I classify as postcolonial include ‘third world’ and, indeed, ‘postcolonial’ (*pokolonialna*, *postkolonialna*), which was occasionally used as a descriptive, temporal marker before 1989 and, more often, as a critical term derived from academic postcolonial criticism from the late 1990s onwards. Other terms include regional, national and linguistic classifiers (e.g. ‘African’, ‘Maghreb’, ‘Indian’, ‘Arab’, ‘Francophone’).

For the sake of this study I limit my definition of ‘postcolonial’ geographically and historically to the regions formerly colonized by modern industrializing European powers, primarily Britain and France, in the nineteenth century: Sub-Saharan and North Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia and the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean. I exclude Latin America and Hispanic Caribbean because the regions underwent a different type of colonization and because the ‘boom’ of

Latin American writing in the second half of the twentieth century is a distinct phenomenon, which has already been studied in Poland by Małgorzata Gaszyńska-Magiera (2011).⁶⁴ I also leave out the Far East and Eurasia because it was not under colonial influence of industrializing West European powers, even if Japan, Russia and China can be said to have acted as colonizers in the regions. The activities of the USA, Canada and Australia, both as colonies and colonizers, also fall beyond the scope of this study.

Even after I delineate the regions of interest, it is far from obvious what criteria define 'postcolonial' writing from these regions: is it the texts' style, language, theme, setting or socio-political message? Or the authors' race, ethnicity, language, place of residence or beliefs? Some of these criteria seem essentialist (the author's race), others are insufficient (a setting) or equivocal (a message). Tentatively, I combine some of these factors and include in my corpus reviews of texts by authors who engage with postcolonial peoples and cultures in sustained and meaningful ways and have some legitimacy to represent them due to their belonging to postcolonial places and cultures (which are likely to be co-determined by the circumstances of birth, residence, ethnicity, social class, etc.). 'Meaningfulness', 'legitimacy' and 'belonging' of course require interpretation and in borderline cases I find myself resorting to the authors' reception and making arbitrary decisions.

I incorporate writing by migrant and second generation immigrant authors living in the West who address their non-European heritage. Admittedly, some of the authors, particularly those who were born in the West, may be and often are discussed as British or American writers and they may themselves wish to avoid such labels as 'postcolonial', 'immigrant', 'multi-cultural', etc. Nevertheless, I think that 'postcolonialism' remains a valid, if by no means dominant, critical lens for reading those second generation authors who decide to explore the question of their origins.

There are also some problematic cases among authors who were born in (former) European colonies. For example, V.S. Naipaul, who grew up in Trinidad in an East Indian community but settled in Britain after his studies there, is a controversial figure for postcolonial criticism because of his apparent loyalty to Britain and his bitter criticism of postcolonial societies. I include his work because I

⁶⁴ Gaszyńska-Magiera's comprehensive study deals with various aspects of Polish reception, including press reviews, although it does not focus on intercultural perceptions. One of her main hypotheses is that translated Latin American literature was in Poland a source of understanding of the distant cultures and I compare my results with hers in Chapter Four on knowledge.

think he engages with postcolonial cultures in meaningful (if critical or, according to some, misguided) ways.

Another problematic case are white anti-apartheid authors from South Africa (e.g. Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee) but I include them based on their belonging to the anti-apartheid struggle and a projected belonging to a postcolonial, racially heterogeneous society that was to emerge after the apartheid. I also rely on the academic consensus that their work be read from postcolonial perspectives. Doris Lessing presents a borderland case, too: she was raised in Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), moved to South Africa at the age of thirty and, at thirty-one, to Britain, where she has lived since (Watkins 2010). She was critical of colonial, neo-colonial and capitalist relations. Some of her writing is set in Africa and although some is not, it remains open to metaphorical or comparative reading in conjunction with her 'African' work and with recourse to such themes as otherness/ sameness, civilization/ barbarity, etc.⁶⁵ I include reviews of her non-African work because I do not want to determine the 'meaning' of a text based purely on its setting.

I exclude authors who belonged to colonial elites and depicted 'natives' from a Eurocentric, if sometimes sympathetic, perspective (e.g. Rudyard Kipling, Karen Blixen). I omit post-WWII authors using postcolonial locales as backdrops for their white characters' exploits, failing to meaningfully engage with the local communities and issues (e.g. the author of action novels Wilbur Smith, born in today's Zambia). I also disregard authors who may sometimes engage with postcolonial locales but lack other connections to them, having grown up and resided in the West.

Postcolonial literature is normally associated with the anti-colonial movements and decolonization after WWII but I include the pre-war Indian authors Premchand and Tagore, who were pioneers of contemporary Indian literatures and problematized social and colonial relations. It is not unheard of to apply postcolonial criticism retrospectively to early works, so I consider my move justified. I limit the corpus to contemporary, twentieth century literature, although I include folktales written or transcribed in the twentieth century. Finally, I narrow the corpus down to *prose* because it is more commonly associated with mimetic functions, which matters for my argument that reviewers tend to comment on 'real' places while discussing

⁶⁵ Lessing stated that her life in Africa was unquestioningly the most formative time for her as a person and writer (Bertelsen 1985:124; in Watkins 2010:184).

fictional texts. Poetry and drama would offer relevant insights but would require additional commentary on aesthetic qualities and forms of performance.

Corpus of Reviews and Articles

I compiled a corpus of nearly a thousand reviews of postcolonial prose and other articles on postcolonial literatures and authors; the articles were published in Polish-language periodicals between 1970 and 2010.⁶⁶ They were originally written in Polish (I excluded foreign-language journals published in Poland and interviews with postcolonial authors reprinted in Polish after the foreign press). Most articles concern prose published in Polish translation but a few articles, by émigré and academic authors, review non-translated writing. It is important to point out that between 1976 and 1990 two publishing systems operated in Poland: an official, censored system and an underground, independent one. Most of my articles from the period derive from official publications, although I included relevant underground articles listed in bibliographies. I also included the articles from emigration magazines which figured in bibliographies. Generally, articles from emigration and underground magazines comprise a small fraction of my corpus because postcolonial literature hardly featured there.

I used the following bibliographies and sources to compile my corpus: *Polska Bibliografia Literacka*, which lists literary translations, reviews and literary criticism (paper volumes for the years 1970–88 and online database for the years 1988–98⁶⁷); *Spis Zawartości Czasopism*, which lists the contents of newspapers and magazines (four online databases for the years 1996–2004 and from 2005 until present);⁶⁸ the bibliography of underground publications *Bez cenzury 1976–1989. Literatura, ruch wydawniczy, teatr: bibliografia* (Kandziora et al. 1999); contents of the Paris monthly *Kultura* for 1981–1987 (Zielińska Danilewicz 1989); contents of the monthly *Literatura na Świecie* for 1979–88 (special issue from 1989); and online archives of the dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Życie Warszawy* and

⁶⁶ The exact number of articles is 902, including 140 articles from the 1970s, 243 from the 1980s, 113 from the 1990s and 406 from the 2000s.

⁶⁷ Available at <<http://pbl.ibl.poznan.pl/dostep/>>. The database contains material from about 1,950 different periodicals.

⁶⁸ The databases are managed by Biblioteka Narodowa (National Library) and comprise material from over twenty dailies and weeklies and circa 1,800 other magazines. They can be accessed individually at <<http://mak.bn.org.pl/w14.htm>> or searched together at <<http://mak.bn.org.pl/fidkar/>>.

Dziennik, and the weeklies *Polityka* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*. I searched the relevant archives and other databases using geographical and national designations, such as ‘African literature’, ‘Indian novel’, ‘Egyptian short story’, etc., as well as authors’ names (which I identified based on my knowledge of postcolonial literature and a list of postcolonial literature in Polish translation I had compiled; the list is discussed later in the chapter).

I collected and read c. 1,050 relevant reviews, articles, essays, interviews and notes (i.e. very brief informative pieces about book publications or authors’ prizes or visits); this total included sample articles on postcolonial poetry and drama, as well as articles in which postcolonial authors were mentioned but were not the main topic (I could identify such articles through online searches, which searched entire texts, but not in paper bibliographies). This reading informed my general awareness of existing discourses and trends but for the sake of the quantitative analysis in this thesis I removed from the corpus the following: non-prose texts, articles where postcolonial authors were not the main focus, notes. I was left with c. 900 texts. To provide some context on where the articles derive from and in what circumstances they appeared, I will now characterize the post-war Polish press.

Polish Press (1945–2010)

In communist Poland the press was subject to state control. Nearly all titles were published by the state, except for some Catholic periodicals such as the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. As I indicated in Chapter One, political pressure fluctuated throughout the period: after WWII a semblance of plurality was initially maintained through a varied offer of titles. Yet, the contents were controlled by a censorship organ, implemented after the Soviet model in 1946. From the late 1940s to the end of Stalinism in 1956, the party maintained a tight grip on the press. The thaw of 1956 allowed some free expression but in 1957 the new leader, Władysław Gomułka, returned to tougher cultural policies. In 1964 intellectuals protested against censorship in a famous two-sentence letter but to no avail. The press remained instrumental to the Party interests, notably during the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968.

The period I study, from 1970, began in an atmosphere of press liberalization and opening to the West under a new leader, Edward Gierek, but despite initial concessions, the press was harnessed to mendacious success propaganda during a deepening crisis. In 1976 the time was ripe for breaking the Party’s monopoly and

organizing underground publishing. It published texts which had been blocked by censors, as well as purpose-written articles. The number of illegal, independent periodicals was estimated at 3,200 in 1986 (Szaruga 1999:85) and although their reach was limited, they played a crucial role in disseminating information and critique of the Party. The advent of Solidarity in 1980 brought unprecedented liberalization, when taboo topics were raised by journalists. Revision of the censorship apparatus was negotiated and according to new regulations, passed in October 1980, censors' interventions – until then a guarded secret – were to be marked, authors had the right to appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court and certain types of publication were exempt from censorship (Bates 2004:153). Yet, the concessions were rarely introduced and few journalists had the nerve to exercise their rights (ibid.).

During martial law (1981–83), periodicals were suspended and defiant journalists purged. Some periodicals were later restored with new editorial teams, others disappeared. Moreover, censorship regulations from the 1940s were reinstated (Romek 2000:33–34). Official media, which presented the martial law leaders as Poland's defenders, were sometimes boycotted, e.g. people ostentatiously went for walks during the evening news broadcast (Paczkowski 2003:120–22). After years of political stalemate, censorship loosened in the late 1980s, to come to an official end in June 1990 (Bates 2004:144).

Freed from institutionalized censorship, the post-1989 press became more pluralistic but also dependent on market constraints and new political pressures. According to Tomasz Goban-Klas, the Polish press market is dominated by foreign owners (mostly German and French). Due to growing unemployment journalists are determined to keep their jobs and more submissive to their supervisors (1996:32). In the 1990s, new political forces expected the media to endorse their viewpoints and attempted to inscribe censorship in media laws. The Christian-National Union party (ZChN) lobbied for legal defence of 'Christian ethics' and launched a campaign against, for instance, translating Salman Rushdie's controversial *The Satanic Verses* (ibid.:31). In 1993, artists and intellectuals penned an open letter in defence of free speech (ibid.). Generally, in the two decades, 1990–2010, the press has been involved in politics.

My articles derive from many periodicals: I will list some of them here. A fair share of the articles appeared in dailies, including *Życie Warszawy*, a Poland-wide

Warsaw daily; *Trybuna Ludu*, an outlet of the communist party published until 1990; *Rzeczpospolita*, a governmental daily from 1982 to 1990, currently a major, right-wing daily (Mielczarek 2007:105); and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, founded in 1989 as a Solidarity outlet, currently a major centre-left daily (ibid.:92). The majority of my articles appeared in weeklies and monthlies, including: *Polityka* (since 1957), a major socio-political leftist weekly; *Tygodnik Powszechny* (since 1945), an independent intellectual Catholic weekly; *Nowe Książki*, a monthly on new publications (bi-weekly before 1982), addressed to librarians, teachers and students (Hutnikiewicz & Lam 2000:468); *Kontynenty* (1964–90), a monthly devoted to Africa, Asia and Latin America, featuring political-ideological commentary and cultural information; and *Literatura na Świecie*, founded during Gierek's thaw in 1971 and bringing a new lease of life to Polish culture. *Literatura na Świecie* editors promised to feature literature from 'socialist' and 'capitalist' countries, as well as 'the literatures that are coming to life on the language territories newly liberated from colonial rule' (Editor 1971:187). Another important source was *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, a journal of Polish Oriental studies.

Censorship

Between 1946 and 1990 censorship operated in Poland within a legal framework: I will summarize its mechanisms focusing on the press and tease out implications for my study. Preventive censorship, executed by the Main Office of Control of the Press, Publications and Public Performances (Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk), affected everything from business cards to concert programmes, to press and book publications (Leftwich Curry 1984:7–8). Yet, the rules were 'vague' and decision-making 'secret' (Barańczak 1980:72; Szaruga 1999:16). Some censorship mechanisms were deduced by authors affected by it; the first underground magazine comprised texts which had been rejected by censors. Another source of information were classified materials of the Main Office from the years 1975–77, smuggled to the West by a defecting censor and collected in *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* (Strzyżewski 1977; Strzyżewski 1978; Leftwich Curry 1984).

Some authors were temporarily blacklisted or could publish books but the reception was manipulated, e.g. positive reviews were blocked (Barańczak 1980:74). I assume that by and large postcolonial authors were not considered dangerous or,

indeed, relevant to Polish politics due to perceptions of cultural distance. I have not encountered a situation where most reviews were negative, indicating possible reception manipulation.

Importantly, institutional censorship was just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of press control (Romek 2000:35). Journalists were censored by editors and probably practised self-censorship, given that most magazines only paid for what was actually printed (Leftwich Curry 1984:9).

Another point about censorship mechanisms is that authors negotiated with censors. The historian Zbigniew Romek observes that authors sought a compromise, making ‘cosmetic’ changes by inserting ideologically correct phrases to save their core ideas (2000:38). Regarding pre-1989 articles from my corpus, many texts contain ideologically marked phrases, e.g. ‘anti-imperialism’, ‘bourgeoisie’, etc. Some of them could have had a ‘cosmetic’ character, although sometimes the terms are used rather purposefully in analyses of postcolonial novels which lend themselves to Marxist readings. Occasionally, Marxist vocabulary is used more frequently and fervently, notably in pre-1989 articles by Waław Sadkowski, who stands out as a zealous pro-governmental reviewer.

Scholars note that the population could read between the lines (Mielczarek 2003:349) and the authors would convey forbidden meanings through historical, biblical and foreign-country ‘costumes’ (Barańczak 1980:75; Żakowski 1999:149). I am aware of one usage of a postcolonial context (but not a postcolonial author) to convey Polish dissident views. Kapuściński’s book *Cesarz* (1978; *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand), depicting the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie and his servile court in an archaized and allegorical tone, was read as a satire on Gierek and the Party. For example, in the underground magazine *Veto*⁶⁹ in 1982 Piotr Buczkowski published a series of ‘Thoughts on *The Emperor*’: the political-analysis-cum-satire on the Party used passages from Kapuściński to raise such themes as lack of reforms (issue No 3), ‘court’ factions (No 4) or justice, the latter inspired by Kapuściński’s observation that good ideas are attributed to the emperor, whereas bad ideas result in firing ministers (No 6). These articles do not engage with Ethiopia and Selassie only serves as a symbol of despotism. According to Kapuściński’s biographer, who talked to

⁶⁹ A magazine published irregularly in Poznań between 1982 and 1988; circulation of 500–2,000 copies (Zwiernik n.d.).

anonymous ex-censors, *Cesarz* was not censored because it was felt that an intervention would have amounted to admitting that African vices had been recognized as Polish (Domosławski 2010:332). This confirms that postcolonial countries generally appeared distant and different from Poland.

Rigorousness of censorship depended on the period (liberalization marked the years 1956–57, early 1970s, 1980–81 and the late 1980s), print run (specialized periodicals with low circulation enjoyed more freedom (Szaruga 1999:16)) and the topic. I presume that third world politics and literature were not too sensitive a topic. Domosławski reports after a former secret service employee that the third world was largely irrelevant for Polish intelligence (2010:508). *The Black Book of Polish Censorship* offers some insight into the 1970s censorship directives on postcolonial countries; the fact that third world countries are given very little space in the book – which, presumably, reflects modest coverage the countries received in the classified materials presented in the book – confirms my assumption that those parts of the world were not seen as particularly important by Polish authorities. At the same time, the arguably modest material presented in the Black Book suggests that coverage of third world affairs was rather strictly regulated. Positive coverage was required for the countries with which Poland had diplomatic and trade contacts (Leftwich Curry 1984:115). For example, criticism of Idi Amin’s Uganda was forbidden, even when Amin planned to raise a statue of Hitler (ibid.). Mention of protests against Arab and African regimes organized by Arab and African students in Poland was banned, as were comments on economic contacts with South Africa or other countries with which Poland had broken diplomatic relations (ibid.:139–40).

I now reach the questions: can I determine if the articles I study were altered by censors? And how does the answer affect my results? I only know that the coverage of the *fatwa*, i.e. a legal opinion issued against Salman Rushdie in February 1989 by the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini over publication of the allegedly blasphemous novel *The Satanic Verses*, was manipulated. An underground publication reports that due to censors’ interventions editors had to block passages of the novel and a PEN-club protest letter from being published. Ironically, one paper printed something about Iranian oil transports to Poland instead (Anonymous 1989). One article on Rushdie in the official press includes a mark of censors’ intervention (in tune with the 1980 concessions). However, otherwise I cannot tell whether pre-1989 articles had been tampered with. One could seek this information in censorship offices

archives, mainly Archiwum Akt Nowych (New Records Office) in Warsaw, which has c. 3,500 call numbers, some comprising over a dozen files, up to 1,000 sheets each (Bates 2004:142). The archives have been used for research, for example Joanna Hobot analysed the censorship of an influential poetic group (2000). Due to time and resource constraints I was unable to undertake archival work on censorship. Such work could constitute further research on my topic but is not indispensable for this study: I explain why below.

I undertake to study, first and foremost, official discourses circulating in the public domain and governed by political pressures but also social conventions, professional ethics, etc. My premise is that, generally, the public domain contains normative models, which sections of the society consider appropriate even if the models are rarely adhered to by all. For instance, in my corpus I find no racially insulting utterances, which shows that racism is an unacceptable model, even though racism is known to linger on outside the public domain or on its fringes.⁷⁰ It would be worth extending my study beyond the official sphere, e.g. by including readers' online comments on postcolonial books. I am of the opinion that I should first study the official discourses, which tend to reflect the values a society or its controlling elite aspires to.

I recognize that in communist Poland large sections of society did not identify with the Party-controlled public discourses and that this disparity limits the representativeness of my results. Nevertheless, I insist it is instructive to know these discourses first because they were very much in the public domain and were bound to have some impact. When Polish society contested official discourses, alternative discourses appeared in underground and emigration publishing but postcolonial literatures and countries were hardly covered there.⁷¹ This could imply that the

⁷⁰ Sample recent articles report an unexplained shooting of a Nigerian by Polish police (Machajski 2010), an arson attack on a Polish-Pakistani family (Klimowicz 2011) and a complaint by a mixed-race child's mother about an initiative in the child's kindergarten to donate pens for African children, advertised as 'Bambo Is Going to Write' (M. 2011). There have also been debates about what constitutes racism, e.g. after the BBC aired a documentary about allegedly racist and anti-Semitic behaviour in Polish and Ukrainian stadiums before Euro 2012 (Piwowar 2012; Passent 2012).

⁷¹ A glance at a bibliography of underground publications (Kandziora et al. 1999) reveals focus on Polish and East European dissidents and Western reflections on freedom, totalitarianism, etc. (e.g. by Plato or George Orwell). I only found references to Gandhi and the *fatwa* against Rushdie (I discuss them in Chapter Seven), and a mention of the Somali poet and political prisoner Abdulle Rage in an Amnesty International report in the magazine *Praworządność* (Law and Order). Besides, two essays on V.S. Naipaul and one essay on Salman Rushdie appeared on emigration (I discuss some of them in Chapter Five).

official coverage of postcolonial literatures was not resented as censored or distorted because the topics appeared relatively distant and politically neutral. It may also mean that postcolonial writing appeared irrelevant to Polish causes.

While fully-fledged institutionalized censorship is a peculiar state of affairs, milder forms of censorship and self-censorship are present outside of undemocratic regimes. For instance, I have reported censorship on religious grounds in post-1989 Poland. John Bates argues that Polish underground publishing ‘did not automatically entail culture without constraint’; he indicates that criticizing Solidarity leaders was taboo, while issues of women’s rights, homosexuality and ethnicity, particularly Polish-Jewish relations, were marginalized (2004:152,163). Perhaps postcolonial peoples, as ethnically other, could be added to the list of the lacunae of underground publishing.

Polish Translations of Postcolonial Literature (1945–2010)

I shall now generally characterize Polish translations of postcolonial writing from the period 1945–2010 (i.e. slightly broader than my reviews study). This commentary is intended as a background for studying *reviews* of the translated books and as such does not offer an exhaustive analysis of translation and publication strategies. It is based on a list of translations, which I compiled using subsequent volumes and an online database of *Polska Bibliografia Literacka* for the years 1970–1998 and other bibliographies (Skurjat 1973; Bębenek 1978; Bębenek 1983; E. Krajewska & Konieczniak 2009; Michalski 2008), as well as keyword and author-based searches in the Polish National Library catalogue. The list of translations is attached as Appendix Two.⁷² The list includes book publications but I should emphasize that translations of poems, short stories and prose passages appeared in magazines (both in relatively specialized titles, such as *Literatura na Świecie* and *Kontynenty*, and in popular titles, including the women’s magazine *Kobieta i Życie* and the peasant daily *Gromada – Rolnik Polski*).

As shown in Chapter One, writings about Africans, Indians and Arabs were read before WWII but, with the exception of Tagore, contemporary writing *by* them only became known after the war. Publication of the works correlated with political

⁷² The list may lack some recent publications because after decentralization and privatization of publishing book copies are not always supplied to the National Library. Besides, immigrant writing may not be identified through a keyword search if authors are not tagged under their country of origin.

interest in the decolonizing ‘third world’. In the late 1940s and 1950s Polish publishers privileged portrayals of social injustice in the colonies, by the Indian writers Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya, South African authors Peter Abrahams and Alan Paton, and Doris Lessing from then-Rhodesia.⁷³ From the late 1950s Algerian authors were translated, e.g. Mohammed Dib and Mouloud Feraoun, which reflected support for Algeria’s anti-colonial struggle. Socially-engaged fiction was accompanied with political non-fiction, for instance by the Guinea-Bissau Marxist Amilcar Cabral and the Ghanaian socialist leader Kwame Nkrumah. In the 1960 interest in African literature grew stronger (albeit not as much as interest in Latin American writing). South African books continued to appear, including two titles by Nadine Gordimer; some Nigerian writing by Chinua Achebe was also translated. The contemporary Indian novel was represented mostly by the South Indian author R.K. Narayan, although writings by two iconic Indians, Tagore and Gandhi, also appeared. Gandhi’s autobiography had a short preface on the importance of his work, written especially for the Polish edition by Jawaharlal Nehru.

In the 1970s and 1980s about hundred and thirty postcolonial works appeared, which is a very small fraction – under two per cent – of all translations of literary works from the two decades.⁷⁴ Only a few authors appeared with relative regularity and frequency: Narayan (with eight books), Naipaul (eight), Gordimer (five) and Dib (four). In addition to Naipaul, several Anglophone authors were introduced, including Nigerian novelists depicting tribal customs and urban life (Cyprian Ekwensi, Elechi Amadi), a Yoruba storyteller, Amos Tutuola, and Wole Soyinka, whose novel and poems appeared before his 1986 Nobel Prize. East African writing was represented only by two novels on Kenyan anti-colonial rebellion by Ngũgĩ Wa Thiongo and a naturalist portrayal of Nairobi life by Meja Mwangi. Among South African authors were Alex La Guma and, in the second half of the 1980s, Dan Jacobson, André Brink and Miriam Tlali.

Several Sub-Saharan Francophone authors were translated in the two decades (mostly in the 1970s): Camara Laye from French Guinea, whose childhood story was criticized in Poland as pro-colonial, Ahmadou Kourouma from Ivory Coast, who

⁷³ Translated works are listed in Appendix Two.

⁷⁴ Based on the data from the annual reports *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach* (Publishing in Numbers; Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa) from the period 1970–89. I calculated that up to 7,500 literary titles were translated in the period.

showed dissolution of traditional networks at political independence, and the Cameroonian Mongo Beti, who satirized and critiqued colonial government. Moreover, in short story collections readers could find a selection of writing from all over Africa (1978), from Nigeria (1980) and South Africa (1984). Translations of Anglophone African authors outnumbered translations of Francophone writers.

Francophone Maghrebian authors from Algeria continued to appear in the 1970s (e.g. Dib, Feraoun, Mouloud Mammeri). Their work revisited the anti-colonial war and examined the realities of independence. Some literature was also translated from Arabic, mostly in the 1980s, including sagas set in Cairo by the Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz and an autobiography by another Egyptian, Taha Hussein, as well as a Palestinian satirical narrative by Emil Habibi and Palestinian short stories by Ghassan Kanafani. Other examples include prose on the Lebanese civil war (1975–76) by the Syria-born author Ghada as Samman and on nomadic traditions by the Libyan Ibrahim al-Koni, as well as poetry books (1976, 1983 – see Appendix Two).

The most recognizable contemporary Indian author was Narayan. More contemporary prose was available in short stories collections (1973, 1976, 1977 – see Appendix Two), which contained translations from Hindi, Bengali, English and other Indian languages. One collection was devoted to the early twentieth century Hindi writer Premchand, who addressed the predicament of peasants. According to a Polish Indianist, the choice of Premchand exemplified preference for realist, socially-engaged prose (Kuczkiewicz-Fraś 2005:363–64). In the 1980s a book for young readers by Ray Satyajit appeared, deviating from the realist model. In 1989 Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* was translated, prefiguring a steady streak of translations of Rushdie's books in the decades to come. Symptomatically, Achebe's classic *Things Fall Apart* also came out in 1989 but while Indian writing was on the rise, interest in Africa was declining.

The translations were brought out by several state-owned publishers, usually founded in post-war years. The main ones were Iskry, specializing in youth literature and travel writing, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy (PIW), one of two biggest publishers of belles-lettres, Pax, part of a pro-communist Catholic association, and Książka i Wiedza (KiW), which specialized in ideological literature (Biliński 1977). A few titles appeared in Wydawnictwo Literackie, Czytelnik and Nasza Księgarnia. Book covers typically signalled non-European themes of the books, usually corresponding with the content. Examples include covers featuring characters' faces

or figures (see Fig. 18 & Fig. 19), architectural and artistic motifs evoking Africa or India (see Fig. 20, Fig. 21), recognizable map contours (Fig. 22), etc. Some covers had more abstract or plain designs (Fig. 23).

Generally, most PIW publications do not have explicatory materials, while most Iskry books have footnotes and, sometimes, prefaces. It may be because PIW's translations came out in the Interesting Book Club series, which offered inexpensive editions of good literature (Biliński 1977:97,99). Iskry, on the other hand, focused on the informative function of literature, perhaps because at least two persons involved in translating and editing were Africanists (Ernestyna Skurjat and Małgorzata Żbikowska). Prefaces, if included, were penned by translators, editors or academics.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 18 (On the left). The cover of *Chmury i łzy (Weep Not Child)* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, trans. Zofia Kierszys (Warsaw: PIW, 1972). **Fig. 19** (On the right). The cover of *Jagua Nana (Jagua Nana)* by Cyprian Ekwensi, trans. Maryla Metelska (Warsaw: PIW, 1976).

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 20 (On the left). The cover of *Sprzedawca słodyczy (The Vendor of Sweets)* by R. K. Narayan, trans. Juliusz Kydryński (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1970). **Fig. 21** (On the right). The cover of *Wąska ścieżka (The Narrow Path)* by Francis Selormey, trans. Maria Skibniewska (Warsaw: Pax, 1971).

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 22 (On the left). The cover of *Gość honorowy (The Guest of Honour)* by Nadine Gordimer, trans. Zofia Kierszys (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1979). **Fig. 23** (On the right). The cover of *Marionetki (The Mimic Men)* by V.S. Naipaul, trans. Maria Zborowska (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1971).

In the two decades 1990–2010 I count roughly two hundred and fifty translations: about twice the number of the translations from the previous two decades but given that the overall number of literary translations also doubled,⁷⁵ postcolonial literature still constitutes a very small percentage of all translated literature. Some familiar authors were still translated: Gordimer (which may have resulted from her 1991 Nobel Prize), Lessing and Naipaul, in whose case the impact of the Nobel Prize is evident as his books appeared between 1971 and 1985, and then

⁷⁵ Based on the annual reports *Ruch wydawniczy w liczbach* (Publishing in Numbers) from the years 1990–2007.

after the award in 2001. Two highly acclaimed postcolonial writers, Rushdie and Coetzee, became well-known in Poland and in the 2000s several younger authors were introduced. Polish publishing houses, which had been privatized, participated in the commercializing and globalizing book market, showcasing work of recipients of prizes and bestselling authors soon after its original publication. The postcolonial authors published before 1989 were normally associated with particular countries, even if tribal or regional identities also played a role, whereas in the 1990s and especially after 2000, many translated authors were migrants or children of immigrants settled in Western Europe or North America.

The proportion of African writing declined compared to the decades 1970–89, although there was a moderate revival of interest in Africa in the late 2000s, when Achebe was reintroduced with a retranslation of *Things Fall Apart* (2009), followed by another novel. Among younger Nigerians one should mention Ben Okri, Biyi Bandele and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a US-educated female author of the youngest generation, author of a coming-of-age story and a chronicle of the Biafra war (1967–70). An Anglophone, Netherlands-based Ugandan author, Moses Isegawa, was also translated: interestingly, his manuscript was in English but the book first appeared in Dutch in his co-translation (Merolla 2009:45) and was translated into Polish from Dutch. I should mention the phenomenon of Waris Dirie, a Somali model and campaigner against the practice of female genital mutilation, whose memoirs were co-written (or ghost written) in English and translated into Polish.

Only South African writing was on the rise, which correlated with the dismantling of apartheid in the 1990s and Coetzee's popularity after 2000. In addition to Gordimer, there were translations of Brink, Christopher Hope and Coetzee, whose (arguably allegorical) work was first read as representation of South Africa but with his rising prestige, the responses became more abstract and philosophical. Athol Fugard's novel *Tsotsi* was translated after its film adaptation (2005, dir. Gavin Hood) and some younger authors appeared, e.g. Damon Galgut.

Francophone writers, featured less frequently, included the Congolese-French author Alain Mabanckou, known for his mishap characters and original use of slang, and the female Senegalese author Ken Bugul. Maghrebian Francophone authors also appeared, although the translation output has been modest: one book by the Moroccan Tahar Ben Jelloun appeared in 1990 (which, given the long publication

circle during communism, may have been a response to Jelloun's 1987 Goncourt Prize) and then two books were brought out in the late 2000s by small publishers specializing in non-European writing. Algeria was represented with one book by the female author Assia Djebar and three books by Yasmina Khadra, which is the female pseudonym of a former serviceman, Mohammed Moulessehoul. Some of his work addresses religious fanaticism, which became topical in the West and in Poland. A Lusophone author from Mozambique, Mia Couto, was also popular, with four novels translated.

Regarding North African and Middle Eastern literature in Arabic, Marcin Michalski finds it consoling that the level of translations did not drop after the end of communism, when interest in Arab countries was no longer politically endorsed (2008:183). Polish readers were presented with more works by Mahfouz; Egyptians generally dominated the translations, with the male author Ala al-Aswani and female authors Salwa Bakr and Miral al-Tahawi, the latter from a younger generation. Authors from other countries include the female author Hanan Al-Shaykh and the male author Rashid al-Daif (both Lebanese), the male Tunisian author Hassan Nasr and the female Syrian author, Salwa al-Na'imi. Michalski notes some recurrent themes in the novels – war, the situation of women, critique of political systems (ibid.:184) – but is reluctant to make generalizations concerning selection strategies. Rather, he puts the choices down to 'chance' and literary and academic interests of translators.

Authors from South-East Asia and of South-East Asian descent were a success, particularly in the 2000s. Rushdie had pride of place with eleven translations spread throughout the decades. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* was translated in 2000 after it won the Booker Prize, followed by her political essays. One book by Anita Desai and one by her daughter Kiran Desai appeared in the 1990s, followed by Kiran's Booker-winning *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2007. A translation of Bharati Mukherjee, an India-born US-based author, from 1993, and the 1994 translation of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, by the half-Pakistani British author Hanif Kureishi, showed immigrants' lives from different angles, prefiguring more works of a similar kind (e.g. by Monica Ali or Jhumpa Lahiri). The acclaimed authors Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh were also popular, as was, for instance, a US-based female writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (with five translations). Aravind Adiga's writing was a different story: *The White Tiger* (another Booker-winning novel) and later short

stories depict destitution and corruption through a tongue-in-cheek realism. The list of Anglophone South-East Asian authors is considerably longer (see Appendix Two). Occasional translations from other languages, mainly Hindi, are also listed.

Books from the Caribbean were less numerous: Naipaul's work, single novels by the female US-based authors Jamaica Kincaid, of Antigua, and Edwidge Danticat, born in Haiti, novels by UK authors of Caribbean parentage (Caryl Phillips, Andrea Levy, Zadie Smith) and a novel by the Francophone author Patrick Chamoiseau.

The texts were very diverse, as was the post-1989 book market. Some of them were brought out by PIW, a survivor of the transformation, others by new popular literature publishing houses (e.g. Prószyński i S-ka, Zysk i S-ka), yet others by high-brow publishers (e.g. Znak) or niche publishers specializing in non-European literatures (e.g. Karakter or the academic publisher Dialog). Popular publishers, who marketed books as good reads, were less likely to add prefaces but could add footnotes. Publications in which academics were involved or editions of established authors are typically prefaced. There is also a variety of covers, displaying various marketing ideas (see Fig. 24 & Fig. 25) and design sophistication and branding (see Fig. 26). Pointers to the non-European character of the books are still there, some more exoticizing, others more inventive (see Fig. 27).

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 24 Three different editions of *Dzieci północy* (*Midnight's Children*), by Salman Rushdie, trans. Anna Kołyszko, publ. Czytelnik and Rebis.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 25 Three editions of *Hańba* (*Disgrace*), by J.M. Coetzee, trans. Michał Kłobukowski, publ. Znak.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 26 Two translations of Alain Mabanckou: *Kielonek* (*Verre Cassé*) and *African Psycho* (*African Psycho*), both trans. by Jacek Giszczak and published by Karakter.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 27 *Zakręt rzeki (A Bend in the River)* and *Utrata El Dorado (The Loss of El Dorado)* by V.S. Naipaul, trans. Maria Zborowska, publ. Noir Sur Blanc.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 28 An exoticizing cover of *Mistrzynie przypraw (The Mistress of Spices)*, by C.B. Divakaruni, trans. Klaudia Michalak-Palarz, and an inventive cover of *Budda z przedmieścia (The Buddha of Suburbia)*, by Hanif Kureishi, trans. Maria Olejniczak-Skarsgrd, both published by Zysk i S-ka.

Merits and Limits of the Method

Finally, I shall comment on the merits and limitations of the approach. One of its merits is that reviews of translated postcolonial literature constitute an extensive, systematically enlarged textual record of encounters with representatives of other cultures, who speak as subjects in their own right, even if their speech is mediated by translation, editing, etc.⁷⁶ This to me is an advantage of this resource over travel writing and other texts by Polish authors, whose exposure to postcolonial peoples' self-expression cannot be taken for granted.

Another merit of this method is that reviews provide discursive commentary, which more often than not carries traces of relevant perceptions. By contrast, studying other reception factors – re-editions, entries in reference books, inspirations in Polish writing – one could learn about the popularity and prestige of postcolonial literature but not the wider perceptions of postcolonial literature, peoples and places. Translation and publication strategies do not necessarily give insight into perceptions either. Associating particular strategies (e.g. foreignization, domestication, heavy footnoting) with attitudes to otherness (e.g. respectful, possessive, exoticizing) is interesting but highly speculative. In other projects I have interpreted individual

⁷⁶ Of course, we need to be alert to the vicissitudes of representation, remembering that postcolonial authors are necessarily selective and appropriative in writing about people, places and problems with which they have more – or less – in common, due to the circumstances of their birth, language, gender, class, education, career, etc.

translations in terms of perceptions of foreignness but my interpretations were aided by discursive utterances by translators (prefaces, translator's academic output, an interview I conducted) and this method was not viable for a corpus of many translations (Gołuch 2011; Gołuch, forthcoming).

An ostensible limitation of my method lies in seeking perceptions of 'real' postcolonial peoples and places in commentaries on literature (predominantly fiction). However, many reviewers do discuss actual places, people and problems, either because the reviewed books prompt them to raise extra-literary topics by the way of digression or because they assume that the books represent existing realities. Some indiscriminate readings of literary fiction as though it was reportage smack of poor literary training but in many readings expectations of a degree of verisimilitude seem justified. This is because postcolonial writing emerged as self-representation and re-writing of the European canon, thus promising a take on people's realities that would be somehow more accurate. Postcolonial writing also relies on a link between the artist and society: such a link is also common in the Polish tradition, rooted in the Romantic ideal of a poet-witness or poet-leader. Marxist criticism, informing some pre-1989 reviews, also grounds literature in social realities. Finally, I can argue that even when reviewers talk about 'fictional' peoples and places, they employ discourses which have named and shaped extra-literary realities, thus subscribing to the cultural perceptions associated with them.

Another limitation of studying reviews is that the inferred perceptions can be ascribed to the reviewers but not necessarily to larger sections of Polish society. At the same time, the reviewers' texts were read by heterogeneous audiences and potential expectations of the audiences were probably taken into account by the reviewers, while the reviews in turn influenced readers and their expectations. The group of reviewers is itself, to an extent, heterogeneous, ranging from intellectuals and academics writing for elite periodicals to journalists in charge of occasional book reviews in regional dailies.

Finally, I acknowledge the impact of review writing conventions on my material and results. While the review genre is flexible, allowing the reviewer to express his or her opinion about a publication, some less imaginative reviewers resort to cliché phrases and generic formats. I sometimes have no certainty if a postcolonial novel struck a reviewer as, for example, universally significant, or whether 'universal significance' is a cliché about literature one mechanically inserts in school

compositions and mediocre reviews. Because I study publicly circulating discourses, rather than reviewers' motives and intended meanings (which anyway may not be possible to recover), I still treat the fact that a reviewer associated, however mechanically, a given cliché with a postcolonial novel as informative for my purposes.

To recapitulate, my method consists in studying press reviews of mostly translated literature and articles on postcolonial authors and literatures to pinpoint relevant discourses and infer perceptions about other cultures circulating in the public sphere. Overall, I consider the method valid for the purpose of examining official discourses, even if I admit that additional archival research on censorship and research into a semi-public sphere, e.g. readers' online comments, could further illuminate the topic. Focusing on the official sphere, I investigate perceptions of reviewers, critics and journalist, who constitute a relatively elite, if internally stratified, sample. I argue that translations of postcolonial literature, as opposed to e.g. Polish travel writing, could prompt reviewers' responses to self-representations of postcolonial cultures. Moreover, the responses often concern knowledge of 'reality' as much as literature. In the following two chapters I examine the discourses on translation and knowledge figuring in the reviews of postcolonial literature.

Chapter Three: Discourse on Translation

Tłumaczyć

1. «objaśniać, wyjaśniać»: T. działanie silnika.

[«explain, elucidate»: (*Tłumaczyć*) how an engine works]

2. «przekładać coś z jednego języka na inny»: T. powieść.

[«translate something from one language into another»: (*Tłumaczyć*) a novel]

*/Mały słownik języka polskiego PWN (Polish Language Dictionary)/*⁷⁷

In Polish there are two verbs for ‘translate’, which can be used interchangeably. *Przekładać* has the concrete meaning of ‘to move something from one place to another’, as well as the more abstract meaning ‘to translate’. The etymology and polysemy of the term suggest that translation has been envisaged as transferring a message over a boundary – the same spatial metaphors underlies the Latin word for ‘translate’, *transferre*, as well as relevant words in other Western languages (Tymoczko 2007, Ch.2).

However, the other Polish word implies a different conceptualization: as the dictionary entry above indicates, *tłumaczyć* signifies both ‘to explain’ and ‘to translate’. The term was first recorded in the fifteenth century – which makes it the oldest Polish term for ‘translate’ – and, originally, denoted primarily interlingual transfer. This has changed in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century, when ‘the most salient meaning of *tłumaczyć* has gradually shifted . . . towards other aspects, including “to explain, present, interpret something”’ (Skibińska & Blumczyński 2009:32). Insofar as etymology and synchronic study of semantics can hint at how speakers conceptualize the world, it appears that in Polish translation is associated with spatial movement but also with clarification.

The connection between translation and explanation is of paramount importance for this chapter. The study of references to translation in the Polish

⁷⁷ Elżbieta Sobol (ed.), 1995, 12th ed. Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

reviews of translated postcolonial literature (1970–2010) suggests that illumination of cultural otherness is considered a crucial task of the translators. In the chapter I first discuss some relevant theoretical approaches to translation. Subsequently I shall offer a qualitative analysis of four articles which address translation in particularly pertinent ways. Finally, I will summarize a quantitative study of the discourse on translation in the four decades.

It seems obvious enough that in order to be cognitively understood the unknown needs to be introduced in terms of what is already known; the process of translation also, by definition, involves resorting to familiar terms, ‘an exchange of source-language intelligibilities for target-language ones’ (Venuti 1995:203). Yet, scholarly conceptualizations of the exact terms of the exchanges and the intended learning outcomes vary, as the following, brief discussion of the relevant work by Kwame Appiah, Gayatri Spivak, Lawrence Venuti and Maria Tymoczko will show.

Appiah advocates literary translation which contextualizes the translated literature and lends itself well to pedagogical purposes. In Appiah’s view, the task of defining and evaluating literature is largely in the hands of relevant institutions, which also have a bearing on pedagogical practices. Associating (canonized) literature with pedagogical function, Appiah defines the goal of literary translation as preservation of what is worth teaching in the literature (2004:398). He believes that literature can give insight into cultural differences but for this to happen it needs to be known with the relevant context. The context includes the conventions governing meaning creation in the source community, e.g. the conventions which allow speakers of a language to recognize a proverb and infer its broader message from the literal meaning.

Appiah refers to such context-rich translation as ‘thick’ translation. He paraphrases the term ‘thick description’, popularized by Clifford Geertz’s argument that the ethnographer needs to describe not merely bare acts of foreign culture representatives but their broader meaning, thus providing ‘thick’ description of the ‘imaginative universe within which the . . . acts are signs’ (Geertz 1973). Analogically, in Appiah’s view, the translator cannot provide merely the literal meaning but should strive for ‘thick’ translation, which seeks to ‘locate a text in a rich cultural and linguistic context’ through extensive annotations and glosses

(2004:399).⁷⁸ Presented in its complexity, a foreign work can be cognitively comprehended without being completely stripped of its otherness and reduced to the cognitive categories of the target culture.

I am now turning to Spivak and Venuti as theorists who emphasize confrontation with foreignness less in terms of cognitive challenge and more as an experience (ethical, aesthetic, emotional, etc.). Spivak outlines a project to translate third world women's writing in a way that is less about 'bodies of meaning . . . transferred in translation' (i.e. cognitive communication) and more about the insights into the forming of identity and 'workings of gendered agency' happening in language (i.e. some sort of empathetic experience) (Spivak 2004:369). She believes that the translator should establish a connection with the author's style through an intimate act of reading, not only grasping communicative logics of language but also 'surrender[ing] herself to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original' (ibid.:377). The rhetoricity – richness of connotative and allusive potential, significance of both inclusions and omissions, surfacing of the signifiers – marks the difference of the author's writing and the singularity of these non-generalizable subaltern subjects which the writing may aspire to signal.

Spivak then advocates attempting to inscribe the difference of the foreign author in the translation, the attempt being a subjective inscription of the translator's sympathetic reading. Spivak notes that she first translates fast and mostly literally, to later revise the translation 'not in terms of a possible audience, but by the protocols of the thing in front of [her], in a sort of English' (ibid.:378). For example, the English of her translation of short stories by the Bengali author Mahasweta Devi is supposed to resemble 'rootless American-based academic prose' (Spivak 1995a:xviii), to a potential estrangement of readers unfamiliar with Americanisms. As she states in the translator's note, she also uses italics in an unconventional way, which may cause a reading difficulty; she treats the difficulty as a reminder of 'the intimacy of colonial encounter'⁷⁹ (Spivak 1995b). Moreover, she supplements the reader's experience with a paratext (interview with the author, translator's preface, note and afterword), thus featuring the source author but also dramatizing the process

⁷⁸ Appiah distinguishes between 'thick', academic translation and translation intended as a work of literature in its own right. Yet, I believe that the concept of thick translation applies to postcolonial literature translated for general readers, rather than students, because the questions of pedagogical function and information load are crucial to postcolonial writing in metropolitan languages.

⁷⁹ She uses italics for the words which in the Bengali original appear in English and as such attest to the intimate permeating of vernaculars by the colonial language.

of representation and foregrounding her own role as a ‘doorkeeper for Devi in the West’ (Spivak 1995:xviii).⁸⁰ Spivak’s translation of Devi can serve as an illustration of her general agenda: that the translator tries to signal the difference of the foreign text through textual rhetoricities and conspicuously self-referential paratext.

Venuti also opts for constructing foreign-like translations but shifts the emphasis from signalling *the* foreign source text onto creating *an* impression of foreignness, in order to frustrate target readers’ expectations of the familiar.⁸¹ Venuti opts for creating translations that will ‘deviat[e] enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience’ (1995:20), thus disrupting the flow of fluent discourse and alerting readers to alternative discourses and values. From Venuti’s perspective, potential benefits of foreignizing translation into US English include ‘forcing a . . . canon reformation’ (ibid.:203), shaking monolingual American readers out of the state of ‘cultural complacency’ (ibid.:17) and improving the status of translators.

Venuti also believes foreignizing translation to be beneficial for the original text: in the closing paragraph of *The Translator’s Invisibility* he pronounces ‘utopian faith in the power of translation to make a difference not only at home, in the emergence of new cultural forms, but also abroad, in the emergence of new cultural relations’ (ibid.:313). By stressing a utopian character of the wish, Venuti suggests that to do justice to the original and do a favour to the target culture are two different, but not necessarily contradictory, things; it is clear from his target-oriented analyses that his more immediate interest lies in the target domain.

Venuti provides illustrations for foreignizing translations, primarily in non-postcolonial contexts – for instance Ezra Pound’s translations of Old English poetry and Venuti’s own translation of a nineteenth century Italian novelist Iginio Ugo Tarchetti – showing how the texts have been rendered via marginal domestic

⁸⁰ Spivak notes that the phrase was used critically by an Indian scholar but she appropriates it, acknowledging that her representation of Devi cannot be completely neutral.

⁸¹ The distinction between constructing literary foreignness to signify *the* foreign, on the one hand, and evoke *an* unspecified sort of foreignness, on the other, can be made primarily at the level of translatorial intention and critical interpretation. Practically, a foreign-like text is constructed from domestic resources in either case. In the case of translations which try to record *the* foreignness of the source text, a link between a foreignizing stylization and the foreign original is likely to be mostly arbitrary, comprising a stylization which the translator, or the critic, associates with the style of the original and/or salient qualities of the source language or culture. The association can be announced e.g. in a preface or a review. A degree of non-arbitrary connection going beyond the customary inclusion of foreign proper names could be achieved by including untranslated phrases in foreign language(s).

discourses. He admits that the foreign texts have been creatively appropriated to serve domestic revisionism, although he also notes that the translators' stylizations were diverse and inconsistent enough to protect the foreign texts from assimilative domestication (Venuti 1995:192; Venuti 1998:17). Yet, his case studies confirm that he treats the source text primarily as a springboard for conjuring up an effect of foreignness for the sake of target readership.

Venuti's strategy has also been advocated for translating postcolonial literature, where the question of commitment to the singular foreignness of the source text is crucial. For instance, Joanna Dyla-Urbańska considers foreignization a suitable strategy for translating Salman Rushdie's novels into Polish.⁸² She writes that a 'foreignizing' translation of *Midnight's Children* by Anna Kołyszko 'helps to challenge the conventions of Polish, proving that the post-colonial aims of Rushdie . . . can also be communicated in the target language' (2009:266). Dyla-Urbańska generally argues that the style of Rushdie should be recreated in Polish for the dual purpose of challenging domestic values and retaining Rushdie's tribute to hybrid postcolonial identity.

The declared duality of purpose in translating is potentially problematic, although I propose how it may be resolved. Dyla-Urbańska aptly views Rushdie as both postmodern and postcolonial: the postmodern aspects of his writing may be associated with deconstructive and subversive potential of foreignness for foreignness' sake, while the postcolonial aspects with a representation of a specific, postcolonial foreignness.⁸³ A worthwhile reconciliation of the two poles with regard to Rushdie's position has been offered by Bishnupriya Ghosh, who views Rushdie as an 'Indian postmodern'. She argues that Rushdie's postmodern use of English as an Indian vernacular can be understood only 'with recourse to *situated* or contextual

⁸² Dyla-Urbańska analyses Polish translations of four novels (*Midnight's Children*, trans. by Anna Kołyszko, *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, trans. by Wojśław Brydak, and *Shame*, trans. by Mariusz Ferek). She generally favours Kołyszko's rendition of Rushdie's hybrid language and criticizes elements of domestication found in the other translations.

⁸³ The common, if vague, differentiation between postmodernism and postcolonialism is intuited by Helen Tiffin, who ventures two 'hazardous generalizations' on the issue: 'post-colonialism is more overtly concerned with politics than is post-modernism' and '[post-modernism] has exercised . . . a cultural and intellectual hegemony in relation to the post-colonial world and . . . cultural productions' (1990:x).

knowledges' (1999:129; original emphasis) and that the situatedness of cultural hybridity in the singular context of the subcontinent 'disallows Western appropriations of the postcolonial into discourses of postmodernity' (ibid.:130). Dyla-Urbańska approvingly demonstrates that the Polish translations of Rushdie strive to produce a form of foreignness stemming from a local, Indian context by retaining Indian words, coining analogical neologisms, etc. I think that the sort of theoretical construct helps to address the potential tension between Venuti's target-oriented foreignization and Dyla-Urbańska's more source-oriented application of the idea.

Dyla-Urbańska attends to the question of the anchorage of Rushdie's textual foreignness, arguing that 'foreignizing strategies help to extend the limits of the reader's native world and broaden his/her knowledge forcing him/her to search for information associated with the foreign culture' (2009:268). Unlike Venuti, who analyses interpretations and reception of translations, she compares translations with their originals. In her analysis she is critical of translations which do not seek anchorage in the foreign source, but achieve non-standard effects through peripheral domestic discourses: looking at translation of the lexis derived from Indian languages, she favours Kołyszko's attempts to incorporate the foreign words and criticizes Brydak's creative use of Polish colloquial idiom in their stead. Dyla-Urbańska's stance suggests that in the context of postcolonial literature Venuti's idea of foreignization is influential but the spotlight is placed on the source text.

The general assumption that textual foreignness is beneficial for translating postcolonial literature is challenged by Tymoczko. She is more interested in how an unfamiliar text from a marginalized culture is known in the receiving culture. She posits that translation, like any retelling, 'metonymically represents features' of its textual and cultural tradition (1995:17), which poses difficulty in translating from marginalized cultures, whose traditions are virtually unknown to the receiving audiences. Translators of marginalized texts either supplement the information through dense explications or are drastically selective in what original features they translate. Hence the translations tend to be scholarly or popular.

Later Tymoczko turned to a specifically postcolonial framework and studied English translations of Old Irish epics to demonstrate that various strategies have been employed by translators who sought to support Ireland's decolonization (Tymoczko 1999a). Some nineteenth century translators assimilated Irish texts to the

domestic convention of English epics, in order to elevate Irish epic heroes through a prestigious literary medium and thus contribute to a project of cultural revival. She implies that, historically, (re-)creating the peculiarity of the Irish epics through ‘foreignizing’ translations could have amounted to playing into the hands of colonial stereotyping against the Irish. In a more recent publication on translation and power, she and Edwin Gentzler generally argued that no translation strategies could be permanently associated with oppression or resistance (Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002:xx).

Tymoczko’s insights can be evoked in the context of Polish translations of African literature. As I have noted elsewhere, the 1989 translation of *Things Fall Apart* by the African studies graduate Małgorzata Żbikowska generally reconstructs salient, foreign features of the groundbreaking 1958 book (e.g. literal translations of Igbo proverbs or formulaic phrases). At the same time it involves elements of stylistic domestication: Achebe’s characteristic short sentences are sometimes joined together, logical linking words are substituted for the frequent ‘and’ of Achebe’s paratactic sentences and occasional cultural details are glossed over through a translation that favours idiomaticity.

In Venuti’s terms domestication generally amounts to reinforcing dominant norms at the cost of both the excluded at home and the foreign text abroad but an argument can be made against such reading in this context. The alterations may serve the goal of avoiding passages which could evoke prejudiced views of Africans, for example the stylistic simplicity of *Things Fall Apart* could be mistaken for primitivism and lack of literary refinement, while some cultural details could trigger stereotypes of wilderness or sexual looseness (Gołuch 2011:210–13).⁸⁴ This argument echoes Tymoczko’s point that Irish translators Anglicized the language and characterizations of Old Irish epics, lest the texts should be judged by the dominant norms as signs of cultural and moral deficiencies.

⁸⁴ For example, the original describes preparations for the Feast of the New Yam, mentioning that children’s hair was ‘shaved in beautiful patterns’ (Achebe 1994:38), while the translation mentions taking special care of the children’s *hairstyles* (*fryzury*) (Achebe 1989:35). Another example hints at attitudes to sexual issues. In the original a priest reproaches the protagonist for beating his wife during the Week of Peace, telling him that his action would have been inexcusable even if he had ‘found her lover on top of her’ (Achebe 1994:30). The explicit phrase is replaced with an idiomatic and, arguably, less graphic phrase, *zastał ją z kochankiem* (‘found her with a lover’) (Achebe 1989:29) (Gołuch 2011:205).

All the above standpoints – except for Venuti but including Dyla-Urbańska's application of his ideas to postcolonial literature – stress the importance of conveying knowledge about postcolonial source texts, their authors, subjects, context, etc. Their preferred strategies, or, in Tymoczko's case, lack thereof, suggest that they envisage transfer of knowledge to work through various channels: through reason and cognitive faculties (primarily receptive of information) but also through reason in combination with aesthetic and ethical experience, imagination and emotion, which would be responsive to such impulses as textual foreignness, cultural/human otherness and similarity, and values inherent in the representations.

Discourse on Translation: Close Readings

In the following part of the chapter I present close readings of four reviews, which exemplify strong trends but also, in one case, give insight into a fairly unusual critical position. Secondly, I narrate the main discursive developments regarding translation as they emerge from a study of reviews in four subsequent decades. At the end I relate the findings to the selected scholarship on translation outlined above.

Text Selection and Ideological Patronage

In the first close reading I focus on a 1970s polemic in order to demonstrate that translation is a vital tool of ideological gate-keeping in communist Poland. The polemicists are Andrzej Różycki, a reviewer with a conspicuous communist agenda, and Zbigniew Stolarek, the translator of Camara Laye's *bildungsroman* *L'enfant noir* (1953; the translation was brought out by Iskry as *Czarny chłopak*, 'Black Boy', in 1973). The polemic revolves around the legitimacy of Laye's image of Africa and, consequently, legitimacy of the decision to publish the book in Polish. As André Lefevere contends, 'the choice . . . of both form and subject matter' for translation is partly constrained by the circumstances of patronage and its ideological components (Lefevere 1992:16). In this case patronage is extended by state institutions, which promote communism. Selection is also a function of the translator's relationship with the original literary scene; Spivak argues that picking a 'representative' is not a matter of simple maths, or law of the majority, but a fine qualitative judgement on who should be speaking for and about a foreign group (Spivak 2004:377). Różycki

and Stolarek disagree about precisely that judgement, when Różycki argues that Laye fails as an African spokesperson.

Różycki (1973) attacks the translator and publisher for selecting a book which focuses on traditional life in rural French Guinea and fails to expose the problems of colonialism. In his article in the pro-governmental literary weekly *Życie Literackie*, Różycki likens *L'enfant noir* to French colonialist novels, noting that its exoticism and sentimentalism won Laye favour and literary prizes from 'the dirty French bourgeois' (*francuskich burżujów*). He is generally sceptical of books which conjure up an image of village life in pre-colonial Africa, extending his criticism to *Piękna Ihuoma* (Beautiful Ihuoma), the translation of Amadi Elechi's *The Concubine*, published in the year preceding the review. He concludes the review with an appeal that publishers avoid such regressive books, lest 'various black boys and beautiful Ihuomas should block our view of Africa's true image'⁸⁵ (*ibid.*).

The true image of Africa, according to Różycki, emerges from works of anti-colonial authors and critics, who do not idealize the past and expose the social injustice of the present day. For example, he juxtaposes Laye's novel with Mongo Beti's *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba* (1956), which was banned in the colonized Cameroon for severe critique of colonialism. Różycki claims that Laye meets with a rebuff from fellow Africans and that such African intellectuals as David Diop and Frantz Fanon criticize books which, by uncritical celebration of tradition, hinder industrialization and 'progressive' social change in African countries. He also quotes Chinua Achebe's criticism that Laye's book may idealize the pre-colonial past. Indicating what counts as the true image of Africa, Różycki claims to be referring to and representing African critics' and readers' own views.

In a polemical article published in *Życie Literackie* two months after Różycki's, Stolarek denies and ridicules the charges of, as he calls it, 'pro-colonial sabotage' (1974). Firstly, he stresses that in the translator's preface he does warn readers that anti-colonial motifs are absent from the book. Secondly, he argues that the book is nonetheless a pioneering, historic piece of African literature. He explains that at an earlier stage of independence struggles African writers depended on colonial infrastructure: hence Laye's connection to the French publishing market was not an uncommon phenomenon. Moreover, Stolarek points out inconsistencies in

⁸⁵ For most quotes I provide the Polish originals in Appendix One, under the relevant chapter and page heading.

Różycki's reasoning, demonstrating that ideological zeal prevents him from appreciating the complexities of authors' biographies. For instance, Stolarek observes that Różycki criticizes Laye's acceptance of a French prize but does not question anti-colonial credentials of Achebe, who lived in the USA and accepted an honorary degree from a US university.

Finally, Stolarek states that despite its limitations, Laye's story is a valuable addition to the reservoir of knowledge about Africa available to Polish readers. In particular, he insists that the insider account of everyday life in a Malinke village should complement the image of Africa presented by Sienkiewicz in *In Desert and Wilderness* and in its film adaptation⁸⁶ (which was released in the year of the review). Stolarek remarks that *L'enfant noir* sheds light on the people and places that Staś and Nel, the novel's protagonists, could not have discovered in their fictional journey. Although he does not enter into a debate with Sienkiewicz, the remark implies that there are omissions in the novel, which another text can fill in. He generally opts for a 'fuller picture', whereby readers can access various points of view, as opposed to Różycki's 'true image', which, allegedly, only ideologically pre-selected, 'anti-colonial' works can provide.

Stolarek and Różycki argue not only about the needs of Polish readers but also about the views of African readers and, consequently, about which African authors are legitimized by the African readers themselves. By insisting that Africans boycott Laye for misrepresenting the continent's history, Różycki gives an impression of merely relaying the voice of Africans who are speaking for themselves. He also advocates translating those authors who, supposedly, express the sentiments of African peoples. Stolarek disagrees with Różycki's diagnoses of who is popular with and representative of African readers, pointing out that even if Laye's *L'enfant noir* met with criticism from African critics when it first appeared twenty years earlier, in the 1970s the book is granted a place in the African canon, appears on school reading lists, etc. Stolarek explicitly challenges Różycki's approach to African literary representation as non-historical and stubbornly synchronic, asking 'why shouldn't African countries change their view on their authors and works in the course of two decades?' (1973). Generally, although Stolarek does not undermine the idea that 'the people' can be represented by 'progressive' authors, who, in turn, can be featured by

⁸⁶ *W pustyni i w puszczy*, directed by Władysław Ślesicki, 1973. The film remains popular until today, even though a new version, by the South African director Gavin Hood, appeared in 2001.

Polish publishers, he promotes a more dynamic and diachronic approach to the issue of representation.

Translation Clarity and Documentary Value

A translator and specialist in African literature, Ernestyna Skurjat, advocates rendering the language of African literature in a relatively fluent manner to secure transfer of information about the foreign. Skurjat reviews Cyprian Ekwensi's novel *Jagua Nana*, translated by Maryla Metelska, for the monthly *Razem* in 1976; a slightly edited version of the review appears also in *Nowe Książki*, whereby the text gains a wider audience. She reads *Jagua Nana* – a story of a mature Lagos prostitute overwhelmed by the excitement of city life – as a source of knowledge about Nigerian society. Ekwensi, in her view, unmask the ills of Lagos life and although the novel was written ten years before its Polish publication, little has changed in Nigeria and the novel remains topical in 1976. She concludes that *Jagua Nana* should be read in Poland primarily as 'a sociological document' (Skurjat 1976a).

Skurjat states that the novel can function as a sociological document in Poland because it benefits from a suitable translation strategy. She notes that parts of the novel are written in Pidgin English, which she glosses as the language spoken in Nigerian cities by migrants from the countryside and pronounces to be untranslatable ('at least into Polish', she adds). She praises the translator's decision to signal the Pidgin passages through 'occasional neologisms and stylistic markers', rather than using more comprehensive stylizations based on non-standard varieties of Polish. In Skurjat's view, the mild stylization allows the translator to retain clarity and readability (*czytelność*) of the text and thus facilitates its informative role.

My reading of the translation alongside the original confirms that Metelska renders the Pidgin using a limited number of stylistic markers (colloquialisms, occasional errors), incorporated into standard, predominantly spoken, language. As an example I will briefly present a passage from the original and, later, its translation: in the passage Jagua accuses her young lover, Freddie, that he will abandon her after he uses her money to get a university degree in England:

When you come back with you title, den you will begin to chase de small gals with standin' breast. . . . Dat time, Jagua go be too ol' for you (Ekwensi 1975:7).

The short passage contains a number of Pidgin markers, including phonetic transcription (e.g. ‘de’ for ‘the’, ‘gals’ for ‘girls’), Pidgin lexis (‘small’ meaning ‘young’) and non-standard grammar (e.g. future tense marker ‘go’ in ‘Jagua go be’ for ‘Jagua will be’). The translation of Jagua’s accusation reads:

Jak wrócisz z tym tytułem, zaczniesz wtedy *uganiać* za młodymi, *co* mają jędrne piersi. . . . Jagua będzie dla ciebie za stara (Ekwensi 1976:9, emphasis added).

[When you come back with that title, you will begin to *chase* the young ones, *which* have firm breasts Jagua will be too old for you] (back translation – D.G.).

The translation does not recreate non-standard pronunciation, lexis, or, for most part, grammar. It does, however, signal colloquial speech by retaining short and simple sentences, introducing a colloquial relative pronoun *co* (‘what’, ‘which’) instead of *które* (‘who’, ‘which’) and omitting the obligatory reflexive pronoun *się* in the verb *uganiać się* (‘to chase’), creating an ungrammatical effect. On the whole, colloquialisms are relatively frequent⁸⁷ but compared to the original the language seems standardized and I agree with Skurjat that it does not obscure clarity of the text.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that Metelska’s choice of moderate stylization coincides with the decision of numerous English translators of Francophone African novels. According to a study by Kathryn Batchelor (2009), the choice to render Pidginized French through a moderately stylized translation counts among the main strategies used by translators of novels with post-independence setting (she finds that novels with colonial settings tend to accentuate Pidginized speech of the colonized characters through frequent and severe mistakes or use of an English Pidgin). *Jagua Nana* is set in post-independence Nigeria and perhaps this is one reason why Metelska and Skurjat are inclined to see the language of the characters independently, as a sort of local standard, rather than in relation to former colonial language.

Two alternative solutions for rendering the Pidgin, which Skurjat rejects as misleadingly evocative of domestic settings, are: existing Polish dialects or jargons and Sienkiewicz’s construction of African speech from *In Desert and Wilderness*.

⁸⁷ Other examples of colloquialisms include *paniusia* (‘missus’, ‘m’dam’) (Ekwensi 1976:81) and *pszepana* (contraction and phonetic spelling of the form of address *proszę pana*, i.e. ‘sir’) (ibid.:24).

Regarding dialect-for-Pidgin translation, she believes that domestic dialects would remind the readers of Polish regions or social groups. Another reviewer of *Jagua Nana* also believes that attempts at representing Pidgin via a Polish dialect would be misguided and artificial (Leopold 1976:414). Dialect-for-Pidgin translation can be considered an instance of a more common strategy of ‘dialect-for-dialect’ translation: such substitution always raises the problem of incongruity between a domestic dialect, metonymically signifying a domestic setting, and the foreign setting of a literary text (Leighton 1991:211; quoted in Batchelor 2009:98). Interestingly, similar problems seem to arise in the case of Pidgin-for-Pidgin translation – an option which Skurjat mentions even though it is unavailable to Polish translators due to lack of Polish-based Pidgins.⁸⁸ All in all, given Skurjat’s emphasis on the informative role of translation, she rejects using a Polish dialect because it would distract readers from learning about Nigeria.

Another solution Skurjat dismisses as incongruent with the documentary value of *Jagua* is to translate the Pidgin into a form of ungrammatical Polish evocative of the speech of Kali, the black Man Friday character in Sienkiewicz’s novel. Skurjat states that ‘Sienkiewicz style tongue-twisters’ (*lamańce językowe*) are a bad idea, albeit without much explanation. One reason for the dismissal may be a sense, possibly growing among critics of African literature, that Sienkiewicz’s representation of Africa is anachronistic (Stolarek, quoted above, also called for updating Sienkiewicz’s image of Africa from 1911). The function of Kali’s Polish within Sienkiewicz’s novel evokes a quasi-colonial relationship between Europeans and Africans, where the latter develop a rudimentary version of the European language. In Ekwensi’s *postcolonial* setting, on the other hand, the sociolinguistic conditions are different: the Pidgin is spoken among postcolonial Nigerians and functions as an egalitarian urban idiom rather than a marker of social and racial distinctions.

⁸⁸ Batchelor examined the use of English-based Pidgins in translations of Francophone African literature. For example, discussing *Road to Europe*, Richard Bjornson’s 1989 translation of Ferdinand Oyono’s *Chemin d’Europe* (1960), Batchelor observes that ‘the evocation of a West Indian context through the pidgin features [introduced by Bjornson] jars with the West African setting of the novel’ (2009:98). The risk of evoking a locale different to the original’s, even if influenced by similar colonizing forces, is also noticed by Helen Buzelin (2006), who decides against using a French Caribbean Creole in her translation of the Trinidadian-Creole-inspired prose of Sam Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners*.

Pidgin should be treated as a system of communication in its own right, a ‘pragmatic lingua franca’ and should not be associated with linguistic incompetence in the way a ‘broken’ variety of a language is (Batchelor 2009:98–99). A full ‘independence’ of Pidgin is more of a theoretical concept than a fact, as its use still connotes class and power differentials.⁸⁹ On the other hand, within Ekwensi’s novel *Jagua* indeed functions as a self-sustained medium – the narrator explains that Jagua and Frank both knew Igbo but they ‘always used pidgin English because living in Lagos city they did not want too many embarrassing reminders of clan and custom’ (Ekwensi 1975:5) – and it is not contrasted with Standard English in the plot. Skurjat rejects the idea of using Kali’s speech because both its colonial baggage (mentioned earlier) and the connotation of incompetence make it an anachronistic and misleading medium for translating the postcolonial *lingua franca* of Ekwensi’s characters.

Untranslated Words and Bicultural Reader

A review of Salman Rushdie’s short stories collection *Wschód Zachód* (*East, West*) by Renata van de Logt offers an example of the rare view that foreignness should be retained in translation. Van de Logt writes that Rushdie plays with words from the languages of the Indian subcontinent, including them in his English text. She then observes that the translator, Maria Gromkova, is ‘overprotective’, sheltering Polish reader from unintelligible words in ‘exotic languages’ (1998:336). In van de Logt’s view, the foreign words from Indian languages should have been left untranslated.

Van de Logt supposes that the translator polonized the foreign terms out of concern for the readers’ knowledge and cognitive comfort. She assumes that the translator may have screened out – and polonized or omitted – the terms which a Polish reader would be unlikely to know. Hence the translator introduces e.g. the foreign word *sahib* because Polish readers should be acquainted with it. Van de Logt agrees with such a supposition, exclaiming: ‘not for nothing have generations of Poles been raised reading Kipling!’ (ibid.). At the same time, van de Logt

⁸⁹ To back this statement, it can be mentioned that, for example, Pidgins or Creoles do not usually function as official languages (with a few exceptions such as Haitian Creole and Tok Pisin spoken in Papua New Guinea) and that in linguistics Pidgins and Creoles only began to be recognized as a legitimate object of study in the 1970s (Holm 1988:60). Importantly, even though in the Polish translation of *Jagua* Pidgin is treated as a self-contained, low register variety and rendered with colloquial Polish, the publisher stigmatizes Pidgin on the blurb by stating that the novel is written in broken English and that ‘the naivety of language and imagery’ is maintained by the translator.

continues, the translator leaves out other vocabulary items from Hindi, Urdu or Bengali, which would be known to Rushdie's British audience (because words from the former colony entered dictionaries of English) but not to Polish readers. In short, trying to reconstruct the logic behind the translator's choices, van de Logt suggests that the translator tries to recreate and mirror the postcolonial author's strategy in dealing with his (British) target readers.

Van de Logt also thinks that Gromkova should follow Rushdie's strategy but she only partly agrees with Gromkova's interpretation of it. In her view, next to the words which, indeed, have made it to British English dictionaries, Rushdie includes a number of words that are bound to be alien to an average British reader. Therefore, van de Logt's argues, Gromkova should have confronted Polish readers with untranslated foreign terms too.

I will now outline three possible rationales behind such a recommendation and show that although all three may apply to van de Logt's viewpoint, she gives most prominence to one that is relatively uncommon. First, there is the by and large poststructuralist idea that encountering signs of cultural and linguistic foreignness in the text readers might become inclined to tolerate the foreign elements and grow comfortable with otherness (i.e., *de facto*, with their own position of not knowing). This may be one effect of untranslated, unknown words on Rushdie's Polish readers. Secondly, reading the foreign terms readers can learn their approximate meaning from the context within the book or in other books and they can reach for other sources of information. Van de Logt acknowledges that readers can acquire cultural knowledge through literature, when she comments that many Polish readers have learnt the word *sahib* from Kipling's *Kim*.

The third rationale for including untranslated, culturally evocative terms is interesting because it caters for a relatively marginalized sub-section of Rushdie's readership. It has less to do with monocultural readers – who may learn from the text – and centres on bilingual or bicultural readers, who are familiar with aspects of Indian culture. In the last part of the review, van de Logt characterizes Rushdie's prose as a palimpsest, to notice that while many layers are accessible to an average, Western reader, some layers include cultural allusions, foreign words, etc. that are understandable only to readers 'to whom India is, for one reason or another, particularly close' (ibid.:337). She points out that readers with bi-, or multicultural competence, equipped to appreciate Rushdie's work at multiple levels, can also be

found among the audience of the Polish translation. Even if they comprise a small sub-section of the readership, it is also for their sake that the translator should have retained untranslated words in *Wschód, Zachód*.

Van de Logt also calls Rushdie's prose an 'imperfect translation' of India into English: this critical insight reinforces the point that Rushdie's work can be more fully enjoyed by a reader familiar with both the language of the 'translation' and with the 'translated' languages and traditions. In a seminal article G.J.V. Prasad (1999) considers Indian literature in English as a form of cultural translation; similar points have been made about other postcolonial literatures.⁹⁰ Tymoczko addresses the question of the reader of postcolonial texts/ translations; she writes that for bilingual Irish readers some passages in Joyce will 'trigger a dual semiosis', while '[f]or monolingual/monocultural readers, by contrast, the text will have a seemingly transparent monolingual surface' (2000:154). Although she writes about a case not fully applicable to Rushdie's prose,⁹¹ the general point – that bilingual readers can resort to more interpretative resources than monolingual ones – is very pertinent.

Biographical information about van de Logt indicates that she may count among such bilingual readers herself. Van de Logt, a Polish woman, and her Dutch husband run a Hindu ashram in the Polish town of Lanckorona, which indicates that they are familiar with elements of Indian culture, religion and, possibly, languages.⁹² Generally, van de Logt sympathizes with a small group of Polish speakers competent in Indian culture and believes that a foreignized translation of Rushdie's prose would have catered for their tastes.

Internet Research, Fluency Norm

In this section I discuss not a review but an interview with a translator, Maria Jaszczurowska, which offers some insight into her career as a translator, her methods for researching a non-European culture and the translation norms she acquired during her internship. Jaszczurowska translated Jhumpa Lahiri's short stories *Interpreter of Maladies* (*Tłumacz chorób*), set in Indian immigrant communities in the USA. The

⁹⁰ For example Samia Mehrez's essay on Maghrebian women's writing in French (1992), Paul Bandia's work on Francophone African literature (Bandia 2008).

⁹¹ Tymoczko refers to a situation where conventionalized translations of the relevant foreign words are used. For instance, Joyce uses the conventional English translation 'fairy mound' for *síd*, but only bilingual/bicultural readers will be able to enrich their reading knowing that *síd* means 'peace' and refers to a mythical Irish otherworld. The case of Rushdie's prose is different because foreign words are actually used in the text.

⁹² Source: <<http://www.babaji.pl/en/practical-information>> (last accessed 21 November 2012).

interview appears in 2010 in a local edition of the influential daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Regarding Jaszczurowska's career path, she tells the interviewer that she chose a translation career when she was studying English philology. She tried her luck in the high-brow Krakow publishing house Znak, following in the footsteps of a friend who wrote reader's reports for the publisher. As an aspiring translator she was given a number of samples (various styles and genres) and before entering the third year of her studies (i.e. in the middle of a five-year course) she was entrusted with her first book: Lahiri's short stories.

Based on my own experiences as a graduate of English philology (translation specialization) in Poland, I would say that an academic path to literary translation has been increasingly common in the last decades. Generally, after 1989 many private higher education institutions were created and it became more common for people to obtain academic degrees. In addition, there is a general modern tendency to narrow specialization in academia and industry and, as a result, it is increasingly common that younger generation translators have a language degree. Finally, at a time when many Anglophone 'postcolonial' works are written by authors raised and/or educated in Anglo-Saxon countries and marketed as part of British or US literary production, the books are likely to be commissioned to translators working with English but not necessarily knowledgeable about the relevant non-Western cultural background.⁹³ This is not to say that all translators of Anglophone postcolonial literature had English degrees – the acclaimed translator of Zadie Smith Zbigniew Batko, for one, was an engineer – but I would venture a statement that Jaszczurowska's experience is exemplary of some of the younger generations of translators relevant for this study.

Jaszczurowska tells the interviewer that translation of the collection required some research on the Indian cultural background. She remembers that she knew Lahiri as a Pulitzer Prize winner and an American author of Indian origin but the book was 'a sort of cultural surprise' (2010). Jaszczurowska explains: 'one doesn't read such books everyday; in any case, I hadn't had much to do with Indian/Hindu culture before' (ibid.). She remembers that she had to learn a lot both in terms of

⁹³ In the earlier times the situation may have differed insofar as formal higher education was less accessible (and, in addition, the historical upheavals of WWII and Stalinism may have prevented persons from the older generation from acquiring their degrees). It was also more common that translators learnt languages in elite secondary education, through travel or other means, and that translation was less of an exclusive occupation for people but something that authors, journalists, etc. would take up.

translator's craft – because it was her first commission – and in terms of background knowledge, because she did not have the relevant cultural competence. She says that she had to read a lot about India, as well as learn how to use the Internet for her work. She reflects that the Internet proved an invaluable source of information but she had to acquire effective research skills with the new tool to evaluate and extract relevant information.

The comments are of interest for discussing the informative function of postcolonial translation because they draw attention to the strategic role of the translator in processing information. Jaszczurowska's example confirms that in some cases the translator must first learn the information himself or herself to explain it in the translation (it is worth adding that Jaszczurowska's translation introduces foreign words, such as names of Indian dishes or garments, and explains them in footnotes). The example also gives insight into the translator's research, showing that specialist (academic) consultation is not always provided and the translator is responsible for consulting relevant resources. It can be understood that nowadays, when the translator shifts from using printed materials, which undergo a relatively stringent selection and editing process, to materials published online, he or she faces a vast amount of information and needs to exercise critical judgement in evaluating their credibility.

Next to the cultural background research, another challenge Jaszczurowska mentions concerns the style of the translation. With hindsight Jaszczurowska believes that at first she used to suffer from a 'mannerism' typical of beginning translators: she would follow the original very closely. However, the editor she worked with advised her that one should aim at the effect of fluency: 'usually [the translation] is done in such a way as to sound well to the Polish reader, even at the cost of minor discrepancies with the original' (ibid.). As a beginning translator Jaszczurowska learnt to apply the suggestion and eight years later, as a more experienced translator, she recalls it as a 'precious lesson'. A piece of advice given by an editor of a prestigious literary publisher to an aspiring translator is likely to encapsulate an aspect of professional practice or norm; in the quote the normative character is even emphasized by the passive construction: 'usually it is done . . .'.

It may be asked if a norm favouring fluent prose has any implications for the transfer of cultural knowledge in the case of Jaszczurowska's translation. Such a correlation may be anticipated if one assumes, after Venuti, that focus on fluent style

is typically accompanied by a more thorough-going domestication or adaptation strategy, which includes removal or substitution of culturally-evocative details etc. This obviously need not be the case and, indeed, it does not happen in Jaszczurowska's work. As mentioned earlier, she includes foreign words denoting Indian dishes, items of clothing and professions; she also provides brief explanations in footnotes. Besides, she footnotes some institutions or customs belonging to American culture (MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Halloween 'trick or treat'). Although the editor's advice states that the native fluency may sometimes require 'discrepancies' with the original, there is no indication that the discrepancies should compromise transfer of cultural information.

Discourse on Translation: Developments (1970–2010)

Generally, as translators and translation researchers have repeatedly complained, the fact of translation is all too often overlooked in the contemporary world; my results regarding references to translation in the Polish articles on translated postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010 tend to confirm this trend, albeit with one exception. In the reviews and other articles from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s translation is mentioned, on average, in only about 15% of all the reviews from the relevant decade. In other words, only about three in every twenty articles contain some acknowledgement that it is translated works that are being discussed, whereas the remaining seventeen offer no reference to translation whatsoever. This is an alarmingly low number, which attests to the contemporary phenomenon of 'invisibility' of translators and translation (Venuti 1995).

At the same time, low as it is, the number suggests that translation was not *completely* invisible and I am inclined to hypothesize that one reason why the fact of translation occasionally did attract the reviewers' attention was the sheer cultural and linguistic distance of postcolonial texts, which did not disappear in translation. Simply put, reviewers may have been alerted to that distance for example by the author's 'exotic' name or by untranslated foreign words in the Polish texts: such impressions of foreignness could have prompted questions about the process of translating.

In the reviews from the 1970's, however, remarks on translation appear in approximately 35% of the articles, i.e. in six or seven articles out of twenty, or in

every third article. While this number is still relatively low, it is certainly higher than the percentage in the following decades. In my estimation this discrepancy may result from the fact that in the 1970s reviewers were particularly struck by postcolonial literature, possibly because the literature was a relatively new phenomenon on the Polish publishing market and reviewers did not have much prior knowledge, or access to relevant information for that matter, to smoothly absorb the novelty. The corresponding sense of foreignness may have invited reflection about the translation process. In fact, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, reviewers often complained that translators and publishers had failed to include additional information in Polish editions, which confirms that a cognitive void led to an inquiry into the process of translation and publication.

Before introducing some recurrent comments regarding translation, I must stress that some of the references to translation are not actually accompanied by any commentary but remain limited to fleeting praise or, less often, criticism of the translation. Although they appear in all the decades with a relative regularity, they will not be extensively discussed as they hardly lend themselves to a discursive analysis. I shall only mention a few names and titles, which reviewers noted in appreciative or disparaging terms. Reviewers seemed to particularly value Maria Zborowska's translations of Naipaul (Malanowski 1972; Sadkowski et al. 2001) and Anna Kołyszko's translation of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (Magala 1988; Nowak 1990; Podkańska 1989). The latter was given an award for the best prose translation of 1989 by the Association of Polish Translators (Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Polskich). Ewa Fiszer's translation of Soyinka's *The Interpreters* emerges as a controversial piece: one reviewer calls it a 'great translation' (Sadkowski 1986), another one notices 'blunders' in the translation but still considers it 'quite good' (Zadura 1979), while yet another simply labels it a 'poor translation' (Tchórzewski 1983). The translation of *The Satanic Verses* is also judged as poor (Masłoń 2000), although the unusual circumstances of its production are also acknowledged (Tomasz Bieroń, a prolific translator from English, states that it would be ungenerous to criticize the translation (1994)).⁹⁴ Brief comments of this sort do not contain any substantiation of the judgements, which to an extent confirms the point that on the

⁹⁴ In the *fatwa* Khomeini called for executing everyone who contributes to the book's circulation. In 1991 the Japanese translator of the novel was murdered, while the Italian translator was wounded (Weisman 1991). The Polish translation was published anonymously.

whole translation is not a subject of sustained critical attention. Other commentaries are more extended and it is to them that I now turn.

Two main discourses on translation present in the reviews address the question of explicatory materials and the language of translations. Regarding the former, reviewers praise translators and publishers for including explanations of various sorts and admonish them if explanations are missing. Although it is a common reservation among critics and readers of literature that paratextual materials, particularly footnotes, may disrupt literary experience, in the reviews there is not the slightest sign of discontent with any element of the paratext. The unquestioning approval of paratext in all guises may be connected with the perceived role of (translated) postcolonial literature as a source of knowledge about other cultures – I explore this issue in the following chapter.

The question of the language of the translations presents a more complex case, as reviewers opt for ‘fluent’, transparent language but they also welcome consistent, non-transparent stylizations. The term used by many Polish reviewers which I translate as ‘fluent’ is *ładki*.⁹⁵ The main, concrete meaning of the adjective *ładki* is ‘smooth’ (e.g. smooth surface, smooth skin, etc.); the word also signifies ease and lack of hurdles (e.g. *ładkie przejście* – ‘smooth transition’, or, in an adverbial form, *wszystko idzie ładko* – ‘things are running smoothly’). With regard to language, *ładki* evokes ease, elegance and skilfulness, and can translate into English as ‘fluent’, ‘flowing’, ‘polished’. A related adjective used by the reviewers is *staranny* (‘careful’, ‘neat’, ‘polished’ – *staranny* can refer to hairstyle or dress, handwriting, textual production). The adjective, derived from the verb *starać się* (‘to try one’s best’, ‘to strive’), implies meticulous care and craft (though not creativity) invested in the target language text. Both terms have connotations of aesthetic pleasure: an obsolete meaning of *ładki* is ‘comely’, while *staranny* suggests a pleasing effect of harmony, neatness, high quality. Generally, the terms evoke polished discourse adhering to the dominant norms of Polish and hence rather inconspicuous.

That said, fluency need not mean a transparent, standardized, nondescript discourse but on a meta-level ‘fluency’ can characterize an overall quality and craft of language. Reviewers regularly praise stylized language which disrupts an illusion of transparency, drawing attention to a particular style and idiom. Yet, they praise

⁹⁵ I choose the English term ‘fluent’ over other lexical equivalents of *ładki* partly because ‘fluent’ resonates with timely debates about translation fuelled by Venuti’s work (1995).

stylizations which they can confidently classify – this suggests that the stylizations appear consistent and carefully executed. It seems that a non-fluent piece is likely to be proclaimed a convincing, successful stylization, rather than artificial translatese, if there is purpose and craft in the disruption of linguistic standards, a salient method in stylistic madness. In a sense then, the non-transparent stylizations which reviewers view as complete and univocally classifiable are likely to exhibit a logical or aesthetic flow and reveal stylistic competence, or fluency, of the translator.

Because in the context of postcolonial translation fluency is often associated with Venuti's criticism of the term, I will briefly contrast the reviewers' concept of non-standard stylization and Venuti's concept of foreignization. Venuti states that foreignizing translation takes the form of a particular stylization: 'the foreignness of the foreign text can only be what currently appears "foreign" in the target-language culture'⁹⁶ (Venuti 1995:203). However, Venuti advocates using marginal domestic styles in unconvincing and incoherent configurations. For example, in his translation of a novel by Tarchetti⁹⁷ he employs Britishisms, archaisms and contemporary American slang together and, as he reports, at some points he makes 'the combination of various lexicons more jarring' (Venuti 1998:17). In the translator's introduction he announces his intention 'to use clichés and colloquialisms unconvincingly' (ibid.:19). Unlike Venuti, the reviewers expect stylizations to be consistent and convincing.

1970–1979

The decade 1970–1979 stands out in the corpus because of a relatively high number of references to translation (in thirty-five per cent of the reviews) and, more specifically, a strong demand for information in translation, as well as frequent commentaries on the language of translated postcolonial literature.

Regarding the importance of explanatory material, all reviewers raising the question of the paratext believe that paratext should be included. About one third of the reviewers raising the question praise the fact that a preface, glossary and/or

⁹⁶ Venuti specifies that non-central domestic values can signify otherness 'because they are residual, survivals of previous cultural forms in the target language, or because they are emergent, transformations of previous forms . . . , or because they are specialized or nonstandard, forms linked to specific groups with varying degrees of social power and prestige' (1995:203, see also Venuti 1998:9–10).

⁹⁷ *Passion* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1994), original title: *Fosca*.

footnotes have been appended, while the remaining two thirds complain that explanations are missing. Some of the publications praised for paratextual materials include Camara Laye's *Czarny chłopiec (L'enfant noir)* (Leopold 1974), R.K. Narayan's *Koń i dwie kozy (A Horse and Two Goats)* (Słuszkiewicz 1972), Francis Bebey's *Syn Agaty Mundio (Le fils d'Agatha Moudio)* (Kieruzalska 1972).

Some of the approving comments coming from Orientalist scholars are accompanied by further remarks on the quality and potential improvement of the material. For example, in his review of Premchand, the professor of Indian studies Eugeniusz Słuszkiewicz welcomes the fact that as many as thirty footnotes have been added to explain cultural concepts and untranslated Indian words, and suggests what else could have been explained⁹⁸ (1971:499). In a review of the same collection, the scholar Agnieszka Kowalska-Soni notices that 'the translator [Juliusz Parnowski] cares more for the fluent flow of the narrative and dialogues than clarity of setting details and accuracy of the local colour' (1972:179). For instance, she notes, having an Indian peasant 'sit at the table' (*siadać do stołu*) is stylistic indulgence because in India peasants eat sitting on the floor (*ibid.*). Importantly, as I show later, both Słuszkiewicz and Kowalska-Soni welcome the fact that Parnowski's translation reads fluently. This suggests that alongside their own interest in precise rendition of cultural and linguistic nuance, they appreciate the difficulty of registering nuances in a fluent, attractive form for Polish readers.

A number of reviewers complain that explanatory materials are missing to the detriment of the readers' understanding. For instance, in a short note on Amadi's *Piękna Ihuoma (The Concubine)* the reviewer states that a glossary is badly needed, as its lack is an impediment to a fulfilling reading experience (B.M. 1972). The reviewer writes that without a glossary the reader gets to know the melodious name 'fu-fu' but never learns what kind of dish goes by the name. Similarly, complaints are made about lack of sufficient information about the author: reviewers ask such questions as, how are we supposed to know the names of R.K. Narayan? (Tarska 1971). Or, how can the readers learn which tribe Wole Soyinka comes from? (Czeszko 1972). An important point, which might not be self-evident in this day and

⁹⁸ According to Słuszkiewicz (1971:499), depiction of a character staying at the door of her debtor requires a gloss, which would explain that sitting at a debtor's door is an old, customary way of extorting payment of debt, called *dharna*.

age of widespread Internet use, is that in many cases the reader actually relies on the translator and publisher for the information.

Reviewers also speculate about how to approach and solve the problem of explanatory materials. In a review of the translation of Ngũgĩ's *A Grain of Wheat* Malanowski announces that he has counted about forty Swahili words and expressions in the translation and asks why the publisher 'disfigures a text of a good translator by not including footnotes' (1973). He advises that the publisher could have asked students from East Africa living in Warsaw to translate the terms, or even just used dictionaries. Another reviewer notes that the practice of including foreword or afterword is declining but should be reinvigorated. His idea is that publishers should include reader reports, used to decide which books to translate, as an afterword (Fredro 1972a).

I now move to another salient theme in the reviewers' reflection: the language of translation. A number of reviewers appreciate fluent language of translation or approvingly note convincing stylizations. For instance, praises of 'fluent' (*gładki*) and 'polished' (*staranny*) translation appear in a review of the novel *Syn biedaka* (*Le fils du pauvre*) by Mouloud Feraoun (J.N. 1973) and in two reviews of a collection of Hindi short stories, *Sandały* ('Sandals'), translated by Juliusz Parnowski (Hamerliński 1977; M. Baranowska 1977). Krzysztof Byrski, another reviewer of *Sandały*, compliments Parnowski on the idiomaticity of the Polish text: 'the Polish idiomaticity is generally well harmonized with the atmosphere of the Indian originals' (1976:490).

Byrski is an academic specializing in Indian studies: he and other scholars recognize idiomaticity as a translatorial norm and ascribe value to it. Kowalska-Soni looks at a volume of short stories by Premchand, which comprises two stories translated by academics and twelve stories translated by Parnowski, who is not an Orientalist. Kowalska-Soni notes that Parnowski's work stands out in the volume: 'Parnowski's translations generally read more fluently [*gładziej*] than the more literal, philological translations of academic Indianists' (1972:180). The effect of fluency meets with her approval:

it is good that he [Parnowski] does not slavishly stick to the 'letter' of the original but, aiming at logical consistency and clarity/readability [*czytelność*] of the translation, is able to successfully change the word order and sentence order, paraphrase titles and cross out some overly 'moralizing' passages (ibid.).

Kowalska-Soni implies that instead of following the ‘letter’, Parnowski captures the ‘spirit’ by following linguistic and literary conventions of Polish. In another article on the collection of Premchand’s stories, Słuszkiewicz observes that the whole translated collection ‘makes a light reading’ (1971). Generally, the scholarly reviewers list losses of cultural details that an idiomatic translation may incur – yet, they generally endorse idiomatic style.

Commentaries on the rendition of Premchand’s dialogues suggest that preference for idiomaticity extends from narrative passages to linguistically marked dialogues. In yet another commentary on the translation of Premchand, Władysław Jerzy Kasiński (1972) complains that the translated speech of peasant characters has not been polished enough (the Polish term, *niewygładzona*, derives from the adjective *gładki*). He objects to a colloquial use of the relative pronoun *jak* (‘how’) instead of *kiedy* (‘when’) and to a number of colloquially used phrases, which are considered incorrect by Polish linguists.⁹⁹

Słuszkiewicz also expresses concern about maintaining standards of correctness, when he criticizes use of ‘barbarisms’ in the translation of Premchand’s peasant dialogues. Słuszkiewicz complains about most of the phrases Kasiński singled out, not because of their colloquial character but because they are calques of Russian expressions. A linguist acquainted with about thirty languages and a co-editor of a Polish dictionary of foreign words, Słuszkiewicz extends Kasiński’s list to point out other Russianisms and Germanisms.¹⁰⁰ Słuszkiewicz’s linguistic purism has patriotic purport, as in an interview he regards care for purity of Polish a ‘duty of each Pole’¹⁰¹ (Słuszkiewicz 1978). He does not object to colloquial stylization as such (unlike Kasiński, he does not complain about the ‘native’ colloquial pronoun *jak*) but he insists that any translation should respect the history and rules of Polish.

⁹⁹ The phrases criticized by Kasiński include: *wziął się za rąbanie*, instead of *wziął się do rąbania* (‘he got down to chopping’), *czyj by nie był*, instead of *czykolwiek był* (‘whoever it belonged to’), *na dniach*, instead of *w tych dniach* (‘one of these days’) (*Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny* 1996; *Słownik wyrazów kłopotliwych* 1995).

¹⁰⁰ Some of the Russianisms Słuszkiewicz notices include: *przez okrągły rok*, instead of *przez cały rok* (‘throughout the year’), *nie smuć się a raduj*, instead of *nie smuć się, lecz raduj* (‘be not sad but happy’), while Germanisms include e.g. *nikt nie wyszedł mu naprzeciw* instead of *nikt nie wyszedł naprzeciwko niego* (‘no one went to meet him on the way’) (*Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny* 1996; *Słownik wyrazów kłopotliwych* 1995). All the phrases are commonly used in spoken Polish.

¹⁰¹ Born in 1901, Słuszkiewicz represents a generation which remembers struggle for the preservation of Polish under the Partitions (1795–1918) and German occupation (1939–45).

Another comment indicates that while idiomaticity is preferred, a colloquial stylization is also expected. Kowalska-Soni finds Parnowski's rendition of the dialogues to be at times 'too literary' (1972:180). She acknowledges that it would be extremely hard for the translator to keep up with Premchand's masterly portrayal of the 'rough and evocatively concrete' language of peasant characters, but she still wishes for a more distinctive colloquial stylization for the sake of registering the marked character of the original (ibid.).

A distinctive type of stylization, featuring 'seemingly simple' language, is also associated with registering the character of the original. For example, in a review of Ngũgĩ's *Chmury i łzy* (*Weep Not Child*), the translator Zofia Kierszys gets credit for 'rendering the direct, primitivizing style with moderation, fortunately avoiding the danger of trivializing or even ridiculing the seemingly simple text' (Laskowski 1973). Similarly, a reviewer of Ngũgĩ's *The Wheat of Grain*, translated by Maria Skibniewska, compliments the translator on a refined rendition of 'seemingly uncomplicated' language (Smoleński 1973). These statements are of interest because, first, they acknowledge the translators' decision to challenge the notion that sophistication is a yardstick of literary value. Second, they guide readers in interpreting the style of the translations: in particular, they stress the deliberate character of the stylistic simplicity, preventing readers from stereotyping African authors as unsophisticated. Finally, they show awareness of the original style (suggesting that the reviewers read the originals and/or consulted sources on African literature) and confirm the point that stylizations are often traced back to the source style.

Other reviews which endorse non-fluent stylizations also rely on comparisons with the originals. In an article on the translation of *Les soleils des indépendances* by Ahmadou Kourouma the scholar Wanda Leopold observes that Kourouma's book is relatively little Europeanized and appears distinctly 'African' in its linguistic layer (1975:369). An expert in African literatures, Leopold specifies that Kourouma translates Malinke proverbs, metaphors and idioms into French and captures rhythms of spoken language in his prose. In her view, Kourouma's Africanized French is in turn 'tastefully and perfectly . . . highlighted in the Polish translation of Zbigniew Stolarek' (ibid.). Leopold expertly explains the stylization of the translation to be motivated by Kourouma's original style, i.e. his marked, postcolonial use of French

(a similar point about translating Africanized English is made by Sadkowski (1973a)).

Another review of the translation of Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances* offers a unique comment, which celebrates a non-standard, foreign effect of the translation, while recognizing that the effect is the translator's creation. Leszek Bugajski (1976) expresses his enthusiasm about the free rendition of the title: *Fama Dumbuya najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu* (Fama Dumbuya the Truest. Dumbuya on a White Horse – the title features the book's protagonist). Bugajski finds it exotic and intriguing, and even wonders whether he would have noticed the book at all, had the title been translated literally. Bugajski claims that such a title promises 'an unusual novel, which stems from a cultural background different to ours; . . . although we read the novel in Polish, it is part of Africa'. This statement reveals a view that cultural foreignness should be marked in translation, for instance by manufacturing an 'unusual' title that will signal the unusual origin of the book. Such stylization is exoticizing and stereotyping according to other reviewers (as I show in Chapter Five on difference) but in Bugajski's view it can give readers an impression that the Polish text remains metonymically grounded in Africa.

1980–1989

In the 1980s there are fewer references to translation in the reviews (appearing in fifteen per cent of the reviews) but the preferences for fluent or consistently stylized translations and for inclusion of paratextual material do not change. One example features a praise of the strategy to translate a 1947 book by Mahfouz into familiar, contemporary language – interestingly, the reviewer is particularly concerned with the benefit of updating the language across a temporal gap, even if the strategy also works to cover geographical distance (A. Baranowska 1983). Another comment on stylization appears in a review of Camara Laye's *Spojrzenie króla* (*Le regard du roi*): the reviewer is impressed with the 'refined simplicity' of the prose (tkrz 1988). The remark resembles the praises of 'seemingly simple' style from the 1970s, although here the reviewer fails to note that the impression comes from reading a translation.

Another comment concerns Ernestyna Skurjat's translation of Amos Tutuola, a Nigerian author using non-standard English. As I note elsewhere, Skurjat standardizes Tutuola's grammar and stylizes the translation on the level of lexis

(Gołuch, forthcoming). She explains in the preface that she treats Tutuola's non-standard or erroneous grammar as a result of translating from his native Yoruba into English and reasons that surely he does not make grammar errors in Yoruba; she also alerts readers to his peculiar lexis and imagery, which she signals in translation (Skurjat 1983). A reviewer of the translation, Maria Bojarska, refers to the preface and supports Skurjat's choice of standardized grammar. Yet, her whole review demonstrates that she finds the text striking and, as I show in Chapter Five, reads it as evidence of African irrationality, which suggests that, despite Skurjat's grammatical standardization, the stylization on the level of lexis has a strong effect.

In the 1980s reviewers continue to opt for explanatory materials, although, again, the instances are less numerous than a decade earlier. Inclusion of paratext is praised by Stanisław Piłaszewicz in reviews of a collection of Nigerian short stories edited by Maryla Metelska and Timothy Aluko's *Sądny dzień w Ibali (Kinsman and Foreman)*. Piłaszewicz, a professor of African literature, appreciates the fact that in her translation of Aluko Skurjat leaves Yoruba phrases and supplies Polish translations in footnotes (1987a). He intimates that the translation had an academic consultant, but, alas, the help has not been acknowledged by the publisher.

Another expert commentary can be found in Danuta Stasik's review of *Opowieści ludowe Bengalu (Folk-Tales of Bengal)*. Stasik, who is an Indian studies scholar and a translator herself, is particularly pleased to see footnotes and a preface in the translation because, she observes, paratext is often 'a bone of contention' between publishers and translators of culturally distant literature (1987:112). In her view, footnotes are crucial for rendering the atmosphere of unfamiliar settings and, as such, they improve, rather than hinder, reception of the texts. Her defensive remark implies that the dominant view deems footnotes as distraction from literary experience.

Some reviewers admonish publishers for failing to include paratext. For instance, a reviewer of Narayan's *Malarz szyldów (The Painter of Signs)* complains that Indian words are not explained in the translation and advises the publisher to consult Indian studies scholars (Sylwan 1984). Similarly to Malanowski, who in the 1970s quipped that there was no shortage of Swahili-speaking East African students in Warsaw, Sylwan ironically adds that the University of Warsaw does not, after all, lie overseas. In a sense Sylwan's complaint confirms Stasik's point that not all publishers realise the importance of paratext in culturally distant books; by showing

that publishers do not always invite scholars to participate in publishing postcolonial literature, it also sheds light on the marginalization of an academic consultant that Piłaszewicz complains about.

1990–1999

I do not find many specific references to the language of translation in the 1990s, although general, fleeting mentions of translation are still present, whereby the overall percentage of references to translation remains similar to that in the 1980s (i.e. fifteen per cent). As far as the role of paratext is concerned, there are a few comments in the 1990s, coming mostly from the first half of the decade. The decline of this discourse may be linked to growing access to information (i.e. a greater number of book publications, cable channels, video cassette rentals and pirate distribution, etc.) after the economic and political transformation of 1989. In a 1990 review of Achebe's *Świat się rozpada* (*Things Fall Apart*), Piłaszewicz praises the translator, Żbikowska, for including relevant and discrete commentary on culturally distant issues, while also attending to Achebe's literary craftsmanship. Besides, reviewers notice the usefulness of paratext to the readers of Salman Rushdie's challenging oeuvre: Nowak (1990) positively comments on the glossary included in *Dzieci północy* (*Midnight's Children*),¹⁰² while Mroziewicz – Poland's ambassador in India at that time – quips that although Rushdie's glossary in *The Satanic Verses* is much appreciated, two more glossaries would come in handy to illuminate, first, Indian mythology and culture and, second, cinematographic allusions (1993).

As was the case in the earlier decades, there is a demand for information about authors. Information about Rushdie was in abundance due to the *fatwa* but an author who later joins Rushdie on the 'postcolonial' pedestal, J.M. Coetzee, is unknown in the early 1990s. Therefore, a reviewer of the 1990 Polish translation of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Czekając na barbarzyńców*, complains that the publisher should have included more information about the unknown author.

2000–2010

In the 2000s I only find a few comments on language and stylization, and on explanatory materials, although due to continued presence of passing mentions of

¹⁰² The glossary was prepared by the translator, Anna Kołyszko, with the aid of an academic consultant.

translation the total proportion of references to translation remains at about fifteen per cent of the reviews. Regarding language, the South African studies specialist Paweł Zajas notes that Gordimer's *Get a Life* (*Zrozumieć życie*) is written in a sort of broken language, accentuated by dissolving, incomplete sentences. As if to further characterize and criticize the style, Zajas observes that one might mistakenly blame the language on the translator. The comment is really intended to convey Zajas's criticism of Gordimer's style but it shows that the translator did convey a non-fluent stylization and in a sense confirms the old adage that the translator always gets the blame.

A few reviewers appreciate stylistic simplicity: in a review of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, occasioned by a new translation by Jolanta Kozak, Wysocki praises the prose as 'stunning and yet charming in its simplicity' (2010). While the whole review provides insight into Achebe's position as a pioneer of African literature, this particular comment does not feature Achebe's conscious stylization (unlike the earlier reviewers, who write about 'seemingly simple' prose). A reviewer of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *To oślepiające nieobecne światło* (*Cette aveuglante absence de lumière*) adopts a more analytical approach when she praises the book for 'minimalistic and poetic form' and adds that it has been 'carefully' (*starannie*) translated (Wilk 2008a).

The references to the informative role of translation decline further after the year 2000. The corpus registers only a few references to the explanatory material and even these seem rather incidental. For instance, a reviewer of the translation of Rushdie's *Fury* remembers that footnotes and glossaries were indispensable for reading the translations of *The Satanic Verses* and *The Moor's Last Sigh* (in the 1990s) but *Fury* happens to feature a Croat protagonist and, hence, more accessible East European references (Mroziewicz 2003). Only Wysocki (2010), the reviewer of a retranslation of *Things Fall Apart*, explicitly expresses an enthusiastic approval of the comprehensive paratext of the re-edition (the re-issue contains footnotes and two essays contextualizing the book).

What can be the reasons for the virtual disappearance of the discursive strand? The main reason that comes to mind is the changing access to information and media. In the 1970s the information included in a book was invaluable – because of shortage of relevant reference books and lack of alternative media – whereas after 1989 more publications, such as lexicons and encyclopaedias, become available and

since the turn of millennium the Internet has been an increasingly accessible source of information. Another reason for the development may be the general shift in the character of the translated postcolonial literature. The earlier novels, often by writers of the older generation, tend to portray more traditional rural settings or postcolonial ‘nation-building’ scenarios and are often read in Poland as realist and informative (e.g. Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Laye’s *L’enfant noir*, Ekwensi’s *Jagua Nana*). Some of the later novels, such as Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* or Gautam Malkani’s *Londonistan*, are at least partly set in Western and other modern, globalized settings, which are more immediately comprehensible to contemporary Polish readers.

Concluding Remarks

The study of Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature in the period 1970–2010 shows that – in tune with the conceptualization of translation as a form of explanation traceable in the double meaning of *tłumaczyć* – translation is expected to shed light on the foreign through explicatory materials and fluent, if stylized, language. Reviewers appreciate consistent stylizations, which can be traced to the style of the source text. Generally, much attention is devoted to the original texts, authors and subjects. Explications are particularly sought after before 1989, when they are the primary source of relevant information; the post-1989 decline of the interest in paratext correlates with growing access to information. Scholars validate and supplement the explicatory materials in their articles, published mostly in literary and academic periodicals and likely to reach more seasoned or specialized readers. Oriental studies specialists also contribute their expertise directly to some publication projects. The specialists are not always invited to translation projects but in the last decades non-specialized translators can take advantage of the Internet for their research. It should also be reiterated that comments on translation appear alarmingly seldom: except for the 1970s when on average every third review mentioned translation (presumably in response to a sense of novelty and a cognitive gap), between 1980 and 2010 only 15% of all the reviews refer to translation.

To return briefly to the translation studies ideas about translation of postcolonial literature outlined in the beginning, I think that Appiah’s notion of thick, generously glossed translation particularly resonates with the results. The reviews

indicate that there is a desire for contextualization on the part of Polish readers, especially before 1989, and there is readiness on the part of some academics to provide cultural context.

Spivak raises problems of representation, which are central to the questions of selection and door-keeping; for instance, in the polemic over Laye's *L'enfant noir* Stolarek, the translator, shows some awareness that he is but providing Polish readers with alternative representations of Africa, while the communist reviewer, Różycki, unreflectively promises access to the 'true' voice of the African people. Spivak also advocates a literalist translation signalling not so much information as operation of individual agency in language – it would be hard to relate this notion to the reviews, where some attention is given to the source language reflected in translators' stylizations but the interpretations foreground cultural collectives rather than singular, gendered agents.

Venuti's project of treating the target reader to an effect of textual foreignness is only relevant insofar as the foreignness is believed to correspond with the source text, for example by retaining untranslated non-European words. I encountered only one reviewer who applauds the creation, not 're-creation', of foreignness by the translator (the praise of the title *Fama Dumbuya najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu*, or 'Fama Dumbuya the Truest. Dumbuya on a White Horse'). Textual fluency, which Venuti criticizes, emerges as an important norm from the reviews and although it does not entail illusion of transparent language, non-transparent stylizations are supposed to be consistent and convincing.

Tymoczko's point that translations from marginalized cultures metonymically stand for the entire cultures chimes with the debates about the choice of texts and their representativeness. Her observation that the translations are either popular or scholarly is not confirmed by my material, as there are no really academic and densely explicated translations from postcolonial literature. It may be because, unlike more ancient 'Oriental' texts, the literature had not been subject of extensive study; besides, the novel is a familiar contemporary form. Some postcolonial authors already write for an international reader, which means that some cultural 'translation' has happened at the level of writing.¹⁰³ The translations are typically addressed to a

¹⁰³ In another article Tymoczko makes the point that postcolonial writing can be analysed as a form of translation (1999b).

general readership and the scholars who are involved seek a compromise between a degree of informativeness and literary fluency.

Translation is in Polish conceptualized as clarification of the unknown and the image proves pertinent to the reviewers' vision of the purpose of translating postcolonial literature. In the following chapter I ask how the reviewers approach the more general question of *knowing* postcolonial peoples.

Chapter Four: Discourse on Knowledge

[A]ll means should be used, to try what may be obtain'd from the Generosity of such as have had the Opportunities of knowing Foreign Countries. . . . 'tis to be hoped that the kind Acceptance only the Publick shall give to this present Work, may excite several other Ingenuous, and knowing Men to follow this Generous Example of Captain *Knox* who though he could bring away nothing almost upon his Back or in his Purse, did yet Transport the whole Kingdom of *Cande Uda* in his Head, and by Writing and Publishing this his Knowledge, has freely given it to his Countrey, and to You Reader in particular.

/Robert Hooke/¹⁰⁴

In this seventeenth century quotation accounts of travellers to faraway lands are hailed as an indispensable source of knowledge about the world. The preface from which the quote derives was written by Robert Hooke, a natural scientist and a member of the Royal Society. It is under the auspices of the Society that support and incentives were offered to 'such as have had the Opportunities of knowing Foreign Countries' to share their knowledge through relevant publications. Hooke was delighted to announce that Robert Knox, a sailor who had lived in captivity in a Sinhalese kingdom in today's Sri Lanka for nineteen years, agreed to do so (Hooke 2004). Knox's *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon*, which was one of the inspirations behind Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), promises reliable information on the local flora and fauna, climate and soil, customs, government and mores, among other topics. In his opening address to the officials of the East-India Company Knox declares, 'I have writ nothing but either what I am assured of by my own personal Knowledge to be true . . . or what I have received from the Inhabitants themselves of such things as are commonly known to be true among them' (Knox 2004).

¹⁰⁴ 'Preface', in *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, in the East-Indies: Together, with an Account of the Detaining in Captivity the Author and Divers Other Englishmen Now Living There, and of the Author's Miraculous Escape*, by Robert Knox (Project Gutenberg: 2004; original edition: London: Richard Chiswell, Printer to the Royal Society, 1681).

Knowledge, Literature and Orientalism

It has been demonstrated that what Knox vouched for to be ‘true’ was tainted by the assumptions of his time – ‘[Knox] had a very strong racial pride and prejudice’ (Goonewardena 1958:46) – and his knowledge contributed to the collaborative efforts of such institutions as the East India Company and the Royal Society ‘to lay claim to the wealth promised by amassing useful knowledge about the world’ (Winterbottom 2009:538). Generally, contemporary scholars have demonstrated that a great deal of the Western knowledge of ‘Foreign Countries’ was obtained through trading and cultural contacts which were often a prelude to colonization, and through warfare, Christianization and colonial administration.

The emblematic work in this respect is Said’s 1978 *Orientalism*, where Orientalism is discussed as ‘a system of knowledge about the Orient’, as well as ‘a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient’ (2003:6). Many later works document connections between the pursuit of knowledge and colonial power, in such fields as English (e.g. Viswanathan 1989), translation (e.g. Niranjana 1992), anthropology (e.g. Cruikshank 2005), medicine (e.g. Vaughan 1991), psychoanalysis (e.g. Khanna 2003), phrenology (e.g. Wagner 2010) and environmentalism (e.g. Grove 1995). Despite growing awareness of such connections, it has not been possible to eradicate the global power imbalances, which inevitably affect acquisition of knowledge. Even within the field of postcolonial studies there is a sense that the institutional project of studying and representing colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial phenomena is fraught with methodological and ethical problems, such as the dominance of Western theoretical approaches and partial objectification of the researched people(s) (Jeyifo 2006; Spivak 1999; Chakrabarty 2000), insufficient knowledge of non-European languages and cultures (Spivak 2003; Spivak 2004), and, according to some, lack of involvement in radical politics aimed at improving the conditions of people’s lives (Parry 1997).

Said and some of the followers were inspired by Foucault, who laid great emphasis on the interrelation of knowledge and power. Foucault argues that power is traditionally viewed in terms of a political contract, in which people cede some rights to the ruler; power exercises oppression when the contract is breached (1980a:91). However, Foucault proposes that power is more diffuse and ‘exercised through a net-

like organisation', where individuals are its vehicles and not sovereign agents external to it (ibid.:98). Rather than a one-directional relation between the ruler and the ruled, power is then a 'network', which 'traverses and produces things, . . . induces pleasure, *forms knowledge*, produces discourse' (Foucault 1980b:119; emphasis added). Said, on the other hand, reintroduced the categories of the rulers (colonizers) and the ruled (colonized), attributing all the power and knowledge formation to the former. Later, Bhabha opted for the Foucauldian diffusion of agency and power.

My study of Polish readings of postcolonial literature does not entail a colonial dependence scenario, so I cannot simply adopt Said's model of the concentration of power and knowledge by the colonizers; neither does Bhabha's speculation about the subversion of power by the colonized fit my purpose. My understanding of power and knowledge is indebted to Foucault's because I am interested in the productive network of power and knowledge formation through the flow of colonial and postcolonial discourses in the reviews of translated postcolonial literature. I am aware that the reviewers retrace some patterns of the Western colonial discourses and the chapter will demonstrate some recourse to stereotypical perceptions and interdependencies between knowledge and politics. Yet, I repeat, the reviewers are not in the position of colonizers. Although I am preoccupied mostly with the Polish side, the network of knowledge and power extends to the 'postcolonial' side, and postcolonial writing is one way of reclaiming control over postcolonial (self)representations.

Regarding the relationship between discourse and knowledge, I treat discourse as a productive mode or system of knowledge and I should stress that my study of a discourse on knowledge (system of knowledge about knowledge) partially has a meta-level character. The reviewers' discourse is not necessarily a self-conscious reflection and I supply my interpretation of the body of statements.

Bearing in mind both the problematic European legacy of knowing the 'Others' and the contemporary attempts to overcome the legacy, I trace references to the question of knowing postcolonial countries in the Polish reviews of postcolonial literature (1970–2010). To prepare the ground for the analysis, I briefly address two general issues which arose during the analysis: how does one theorize the cognitive merit of literature? (I propose to use the perspective of philosophical aesthetics). Secondly, given that Polish Oriental studies scholars contributed to the Polish

translation and reception of postcolonial literature, should one review their contribution in the light of Saidian arguments about the complicity of academic Orientalism with colonialism? Afterwards, I summarize a study which argues that translated Latin American literature was received in Poland as a source of knowledge. I shall subsequently offer five close readings of reviews and conclude by outlining the overall development of the references to knowledge in the course of the four decades.

The Polish reviewers of literature regularly pose the question of *knowing* foreign authors, cultures and countries, and refer to the ‘cognitive value’ (*wartość poznawcza*) of a literary work. There is little doubt that they consider literature a valid source of knowledge but they seem to hold various opinions regarding the sort of knowledge literature can impart and the status of literature in relation to other sources of knowledge about distant cultures (reportage, news, travel, etc.). Some tend to view literature as a source of information about facts, not dissimilar in its function and nature to journalism. Others lean towards viewing literature as a source of understanding, i.e. knowledge which encompasses not only and not necessarily information retrieval but more complex interpretative practice, imaginative involvement, empathic experience, emotional response, etc. The latter outlook is more likely to capitalize on the unique status of a text *qua* literature. The two views – knowledge as information and knowledge as understanding – can be compared to some of the types of knowledge distinguished by philosophers preoccupied with the question of art and knowledge.

Dating back, in the Western tradition, to Plato’s apprehension of the poet’s influence and Aristotle’s appreciation of the cathartic power of tragedy, the question of the relationship between art and knowledge of reality is a formidable one. In this chapter I shall only mention some opinions on the matter held by contemporary aestheticians and I shall focus on literature. According to Berys Gaut (2003:437–38), the main concerns in the examination of art and knowledge can be reduced to two questions: the epistemic question, whether art can give its audience non-trivial knowledge, and the aesthetic question, whether such capacity enhances the value of art as art, i.e. its aesthetic value. He notes that the answers to some extent depend on how knowledge is conceptualized. Adherents to the ‘cognitivist’ view, who answer affirmatively to the epistemic question, distinguish between propositional knowledge (of ‘what is actual’, including knowledge of ‘human nature’), as well as other types

such as the knowledge of possibilities (e.g. how a possible person might feel, react or think in a possible situation), experiential knowledge (e.g. of what something would feel like; called also empathic knowledge (Novitz 1987:120)), knowledge of values and moral instruction and practical knowledge (e.g. of how to look at the world, how to understand others). What I called factual ‘information’ overlaps with propositional knowledge, while ‘understanding’ would encompass the aspects of propositional knowledge requiring complex, often non-conclusive interpretative practice (e.g. learning about ‘human nature’), as well as empathic, moral and practical knowledge, and knowledge of possibilities.

Some versions of the cognitivist view of art are harder to defend than others: it is less contested that art imparts experiential or moral knowledge, or knowledge of possibilities than that it can impart propositional knowledge, particularly through fiction. This is because propositional knowledge requires a justification component, e.g. through institutional vetting or experience. Gaut acknowledges the seriousness of this anti-cognitivist argument but problematizes it, saying that some literary works and entire genres claim to introduce assertions about ‘what actually is’ (e.g. the realist novel), even though they are not expected to undergo a rigorous vetting. I would add that in some cases readers count on publishers and critics for some form of vetting and necessary disclaimers. Eileen John makes a similar, though more general, point that art audiences can resort to relevant commentaries: ‘[w]e can appeal to other people’s perspectives and to the authority of people with wider artistic and cultural experience’ (2005:426). She adds that this may be particularly beneficial in the context of controversial pieces, such as *The Satanic Verses*. She dismisses the counterargument that one would then be learning from commentaries and no longer from art, stressing that the public discourse (just as, I would add, the paratext) is an integral part of the cognitive functioning of art.

Regarding the question of aesthetics, Gaut supports a view that cognitive merits tend to have an aesthetic relevance, mostly through the ‘mode by which [a work] conveys its insight’; his example is that Jane Austen’s insight on the human nature in *Emma* is artistically realized through her construction of the Emma character (Gaut 2003:445). He also deals with an anti-cognitivist argument by Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen (1994) that the truth of a literary work is not relevant to the aesthetic value because literature is not received in terms of its truthfulness by the institutions of literary criticism (unlike philosophy or science writing, which are

received primarily in those terms). Gaut convincingly replies that truth matters to some critics – e.g. those preoccupied with the representations of certain groups, such as women or blacks, or with perennial themes, such as love (2003:447–48). In another response to Lamarque and Olsen, M.W. Rowe notes that, irrespective of the themes discussed, some commonly used critical vocabulary – e.g. ‘penetrating’, ‘insightful’, ‘idiotic’ – reveals an implicit or explicit concern with the truth or accuracy of the literary text (2010:2–3).

Debates about the cognitive merit of literature are obviously too complex to be summarized here. Although philosophers seem to overlook the question of learning from literature from foreign cultures and languages, their reflection – in particular the distinction between various types of knowledge, the recognition of public debate as part of cognitive functioning of art and the arguments that ‘truthfulness’ matters to the literary, aesthetic value – prove pertinent to my material.

I will now move to the issue of academic Orientalism. Said states that ‘the most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one’ (2003:2) and argues that Orientalist study has been implicated in European colonialism, as well as the contemporary US imperialism. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Oriental studies scholars supported the cognitive function of translated postcolonial literature, acting as translators, editors, consultants and reviewers.¹⁰⁵ Polish Oriental studies

¹⁰⁵ I compiled a non-exhaustive list of the relevant scholars (wherever possible I note their date of birth or death, or the date of the earliest degree I was able to establish; the date is followed by their highest academic degree, in the case of Indian and African studies the language specialization and, finally, sample contributions to the presence of postcolonial literature in Poland). The Africanists include Rajmund Ohly (1923–2003, professor, specializing in Swahili; author of a preface, contributor to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*), Zygmunt Komorowski (1925–92, professor; contributor to *Spojrzenia*), Wanda Leopold (d. 1977, PhD, Anglophone African literature, contributor to *Rocznik Literacki*, editor of a poetry collection), Halina Hanna Bobrowska (Francophone African literature; contributor to *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*), Eugeniusz Rzewuski (MA 1967, PhD, Swahili and Lusophone Africa; author of a preface), Stanisław Piłaszewicz (MA 1968, professor, Hausa; contributor to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*), Janusz Krzywicki (MA 1970, professor, Francophone and Anglophone African literature; translations, contributor to *Okolice*), Ernestyna Skurjat (MA before 1973, PhD, Anglophone African literature; editor and translator, contributor to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, *Nowe Książki*, *Literatura na Świecie*, *Razem*), Izabela Will (PhD 2005, Hausa; consultant). The scholars working in Indian studies include Eugeniusz Słuszkiewicz (1901–1981, professor, Sanskrit; contributor to *Rocznik Literacki*), Tatiana Rutkowska (MA 1949, PhD, Hindi; translator, contributor to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*), Elżbieta Walterowa (PhD, Bengali; translator), Maria Krzysztof Byrski (PhD 1966, professor, Sanskrit; contributor to *Rocznik Literacki*), Barbara Grabowska (professor, Bengali; translations), Agnieszka Kowalska-Soni (1974 PhD, Hindi; author of prefaces, contributor to *Literatura na Świecie*), Danuta Stasik (PhD 1990, professor, Hindi; translations, contributor to *Nowe Książki*), Agnieszka Kuczkowska-Fraś (MA 1996, PhD, Urdu; translator, editor), Artur Karp (MA before 1978, Hindi; translations, consultant), Monika Browarczyk (MA 1998, PhD, Sanskrit, Hindi; consultant), Anna Sieklucka (MA, Hindi and Urdu; translations, author of prefaces). Among the Arabists one should list: Józef Bielawski (1910–1997, professor; translator), Ewa Machut-Mendecka (MA 1969, professor; translations), Janusz Danecki (MA 1969, professor; translator, contributor to

scholars were not involved in state-run colonial enterprises, although, just as the Polish representations of non-Europeans presented in Chapter One corresponded with West European models, the academic discipline was indebted to Western Orientalist centres, while direct contacts with the ‘Orient’ played a relatively minor role (Danecki 1988; Reychman 1964; J. Szymańska 2000). Polish scholars have worked in politically situated contexts, marked by the communist policies towards the third world or Poland’s participation in the USA-led war against terrorism after the attacks of 11 September 2001. In those contexts scholars would have provided reports, training and research, which in Saidian terms may have amounted to complicity but might also be construed as attempts at fostering intercultural understanding and alleviating conflict. One can deem such participation inevitable if one adopts Foucault’s notion of all-pervasive power and its relations to knowledge (Foucault 1980b:119). This is not to say that the category of ethical responsibility is rejected, as particular contributions of particular individuals can be considered in ethical terms, even though it is not my purpose in this thesis.

I will mention one example. As I noted in Chapter One, Polish professionals sent to African countries received postgraduate training at the African Studies Institute. Judging by the titles of the course books written for the course, the course focused on economics, industry, agriculture and tropical medicine, and the topics were presented from a socialist standpoint. There was also one book on the literature of Sub-Saharan Africa. It was penned by Ernestyna Skurjat (1973), the prominent translator, editor and reviewer of African literature, and it presented writers’ biographies and plot summaries in order to, as the preface states, provide insight into

Kultura, Literatura na Świecie), Jolanta Kozłowska (PhD; translator), Marek M. Dziekan (MA 1988, professor; translations), Izabela Szybilska-Fiedorowicz (MA; translator). In Iranian Studies: Wojciech Skalmowski (1933–2008, professor; contributor to the Paris *Kultura*), Anna Krasnowolska (PhD; contributor to *Tygodnik Powszechny*). In English, American and South African Studies: Krystyna Stamirowska (professor; contributor to *Tygodnik Powszechny*), Jerzy Jarniewicz (b.1958, professor; prefaces, articles for *Literatura na Świecie*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, *Odra*), Magda Heydel (PhD; translator, editor), Piotr Pieńkowski (MA 1982; contributor to *Arka*), Bożena Kucala (PhD 2001; contributor to *Dekada Literacka*), Andrzej Pawelec (MA 1988, PhD; contributor to *Znak*), Marek Paryż (MA 1996, professor; contributor to *Nowe Książki*, *Tygiel Kultury*, *Literatura na Świecie*), Paweł Zajas (MA 2000, PhD; contributor to *Nowe Książki*), Jan Rybicki (MA 1987, PhD; translator). In Polish Studies, for example, Helena Zaworska (b. 1930, researcher at Polish Academy of Sciences; contributor to *Nowe Książki*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*), Ewa Rajewska (PhD; translator). As I am not familiar with the names of contemporary Francophone studies scholars, they may be underrepresented in this list.

Sources: (Klima 1986); <<http://www.orient.uw.edu.pl/>>; <<http://www.io.filg.uj.edu.pl/>>; <<http://www.ifa.filg.uj.edu.pl/en>>; <<http://www.angli.uw.edu.pl/>>; <www.amu.edu.pl/teolit>; <http://portalwiedzy.onet.pl/42636,,,,zaworska_helena,haslo.html?drukuj=1> (accessed 30 July 2012).

aspects of African life, society and culture (ibid.:6). As I signalled in Chapter One, Polish and Soviet ‘aid’ in Africa can be variously assessed but I think that Skurjat’s book, which is sympathetic to the idea of ‘engaged’ literature but free from propaganda-style rhetoric, could have served as a manual of cultural knowledge and competence for the professionals. I have suggested elsewhere that Skurjat’s critical and translational work can generally be read as an attempt to foster intercultural understanding within the framework of Orientalist legacies and Cold War politics (Gołuch, forthcoming).

Regarding the use of translated non-European literatures as a source of knowledge, important findings appear in Małgorzata Gaszyńska-Magiera’s work on the Polish reception of Latin American literature (1945–2005). One of the main theses of Gaszyńska-Magiera’s book is that the literature was received as a source of knowledge, mostly before 1989, and actually has facilitated the process of getting to know a distant culture. She examined the publishing strategies to show that during the boom (1968–1981) some publishers included Latin American authors in existing, prestigious series, keeping introductory materials to a minimum, while others, notably Wydawnictwo Literackie (WL), highlighted the cognitive function of the books by launching a dedicated series and providing rich paratext by specialists on the region. Gaszyńska-Magiera quotes the series editor, Maria Kaniowa, who stressed the informative function of the series and considered the need to know Latin America a matter of socialist solidarity (Kaniowa 1978:238; in Gaszyńska-Magiera 2011:76). Gaszyńska-Magiera analyses the prefaces of the WL editions to find that socio-political and historical issues were invariably foregrounded, often at the cost of other interpretative suggestions. She also claims that the reviewers strove to explain the new literature and region to the readers, even if they had to inform themselves first, e.g. from foreign sources.

According to Gaszyńska-Magiera, the emphasis on knowledge wanes after 1989. Most masters of the boom are still in print (García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Jorge Luis Borges, Carlos Fuentes), some younger authors are introduced (Isabel Allende, Juan Pedro Gutiérrez) but the paratextual scaffolding and instructive reviews are gone. Gaszyńska-Magiera offers three main explanations for the phenomenon: firstly, Latin American literature has become a familiar ‘brand’ and introductions are superfluous. On a related note, she writes that Latin American authors have been admitted to the canon, so their work no longer requires

introductions or apologia – this point implies that canonical literature transcends, as it were, its region or period and comes to address perennial, rather than particular and local issues. The second reason is that the knowledge-oriented readings, promoted in the name of socialist solidarity, belonged with the past ideology and lost their *raison d'être* with its demise. Thirdly, the advent of the Internet and access to other media eliminated an urgent need for paratext.

As part of her study Gaszyńska-Magiera carried out a questionnaire among readers and found that the readers would reach for translated Latin American literature expecting, first and foremost, a ‘meeting with an unknown culture’ (38 participants out of 53).¹⁰⁶ Another, less prominent, expectation was to find ‘information about Latin America’ (17 participants). In relation to the two answers, Gaszyńska-Magiera notes that the cognitive function of literature is of utmost importance to the readers but they distinguish between ‘intercultural meeting’ and ‘information’ and those expecting ‘a meeting’ exhibit a higher literary awareness, while the others treat the fictional reality too literally (2011:243–44). Gaszyńska-Magiera’s distinction corresponds with my distinction between ‘understanding’ and ‘information’, as understanding can be conceived of as a meeting. I would imagine that the interest in ‘information’ need not mark poor literary awareness but can also be a matter of a pragmatic, curiosity-driven approach to particular texts.

Altogether, Gaszyńska-Magiera gives the translators, publishers and reviewers credit for the enormous achievement of making an unknown literature and region familiar to the Polish readers. In my corpus I also find evidence that Latin American literature became a familiar point of reference: a review of African short stories opens with an observation that Latin American authors have shaped Polish readers’ ‘literary tastes, as well as knowledge about their native countries and their socio-political situation’, only to ask if African literature will be able to play a similar role (K.G. 1978). I attempt to answer this question and compare Gaszyńska-Magiera’s results with mine at the end of the chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Fifty-three library users were asked to choose the answers which described what they expected of Latin American literature (multiple answers were allowed). The top answers were: ‘meeting with an unknown culture’ (38 participants), ‘aesthetic experience’ (30) and ‘other perceptions of reality’ (25). Some of the least popular answers were ‘eroticism’, ‘humour’, ‘the experiences that one cannot get from European literature’.

Discourse on Knowledge: Close Readings

I will now show how the issues of cognitive value, power and intercultural meeting, among others, register in the reviews. I carry out close readings of some of the most suggestive reviews in this section. In the final section I will trace the popularity of the discourse in the successive decades.

Credentials to Represent

This polemic is explicitly political: Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, a prominent Polish author and a long-time president of the Union of Polish Writers during communism, and K. Natwar-Singh, India's ambassador in Poland and a man of letters, argue what knowledge of India should be conveyed in a collection of Indian short stories. Natwar-Singh, who edited and introduced a short story collection *Tales From Modern India* (New York: Macmillan, 1966),¹⁰⁷ visited Iwaszkiewicz in his Union of Writers office and presented him with a copy of the book, which Iwaszkiewicz read (in English) and reviewed for a popular daily *Życie Warszawy*. Natwar-Singh had his response to the review published two weeks later. Amidst diplomatic phrasing and assurances of respect Iwaszkiewicz and Natwar-Singh debated which 'real' problems should be signalled in the anthology to provide a valid representation of India. As the articles' titles indicate – Iwaszkiewicz's all-encompassing title 'India' and Natwar-Singh's formal 'A Letter from the Ambassador of India' – the exchange acquired a semi-official framing. It resonated with Poland's and India's socialist ideologies, which call on intellectuals and politicians to represent 'the people' and their 'real' problems.

In his review Iwaszkiewicz (1971) first talks about the circumstances of acquiring the book (the ambassador's visit to his office) and then favourably comments on the literary quality of the collection. He finds it surprising that the stories are not too exotic and quips that there is more exoticism in Joseph Conrad than in the Indian collection (expectations of exoticism are discussed in the next chapter). He points out that Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan, included in the collection, have already been published in Polish, adding that Anand has also visited

¹⁰⁷ The UK edition: *Stories from India* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971).

Poland. Indeed, visits by literati formed part of Polish cultural contacts with the non-aligned countries in the Cold War milieu.¹⁰⁸

Iwaszkiewicz ends on a critical note, inquiring into the range of topics covered by the stories and concluding that the collection shies away from some serious problems of the third world. He refers to the novel *The Bombay Meeting* by Ira Morris as a sample text which deals with such problems as starvation, homelessness and caste in a more satisfactory way. Iwaszkiewicz states, '[the collection] does not give us a full picture of contemporary India'¹⁰⁹ (ibid.). Morris was an American writer, little remembered today,¹¹⁰ and *The Bombay Meeting* describes a writers' society congress in Bombay. Full of clichés about a meeting of the West and the East (symbolized by an unconvincing romance between a narcissistic American author, Jason Cole, and a traditionalist Hindu wife),¹¹¹ it dramatizes the question of the writer's mission. Cole is torn between the aestheticist attitude of the writers' society and an engaged stance represented by 'progressive', left-leaning intellectuals, including a Parsee scientist (the husband of Cole's lover). What Iwaszkiewicz calls India's 'real' problems – destitution, disease, human degradation – appear occasionally as flashes from the 'real' world surrounding the luxurious venue of the congress, which haunt Cole until he overcomes his revulsion and abandons escapist writing to lend his pen to the pressing issues of the real world (Morris 1955).

Schematic and exaggeratedly naturalist, these images function as a catalyst for a Western character's self-development rather than a sustained inquiry into Indian problems, so it is debatable whether Iwaszkiewicz is backing his claims with suitable evidence. Actually, Iwaszkiewicz is not adamant about his point: at the end of the review he performs a U-turn, proclaiming his ignorance and naming a fellow writer, who, having worked in India, should be more competent: 'But actually I don't know

¹⁰⁸ Anand took part in the communist-led World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in Wrocław in 1948 (Anand 1973). Narayan visited Poland in 1973, two years after Iwaszkiewicz's review, and stayed with Natwar-Singh (Kydryński 1973).

¹⁰⁹ This is a reminder that for most quotes I provide the Polish originals in Appendix One, under the relevant chapter and page heading.

¹¹⁰ In spite of consulting a number of reference books on twentieth century literature (including S. J. Kunitz et al. 1955; Hart 1996; Ward & Hussey 1981), I have only come across a note on Morris's son, Ivan Morris (scholar of Japanese history and literature, born in 1925). The note mentions that Ira, the father, was an American novelist living for some period in Paris (Wakeman & Kunitz (Eds) 1980:570).

¹¹¹ The novel is narrated from the perspective of various Western characters, participants of the congress. Here are some of their clichéd observations: 'Perhaps in India nothing did change, despite the outer manifestations of change' (Morris 1955:1), 'banter was neither understood nor appreciated in the Orient' (ibid.:51) and, 'the Indian capacity for forgetfulness' (ibid.:14).

much about it. You need to ask Żukrowski¹¹² (1971). In this rather puzzling sequence Iwaszkiewicz complains that the book does not intimate knowledge of India's painful problems, only to reveal that his claim is based on little more than other books (his criteria for favouring one source over another are unclear), and then undermine his book-based knowledge in favour of first-hand experience of someone who lived in India.

In his response Natwar-Singh diplomatically defends his credentials but does not undertake a detailed polemic, writing his response as an ambassador, not an editor. He profusely thanks a prominent Polish author for finding time to review stories from, as he says, a distant country, calling the gesture a proof of good relationships between the nations. He only notes that it would be inappropriate of him to argue with Iwaszkiewicz, adding: 'it should suffice if I say that the affairs of India and its inhabitants cover a much wider range of problems than those raised by Morris in *The Bombay Meeting*' (Natwar-Singh 1971). Through this understatement he dismisses Iwaszkiewicz's source for a narrow perspective and firmly reasserts his knowledge of the matter in all its complexity. The reassertion of his credentials is crucial for his position as an appointed political representative of his country.

Natwar-Singh talks enthusiastically about Polish-Indian friendship and stresses his role in representing India both politically and culturally in an interview which he gave two years later. He states that his modest contribution to the mutual knowledge and cooperation between India and Poland consists in his collection of Indian short stories, which is due to appear in translation in the PIW publishing house (Natwar-Singh 1973:4). He also mentions that he has brought from India two films, which will be shown on Polish TV. This example features a political representative, who recommends particular (artistic) representations of his country thus legitimizing them as sources of knowledge about it. The double signification of 'representation' as 'proxy' and 'portrait' is highlighted in Spivak's essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', where she traces it to two German words, *vertreten* ('represent', 'act for') and *darstellen* ('represent', 'depict'), rendered as 'represent' in an English translation of Marx's *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (Spivak 1999:256–57). This example of the ambassador-editor highlights the affinity between the political and cultural, or philosophical and aesthetic, aspects of representation.

¹¹² Wojciech Żukrowski (1916–2000) was a writer, screenwriter and reporter; he worked as a cultural advisor in the Polish embassy in India in the period 1956–1959 (Boczek & Żukrowska).

Following Spivak's general argument of the essay – that subaltern, disenfranchised subjects lack ways of effective communication with their environment and their voice is not heard by their 'representatives' – I should air the rhetorical question how well an upper class, high-profile politician¹¹³ can speak for a heterogeneous group of 'Indians'. It is interesting to see Iwaszkiewicz question these credentials, even if Iwaszkiewicz's own claims to superior knowledge of India seem debatable. Of course the same question could be asked about the echelons of the Polish Party and how they represented the 'Polish people'.

The exchange between Iwaszkiewicz and Natwar-Singh resembles the dispute about the merit of *L'enfant noir* between Różycki and Stolarek, presented in the previous chapter, even though the latter concerned a translation and the former a book in English, only translated two years later. In both cases the participants debate the representative character of a book, representativeness being a particularly contentious issue due to the dominant ideology and the peripheral status of African and Indian literature in Poland (where individual texts are likely to stand for an entire literature and culture).

Orientalist Expertise

In a 1979 review of Soyinka's novel *Interpretatorzy* (*The Interpreters*, trans. Ewa Fiszer, 1978), Skurjat calls for a closer cooperation between publishers and Africanist scholars. Skurjat argues that to fully appreciate the multifaceted meanings of the novel, a portrayal of five young people in post-independence Lagos, the reader should be equipped with knowledge of Yoruba mythology. She notes Soyinka's treatment of universal problems – such as the conflict between honesty and hypocrisy – but she also interprets culturally-specific motifs such as the resemblances between the characters and Yoruba gods. She regrets that this richness of meanings is lost on the Polish readers, who know close to nothing about Yoruba culture. She wishes that the Yoruba background had been introduced by the publisher. Skurjat also comments on mistakes in the translation, e.g. she finds that the name of the traveller Mungo Park gets translated as a park called Mungo (Skurjat

¹¹³ As Natwar-Singh documents, he was acquainted with influential personalities of India's political and cultural scene, including the prime minister Indira Gandhi, the statesman Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the last viceroy of India Louis Mountbatten and the authors R.K. Narayan and E.M. Forster (Natwar-Singh 1997). His ties with Indira Gandhi are confirmed by their correspondence, which included letters with birthday wishes and book recommendations Mrs Gandhi sent to Natwar-Singh's Warsaw address during his ambassadorship (Natwar-Singh 2010:7–9).

1979). Prompted by the mistakes and lack of paratext, Skurjat ends with a plea to publishers: 'I have been repeating for years that it's really necessary that publishers work with Africanists, who are glad to provide advice and share their knowledge...' (1979:27; original suspension points).

Indeed, Skurjat herself shares her expertise of Yoruba culture through the review and it is not the first time she has done so in connection with Soyinka's novel. In an issue of *Literatura na Świecie* from 1976 there is a passage from *The Interpreters* in Fiszer's translation and an article, subtitled 'gloss to the novel', by Skurjat (1976b). The article explains the significance of Yoruba culture to the novel and its arguments are repeated, sometimes verbatim, in the 1979 review cited above. The 1978 translation of *The Interpreters* includes only a brief note from the publisher with information about Soyinka's life and work and a general characterization of the book (Soyinka 1978).¹¹⁴ All this means that when Skurjat asked in 1979 why the publisher had not included paratext, she knew that material for a suitable introduction had already been published, alongside a translated passage, in a prestigious literary magazine. Perhaps that fact, among others, provoked the reproachful and resigned tone of 'I have been repeating for years...'

The novel's reception confirms Skurjat's point that readers (reviewers) lack knowledge to appreciate African cultural allusions. Indeed, reviewers notice universal motifs (Termer 1979; Zadura 1979) and socio-political problems of a 'young' country (Termer 1979; Zadura 1979; Piasecki 1979; Sadkowski 1986). Two reviewers show awareness of their cultural ignorance: Zadura admits that Polish readers do not know the Yoruba Olympus (as a regular contributor to *Literatura na Świecie* he probably read Skurjat's piece), while Piasecki notes that African literature is unknown in Poland. Generally, contrary to what Gaszyńska-Magiera writes about the reviewers of Latin American literature, (non-specialist) reviewers from my corpus are ready to admit they are unable to provide culturally informed readings. Academic specialists are prepared to help but, according to Skurjat's complaint and similar complaints from the previous chapter (Piłaszewicz 1987; Stasik 1987:112), they are not always invited to. They offer commentaries in reviews, although they seldom write for popular periodicals.

¹¹⁴ In the second edition from 1989 the same note is included, with an extra sentence about Soyinka's 1986 Nobel Prize (Soyinka 1989:5–6).

The Illuminating Power of Literature

This example is pertinent to the question how literature relates to other sources of knowledge about foreign countries. In a 1988 review of Emil Habibi's *Niezwykłe okoliczności zniknięcia niejakiego Saida Abu an-Nahsa z rodu Optysymistów (Al-Waqa i al-gharibah fi ikhtifa Sa id Abi al-Nahs al-Mutasha il)*¹¹⁵ literature is hailed as a unique medium offering sympathetic insight into the plight of others. Writing for a pro-governmental youth magazine, *Sztandar Młodych*, Wojciech Łuczak states that when he reached for the Palestinian author, he expected to read about the suffering of Palestinians. He thought that the account would aim at inspiring his pity but doubted he would be capable of a full, emotional response. 'We, people of this part of Europe', Łuczak writes, '. . . have lost sensitivity to the [human] suffering that our media have been blatantly thrusting down our throats for years' (1988). He mentions that, similarly, South African apartheid makes headlines so often that the Polish public lost the sharpness of perception of the situation. He suggests that, sad as it sounds, repetitive media accounts have exhausted the capability for sympathy in the Polish audience.

Yet, upon reading Habibi's book Łuczak announces that his expectations proved to be wrong because the book lets the reader regain the lost sensitivity. Łuczak writes: 'we get to know the events from the front pages of newspapers in a completely different light, as they are depicted through characters, situations, and . . . fortune's whims' (ibid.). In other words, literature intimates the reader to a new point of view, aligned with the perspectives of the characters, i.e. possible people in possible places. Unlike informative media reports, which adopt an external observer's perspective, literature can impart understanding which prompts a personalized, emotional response. In addition, I want to mention Louis Althusser's view on the specificity of literary cognition. Althusser writes, 'I believe that a peculiarity of art is to "make us see" (*nous donner à voir*), "make us perceive", "make us feel" something which *alludes* [sic] reality' (2001:152; original italics) and stresses that, like science, art provides insight into reality, even if the insight differs from scientific knowledge and does not offer a systematic understanding of phenomena (ibid.:153). Although Althusser goes further to say that art gives insight into ideology of which it is part, enabling ideological critique, and Łuczak does not

¹¹⁵ Published in English as *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist*; trans. Salma Khedra Jayyusi and Trevor LeGassick (London: Zed, 1985).

pursue that sort of critique, Althusser's point confirms the importance of the sort of distinction between understanding (empathic knowledge, knowledge of possibilities) and information (propositional knowledge) suggested earlier.

Interestingly, Łuczak associates the unexpectedly illuminating effect of Habibi's work with its generic characteristics: he praises Habibi's erudition and literary craft, which are manifest in his use of the philosophical tale of Voltaire and Diderot. He summarizes the book as a travel account of a Palestinian *Candid*, driven by higher powers. Łuczak does not specify what exactly about the genre provides a refreshing perspective but I presume that he may be influenced by the satirical distance that allows the reader to glimpse characters from afar as types (not pity-inducing individuals, as they may be portrayed in psychological realism or in reportage) and to view events from a more abstract, philosophising perspective. Such a perspective may invite identification with the characters' problems due to their universal purport and activate what Gaut calls propositional knowledge of human nature.

Another reason why Łuczak is captivated by the philosophical tale may be that the form took him by surprise. If he expected a fictionalized version of media reports, he was probably prepared for realism, possibly naturalism, and a poetics of protest or drama. Instead, he encounters a detached, auto-ironic tale. The power of art to shock and shake the audience by defamiliarized formulas in order to make them see familiar things anew – or, as Łuczak puts it, in a completely different light – has been celebrated by many, including the Russian Formalists and Bertold Brecht.

Victor Shklovsky's *ostranenie* and Brecht's *Verfremdung* are two sample, twentieth century terms which help me to contextualize Łuczak's praise of the eye-opening power of literature. The school called Russian Formalism was most active in the second and third decades of the twentieth century; one of its best remembered concepts is Shklovsky's *ostranenie* (de-familiarization, making strange). *Ostranenie* is the power of art to refresh the vision: '[a]rt removes objects from automatism of perception' (Shklovsky 1965:13). Brecht propagated a technique of *Verfremdung* (alienation) effect, which aims at disrupting a theatrical illusion through open-ended plays and non-naturalist acting: unconventional performance is supposed to de-automatize the viewers' perception of the portrayed reality and 'encourag[e] in the audience a "complex seeing"' (Eagleton 1976:65). Despite the differences in artistic media – prose, poetry and theatre – and the fact that Łuczak does not engage with the

critical and ideological tenets of Shklovsky or Brecht,¹¹⁶ the concept of counteracting automatized perception through art is relevant to Łuczak's point that the desensitized Polish perception can be shaken off by a captivating literary work.

Literature, Reference Book and Travel

While some reviewers deem literature a source of understanding more potent than non-fiction accounts, others place it in the same category as non-fiction and ascribe it less informative power. In this section I look at the stance of a reviewer of Rushdie's *Dzieci północy* (*Midnight's Children*). The tale of children born on the midnight of Indian independence is designed as a panorama of contemporary India, even though its narrator acknowledges the precariousness of the task: 'there are as many versions of India as Indians' (Rushdie 2006a:373).

In his 1990 review, Zbigniew Florczak examines the book for its informative potential and asks to what extent the novel acquaints the reader with India: '[w]as Rushdie able to bring closer to us the image of his heterogeneous, multifaceted and (in the Polish perception) completely exotic motherland?' (1990:59). His answer is that although Rushdie did what he could, no novel can accomplish such a formidable task. Novels do, in his view, supply some material for imagining India: *Kim* is a prime example of that and *Dzieci północy* will be a valuable addition to *Kim*. Yet, in his view, a novel can offer some information but only a prolonged sojourn in India could provide some understanding of the country.

Another means of approaching India, not as efficacious as a stay there but still more credible than literature is, in Florczak's view, historical reportage. He praises a 1975 historical reportage on India, *Cette nuit la liberté* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (which was also written in English by the same authors and appeared as *Freedom at Midnight*¹¹⁷). Florczak stresses that the extensive work is based on four years of travelling, interviews and archival research and the result is very informative. Nevertheless, he maintains that no text can offer holistic knowledge of India, *not even* a good reference book. His phrasing implies a

¹¹⁶ The Formalists' interest lay primarily in aesthetics and although they rejected a traditional opposition of 'content' and 'form', their investigations did not centre on the involvement with a literary referent (Erlich 1973:631–32). Brecht's was a Marxist agenda: he believed that the awoken critical vision penetrates through the reality of social relations of production (Eagleton 1976:63–67).

¹¹⁷ The similarity to Rushdie's title to this reportage is probably no accident, as Catherine Cundy finds in *Midnight's Children* allusions to *Freedom at Midnight* (1996:36).

hierarchy, in which fiction is placed at the bottom, non-fiction is higher up as more informative, but personal experience of living in India remains on top.

Florczak specifies that to learn something while actually staying in India one would need to have one's eyes wide open, which accentuates the role of the learner in the learning process. He observes that the European learners are not sufficiently attentive and there is not much 'hunger for knowledge' of other parts of the world, as Europeans find it convenient to live with a ready-made literary mythology (ibid.). He then reminisces about a classic literary 'myth' of India, namely Kipling's *Kim*. He casually writes a stylistically evocative and visually suggestive paragraph on Kim, the urchin, and Lama, the sage, traversing a picturesque Indian landscape, and mentions the illustrations he came to associate with the landscapes of *Kim*.¹¹⁸ This suggests that the book left an imprint on his imagination. He also briefly compares Rushdie's novel to *Kim*, noting that a certain 'crowded commotion, heartiness, mixture of naivety and roguery' (ibid.) characterize the scenery and plotting of both novels.¹¹⁹ Stylistic and historical differences between the texts strike him too, as he stresses that Rushdie, unlike Kipling, is free from British Imperial ideology.

This, to me, implies that he views Rushdie's novel as an illuminating corrective to *Kim*, the pillar of the Polish literary mythology on India. Even if he is sceptical about the epistemological potential of any literary work, he does suggest that literature feeds readers with images of the world (and *Kim* has influenced him) and finds *Midnight's Children* a worthy enterprise in this respect. Yet, the passing comment about the cognitive sloth of Polish and European readers may imply that not all readers will verify their (dated) image of India with the help of the new book.

Changing Stereotypes

After the year 2000 a few reviewers comment that the reviewed books challenge an existing stereotype of Arabs; interestingly, the stereotype they evoke differs from the stereotype mentioned by reviewers in the 1980s. I will first briefly and selectively define the term 'stereotype' for the purpose of this example.

¹¹⁸ Florczak mentions memorable illustrations of Indian bulls with unusual horns by Tadeusz Kulisiewicz; presumably he is referring to Kulisiewicz's drawings of India collected in the book *Rysunki z Indii* [Drawings from India] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne RSW 'Prasa', 1959).

¹¹⁹ The comparison is not uncommon in the international criticism on both novels. For example, Said calls *Kim* 'an aesthetic milestone along the way to midnight 15 August 1947' (1989:46), while Richard Cronin refers to *Midnight's Children* as a 'post-independence version of *Kim*' (1989:5).

According to classical sociological definitions, dating back to Walter Lippmann's articles published in the USA in the 1920s, stereotype is a concept about groups or categories which portrays them as homogeneous: 'certain forms of behaviour, disposition or propensity are isolated, taken out of context and attributed to everyone associated with a particular group of category' (Pickering 2001:4). Psychologists consider stereotype a mental and cognitive phenomenon, identifying or comparing it with 'category', which is a 'way of organising our sense of the world' (ibid.:3). A cultural scholar, Michael Pickering, convincingly argues that although stereotypes, too, are 'a way of imposing a sense of order' on the world, categories and stereotypes differ because the former are flexible and the latter not. Pickering also introduces the question of power, arguing that a stereotype 'attempts to establish an attributed characteristic as natural and given in ways inseparable from the relations of power and domination through which it operates' (ibid.:5).

The question of power as a crucial component of stereotypical perceptions is central to Bhabha's view of stereotype. He identifies stereotype as the 'major discursive strategy' of colonialism (1994:66). In tune with his general point that colonial power affects both the colonized and the colonizers, Bhabha believes that stereotype rests on ambivalence between fixity and a need for repetition:

[stereotype] is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved (ibid.; original ellipsis).

Bhabha sees stereotype as contradictory: the need to repeat the stereotype stems from the colonial subjects' anxiety to permanently reassert their identity against the colonial other but at the same time reveals an element of fascination with otherness. Bhabha's context of colonialism does not correspond with my example but two of his points inform my analysis: that stereotyping involves oscillation between contradictory attitudes and that it characterizes those doing the stereotyping as much as the stereotyped, if not more. I also rely on Pickering's point that stereotypes serve as provisional 'knowledge' but are inflexible and overgeneralized.

In a review of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *To oslepijace nieobecne swiatlo* (*Cette aveuglante absence de lumière*) Paulina Wilk lists three reasons why the book is extraordinary: a universal theme, the literary form and, last but not least, the cognitive quality. Wilk writes that Jelloun 'provides insights into Muslim

religiousness, whose knowledge in Poland is scarce and distorted by stereotypes'. Contrary to the stereotypes, she continues, 'in the novel [the religion] emerges as a source of strength that lets people preserve their humanity' (2008a). She thus suggests that Islam is stereotypically viewed as a destructive, politicized force.

The stereotype of Islamic terrorism is named by Hanif Janabi, a poet and scholar of Iraqi origin, living in Poland since 1976. After condemning the September 11th attacks, Janabi shares his worry that all Arabs may be unjustly stereotyped: 'the so called ordinary Polish citizen, who knows little about the [Arab] world, will link it all very simply: an Arab – a fanatic – a terrorist – a bad person. And it's not like that!' (Janabi 2002:6). The chain of associations corresponds with a definition of stereotyping, quoted earlier: 'certain forms of behaviour, disposition or propensity [here: terrorism] are isolated, taken out of context [here: of the attacks committed by people who were Arabs] and attributed to everyone associated with a particular group [all Arabs]' (Pickering 2001:4).

Marcin Sendeki, a reviewer of Mahfouz's *Rozmowy nad Nilem (Thartharah fawqa al-Nīl)*¹²⁰ points towards another stereotype of Islam. He considers the novel worthwhile because a 'juxtaposition of today's stereotype of the Islamic countries with the lives of the characters, who enjoy themselves much more freely than one could think' (2008) can be an eye-opener. It can be inferred then that stereotypical Muslims do not smoke hashish, engage in long discussions and make free love (as the characters do). To the contrary, all people living in countries where Islam is the main religion are stereotyped as adhering to very strict prohibitive codes and there is no awareness in Poland that the codes differ from place to place and group to group and that in some cases they are enforced rather than observed freely.

These religion-based stereotypes differ from a pre-1989 stereotype of Arabs mentioned in Łuczak's review of Habibi, discussed earlier. Łuczak believes that the novella can not only renew Polish readers' sympathy for the Palestinians but also challenge the stereotype of Arabs who 'shower green notes' and are 'customers of "working girls"' (1988). Janabi mentions that he has been subjected to a similar stereotype: as an Arab he was expected to trade dollars on the black market and he remembers that the profiling was particularly frustrating at a time when, as a doctoral student and political exile, he was rather impecunious. The view expressed by

¹²⁰ Published in English as *Adrift on the Nile*, trans. Frances Liardet (London: Doubleday, 1993).

Łuczak, again, assumes, a form of a stereotype, according to which possession of hard currency and a propensity for spending it on prostitutes are attributed to every individual associated with a group of (male) Arabs. Needless to say, this image does not prefigure the later view of Arabs as pious ascetics.

In the close readings I have signalled the following questions: the credentials to convey knowledge about India (debated by Iwaszkiewicz and Natwar-Singh), Oriental studies scholars' readiness to share their expertise (expressed by Skurjat), the power of literature to refresh the readers' vision (appreciated by Łuczak), the limitations of literature as a source of information (pointed out by Florczak) and the reading of literature in relation to the changing stereotypes of Arabs (by Łuczak, Wilk and Sendeki). In the next part I offer a more systematic account of the references to knowledge found in the reviews in successive decades.

Discourse on Knowledge: Developments (1970–2010)

References to knowledge in the reviews typically occur as straightforward praise of the cognitive value of a reviewed piece; in some cases it can be inferred whether reviewers tend to think about knowledge in terms of information or understanding. Remarks pertaining to the question of representation and stereotypes of postcolonial peoples appear rather regularly. In addition to stereotypes, which are characteristics attributed indiscriminately to all members of a group, there are instances where due to lack of more systematic knowledge, one place, person or phenomenon is arbitrarily and rather reductively made to symbolize a whole country, culture or peoples.

1970–1979

In the 1970s, references to knowledge gained from postcolonial literature appear in over twenty-five per cent of the reviews, which is more than in the other three decades (I suggest reasons for this in the concluding section). For example, Janusz Termer writes that Soyinka's *The Interpreters* grant the reader an 'insight into the predicaments of young independent countries' (1979), while Czeszko writes in a review of Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances* that Poles know little about Africa and 'it is good to read a wise and beautifully written book . . . by someone from there, which . . . illuminates at least a small fragment of the tangled matters'

(1976:27).¹²¹ He adds that, except for Kapuściński, nobody in Poland understands the maze of African conflicts.

The question of representativeness matters, as the polemics between Iwaszkiewicz and Natwar-Singh or between Różycki and Stolarek demonstrate. In his other reviews Różycki takes issue with books which do not denounce colonialism, but, unlike in the attack on Stolarek discussed in Chapter Three, he does not reject them altogether. For example, he appreciates that Francis Bebey's *Syn Agaty Mundio (Le fils d'Agatha Moudio)* will 'expand the information the reader has about contemporary African village life' even though it ignores important struggles (1972).

As Florczak's review of *Midnight's Children* presented earlier indicates, some reviewers value literature for its affinity to non-fiction: e.g. Gosiec writes that readers of Ngũgĩ's *Chmury i lzy (Weep Not Child)* can 'compare it to the facts [about the Mau-Mau rebellion] featured in press agency releases' (1972), while Skurjat calls for approaching Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* as a 'sociological document' (1976a).¹²² Others appreciate literature primarily because of its *difference* from non-fiction. For example, a reviewer of Natwar-Singh's collection believes that literature can be a bridge: it 'can help to lower the threshold of difference dividing the worlds, theirs and ours' (Zieliński 1974:13).¹²³

Reviewers also scrutinize the existing knowledge about postcolonial cultures, noting that it tends to be superficial and stereotypical. For instance, Borkowska (1978) and Baranowska (1977) say that Polish knowledge of India is limited to some keywords and images, such as Sanskrit, sacred cows, poverty and wealth (which one can call reductive symbols); the ambassador Natwar-Singh believes that the image of India in Poland is reduced to elephants, Taj Mahal and poverty (1973:4). In an early review of Rushdie, entitled 'Guru Rushdie', Anna Bojarska (1978) criticizes him for exploiting and ultimately perpetuating the stereotype of Oriental spirituality. Czeszko complains that Africa appears as a continent of unending wars and entangled politics (1976:26).

¹²¹ References to the cognitive value of literature can also be found in other reviews (Malanowski 1972; Soni 1975; Leopold 1975; Żórawski 1971; Byrski 1976).

¹²² Similar comments appear in other reviews (e.g. J.N. 1973; Żukrowski 1975; Leopold 1976).

¹²³ Comparable examples can be found in Krzysztof Nowicki (1978), Andrzej Różycki (1976) and Bohdan Czeszko (1976:27).

It is difficult to change the old ‘myths’ and reductive metonymies because they have been instilled in generations of readers through the powerful literary medium. In his review of Natwar-Singh’s collection mentioned earlier Zieliński (1974) calls literature a bridge but adds that Indian writers will need time to challenge the memorable image conjured up by Kipling. A reviewer of Premchand’s short stories confesses that the world of India is ‘so difficult to understand for people from the Mediterranean cultural circle, for whom everything that comes from [Indian] cultural circles still has an air of an exotic *Arabian Nights* tale about it’ (AK 1971; see also Ziembicki 1977:33). As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, reviewers also complain when the Polish editions lack explications.

1980–1989

In the 1980s the frequency of references to knowledge decreases considerably, to about ten per cent (compared to twenty-five per cent in 1970s). Relevant comments appear for example in Orłowska (1989), who considers cognitive value to be one strength of Hamidou Cheikh Kane’s *Dwojaki sens przygody Samby Diallo (L’aventure ambigu)*, the other strength being the portrayal of human dilemmas. Kozłowska believes that the merit of Mahfouz’s writing lies in the cognitive value, as well as good dialogues and convincing depiction of the characters’ stories (1988).¹²⁴ The issues of representativeness are also addressed, although not as fiercely as in the 1970s. In the monthly *Kontynenty*, which adopted the governmental perspective on the third world, a reviewer complains that Narayan fails to portray the social and political upheavals of his time and his writing has the effect of tranquilizers on the reader (P.L. 1988).

The assumption of verisimilitude underlies Andrzej Longin’s comment that the description of post-independence African conflicts in Gordimer’s work reads ‘like a cutting from the press of the 1960s’ (1980), as well as the observation that Miriam Tlali’s semi-autobiographical *Muriel w Metropolitan (Muriel at Metropolitan)* complements the media coverage of South African unrests by showing everyday life under apartheid from the perspective of a black woman (L.B. 1989).

Other reviewers stress the distinct cognitive potential of literature. One of the most emphatic statements appears in Zieliński’s review of Yoruba stories. He writes that despite the availability of fast travel, one can only reach another’s culture

¹²⁴ For a similar example see Sowińska (1972).

imagination and dreams by reading: ‘only literature offers tickets for such journeys’ (1984:39). The observation that the modern knowledge of other cultures becomes superficial and numerical without literary inputs is backed with the following anecdote: Zieliński’s acquaintance brought a mask from his stay in Africa but knew close to nothing about the culture that produced it. Besides, reviewing Gordimer’s *Zachować swój świat* (*The Conservationist*), Jan Marx wishes Gordimer had explained the South African background in more detail for the sake of foreign readers, only to admit that one cannot expect the author ‘to make her novel into a fictionalized textbook of [South African] history’ (1983).¹²⁵ Marx stresses that some cognitive basis is needed for absorbing further knowledge. Maria Bojarska makes this point, too, complaining that the publisher of Gordimer’s short stories should have provided an afterword because ‘the book itself is not everything and sometimes one needs knowledge to understand it well’ (1985:104).

Some reviewers remark that the existing knowledge of postcolonial countries and literatures is perfunctory; for instance, in a review of Dib’s *Talizaman* and *Wielki dom* (*Le talisman, La grande maison*) Mazowski writes that an average reader has not heard about any Arabic works beyond *The Arabian Nights* (Mazowski 1981).

1990–1999

In the 1990s literature is referred to as a source of knowledge with a frequency comparable to the previous decade (eight per cent compared to the ten per cent in the 1980s). A few examples merit a mention. Joanna Szczęsna uses the metaphor that literature maps out the world for the reader and writes, ‘Villon’s and Balzac’s Paris, . . . Dickens’s and Thackeray’s London, . . . Geographical space filled in with living people. But South Africa was not on that map’ (1993). However, she announces, with Christopher Hope’s book *Odrębne światy* (*A Separate Development*) readers gain knowledge that will animate the country on their imaginary maps. Adam Michnik writes that through André Brink’s novels ‘we [Polish readers] get to know the world of apartheid from within’ (1993). He also suggests that the knowledge has universal purport – dramatizing loyalty, love and rebellion – and a particular relevance to the peoples, such as Poles, who know the experience of totalitarianism first hand (I return to this example in Chapter Seven).

¹²⁵ See also Bukowska (1983:142).

The debate around *The Satanic Verses* highlights the question of what credentials one needs to make valid commentaries. In a peculiar exchange in *Tygodnik Powszechny* the attaché of the Iranian Embassy rebukes the Iranian studies scholar Anna Krasnowolska for her favourable commentary on Rushdie (1994a), primarily by undermining her expertise. The attaché (1994) asks why, despite her degree, Krasnowolska cannot understand that Iranian culture flourished thanks to Islam (although this point has little relevance to Krasnowolska's article). The attaché patronizingly addresses Krasnowolska: 'you have not passed an exam on your knowledge' (ibid.). Unsurprisingly, the attaché's ideological adherence is evident, for example in his statement that by issuing the *fatwa* Khomeini pre-empted a conspiracy against revolutionary Islamic culture. In her response Krasnowolska implies that the attaché is not in a position to assess her credentials because he is not a specialist himself and because he represents the viewpoint of a believer, not a researcher (1994b).

Reviewers also stress the uniqueness of the literary medium. In two different reviews, Helena Zaworska enthuses about Coetzee's ability to illuminate African 'mystery' with literary epiphanies and, as I will show in Chapter Five, compares him to Conrad. She grants literature a high status as a source of knowledge, denouncing mass-media coverage as ineffective: 'Africa. We know it mostly from TV screens . . . [and] descriptions of courageous journalists. Mass horror flashes in front of our eyes, without depriving us of sleep or appetite. We got used to it. We don't understand but maybe it's better this way' (1997). This telling comment echoes Czeszko's warnings that Africa emerges from the media as a maze of conflicts and cataclysms (1976:26).

The comments on the superficiality of media images also point towards pervasive stereotypical 'knowledge'. Zaworska denounces the stereotype of Africans as victims of military and humanitarian crises (although I argue later that she embraces an equally stereotyping view of African mysteriousness). Joanna Papuzińska exposes anachronistic misconceptions about India, stating that before she read Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, she had imagined India as 'fakirs frozen in the lotus position, . . . starving children in the streets, . . . Gandhi, Mother Theresa . . . and dignified English lieutenants from Agatha Christie's detective stories' (1999). However, Roy made her see India as home to modern paraphernalia and a setting of universal dramas (I explore this point in Chapter Six). In the 1990s

there are also a few comments on facilitating knowledge acquisition with the paratext; for example, Nowak appreciates the glossary in the translation of *Midnight's Children*, stressing that otherwise not everything in the book is understandable (1990).

2000–2010

In the decade 2000–2010 references to postcolonial literature as a source of knowledge continue with a similar frequency (ten per cent, compared with eight per cent in the 1990s and ten per cent in the 1980s). For example, one reviewer comments that Anita Nair's stories allow the reader to 'gain insight into a mysterious world of Indian women' (Schefs 2007): the comment implies a quest for understanding ('insight') rather than information, although it may also contain a seed of cultural and gender othering (I return to this in Chapter Five).

A reviewer of Lahiri enthuses about the sensual knowledge to be found in the book: the reviewer metaphorically says that in the book 'there are senses: touch, smell, sight, hearing. Details happen to the senses: a special colour, darkness, bare skin, delicious *pierozki*' (RR 2002; italics added). The reviewer uses the name of a Polish dish, *pierozki* (small dumplings); in the translation the dish the reviewer must be referring to is rendered as 'samosa' and described in a footnote as 'a triangular pierożek' (Lahiri 2002:104).¹²⁶ That the reviewer chooses to use the Polish explication may result from an attempt to list experiences which Polish readers can imaginatively 'feel', whether they are universal (e.g. bare skin) or culture specific (taste of *pierozki*). Here, too, the reviewer conceptualizes knowledge as personalized understanding.

As in the earlier decades, post-2000 reviewers believe that literature imparts propositional knowledge about the world. The following quotations speak for themselves: '[*White Teeth*] was published a year before 9/11 and although a few novels referring directly to the terrorist attacks have since appeared, Smith's book best shows the complexity of the world in which the attacks were possible' (Kurkiewicz 2011; a similar point is made in Bratkowski 2000) and, 'the popularity of the literature about immigrants written by immigrants [in Britain] proves a hunger for knowledge about them' (Grzymisławski 2004; a similar point appears in Jarniewicz 2002a). Maja Wolny links Coetzee's *Hańba* (*Disgrace*) to her experience

¹²⁶ In the original it is also 'samosa', without a footnote (Lahiri 1999:94).

of visiting South Africa. She comments on the geographical and conceptual distance of the country – ‘the ends of the earth: hard to get there and even harder to understand it . . .’ (2001), only to turn to Coetzee’s novel as a source of understanding (‘. . . unless one takes for a guide – as I did during a recent journey to South Africa – Coetzee’s latest book’ (ibid.)). She then states that rape, which is something *Disgrace* deals with, is common in South Africa and that she heard about a rapist who prowled the camping site where she stayed. On the one hand, Wolny tentatively extracts from the novel propositional knowledge of what to expect in South Africa and, on the other hand, she retells her experience to validate what the book conveys.

As before, reviewers capitalize on the continuities between literature and journalism, e.g. Marta Strzelecka approvingly calls Adiga’s *The White Tiger* ‘a long reportage’ (2008), while Agata Szwedowicz remarks that Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* describes an area which the media overlook because, unlike the Indian-Pakistani and Indian-Chinese borders, ‘the north-east of India rarely makes it to the front pages of newspapers’ (Szwedowicz 2007). Reviewers also emphasize the specificity of literature. For instance, a reviewer notes approvingly that Tarun J. Tejpal’s writing ‘does not smack of journalism’ (Budrecki 2007; a similar point in Czaja 2007). Paulina Wilk criticizes Nikita Lalwani’s debut book: ‘whatever the author was not able to convey with finesse was put into dialogues. . . . In Lalwani’s writing there is no mystery altogether: just valuable knowledge’ (2008b); she also enthuses that Ghosh’s *Żarłoczny przyływ* (*The Hungry Tide*) does preserve a sense of mystery, ‘[t]he real India is in Ghosh’s books – too complex to be described. One can only, as Ghosh does, show it bit by bit’ (Wilk 2008c). The insistence on mystery can signify a literary taste (dislike of didacticism, preference for complexity) but it correlates with insidiously stereotyping or exoticizing views of other cultures. Zaworska’s review mentioned in the 1990s section, which celebrated Conrad and Coetzee for illuminating African mystique, was rehashed after Coetzee’s Nobel Prize for Literature and re-edition of his work (2004).

There are also disputes over whether texts offer representative images of places or peoples. Robert is disappointed that in *Londonistani* Malkani does not offer a complex image of the contemporary British Indian minority, stating, ‘big politics does not interest Malkani: in London’s suburbs racist acts are but teenage hooligan pranks’ (2007). Adiga’s tongue-in-cheek critique of the Indian caste-system also

proves controversial: reviewing *Między zabójstwami* (*Between the Assassinations*), Szwedowicz announces: '[i]s it a true image of that country? Generally yes, but very one-sided, exaggerated and importunately neorealist' (2010:27). A few reviewers, on the other hand, consider Adiga a refreshing and instructive alternative to 'multi-culti' novels by Zadie Smith or Salman Rushdie (Adamowski 2008; Jacek Ratajczak 2009). The examples demonstrate that although the authoritative tone of some of the pre-1989 hard-liner critics is no longer heard, after 1989 there are still ideological skirmishes and pressures.

Concluding Remarks

The reading of Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010 confirms that literature is viewed as a valuable, even indispensable, repository of knowledge about postcolonial places and peoples. Literature is believed to convey factual information, or propositional knowledge, and as such it is classified together with journalism and reportage. Moreover, it is appreciated as a unique source of complex understanding of others (which can be termed propositional knowledge of human nature, empathic knowledge, moral knowledge, knowledge of possibilities, etc.). The culture- or region-specific propositional knowledge conveyed through the translated literature is verified by Oriental studies scholars, either during the publication process if they act as translators or consultants, or *post factum*, in reviews. Statements by scholars indicate that they feel they are not invited to cooperate on relevant publishing projects often enough.

It is also evident that knowledge of other cultures – which predates the literature, is inferred from it or accompanies it in the form of commentaries and reviews – is inextricably linked to bilateral and global power relationships. The most conspicuous evidence involves arguments about the legitimacy of particular representations, where the discussants position themselves in relation to such ideologies as communism, capitalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, anti-colonialism, neo-colonialism, theocracy or secularism.

The interrelations between knowledge and power are also visible in the construction of stereotypes. The stereotypes of Arabs mentioned earlier correlate with the prevailing ideological formations of the time: an image of Arabs with

dollars gained its salience when communist Poland maintained economic and political contacts with Arab countries and circulation of dollars was controlled by the state. The stereotype of prohibitive religiousness and fanaticism gained currency in Poland after 2001, at a time when Poland identified with the Western structures of power. The mutability of stereotypes of others resulting from the changing positions of the self confirms Bhabha's point that stereotypes can reveal much about those who construct them.

Generally, postcolonial literature is expected to challenge stereotypes – e.g. of promiscuous or fanatical Arabs, poor or spiritual Indians, backward or victimized Africans – and the fact that reviewers make such comments to the readers proves that it does fulfil this function to some extent. There are also stereotypes which are not always recognized as such, for example the stereotype of mysteriousness. Reductive symbols, such as *The Arabian Nights*, Gandhi or an African mask, are mentioned regularly and some self-reflective reviewers hope that they will lose their salience when readers engage with more diverse and sustained representations of postcolonial cultures.

As I signalled earlier, the percentage of references to knowledge peaked in the 1970s, fell considerably in the 1980s and remained relatively steady throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The early changes correlate with the twilight of politically inspired interest in the third world in the beginning of the 1980s and, possibly, with a general shift of cognitive energies towards the internal problems of Poland and the region in the 1980s. The overall decrease in references to knowledge in the period 1970–2010 partly correlates with the increased access to information through communication technologies and travel; yet, it is only partial correlation as after 2000 literature is still viewed as a valid, even unique, source of knowledge about others.

One slight shift I notice after 2000 is that there are fewer explicit and free-standing announcements of the 'cognitive value' of a text – rather, many commentators engage with the current representations of other cultures, notice stereotypes and suggest how the reviewed text intervenes into them. The shift may reflect a growing sensitivity to the problematic of intercultural knowledge considered from postcolonial positions. Another interpretation could be that, as Gaszyńska-Magiera suggests, the focus on 'informative' or 'cognitive' value was so closely linked with the Cold War prerogative to know the third world that it later felt like a

relic of the past. Besides, it is conceivable that after years of publishing, prefacing and reviewing, the postcolonial literatures and cultures have become more familiar.

They have not become as familiar as Latin American literature and culture, though. Like Gaszyńska-Magiera, I can see that references to knowing the third world often imply an ideological angle before 1989. Yet, contrary to Gaszyńska-Magiera's results, I find that statements about the need to learn about postcolonial literatures and cultures are still conspicuous after 1989. As I signalled earlier, I also find that reviewers in my corpus acknowledge their ignorance more often than reviewers of Latin American literature, who, according to Magiera-Gaszyńska, in most cases adopted the role of cultural brokers.

The fact that 'knowledge' seems to have remained a primary category in the reception of postcolonial literature may result from the fact that postcolonial literature has not 'boomed' or been canonized in Poland (with the possible exceptions of J.M. Coetzee and Salman Rushdie) and is still considered in relation to the places and traditions it evokes. Although the thesis, as I admitted earlier, does not systematically engage with commentary on the aesthetics of (translated) postcolonial literature, or lack thereof, I would venture a general hypothesis that the profound interest in an informative function of postcolonial literature, documented in this chapter, may to an extent downplay aesthetic values of the literature, which, in turn, may perpetuate a Eurocentric notion that postcolonial literary production lacks in artistic terms (where 'art' is defined within a Western tradition). One should approach the hypothesis cautiously and the chapter does feature counter-examples, showing that some reviewers paid attention to the form. At the same time, it is fair to note that while in the Polish reception of Latin American literature aesthetic categories, such as 'magical realism', have been of paramount importance, no similar phenomenon occurred in the Polish reception of postcolonial literature. Over thirty years after a reviewer of African prose pondered whether African literature would repeat the success of Latin American literature (K.G. 1978) the answer is that it has not.

In this chapter I have indicated that references to knowledge do not appear on their own but among references to mysteriousness, exoticism, similarity and universalism of the postcolonial writing, cultures and peoples. Indeed, the question of knowing the 'others' is embedded in the reflection of what the 'others' are like and how they relate to the 'self'. I explore these questions in the following chapters.

Chapter Five: Discourses of Difference

The Nordic language recognizes four orders of foreignness. The first is the otherlander, or utlanning, the stranger that we recognize as being a human of our world, but of another city or country. The second is the framling . . . This is the stranger that we recognize as human, but of another world. The third is the ramen, the stranger that we recognize as human, but of another species. The fourth is the true alien, the varelse, which includes all the animals, for with them no conversation is possible.

/Orson Scott Card, *The Speaker of the Dead*, 1986, Ch. 2/

In Orson Scott Card's science-fiction classic *The Speaker of the Dead*, humankind mourns the Buggers, a species which it exterminated over 3,000 years earlier in what then appeared to be a life-and-death war against a truly alien species. It was only after the war that humans learnt that the Buggers were not in fact a predatory *varelse* but the *ramen*, the stranger that should have been recognized as human. The novel is set in the fifth millennium, when, once more, an alien intelligent species, the Piggies, is discovered on a distant planet. The novel's main question is whether history must repeat itself or whether humans can come to terms with otherness and perceive similarities rather than differences.

This chapter looks at perceptions of difference and discourses of othering emerging from Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010. Contemporary meaning of 'othering' is defined by the *OED* as the 'perception or representation of a person or group of people as fundamentally alien from another, frequently more powerful, group' (Anon 2013d). Othering operates through a taxonomy of exclusions, based on classification of perceived similarities and differences, and legitimized by a system of names and descriptions (not unlike the one in the opening quote, even though, obviously, the science-fiction reference is introduced with a pinch of salt). Othering perceptions are usually marked by a sense of superiority: indeed, Polish commentators often identify with Europe, i.e., according to the definition quoted above, a more powerful group, which reinforces its identity by perceiving others as fundamentally alien.

Historically, othering was encoded in colonial discourses, which facilitated the process of colonization. It is a commonplace that Said's *Orientalism* (1978) opened up vistas for studying discursive othering and triggered research into particular places and periods. Polish othering discourses towards postcolonial peoples were not part of large-scale, violent projects such as colonization. Nevertheless, the discursive choices and perceptions are likely to correlate with actual behaviour towards postcolonial peoples, e.g. economic and cultural exchanges with postcolonial countries, Poles' attitudes to immigrants and Polish foreign affairs, including contributions to the policies of the EU and NATO.

The main discourses of difference I identified in the reviews are the discourses of irrationality, barbarity, mystery and exoticism. The first three revolve around the ideal of rationality: the discourse of barbarity invests others with negative characteristics such as primitivism and cruelty, positioning it in a hostile opposition to rational civilization, while the discourse of mystery relegates otherness to a parallel epistemological realm by foregrounding such notions as impenetrability, mysteriousness, irrationality and wilderness ('wilderness' also belongs with barbarity but here the wilderness is elusive, enigmatic). The discourse of exoticism, however, signals quintessential otherness and *relation* of externality rather than alien characteristics. It carries little meaning of its own and is filled with projections of fantasies of the self. In the first half of the chapter I discuss the othering discourses which stigmatize irrationality, mystery and barbarity, whereas in the second half I turn to the discourse of exoticism.

Discourses of Irrationality, Mystery and Barbarity: Close Readings

In this section I offer close readings of salient examples to underscore discursive practices, as well as flag up interpretative ambiguities. The following section will contain a narrative account of the main discursive developments in the four decades, 1970–2010.

Africa and *Logos*

The first example capitalizes on the insidiously othering discourse of African irrationality, which blends with a popular stereotype of Africa as a realm of music,

feeling and dance, rather than reason, word and logic. At the first glance this stereotype need not appear strikingly othering and, indeed, it has been embraced as part of self-perception by some African emancipation movements.¹²⁷ However, it may link with discourses of African inferiority. My example is a 1975 review of three publications of and on African literature,¹²⁸ which describes Africa through an implicit contrast to Europe. The reviewer, Adam Krzemiński, claims that African literature and orature developed relatively late because ‘in Africa in the beginning was *not* the word’ and Africans expressed themselves through dance, music and sculpture, rather than story-telling (1975). In this explanation Krzemiński employs an authoritative idiom – a paraphrase of a well-known Biblical line – to depict an othering and implicitly unfavourable image of Africa.

‘In Africa in the beginning was *not* the word’ is a paraphrase of the first verse of the Gospel of John, ‘in the beginning was the Word’.¹²⁹ It is an emphatic negation of the verse, implying contrast between Africa, which did not originate with the word, and Christian, European civilization, which did. The othering effect is strong because the difference is located in a transcendental temporal order: the ‘beginning’ signified here is not merely a historical point but an absolute beginning preceding the genesis, or in a more lay sense, some sort of mythical past. In other words, if the African-European difference has its locus in a theological or mythical origin of things, it becomes sanctioned by tradition, perennial, nearly natural.

A civilization believed to revolve around music rather than word is, by the Western standard, not only different but also deficient. In the West there is a bias

¹²⁷ A notable example of championing feeling rather than reason as part of a black identity is the pan-African Negritude movement. Initiated in the 1930s by Francophone authors and intellectuals, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas, the movement aimed at celebrating ‘the sum of the cultural values of the black world’, such as closeness to nature, feeling, dynamism and rhythm (Senghor 1993:28–31). The movement came under criticism for essentializing black identity and reversing Western dichotomies of reason and feeling, but it has also been credited for advancing pan-African struggle and affirming some traditional African concepts (Ahluwalia 2007:231–32).

¹²⁸ *Fama Dumbuya najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu (Les soleils des indépendances)*, by Ahmadou Kourouma, trans. Zbigniew Stolarek (1975), an anthology of African poetry, *Antologia poezji afrykańskiej*, ed. Zbigniew Stolarek and Wanda Leopold (1974), and Leopold’s book on Sub-Saharan literature *Literatura Czarnej Afryki* (1973).

¹²⁹ In Polish ‘W Afryce na początku wcale nie było słowo’, which is a negation of the line ‘Na początku było Słowo’ (this wording is used in the Catholic Old Polish translation by Jakub Wujek published in 1599, as well as in the authoritative modern Catholic translation Biblia Tysiąclecia, first published in 1965). In the English translation of Krzemiński’s statement I negate the English translation ‘In the beginning was the Word’, used in King James Bible (1611) and most later translations, according to Online Parallel Bible website at <<http://bible.cc/john/1-1.htm>> (last accessed 12 March 2012).

towards logocentric civilization, i.e. one centred on reason and language.¹³⁰ The opposition of language, on the one side, and music, dance and material art, on the other, can be described in terms of other binaries present in Western thought, such as rationality versus sensuality, ability for abstract thinking versus encapsulation in the material ‘here and now’, or, to use Friedrich Nietzsche’s terms, the Apollonian, i.e. harmony and moderation, and the Dionysian, i.e. excess and forgetfulness of self through intoxication (Nietzsche 2000). Philosophers such as Nietzsche and, at a later and different moment, Jacques Derrida argue that Western thought has privileged the Apollonian and the logocentric at the expense of qualities which were perceived as opposite. Postcolonial critics note that a good deal of such ‘opposite’ qualities were lumped together in colonial discourses and ascribed to non-European ‘Others’: for instance irrationality (supposed to hinder self-government and technological advancement) or immoderation (translated by colonial policy-makers into proneness to sensual and sexual excess). Even if Krzemiński does not directly engage with such stereotypes, by drawing a divide between civilization rooted in the word and other civilizations, he evokes a series of irreconcilable differences between Europe and Africa.

Alleged dissociation of Africans from the word, or *logos*, must also impair on their self-knowledge and subjectivity. Derrida, who uses ‘*logos*’ to mean reason, spoken word and god, argues that ‘God is the name and the element of that which makes possible an . . . absolutely self-present self-knowledge’ (1997:98). The enabling God/*logos* is spoken word because speech gives an illusion of the signifier being identical with the signified (unlike writing, which is considered representation of speech). Derrida writes that *logos* can be self-present

. . . only through the *voice*: an order of the signifier by which the subject takes from itself into itself. . . . Such is at least the experience – or consciousness – of the voice: of hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak [*s’entendre-parler*] (ibid.; original emphasis).

According to Derrida, while self-understanding is believed to be possible through speech rather than writing, logocentric metaphysics comes into being within a system of language associated with phonetic-alphabetic writing (ibid.:43). Hence, two

¹³⁰ Two meanings of ‘logocentric’ recorded by the *OED* are: ‘centred on reason’ and ‘centred on language’ (Anon 2013e).

elements seem crucial to development of Western metaphysics: spoken word and a phonetic alphabet.

Krzemiński notes absence of both these elements in the African tradition, which implies that Africans have problems with self-knowledge, at least by Western standards as diagnosed by Derrida. First, as I have said earlier, Krzemiński states that Africans lack an intimate connection to the spoken word. Second, he adds that ‘their thought was not tamed/ made familiar by an alphabet of their own’ (1975). Here the underlying assumption is that only language with a codified alphabet can give one proper access to one’s own thoughts; the assumption coincides with Derrida’s insistence that phonetic-alphabetic writing gives rise to the alleged experience of self-understanding through speaking. Interestingly, Krzemiński uses the verb *oswoić*, meaning both ‘to make familiar’ (literally ‘one’s own’) and to ‘tame’ or ‘domesticate’, which suggests that one’s thoughts remain wild and foreign to oneself until they are filtered through a standardized system of signifiers. Krzemiński also writes that African beliefs did not require an objective description and lacked consistent mythologies of the European and Asian sort, thus reinforcing the point that by lacking links to *logos*, Africans did not possess tools for knowing themselves.

An argument implying that Africans are incapable of self-reflection may not seem openly discriminatory but it is insidiously othering because in the West this capability is a gauge of the progress of humanity. This point is fully spelt out in a 1983 review by Maria Bojarska (which I also discuss in Chapter Six). Reviewing Amos Tutuola, a Nigerian author famous for his vivid folk stories and non-standard English, she takes issue with Tutuola’s irrational narrating mode, which she finds at odds with Western standards. ‘Our [European] idea of literature is governed – still – by rationalism’, writes Bojarska, adding that it is thanks to critical distance and objective reflection that a narrator or author comes across as a ‘*thinking creature*’ (Bojarska 1984:73; original emphasis). In her view, rationalism is altogether absent from Tutuola’s work: ‘his narrator is all over the place, like a ball hit by a madman’s racket’ (ibid.) For her this is problematic because in the West literature is a tool of self-knowledge and progress: only thanks to painstaking rational self-examination through literature could the Western reason produce modern technological inventions. Africans, however, avoid rationalism and the hardships of self-examination in literature but partake fully in the benefits of modern civilization. Bojarska’s suggestion that Africans are parasitical on Western modernity is an

extreme example of othering but I think that it is a logical consequence of the assumption of African irrationality which emerges from Krzemiński's review. At the same time, Krzemiński entertains the idea of similarity between Africans and Poles, to which I return in Chapter Seven.

The Core of Africa

Two ideas of African difference dominate the 1988 review of Camara Laye's *Spojrzenie króla* (*Le regard du roi*) by Anatol Ulman: first, that African essence is characterized by obedience and, second, that African essence is an impenetrable mystery (reminiscent of the Conradian notion of heart of darkness). Although at face value the review seems to endorse these othering ideas, I also note a possibility of mockery and critique. Laye's novel is set in the French Guinea and tells the story of a bankrupt Frenchman, Clarence, possessed by the dream to find and worship a famous African king. Despite many hardships – he is at a loss in the culturally foreign environment, which makes him end up, for example, as an enslaved stud horse in a harem – he perseveres and succeeds. Ulman finds the plot unrealistic and psychologically implausible because no white person would behave the way Clarence does. Ulman says that Laye endows a white character with 'a soul of a black man' (*duża Murzyna*), which is very different but, Ulman hastens to add, in no way worse than a white man's soul (Ulman 1988:94).

The main instance of implausibility is for Ulman the fact that Clarence dreams about submitting himself to the king. Ulman states that, as far as he understands, uncritical obedience to a leader is a norm for Africans but he calls it 'incomprehensible for us' and thus highly implausible for a white European character. Through this statement he identifies Poles with Europeans, as well as endorses one of the standard excuses for colonialization: that non-Europeans require, even desire, a strong rule. At its most essentialist, the claim was given a psychoanalytical grounding by the French psychoanalyst from Lacan's school, Octave Mannoni. Mannoni diagnosed the colonized people of Madagascar with a need to submit to superiors and called it the dependency, or Caliban, complex (1990).¹³¹ Although he studied the Malagasy people, his theory of the psychology of

¹³¹ Mannoni argues that the Malagasy do not develop beyond the stage of child's dependency on parents, treating their local rulers and, later, colonizers as 'a kind of father figure on whom they entirely and uncritically rel[y]' (Bloch 1990:x).

colonization had an universalizing slant: Mannoni writes that ‘not all peoples can be colonized: only those who experience this need [for dependence]’ (ibid.:85). In the review Ulman may stress that racial difference does not jeopardize equality (the black man’s soul being different but not worse) but his notion of African submissiveness resonates strongly with colonial discourses justifying European rule in colonies.

The second othering mechanism to be found in the review is the construction of Africanness as an unfathomable enigma. In her preface to an English edition of Laye’s novel, Toni Morrison sees Laye’s writing about Africa as a subversion of dominant, colonialist codes: ‘[he] exchanged African “enigma” and darkness for subtlety [and] literary ambiguity’ (2001:xv). Yet, she notes that the ambiguity falls on deaf ears, as far as Western critics are concerned, because they stubbornly see in the novel ‘mute symbols and cryptic messages’¹³² (ibid.:xxi). Ulman appears to follow suit, at least when one reads him at face value.

Ulman reads Clarence’s adventures as a symbolic white man’s journey to an enigmatic, mystical core of Africa. There is a Conradian association because the word Ulman uses for ‘core’, *jądro*, is the Polish translation for ‘heart’ in the title *Heart of Darkness* (*Jądro ciemności*). For Ulman, Clarence’s quest for a king is supposed to represent the search for the heart of Africa, which rests hidden inside a ‘black shell’ (hence the review’s title, ‘Mysticism in a Black Shell’). The shell is thick and impenetrable, Ulman writes, implying that Africa eludes rational cognition and its core can only be reached through ritual initiation or a mystical path. Thus Ulman depicts the continent as an impenetrable mystery and an epistemological enigma.

Although at first sight the review appears to perpetuate an othering perception of African literature, I cannot rule out the possibility that it parodies such perceptions. Ulman does not offer any of his readings as the final one (after offering a sample symbolic reading, he comments, ‘And so on. We can treat ourselves to many explanations of one sort or another’). This strategy of toying with various interpretations may imply critical distance if not a mocking attitude to at least some of them. The symbolist reading, in particular, seems to be given tongue-in-cheek.

¹³² Morrison gives examples of such, in her view, tendentious readings; this one is her quote from Sonia Lee’s *Camara Laye* (Boston: Twayne, 1984, p.iii).

Yet, Ulman seems to think that the novel invites it, which he probably treats as the novel's drawback. Ulman writes that because Laye is a black African the novel cannot be realist but must be full of symbolism, mysteriousness and magic ('drums', 'witches', 'dance and nudity'). I read it as criticism of Laye for complying with stereotypical expectations of African literature. As I showed in Chapter Three, in the 1970s Laye was criticized as a pro-colonial reactionary because his *L'enfant noir* did not condemn colonialism. All things considered, I would reiterate that Ulman expresses an essentialist view of Africans as submissive: he utters this view in brackets, in the indicative, before he embarks on a series of hypothetical symbolic readings, which confirms that he writes it in earnest. With regard to the othering idea of African enigma, he may actually be distancing himself from tendentious perceptions, which he might be attributing to reactionary African authors.

Third World Barbarity

The reviews described so far were published in Poland in the state-controlled press, which means that at least at a general level their content complied with the basic policies towards third world countries (support for decolonization, aid and solidarity, etc). Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory statements were *de rigueur* – Ulman's assurance that the black man's soul is different but certainly not worse than a white man's soul is an apt example. Even if some of the othering discourses I noticed are reminiscent of nineteenth century colonialist discourse (e.g. Ulman's belief that Africans uncritically worship their leaders), there is no direct criticism of postcolonial third world states. Before moving to post-Cold War reviews written in Poland, I want to present a view expressed before 1989 outside the country, in emigration circles. Émigré literary critics were free from the communist censorship and could use discourses that countered the on-message criticism published in Poland.¹³³

I discuss essays by an émigré intellectual, Wojciech Skalmowski, who endorses Naipaul's discourse on non-European barbarity in a way that resonates with emigrational criticism of communist Poland. The essays were published in the influential emigration monthly, the Paris *Kultura*, in 1982, 1986 and 1989, and were

¹³³ It should be noted, however, that emigration publishing, like any publishing, was not completely free from broadly understood censorship and the notions of politics, mores, literary tastes, etc must have influenced the publishers' decisions in one way or another.

signed 'M. Broński'. Skalmowski's ideas on Naipaul proved inspiring for his friend Sławomir Mrożek, who was a prominent émigré author and who later wrote about Naipaul in the post-1989 mainstream Polish press.

Skalmowski endorses Naipaul's belief in the hierarchy of civilization and bush, or light and darkness, emphasizing that the belief goes against the grain of leftist thinking. Hierarchical thinking appeals to Skalmowski, because he is tired of leftist egalitarianism and the communist levelling-down in Poland. Skalmowski also complains that discussions of third world countries are monopolized by leftist discourses, dubbed as 'The Great Chatter of the current times' (Broński 1982:52), and lauds Naipaul for pronouncing a view which is 'obvious but also highly unpopular' (ibid.). Skalmowski summarizes the view in four points, which in a very close paraphrase sound as follows: firstly, contemporary societies can be divided into civilized and half-civilized, or barbarian, secondly, civilization is better than barbarity, thirdly, only the civilized societies enable individuals to overcome mediocrity and achieve something (ibid.). Before reporting the fourth point, I want to stress that the opposition between civilization and barbarity, or 'bush', is developed and illustrated in the essays. Bush is identified with: meaningless violence filling the void of values (e.g. murder of an Englishwoman described by Naipaul in the reportage 'The Killings in Trinidad' and in the novel *Guerrillas*) and with uniform stupidity seeking to stifle any ambition (e.g. the fact that aspiring individuals such as Naipaul and Conrad had to emigrate to escape the eternal mediocrity of Trinidad and Poland or Russia). Civilization is the only protection against bush – it is order, meaning, affirmation of achievement and hierarchy – while bush is hostile to civilization. The two are locked together in a Manichean combat.

The final and most othering of Naipaul's points, which Skalmowski reports, is that 'the stagnation, inefficiency, stupidity and cruelty of the half-civilized societies are to a large extent *their own fault*' (ibid.; original emphasis). The 'half-civilized societies' are conterminous with Naipaul's 'half-made societies', i.e. postcolonial peoples. What can be inferred from Skalmowski's essays is that the fault lies mostly in a permanent lack, in a failure to create a civil community of values, in a civilizational void where vices rear their ugly head. This attitude mirrors Naipaul's widely cited statement from *The Middle Passage* that nothing has ever been created

in the Caribbean.¹³⁴ Another fault Skalmowski finds with non-Western peoples – which he describes in a letter to Mrozek – is a certain irrationality and unreliability, which stems from a fundamental difference: ‘What makes the East differ from the West is the distance between word and reality: in the East, they are two independent domains, in the West . . . the word matches reality’ (Mrozek & Skalmowski 2007:172).¹³⁵ Skalmowski backs the claim with his experiences of dealing with some Persian representatives during his academic visit (he was a professor of Iranian studies at the University of Leuven), but also with a deteriorating situation in Poland. According to him Poland is flooded by Russian Asianness and the deterioration he talks about is most probably forms of communist newspeak pervading private and public communication. He refers to the disjunction between words and things as ‘Asia’ and adds that he senses a breath of Asia (his phrase) even in Belgium, where it manifests itself in an insincere politeness code. Skalmowski’s use of a continent’s name, Asia, as synonymous with duplicity and his general equation of all negative features with ‘half-civilized’ postcolonial societies, are self-evidently othering practices.

The othering treatment of postcolonial societies, evident in Skalmowski’s essays on Naipaul and letters to Mrozek, should be seen in the context of his attitude to Soviet communism. Two main aspects to consider are: first, he sees Russia as ‘Asia’ and, second, he opposes leftist idealization of the third world. Regarding the first point, in another letter there is a strong suggestion that the Polish fear of ‘Asia’ is a fear of Russian tyranny and domination. The Polish situation, Skalmowski writes, ‘is more a result of the invasion of Asia itself than communism; i.e. the Russian communism is Asia rather than a consequence of Marx’ (Mrozek & Skalmowski 2007:124). Skalmowski insists that Soviet communism is an Asian adaptation of Marxism and a continuation of tsarist despotism, because instances of Asian character, such as a yawning gap between rulers’ cruel practices and humanitarian preachings, are a constant feature in Russian history. He believes that Poland, exposed to Russian and then Soviet influence, is receptive to growing

¹³⁴ Controversy surrounding the statement is neatly summarized by Evelyn O’ Callaghan (2011) in *Created in the West Indies: Caribbean Perspectives on VS Naipaul*. Very different visions of achievement and creation in the Caribbean are proposed by such authors and thinkers as Derek Walcott, Wilson Harris and Aimé Césaire.

¹³⁵ Letter from 23 July 1974.

Asiatization, which may stem from his frustration with Poles who colluded with communism and his concern about the vulnerability and future of the country.¹³⁶

Being affected by the situation in Poland and by his forced emigration, Skalmowski projects Naipaul's disappointment with Trinidad onto his own ambivalent attitude to communist Poland. For instance, he imagines that Naipaul, with his perceptive, critical gaze, would see through Polish flaws – the 1982 essay ends with a comment that it is very unsettling to imagine what a book by Naipaul about Poland would look like. To sum up, for Skalmowski Naipaul's critique of the third world is instrumental in considering the Polish situation as a consequence of Asian expansion: this fact does not justify an essentialist and othering view of 'Asia' but it enables a better understanding of the emigrant perspective.

The second reason why Skalmowski and Mrozek support discourses of civilizational hierarchy is their hostility towards leftist egalitarianism, in general, and politically correct attitudes to the third world, in particular. Like a number of Polish émigré intellectuals, Skalmowski and Mrozek were alarmed by the currency Marxism enjoyed in the West. Representing more right-wing positions among the émigré dissidents, they worry that by levelling down all standards under the banner of egalitarianism, Western societies cultivate stupidity and invite a take-over by communist forces (Mrozek & Skalmowski 2007:445).¹³⁷

Their resentment of the political left is also expressed as a refusal to embrace third world problems after the fashion of 'engaged' critics. Mrozek explains this mechanism in a letter when he says that – in my close paraphrase – he cannot stand black people and their cause. Why? Because he is forced by progressive circles to love them. He remembers that he used to have a casual, naturally sympathetic attitude to black people. However, Mrozek writes, '[it was] before I was told to adore the blacks, to make apologies to them (and for what should I apologize, really?), before *black* had to be *beautiful*'¹³⁸ (ibid.:333). Mrozek dislikes blacks and other third world people out of contrariness, he also distances himself from an apologetic attitude to former colonies. To sum up, Skalmowski and Mrozek welcome Naipaul's

¹³⁶ The suggestion that invasions and influence from the East pose a threat to Poland's Occidental identity has appeared in Polish literature, more or less explicitly pointing to Russia's expansionism. Three examples are Witkacy's *Nienasycenie* (1930; *Insatiability*, trans. by Louis Iribarne), Tadeusz Konwicki's *Kompleks polski* (1977; *The Polish Complex*, trans. by Richard Lourie), and Kapuściński's *Imperium* (1993; *Imperium*, trans. by Klara Glowczewska).

¹³⁷ Mrozek's letter from 31 March 1980.

¹³⁸ Letter from 17 April 1977.

‘obvious if highly unpopular’ views that postcolonial peoples only have themselves to blame and they think about Naipaul’s criticism of ‘half-made societies’ as applicable to communist Poland and as a challenge to the hegemony of leftist discourses on the third world.

African Mystery

The vision of postcolonial countries as impenetrably mysterious can be found in post-1989 reviews of J.M. Coetzee by Helena Zaworska. Zaworska’s opinions are consistent and appear in widely-read and relatively prestigious outlets over the course of ten years: there is a review in *Gazeta Wyborcza* in 1997, *Gazeta’s* material on Coetzee’s Nobel Prize in 2003 and two reviews in *Nowe Książki* in 2004 and 2007. The reviews constitute the exception rather than the rule not only in the 1990s reception of postcolonial literature but also in Polish-language criticism of Coetzee’s work. His work attracted diverse responses, which oscillate between more allegorical and more realist; many of them do not focus on Africa but those which do often register not only epistemological difficulties but also ethical dimension of ‘knowing Africa’. As I will show, Zaworska rather unreflectively focuses on the epistemology and leaves out the ethics. The core idea Zaworska repeats between 1997 and 2007 is that Africa is an enigmatic embodiment of otherness and can only be intimated via literary epiphanies of the Conradian type.

Zaworska treats Africa as an enigma and wonders how ‘black people’s psyche’ (*psychika murzyńska*) – reminiscent of Ulman’s ‘black man’s soul’ – can be known by non-African readers. As I noted in the previous chapter on knowledge, Zaworska believes that media coverage does not provide insight into Africa (black man remains mysterious ‘even though whole herds of them flash by on our TV screens almost every evening’) and neither does reportage (even a Kapuściński cannot really understand Africans). Yet, she believes in another way of penetrating Africa’s secrets: through literature (Zaworska 1997).

Zaworska urges her readers to look for knowledge of Africa’s mysteries in literature by foreign authors, who can ‘uncover to us the mysteries of psyche, which we find exotic and incomprehensible’ (2004:63). According to her, those authors’ power lies in their ability to capture revelatory moments through which insight into African reality is granted. For instance, Coetzee manages to initiate his readers into Africa through a symbolic character, Magda from *In the Heart of the Country*.

To Zaworska, Magda's symbolic aura is a reminiscence of another suggestive female character:

I have already come across such a suggestive literary vision of a woman who *magically initiates us into Africa*. Yes, she exists briefly at the end of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* . . . A black woman, treading proudly, decked with trinkets and amulets: "She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent . . . Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene" (1997; quote from *Heart of Darkness* from Aniela Zagórska's translation, Zaworska's omission in the quote from Conrad, emphasis mine – D.G.).

Zaworska suggests that literary visions, invested with awe-inspiring symbolism, can illuminate a place or thing which they represent and that Coetzee's prose also offers images which are like 'revelations'. Such a suggestion need not be othering in itself but Zaworska does, in my view, construct Africa as radical otherness, by using imagery of arcane knowledge which requires 'magical initiation'. Besides, she reads Coetzee through Conrad, whose depiction of a black woman is for her a paradigmatic African epiphany. Given that Conrad has been criticized for an ethnocentric vision of Africa, by paying unconditional homage to Conrad she may be replicating some of his blind spots.

Postcolonial reappraisals of Conrad range from Chinua Achebe's early, provocative accusation of racism, to later, more balanced commentaries which note the ambivalence of Conrad's oeuvre. Achebe's intervention has been criticized as 'misreading Conrad' (Collits 2005:98). Yet, I think that Achebe's text objects first and foremost not to the inception but the contemporary *reception* of *Heart of Darkness* and its role in sustaining marginalization of Africans, which, as Achebe writes in the essay, he and other Africans were constantly experiencing. For all its theoretical shortcuts, the essay did make a strong impact and paved the way to more nuanced analyses. Because I think that Zaworska's use of Conrad is completely uncritical and, as it were, pre-Achebe, I will use the heavy artillery of Achebe's sarcasm to highlight some blind spots of her reading.

Achebe argues that Conrad uses Africans and African landscape as a mere foil for European self-examination (as Marlow's journey and Mr Kurtz's condition are often read) and that he reinforces Eurocentric politics of representation by

‘project[ing] the image of Africa as “the other world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization’ (Achebe 1977:783). Achebe particularly strongly objects to the novella’s treatment of Africans, which he finds dehumanizing. He notes that the natives only appear as creeping subhuman shapes (the labourers Marlow meets at a station), as clownish imitators of the white man (the fireman on Marlow’s boat) or as formidable embodiments of primordial wilderness (frenzied tribesmen Marlow’s crew see on the shores). Importantly for my argument, in the latter category Achebe also lists the black woman:

Towards the end of the story Conrad lavishes a whole page quite unexpectedly on an African woman who has obviously been some kind of mistress to Mr. Kurtz and now presides (if I may be permitted a little liberty) like a formidable mystery over the inexorable imminence of his departure . . . This Amazon is drawn in considerable detail, albeit of a predictable nature, for two reasons. First, *she is in her place* and so can win Conrad’s special brand of approval and second, she fulfils a structural requirement of the story: *a savage counterpart to the refined, European woman* who will step forth to end the story (ibid.:785–86; emphasis added).

According to Achebe, the portrayal of the woman reinforces the divide between African otherness and European civilization because she is shown belonging securely with the prehistoric savagery (‘she is in her place’ – unlike black imitators of white man, who upset the hierarchy) and playing the role of an Englishwoman’s other. One more othering technique, in Achebe’s view, is Conrad’s liberal use of adjectives connoting mystery and mystique, which Achebe parodies in the above quote (‘like formidable mystery . . .’).

Parading Conrad’s black woman as the pinnacle of European understanding of Africa, Zaworska’s review repeats some of the othering gestures that Achebe finds in Conrad. Zaworska announces that the woman is to be read as the embodiment of mysterious Africa, thus positioning her in the locus of difference and opposition to Europe. She depicts her through a quote from Conrad which accentuates such qualities as mysteriousness, sublime wilderness and power over the elements. Zaworska also persistently repeats a few evocative phrases, which is slightly reminiscent of Conrad’s exuberantly emotive style. For example: ‘very mysterious and exotic world’ (2004:63), ‘mysteries of souls and bodies that are difficult to comprehend’ (1997) or the review title ‘Niesamowita Afryka’ (Uncanny/Incredible Africa).

Finally, although Conrad informs her reading of the *postcolonial* author J.M. Coetzee, who intertextually alludes to Conrad through his title *In the Heart of the Country*, she does not register major postcolonial developments in Conrad criticism, nor does she otherwise signal significant socio-cultural and geopolitical changes separating Conrad's and Coetzee's milieus.¹³⁹ To conclude, Zaworska's reviews present the continent as an epistemological enigma, which can be discovered for Europeans through Conrad's literary revelations, but they do not engage with the ethical and historical dimensions of the 'discovery', even though those dimensions have been examined by contemporary Conradian criticism.

Barbarity Revisited

A 2002 article on Naipaul by Łukasz Wróbel resonates with the discourse of barbarity present in Skalmowski and the discourse of mysteriousness featured in Zaworska. Arguing that uprootedness is Naipaul's personal and artistic credo, Wróbel reads *A Bend in the River* as a novel about alienation. He sees alienation as a ubiquitous problem in the modernizing world but he also notes that Africa, the novel's setting, is particularly vulnerable because of an ongoing conflict between Europeanizing influences and 'the dark reality of the bush' (2002:48). Wróbel adopts Naipaul's derogatory metaphor of the 'bush' to signal an ominous impersonal force and thus serve a discourse of African mystery: '[Naipaul shows] the enormous power of the bush, when human life is destroyed by . . . the darkness of the continent' (ibid.). Moreover, the force is anthropomorphized as 'voice' and is supposed to manifest itself through bush inhabitants: '[Naipaul uncovers] authentic jungle culture, voice of the primordial consciousness' (ibid.:49). Thus the meaning of the bush as an impenetrable mystery is extended to African people. At the same time, 'bush' is understood as a threatening type of otherness: Wróbel refers, for example, to 'reality of magic, bloody ritual and violence' (ibid.:48), which foregrounds the notion of African cruel 'barbarity'.

¹³⁹ Postcolonial criticism of Conrad is known to other Polish reviewers (see e.g. Jarniewicz 2001; Roszak 2009). Importantly, the criticism is mentioned in Ryszard Kapuściński's best-selling book *Lapidarium V* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2005), whose relevant passage appeared in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Kapuściński 2002). Besides, an introduction to a recent retranslation of *Heart of Darkness*, written by the translator Magda Heydel, provides a comprehensive overview of critical responses to the novella, including postcolonial readings (2011).

Yet, Wróbel tries to avoid generalization and essentialism. This attempt is best visible in his comparison of *A Bend of the River* to *Heart of Darkness*. A metaphorical opposition of light and darkness, corresponding roughly with the civilization/barbarity binary, is used throughout the review but at one point Wróbel spells out a Conradian reference: he calls *A Bend* a contemporary *Heart of Darkness*, in which, he writes, the roles of the whites have been taken over by Africans (ibid.). This is a brief but significant statement. What roles do white characters play in Conrad's novella? First, there is Marlow: traveller into the African interior, mercenary of colonial trade, half-hearted advocate of civilization. Second, Kurtz, an enigmatic colonialist-turned-native-despot, and, third, colonial officials of various ilk, from pragmatists to idealists. What they have in common is that they represent the institutions and ideologies of Western modernity. Hence, if their roles are to be cast by Africans, it will surely be those Africans who have become Westernized. Given the prevailing axiology of darkness and light in Conrad's text, Wróbel's statement would imply that the Africans who modernize cross onto the side of civilization and light. From there they continue to venture into the darkness by studying, civilizing, fighting and ruling their black compatriots, who remain bush-dwellers.

On the one hand it may be argued that such a scenario levies the essentialist racial criterion that dominates the reality of *Heart of Darkness*, where every black person is doomed as primitive and deemed inherently inferior. In what Wróbel sees as an updated version of the novella, black people *can* represent civilization: modernization, not whiteness, becomes a pass to the enlightened part of humanity. However, the idea of modernization as an evolutionary pinnacle and the whole notion of a hierarchical scale of progress are part and parcel of Eurocentric thinking which can be linked with colonization and racism. Progress was associated with Europe, while the others of Western modernity, who were placed at the bottom of the scale as savages, were likely to be non-European and non-white. In *Heart of Darkness* this division is very obvious, because black Africans are cast in the roles of the non-civilized and perhaps even non-civilizable people. Moreover, the

compartmentalization is given an evolutionary sanction, as it were, when Africans are discussed as representatives of early stages in human evolution.¹⁴⁰

According to Wróbel's comparison, in Naipaul's novel the roles of the whites are played by blacks but it is taken for granted that the roles of blacks, i.e. the roles of prehistoric savages, remain reserved for Africans. Indeed, Africanness and 'prehistory' are blended in some of the phrases Wróbel uses to talk about the contemporary Africa of *A Bend*, e.g. 'primordial African instincts' or 'voice of primordial consciousness' (2002:49). To sum up, in the discourses of radical difference used in Wróbel, access to modernization may be substituted for racial segregation but the Western modernity is not completely separable from the history of racism and colonization.

I have offered four close readings of reviews from the Polish press from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, as well as an analysis of essays from the 1980s published in an emigration magazine. Now I will provide a narrative overview of the occurrence of these discourses in the course of four decades.

Discourses of Irrationality, Mystery and Barbarity: Developments (1970–2010)

The discourses of difference appear throughout the four decades I analyse, even though their number is relatively low and overall decreases in the course of time.¹⁴¹ Some reviewers challenge and criticize othering practices and the amount of criticism increases in the course of the years. Generally, othering tendencies are most prominent in reviews of African literature from Sub-Saharan Africa, which echoes the centuries-long representations of black people as primitives and savages, summarized in Chapter One; Indian and Arab literatures are more often read as 'exotic', which correlates with the historical fascination with the Orient. I also noted a few instances of gender and sexual othering, although gender issues rarely come to the fore.

¹⁴⁰ Sample quotes which substantiate this point are 'we were travelling in the night of first ages' (Conrad 1989:69) or, 'the prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us' (ibid.:68). The scalar notion of progress and its manifestation in *Heart of Darkness* are mentioned again in Chapter Six.

¹⁴¹ The exact numbers are: 8% of all the reviews in the 1970s, 10% in the 1980s, 5% in the 1990s and 3% in the 2000s.

In addition to Krzemiński's statement that Africa lacked an organic connection with *logos*, discussed earlier, there were other views of African irrationality and mysteriousness in the 1970s. For example, in a social-cultural quarterly *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* a reviewer writes that Camara Laye 'lets the rational Western world approach the mysteries of Africa, [whose value lies in] emotions, faith in the meaning of life and strength gained through communion with phenomena that are invisible to the eye' (Borowska 1973:143). In a review of African short stories entitled 'Secrets of a Continent', the reviewer finds the literature puzzling because it alludes to 'spiritual realms which the white man has not yet penetrated' (Nowicki 1978; in a regional weekly *Fakty*). Sexual othering is evident in a review of Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*, which is read as, I paraphrase, a gauntlet thrown to the white man's civilization from the position of sexual and social naturalness of an African (*z pozycji naturalności obyczajowej*) (Mól 1976). Admittedly, *Jagua Nana* is a highly sexualized novel about a prostitute, but reading 'Africanness' into the text reveals a stereotyping view of African promiscuity or lustfulness.

As far as critique of othering is concerned, in the 1970s I do not find statements that would challenge the idea of African mystique, even though Marxist critics condemn other types of othering, such as racism and imperialism (e.g. Sadkowski 1973b), and exoticization (see the second part of the chapter). The facts that the idea of African mystery is not detected by the radar of political correctness and that it appears in a range of periodicals, including a semi-academic quarterly, suggest that the idea is pervasive and deeply ingrained.

Othering along the lines of irrationality continues in the 1980s. In one of the most explicitly othering texts in my corpus, Bojarska's review of Tutuola mentioned at the end of the first close reading in this chapter, Europe is depicted as a stronghold of reason, besieged by African irrationality. Bojarska announces, 'yes, I am dividing the world . . . "Them" means Africa, "Us" means Europe' (1984:73). There are also some statements emphasizing difference in potentially essentialist ways: in addition to Ulman's point that black man's soul is different but not worse, there are views that African literature intimates worldviews and values which are 'completely different' from European and American ones (Jaskulski 1988). Moreover, I found an example of gender and ethnic othering in a review of *A Dance in the Sun* by the South African author Dan Jacobson. The reviewer summarizes the story stating that a white character had a child with a black servant, which was criminalized in South Africa

but, the reviewer adds, ‘after all he is not the first to have been in that situation’ (Lebioda 1987:199). That over-familiar, ‘boys will be boys’ sort of remark, together with the fact that the woman is only referred to as the male character’s ‘black lover’ and never a character in her own right, reveal lack of sensitivity to the woman’s story.

Regarding discourses of barbarity, in addition to his essays on Naipaul, the émigré author Skalmowski described the controversy surrounding Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* as a ‘confrontation of Western civilization with Asiatic backwardness and fanaticism’ (Broński 1989:184). The rhetoric of irreconcilable difference between civilization and barbarity sometimes figures in articles on the *fatwa* in the official Polish press in 1989, when criticizing Arabs was possible due to the gradual crumbling of censorship and dissolution of Cold War alliances. Two sample announcements are: ‘[The West and Islam are] two different planets’ (Majewicz 1989) and, ‘[It is] embarrassing that such a reaction should be occurring in the so-called civilized world’ (Gronowska 1989; see also Wiczorkowski 1989).

In the 1990s othering discourses appear, on the whole, much less frequently than in the previous decade (in about five per cent of the reviews, as opposed to about ten per cent in the 1980s). However, othering comments on Islam occasioned by the *fatwa* can still be found; they typically follow the binary model of a ‘clash of civilizations’, popularized by Samuel Huntington.¹⁴² For instance: ‘Islam is governed by determinism . . . , while Christianity includes objectivity’ (Cackowski 1997; see also Fabjański 1997). To be precise, such examples are not representative of the general Polish coverage of the ‘Rushdie affair’: while most articles take a Western viewpoint, they tend to report the situation with some nuance rather than rely on sweeping generalizations about Islam (e.g. some articles mention objections to the *fatwa* voiced by Arabs, notably by Naguib Mahfouz). The discourse of mystery still occurs, but only in a few reviews, notably the ones by Zaworska analysed earlier.

¹⁴² Huntington’s concept was first introduced in Polish in a 1994 translation in *Res Publica Nowa* („Wojna cywilizacji?”, trans. JK, Issue 2) and later in a translation of his book in 1997 (Warsaw: Muza, trans. Hanna Jankowska). The book has been reissued at least six times, most recently in 2007, which indicates its popularity (KaRo library catalogues search, at <<http://karo.umk.pl>>). At this point a comment on the term ‘civilization’ is required. With the prevailing influence of Huntington’s concept and related ideas, the term ‘civilization’ is often used in the reviews to mean a ‘culture, society, and way of life of a particular country, region, epoch, or group’, and not ‘human cultural, social, and intellectual development when considered to be advanced and progressive in nature’ (Anon 2013f), the latter being how Naipaul and Skalmowski used it, consequently referring to non-Western peoples as ‘barbarians’ and not as representatives of different civilizations.

These trends – fewer instances of ‘African mysteriousness’ and more of ‘civilization versus barbarity’ – seem to reflect decreasing interest in Africa (no longer an important Cold War arena) and sharpening tension between ‘the West’ and ‘Islam’ (linked, in various ways and to varying extent, to the *fatwa* against Rushdie, the Gulf War of 1990–91 and crimes against Bosnian Muslims 1992–95).

Opposition to anti-Muslim sentiments, triggered by the ‘Rushdie’ debate, came from different sides of the changing Polish political scene. In a review in a party daily *Dziennik Ludowy*, representing the communist pro-Arab stance, Ayatollah Khomeini is presented in a somewhat positive light, as the ‘triumphant leader of the anti-imperial revolution in Iran’; there is also a quote from another Iranian authority, who called Rushdie ‘a mercenary of colonialism’¹⁴³ (Bukowski 1989). At the same time, the conservative Catholic circle of the Christian National Union party (ZChN) issues a statement condemning Rushdie and, *de facto*, supporting Muslims’ right to have their religion respected (SAN 2008). This circle does not speak for the whole Polish Church, as a different response appears in a more liberal, intellectual monthly *Więź*, which publishes a historical meditation showing that Islam originally defended outlaws and that Khomeini and others misappropriated religion for political goals (Kozak et al. 1990:167). The examples show that Orientalist generalizations about Islam meet with criticism in Poland and the critics represent various convictions and agendas.

In the 2000s, discourses of difference are, again, less prominent (featuring in about three per cent of the reviews), while criticism of othering is more prominent. Examples of othering include comments on the mystery of Africa by Zaworska and Wróbel, quoted earlier. There are also statements alluding to incommensurability of the West and non-West, fitting in with the rhetoric of ‘clash of civilizations’, which gained new currency in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001. For instance, an article in the conservative weekly *Wprost* opens with a suggestion that the decision of the Swedish Academy to award the 2001 literature prize to Naipaul might be connected to the attacks. The article summarizes the message of

¹⁴³ ‘[N]ajemnik kolonializmu’; it is a quote from Hassan Sanei, whose June Fifth Foundation offered a ‘reward’ of \$1 million for Rushdie’s head. Sanei’s statement first appeared in English in *The Independent* on 16 February 1989 (reprinted in *The Rushdie File*, ed. L. Appignanesi and S. Maitland). I am indebted to Dr Florian Stadler and Dr Jenni Ramone for their assistance in identifying the source of the quote.

Naipaul's oeuvre as, 'Full understanding of people from different civilizations is not possible' and the phrase is featured as the article's title (Kobus & Kukliński 2001). Moreover, the neighbouring articles in the same issue of *Wprost* endorse war on terrorism (Kamiński & Krasnowska 2001; Giziński 2001), which further implies that Naipaul's alleged view about the difficulty of intercultural understanding has the reviewer's approval.

Another relevant example comes from an article on Rushdie. 'Consensus between the liberal West and Islam is not possible because of different concepts of the individual' (Marzec 2010), a reviewer of the right-wing daily *Rzeczpospolita* writes, showing that over twenty years after the *fatwa* the discourse of irreconcilable civilizational difference is still in use. Gender othering also lingers on, sometimes appearing in articles by Polish women who treat non-Western women as a foil for their own allegedly emancipated status. For example, a reviewer of Anita Nair's stories comments that Indian women sacrifice their ambitions for family life, which is 'inconceivable for Europeans' and which should make European women realise how lucky they are to have won their emancipation (Scheffs 2007).

Yet, in the 2000s reviewers increasingly often distance themselves from the use of certain othering terms. I will mention four examples: first, in a 2009 review of *Things Fall Apart* entitled 'The Clash of Civilizations From an African Perspective' the word 'barbarian' is used in inverted commas to undermine an othering Western discourse of African barbarity: '[European missionaries] wanted to put an end to "pagan" and "barbarian" customs' (Wysocki 2010:197). In the second example, the sociologist and feminist critic Kinga Dunin disapprovingly summarizes Naipaul's polarized 'ideology': 'On the one hand there is the Western world, with rationality, linear history, civilizational inventions, objective language. On the other hand, history without dates, spirituality and mysteries of other peoples, which cannot be captured by our categories' (Dunin 2002). Dunin finds Naipaul's Eurocentric stance schematic and predictable.

Examples three and four touch upon gender. In a review of Brink's prose, Jerzy Jarniewicz (2010) notices that after the end of apartheid Brink turned to history of women. Jarniewicz adds that postcolonial authors are often sensitive to various forms of exclusion, thus drawing attention to the problem of gender discrimination, which

is often overshadowed by racial, ethnic and social types of exclusion.¹⁴⁴ The feminist literary critic Kazimiera Szczuka (2002) also seems to emphasize that various types of discrimination are interrelated: she praises the work of Zadie Smith and the Polish author Dorota Masłowska as attentive to historical mechanisms of exclusion (be it colonial, nationalist or social). She adds that ‘it is no accident that subversive and liberating texts’ are being written by young women (ibid.), thus implying that due to their gender, the writers may be particularly sensitized to discriminative practices.

There is generally more criticism of the discourses of difference in the 2000s – what may be possible reasons for this? One reason could be a greater presence of postcolonial studies, as documented in Chapter One, and related disciplines indebted to poststructuralist and/or Marxist criticism in Polish academia and intellectual landscape. In two of the examples above one finds postcolonial studies inspirations: reviewing *Things Fall Apart*, Wysocki uses and references two essays by postcolonial scholars, which are included in the 2009 re-issue of the novel,¹⁴⁵ while Jarniewicz is an English studies scholar with an interest in postcolonial studies.

The literary critic Przemysław Czapliński notes that in the 2000s there was a reappraisal of politicized readings of literature (and engaged readings tend to combat exclusion and othering). According to Czapliński, the reappraisal followed after the 1990s trend to liberate literature from political causes after the end of communism and anti-communist opposition (Czapliński 2009a). Czapliński’s article prefaced a collection of new literary criticism published by *Krytyka Polityczna* (Political Critique), which is an active circle working to rejuvenate Polish traditions of the left. Dunin, whose reading of Naipaul was mentioned above, is one of the recognizable critics of the circle. Although postcolonial literature is not their frequent focus, they contribute to creating a climate in which texts are read to highlight issues of identity, social justice, exclusion, tolerance and otherness.

I now turn to the discourse of exoticism, which seems to be both more entrenched and more readily critiqued.

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, a Polish professor of Dutch and South African studies finds that Brink’s recent novels abound in nearly grotesquely cruel male characters and as such are *tendentiously* pro-feminist (Zajas 2006a). This disagreement shows, I think, that ‘feminism’, which is a relatively new discourse in Poland, is used with reference to a range of notions. This includes a reductive equation of feminism with misandry which, in my reading, Zajas imputes to Brink or perhaps uses himself.

¹⁴⁵ The essays, reprinted after a 1996 Heinemann’s African Writers Series edition of *Things Fall Apart*, are: ‘Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture’ by Simon Gikandi and ‘Igbo Culture and History’ by Don C. Ohadike (translated into Polish by Jolanta Kozak).

Discourse of Exoticism: Close Readings

The Polish adjective *egzotyczny*, just as the English ‘exotic’, derives from Latin *exōtic-us*, which in turn can be traced back to the Greek *ἐξωτικός*. The Greek word’s root, *ἐξω*, means ‘outside’ (OED Online) and indeed the concept of externality informs two dictionary meanings of the Polish word *egzotyczny* (‘exotic’). Namely, *egzotyczny* is defined as ‘1. Characteristic of countries with a completely different climate and different civilization; 2. unusual, curious’¹⁴⁶ (Anon 2013g): the first definition locates the exotic outside the familiar climate and civilization, while the second places it, broadly speaking, outside the zone of one’s expectations. The stamps of ‘exoticism’ signify otherness but otherness pure, devoid of essences such as primitivism or barbarity, and waiting to be infused with the beholder’s desire for the extraordinary. Graham Huggan stresses that the exotic is not an inherent quality but a relational and dialectical concept which controls cultural translation, ‘render[ing] people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them’ (2001:13).

The term appears very often in the reviews of postcolonial literature, marking the works and their topics as external to the usual literary, cultural and geographical points of reference. Exoticism usually warrants enthusiastic approval (when the term is used as praise) or at least passive acknowledgment (when it is used in a descriptive manner), which suggests that it indeed works well as a ‘control mechanism of cultural translation’ (ibid.:14), ensuring that the end product is alluringly but palpably foreign. These uses of the term imply that ‘exotic’ texts are interesting, enticing, curious, informative, in a word: a welcome novelty. However, sometimes the approving and descriptive usage of the term ‘exotic’ comes under criticism for insidiously exoticizing other places and reducing them to mere empty spaces available for Western needs. In addition, in a couple of cases ‘exotic’ carries the meaning of ‘irrelevant’ (i.e. finding itself outside the circle of relevant, familiar concerns) and ‘dangerous’, ‘ominous’. In the following section I offer a detailed discussion of selected reviews, to later narrate the main trends in the usage.

¹⁴⁶ ‘1. właściwy krajom o całkowicie odmiennym klimacie i o odmiennej cywilizacji; 2. niezwykle, osobliwy’.

Critique of Neo-Colonial Exoticization

‘The national bourgeoisie will be greatly helped on its way towards decadence by the Western bourgeoisies, who come to it as *tourists avid for the exotic*, for big-game hunting and for casinos’ – it is a sentence from Frantz Fanon’s rousing analysis of neo-colonial exploitation, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 1990:23, emphasis added). Adapting Marxist terms for the third world context, Fanon criticizes the postcolonial middle class for cutting off their ties with the people and playing the role of Europe’s lackey instead. What interests me here is that Fanon identifies Western capitalists as tourists and their abusive attitude to third world countries as ‘avidity for the exotic’. While he uses the terms literally, tourism and exoticization are also used in left-wing criticism as metaphors for neo-colonial exploitation.

The terms are used in this figurative way in reviews of postcolonial literature. For example Sadkowski’s 1971 article on Naipaul entitled ‘Against the Tyranny of Exoticism’ implies a connection between exoticization of the Caribbean and ruthless capitalist rule. Sadkowski dismisses Naipaul’s early novel *The House of Mr Biswas* as a ‘stall with exotic “souvenirs”’ because, politically speaking, the book is a projection of apathy: it depicts passive characters and only sporadically signals socio-political issues. In other words, Naipaul fails to show engagement, fails to side with emancipatory aspirations of Caribbean nations and, finally, fails to support ‘the processes of awakening a new [political] self-consciousness of these nations’ (Sadkowski 1971a). Sadkowski implies that by ideological detachment Naipaul perpetuates an imperialist view of the Caribbean as mere exoticism, i.e. as a commodity for Western tourists, gamblers, planters, investors and other exploiters. According to Sadkowski, the ‘tyranny of exoticism’, which is really a tyranny of capitalism, can be overthrown if Caribbean nations rise to break out of the cycle of neo-colonial dependence, follow the example of Cuba and adopt communism.

Alongside his criticism of shallow, exoticizing representation of the Caribbean, Sadkowski claims that the antidote to exoticism is political involvement on behalf of the oppressed classes. The whole article is occasioned by Naipaul’s essay ‘Power to the Caribbean People’ published in *The New York Review of Books* in 1970. Sadkowski provides a fragmentary account of the essay – listing Naipaul’s references to slave resistance as the origin of Trinidadian carnival and the cult of the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie among a Jamaican Black Power movement – to present the

essay as an engaged diagnosis of Caribbean power relations. The essay is juxtaposed with the 1961 *The House for Mr Biswas* as evidence for Naipaul's evolution from exoticism towards concern with 'real' problems of the people, i.e. as proof of 'the author's growing maturity and the deepening of his artistic consciousness' (ibid.).

Of particular relevance for my discussion of the discourse of exoticism is that Sadkowski places exoticizing representation and engaged socio-political representation on two opposite ends of an evolutionary scale: advancement from the former to the latter is praised as progress and growth in maturity. By extension, exoticism is seen as a sign of a writer's immaturity and shallow consciousness. This is a serious point of criticism, given that the notion of developing class consciousness and progressing towards communism is crucial for a Marxist vision of history. Put differently, Sadkowski's juxtaposition of exoticizing writing with 'progressive' engaged literature marks exoticism as *reactionary*, thus adding a strong point to the Marxism-inspired criticism of links between exoticization and capitalism.

It is also worth noting that in the context of state-controlled publishing in communist Poland, 'exoticization' is not only an abstract category but can also be a factor in the process of admitting authors to the Polish book market. The example of Naipaul shows how relevant critics' judgement about exoticizing agendas of a writer could effectively work as either a pass or a ban for the writer's work. Naipaul's example is particularly interesting because it illustrates the scale of possible manipulation: because internationally Naipaul's work is received as anything but leftist, it may come as a surprise that a leftist critic should be announcing Naipaul's conversion to 'progressive' writing. Indeed, Sadkowski can only make his argument *via* a very selective reading, not to say misreading, of Naipaul's essay 'Power to the Caribbean People' because the essay actually shows Caribbean societies as doomed to provincialism and does not propose any reformatory, let alone revolutionary, ideas (Naipaul 1970).¹⁴⁷

The announcement of Naipaul's political engagement may have been part of a ploy to equip Naipaul with leftist credentials and thus smuggle him through the communist censors – this version of events emerges from Sadkowski's retrospective article on Naipaul from 2001. In that 2001 article, Sadkowski writes that he first read *The House for Mr Biswas* after he had been asked to provide an internal reader's

¹⁴⁷ The essay provoked a polemic from a London-based Trinidadian reader, who, in a letter to the editor, criticized Naipaul for his disengaged tone and for spreading doom and gloom (Jones 1970).

report for a publisher and he did not recommend the book for translation because he failed to notice Naipaul's stylistic craftsmanship and misread his style as simplistic. This means that in his personal post-1989 narrative Sadkowski claims that actual motivations of his critical decisions were purely literary, even if in public he gave them an ideological grounding. After he realised the mistake – so the 2001 autobiographical narrative goes – he worked hard to improve Naipaul's image in Poland by disguising him as an engaged expatriate and thus managed to dupe the system and get him published (Sadkowski 2001).

In 2001 Sadkowski even expresses disapproval of leftist policing of Naipaul. He actually begins his article by agreeing with a quote from the former émigré Mrozek, who bitterly complains about the stigma the international left attached to Naipaul: this highlights the U-turn in Sadkowski's public stance, given the profound differences between Mrozek's and Sadkowski's positions before 1989. Sadkowski's claims that smuggling Naipaul and other good writers past communist gatekeepers was his lifelong activity met with some protest and disbelief.¹⁴⁸ Whatever Sadkowski's actual motivations, his judgements on the (waning) exoticism in Naipaul's work may have influenced Naipaul's presence in Poland.

Critique of Exoticism Revisited

Strong criticism of the exotic returns after the year 2000. I will look at two reviews of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, a humorous but unadorned portrait of social injustice perpetrated in modern India, featuring a servant who becomes an entrepreneur after murdering his master. Polish reviewers praise the book because it escapes exoticizing stereotypes, which normally help to market India for consumption. For example, Jarosław Adamowski writes, '[Adiga does not] immerse himself in the rich Indian culture or describe exotic landscapes, tastes and smells of the subcontinent, so as to tempt more . . . Western tourists' (2008:22).

Not unlike Sadkowski in his admonition of Naipaul from 1971, Adamowski juxtaposes the façade of exoticising marketing and the core of social realities: '[Instead], Adiga chose to look at the social relationships in the "world's largest

¹⁴⁸ Sadkowski's autobiography was undermined as self-aggrandizing and inaccurate (Mentzel 1998). Joanna Siedlecka, who researched communist secret police files to reveal invigilation of writers, showed Sadkowski as a secret police agent, who zealously informed on literary colleagues and jumped on the bandwagon of anti-communism after 1989 (Siedlecka 2007; Siedlecka 2008). Sadkowski, supported by two colleagues, denied the accusations (Sadkowski et al. 2007).

democracy”, whose complexity we know so little about in the West’ (ibid.). Another reviewer writes, ‘This is the real India, not imagined India. This country is still seen in the West, but also by the local middle and upper class, through a rosy glass of mysticism’ (Ratajczak 2009:124). Although Adamowski and Ratajczak do not mean to convert anyone to communism, and in that sense are an epoch apart from Sadkowski, these post-2000 reviewers are sensitive to connection between exoticizing representation and capitalist exploitation, and critical of the ways in which an exotic lens obscures social injustice.

The reviewers appreciate Adiga’s style as distinctly non-exoticizing and his topic as socially significant but they realise that being an upper class cosmopolitan and writing in English for an international audience, he inevitably enters a circuit which may be inherently exoticizing. Ratajczak notes an ambivalence that marks Adiga’s position *vis-à-vis* his topic, pointing out that the construction of the protagonist can only reflect how an educated well-off man imagines what it means to be a pauper (ibid.). He also mentions that having lived and studied mostly abroad, Adiga could have fallen into the trap of describing India from a foreign and simplistic viewpoint. Yet, Ratajczak argues, Adiga actually uses his perspective of both an insider and a tourist in his own country in productive ways.

Ratajczak suggests that due to his position and his international target audience Adiga cannot fully discard the optics of rosy exoticism but he achieves a critical outlook nonetheless. This suggestion is not dissimilar to Huggan’s reading of contemporary, renowned Indian authors writing in English. Huggan argues that Rushdie and Roy manage to subvert exoticizing models even when they inevitably participate in global circulation of financial and symbolic capital. According to Huggan, the tension between resistant impulses to ‘work toward the dissolution of imperial epistemologies and institutional structures’ and assimilative tendencies to participate in global markets, ‘[capitalising on] circulation of ideas about cultural otherness and . . . trafficking of culturally “othered” artifacts and goods’ concerns not only Indian authors but rests at the heart of much postcolonial literature and scholarship (2001:28). Huggan addresses this tension through the concept of the ‘postcolonial exotic’, where ‘exoticism’ implies not just a style, narrative mode or choice of material but ‘a kind of semiotic circuit which oscillates between the opposite poles of strangeness and familiarity’ (ibid.:13). Postcolonial (self-)representation, being a type of writing about ‘strange’ lands, functions in a

similar way to the tourism industry, folk arts market and souvenirs trade because it enters the circuit of capital.

The comparison of postcolonial literature and exotic souvenirs was prominent in Sadkowski's dismissal of Naipaul's novel, which served communist propaganda and offered critique of capitalism. Huggan and some of the Polish reviewers of Adiga, writing in the first decade of the twenty-first century, also criticize capitalism but they do not see communism, or any other system, as an alternative. Huggan notes that within postcolonial studies there is tension between, generally speaking, Marxist and poststructuralist theories, which can be mapped onto the goals of, respectively, 'political activism and cultural critique' (ibid.:261). He treats these tensions as constitutive of the field and, unlike the critics who radically oppose capitalism, he concludes that the field should strive to bring 'productive destabilisation and welcome change' within the existing system (ibid.:262). Like Ratajczak, who praises Adiga's unique perspective of both an insider and tourist in India, Huggan suggests that postcolonial authors and scholars, who try to represent an insider's perspective but inhabit exoticizing structures of capitalism, can use their peculiar, ambivalent position to criticize capitalism from within.

Longing for Colour in Communism

Vicarious journey, imaginary retreat, exotic escape: these motifs and motivations, typically appearing in pre-1989 reviews, do imply a self-serving perception of non-Western lands as a backdrop for European activities, but also signal a sense of isolation and containment of Poland's citizens. For instance, a review entitled 'Twenty-One Colourful Elephants', which deals with a collection of twenty-one Indian short stories, is based on the simile that each story is like a colourful elephant, taking the reader for an exotic journey to India (Zieliński 1974). The reviewer, Stanisław Zieliński, writes at length about his youth dreams to see India with his own eyes. After his dream came true and he visited India as a member of a Polish delegation for a literary event (cultural exchange between the non-aligned India and communist countries was relatively lively), he recommends the short stories as valuable preparation, or at least substitution, for an Indian journey. Zieliński's text does not in any way allude to Polish colourlessness but it encapsulates the idea that literature can be a vehicle transporting readers into colourful lands.

It is no accident that the elephants from Zieliński's review title are *colourful* given that the reality of the PRL, or People's Republic of Poland, was proverbially grey: resources were scarce, life mediocre, perspectives limited. The 'greyness' was often juxtaposed with the extravaganza of colours which symbolized the West, a place of bounty and beauty. Exotic lands were also envisaged as extraordinary sights, not a consumer's paradise but a natural Eden, sparkling with colours: foliage in all shades of green, many-hued plants, tropical animals and natives with colourfully painted faces and costumes. It is worth remembering that the allure of words and the power of imagination must have been stronger before the heyday of image culture, i.e. without Google Images, digital photography, colour TV or even glossy albums and guides.

An evocative, retrospective account of the desire to escape from mundane Poland to an exotic *elsewhere* can be found in a 2011 conversation with the author Joanna Bator. Talking loosely about her reading experiences, Bator remembers two formative books of her youth: an Italian cookery book and a coffee-table book about sculptures from ancient India, both lavishly illustrated and enticingly exotic. She recollects the contrast between, on the one hand, her coarse and dreary surroundings – concrete bloc flat, 'late Gierek' style furniture and so on – and, on the other hand, the sheer magic of *antipasti*, *lasagne* and *Kamasutra*. 'It is through those books that my desire for other tastes and desire for travel were born', Bator confesses (2011).

An illustrated coffee-table book from Bator's anecdote was a treat because the communist economy was at times incapable of providing people with bare essentials, so colour images were considered a luxury. The shortage and demand for exotic images may explain why pre-1989 reviewers of postcolonial literature make enthusiastic remarks whenever a translation is published with illustrations or other visual materials, e.g. reproductions of African masks (Piłaszewicz 1981:400; Zwierz 1984). Besides, the *Kontynenty* monthly, which featured Africa, Asia and Latin America and appeared between 1964 and 1991, was popular partly thanks to its large colour photographs printed on paper of decent quality. In the editorial of the 20th-anniversary issue, the editor outlines the development of the periodical: he stresses that the circulation was around 25% higher when *Kontynenty* received rations of good quality paper and could afford to print large format photos in colour and that sales went down when the magazine had to be printed on grey paper with fewer pictures (Onichimowski 1984).

The background information sketched in the pre-1989 close readings suggests that postcolonial literature played a peculiar role in the PRL because it catered for a number of needs, including the party's ideological agendas (evident in the critiques of exoticism) and Poles' longings for escapist exoticism. I find a similar observation about the roles of Polish translations of Latin American literature before 1989 in Gaszyńska-Magiera's study of the reception of Latin American literature in Poland, mentioned in Chapter Four. She writes that reviewers and publishers often capitalized on the social-political contents of the translations; at the same time, both reviewers and readers often indicated that they were attracted by the exoticism (2011:136-44,243). Overall, I am not trying to justify exoticization of postcolonial peoples by outlining the sense of isolation in communist Poland but I do think that this observation contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Discourse of Exoticism: Developments (1970–2010)

I shall now sketch the developments of the discourse of exoticism in the four decades, demonstrating, generally, that the number of approving references to exoticism fell between 1970s and 1990 and remained at a similar level from 1990 to 2010. At the same time, critique of exoticism was at its strongest also in the 1970s, to gradually disappear by the 1990s and resurface after the year 2000.

Compared to other decades, the 1970s abound in references to exoticism as a literary technique and marker of geo-cultural otherness: most of them signal approval or uncritical acknowledgement, although criticism of 'exoticization' as an imperialistic misrepresentation of the third world is relatively frequent too. The approving references appeared in about 15% of the reviews, i.e. more or less as often as universalist discourses (excluding the discourse of modernity – for details please see the following chapter) and more frequently than discourses of mystery and barbarity (which, as stated earlier, figured in about 10% of the reviews). The approving comments present the 'exotic' as something appealing, new and thrilling, e.g.: '[Africa's writing] attracts European readers by its exoticism and freshness' (R.G. 1973). One reviewer states that Elechi Amadi's *Piękna Ihuoma* (*The Concubine*), is such a poor book that 'even the exotic scenery does not help' (Sowińska 1972), while a reviewer of Ahmadou Kourouma's novel favourably comments on changing the title *Les soleils des indépendances* into a much longer

title *Fama Dumbuya najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu* (Fama Dumbuya the Truest, Dumbuya on a White Horse): ‘It sounds great, exciting and, for us, exotic’ (Bugajski 1976).

However, critique of exoticism constitutes a significant counter-discourse, surfacing in about 10% of all reviews in the decade. As suggested in the close readings, the critics imply that exoticism privileges a thin façade of pseudo-cultural otherness at the cost of a more thorough involvement with actual places and people. For example, Bugajski’s enthusiasm for the exotic-sounding title *Fama Dumbuya najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu* can be compared with Bohdan Czeszko’s criticism: ‘The publisher decided to frighten us a little with the black folk, which is a common practice in publishing African authors . . . The publisher simply thinks that the book will sell better if the title emanates exoticism’ (1976:26). Czeszko thus stresses that exoticizing representations are created to meet the demand of consumers for exotic goods.

Criticism of exoticizing representations often comes from reviewers who have significant interest in postcolonial countries and literature. This is true of the reviewers mentioned above: Czeszko was a Polish writer and a self-declared enthusiast of Africa (Czeszko 1976), while Sadkowski was the editor-in-chief of the world literature magazine *Literatura na Świecie* between 1972 and 1993, and regularly wrote about Anglophone postcolonial authors. Reviewers with academic knowledge of postcolonial countries object to exoticizing readings, too. For instance, the Africanist and translator Ernestyna Skurjat wrote in her review of Ousmane Sembere’s *Xala* that Polish readers prefer books on traditional Africa, which fascinate them with exoticism and otherness but refuse to read about contemporary Africa (1978:23; see also Piłaszewicz 1989). Thus, speaking from a position of expertise, Skurjat urges readers to go beyond mere exoticism in reading African literature.

In the 1980s the number of positive mentions of exoticism decreases (from fifteen to ten per cent); so does the amount of criticism (from ten to about three per cent). The approving references include an idea that reading about exotic places offers vicarious travelling or imaginary retreat. A review of a Nigerian novel by Timothy Aluko, for example, opens with the promise: ‘some books offer a journey which is exotic for most readers’ (Tom 1987). Books are also deemed a retreat for the imagination, e.g. one reviewer of Soyinka remembers that in his childhood games

the rhyming words *Afryka dzika* ('wild Africa') 'were a sort of magic charm, synonym of adventure and mystery', adding that the imagined Africa had that appeal because of the adventure books he used to devour (Jodłowski 1987a). These examples have a mildly exoticizing effect because they evoke a Eurocentric tradition of using other lands as a backdrop for European travels and adventures.

Reviewers also praise authors who, in their view, avoid reductive exoticization: 'Soyinka is not a tribal or exotic author. He is not one to be put in a *Cepelia* [folk arts and crafts store]' (Pieczara 1986) or, 'Unlike some of his fellow writers, [Narayan] does not try to win readers over with exoticism. The cultural setting is naturally embedded in the narrative, . . . it is not there for the sake of a foreign reader' (P.L. 1988). The examples still feature the pejorative vocabulary of commodification and trading in otherness.

In the 1990s the number of references to exoticism falls to about five per cent (in comparison to ten per cent in the 1980s and fifteen per cent in the 1970s). Reviewers approvingly note an exotic component in books by Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy, among others: '[*Midnight's Children* shows India as] heterogeneous, multifaceted and completely exotic (from the Polish perspective)' (Florczak 1990:59) or, '[*The God of Small Things*] is set in a place as exotic as India and as grey, bourgeois and boring as a small town in Kerala' (Sobala 1998). Exoticism is much less often depicted as vicarious travelling and retreat from reality

One possible explanation for the shrinking presence of 'exoticism' in the reviews in the 1980s and 1990s is that foreign countries were becoming more familiar and hence less exotic, if 'exoticism' be understood as oscillation between strangeness and familiarity (Huggan 2001:13). The familiarity could be an effect of knowledge – Tzvetan Todorov writes that 'knowledge is incompatible with exoticism' (Todorov 1993:265; quoted in Huggan 1994:186) – and knowledge of postcolonial countries may have grown thanks to an easier access to a variety of representations and media that flood Polish market after the advent of capitalism. For example, information became available from cable TV, films circulated by video rentals and pirate networks, as well as a plethora of book publications. However, it is unlikely that the information should really render postcolonial places utterly familiar in such a short time and neutralize their centuries-long 'exotic' position, especially since the informative products are imported from the West and are often exoticizing themselves.

I suggested a connection between the thirst for exoticism and the isolation and mediocrity of the PRL era: the post-1989 decline of exoticizing commentary in the reviews of postcolonial literature could be associated with the advent of a more 'colourful' consumerist landscape and the opening of borders. However, first, the transformation was not so rosy, as the alluring products and offers were not necessarily affordable. Second, if exoticism is an externalization of one's fantasies, then one continues to designate someplace else as exotic, no matter how much one's own situation improves.

Because before 1989 the offer of books (and many other products) was relatively modest, postcolonial literature was an important aid in imagining postcolonial countries; this changed after 1989. On a societal level, there may have been a shift of interest in exoticism from postcolonial literature onto newly-introduced products with a strong exoticizing and commercial potential, such as popular literature with 'exotic' settings. For example, twenty-seven books by Wilbur Smith, a popular adventure author using African settings, were translated in the 1990s and nearly all of them were republished on average twice in the late 1990s and/or early 2000s (E. Krajewska & Konieczniak 2009).

Interestingly, very few criticisms of exoticism appeared in the 1990s (only in 1–2% of the reviews) and when they did appear, the criticisms concerned tensions between literary quality, writing fashions and market demands, rather than larger, politicized issues of representation. For example, in a review entitled 'Postmodern Logorrhea' the reviewer criticizes Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* as verbose concoction, cleverly prepared to cater for fashionable literary tastes, including the taste for exoticism: '[The plot] is dressed with a liberal serving of hot Indian curry, made for this purpose of a big portion of exoticism, extraordinary sex and a certain number of ghosts' (Skrok 1998:58). The criticism is directed at Rushdie as an artist and, possibly, at book market mechanisms, but not so much at Rushdie as a representative of Indian people, responsible for addressing their 'real' problems.

As I noted in Chapter Four on knowledge, Czapliński observes that politicized readings of literature were generally unwelcome in the 1990s. The change is visible in the literary criticism of Sadkowski, who employed a markedly Marxist critical idiom in his reviews from before 1989 but not in his post-1989 literary criticism. As stated in Chapter Two, I am not trying to retrieve personal motivations of reviewers but Sadkowski's case underscores a correlation between ideological systems and the

discourses the systems allow and favour. It seems that the Marxist idiom that facilitated critiques of exoticization in the 1970s and 1980s is not available in the 1990s, neither are there any alternative, acceptable discourses for expressing an anti-exoticizing stance.

In the decade 2000–2010 the level of approving references to exoticism is very similar to the level from the 1990s (around five per cent). This would suggest that the decline in exoticizing perception does not necessarily correlate with a growing access to a variety of representations and media. Even though in the 2000s the range of representations continues to grow, notably with the popularity of the Internet, references to the exotic in the reviews of postcolonial books do not become noticeably rarer. This may suggest that after popular exoticizing products became widely accessible on the market and, possibly, took over the role of primary provider of exotic escapism, the interest in exoticism that was still associated with postcolonial literature became stabilized, at least for two decades.

Examples of reviews which treat exoticism as an asset include the following three passages: first, in a review of Tahar Ben Jelloun's *To oślepiające, nieobecne światło* (*Cette aveuglante absence de lumière*) the setting is described thus, 'the underground prison Tazmamart, physical tortures and spiritual struggles of the inmates come from an exotic Moroccan world, a desert land of scorpions and Qur'anic suras' (Wilk 2008a). Another example is a positive comment on Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* sent in by a reader participating in the newspaper's poll on a favourite book: 'I vote for *Kroniki abisyńskie* by Moses Isegawa. Exoticism, engaging language and mysteries of Africa, of which only some of which [sic!] Kapuściński discovered for us, like Isegawa' (Arbaszewski 2001). Another relevant example comes from a review of Waris Dirie's confessional memoir *Córka nomadów* (*Desert Dawn*): 'It is about the authenticity of experience, which is attractive in its exoticism like *The Arabian Nights*, even if [Dirie] does not talk about sultan's palaces . . . but about a makeshift shelter made of mats' (Karpińska 2003). These and other positive references to exoticism often point to an existing reservoir of exotic imagery, such as *The Arabian Nights*.

Critiques of exoticism as an ethically dubious representation strategy regain visibility in the 2000s, although their number remains under five per cent of the reviews. As shown earlier, Adiga's *The White Tiger* is welcomed as departure from exoticizing depictions of India. Another example: Paweł Zajas praises Athol

Fugard's novel *Tsotsi* for its 'authentic communication', which does not seek to conform to Western literary tastes and stereotypical images of Africa. He also criticizes a 2005 film adaptation by Gavin Hood for its Hollywood-style appropriation of the novel's message and for reducing the South African specificity to an attractive prop. He writes that the film uses South African exoticism as a colourful backdrop (Zajas 2006; for critical comments on exoticism see also: Szwedowicz 2007; 2008; Fuzowski 2008).

After the discursive void caused by a backlash against Marxist criticism in the 1990s, the decade 2000–2010 witnesses a return of critical vocabulary of Marxist provenance, possibly filtered through contemporary postcolonial vocabulary.

Concluding Remarks

As this chapter demonstrates, discourses of difference are present in Polish reviews of postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010, which suggests that Polish reviewers and, insofar as the discourses correspond with grids of collective imagination, a wider Polish public perceive authors and peoples from postcolonial countries as different to them. The difference is expressed through discourses that undermine the rationality of others, representing them as mysterious (existing in a non-historical order that is impenetrable to reason) and barbarian (lurking at the opposite end of civilization), and discourses of exoticism, which envisage distant places as pure externality (instrumental in enjoying a break or broadening one's horizons). Boundaries between these discourses are blurry; in particular, the perception of mysteriousness implies awe, which can border, on the one hand, on terror and the perception of barbarity and, on the other hand, on fascination and the perception of exoticism.

As shown in the case studies section, the discourses of irrationality and mystery are informed by time-honoured canonical texts, for example Krzemiński intertextually refers to a biblical line, while Ulman, Zaworska and Wróbel draw on Conrad. I find examples of these discourses in all the four decades, which suggests that they are deeply ingrained in Polish perceptions and were not treated as detrimental to representing the third world by communist censors. The use of these discourses is steadily decreasing, which might suggest that the notions are beginning to appear problematic as postcolonial critiques of othering are gaining ground, although the change may also correlate with the type of reviewed publications (the

earlier books dealt with traditional settings and rituals more often than the later ones, focusing on migration and modernization).

The examples of the discourse of barbarity include Skalmowski's reflection on the opposing forces of civilization and barbarity, as well as a number of references to the incommensurability of the West and Islam, occasioned mostly by the *fatwa* against Rushdie and Naipaul's Nobel Prize in the wake of September 11th. Many of these are textbook examples of Orientalist thinking, phrased in terms of a 'clash of civilizations'. Before 1989 this discourse appeared in an emigration magazine, because, unlike the discourse of mystery, it was incompatible with the communist policy on third world countries. It also allowed the émigré critics to express a sense of civilizational divide between the West and 'Asia', the latter signifying Russia. After 1989 condemnation of barbarity entered the official Polish press. However, this discourse is also challenged by reviewers, often through tools of postcolonial criticism.

Some instances of gender and sexual othering can be found in all the decades, although after the year 2000 explicit criticism of gender othering appears too. Early postcolonial literature (especially from the 1960s and 1970s) and, consequently, most of the postcolonial literature translated into Polish until approximately the 1990s was dominated by male authors and abounded in male protagonists,¹⁴⁹ which generally means that the texts themselves were unlikely to feature women's viewpoints and directly invite gender-related responses. Still, dearth of such responses also indicates that the predominantly male perspectives would have been accepted as universal. In the 1990s and 2000s numerous female authors who have woven issues of gender and sexuality into their plots were translated into Polish, including Jamaica Kincaid, Arundhati Roy and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Nevertheless, their work very rarely inspired discussions about gender and sexuality, which further confirms that not many reviewers have been sensitized to gender issues and, perhaps, that the issues are not very high on the agenda in the Polish public sphere in general.

Positive references to exoticism appear more often during communism, when they may mark a desire for escape from a mundane existence. They are rarer, if rather constant, after 1989, possibly because the sense of geographical and cognitive distance decreases as capitalism and technology provide greater mobility and global

¹⁴⁹ Nadine Gordimer was one of the few female postcolonial authors translated into Polish before 1989 but the translated novels, *The Conservationist* and *The Guest of Honour*, feature male main protagonists.

connectedness or because interest in the exotic is transferred onto more popular and exoticizing products. Critiques of exoticization as a smokescreen for social ills are strong under communism and seem to reappear after in the 2000s, possibly on the tide of postcolonial criticism and new leftist criticism in Poland.

As these developments indicate, the perception of others is inextricably bound up with the perception and position of the self. Here perceptions of postcolonial people are related to the reviewers' self-perceptions, typically as representatives of Poland, or rather a vision of Poland to which they and their circles subscribe. To highlight a few crucial examples, before 1989 some on-message reviewers write about the third world in a solidary but patronizing fashion from the perspective of communist Poland (e.g. Sadkowski calling on the Caribbean to embark on the path to communism) or stigmatize the otherness of postcolonial people and reassert Poland's belonging to Europe (e.g. Bojarska's provocative "'Them' means Africa, 'Us' means Europe'). Émigré critics scorn non-Western barbarity, identifying themselves with the West and worrying about Poland's proneness to Asiatic influence. After 1989 reviewers see postcolonial countries as different, adopting the perspective of Europe (as before 1989), as well as 'the West', which was not possible in the official communist press; e.g. Adamowski welcomes Adiga's book on India's problems because 'we know so little about [India] in the West' (2008:22). With more plurality in the post-1989 media, the perceptions are linked to reviewers' positions on Poland's political scene, e.g. enthusiasm for Naipaul as a crusader against political correctness comes from the right (e.g. from Mrożek), while a more distanced attitude appears on the left (e.g. from Dunin). Intricate differences in critics' agendas are also evident in various responses to the 'Rushdie affair'.

To recapitulate the overall trends, exoticizing and othering discourses were more frequent in the 1970s (appearing in, respectively, 15% and nearly 10% of the reviews), and in the 1980s, when both discourses figured in about 10% of the reviews. In the following two decades their usage declined to about 5% (and under 5% in the case of 'mystery and barbarity' in the 2000s). Criticism of exoticizing discourses registered in the 1970s, when it resonated with an official anti-imperialist stance, and then, to some extent, after the year 2000; 'mystery' and 'barbarity' were also critiqued in the 2000s, which coincided with a growing popularity of postcolonialism in Polish academia. All in all, in quantitative terms othering and

exoticizing discourses appearing in the reviews of postcolonial literature seem to be declining, while their criticism is on the rise.

Returning to the opening science-fiction quote, in which degrees of exclusion are neatly ordered and legitimized with dictionary definitions, I can say that postcolonial otherness is also predicated on exclusion: through discourses of difference postcolonial peoples are excluded from a community founded on rationalism and civil virtues, and labelled as enigmas, barbarians, exotics, etc., instead. Card's novel *The Speaker of the Dead* ends well, as the similarity between humans and the species of Piggies is understood and violence is avoided. The analogy between my material and the dramatic science-fiction scenario is obviously to be taken with a liberal dose of salt but the effort at seeing similarity and dissolving perceived otherness is something I address in the following chapters. Chapter Six deals with the discourses of universalism.

Chapter Six: Discourses of Universalism

Build bridges between human beings.

Needless to say, *drawbridges*.¹⁵⁰

/Stanisław Jerzy Lec/

Stanisław Jerzy Lec was one of Poland's best post-war aphorists. The aphorism quoted above may be read as a warning from a man who experienced the turmoil of the twentieth century first hand or a comment on interpersonal relationships in a totalitarian society, or, indeed, an abstract observation on human nature. My reason for introducing the quote is that it seems to invite a universalist gesture of connecting with others and including them in one's group, at the same time stating that such connections may need to be suspended. Lec thus captures the tension between universalist and particularist politics, collective and individualist impulses, and inclusive and exclusive processes, which are discussed in this chapter.

This chapter discusses the discourses of universalism found in the Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010. If the previous chapter demonstrated that the Polish reviewers classify postcolonial peoples as 'others', this chapter documents attempts at bridging the difference with the help of overarching, universal categories. The categories include a shared humanity, which is evoked through reference to the imponderables of life and proximity of other cultures, a common modernity, which unites all the peoples facing modern problems, as well as progress, which is seen as a route to future equality and emancipation. The chapter shows that universal identification coexists with particular identifications and although in theory the general subsumes the particular, in practice the relationship seems more dynamic, contextualized and hedged around with specific conditions. In particular, there is the condition that to be admitted into a universal category others must reach a desired stage of progress.

I begin the chapter by introducing the ideas that inform my analysis of reviews: firstly, the Enlightenment idea of universalism and its postcolonial critiques,

¹⁵⁰ 'Budujcie mosty od człowieka do człowieka, oczywiście zwodzone', from *Myśli Nieuczesane*. Source: <<http://ecytaty.pl/autorzy/1/stanislaw-jerzy-lec/budujcie-mosty-od-czlowieka-do.html>> (last accessed 20 August 2012).

secondly, selected views on the inclusive and exclusive potential of modernity, with particular reference to the discourse of progress. After, I present close readings of six suggestive and symptomatic reviews. Finally, I provide an overview of the development of the relevant discourses in the successive decades between 1970 and 2010.

The Enlightenment vision of universalism was generally predicated on the idea that morality, religion, science, aesthetics, politics, etc. were grounded in natural, universal principles, which humans could discover thanks to their rational faculties (Bristow 2011). The universal principles were supposed to unify all races and cultures comprising humankind. Yet, according to Simon During, Enlightenment universalism ‘assumes all human beings to be equal in so far as they are led by the light of reason and no further’ (1987:36). Indeed, Western Europe was seen as the epitome of reason and hence as ‘more equal’, to use an Orwellian expression, than others. Universal humanity was a future ideal, to be fulfilled by civilizing, educating and enlightening the ‘backward’ peoples, rather than a valid declaration of current equality.

According to Warren Montag, prominent Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau envisaged a universal humanity but they saw it as internally stratified, down to ‘the periphery of the species beyond which the universal no longer applies’ (1997:286–87). For example, Locke suggested that the individuals who renounce reason by committing crimes against life or property might be excluded from the category of universal humanity and deprived of their rights. Montag believes that although in theory non-Western peoples were recognized as fellow human beings, their humanity could be undermined due to their irrationality, barbarity or backwardness.

The postcolonial criticism of universalism is first and foremost a criticism of the discriminatory practices carried out under the banner of universalism but in glaring contrast to its actual precepts. As Chinua Achebe puts it, the word ‘universal’ has been misused ‘as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe’ (2006). The misuse exposed, ‘universalism’ was scrutinized by postcolonial critics. For example, the editors of *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* introduce the ‘Universalism and Difference’ section by dismissing the concept of ‘universalism’ as ‘th[e] notion of a unitary and homogeneous human nature which marginalizes . . . the difference . . . of post-colonial societies’ (Ashcroft et al. 2006:71).

Another example is Gayatri Spivak's attempt to pinpoint the Eurocentric legacy of the Western philosophical tools in order to adapt them for postcolonial analysis; in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* she is preoccupied with the German philosophical tradition, including Kant, Hegel and Marx, which 'produced authoritative "universal" narratives where the subject remained unmistakably European' (Spivak 1999:8–9). She goes on to, in Stephen Morton's words, 'scrutinize Kant's universal principles by questioning the ethnocentric assumptions that underpins Kant's subject of Enlightenment humanism' (2007:140). A similar project is undertaken by Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Provincializing Europe*, where he claims that '[p]ostcolonial scholarship is committed . . . to engaging with the universals – such as the abstract figure of the human or that of Reason – that were forged in eighteenth-century Europe'. He notes that some ideas of the European political modernity, e.g. citizenship, democracy or social justice, were used by anti-colonial leaders against Europeans, who abused the very ideas, and his project is to further reclaim the ideas as 'global heritage' (2000:4–5).

While the misuse of 'universalism' is widely criticized, postcolonial thinkers do not reject the idea of a properly inclusive universalism altogether. Kwame Appiah notes that critics of universalism tend to use the term 'as if it meant *pseudouniversalism*' and, in fact, object to Eurocentrism paraded as universalism (1992:58; quoted in Hogan 2000:xvi). One outspoken advocate of a reappraisal of universalism is Patrick Hogan, who believes that universalism has been confused with absolutism (a belief that one culturally specific worldview and lifestyle applies to all humans) and projection (taking for granted that all humans think in the same way we do). Yet, universalism actually 'involves a self-conscious effort to understand precisely what is common across different cultures' and enables appreciation for different cultural instantiations of shared human values (2000: xv–xviii). Thus, for Hogan, universalism is not adverse to difference but compatible with it. He names a number of prominent anti-colonial and postcolonial thinkers who criticize abuses of the term but still opt for universalism or humanism: Rabindranath Tagore, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Aijaz Ahmad.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ The works Hogan references are Tagore's *Gora* (1910), Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961), Said's article 'Bookless in Gaza' (1996), Ngũgĩ's *Moving the Centre* (1993) and Ahmad's *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1994).

That universalism may be making a comeback at the turn of millennia is also the argument of Joel S. Kahn; Kahn's evidence includes a praise of 'our common humanity' by Salman Rushdie (1998; quoted in Kahn 2001:2), defence of 'universal human rights' against cultural relativism in anthropology and advocacy of the idea of universal citizenship in the form of 'civic nationalism' by Jürgen Habermas (echoed, according to Kahn, by politicians and political commentators in France, USA, Britain and Malaysia) (Kahn 2001:2–5).

Kahn in fact writes about *modern* universality, discussing links between modernity and both inclusion and exclusion: this topic proves influential for my study. Needless to say, the topic is far too complex for a proper coverage here, so I limit myself to a few main points. As far as a general definition of modernity is concerned, Anthony Giddens points to industrialization and capitalism as the distinctive markers of modernity and to the nation-state as its paradigmatic social institution. He also stresses the importance of two phenomena: the separation of time and space (through standardized dating system and the mechanical clock, which allowed 'precise coordination of the actions of many human beings being physically absent from one another') and the disembedding of social systems, i.e. removing 'social relations from local contexts and their rearticulation across indefinite tracts of time-space' through symbolic tokens, such as money, and expert systems, such as engineering or sociology (Giddens 1990:16–29). He locates the beginning of modernity in post-feudal Europe, noting that in the twentieth century its 'world-historical' impact has increased (1991:15).

The question whether modernity is a uniquely Western phenomenon is a hotly debated one. Giddens answers to it 'yes and no': *yes*, in so far as the modern organisational complexes, the nation state and capitalist production, did develop in the West, and *no* in the sense that globalization, a fundamental consequence of modernity, involves many types of 'cultural responses' to modern institutions (1990: 174–75). Some scholars capitalize on the plural ways in which modernity emerges outside the West and advocate studying multiple modernities (e.g. Ichijo 2011; Taylor 2004), parallel modernities (e.g Kahn:14–16) or alternative modernities (e.g. Gaonkar 2001). Though not in the plural, the term 'spatial modernity' also aims at highlighting the local character of the modern experience 'through place particularities and place relations'; the concept is used by Alan Dingsdale to account for East European modernity (2001).

While some scholars address modernity in the plural form, the question whether it implies an indigenisation of the Western model or a more independent manifestation of modern phenomena remains moot. According to Chakrabarty, the trend to see various peoples as modern in their own way signals a laudable ‘sentiment of egalitarianism’ of contemporary scholars, but it also poses the risk of obscuring the existing inequalities in education, urbanization and various forms of cultural capital (2011:665–66).

Modernity has been envisaged as an equalizing and emancipatory project, with its universal promise of freedom through human autonomy and of prosperity through mechanization. Without necessarily disregarding some of the modern achievements, critics of modernity claim that it has proved exclusive and destructive. Post-war European thinkers such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and later Zygmunt Bauman, suggest that the Holocaust was a distinctly modern crime, facilitated by the processes of rationalization, bureaucratization and mechanization (I return to this point later). Stuart Hall calls the moment of modernity ‘the point at which the West began to universalize itself [and attempted to] . . . convert the rest of the world into a province of its own forms of life’ (2001:18). Anti-colonial and postcolonial thinkers largely dismiss the arguments of a benevolent civilizing or modernizing mission and claim that the consequences of Western interventions were disastrous for the victims of slave trade and colonialism.

The dynamics of modern exclusion and inclusion can be grasped through reference to the discourse of progressivism (also known as evolutionism, social Darwinism or a comparative scale of civilizations). As Teodor Shanin writes in an essay on the idea of progress, the core concept is that ‘all societies are advancing naturally and consistently “up”, on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance to riches, civilization, democracy and rationality’ (1997:65). The idea is strongly influenced by a Hegelian vision of linear and teleological history.¹⁵² It has had an enormous impact on the Western perceptions of non-Western peoples, because with the Western countries positioned on the top of the scale, other contemporary cultures could be seen as representing earlier stages of civilizational

¹⁵² ‘With his idea of the development of “spirit” in history, Hegel is seen as literalising a way of talking about different cultures in terms of their “spirits,” of constructing a developmental sequence of epochs typical of nineteenth-century ideas of linear historical progress and then enveloping this story of human progress in terms of one about the developing self-conscious of the cosmos-God itself’ (Redding 2012).

and human development. This mechanism was evident, for example, in the nineteenth century anthropological concept of a ‘comparative scale of civilizations’ (Melas 2007:51).

Shanin suggests that the discourse of progress is tied to colonization and to the neo-colonial Western domination. He observes that the discourse ‘interacted powerfully with the “Industrial Revolution” and urbanization, as much as with the spread of colonialism, giving them for a time an almost metaphysical meaning’ (1997:68). He also argues that, adapting to the times, the proponents of the progressivist discourse have used such terms as ‘modernization’, ‘development’ or ‘growth’ and varied the justifications from ‘civilizing mission’ to ‘economic efficiency’, to ‘friendly advice’ (ibid.:66). I want to add that the latter justifications are typical not only of the Western but also the Soviet politics towards the third world.

The progressivist discourse, with its universalist underpinnings, is also compatible with Marxism and the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Soviet bloc. Philosophically, Marxism has often been seen as ‘taking the historical dynamics of the Hegelian picture but reinterpreting this in materialist . . . categories’ (Redding 2012). Regarding universalism, Sidney Hook notes that although Marx critiqued ‘universal’ rights of man associated with the Age of Reason as ‘concealing the economic class interests’ of a bourgeois posing as ‘man’, he did envisage equality for all in a classless society of the future (Hook 1968:93). Some postcolonial critics note that despite the critique of the bourgeois hijacking of ‘universalism’, Marx retained other exclusionary biases of his time. Robert Young writes, ‘Marxism, insofar as it inherits the system of the Hegelian dialectic, is also implicated in . . . a phenomenon that has become known as Eurocentrism’ (2004:33). This is because Marxists considered Europe to be the most advanced in class struggle and expected other continents to re-enact Europe’s socio-economic development.

The progressivist thinking is also retained in Marxism-Leninism, the official ideology of the Soviet bloc, which has a bearing on some of my material. Shanin claims that the ‘Marxism of the Second International and the eventual adoption of a version of it as the obligatory ideology of the Soviet Union shows the overriding nature of the idea of progress, whatever the party politics involved’ (1997:68). Indeed, the party politics under Stalin and beyond did not diminish the importance of progress. Leszek Kołakowski notes that Stalin’s primitive version of Marxism-

Leninism retained the doctrine of historical materialism, with the idea of progress as a succession of five socio-economic phases (1978:100–101). Stalin's ideology was codified in *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course*,¹⁵³ a compulsory reading and a powerful 'instrument of mind control' in the Soviet bloc (ibid.:95). The course glorified Stalin as a progressive leader and the Party-led U.S.S.R. as being at the forefront of historical development.¹⁵⁴

Discourses on Progress and Modernity: Close Readings

In this part of the chapter I offer close readings of reviews which employ the discourses of progressivism and of a shared modernity. I have not encountered reviews which expressed the idea of a shared humanity in abstract terms *and* lent themselves to a longer analysis. Rather, all the abstract references to common humanity seemed relatively brief and as such are mentioned in the narrative of the discursive developments in the last part of the chapter.

Progressivism and Ideological Seniority

Reviews by the communist critic Waclaw Sadkowski exemplify the mechanisms of the progressivist discourse operating within the ideological framework of Marxism-Leninism. As signalled above, Marx is said to have adopted Hegel's teleological vision of history, where progress is marked by a revolutionary progression from one mode of production to another and the goal of history is no less than universal communism. As in a colonial progressivist paradigm, contemporary peoples are seen as fossils of earlier phases of development and the stigma of backwardness is attached to the non-Western populations. In Young's words:

Marxism's universalizing narrative of the unfolding of a rational system of world history is simply a negative form of the history of European imperialism: it was Hegel, after all, who declared that 'Africa has no history', and it was Marx, who, though critical of British imperialism, concluded that the British colonization of India was ultimately for the best

¹⁵³ The Polish version is *Historia Wszechzwiązkowej Komunistycznej Partii (bolszewików): krótki kurs* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1949).

¹⁵⁴ The advancement is expressed, for example, in the depiction of the social classes in the U.S.S.R., which are supposed to have reached an unprecedented level of development: 'it was a working class the like of which the history of mankind had never known before' or, 'It was a peasantry the like of which the history of mankind had never known before' (Commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) (ed.) 1939). Source: <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1939/x01/ch12.htm>> (last accessed 3 April 2013).

because it brought India into the evolutionary narrative of Western history, thus creating the conditions for future class struggle there¹⁵⁵ (2004:33).

The view of a Eurocentric bias of Marxism is common but not unchallenged: August Nimtz (2002) argues that in their later writings Marx and Engels placed more emphasis on revolutionary initiatives outside Western Europe.

One way in which Eurocentrism manifests itself in Marxism-Leninism is through an assumption that while revolutionary potential is universal, Soviet countries are the vanguard and third world countries lag behind. This view is echoed in the pre-1989 literary criticism of Sadkowski. In one article he underscores the universal and humanistic appeal of communism, calling it a means of ‘infusing the forms of the social life with *truly human* meanings’ (1971:1; emphasis added). In addition, he states that the developing countries are still ‘march[ing] forward towards higher forms of social life’ (ibid.), thus implying an assumption of a temporally stratified hierarchy of peoples.

A more elaborate version of the progressivist argument appears in his 1973 review of Nadine Gordimer’s *Gość honorowy (The Guest of Honour)*, in which he analyses her vision of African development from the position of Poland’s ideological seniority. The novel is set in an imaginary African country at the dawn of political independence and shows conflicts between the former liberation movement leaders, who nurture different visions of the country’s future. According to Sadkowski, in the novel Gordimer endorses ‘anti-bureaucratic peasant egalitarianism’, which shows affinities with Maoism, and wrongly criticizes Soviet socialism (1973:340). Orthodox in his distinction between the Soviet and Chinese Communism,¹⁵⁶ Sadkowski warns that she falls prey to indoctrination to which the ‘young’ third world countries are exposed (ibid.). Importantly, he stresses the alleged youth of postcolonial countries, thereby adopting a position of seniority and experience. This position can be inferred, for instance, from a passage in which he magnanimously concedes that Gordimer may be simply ‘unaware’ of her ideological deviations and expresses hope that she will progress ‘to ask penetrating questions’ about ‘the hidden . . . goals of the political and ideological game, which in the eyes of the young . . .

¹⁵⁵ The quotations are referenced by Young as Hegel (1899:99) and Marx (1973:320).

¹⁵⁶ Other reviewers of this novel do not engage in ideological nuance and simply praise the leftist solutions supported in the book (Skurjat 1980b; Mir 1980).

African movements looks like an act of pure and disinterested solidarity' (ibid.) In short, he admonishes Gordimer that to turn towards Maoism would be a false step, resulting from juvenile naivety.

If gullible trust in Maoism is one anomaly in Gordimer's outlook, her distrust of East European socialism is – in Sadkowski's view – another. He is alarmed to see that in Gordimer's novel the most positive and open-minded characters criticize 'certain European societies, which she considers totalitarian, despite basic differences in the political systems' (ibid.). By 'certain societies' Sadkowski must mean East European countries because, like the emerging regime depicted in the novel, they have a bureaucratic totalitarian apparatus and because there is the political difference he mentions, in that Eastern Europe is communist and Gordimer's fictional regime is not. Rejecting her view as misguided, Sadkowski insists that what Maoism falsely promises, Soviet communism can offer: disinterested solidarity and guidance on the way to universal happiness. In addition to being blatant propaganda, it is also patronizing of Sadkowski to insist that to achieve social progress African countries should follow the suit of allegedly more advanced countries such as Poland.

Resentment towards Modernizing Africa

Maria Bojarska's review of Amos Tutuola challenges a paternalistic attitude to African history, but pictures African modernization not as a unifying process but a threat to European civilization. The review was mentioned in Chapter Five because of an antagonistic juxtaposition of the 'rational' European literature and 'irrational' African writing. While the othering view of Africa concludes the whole review, I present it in this chapter on universalism because it contains one of the most outspoken criticisms of the progressivist outlook on Africa in my whole corpus and for a potent moment appears to promise a universalizing conclusion.

In her criticism of the progressivist discourse, Bojarska self-ironically spells out European assumptions about African backwardness: 'we love them as younger brothers. We want to carry powdered milk and penicillin to their little huts. We want to teach them how to give injections and read Montaigne. Because in our heads lingers on *In Desert and Wilderness*' (1984:73). Yet, rather than implying that such a view is othering or downright prejudiced, she insists that it is no longer accurate. Africans, she claims, became technologically advanced: a Tutuola may write novels

untouched by rationality but he does so ‘sipping cold coca-cola, taking out ice from a fridge, watching colour TV, sending messages by telex’ (ibid.). Similarly, a friend of Bojarska from Ivory Coast enjoys all the above, as well as calculators, walkmans and outfits ‘made in London’. In a nutshell, Bojarska mocks treating Africans as ‘petits Nègres’ (ibid.) as anachronistic.

What follows, however, is not a call for universal equality (as one may expect) but a complaint that Africans outdistanced Poles in the technological race, even though Poles are Europeans. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, Bojarska sees European rationalism, manifest in literature and in science, as a source of innovation; she is also convinced that Africans, with their irrationalism, intuition and imagination, cannot have contributed to technological progress. Therefore, she finds it problematic that they consume its achievements, while Poles are not benefitting as much as they deserve. The strongly othering stance stems from a sense of threat: Bojarska prophesizes that African civilization, which retains its robust irrationality and continues to take over the inventions in which Europe invested its energies, may bring about Europe’s downfall.

I think that Bojarska’s exclusionary attitude to Africans as beneficiaries of modernity should be read in the context of her sense of Poland’s exclusion from modern progress. Although she is consistent in using phrases such as ‘our European civilization’ and ‘our European literature’, she reveals the inadequacies of Polish life in the light of a European standard. For instance, after listing the modern amenities that the Ivory Coast friend has daily at her disposal, Bojarska paints a sorry image of herself: timidly queuing for the one available photocopier, drinking her coca-cola warm and (again, after a long wait in a queue) proudly purchasing a hot-dog, which turns out to be a bun with mushrooms. She concludes that it is she, rather than her African friend, who is ‘a Zulu of civilization’¹⁵⁷ (ibid.). Using the name of an African tribe to signify backwardness, Bojarska drives home that there is an established order, which the African modernization upsets.

Bojarska resents Africa’s upward movement on the scale of progress and finds it unfair that Africa, of all places, should have what the ‘civilized’ Poland does not. The image of herself (scarce photocopying opportunities and the curse of warm coca-

¹⁵⁷ Using the ethnic designation ‘Zulus’ as a synonym of backwardness is reminiscent of another common expression, ‘(być) sto lat za Murzynami’, literally ‘(to be) a hundred years behind the blacks’, which the PWN-Oxford bilingual dictionary glosses as offensive and translates as ‘to be backward, primitive; to be in the Stone Age’ (Anon 2006).

cola) is, to my mind, a recognizable image of the late PRL mediocrity, while some of the symbols of the technological and consumerist age she names come from an American dream rather than a Soviet laboratory. Yet, there is no implication in the review that Poles are curtailed-off from their European heritage because of the Soviet domination. The idea that East Europeans and Africans are *both* inhibited in their ‘progress’ by foreign subjugation – to which I return in Chapter Seven – does not appear on the horizon either. Instead, a de-contextualized image of African prosperity is pitted against an image of Polish misery. For all the initial challenge to Eurocentric paternalism, Bojarska does not see progress as a (potentially) unifying force – hers is a vision of a competitive and mutually-exclusive modernization. The following examples show a different view on progress and modernity.

Inclusion into Modernity and Shared Loneliness

A suggestion that the experience of modernity is globally shared and thus inclusive appears in a 1987 article on Nigerian literature by Ewa Bogalska-Czajkowska. She discusses the Nigerian writing published in Polish, emphasizing its focus on the tensions between tradition and modernization. In her view, Wole Soyinka, Cyprian Ekwensi, Obi Egbuna¹⁵⁸ and others cast a critical eye on Westernization, urbanization and modernization (the three being nearly identical in her analysis). The authors’ characters confront the changes, risking alienation from traditional communities. It is this inevitable encroachment of modernity on people’s lives that for her constitutes an experience universal to contemporary peoples around the globe. She concludes: ‘there is no civilizational alternative. In the end *all of us*, black and white, will become citizens of the world and whether the world will be happy is a different matter’ (1987; emphasis added). This suggests that in her view the inevitable and indiscriminate admission to modernity has an inclusive edge to it, even if the modern world may not be ‘happy’.

Bogalska-Czajkowska dwells on the downsides of modernity. Surveying the salient themes of Nigerian writing, she notes that it interrogates the modern promise of freedom for all. On the one hand, it conveys the idea that modernity should bring ‘the right to individual happiness’ to people from all walks of life. On the other hand, it shows that the poor migrate to modernized cities but instead of freedom find corruption and disillusionment. Bogalska-Czajkowska endorses the authors’ view

¹⁵⁸ Egbuna’s writing was included in a short stories collection.

that the possible gains of modernity are overshadowed by the losses: '[t]he new world is coming into being irrespective of our will, it is . . . a reality of our similarity in loneliness, fear of death, hunger and toil of everyday work' (ibid.). The major loss is the loss of social, material and existential certainties – the straitjacket of family, class, religion – that by and large characterized pre-modern traditional lives. At the same time, she stresses that the situation is similar for everyone, thus implying some kind of communal point of reference for individual suffering.

Literary scholars see the anxiety caused by a passage from tradition to modernity as a major theme in Nigerian writing; for instance, Oladele Taiwo discusses the approaches to modernity and tradition in the works of Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Gabriel Okara, to conclude that all the authors note the precarious position of an individual responding to modern pressures: '[a]lthough the customs, conventions and traditional practices of the people are usually criticized, the message seems to be that any individual who defies tradition does so *at his own risk*' (Taiwo 1986:67; emphasis added). Critical distance to both the established tradition and the risk-inducing, non-traditional order marks also, according to another critic, Soyinka's approach. Mpalive-Hangson Msiska believes that 'Soyinka seeks to overcome the dichotomy between tradition and modernity' by advocating a middle ground between the two (Msiska 2007). These critical views coincide with Bogalska-Czajkowska's view of modern alienation and anxiety, captured in Nigerian literature, as a pertinent socio-political issue.

Theoreticians of modernity generally recognize that uncertainty and risk are a possible outcome of the modern emphasis on human autonomy and hence part and parcel of modernity. For example, Giddens writes that in the modern period 'doubt, a pervasive feature of modern critical reason, permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness' (1991:3). He also comments on the experience of modern loneliness, which Bogalska-Czajkowska deems prevalent in Nigerian fiction. Namely, he acknowledges that one widely accepted view of modernity foregrounds loneliness as a chronic modern ailment: 'Modernity, it might be said, breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition . . . The individual feels bereft and alone in a world in which she or he lacks the psychological support and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings' (ibid.:33–34).

Bogalska-Czajkowska treats loneliness and uncertainty as universally experienced aspects of modernity but what does she mean by 'our' when, referring to

the characters of Nigerian fiction, she says, '[their] loneliness is our loneliness'? While I do not see one definitive answer to the question, my reading is that Bogalska-Czajkowska speaks for Poles as participants, but peripheral participants, of the Western civilization. In the article only two 'civilizations' are juxtaposed – the traditional African one and the modern Western one – so by a process of deduction, I assume that Bogalska-Czajkowska identifies with the latter. Yet, she never uses phrases such as 'our European civilization' or otherwise announces Poland's Europeanness (as other reviewers do), while the poignancy of her complaints about the dark sides of modernity may suggest that she feels Poland's modernization to be a recent, or ongoing, and painstaking process.

As a totalitarian (or authoritarian) country with a centralized socialist economy, Poland followed a different modernizing route than the Western countries (Dingsdale 2001:9–10). Contemporary scholars assess the communist Polish industrialization as 'selective, peculiar, unsuccessful and very costly' (Ziółkowski 1999:41–42; see also Kościk & Chumiński 2010:214–15; Leszczyński 2008). All this suggests that the situation in which Bogalska-Czajkowska writes about modernization is likely to have been experienced by her and her contemporaries as a time of a deficient or deviant modernization.

Yet, even though the article signals differences between various modernities, the underlying conceptualization of modernity is that of a single and homogenizing process. Particularly the concluding statement that in the end all people must be citizens of the world suggests that Bogalska-Czajkowska reasons in terms of linear progress towards global modernity and distinguishes not between parallel types, but between consecutive stages of development on the way to full modernity.

If the Polish and Nigerian situations are perceived as different phases of unidirectional development, then it is worth asking how they are supposed to be related to each other. I notice one possible indication in the article that Poland is slightly more advanced, namely: the modern predicaments that Nigerians are facing for the first time are already familiar to the Poles. Nevertheless, unlike the reviews analysed above, this review signals that both Nigeria and, *de facto*, Poland are struggling on the way to modernity and there is similarity in the predicament.

Globalization and Recognition of Similarities

Global-scale modernization is seen as a homogenizing and hence both universalizing and destructive force in a 1999 text on the translation of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. In a review in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Magda Papuzińska heaps praise on Roy's imaginative tale of forbidden love and forbidding History, set in postcolonial Kerala. Papuzińska notes the book's remarkable international success, its artistic quality (comparable with García Márquez) and its lyrical treatment of 'humanity's most shameful and sensitive affairs', such as incest and murder (1999). What is of particular interest to me, she also notes the fact that the attributes of Western (late) modernity are conspicuous in the setting of modernizing or globalizing India.

I propose the alternative terms – modernity or late modernity and modernization or globalization – because the period Papuzińska focuses on, the very end of the 1960s, can be seen as a borderline period. According to some scholars, the economic, socio-political and cultural changes burgeoning in the 1970s and flourishing at the turn of the twentieth century mark the transition to late modernity.¹⁵⁹ Globalization can be understood as a world-wide spread of modernity, enabled by advances in global communication; Dasgupta notes that the term 'global village' was used in the 1960s to capture the growth of communication networks and their impact on local life (2004:16–17). The networks also facilitated export and marketing of products, some of which proved so influential that their brand names became nearly synonymous with globalization, e.g. McDonalidization, referred to as 'one of the motors of globalization' (Ritzer 2004:162), or 'Coca-colization' (used e.g. by: DeVereaux & Griffin 2006). As I show below, Papuzińska talks about the presence of coca-cola and Hollywood films in the 1960s Kerala, which I associate with early globalization.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Terms which are nearly synonymous with 'late modernity' are 'postmodernity' and 'liquid modernity', used by Zygmunt Bauman, or second modernity (Ulrich Beck). One can generally see the changes from modernity to late modernity as a movement from the ideals of industrialized nation-states (stable, life-long jobs and welfare safety nets) and quests for structure and functionality in some branches of art and architecture, towards the prevalence of information technology and the service sector in post-industrial states, free flow of multinational capital, increased professional and geographical mobility of metropolitan elites, as well as self-reflexive gestures of deconstruction, asymmetry and pastiche in the arts.

¹⁶⁰ Globalization can also be viewed as a later process, intensifying in the beginning of the twenty-first century, a 'new phase (and face) of capitalism, or imperialism, or neo-colonialism, or modernization', bound with the growing role of finance capital and information technology (Appadurai 2006:36).

Papuzińska dwells on her experience of recognition, i.e. of coming across familiar Western imagery in what she expected to be a strange Indian landscape. As I noted in the previous chapter, she recollects that an image of India that had existed in her head was peopled with fakirs, starving children and British lieutenants, among others. However, she writes,

Achievements of the world civilization have been added to the pure vision of India (I had): Elvis Pelvis with his pompadour haircut . . . , panoramic cinema screening the American film *The Sound of Music*, plastic pens with pictures of London floating inside, a blue Plymouth and coca-cola (Papuzińska 1999).

This collection – comprising icons of American popular culture, mass-produced souvenir emblems from the fading British empire and automotive or drink industry household names – evokes the world-wide export of Western modernity in the late 1960s (when part of the novel is set). Papuzińska refers to the made-in-the-West modern markers as ‘the achievements of the world civilization’ (ibid.), which suggests that she accepts the global spread of Western culture as a matter of course and grants the culture an unquestioned universal status.

Moreover, she associates the presence of Western culture with her changing perception of India. She says, ‘I discovered, among other things, that the Indians are so similar to all other people. That Western civilization, its idols, its paraphernalia, ruthlessly entered the world of tradition’ (ibid.). The recognition of similarity between Indians and ‘all other people’ (expressed in the first sentence) appears to be linked to the global spread of Western modernity (second sentence), which is treated as a universally relevant point of reference and an antonym of particularist tradition.

The link might be more or less direct, depending on how one interprets the ambiguous, paratactic syntax of the quoted statement: the second sentence may be either an explanatory complement of the first (she discovered that Indians are similar, *that is to say* they function in a familiar modern setting) or an additional observation (she discovered that, *firstly*, Indians are similar and, *secondly*, Indians function in a modern setting). The latter interpretation is, to my mind, less plausible because paratactically joined enumerations without a conjunction typically consist of more than two items. In my estimation, correlation between a sense of similarity and recognition of a modern setting is implied by Papuzińska.

I see the connection there also because I believe that the reviewer herself identifies with Western culture and, in consequence, is likely to treat its markers as familiar signposts in an alien landscape. Like Bogajska-Czajkowska, Papuzińska does not explicitly define her cultural coordinates but the reference to markedly Western cultural products as ‘achievements of world civilization’ indicates that Western culture is seen as a core of a common tradition in which, at least in principle, one wishes to participate.

Another reason for assuming that the review is written from a West-oriented position is that such an orientation is prevalent in post-1989 discourses on Polish self-identity typically disseminated by *Gazeta Wyborcza*. I will quote an apt proof of *Gazeta*’s orientation, which also includes Arundhati Roy. In 1999 *Gazeta* published an interview with Roy, which was conducted in Delhi by Piotr Pacewicz, the vice-editor-in-chief, in the presence of the editor-in-chief, Adam Michnik, and the Polish ambassador in India and journalist, Krzysztof Mroziewicz. All three are influential figures who deal primarily with socio-political issues, rather than professional literary criticism, and are likely to accentuate their worldviews and alliances. Indeed, throughout the interview, Pacewicz speaks from the position of ‘a European’, which leads to interesting polarizations and exchanges, for example:

Pacewicz: ‘We, Europeans, are sometimes accused of . . . being oversaturated with freedom’.

Roy: ‘. . . That West of yours has been exploiting our world since the colonial times, so I find the talk about your problems with freedom a little annoying’ (Roy 1999).

Default identification with the West does not extend to uncritical praise. Papuzińska says that Western modernity ‘entered ruthlessly’ the world of Indian tradition and ‘destroy[ed] it almost as efficiently as the bombs dropped on Vietnam’ (1999). The militaristic simile suggests criticism or at least awareness of a destructive and perhaps even neo-colonial edge of the global expansion of Western models. The discriminatory side of globalization is discussed by some scholars, for example Samir Dasgupta and Kaushik Chattopadhyay note that alongside the apparent blessings of globalization, ‘large-scale deprivation, uncertainty and exploitation have also been the product of globalization for the third world countries’ (2004:189). Similarly, focusing on the experience of migrants in the metropolis, Appadurai points out that while globalization is a ‘positive buzzword’ for global

elites, for the marginalized it is but a ‘source of worry about inclusion [and] jobs’ (2006:35).

Like Bogalska-Czajkowska in 1987, Papuzińska is alert to the negative sides of modernity in 1999. However, while the former indicated that Poland was also afflicted by them (‘their loneliness is our loneliness’), the latter only acknowledges India’s predicaments. I suggested that Bogalska-Czajkowska’s position might have been influenced by her own experience of the difficulties of modernization; Papuzińska does not bring her, or Polish, experiences of this sort into the article, even if, as scholars note, the post-1989 transformation was a bumpy ride.¹⁶¹ Perhaps in 1999 there is more confidence in Poland’s belonging to the West, especially since the country was admitted to NATO shortly before Papuzińska’s review.

Papuzińska identifies with Western modernity, which she calls ‘world civilization’, but she gives no clue as to whether the responsibility for the modern destruction should be collective. The next example touches upon the question of responsibility and guilt.

Ethical Numbing of Modernity

An article by Dariusz Czaja on J.M. Coetzee touches upon the ethical consequences of modernity’s exclusions. The text ends with a statement that since Coetzee exposes the dark sides of modernity and its exclusionary force, his prose is not particularly easy and hence not very popular. It is as if Coetzee held a mirror – Czaja concludes – in which ‘our sad faces show very well and so does the chill in our hearts. And indifference as our signature mark’ (2005:14). A possible interpretation of the conclusion, which I develop in this section, is that those who participate in the project of modernity do not feel any empathy or ethical responsibility for the creatures excluded from the categories ‘modern’ and even ‘human’.

The anthropologist Dariusz Czaja guides his readers – the text appears in the intellectual weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 2005 – through the intricate terrain of

¹⁶¹ According to Marek Ziółkowski, after 1989 Poland attempted a modernizing leap to catch up with the capitalist West. As a result, in post-1989 Poland different phases of modernity were experienced at the same time: the ‘early’ phase of an industrial society, production and free market, the ‘late’ phase of a post-industrial society, growth of services sector, corporations and consumption, and ‘postmodernity’, characterized by a further growth of consumption, media, globalization and individualism. Moreover, these trends interacted with the vestiges of two pre-1989 phases: the pre-communist ‘traditional’ society and the communist society. This diagnosis is generally supported by Piotr Sztompka (Ziółkowski 1999; Sztompka 1999).

Coetzee's prose, highlighting the themes of animal and human suffering in *Elizabeth Costello*, a collection of lectures on animal rights by a fictional Australian author, and *Haïba (Disgrace)*, whose main character witnesses an assault on his daughter and her dog on a post-apartheid South African farm and later volunteers to help putting down dogs from a shelter. Czaja entitles his article 'A Slaughterhouse' and, in keeping with the title, he addresses Coetzee's way of confronting the reader with a rationalized and mechanized, modern annihilation industry.

Although the focus of 'A Slaughterhouse' rests on the modern organized killing of animals, there is an explicit parallel to be drawn with the extermination of people. Czaja reports, first, the passage from *Elizabeth Costello* in which the character likens the meat industry to the Holocaust in her lecture, much to the shock of her audience. Secondly, he analyses a description of the crematorium in which the protagonist of *Disgrace* burns dead dogs – the neatly organized process is called a *Lösung*, which, again, evokes Hitler's Final Solution. The association between the Holocaust (as an organized and mechanized mass atrocity) and modernity was established by Adorno and Horkheimer, to be later elaborated by Bauman, among others: the thrust of the argument is that the execution of the Holocaust was facilitated by the distinctly modern drive towards efficiency, rationalization and bureaucratization.¹⁶² In addition to Costello's explicit comparison, some descriptions in *Disgrace* allude to the relevance of similar mechanisms to the animal killings and thus evoke modern genocide too.

Colonialism can also be conceived of as a *modern* transgression, enabled by modern military, bureaucratic and capitalist mechanisms. Coetzee deals with colonialism and imperialism directly in his first novel *Dusklands* (1974) and indirectly in such acclaimed semi-allegorical pieces as *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) or *Life and Time of Michael K* (1983); the legacy of colonialism and state racism are also relevant to *Disgrace*. Colonialism as a form of modern exclusion can also be brought into the picture by extending the association between modernity and the Nazi genocide to cover colonialism.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 2001). Zygmunt Bauman. *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989).

¹⁶³ In Article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1951) genocide is defined as 'any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the

The orchestrated violence committed during the slave trade and colonialism is compared to the Nazi crimes by the anti-colonial thinker and poet Aimé Césaire. In a 1955 piece Césaire passionately argues that Nazism was but a manifestation of the same cruelty that the European bourgeoisie had long practised on the colonized abroad and on the workers at home. In a sense he even implies a causal connection between the atrocities inflicted in the colonies and in Europe during the war, insisting that colonization leads to decivilizing the colonizer (Césaire 1994). Thus the destructive savagery inhabited Europe before Nazism but Europeans turned a blind eye to it, until it struck against Europeans themselves.¹⁶⁴ A similar argument was made by another anti-colonial thinker, W. E. B. Du Bois in *The World and Africa* (1947) (quoted in Kelley 2012).

In my reading, the slaughterhouse signifies a modern factory of death and it is in this context that I read Czaja's provocative, closing remark that callousness and indifference is a signature mark of Coetzee's readers, 'our signature mark', as he says. Here the only clue as to the reference of the pronoun 'our' is the statement that precedes it, that due to the uneasy messages of Coetzee, his books are not popular with the readers. Given that Czaja is more likely to have an overview of the popularity and circulation of the author in Poland, and indeed he attaches a list of Polish translations to the article, I assume that he refers, at least primarily, to the Polish readers. This would mean that he believes the Polish public to exhibit signs of ethical numbness and deficient empathy towards the mass inflicted human and animal suffering of modern times.

The diagnosis can serve as a springboard for speculating about Czaja's view of Poland's position in the contemporary world. The expectations and pressures of ethical responsibility towards victims of modern transgressions increase in the modern era of unprecedented access to information through mass-media coverage of

group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group' (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; source: <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm>> (last accessed 25 August 2012)). Although it is debatable whether colonialism involves the intention of destroying indigenous groups, some scholars argue that in selected historical cases, particularly of settler colonialism, one is justified to talk about genocide (Moses & Stone (eds) 2007).

¹⁶⁴ Within the analogy Césaire probably includes under 'Nazism' all war crimes, not only the Holocaust, or, if he does mean mainly the Holocaust, he treats Jews as another group of Europeans, leaving aside the fact that anti-Semitism worked to exclude Jews as 'others' on racial and civilizational grounds.

humanitarian disasters, mass atrocities and social injustices. Yet, scholars note that such phenomena as ethical numbing or civil apathy (Wilson 2010) are wide-spread in the societies of the developed West, despite the accessibility of knowledge, or partly *because* of it, due to ‘compassion fatigue’ (Moeller 1999) or ‘psychic numbing’ (Slovic 2007). In addition to the growing reach of mass-media, other changes of the late modernity – e.g. globalization, consumerism and pragmatism of life – are believed to affect the sphere of morality. According to Jan Szmyd, morality is outpaced by civilizational and technological developments, which leads to ‘a certain dullness or numbness of human consciences and moral dilemmas’ (2010:114). Associating Czaja’s comment on the ethical apathy of the Polish public with a distinctly modern, or late modern, phenomenon, brings me to a conclusion that Czaja sees Poles as belonging more or less securely to Western (late) modernity and implies some sort of (repressed) responsibility for the victims of such modern transgressions as colonization, the Holocaust and, from an ecological viewpoint, perhaps also mass meat production.

This is the last of this chapter’s close readings. I have discussed two pre-1989 examples in which the progressivist discourse is applied to assess the ideological and technological development of the third world, as well as three examples, from 1988, 1997 and 2005, featuring the inclusive and exclusive forces of (late) modernity. In the second part of the chapter I offer a more thorough description of all the reviews.

Discourses of Universalism: Developments (1970–2010)

In this part I sketch a larger picture of the universalist discourses appearing in the Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature in the four decades, 1970–2010. I shall distinguish between three discourses: the discourse of a shared humanity, which features no less than the imponderables of life and often envisages similarity in terms of proximity; the discourse on modernity, which anchors its claim to universalism not in a de-historicized notion of common humanity but in a temporally defined, globally shared experience of modernity; and the discourse of progressivism, which presupposes the ideal of universal humanity but defers its emergence. I do not observe conspicuous changes in the four decades, except for the

gradual disappearance of the discourse of progressivism, although references to universalism occur slightly less often in the 1990s and 2000s than in the preceding two decades.

1970–1979

According to my calculations, in the 1970s universalist statements appeared in about fifteen per cent of the reviews, while references to modernity with (potential) progressivist underpinnings were used in about five per cent of the texts. In a number of reviews in the 1970s the interplay between similarity and difference is expressed in terms of proximity: for example a reviewer of Narayan's prose entitles his text 'Far and Yet Close', while a review of Soyinka's *The Interpreters* entitled 'Nigeria is closer' ends with the statement, 'there is more to unite people . . . than to set them apart' (Zadura 1979). Another example is an assertion of unlimited comparability, despite expectations of exoticism, in the article on Camara Laye's *Czarny chłopiec (L'enfant noir)*. The review ends with the statement, 'No people are so exotic that we could not recognize ourselves in them'¹⁶⁵ (Z. Stolarek 1974).

Abstract universal features, or the imponderables, are referred to in a number of reviews, for instance a reviewer of Premchand's short stories on Indian peasants states, 'Human harm and humane sensitivity to it are the same all over the world' (AK 1971), while other reviewers believe that Mohammed Dib's *Kto pamięta o morzu (Qui se souvient de la mer)*, evoking the Algerian war of independence, 'has a universal appeal, as it deals with. . . an eternal and powerful . . . human strife for freedom' (Jurkowski & Dolecki 1977). In addition to conjuring up purely universal concepts, these reviews comply with the discursive trends of their contexts: sympathy for Indian peasants resonates with the official denouncement of social injustice, while solidarity with the Algerian struggle echoes communist support for decolonization.¹⁶⁶

The reviewers recognize that postcolonial authors touch not only upon eternal human quandaries but also timely human concerns, such as the widely-felt tensions between tradition and modernity. For example, Narayan's characters are believed to

¹⁶⁵ The statement can be interpreted in the context of the polemic in which it appeared (discussed in Chapter Three). Stolarek, the translator of *Czarny chłopiec*, is fending off an accusation that the novel fails to represent anti-imperial struggle. The assertion of universal humanity is one of the arguments Stolarek uses to justify the value of the book.

¹⁶⁶ A similar argument can be made about Fredro's review of Ngũgĩ's *Chmury i lzy (Weep Not Child)*, a portrayal of Kenyan independence struggle (1972).

represent tension between ‘attachment to tradition and technological progress’ (Żórawski 1971; a similar point about Narayan appears in Nowicki 1975). Bohdan Zadura writes that in *The Interpreters* Soyinka depicts an oscillation ‘between the Scylla of backwardness and the Charybdis of the kitschy modernity, which makes everything uniform’. He thus draws attention to the process of standardization, which on the one hand can increase similarity between peoples (bringing Nigeria closer, to paraphrase Zadura’s title), but on the other hand instils ‘kitschy’ uniformity (1979; a related comment on Soyinka appears in Skurjat 1979:26).

It is also noted that modernity affects what traditionally has been perceived as universal values. The literary critic Henryk Bereza reads Narayan’s *Sprzedawca słodyczy* (*The Vendor of Sweets*) as a novel about a crisis of values: ‘Narayan made swindling (i.e. feigning values) into a sign of the times, a marker of a modern human being’ (1972:13). In another text on Narayan, a reviewer of a regional Krakow daily complains about contemporary deterioration of ethics, symbolized by a character-demon from Narayan’s *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. She announces that ‘man-eaters’ also operate in Krakow, i.e. that ethical codes are being eroded by modern developments in her locality (Tarska 1971).

The statements of similarity and universalism can be undermined by the progressivist assumption that while all people are equal, some are more developed. The discourse of progressivism is manifested in classifications of political and literary development. Postcolonial countries are routinely associated with ‘youth’ and underdevelopment and referred to as, for example, ‘young independent states’ (Termer 1979; also in Bugajski 1976 and Zadura 1979). It implies that the history of the postcolonial peoples is projected on a Western narrative of progress, where advancement is epitomized by the nation-state and technological development.

A Marxist-Leninist version of the narrative figures in a small number of reviews, such as Sadkowski’s admonition of Gordimer, presented earlier. Andrzej Różycki substantiates his attack on Laye’s allegedly pro-colonialist novel *L’enfant noir* with a quote from Bogusław Winid, the director of the African Studies Institute. Winid recommended – *nota bene* at a congress of translators of African literatures – that African literature be read as ‘an indication of the cultural and social development or stagnation, or even regression of African nations’ (Różycki 1973). He thus imposed a teleological, Marxist interpretation on the history and literature of the African continent.

The ontogenetic metaphor is applied not only to political but also to literary phenomena, as reviewers comment on the ‘youth’ of postcolonial literatures (Krzemiński 1975; K.G. 1978; R.G. 1973). It is taken for granted that postcolonial literatures will evolve to produce national writing in national languages. For example, one reviewer diagnoses that ‘in the contemporary writing of the [African] continent one cannot *as yet* discern any . . . visible national features’(K.G. 1978; emphasis added) and the renowned poet Wisława Szymborska (1923–2012) reports teething problems of African literatures from the position of European seniority: ‘an African writer faces a choice, which is no longer known to us in Europe: which language to write in’ (Szymborska 1973). Contemporary Indian authors are pronounced clumsy ‘neophytes’ who learnt writing from England but have not developed beyond mawkish and one-dimensional style (Strońska 1974). Some reviewers are aware of the ancient Indian scriptures but still talk about the second youth of Indian writing (Ziembicki 1977; Sadkowski 1971a). All the suggestions that contemporary postcolonial literatures are re-enacting the evolution of European literatures exemplify the progressivist discourse.

Although the progressivist paradigm is wide-spread, at least two comments challenge it to some degree. First, Ewa Borkowska capitalizes on the legacy of ancient Indian writing: she links what she, like some other reviewers mentioned earlier, calls the ‘youth’ and the ‘old age’ of Indian literature and reasons that the contemporary literature which Europeans, keen on formal sophistication, dismiss as young, primitive and ‘engaged’ actually stems from the old traditions which put an ethical message first (1978). Secondly, Szymborska stresses that it was the colonizers who denied Africa history and culture in order to justify conquest: ‘Africa was deemed a land unable to produce self-efficient state structures and its culture was perceived by the colonizers as *early, childish* efforts’ (Szymborska 1978; emphasis added; see also Żukrowski 1978). Interestingly Szymborska’s comment quoted in the previous paragraph employs a subtle form of the progressivist discourse, whereas here she criticizes the progressivist colonial projections of non-Europeans as less developed. This may be because in its milder, less discriminatory forms the idea of pre-determined development is entrenched in contemporary thinking.

1980–1989

In the 1980s the discursive strands continue with almost the same frequency (universalism: 15%; progressivism: 4%). The ‘far and yet close’ discourse, acknowledging both the anticipated difference and the perceived similarity, appears e.g. in a review of Narayan’s autobiography – ‘people are closer to one another than it seems. . . . [cultural differences] are not an obstacle to a full spiritual understanding’ (Józef Ratajczak 1988) – and in a review of Emil Habibi’s *Niezwykłe okoliczności zniknięcia niejakiego Saida Abu an-Nahsa z rodu Optysymistów*, which is said to ‘read swiftly and, *curiously enough*, without a sense of foreignness’ and ‘acquire a universal dimension’ (Mętrak 1988, emphasis added; see also Cielecka 1984:12).

Other reviewers refer to the imponderables of life; for instance, Soyinka is praised for his preoccupation with ‘the limits of the human condition, . . . loneliness, pain, suffering, madness and faith’, as well as ‘a search for eternal features of human nature’ (BM 1986). In a review of Mouloud Mammeri’s *Opium i kij (L’opium et le baton)* Skurjat states that Mammeri and other Algerian writers return in their work to ‘human strife for dignity, to an analysis of the human psyche, to identifying the limits of loyalty’ (1980:51). Besides, Seydou Badian’s book *Krwawiące maski (Le sang des masques)* is praised for its ‘treatment of love as the principal ideal in human life’ (Miedziński 1986). This review appears in a pro-governmental Catholic magazine, *Kierunki*, and the reviewer recommends the novel, noting that love is a Catholic ideal. This example further confirms that perception of universal features is related to the circumstances of the beholder.

Judgements on modernity accentuate its exclusionary potential, hinting at its universalizing aspects too. One reviewer capitalizes on modern atrocities, claiming that Soyinka’s prison notes, written during incarceration by a Nigerian regime, encapsulate human protest against evil. The reviewer also evokes the Polish experiences of World War Two (naming some concentration camps and bombarded cities) and points towards the contemporary, modern dimensions of evil. Upon reading Soyinka, he exclaims: ‘This is universality of the experiences of the contemporary world. This is Brotherhood in Death!’ (Rurawski 1987:13; a similar example appears in Jodłowski 1987:27). Rurawski’s proclamation of brotherhood at the time of war and oppression can be compared with Bogalska-Czajkowska’s

statements on modern loneliness discussed earlier, especially her calls for solidarity in the face of a modern malaise.

Another reviewer draws attention to the prospect of global connectedness: as noted in Chapter Four on knowledge Bohdan Czeszko believes that the Polish public only consume mass-media coverage of occasional African events, such as the fact that ‘the Tutsi have wiped out the Hutu’,¹⁶⁷ but do not really understand Africa or, Czeszko adds, feel that its affairs concern them in any way. However, Czeszko emphatically argues, ‘we [Poles] will begin to care, believe me, because the world is becoming small like an apple’ (1972:34). While he does not specify how the globe’s shrinking should shatter the Polish indifference, I assume that the premonitory statement concerns an unprecedented global interdependence, probably acutely felt due to the Cold War and a growing density of media coverage.¹⁶⁸ The remark can be read as a warning against an inevitable intrusion of ‘others’, e.g. through migration or escalation of international conflicts, or it could be received as a comment on the necessity for an international solidarity.

A statement which exposes the exclusive side of the globalization trends appears in a review of Rushdie’s *Grimus*. The reviewer finds it fair that third world authors should be part of an international canon but is disillusioned about the fairness of the global relationships in general. As he ironically notes, the promotion of Rushdie to the canon marks a paradoxical sort of ‘globalizing’: ‘One more local curiosity is elevated to be an expression of human experience. . . . We are poisoning thousands of people in Bhopal but our fragile mechanisms of cultural debate are becoming more universal and just’ (Magala 1988:158). He refers to a 1984 environmental disaster caused by a chemical leak in a plant in India (Anon. 2012a), blaming the disaster on the exploitative policies of industrialized countries (the plant was owned by an Indian subsidiary of a US company). In the light of such exploitation, he seems to say, can single gestures towards cultural universalism be

¹⁶⁷ Czeszko must be referring to the genocide of Hutus following a suppressed rebellion against the Tutsi rule in Burundi in 1972 (Brown 2007; Anon 2012b).

¹⁶⁸ The Polish media of the period did not rely solely on international press agencies for the coverage of the third world affairs, as they had their own correspondents, e.g. in the 1960s and early 1970s Ryszard Kapuściński reported for the Polish Press Agency (Polska Agencja Prasowa) from Africa, Caucasus and Latin America. In addition to the press and radio, television was becoming an important medium: in 1961 everyday broadcasting was launched by TVP1, or Channel One of Polish Television, while in 1970, two years before Czeszko’s article, another channel was added (TVP2) (Anon., Telewizja w Polsce).

really meaningful? It is worth stressing that Magala univocally positions himself on the side of the West, not only in the sense of a cultural tradition, as many reviewers do, but in the sense of civilizational advancement and responsibility for the harmful consequences of progress.

The use of the progressivist discourse declines in the 1980s. I do not think that the underlying notion of progressivism itself is challenged because it informs the whole discourse of development that is still used rather uncritically in the context of international politics and aid. The change correlates with a relative waning of interest in postcolonial countries, which had its peak in the 1960s and 1970s. Progressivist thinking is still implicit in a number of comments, e.g. Bogalska-Czajkowska's conclusion that *in the end* all people will modernize, mentioned earlier. It is also manifested in a number of straightforward phrases denoting political and literary development, e.g. 'young social organisms of Africa' (WS 1980:347) or 'young country' and '[Africa's] great backwardness' (Longin 1980). Similarly: non-Western literatures are called 'young literatures' (Drawicz 1988) and Arabic literature is conceptualized as young and old at the same time (Machut-Mendecka 1982).

1990–1999

In the 1990s the universalist discourses are still regularly employed, although their usage is by 4–5% less frequent than in the previous decades; references to modernity which might be interpreted as progressivist remain present in about 5% of the reviews.

For example, universalism is introduced as a counterpoint to the expected exoticism, e.g. a reviewer of Rushdie's collection *Wschód Zachód (East West)* finds in the book 'both exoticism – . . . which is domesticated and comprehensible for a European – and universalism, which unites various ways of understanding the human condition' (Nowacka 1997).

The imponderables of life are still featured; for instance, a reviewer of Gordimer's *Broń domowa (The House Gun)* interprets the combination of family drama and legal thriller largely in abstraction from its South African setting and ends the text with: 'Your child, too, could kill, Gordimer says. And what would you do then?' (Kucia 1999). Another example comes from an article by Adam Michnik. He

enthusiastically writes that André Brink's novels¹⁶⁹ treat of 'loyalty, love and rebellion', as well as 'of a human being thrown into a destructive machinery of dictatorship, politics and custom' (1993). Because of Michnik's biography the universalist statement lends itself to more specific readings, which I develop in Chapter Seven.

Political transgression – oppression and slaughter committed in the name of the modern state and with the aid of modern technology – is seen as a distinctive feature of modernity. Rushdie's *Shame* is read as a book about political transgression by Witold Turand soon after the end of communism. Turand states that the book depicts Pakistan as a failure of a 'dreaming mind' and adds that the twentieth century abounded in such failures (i.e. ideological projects resulting in oppression), which are marked by 'shame and shamelessness, which stem from violence and create contemporary history'¹⁷⁰(1991). Turand thus implies that the novel is relevant to contemporary people living through twentieth century turmoil. However, the inclusive identification is further qualified, as the comment on contemporary oppression continues: 'we have participated in some, we have forgotten many and there are others that we do not even know about . . . because they took place in areas which are for us very exotic' (ibid.). A universal 'we' of modernity is here narrowed down, through an exclusion of 'exotic' others, to encompass Europe, or perhaps just Eastern Europe (or even just Poland), where the experiences of twentieth century violence were distinctive.

Other references to a universal reach of modernity concern the global spread of Western popular culture, noted by Papuzińska in the review of Roy, and individual experiences of exile and lack. Regarding the latter, a reviewer of Rushdie says that '[*Ostatnie westchnienie Maura (The Moor's Last Sigh)*] is about us . . . The Moor's exile can be a figure for our exile, his feeling of lack can be a sign of our feeling' (Naumczyk 1998). The comment compares with Bogalska-Czajkowska's statement 'their loneliness our loneliness', since both envisage solidarity predicated on a

¹⁶⁹ *Sucha biała pora (A Dry White Season)*, trans. by Tomasz Wyżyński; and *Chwila na wietrze (An Instant in the Wind)*, trans. by Magdalena Konikowska.

¹⁷⁰ Although Turand does not explicitly acknowledge it, the comments are probably derived from Malcolm Bradbury's blurb comment on a British edition. Turand was reviewing the original, as *Shame* was not available in Polish in 1991. The phrase I quoted is in all likelihood Turand's translation of Bradbury's phrasing, 'shame and shamelessness, born from the violence which is modern history'.

modern form of distress. Naumczyk's focus on exile could evoke the Polish experiences of economic and political migration, as well as a metaphorical and philosophical concept, akin to 'feeling of lack'.

The discourse of progressivism appeared in a few reviews only, which may be because the period of intense decolonization, which had triggered comments on 'young' countries, belonged to a different political milieu. Another reason might be that the writing by migrant authors does not necessarily lend itself to a paternalistic progressivist reading.

One of the few examples I can find is related to the so-called 'Rushdie affair'. One reviewer compares Khomeini's *fatwa* to the transgressions of the Catholic Inquisition in the Medieval and Early Modern Europe and finds the two commensurable because of a temporal lag allegedly separating Christianity and Islam. He writes, 'Let us not forget that Islam is a good 700 years younger than our Christianity' (Magala 1995:74). Another example appears in Turand's article on *Shame* mentioned above. Commenting on the fact that postcolonial writers use metropolitan languages to express resentful and revisionary attitudes towards the former metropolis, Turand states that '[the former colonizers] admit the angry *younger brothers* under the umbrella of their language and culture, as if it was happening on a London street' (1991:113; emphasis added). The image of a magnanimous 'older brother' tolerating juvenile defiance and extending a guiding hand to a younger sibling is a patronizing evocation of progressivism, where civilizational development is sometimes expressed in terms of childhood and adulthood. While Turand is far from celebrating colonization and its legacy in his review – he calls imperial conquest 'an outrage' and, as the earlier example showed, generally objects to political transgressions – his siblings metaphor marks a progressivist viewpoint.

2000–2010

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the universalist discourses continue at the 1990s rate of ten per cent (cf c.15% in 1970–1990) but the discourse of progressivism drops from c. 5% to 1–2%. To give some examples, the 'far yet close' discourse appears in a review of Mahfouz's *Opowieści starego Kairu*. *Kamal*

(in English *Palace of Desire*).¹⁷¹ The reviewer remarks that a depicted social practice of lying when convenient, allegedly typical of the middle class,¹⁷² ‘makes the novel interesting not only because of its exoticism but also universal purport’ (Fuzowski 2009). This comment is of interest as one of very few comments drawing attention to class.

The imponderables that reviewers identify in postcolonial literature in the 2000s include questions of good and evil, as well as human entanglement in them. Coetzee’s work certainly triggers such reflections. Jerzy Jarniewicz notes that Coetzee manages to capture ‘suffering in its very different shades: suffering which we witness, which we inflict on others and which happens to us’ (2003). Similarly, the critic Anna Marchewka finds in Desai’s *Brzemie rzeczy utraconych* (*The Inheritance of Loss*) an illuminating insight into the complex interrelations between oppressors and victims. Stressing that the separation or distinction between the two is not always clear-cut, she concludes the review with: ‘Separation is a trap. Such truths flash in *The Inheritance*... Will we have enough courage not to overlook the flashes?’ (2007).

Other themes singled out for their universal appeal are the themes of love and relationships, as well as quotidian human affairs. In a review of André Brink’s *Zanim zapomnę* (*Before I Forget*), a reviewer notes that contrary to what the blurb promises, the book is *not* mainly about politics: ‘Squeezed between one sex scene description and another, the reflections on Bush and the war in Iraq tend to lose importance. However, through this strategy *Before I Forget* is also a very universal text’ (Grodecka 2010:167). The reviewer implies that eroticism and romance should count as a universal motif. The intricacies of romantic and family relationships are also seen as a universal theme emerging from the prose of Jhumpa Lahiri and transcending the particularities of her setting, i.e. of Indian immigrant communities in the USA (AŚ 2002; RR 2002). Finally, universal, quotidian affairs are considered a signature topic of Narayan: this view appeared in the 1970s and 1980s and in 2001 it is repeated in Narayan’s obituary (a.w. 2001)

The notion of shared modernity matters, for instance, in Jarniewicz’s review of Zadie Smith’s *Białe zęby* (*White Teeth*). He sees the novel as a significant diagnosis

¹⁷¹ The book was translated from Arabic by William Maynard Hutchins, Lorne M. Kenny and Olive E. Kenny (London: Doubleday, 1991).

¹⁷² The reviewer ascribes this observation to J.M. Coetzee.

of late modern, or post-modern, revaluations of ‘history’ and ‘culture’. ‘In today’s world’, Jarniewicz says, ‘the contradiction between history and the everyday, and between the public and the private sphere, is disappearing, as is the idea of ethnically uniform culture’ (2002). Jarniewicz implies that the dethronement of authoritative ‘History’ and cultural homogeneity might lead to a more inclusive vision of culture and cultural memory, also in Poland. If Smith’s novel is read as an optimistic chronicle of the turn of millennia, Coetzee’s work serves as an unfailing barometer of modern transgressions, as the earlier analysis of Czaja’s article on *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello* indicates.

The discourse of progressivism hardly registers in the reviews of postcolonial literature. I find comparisons with earlier, European writing but they are not accompanied by the metaphors of seniority and youth, innovation and imitation (Grzymisławski 2004; Janiszewski 2007). I also find a few reviews which expose and/or circumvent the assumptions of progressivism. One example is a review of *Miłość za kilka włosów* (*Love with a Few Hairs*), which is a tale told by the Moroccan Mohammed Mrabet and translated from oral Maghrebi into written English by the American author and composer Paul Bowles. It is not lost on the reviewer, Bartosz Staszczyszyn, that Bowles’s fascination with Maghrebian culture may well have a patronizing edge to it: he suspects that the young Mrabet may have been an ‘exotic attraction from a still innocent world for the old Bowles’ (Staszczyszyn 2008). This remark is reminiscent of Bojarska’s refusal to treat Africans as inept little brothers but, unlike Bojarska, Staszczyszyn does not reinforce the progressivist paradigm in any way (other relevant examples can be found in Grzymisławski 2005; Jarniewicz 2007).

Concluding Remarks

The chapter has shown that the universalist discourses have a relatively permanent presence in the analysed reviews from the four decades, 1970–2010, even though the discourses are used a little more seldom in the 1990s and 2000s. It is not easy to account for the (slight) fall in usage. One hypothesis is that universalist thinking about postcolonial countries was to some degree replaced by thinking about Poland and postcolonial countries in terms of specific historical similarities: the next chapter shows that statements of similarity became slightly more frequent in the

decades 1990–2010 (which in turn might be attributed to growing currency of the discourse of postcolonialism).

The discourses that announce perceived similarity despite anticipated difference ('far yet close') and draw attention to the imponderables of life appear throughout the whole period. The recurrence may suggest that the very existence of the concept of common humanity is relatively immune to historical changes, perhaps because it permeates the philosophical and religious teachings that have historically been at the heart of Polish culture and education (humanism and Christianity). At the same time, my examples show that as soon as the concept is applied in a given context, it is coloured with particular meanings. For instance, freedom as a universal human longing tends to be mentioned in the context of anti-colonial struggles before 1989 and in relation to anti-totalitarian opposition after 1989. The recurrence of the concept of universalism in the reviews may also be linked to certain conventions of reading literature (e.g. identifying with the characters or learning about the human condition) and writing reviews (e.g. bringing up the relevance of a book to the reader).

References to universally shared experiences of modernity also appear regularly, registering not only the situatedness of the reviewers' responses but also their concern with accelerating and expanding changes. According to my readings, the impression of the unifying character of the modern changes may be based on commonly experienced uncertainty and loneliness, a crisis of ethics and empathy or the homogenizing impact of globally circulated Western popular culture. These and other examples show that modernizing processes are accompanied both by inclusion – e.g. inclusion of Nigerians and Poles in the category of global citizens or inclusion of Indians and Poles in the global village of coca-cola consumption – and exclusion, for instance: extermination of those excluded from the category 'human' or exclusion of non-Western, traditional communities from the benefits of modernization.

Unlike universalist discourses, which remain salient in the course of the four decades, the discourse of progressivism registers in the 1970s and 1980s, to occur less often in the 1990s, and virtually disappear in the 2000s. As far as reasons for this development are concerned, I suggested that, firstly, African decolonization was fading away from the agenda and, secondly, there was a growing number of books by migrant or second generation immigrant authors, which escaped associations with imitative 'youth' due to their metropolitan settings and Western marketing.

The perceptions of the postcolonial peoples as fellow human beings with their dreams and fears, and fellow inhabitants of a globalizing world, which are at times compromised by compartmentalizing the others on a scale of progress as not yet fully developed, are interdependent with the self-perceptions of the reviewers. The results presented in this chapter show that sometimes the reviewers appear to speak from an indeterminate position of human beings but in most cases a closer reading reveals that their position is specified by national, cultural, ideological and other parameters.

Most frequently they seem to identify with Western civilization by envisaging Poland as a modern country. Before 1989, and particularly in the 1980s, I find some reservations about Poland's advancement, which might reflect the experience of the socio-economic crisis of the decade. Despite the reservations, there is little doubt in the reviews that Poland should be higher up on a progress ladder than non-European countries. The dedicated communist critics, who constitute a minority in my corpus, identify with the Soviet Union and write about Poland's high development with dogmatic confidence.

After 1989 the progressivist discourse is much less prominent, but the notion that a single and markedly Western modernity is the synonym of development may well have progressivist underpinnings. In the period reviewers do not problematize Poland's modernity, as if taking for granted that it is part of the modern, Western world. There is abundant evidence in contemporary Polish literature and other public discourses that rapid and uneven privatization and modernization did play havoc with Polish society.¹⁷³ That none of it registers in the reviews of postcolonial literature after 1989, as far as I read them, might mean that even if within Poland many see themselves as, to use Bauman's phrase, 'human waste' of late modernity, while within Europe Poland is seen as a developing Eastern marshland (Dingsdale 2001), in a global-scale comparison with postcolonial countries Poles may think of themselves as members of the developed West or the global North.

This chapter illustrates that the recognition of sameness dynamically co-exists with the perception of difference. If the discourses of otherness discussed in the

¹⁷³ An insightful reading of post-1989 Polish literature as a response to the processes of the late modernity is offered by Przemysław Czapliński in *Polska do wymiany. Późna nowoczesność i nasze wielkie narracje* (Poland for Overhaul. Late Modernity and Our Grand Narratives) (2009). The question of unequal opportunities was debated, for instance, in terms of 'Poland A and Poland B' ('Polska A i Polska B') in the 1990s, while the sense of failure of the Polish youth was expressed in debates about the 'Nothing generation' ('generacja Nic') (Wandachowicz 2002).

previous chapter capitalize on a perceived gap between peoples and cultures, the universalist discourses sometimes bridge the gap but, to borrow Stanisław Lec's quip quoted as a motto for the chapter, they only provide drawbridges. In other words, the universalist perceptions are grounded in particular contexts and marked by the reviewers' positioning on the spatio-temporal, geo-political and socio-cultural grids. The dynamic, in-and-out, 'drawbridge' character of the universalist perceptions can be seen as a shortcoming if it works to reinforce exclusion. Yet, it could be an advantage, as it is compatible with a dynamic idea of identity, which allows for constructing a sense of specific similarities and privileging them over differences. It is to the perceptions of specific similarities between Poland and postcolonial countries that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Statements of Similarity

LIFE AND LOVE IN THE SHADOW OF THE FATWA: SALMAN RUSHDIE TELLS HIS PAINFUL AND DRAMATIC SECRETS

...

THE SAFE HOUSES, THE SECRET LOVERS AND THE CONSTANT FEAR
OF THE ASSASSIN'S BULLET: MY LIFE ON THE RUN BY SALMAN
RUSHDIE

On February 14, 1989, Salman Rushdie was sentenced to death by the Ayatollah Khomeini . . . Rushdie then adopted the alias Joseph Anton – merging forenames of authors Conrad and Chekhov. Here, in a gripping extract from his memoir, Rushdie writes in the third person as Joseph Anton.

/by Geordie Greig; *Mail Online*; 15 September 2012/

Salman Rushdie once said that he felt an affinity with Joseph Conrad, who did not write in his native Polish and yet was a great writer (2006). This may be one of the reasons why he chose to use Conrad's (Anglicized) first name when in hiding: due to its dramatic and erotic contents his recent memoir *Joseph Anton* made the headlines in the popular press too. Thus a comparison of Rushdie and Conrad appeared, rather unexpectedly, in the mass-appeal British newspaper *Mail Online*. Comparisons between these two writers have been employed in Polish reviews of postcolonial literature: in my reading, the comparisons highlight similarities between the experiences of the two migrant authors and signal a trend of thinking about Poland and postcolonial countries comparatively.

This chapter traces statements and suggestions of similarities¹⁷⁴ between Poland and postcolonial countries. A comprehensive list of the perceived similarities appears in a 1995 review of Naipaul. It merits full quotation because it introduces the themes explored in this chapter:

Let us honestly admit that our cultural status also had something to do with the Partitions, i.e. a sort of partial and temporary colonization. For some time one had to go to a colonial metropolis to make a name for oneself: to Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin . . . Ms Skłodowska married a Frenchman to leisurely do her radiation, Przybyszewski bet on Berlin and Scandinavia, while Conrad worked for British ship owners. Besides,

¹⁷⁴ As such statements are neither well-established in the Polish public sphere nor sufficiently interconnected within my corpus, I shall not refer to them as a discourse.

Germany tried to conquer Eastern Europe twice and Russia once (in the twentieth century) to gain a foothold in the game of world domination. And even now, when from the East we have become the South, we must court the former colonizers to get some capital. So we can understand the wretched of the earth as homeless or rootless people. We can understand the multiple entanglements and subtle tentacles of the colonial past (Magala 1995:74).

This passage stands out for its explicit and exhaustive comparison between Poles and postcolonial peoples, written in the first person plural. It introduces two themes which dominate in all the statements of solidarity I encountered: political dependence and migration (his mention of Conrad also chimes with my opening point about Rusdhe and Conrad being fellow migrant authors). It is worth recalling that in his other articles Sławomir Magala seems to identify Poland with the West,¹⁷⁵ which shows that the Polish self-images as Western and as postcolonial co-existed. His remark that Poland has become part of the global South may reflect the climate of mid-1990s, when post-transformation difficulties and disappointments were felt (as opposed to the late 1990s and the 2000s when Poland joined NATO and the EU and identification with the global North was strengthened).

Statements of Similarity: Close Readings

In this section I offer close readings of four reviews, which dramatize the question of similarities between Poland and postcolonial countries in particularly suggestive ways. Some of them are explicit comparisons, albeit rarely as outspoken as Magala's, whereas others only evoke the Polish context by means of culturally and historically charged terms. As in the previous chapters, the close readings will be followed by a more general and diachronic discussion of the examples.

Messianism in Negritude and Polish Romanticism

In Adam Krzemiński's review of an African novel, an African poetry anthology and Wanda Leopold's book on African literature – discussed in Chapter Five for its othering view of Africa – there is a suggestive comparison of the ideas of Negritude with Polish Romanticism. Krzemiński introduces the comparison after Leopold, a scholar working on African literature: in this section I first report how

¹⁷⁵ For instance, 'we are poisoning thousands of people in Bhopal' (1988:158); see the sub-section 1980–1989 in Chapter Six above.

Krzemiński introduces the comparison, then turn to Leopold and other secondary readings to elaborate on the comparison and, finally, return to Krzemiński's review to ask how he develops the comparison and whether it throws a new light on his representation of African otherness.

Commenting on the anthology of African poetry in Polish translation (Leopold & Z. E. Stolarek 1974), which includes work of the proponents of Negritude Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) and Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001), Krzemiński summarizes Negritude as a 'black humanism' based on 'spiritualism and a pre-eminence of the metaphysical and spiritual values of the black man, whose cognition is intuitive, rather than empirical-rational as in a European' (Krzemiński 1975). The characteristic is followed by a quote on Negritude from Leopold's book: 'The whole affair is deceptively similar to the Polish messianism . . . with its mythical self-images and equally arbitrary depictions of the nations of Western Europe' (ibid., Krzemiński's ellipsis, after Leopold 1973:72).

In her book Leopold indeed compares the messianic dimension of Negritude and Polish Romanticism but she also stresses that messianism is only one aspect of Negritude, or rather of a 'popularized' (Leopold 1973:71) and potentially reductive version of Negritude, stemming from Senghor's – but not Césaire's – work. Leopold writes that according to Senghor black people's gifts of spiritualism and empathy, together with their past suffering, are crucial contributions to a universal humanism that will transcend the rationalistic tradition of Europe. She quotes from an editorial of *Présence Africaine*, which she attributes to Senghor: 'The peoples of Bandung are destined to save the world from sterile poverty of imagination and the hearts of their leaders are destined to . . . renew the substance and the laws of human culture and civilization'.¹⁷⁶ She comments that this passage strikes a messianistic note and evokes Polish messianism – this comment is quoted by Krzemiński (see end of the previous paragraph). However, Krzemiński fails to signal the various versions of Negritude Leopold mentions,¹⁷⁷ using her characterization of one 'popularized' version as *the* definition of Negritude.

¹⁷⁶ My translation after Leopold, checked against the French original (*Présence Africaine* 1957).

¹⁷⁷ According to Leopold, Césaire emphasizes the issues of black historical and cultural legacy, as well as individual identity and his formulations do not lend themselves to being interpreted as 'black racism and naïve messianism' (Leopold 1973:60–61). Senghor shifts emphasis onto psycho- and physiological constitution of a black person and the uniqueness of 'black' civilization (ibid.:66–77). In one of Senghor's most anthologized pieces in English-language academia, 'Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century' (Senghor 1970; Senghor 1993; Senghor 2010), one finds praise of

I will now briefly outline the understanding of messianism in the Polish tradition to shed light on Leopold's comparison. Leopold herself does not elaborate on the concept; she refers to messianism dismissively as 'naïve' (1973:61) and founded on 'mythical' (ibid.:72) self-perceptions, linking it with lack of political acumen and megalomania. In Poland messianism is associated with the Romantics, who, according to most contemporary interpretations, pictured Poland's doomed struggle against despotic monarchies in the nineteenth century as a sacrifice at the altar of freedom for other countries. Andrzej Walicki suggests that the idea of a redeeming sense of suffering was particularly appealing to Poles after the failed November uprising of 1830–31 (Walicki 2006:19). He distinguishes different strands of messianism among Polish Romantics, suggesting that Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) in his 1830s works and Juliusz Słowacki (1809–49)¹⁷⁸ propose national messianism, envisaging a messianic mission of Poland alone.

It is worth adding that an emblematic image of national messianism appears in Mickiewicz's play *Forefathers*, Part III, where a priest has a vision of Poland's crucifixion at the hands of other nations, followed by resurrection.¹⁷⁹ In the dominant national interpretations this image is normally summarized as 'Poland, the Christ of nations' (*Polska Chrystusem narodów*), even though it seems that the phrase is

an anonymous encapsulation of a superficial, cumulative reading of Mickiewicz's *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*, 1823–32) and *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* (*The Books of the Polish Nation and the Polish Pilgrimage*, 1832) [and two works by another Romantic, Zygmunt Krasiński] (Filipowicz 2001:606; Markiewicz & Romanowski 1990:830, in Filipowicz 2001:606).

Some interpretations complement or challenge the mainstream reading of Poland as the redeemer of other nations. In his distinction, signalled above, Walicki also describes Mickiewicz's mature messianic vision, which he finds in

Negritude but the messianic message is subdued. Senghor insists that such values as 'synthesis' of life forces (rather than dualism of spirit and matter) in ontology, 'harmony' and 'dialogue' in societal relationships, and 'sensibility' and 'rhythm' in art are indispensable to the 'humanism of the twentieth century' and international peace. At the same time, unlike the 'popularized' formulation signalled by Leopold, this essay implies a *contribution* to universal civilization and not world salvation.

¹⁷⁸ Walicki references Mickiewicz's *Księgi pielgrzymstwa i narodu polskiego* (1832; *The Books and The Pilgrimage of the Polish Nation*, trans. James Ridgway, 1833) and *Dziady III* (1832; *Forefathers*, Part III, trans. Count Potocki of Montalk, 1938), as well as Słowacki's *Genezis z Duchą* (written 1844, published 1866) and *Król-Duch* (written from 1845, unfinished, published 1924).

¹⁷⁹ *Dziady*, Part III, Act I, Scene V; an English version can be found in *Forefathers*, trans. Count Potocki of Montalk (London: The Polish Cultural Foundation, 1968:198–201) or *Gems of Polish Poetry: Selections from Mickiewicz*, trans. Frank H. Fortey (Warsaw: Polish Editorial Agency, 1923:94–99).

Mickiewicz's Paris lectures at Collège de France (1840–41): the vision transcends a national perspective to envisage an international, Poland- and France-led, effort for religious and social revival (Walicki 2006:24–31).¹⁸⁰ Karen C. Underhill argues that in the Paris lectures Mickiewicz's notion of Christ is not that of a crucified redeemer (which would mesh with the reading of Poland as 'the Christ of nations'): instead it is the notion of 'a living and moving Xristos, the next and potential Messiah . . . , called now to push aside the official Church and to lead the other Christian nations' (2001:723). Underhill (2001) also suggests that this vision testifies to Mickiewicz's investment in Judaism and Kaballah.

At this point I return to the comparison of African and Polish messianism. I see two major similarities: the interpretation of suffering as a prelude to an era of good and commendation of 'spiritual' values as an antidote to rationalism and prerequisite for messianic effort. Another similarity, which Leopold implies, is that claims to an ethically superior historical mission develop in response to marginalization. Leopold stresses that Poles under Partitions and African peoples under colonialism occupy similarly underprivileged positions; she concludes that those nations and societies were formed 'under conditions of economic backwardness and long-term bondage' and therefore 'deeper and systematic similarities are to be expected' (1973:72). She does not develop this comparison but her example of the predilection for messianism implies that she thinks not only about political and economic disadvantage but also about psychological and societal consequences, which shape a community's image of themselves and others. At the same time, African and Polish messianism differ in that the idea of saving the world through a people's suffering is ingrained in Polish, but not really African, traditions.

A final point concerns the way Krzemiński develops the comparison with regard to the anthologized African poetry after his quote from Leopold. He asserts that the poems contain imagery reminiscent of Polish nineteenth-century poetry: in addition to the motif of 'the ennobling power of suffering', related to messianism, Krzemiński mentions images of a black mother and of storks flying away to free countries. Krzemiński is probably alluding to such poems as 'Duch wiatru' by the Nigerian poet Gabriel Okara (Leopold & Stolarek, eds, 1974:203, trans. Ludmiła

¹⁸⁰ Mickiewicz seemed to believe that Poland was predisposed to play its messianic role because of such qualities as Slavonic spirituality and purity. He and other Polish Romantics were partly inspired by Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of the purity and gentleness of Slavonic spirit, mentioned in the context of Slavonic-Indian comparisons in Chapter One (Walicki 2006).

Marjańska; ‘Spirit of the Wind’), which depicts migrating storks, and ‘Sny czarnej matki’ by a Mozambican poet Kalungano (real name Marcelino dos Santos; *ibid.*:281, trans. Zbigniew Stolarek; ‘Sonho de mãe negra’), which shows a black mother dreaming about a good future for her son. The comparison accentuates experiences of bondage: birds in flight highlight immobility of the captive peoples, while the mother symbolizes a desire to free future generations from the circle of oppression.

Krzemiński does not go deeper into the comparisons, leaving aside the question of racial difference, evident in the African poems. In Okara’s first stanza storks are called ‘white specks’, while in the closing one the subject claims to have his or her stork ‘caged/ in singed hair and dark skin’.¹⁸¹ The subject’s captivity, for which the migrating birds are a foil, may be read as captivity within a stigmatized coloured skin. In the Polish tradition, on the other hand, storks symbolize countryside domesticity.¹⁸² Regarding the other image, it is not clear why Krzemiński considers the *black* mother – as opposed to a generic and indeed evocative ‘mother’ image – reminiscent of Polish poetry. In the Mozambican poem blackness clearly signifies race. What Krzemiński might allude to in his comparison is the religious figure of Black Madonna, although the figure is not black-skinned.¹⁸³ The motif of motherly care and love emerges as a common point of reference but a race problematic is not addressed. After noting the similar imagery Krzemiński adds that the resemblance is so strong that even the foreign images of African drums or ritual dances cannot obscure it.

This emphatic statement and the whole Polish-African comparison suggest a possibility of imagining Poles and Africans together and forging a sense of solidarity, even if in the opening paragraphs of his text Krzemiński upholds a civilizational

¹⁸¹ The Polish translation – ‘mój bocian jest uwięziony w klatce/ Krętych Włosów i Ciemnej Skóry’ – even strengthens the racial allusion by replacing the adjective ‘singed’ (*przypalony*) with *kręte* (‘curly’) for a more obvious racial association.

¹⁸² In Polish Romantic poetry storks appear e.g. in Słowacki’s poem *Hymn*, where they remind the lyrical subject, an exile, of Poland; storks are mentioned in Book XI of *Pan Tadeusz* as a sign of spring in the Lithuanian countryside, while stork nests in Cyprian Kamil Norwid’s poem *Piosnka II* are part of a nostalgic and idealized image of Polish domesticity, tradition and harmony.

¹⁸³ The most revered Polish Black Madonna is a painting from Częstochowa, which features in the invocation of Mickiewicz’s epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* (1834). Black Madonna figures, as exemplified by the Częstochowa painting, represent essentially ‘Caucasian’ female figures, with dark complexion. It has been speculated that the colouration may result from exposure to smoke and other environmental factors, or that dark pigment was applied by original artists, inspired by a verse from the Old Testament Song of Solomon (1:5) ‘I am black, but comely’ (King James version, at <<http://www.biblestudytools.com/song-of-solomon/1-5-compare.html>> (last accessed 3 April 2013)) (Duricy 2011).

divide encapsulated in the statement that in Africa in the beginning ‘was not the word’, which I discussed in Chapter Five. In addition, he states that Poles are situated in the heartland of Europe, away from the routes of intercontinental economic and cultural traffic, and as such are ill-placed to ‘incorporate into [their] experience the experiences of faraway peoples’ (1975). It is difficult to ascertain if for Krzemiński the similarities between Negritude and Romanticism are a convincing indicator that the experiences of Africans (‘faraway peoples’) are not that distant from Polish experiences of bondage and liberation struggle – Krzemiński does not revisit his opening statement in the course of the article. He is open to comparisons of Poland and African countries but his comparisons do not challenge the division along the lines of rationality. In the closing sentences of the article he states that the, once pure, categories of ‘Negritude’ and ‘Europeanness’ are being contaminated, as people adopt African or European cultural characteristics at will.

He seems to suggest that intercultural contacts will sooner or later affect Poles. He writes, ‘It is worth being aware of the diversity of cultures but also of their accessibility to everyone. It is worth seeing one’s reflection also in foreign sources, to realize one’s own deficiencies and one’s own hopes...’ (ibid., original suspension points). His closing statement implies that he is not against the prospect of learning from other cultures, even though he retains his view of Poles and Africans as distinct groups.

Palestinian Wallenrod or Ketman

Habibi’s novella about Saeed ‘the pessoptimist’, discussed in Chapter Four as an instance of literature’s illuminating power, invited comparisons between the situation of Palestinians in the state of Israel and Poles under tsarist and Soviet rule. Using such resonant Polish terms as ‘Wallenrod’ and ‘ketman’ reviewers highlight the dilemmas of the Palestinians and Poles who conform to the rules of new rulers but negotiate this involvement with a sense of loyalty to their national, ethnic or religious identities. This comparison does not bring together two collectives, i.e. ‘Poles’ and ‘Palestinians’, but concerns individuals’ relationship to their societies. In Habibi’s work, Saeed is expelled from his homeland but illegally returns and works as an informer for the Israeli state. Saeed’s subservience to the state is ‘juxtaposed . . . with his continuing ties to his Palestinian roots and rights’ (Khater 1993:78), even though he does not manifest his solidarity with the Palestinian community in a

univocal way (unlike his son, who joins the armed resistance). Saeed is finally kidnapped by aliens and looks back on his hyperbolically hapless life from the distance of a spaceship.

Two reviewers refer to Saeed as a Wallenrod, evoking the title protagonist of Mickiewicz's 1828 poem *Konrad Wallenrod*; one of the reviewers entitles the review 'A Palestinian Wallenrod?' (Mętrak 1988), while the other calls Habibi's protagonist 'a half-Wallenrod' (tm 1988). Mickiewicz's poem dramatizes the questions of loyalty and treason in the historical setting of fourteenth century conflicts between Lithuania and the Teutonic Knights. Wallenrod is the Grand Master of the order but he holds a secret: he was born a Lithuanian and was kidnapped and raised by the Knights, Lithuania's sworn enemy. His hidden loyalties to Lithuania rekindled by a minstrel's song, Wallenrod deals a deadly blow to the order from within, purposefully leading his soldiers to a devastating defeat. At the end Wallenrod commits suicide: his last words reassert the meaning of his actions through an analogy with Samson's self-destructive revenge on his enemies: 'As Samson, by once shaking of the column,/ To o'er throw the temple, dying in its ruin' (Mickiewicz 2010:93).¹⁸⁴

Intended by Mickiewicz as a veiled call for unremitting struggle against contemporary enemies, *Konrad Wallenrod* was a major influence on generations of Polish readers, including the participants of nineteenth century Polish insurgencies. The teachings of the minstrel, directed at Wallenrod, 'Thou art a slave; the only/ Weapon that slaves may use is treachery' (Mickiewicz 2010:50),¹⁸⁵ justified Machiavellian methods. The poem also problematized the question of collaboration with an oppressor, implying that it can serve patriotic ends. In a study of the influence of *Konrad Wallenrod* on generations of Poles, Maria Janion chronicles historical instances of Wallenrod-like dilemmas and actions. For instance, she looks at biographies of Russian army officers who had Polish parentage and who, despite Russian upbringing and career, joined the Polish side in the 1863 January uprising and used their knowledge of Russia against it (e.g. Jarosław Dąbrowski and Józef Hauke-Bosak). Despite its influence, the poem was also reviled for moral relativism,

¹⁸⁴ 'Jak Samson jednym wstrząśnieniem kolumny/ Zburzyć gmach cały, i runąć pod gmachem!' (Mickiewicz 1991:106). Samson is a Biblical Israelite hero appearing in the Old Testament Book of Judges (verses 13–16). Samson was deceitfully captured by the Philistines, blinded and enslaved but when he regained his supreme strength he destroyed a Philistine temple, killing both his captors and himself (Anon 2013h).

¹⁸⁵ 'Tyś niewolnik, jedyna broń niewolników – podstęp' (Mickiewicz 1991:67).

instigation to treason and betrayal of the ideal of honour; Mickiewicz himself renounced it later in his life.

The reviewers of Habibi, Mętrak and 'tm', refer to Saeed as a Wallenrod somewhat half-heartedly, calling him 'a Palestinian Wallenrod?' – *nota bene* with a question mark – and 'a half-Wallenrod'. Similarity between Saeed and Wallenrod consists in serving a 'hostile' power in public while secretly nourishing the cause of one's own people. A major difference, however, is that Wallenrod symbolizes *action* – which could be deemed sacrificial or treacherous but which concluded a lifetime of double living – whereas Saeed continuously conforms to outside pressures. The contrast is strengthened by different poetics: the tragic tone of Mickiewicz's poem and the satire of Habibi's novella (comprising elements of science fiction, romance and philosophical tale too). Although the Polish reviewers do not name this difference, a sense of dissonance between Wallenrod's heroism and Saeed's anti-heroic stature is signalled by their half-hearted reference to Wallenrod. 'Tm' also emphasizes a non-Wallenrodian side of Saeed's stance by calling him 'half-Wallenrod' and 'half-opportunist'.

Another term used by Polish reviewers to describe Saeed, which emphasizes (ostensibly) opportunist behaviour and an ongoing schizophrenia, is *ketman*. Ketman is a form of individual response to ideological oppression discussed by Miłosz in his essays on totalitarianism *Zniewolony umysł* (1953; *The Captive Mind*). Mętrak writes that Saeed acts according to an 'Eastern principle of ketman', which 'allows believers to ostensibly renounce their faith and hide their views in unfavourable circumstances' (1988), while L.B. notes that although Saeed serves the occupying power, 'of course, according to the ketman principle, the service does not imply internal convictions' (L.B. 1988). Besides, in a less straightforward allusion to Miłosz, which I explain below, the reviewer 'tm' states that Saeed suffered from 'an opportunist sting' (*ukąszenie oportunistyczne*). To contextualize these terms I now turn to *The Captive Mind* and its Polish reception.

Miłosz references *ketman* as a Persian practice (hence 'Eastern principle' in Mętrak's review), whose description he encountered in *Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia* by Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau (1816–82). After distancing himself

from Gobineau's views,¹⁸⁶ Miłosz follows his account of a practice of ketman spreading among Persian dissidents, who would endorse the binding Islamic doctrine to survive under theocratic rule, but would secretly stick to other beliefs (Miłosz 1953:57–58).¹⁸⁷ Miłosz then turns to the context of Stalinism in Poland, which he experienced in the years 1945–1951, working for the Polish government (mainly as a diplomat in France and the USA) before defecting to the West. He writes that confronted with the totalitarian ideology of Marxism, which demands an absolute conversion, some Poles posed as zealous neophytes, concealing vestiges of the old thinking. He talks about several types of ketman, including ketman of 'revolutionary purity', driven by a belief that after a regrettable phase of terror the revolution regains its pure form (ibid.:63–64), aesthetic ketman, practised by artists who pay tribute to the regime to be left to indulge in their 'bourgeois' tastes in private (ibid.:64–69) and professional ketman, i.e. finding refuge in doing one's job well and, as far as possible, without falsity (ibid.:69–71). Ketman has, in Miłosz's view, a primarily self-defensive character, although it can be pernicious, bordering on schizophrenia.

The Captive Mind was published in 1953 in Polish, by the emigration publisher Instytut Literacki based in Paris, and in three other languages.¹⁸⁸ Its Western reception was enthusiastic: it was read as a 'study of Stalinism, a study of the split personality under totalitarian conditions' (Pawelec 2011:184; see also Walicki 1993:309). Polish responses were less favourable. Emigration circles rejected the idea of ketman as Miłosz's invention justifying his adherence to Stalinism, e.g. the author Gustaw Herling-Grudziński claimed that Stalinism installed itself not through ideology but terror alone. Some émigrés considered Miłosz a communist agent and *The Captive Mind* a veiled apology for communism. In the communist Poland Miłosz was condemned as a renegade, e.g. Iwaszkiewicz, whose polemic with the Indian ambassador was discussed in Chapter Four and who was the president of a pro-

¹⁸⁶ According to *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, Gobineau was a 'French diplomat, writer, ethnologist, and social thinker whose theory of racial determinism had an enormous influence upon the subsequent development of racist theories . . . in western Europe'. He spent many years as a diplomat in Tehran (Anon 2013i).

¹⁸⁷ Miłosz (1953:59–60) retells the example of Sadra (ca. 1571–1636), a disciple of Avicenna who gained the trust of Persian Shia mullahs acting as a zealous observer of their doctrine, only to cunningly spread Avicennism and reveal his real stance when he established his position.

¹⁸⁸ English (trans. Jane Zielonko; London: Secker & Warburg; New York: Alfred A. Knopf), German (*Verführtes Denken*, trans. Alfred Löpfe, Köln, Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch) and French (*La Pensée captive*, trans. A. Prudhommeaux and the author; Paris: Gallimard).

governmental writers' association, proclaimed him a traitor (Walicki 1993:23–24; Pawelec 2011:184). Polish oppositionists who never adhered to Stalinism (whether practising ketman or not) were also critical of Miłosz's ideas, treating them as a *post-factum* justification of mere opportunism.

Against that view Walicki argued that some intellectuals were authentically susceptible to Stalinist Marxism because, like Miłosz, they had leftist sympathies and a philosophical inclination towards Hegelian dialectic of historical necessity (i.e., as Miłosz called it, a 'Hegelian sting'¹⁸⁹), which made them explain the evil of Stalinism as a prerequisite to the good of a new era of historical synthesis. At the same time, other authors focused on the biographies of those who, like Herbert, never endorsed the system (Michnik 1985).

The reviews of Habibi appeared in the second half of 1988, in traditionally pro-Party cultural magazines *Życie Literackie* and *Kultura*, and a popular daily *Express Wieczorny*: the fact that references to *The Captive Mind* were allowed in them signalled a demise of censorship because *The Captive Mind* was banned from publication in Poland, even when some of Miłosz's works were allowed after his Nobel Prize in 1980. Yet, the book had almost thirty underground editions until 1989 (Pawelec 2011). Interestingly, in the first half of 1988 three articles on *The Captive Mind* appeared in one of the few legal but not pro-governmental magazines, the monthly *Res Publica*.¹⁹⁰ Although the book was published in the underground ten years earlier (Kandziora et al. 1999), the articles suggest that the term ketman entered an even wider circulation. Hence, the reviewers' judgements may have resonated with Polish discussions on the conduct of individuals during Stalinism and communism, prefiguring post-1989 attempts to settle accounts with the past.

The reviewers appreciate that Saeed collaborated without an internalized ideological conviction: he could be said to practise ketman or resemble Wallenrod. Yet, they also see Saeed's behaviour as merely opportunistic, which may be because Saeed represented poor ketman – while practitioners of ketman 'distinguish between the aim, which [they] pursue with ardour and passion, and the protective cover'

¹⁸⁹ The phrase was dismissed as another grand self-justification by Herbert, who commented that, being long dead, Hegel could not sting and it was Stalinist ideologues who did (Pawelec 2011:185). The phrase is also travestied by the Habibi reviewer who talks about an 'opportunist sting'.

¹⁹⁰ D. Pawelec, 'Zniewolony umysł jako parabola' in *Res Publica* Issue No 5; J. Strzelecki 'Sprawy nadwiślańskiego umysłu. „W człowieku nie ma nic?”' in No 1 and J. Ziomek 'Beta kontra Mi' in No 5.

(Miłosz 1989:222), Saeed has neither aims nor ardour – or because they were not persuaded that ketman was more than a self-gratifying cover for sheer opportunism.

The reviews of Habibi introduce a foreign novel in a way that resonates with domestic concerns about the meaning of loyalty and solidarity. Although the figures of Wallenrod and ketman differ considerably,¹⁹¹ both have been used to signal understanding for a character's conflict of loyalties and an ethically ambivalent life, but also speak of opportunism when clear signs of solidarity with one's own people are missing.

The juxtaposition of these problematics in their Palestinian and Polish form implies a perception that some historical experiences of the peoples are comparable. It would be far-fetched to conclude that the reviewers create a common conceptual category of Poles and Palestinians because they are preoccupied less with a frontal comparison of or solidarity between the two groups and more with the meaning and formation of group solidarity from an individual's perspective.

Anti-Communist Opposition, Apartheid and Gandhi

The following examples feature comparisons between oppressive communist, colonial and apartheid governments, as well as acts of resistance against them. The main examples come from the 1990s, when communist oppression could finally be openly discussed, and additional examples derive from the underground publishing in the previous decade, as well as from the decade 2000–2010, when communism becomes the subject of more socio-historical reflection.

In a 1993 article Adam Michnik, former dissident, compares communism and apartheid, inspired by André Brink's novels *Chwila na wietrze* (*An Instant in the Wind*) and *Sucha biała pora* (*A Dry White Season*). Before Michnik articulates the Polish-South African historical similarity, he evokes discourses of otherness and universalism. Michnik asks why Brink is not popular in Poland. Dwelling on this question, he points to the otherness of South African books: 'for the Polish reader they are an encounter with another world . . . Without Auschwitz and Gulag, without Hitler and Stalin, without Wojtyła and Solzhenitsyn'¹⁹² (Michnik 1993). Michnik thus explains that to a public attached to their own historical symbols and traumas –

¹⁹¹ First and foremost, Wallenrod is associated with action and highest sacrifice for a community, while ketman is rather passive and focused on self-preservation.

¹⁹² Wojtyła is the surname of pope John Paul II.

World War Two, communist terror, anti-communist resistance – a regime with a different socio-political backdrop and historical underpinnings appears distant, even irrelevant. However, Michnik strives to overcome the sense of detachment by gesturing towards a universal significance of Brink's narratives. As I mentioned in Chapter Six, he reads them as tales of love, faithfulness and rebellion. Finally, he narrows down the comparison to include peoples who have lived under an oppressive regime, such as Poles and South Africans. Michnik writes,

And yet a Polish reader easily recognizes the atmosphere . . . of dictatorship, of disdain and powerlessness; a world where a human becomes an object; a world of police omnipotence, where some lack hope, while others live . . . happily as long as they don't try to think about all that (ibid.).

Michnik conveys a suffocating atmosphere of captivity and surveillance, where human bonds are frail and the regime appears invincible. He also touches on different life choices under an oppressive regime, from fighting against the odds to denial and blissful ignorance. The comparison carries additional weight because Michnik is known to have fought for freedom from communism himself (I return to this later).

In an interview published in the same year, 1993, Ryszard Kapuściński brings together communism and apartheid and compares their collapse. Kapuściński notes that both regimes were overthrown through bloodless negotiations; moreover, he stresses that Poland first 'introduced and exercised' a model of negotiated transformation, which was inspiring for the oppressed peoples elsewhere (Kapuściński 1993). Examples from the following decade, 2000–2010, show that this notion of setting a model for peaceful revolution entered the public discourse. In 2007 the European Solidarity Centre was founded in Gdańsk and one of its statutory goals is 'sharing the achievement of peaceful struggle for freedom, justice, democracy and human rights with all people who are deprived of them'.¹⁹³ Similarly, during the 30th anniversary of the first Solidarity congress in 2011 much attention was given to anti-regime movements in North Africa. Delegations from Egypt and Tunisia were hosted in Gdańsk and prominent politicians, including Wałęsa and incumbent President Bronisław Komorowski, expressed solidarity with the

¹⁹³ In the European Solidarity Centre Foundation Contract, article 2.1.3; Source: <http://www.pomorskie.eu/res/BIP/Gdansk/ECS/umowa_ecs.pdf> (last accessed 3 April 2013).

movements and stressed that Poland could offer guidance on freedom struggle (Em|en 2011).

Other commentaries suggest that to achieve a peaceful transformation Poles, in turn, partially emulated the anti-colonial strategy of Gandhi. Some writings on Gandhi appeared in the underground press in the 1980s. An article by Jacek Lwowski in the underground magazine *Ogniwo* responds to non-violence initiatives in Poland, such as *Bez przemocy* (Without Violence) founded in 1984. The article questions the applicability of non-violence solutions in Poland, arguing that one could use them against British or US governments but not against the communists, who ignore public opinion and the law (1985:11). Lwowski suggests that Gandhi himself did not advocate non-violence indiscriminately and quotes a relevant passage from *Satyagraha* (M. K. Gandhi 1985). The question of applying Gandhian methods against totalitarian regimes is also critically addressed in George Orwell's essay 'Reflections on Gandhi', which appeared in Polish in the Krakow-based underground magazine *Arka*¹⁹⁴ (1984).

It is worth mentioning two more references to Gandhi in the records of the Polish opposition: both imply that there was both interest in his methods and reservations about their applicability. In his autobiography, Wałęsa presents himself as a follower of Gandhi's methods: he notes that his fellow activists believe that violent struggle is necessary against the communists and he admits that the communists in no way resemble the 'British gentlemen' whom Gandhi decided to confront with passive resistance. Yet, he insists that as a Nobel Peace prize laureate he is obliged to pursue peaceful solutions at all cost (Wałęsa 1991:5–6). Byrski, the Indologist, anecdotally recollects that during the Martial Law there was an attempt to practise civil resistance and economic boycott by means of a country-wide 'month of sobriety' initiative. The drop in alcohol sales was to affect the government, while abstinence was a valid cause, which governmental propaganda could hardly attack. Despite support from the church the project did not take off. Byrski speculates that 'perhaps Gandhi's methods are too exotic for Europeans' (1998), whereby he stresses perceived differences in political culture.

¹⁹⁴ Orwell writes, 'It is difficult to see how Gandhi's methods could be applied in a country where opponents of the regime disappear in the middle of the night and are never heard of again. Without a free press and the right of assembly, it is impossible not merely to appeal to outside opinion, but to bring a mass movement into being, or even to make your intentions known to your adversary' (Orwell 1950:101).

Gandhi is also evoked in comparisons with figures of anti-communist resistance; two examples merit a mention. First, Michnik is likened to Gandhi by Miłosz, who writes in an article entitled ‘Michnik – fighting without violence’ that he admires Michnik for his readiness to fight injustice regardless of personal costs, just as an Indian must have admired Gandhi (Miłosz 2006). The comment testifies to Michnik’s position as a veteran dissident and confirms my earlier point that a comparison of apartheid and communism by Michnik carries additional weight.

Second, a 2010 sand sculpture festival in Gdańsk, commemorating thirty years of the Solidarity trade union, was named ‘Solidarity between people and nations’ and the sculptures represented people and objects symbolizing that solidarity. There were the Polish heroes Wałęsa (see Fig. 29) and John Paul II, leaders of freedom struggles worldwide, such as Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Ky, as well as symbols of charitable and humanitarian work, e.g. Irena Sendler (who saved Jewish children during the Holocaust), a well in Sudan built by the Polish Humanitarian Action and international stars such as Bono and Angelina Jolie¹⁹⁵ (see Fig. 29). These examples feature ‘Gandhi’ as an iconic figure rather than Gandhi’s thought and actions, and as such they signal a process of iconization, which William Mazzarella describes as branding Gandhi as a ‘herald of peace’ and a ‘global saint’ (2010). The event is organized under the auspices of the Solidarity commemoration: by gathering around itself all the prominent figures, ‘Solidarity’ – as a set of values, a historical phenomenon and a sort of recognizable Polish ‘brand’ – benefits from national and international publicity.

[Illustrations removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).
Please see the links below.]

Fig. 29 Sand sculptures of Lech Wałęsa (left) and Angelina Jolie with a child (right), displayed at the 2010 sand sculpture festival in Gdańsk. Sources: <<http://mirki2.web-album.org/photo/303267,3-gdanski-festiwal-rzezby-z-piasku-5lipca-31-sierpnia-2009-1-lipca-31-sierpnia-2010>> ; <<http://mirki2.web-album.org/photo/303225,3-gdanski-festiwal-rzezby-z-piasku-5lipca-31-sierpnia-2009-1-lipca-31-sierpnia-2010>> (last accessed 22 September 2013).

The gathering of these figures in Gdańsk, Solidarity’s birthplace, under the umbrella phrase ‘Solidarity between people and nations’ can be read as imagining a

¹⁹⁵ Show business stars often have pride of place in press coverage of the event, e.g. one article was entitled ‘Angelina Jolie at the Gdańsk Beach’, playfully suggesting that the actress was present in person.

category of those struggling against needless suffering, enslavement and destitution – an inclusive category, which for Richard Rorty paves the way to solidarity (as noted in the thesis Introduction). I recognize that the category as envisaged by exhibition organizers is very broad, featuring those who struggle against suffering, whether or not they share the fate of the sufferers. Representation of Poles varies in this sense, as e.g. Wałęsa stands for the struggle against oppressors where he counted among the oppressed, whereas the well in Sudan symbolizes help in relieving humanitarian disasters which Poles do not experience. The entire grouping – including Gandhi and Jewish children, Bono and Wałęsa, etc. – does not immediately seem to have a salient common point of identification. Localized, bilateral comparisons mentioned earlier in this section are more tangible in this sense.

Probably the greatest sense of recognition can be glimpsed when Michnik finds the atmosphere of apartheid in Brink's novels chillingly familiar. His statement that Polish readers should easily recognize that atmosphere is an explicit indication of a shared experience of suffering, which can form a basis of solidary attitudes. Yet, he also remarks that Brink is *not* much read in Poland, which implies that it is Michnik himself who may be particularly sensitive to the similarity due to his dissident past. Miłosz's comparison of Michnik to Gandhi also implies a potent recognition of similarity between Polish and Indian paths to political independence, although, again, one can wonder to what extent this perspective is unique to an intellectual such as Miłosz and to what extent it reflects – and affects – the views of a broader public.

Indians, Poles and the American Dream

'An exotic novel about India talks about us too', Justyna Sobolewska comments on *Brzemie rzeczy utraconych (The Inheritance of Loss)* by the Indian author Kiran Desai (Desai 2007:65). Sobolewska, editor of the weekly *Przekrój*, conducted an interview with Desai and the above remark summarizes an editorial commentary accompanying the interview. The 'us' evoked by Sobolewska signifies a nationally and historically defined community of Poles or East Europeans (unlike the universalist 'us' described in Chapter Six). Desai's novel features separatist movements and class divisions in the Indian-Tibetan borderland in postcolonial India, complexes and mannerisms of the generations who remember British colonialism, as well as a hopeless day-to-day existence of illegal immigrants in the

USA; Sobolewska reads the novel as pertinent to Poles because of the postcolonial and Polish experiences of political instability, colonial complexes and, importantly, migration.

This explicit Polish-postcolonial comparison – one of the most explicit in my corpus – begins with a statement that ‘the instable world [of the novel], in which everyone can become a stranger, refugee and enemy, is very clear in this part of Europe’ (ibid.:64). The statement is addressed, at the beginning of the interview, to Desai, who responds affirmatively that she has often heard a similar point in Poland. This suggests that the postcolonial author is alerted to a sense of recognition Polish readers experience reading her book and is open to this reading: she does not dispute the comparison or stress the specificity of Indian postcoloniality in any way. The interview itself centres on Desai’s work but in a separate, conspicuous column of editorial commentary (see Fig. 30). Sobolewska develops the comparison further.

Developing the point about political instability Sobolewska writes, ‘[f]luidity of borders, resettlements, expulsion from the country – we have it in our blood’ (ibid.:65). She thus generally refers to the turmoil of the Partitions and two world wars in the nineteenth and twentieth century. She also notes that the ‘postcolonial complex’, which she characterizes as ‘a simultaneous feeling of admiration and contempt’ is familiar to Poles, too. ‘In Poland we feel similarly about our neighbours, the former colonizers and those whom we ourselves colonized’, Sobolewska states, recognizing Poland’s status as both the colonized and the colonizer (ibid.). This sort of recognition is relatively rare in my corpus and its significance lies in complicating the common narrative of Poland’s ‘Eastern Borderlands’.

[Illustration removed due to copyright restrictions (please see a note on p. 7).]

Fig. 30 Layout of Justyna Sobolewska’s interview with Kiran Desai.

Another crucial theme in Sobolewska’s commentary concerns migration for economic reasons to the USA. One of Desai’s characters, Biju, set off to the USA seeking a better life but found only fierce competition, fear of deportation and contempt. His American stay captures the imagination of most characters, who impatiently await his letters in India. Desai skilfully shows discrepancies between the

letters, where Biju conjures up the success expected of him, and the squalor of his existence in fast food kitchens and overcrowded lodgings in New York. Sobolewska sees a parallel between the American sub-plot and the experience of generations of Poles. She comments that ‘the scenes from a queue for an American visa could be happening in Warsaw twenty years ago’ (ibid.), referring to a dream of American prosperity that urged Poles in the 1980s, and other periods, to seek opportunities to emigrate.

Economic emigration to the USA has been a wide-spread phenomenon in Polish history since the nineteenth century. Discussing the phenomenon and its reflections in literature falls beyond the scope of this thesis but I would like to mention one contemporary Polish text, which the US emigration plot of *The Inheritance of Loss* reminds me of. It is Edward Redliński’s novel *Szczuropolacy* (1994; Rat-Poles):¹⁹⁶ like Desai’s novel, it uncovers the squalor of New York immigrant slums. It depicts Polish immigrants living in a crowded flat-share and facing various problems, from depression and self-contempt, to moral dilemmas regarding advances of an elderly boss, to loss of years’ savings and violent threats from other nationalities competing for work. Reacting to New York in different ways, most characters share a deep-felt disillusionment with the American dream. References to rats underscore a sense of being treated like a pest and pushed underground; the narrator says,

Here everyone: is chasing or being chased...
Everyone is robbing or being robbed.
Attacking or defending oneself.
A city of fighting. Yes, fighting. Because it’s not a rat race. Race – that’s too elegant a word¹⁹⁷ (Redliński 1994:157).

This synopsis of *Szczuropolacy* illustrates Sobolewska’s point that the story of Biju’s emigration, from the hopes in the embassy queue to the sense of entrapment in America, is all too familiar to Polish readers.

In her commentary Sobolewska insists on shared Polish-postcolonial experiences – political volatility, complexes towards other nations and migration – which could provide base for a common identification. Particularly, experiences of

¹⁹⁶ The book has had at least three editions (1997, 2000, 2010; in 1997 the title was changed to *Szczurolajcy* (Rat-Yorkers)). It was adapted for the screen in 1997 as *Szczęśliwego Nowego Jorku* (Happy New York), written by Redliński, directed by Janusz Zaorski, starring such popular actors as Katarzyna Figura, Bogusław Linda, Cezary Pazura and Zbigniew Zamachowski.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Tu każdy – jest ścigany, albo ściga.../Jest okradany, albo okrada./Broni się albo atakuje./Miasto walki. Tak, walki. Walki szczurów. Bo to nie wyścig. Wyścig – za elegancko powiedziane’.

resettlement and emigration may be salient enough to co-define one's identity and a sense of being 'a migrant' may give rise to solidarity with 'fellow migrants', above the differences of nationality, ethnicity and so forth.

Statements of Similarity: Developments (1970–2010)

I have presented close readings of reviews from four decades, touching upon particular issues that emerged as important in each decade. A comparison between Negritude and Polish Romanticism appeared in the 1970s, when the topic of Polish and anti-colonial independence struggles was often addressed. In the late 1980s Habibi's story of Saeed, who is torn between serving Israel and solidarity with fellow Palestinians, made reviewers use such terms as 'half-Wallenrod', 'ketman' and 'opportunist sting', resonating with timely debates about Miłosz's and others' relationship to Stalinism. In the 1990s one could freely compare colonial and postcolonial regimes with communism in Poland – Michnik did that in a review of Brink, noting a strangeness of the South African setting, universal qualities of the stories and the similarity between apartheid and communism. The theme of migration was central in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when Poland entered the EU; it is also central to Sobolewska's comparison of Poland and the postcolonial India of Desai's novel. In the remaining part of the chapter I offer a more thorough description of the discursive developments regarding Polish-postcolonial similarity.

1970–1979

In the reviews from the 1970s I encounter comparisons between anti-colonial and postcolonial struggles and the Polish independence struggle during the Partitions and World War Two; they constitute approximately seven per cent of all the reviews from the decade. The Partitions period is evoked indirectly, through literary phrases associated with independence struggle, which have entered the Polish language. For example, Stolarek calls Césaire's poetry an attempt at 'moving the terrestrial globe away from its base' (*ruszanie bryły z posad świata*), using a well-known phrase from Mickiewicz's 'Ode to Youth' (1820), generally read as a manifesto of youthful

vitality and a call to action.¹⁹⁸ The phrase accentuates Stolarek's point that Césaire, both a poet and a politician, summons the word to change the world (1978:216). Similarly, in an article on Syrian literature Elżbieta Jachołkowska-Bator (1976) remarks that Ma'ruf Arna'ut (1892–1948) wrote his novels 'to uplift the hearts' (*ku pokrzepieniu serc*): the phrase was coined by Sienkiewicz, who wanted his historical novels, written during the Partitions but portraying the greatness and heroism of seventeenth-century Poland, to uplift the spirits of his readers.

There are also three comparisons between colonization and World War Two. Two come from postcolonial interlocutors of Polish journalists. In an interview quoted in Chapter Four on knowledge, the Indian ambassador and editor of a short stories collection Natwar-Singh says that his generation remembers both colonialism in India and the Polish tragedy during WWII, wherefore it understands Poland very well. As I suggested earlier, Natwar-Singh speaks, first and foremost, in accordance with diplomatic protocol. A similar statement is quoted by Zbigniew Reszelewski, who reports that a South African writer with whom he corresponded, Nat Nakasa (1937–1965), wrote in a letter that he had grown up under circumstances that Reszelewski could not relate to, although Reszelewski's parents, who had experienced German occupation, could. Although it lies outside my focus here, these examples invite questions about the perceptions of Poland in postcolonial countries and, in this case, the narratives of WWII that dominated there.

One more example featuring WWII appears in Stolarek's review of *Królewski taniec* (*La danse du roi*) by Mohammed Dib. Stolarek establishes that Dib deals with war, which is a familiar theme to Poles. However, he warns that even in the comprehensive Polish war literature 'one will not find equivalents of many an Algerian situation' (Stolarek 1977:19). One such unfamiliar situation, according to Stolarek, is a scene from an autobiographical book by Djamel Amrani (1935–2005), *Le Témoin* (1960). Amrani describes how during an interrogation he underwent as a participant of the Algerian independence movement, a French officer made him list

¹⁹⁸ The phrase derives from the following stanza, quoted here in the original and in Michael J. Mikoś's translation: 'Hej! ramię do ramienia! spólnymi łańcuchy/ Opaszmy ziemskie kolisko!/ Zestrzelmy myśli w jedno ognisko/ I w jedno ognisko duchy!.../ Dalej, bryło, z posad świata!/ Nowymi cię pchniemy tory,/ Aż opleśniałej zbywszy się kory,/ Zielone przypomnisz lata' (Mickiewicz 1998a); 'So shoulder to shoulder! As with a common chain/ Let us encircle the whole planet!/ Let's swiftly aim our thoughts at one target/ And spirits into one domain!/ Terrestrial globe, away from your base!/ We will push you onto a new lane,/ Until freed from moldy bark once again,/ You will recall your verdant days' (Mickiewicz 1998b).

works of Montesquieu to finally announce that if Amrani had read *The Spirit of the Laws* he should have abided by the law (Amrani 1960:33–34). Stolarek observes that although the physical torture the officer inflicted on the prisoner as he was driving his point home will be a recognizable image for the Polish reader, the rest of the scene will not. He presumably means that colonization involved orchestrated Gallicization, whereby it was harder for Algerian insurgents to draw a line between the enemy's culture and their own than it was for Polish resistance during a five-year German occupation.¹⁹⁹ All these three comments, coming from Indian, South African and Polish participants of the cultural traffic between the 'third' and 'second world', confirm that WWII was pivotal for identifying with the experiences of others, even if not all experiences could be neatly compared.

It is not surprising that WWII emerged as a pivotal point of reference given that anti-German sentiments were encouraged by the Party. References to Soviet domination were not accepted, although in a 1976 text I find an ironic allusion to Stalinism (which had been condemned since Khrushchev's criticism of the 'personality cult' in 1956). In an article on Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, Zbigniew Białas remarks that if the novel had been written in the 1950s in Eastern Europe, socio-political aspects of the plot would have been resolved in a univocally happy ending (rather than a suspended one). Białas says that 'the forces of reaction would have suffered a devastating defeat, in tune with the principles of historical justice, and the morning star of freedom would shine over the reborn country' (Białas 1976:120). He thus alludes to ideological demands of social realism in literature and mobilizes (to a potentially parodic effect) the formulaic language of the Stalinist period. The 'morning star of freedom' (*jutrzenka swobody*), a phrase from Mickiewicz's *Ode to Youth*,²⁰⁰ exemplifies the phenomenon of co-opting Romantic and other patriotic phrases in the service of communist newspeak, although Białas only includes it in a (parodic) citation, rather than using it in this manner himself.

¹⁹⁹ However, one can wonder if the processes of deculturation and interpellation were not comparable to the severe Germanization and Russification policies in the Prussian and Russian Partitions in the nineteenth century.

²⁰⁰ The final stanza of the ode reads: 'Pryskają nieczule lody/ I przesady światło ćmiące;/ Witaj jutrzeńko swobody,/ Zbawienia za tobą słońce!' (Mickiewicz 1998a); and in Mikoś's translation: 'The numb icecaps suddenly quail,/ So does prejudice that dims light's radiance./ O morning star of freedom, hail,/ Behind you the sun of deliverance!' (Mickiewicz 1998b).

1980–1989

In the reviews from the 1980s the earlier comparisons reappear and allusions to the problems of contemporary communist Poland gain prominence. The comparisons feature in about ten per cent of all the reviews (i.e. slightly more often than in the 1970s). Regarding the comparison to the Partitions, in addition to the references to Wallenrod in the reviews of Habibi's novella (discussed earlier), I find an interesting comment on similarity between Gordimer's South African short stories and the novellas of the Polish writer Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841–1910). Maria Bojarska, whose idiosyncratic review of Tutuola was discussed in Chapters Five and Six, remarks that Orzeszkowa, like Gordimer, depicted a world of political, social and economic conflicts: '[Orzeszkowa], too, had to divide the world into two parts (Poland, Russia; gentlewomen, peasant woman . . .; a stupid parvenu, . . . a wounded freedom fighter [*powstaniec*], etc., etc.)' (Bojarska 1985:103). The opposition between Poland and Russia in Orzeszkowa's worldview is probably supposed to signify a gap between a colonized and a colonizer, comparable to that between the indigenous black population of South Africa and the white settlers, while the other oppositions signal social divisions and different life choices and circumstances.

A comparison related to WWII appears with reference to Soyinka's *The Man Died. Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka* (1972). The notes, written during Soyinka's incarceration by the regime of general Yakubu Gowon at the time of the Nigerian civil war (1967–70), are sometimes likened to *Reportáž psaná na oprátce* (1945; *Report from the Gallows*, trans. Stephen Jolly) by Julius Fučík (1903–43). Fučík was a Czech journalist and member of communist anti-Nazi resistance, who was captured and executed by the Nazis in 1943. He wrote his notes in prison, waiting for execution. Polish reviewers do not take credit for the comparison but mention that they encounter it in 'Soyinka criticism' (Rurawski 1987; Sadkowski 1986; Stanisław Piłaszewicz 1987b). This comparison rests on the similarity of the tragic situation in which the 'notes' and the 'report' were written and their uncompromising defence of human dignity and freedom, which echoes with universalist ideals. At the same time, the juxtaposition of Soyinka and Fučík brings together opposition against Germans during WWII and against a postcolonial regime in Nigeria. However, it evokes not Polish but Czech and communist anti-German resistance. Given that Fučík was championed as a martyr by the communists in the whole bloc, Polish readers critical

of the Party (and the communist narrative of WWII condemning Nazi atrocities and trumpeting Soviet liberation) may not identify with this example.

Some statements incorporate comparisons of colonial and postcolonial regimes with communism. In the first half of the 1980s statements implicitly likening Gandhi-led resistance in India and anti-communist opposition, mentioned earlier in this chapter, appeared occasionally in the underground press. Towards the end of the decade similar comments entered the official circulation. In an article on Soyinka Marek Jodłowski stresses that Soyinka's commitment to the individual was the target of criticism: 'he was accused of insufficient "negritude" and undervaluing the working masses (sounds familiar, doesn't it?)' (Jodłowski 1987:11). Through the understatement in brackets Jodłowski addresses his readers, who should recognize in the accusations of Soyinka the ideological prescriptivism of communist Poland. In a 1988 article on African literature Andrzej Tchórzewski states that *Sądny dzień w Ibali (Kinsman and Foreman)* by Timothy Aluko 'reads like a novel about Polish corruption and bureaucracy' (1988). Here the criticism is directed less at ideological pressures and more at the Party's ineptitude and the tedium of red tape and bribery. References to Miłosz's *The Captive Mind* in 1988 reviews of Habibi also indicated that commentaries at postcolonial and Polish dependence incorporated allusions to communism.

In 1989, at a time of declining censorship, some articles on the so-called Rushdie affair included comments in which the stifling of free expression by the Iranian regime and other fundamentalist forces is compared to ideological control under communism. In a piece 'Khomeini and Rushdie', republished in *Literatura na Świecie* after *The New Perspectives Quarterly*, Kapuściński analyses the *fatwa* as manifestation of a conflict between writers and tyrants, or democracy and dictatorship. He utilizes his own geopolitical perspective, stating that for a Central-East European the case is no novelty: Hitler, Stalin and Ceaușescu murdered writers, silenced them and destroyed their work (Kapuściński 1989:320–21). Kapuściński also implies kinship between East European and postcolonial views of the writer as 'a conscience, a fighter', which he contrasts with an escapist and aestheticist notion of literature prevalent in the West. In a solemn tone, Kapuściński declares that Rushdie 'reinstates the seriousness of literature, he reinstates its pride and its dignity' (ibid.:322).

Next to Rushdie's piece *Literatura na Świecie* reprinted statements of solidarity with Rushdie by fellow authors, including Miłosz, Michnik and the Czech-born migrant author Josef Škvorecký, which originally appeared in *New York Times Review of Books*.²⁰¹ As though confirming Kapuściński's point that East Europeans (and their dictators) treat literature seriously, these authors testify that they have experienced persecution and censorship, which makes them particularly sympathetic to defending freedom of speech and Rushdie's security (Vargas Llosa et al. 1989:324,326). Besides, Adam Szostkiewicz evokes communist totalitarianism through an allusion to Orwell's *1984* when he states that Rushdie must write as he pleases because literature does not obey thought police (1989).

At the same time, I encounter expressions of solidarity with Muslims (offended by *The Satanic Verses*), which come from Catholic circles. In a pro-governmental magazine with a Catholic profile *Za i Przeciw*, a reviewer notes that although the death sentence on Rushdie is condemnable, 'leftist' and 'liberal' critics fail to see that offending religious beliefs is also a regrettable act (Kot). As I mentioned earlier, conservative Catholic circles gathered around the Christian nationalist party (ZChN) protested against publishing *The Satanic Verses* in Polish. Zbigniew Broniarek, a journalist and writer, also explores a Catholic perspective on the matter but to comprehend the outrage of Muslims rather than endorse it. Broniarek reasons that if someone called Holy Mother 'a . . . may the reader guess what', Poles would also be protesting (1989).

Another issue surfacing in the public discourse during the gradual demise of censorship concerns the history of resettlement. In an article on Rushdie in the regional daily *Głos Szczeciński* (Szczecin Voice), Anna Podkańska digresses about the role of history in *Midnight's Children*. Podkańska recommends that her readers look with the eyes of Rushdie's protagonist Salim on their own lives and asks: 'Don't the phenomena described in the novel occur in the old, wise Europe too?' She continues with a more localized reference, asking how many inhabitants of Szczecin would not say that they had been 'enmeshed in a series of complications' by history rather than their own choices. Salim's family's migration from Kashmir to Delhi, to Bombay, to Pakistan is thus implicitly compared with the historical experiences of Szczecin inhabitants, many of whom would have been resettled from the eastern

²⁰¹ The article can be accessed online at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/04/18/specials/rushdie-words.html>> (last accessed 15 March 2013).

territories (or ‘Borderlands’) of pre-war Poland to the territories in the West (including Szczecin), connected after Poland’s borders were redrawn by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in Yalta in 1945 (see a map in Chapter One, Fig. 14). ‘History’ – manifested in the outcome of the Yalta conference – certainly enmeshed the forced migrants in complications on a mass scale.

Podkańska’s comparison evokes narratives of the region which were marginalized under communism: narratives of post-war Szczecin settlement and, consequently, personal losses of old homelands, as well as the national ‘loss’ of the eastern ‘Borderlands’ and sovereignty to Stalin. Moreover, narratives of migrants from the corners of the pre-war Poland imply a certain plurality of ‘Polishness’, contrary to a binding vision of ideological and national unity. It is instructive to confront Podkańska’s Polish-Indian comparison with the newspaper’s profile: a Party daily, *Głos Szczeciński* features the slogan ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ on its front cover. Under the slogan, there is the Pomeranian coat of arms with the inscription ‘Nie rzucim ziemi skąd nasz ród’ – ‘We won’t abandon the land whence our kin’ (Konopnicka 2000) – the first line of a patriotic hymn calling for indomitable resistance to Germanization²⁰² (see Fig. 31 & Fig. 32). The official narratives signalled on the paper’s front page can be summarized as communist internationalism (by the 1980s void of internationalist aspirations) and Polish nationalism (reinstating the Polishness of Pomerania). In 1989, before the end of the system represented by *Głos*, Podkańska is inspired by an Indian novel to challenge these narratives by signalling a multiplicity of Polish stories.

²⁰² *Rota* (1908; *The Oath*); written by the author Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) to protest against tightening Germanization, particularly against a ban on Polish-language religion lessons in the Prussian Partition. *Rota* was first performed – to music by Feliks Nowowiejski (1877–1946) – in 1910 at the 500th anniversary of the Grunwald battle to celebrate the victory of Polish-Lithuanian army over Teutonic Knights. Lena Magnone observes that due to dense national symbolism, reaffirming the Polish character of the then Prussian Partition (western part of today’s Poland), *Rota* was used by the party of national democrats, who opted for reconstructing the Polish state in the historic borders of the eleventh-century Piast kings, including Silesia and Pomerania (2008:255–56).



Fig. 31 Front page of *Głos Szczeciński* (30 June 1989).



Fig. 32 Close up of the upper left corner of the front page of *Głos Szczeciński* (30 June 1989).

Another matter which was unwelcome in the official press but was raised in an emigration article concerned the conditions of Polish migrant writers. Wojciech Skalmowski, using the penname Broński, likens Naipaul to Witold Gombrowicz. In an enthusiastic article on Naipaul, discussed in Chapter Five, Skalmowski states that both authors exhibit intellectual non-conformism, irreverently addressing taboo problems (Broński 1982:53). In a later article, also in the Paris *Kultura*, Skalmowski expands on the Naipaul-Gombrowicz comparison, focusing on their philosophical programmes but also their migrant biographies. He argues that both authors depict a human being in the state of becoming, placed between externality (or Gombrowicz's 'form') and self-creating spontaneity (Gombrowicz's 'youth'). However, Skalmowski finds that Gombrowicz is 'nihilistic', as Gombrowicz believes that one can neither find a truly fitting form nor break free from form, whereas Naipaul is cautiously optimistic and believes that one could find self-realisation thanks to civilization. Skalmowski suggests that the worldviews may have biographical

underpinnings, as for Gombrowicz moving to Argentina is degradation (even if he embraces it, considering all ‘high’ civilization a hypertrophy of form), while for Naipaul immigration to England is advancement and he treasures civilization as a protection against ‘bush’ (1989).

1990–1999

Reviewers in the 1990s shift their attention to the issues already signalled in the 1980s, particularly migration and migrant authors. The number of relevant comparisons is just under ten per cent of all the reviews, i.e. similar to that in the 1980s. Partitions and WWII are sometimes still evoked. For example in the article quoted at length in the chapter introduction, Sławomir Magala calls the partitioning ‘a sort of partial and temporary colonization’, adding that twentieth-century German and Russian expansionism, i.e. WWII and Soviet subjugation of Poland, made Eastern Europe into of a pawn in political game (1995:74). In Zaworska’s review of Coetzee, examined in Chapter Five, there is a sympathetic comment on Micheal K. (from *Life and Times of Michael K.*). Zaworska writes that South Africa is a country of camps about which ‘we [Poles] know very little, preoccupied as we are with our historical camp martyrology. We don’t always realize that the time of camps is not over’ (1997). She thus calls on Poles to transcend their experiences of oppression and extend their solidarity to victims in other parts of the world. Both these comments signal the communist period, too, as Magala mentions Russian expansionism, whereas Zaworska’s ‘camps’ can signify not only concentration camps of WWII but also Soviet lagers and communist detention camps.

I find a few more comparisons of communism and colonial and postcolonial regimes in the 1990s. To recall an example presented in the close readings section, Michnik was amazed at the resemblance between the atmosphere under communism and under apartheid described by Brink. Besides, Turand remembers that he smuggled in to India a forbidden book– a copy of *Midnight’s Children*, which was banned for an unfavourable portrayal of Indira Gandhi – and adds that the practice of smuggling books was familiar to Poles (1991). Miłkowski (1991) agrees with Kapuściński’s statement that the dignity of literature was at stake in the ‘Rushdie affair’ and stresses that in Poland literature does not serve mere entertainment (this comment refers not specifically to communism but, generally, to Polish history, in which literature was mobilized against tyrants).

Magala's comprehensive list of 'colonial' aspects of Polish history includes migration of talented individuals to civilizational centres as a symptom of Poland's peripherality. Generally, under the rubric of migration one can list political exile, economic migration and forced resettlement: all these are mentioned in reviews from the 1990s. An emphatic, if brief, comment appears in an article on Rushdie by the Iranian studies scholar, Anna Krasnowolska (who was accused of incompetence by the Iranian embassy, as shown in Chapter Four). Krasnowolska believes that due to the *fatwa* commentators overlook the central theme of *The Satanic Verses*, i.e. the condition of immigrants in Europe: problems with adaptation, cultural strangeness and hostility of xenophobes in the host societies. She is convinced that these themes should be of interest to Polish critics because 'the emigrant complex has concerned Poles, too, for many generations' and because the budding xenophobia is also a Polish problem (Krasnowolska 1994a). She thus shows Poland not only as a country of émigrés but also a host country, which is a rare perspective in my corpus.

The emigrant perspective is also mentioned in a review of Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, a story of an Indian woman coming to the USA. The reviewer remarks that the character sees America with fresh eyes and such a vantage point is attractive for American readers. Yet, she also says: 'here is where the book ends for Americans and starts for me. I can easily imagine not only the Indian woman, but also myself as the Indian woman' (Czekanowicz 1993). This declaration of an ability to identify more fully with the character, despite a cultural difference, must stem from the cultural memory of Polish experiences of immigration (outlined in the discussion of *The Inheritance of Loss* earlier in the chapter). The identification may also be facilitated by a shared gender.

A related theme, which after 1989 can see the light of day, concerns migrant authors. Postcolonial authors are compared to Conrad – who was sometimes referred to in the earlier decades – but also to more contemporary authors such as Gombrowicz and Miłosz, who used to be, to a smaller or greater extent, blacklisted. For instance, Mroziwicz, a journalist and an ambassador in India in the second half of the 1990s, contrasts Rushdie's position in Britain with that of Conrad: 'All [Rushdie's] writing . . . is an attempt to free himself from the roots, which must be more of an obstacle in London for a swarthy-skinned author than they were for Conrad' (1993). This altogether debatable opinion that Rushdie should strive for assimilation into British society is based on Rushdie's talk, which Mroziwicz

attended in India and did not like. He thought that Rushdie patronized the Indian audience to compensate for the discrimination he experienced as a brown immigrant in London. Mroziejewicz implies that, as a foreigner, Conrad would have also been discriminated against in Britain but his situation would have been easier overall because of his white skin. This is one of several utterances in the corpus which contrast the situations of East European and postcolonial migrants but one of very few which name race as certain advantage the former have.²⁰³

Skalmowski published one article in the 'free', post-1989 Polish press, in which he condensed some of his ideas on Naipaul and Gombrowicz presented on emigration in the 1980s (Skalmowski 1995). Witold Turand also refers to Gombrowicz in a text on Rushdie, stating that both these authors are critical of the societies from which they derive, i.e. Pakistan, India and Poland.²⁰⁴ He argues that looking from outside they can describe 'stupidity, poverty and pointless fights' (which, in his view, constitute histories of most countries) but their critical insights are resented by their compatriots (1991:113). Turand also mentions other migrant authors, Miłosz and Mickiewicz, born in the territories of today's Lithuania and Belarus. Moreover, he raises the question of Polish-German borderlands, comparing Rushdie with yet another migrant author, albeit not Polish: Günter Grass. An acclaimed German author, Grass grew up in Danzig (today's Gdańsk), which he left when Pomerania became part of Poland after 1945 (ibid.). Despite the strong Polish notion of the Polishness of Pomerania, Turand acknowledges that the displacement of Germans also amounted to a loss of homeland.²⁰⁵

2000–2010

In the 2000s historical upheavals experienced by Poles and postcolonial peoples continue to trigger comparative remarks, whose overall percentage rises

²⁰³ A relevant comment on migrant authors also appears in Florczak (1990:60).

²⁰⁴ Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) was read as a satirical depiction of Pakistan, while his *Midnight's Children* (1980) was ill-received in India for its criticism of Indira Gandhi. *The Satanic Verses* (1988), which engages with the founding years of Islam, caused outrage in many countries inhabited by Muslims. Gombrowicz in his oeuvre championed uninhibited cultural 'youth' and ridiculed Polish national dogmas, mostly of Romantic provenance, and parochial, misguided aspirations to cultural seniority.

²⁰⁵ Grass himself was aware of a similarity between his experience and that of a person in a postcolonial region. In an interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, occasioned by the celebration of a millenium of Gdańsk's existence, Grass was asked about his experience of expulsion. He replied that it was primarily a loss of childhood and added that when he had been interviewed by BBC together with Salman Rushdie, Rushdie had said that they had much in common and both obsessively wrote about a lost childhood, in Bombay and Danzig (Grass 1997).

slightly in comparison to the 1990s, reaching about thirteen per cent. As in the 1990s, the theme of migration takes centre-stage: after the year 2000 it also includes comments on the most contemporary wave of Polish emigration to the United Kingdom and on the question of multiculturalism.

References to the Partitions and WWII are still present, albeit less prominent. Partitions are evoked in an article on Mahmoud Darwish, who is likened to Mickiewicz and Słowacki. It is suggested that the Palestinian and the Polish poets had to address predicaments of their peoples and that history and politics determined their artistic development. The article was written by Hanna Jankowska, a translator from Arabic, and appeared in *Lewa nogą*, a niche leftist magazine. While before 1989 comparative comments on Palestine featured in the mainstream press, post-1989 this tends to change.²⁰⁶ Regarding WWII, a potent analogy between resistance to the Nazis and to Islamic fundamentalists emerges from an interview with Michał Borowski, a Pole who in his Swedish flat hosted Rushdie when the writer was in hiding. Borowski explains that he helped Rushdie because Borowski's father, a Jew, had been given shelter during WWII and thus survived the Holocaust (Borowski 2006). This expression of solidarity with a hunted postcolonial writer, presented as a response to an earlier act of solidarity with a Jewish man, is one of the few instances in my corpus where history of Polish Jews is evoked as an integral part of Poland's history.

Analogies with communism appear relatively often. For instance, in a favourable article on Naipaul Marek Zagańczyk wishes someone like Naipaul had written the history of 'new people and new ideas imposed forcefully, against common sense', i.e., as far as I understand, the history of Poland's communist period (2004:88). Like Skalmowski (Broński 1982), Zagańczyk wants to see Poland through Naipaul's eyes. However, where Skalmowski read and admired Naipaul as a merciless critic of the third world, Zagańczyk finds Naipaul's attitudes carefully balanced, stating that Naipaul shows 'curiosity for all the parties involved and understanding for human smallness' (Zagańczyk 2004:88). Besides, authoritarian mechanisms of communism are evoked in reviews of Rushdie's *Wstyd (Shame)* – by means of a comment that Poland recently experienced army rule just like the

²⁰⁶ This change correlates with a general shift in Polish foreign policy: the Soviet bloc generally supported Arab countries against Israel and the USA, while after 1989 Poland decided on rapprochement with Israel and alliance with the USA.

fictionalized Pakistan (Masłoń 2000:15) – and of Brink’s *Zanim zapomnę* (*Before I Forget*), where the motif of a woman spying on her lover for the state is considered reminiscent of the stratagems of communist secret police (Grodecka 2010). There is also Miłosz’s praise for Michnik’s Gandhi-like service in anti-communist resistance, mentioned earlier in the chapter. Last but not least, in an interview for a Polish paper Rushdie compares dissidents against Islamic regimes to anti-communist dissidents of the Cold War era (2006).

As far as the theme of migrant authors is concerned, Conrad remains a flagship example. In a review of Yasmin Khadra’s book, Aleksander Kaczorowski notes that attitudes to foreign authors writing in West European languages have changed. While in the past ‘Józef Korzeniowski had to become Joseph Conrad to be successful’, currently an ‘exotic’ name is not an obstacle but an asset (2006:102). In his Polish interview Rushdie evokes Conrad to clarify his own status: as I noted in the beginning to contextualize the introductory *Mail Online* quote, for Rushdie Conrad was a proof that writers could successfully change the language of their art and Rushdie’s own writing career took that route (Rushdie 2006a). In an article on Naipaul, Ryszard Sawicki claims that Naipaul lacks ‘a clearly defined sense of national belonging’, whereby his situation resembles that of Poles living in the UK, USA or France (2002:211). Sawicki adds a personalized comment that it must be difficult for Naipaul to adapt to new places and climates (also in the literal sense), as he himself feels confused by Polish winters after a ten-year emigration in California. Another comparison, of Coetzee and Miłosz, suggests that transcending one’s roots was necessary for these writers, coming from ‘the cultural fringes’ (*kulturowe obrzeża*), in order to function in Western literature (Sowiński 2010:142).

Post-2004 Polish migration to the UK enters the picture too, becoming a point of reference for postcolonial authors who give interviews to Polish journalists. In an interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Mohsin Hamid, an author of Pakistani origin, is asked to comment on London immigration. He responds by noting the arrival of East European migrants, including Poles, and adds: ‘thanks to them we, as immigrants, have become for most part a group of white people’ (Hamid 2008). Unlike Mrozwicz, who in the 1990s pitted ‘white’ Conrad against ‘swarthy’ Rushdie, Hamid speaks about immigrants of all races and origins in the first person plural, as one grouping. In an interview for *Rzeczpospolita*, Nikita Lalwani, a British-Indian author, shares her view that migration requires an adaptation phase, when newcomers

cease to divide people into ‘us’ and ‘them’. She adds that new Polish immigrants in the UK must be experiencing this phase and once demarcation lines blur, she says, ‘we will begin to occupy the same space together’ (Lalwani 2008). Like Hamid, Lalwani envisages a UK immigrant community as one entity, even though her comment implies that ‘new’ immigrants, including Poles, do not subscribe to such a community yet.

A migration-related theme to emerge in the 2000s concerns multiculturalism. The London of Zadie Smith’s *Białe zęby* (*White Teeth*) seizes reviewers’ imagination as a multicultural microcosm, where conflicts may flourish but so does fruitful cultural exchange. The reviewers hold Smith’s text up as a mirror to the Polish public. Szostkiewicz insists that it be read ‘as a book about Poland’, drawing a parallel between Smith’s London and the Poland of the near future: ‘the Poland in which we will live, when in some five or fifteen years we will become an integral part of a multiethnic, multicultural Europe and world’ (Szostkiewicz et al. 2002). However, he warns that that Poland might not materialize and *Białe zęby* could remain a novel about ‘the Poland which we won’t have if we see in Poland the victory of the forces that claim to guard tradition . . . and wish no “motley” here’ (ibid.).

Prompted by Smith’s novel, Szostkiewicz projects alternative visions of Poland’s future: integration with Western Europe or descent into ill-conceived traditionalism. Entering ‘Europe’ and ‘the world’ is here envisaged as unification with a diverse, global community; that is juxtaposed with a path of homogenizing isolation and xenophobia. Like Krasnowolska in the mid-1990s, Szostkiewicz envisages Poland as a host country for migrants and he too is wary of the reception larger numbers of immigrants can expect. The review was written less than eight months before Poland’s EU accession referendum (7–8 June 2003), so its pro-European tone may have resonated with timely debates about Poland’s alliances and development.

Szostkiewicz also complains that contemporary Polish literature, with the exception of Dorota Masłowska, has been ignoring societal tensions in Poland and presenting ‘homogenized or idealized worlds’²⁰⁷ (ibid.). The feminist critic

²⁰⁷ Masłowska first became known as the author of *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną* (2002; *White and Red*, trans. Benjamin Paloff, 2005), which Szostkiewicz calls a political grotesque with a potential for destruction and reconstruction of meanings. Famous for a bold stylization and

Kazimiera Szczuka is also aware of Polish tensions and resentments but sees no Polish counterparts of Smith or equivalents of the postcolonial novel. Szczuka states that ‘the Polish novel has yet to enter a post-xenophobic or post-anti-Semitic phase, equivalent to Western postcolonialism’ (Szostkiewicz et al. 2002).

Szostkiewicz and Szczuka treat (postcolonial) literature as a tool for dissecting social and cultural complexities; another reviewer thinks of multiculturalism as a myth of an idealized past, which literature can record. Reviewing *Bogini z tygrysem* (*The Tiger Ladies: A Memoir of Kashmir*) by Sudha Koul, Małgorzata Baranowska observes that ‘despite an exotic setting’ she feels that someone could write about the ‘Eastern Borderlands’ (*Kresy*) as a peaceful multinational, multireligious region (2003:46). She admits that such idyllic portrayals lack verisimilitude but can understand the author’s impulse to create an idealized image of the land of her childhood. This may suggest that she is aware of the appropriative character of Polish narratives on the ‘loss’ of the Borderlands.

In addition to the tangible questions of history, struggle and migration, reviewers occasionally touch upon psychological aspects of political and socio-economic marginalization. As noted in the close reading, Sobolewska found *The Inheritance of Loss* reminiscent not only of Polish experiences of economic emigration but also of a ‘postcolonial complex’, ‘a simultaneous feeling of admiration and contempt’ (2007). In a review of Tejpal’s *Alchemia pożądania* (*The Alchemy of Desire*), Lech Budrecki points out the following similarities in the mentality of contemporary Hindus and Poles: ‘parochialism, anachronism, a sense of mission and resentment against the whole world’, as well as a sense of peripherality (Budrecki 2007). These seemingly contradictory feelings of exceptional mission and parochialism or peripherality may be taken to signal both inferiority and superiority complexes, or feelings of contempt mixed with adoration for others.

One more opinion on this issue comes from Mrozek. In an interview he admits similarities between himself and Naipaul, based on their peripheral origins (Trinidad, Poland) and migration to West European centres. The interviewer also provocatively asks if Poland should not follow other peripheral countries and ‘flaunt its sufferings’, which, the interview adds, ‘is now called “postcolonialism”’. To that Mrozek quickly

narrated by a perceptive hooligan, the novel signals animosity towards strangers, particularly ‘Russkie’, as well as post-transformation social and economic tensions. Masłowska has written other novels and a play since her debut.

answers that Poland definitely should *not* do it (Mrożek 2007). Unsympathetic to the idea of flaunting one's marginality, and personally identifying with Naipaul's ambition to reach a civilizational centre, Mrożek confirms the views he and Skalmowski expressed in their letters (examined in Chapter Five), in particular their profound dislike of what they saw as leftist celebration of self-pity. Mrożek differs in his attitude to peripherality from the other commentators, as Sobolewska and Budrecki are eager to learn something about themselves from comparisons with postcolonial countries and with the help of postcolonial criticism, whereas Mrożek is averse to the discourses of postcolonialism, which he associates with leftist viewpoints and apology for weakness.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown that reviewers do perceive similarities between Poles and various postcolonial peoples with regard to shared historical experiences. The main experiences featured in the examples include political and cultural bondage and resistance against oppressors – in the contexts of British colonialism in India, French colonialism in Algeria, apartheid in South Africa, as well as Russian and Prussian partitioning, German occupation and Soviet dominance in Poland – and migration, whether triggered by a re-drawing of borders, political danger or economic and personal aspirations (from Palestine, from Kashmir, from Lwów, from Warsaw, from Trinidad, to New York, to London, to Szczecin, to Paris). Other, perhaps less obvious, similarities emerge too: between writers who treasure freedom of expression, maintaining a complex connection with 'their' communities (Rushdie, Miłosz, Naipaul, Mrożek, Gombrowicz), between diverse contributors to efforts for human freedom and dignity (Wałęsa, Gandhi, Michnik, Mandela, Angelina Jolie, Michał Borowski), between believers (Muslims, Catholics), between women (vaguely signalled in a review of an immigrant story, *Jasmine*).

References to similarities are a constant presence in the reviews in the four decades and their number slightly increases, from about seven per cent in the 1970s to thirteen per cent in the 2000s. The increase may be caused by such factors as the growing influence of postcolonial literature and criticism, the topicality of 'migration', as well as an increasing temporal distance from communism, which allows for historical analyses and comparisons, including the comparisons between

communism and colonialism. In the 1970s WWII was the main point of reference for Polish-postcolonial comparisons, although the Partitions were also evoked, mostly by Romantic allusions. These motifs continued to appear, although with decreasing frequency. In the 1980s communist ideological duress and terror, as well as Party ineptitude were criticized through comparisons with postcolonial situations. In the 1990s the (retrospective) critique of communism continued and Polish victory over the regime was treated as a model for other struggles. Besides, migration gained visibility, sometimes in texts of former emigrants. Migration remained pivotal in reviews in the 2000s, when it was explored not only as a historical fact or from the angle of migrant writers but also as a timely phenomenon. Importantly, some of the comparisons have been suggested by postcolonial authors, who have been interviewed by or have exchanged letters with Polish journalists and critics.

In some statements reviewers pinpoint a special relationship between oneself and others, following from the similarities. For instance, Sobolewska writes, ‘an exotic novel about India talks about us too’ (2007), Czekanowicz remarks ‘I can easily imagine . . . myself as the Indian woman’ (1993), while Magala, after a list of Polish-postcolonial similarities, concludes, ‘so we can understand the wretched of the earth’ (1995). I argue that one can tentatively read such statements as a step towards imagining a common category and I agree with Richard Rorty that a sense of a common ‘us’ can facilitate Polish-postcolonial solidarity. At the same time, I recognize that by privileging a common category predicated on national, ethnic or geopolitical criteria one risks overlooking inequalities within the category, which may stem, for example, from gender or class differences.

The results of the previous chapter confirm Rorty’s intuition that universal human similarities are typically abstract, vague and probably inefficient. This chapter featured more localized and tangible similarities, which were elaborated in fully-fledged comparisons. This material lends itself to a reading in Rorty’s terms both because the emergent ‘us’ becomes narrowly specified and because in the examples of past oppression the identification is predicated on an experience of suffering. I shall continue this train of thought in the thesis Conclusion.

Conclusion

The present thesis has been concerned with Polish reviews of postcolonial prose originally written primarily in English and French and translated into Polish. The reviews appeared in Polish between 1970 and 2010. I have shown that the reviews accentuate both the differences and the similarities between Poland and postcolonial countries: the perceptions of difference correlate with the self-identification with Europe or the West, whereas the similarities are predicated on various aspects of the reviewers' identities, or indeed Polish identities. Following the theorization of solidarity by Richard Rorty and others, I presumed that the specific and tangible similarities are a better foundation for solidarity than universalist categories such as 'humanity'. Therefore, I sought statements of similarity regarding historical cases of (quasi-)colonization, struggle, migration, postcolonial complexes, etc. In this Conclusion I will first summarize the overall findings. I shall subsequently relate them to the emerging scholarship on Polish postcoloniality, reviewed in Chapter One. Finally, I shall discuss them in the context of the conceptualizations of solidarity included in the Introduction.

In the thesis Introduction I situated the work in the field of postcolonial, translation and Polish studies and outlined some contemporary reflection on solidarity. Chapter One contained a historical overview, suggesting, first, that Polish representations of non-Europeans have generally followed European models and, second, that some events in Polish history could be perceived as colonization. The chapter also contained a review of the scholarship on Polish and East European postcoloniality, concluded with a recommendation that the study of Poland's postcoloniality be combined with the question of Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonials. Chapter Two explained my methodological approach and characterized the corpus of Polish translations of postcolonial literature.

The first two core chapters explored the interrelated discourses on translation and knowledge, demonstrating how they featured in the reviews of postcolonial prose. The discourse on translation in the reviews, analysed in Chapter Three, indicates that translation is supposed to illuminate otherness through explications and

fluent language. Fluency does not preclude stylization, which is expected to be consistent, comprehensible and inspired by the original. There is a demand for explications, particularly before 1989, when the sources of information were limited. The emphasis on explications is found both in articles by non-specialist reviewers, who sometimes declare their inability to contextualize the novels, and by scholars, who are also interested in the accuracy of the explications. The issues of representation and representativeness are key to the question of selecting texts for translation: these issues are raised by ideologically-minded critics and by academics, who are acutely aware of the dearth of publications about postcolonial cultures and, hence, the strategic importance of text selection. In quantitative terms, 'translation' received relatively much attention in the 1970s, possibly because of the novelty of postcolonial literature and lack of systematic explication strategies, but it was rather neglected, or nearly invisible, in the following decades.

The chapter contributes some new material to theoretical discussions on translation. The demand for contextualization in translations of postcolonial writing, from academic and non-academic publishers, is associated with Kwame Appiah's notion of 'thick', or generously glossed, translation. The reviewers' insistence on intelligibility and fluency confirms Lawrence Venuti's observation about the primacy of domesticating strategies in contemporary literary translation. The reviewers' appreciation for foreignized, stylized translation is conditional upon a valid link with the source and overall linguistic consistency and craft. As such it does not coincide with Venuti's notion of foreignization.

Chapter Four features the discourse on knowledge: it demonstrates that translated postcolonial literature is viewed as a valuable source of knowledge about postcolonial places, people and problems. The reviewers assume that literature offers factual information, not unlike reportage, but also a unique insight into otherness. Oriental studies scholars endorse the idea that translated postcolonial prose should be instructive and they offer to assess the publications. Regarding the interrelation of knowledge and power, one should note that the knowledge of postcolonial countries in Poland after 1970 did not feed into large-scale projects of subjugation (unless the occupation of Iraq from 2003 is considered as such) but discussions about representing postcolonial peoples pertain to wider questions of power in bilateral and global relations. For instance, a polemic between a leading Polish author and the Indian ambassador in Poland, who also edited an Indian short stories collection,

situated the question of intercultural knowledge right at the intersection of politics and literature. Besides, the reviewers comment on cultural stereotypes (e.g. of Arab fanaticism, Indian poverty and African wars), which they believe to be challenged or perpetuated in the postcolonial prose.

The discourse on knowing postcolonial countries was relatively prominent in the reviews from the 1970s, when the interest in decolonization, fuelled by Cold War agendas, was still felt. From the 1980s onwards, the frequency of references to knowledge decreased, which correlated with the shift of international attention away from the third world and with improved access to alternative sources of information after 1989. Yet, the discourse remained present in post-1989 reviews: the fact implies that postcolonial literature continued to be read for knowledge of other cultures, despite an explosion in the numbers of other media and information sources.

The remaining three core chapters examined the discourses of difference and similarity: I shall first summarize the qualitative analyses from all the three chapters and provide a summative section on the quantitative aspects of the three chapters afterwards. Chapter Five focused on the discourses of difference, which draw a line between Poland, as part of Europe, and non-European postcolonial countries. Specifically, I identified the discourses of postcolonial irrationality, barbarity, mysteriousness and exoticism. The first three rest on the axiom that Europe epitomizes reason, while other continents lack – and elude – the faculties of rational cognition, and, in consequence, lack civilization. Exoticism, on the other hand, renders others as pure externality, which can be possessively claimed.

The discourses of irrationality and mystery concerned mainly Africa; it appears that they were often informed by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The discourse of barbarity, openly critical of the third world, could only appear before 1989 in emigration periodicals (Wojciech Skalmowski's endorsement of V.S. Naipaul), whereas after 1989 it figured in the Polish press in articles on the *fatwa* against Rushdie and on Naipaul's Nobel Prize for Literature, awarded in the wake of the attacks on September 11th. In the 2000s the discourse was critiqued from a postcolonial perspective.

Instances of gender and sexual othering were found in a few reviews: they evoked a prejudiced association of Africa with promiscuity and generally demonstrated considerable inattention to female characters' stories. In the decade 2000–2010, i.e. at a time when feminist discourses spread in Polish academia and

more ‘gender-conscious’ postcolonial literature was available in Polish, more criticism of gender othering and interest in female narratives was generated. The fact that for most of the time the issues of gender and sexuality were not addressed in the Polish reception (1970–2010) points towards a general discursive void and marginalization of these issues in the Polish public sphere.

The discourse of exoticism appeared in the context of both Indian, Arabic and African literature and among its points of reference was *The Arabian Nights*. Before 1989 exoticism was relatively often mentioned in the reviews – and it could have served as an antidote to the proverbially mundane landscape of the late PRL – although after 1989 approving referenes to exoticism could also be found. Exoticism, as a literary device and a reception mode, was criticized for obscuring social realities by communist critics and, more recently, in the reviews of quasi-realist novels such as Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*.

Alongside the discourses of difference the reviewers employed universalist discourses, indicating a perception of similarity or sameness. In Chapter Six I described the discourse of essential humanity and the imponderables of life, of a common communist future, of shared modernity and of progressivism. Some of the relevant statements were brief and formulaic, which made me ask, after Richard Rorty, to what extent identification and solidarity with the whole of humankind is a lofty but empty phrase. The examples often invited not only a universalist interpretation but also a more localized reading (e.g. Adam Michnik’s statement that André Brink writes about freedom was developed into a parallel between the Polish and South African anti-regime struggles). References to modernity emphasized the growing global interconnectedness, as well as the phenomena of alienation and objectifying human beings. It was implied that these processes affected Poland and postcolonial countries alike and some reviewers called for solidarity in facing the changes.

At the same time, I found examples of the discourse of progressivism, which undermines the suggested sense of similarity. The discourse allows the reviewers to represent postcolonial cultures as essentially the same but not fully evolved and hence temporarily different. Thus postcolonial countries are dismissed as ‘young’ and patronized from the position of Polish advancement in communism or modernity (e.g. Sadkowski pontificated on the need for communist progress in Africa).

In addition to the discourses of universalism, whose instances were often brief and which were partly overshadowed by the discourse of progressivism, in Chapter Seven I sought references to specific similarities between the historical experiences of Poland and postcolonial countries. I found a number of statements and implicit or explicit comparisons; I do not think there are enough interconnections to see them as a discourse. The experiences evoked by the reviewers focus on the colonial subjugation of postcolonial countries and the Partitions, Nazi occupation and Soviet domination of Poland; collaboration with the oppressors and resistance against them; resettlement, exile and emigration. I will return to these and other examples in the final section of this Conclusion devoted to solidarity. I find that the comparisons and statements of similarity appear in all the decades: before 1989 mentions of independence struggle and WWII prevailed, echoing the official anti-colonial and anti-German stance, while after 1989 migration was a key topic.

As far as the quantitative analysis is concerned, othering and exoticizing discourses present in the reviews of postcolonial literature are generally losing prominence, while their criticisms are gaining visibility. Usage of these discourses decreased between 1970 and 2010, possibly due to a changing type of the reviewed books – which shifted from traditional and potentially exoticized village settings towards modern, urban ones – and the (re-)introduction of anti-Orientalist and leftist discourses in the Polish public sphere. In the case of exoticism, the drop could also have resulted from the introduction of a plethora of popular, exoticizing products, such as the page-turners by Wilbur Smith, after the advent of capitalism. However, references to exoticism remained present, partly, I believe, because postcolonial countries are still relatively unfamiliar to Polish readers and partly because of a long-standing tradition (and perhaps an underlying psychological need) to demarcate some other place as different and exotic.

Universalist discourses appeared relatively regularly in the course of the four decades, although their usage fell from about 15% to about 10% after 1989. The fall might be explained in relation to a growing number of specific – as opposed to universal or general – comparisons between Poland and postcolonial countries. The discourse of progressivism was steadily declining in the forty years and hardly registered in the reviews published after 2000, possibly because it belonged with the Cold War vocabulary of birth and youth of decolonizing countries and as such fell into disuse. As noted above, statements of Polish-postcolonial similarities slightly

increased in number, from 7% in the 1970s to 13% in the 2000s. This development seems attributable to such factors as currency of postcolonial criticism and a growing temporal distance from communism, which enabled historical analyses and comparisons, including comparisons between communism and colonialism.

If one compares the discursive trends, it appears that the othering discourses have generally been less recurrent and have become considerably less frequent in the recent decades than the discourses of universalism. Furthermore, percentagewise, the statements of similarity seem to have outnumbered both othering and universalist discourses (even if only by about three per cent in the case of the latter). Overall, I would argue that the growing focus on similarity over otherness and, specifically, the preponderance of comments on particular Polish-postcolonial similarities over the potentially empty assurances of shared humanity are positive developments from the perspective of intercultural perceptions. This argument rests on my belief that the discourses used in the reviews to a certain degree reflect and affect societal perceptions and attitudes.

However, I am also aware that in qualitative terms the othering examples remain rather potent as they evoke a time-honoured tradition of representing non-Europeans. Besides, I do admit that the Polish reviews of translated postcolonial literature constitute only a fraction of the varied material that could be analysed for intercultural perceptions. What is more, the reviewers may actually be inclined to tone down othering responses due to their interest in postcolonial literature and, arguably, their status as public figures and, to an extent, role models. Therefore, it is possible that an analysis of discourses employed by other, e.g. non-elite, users would indicate continuing topicality, not decline, of othering perceptions.

In the remaining two sections of the Conclusion I relate my results, particularly the presence of othering discourses, to the scholarship on Polish postcoloniality outlined in Chapter One, to then return to the question of solidarity. In Chapter One I reviewed the emerging scholarship on Poland's postcoloniality: my study of the reviews of postcolonial literature from the period 1970–2010 proves that comparisons between the practices of overseas colonialism and events from Poland's history have occurred outside academia too. They are not particularly common and do not necessarily activate the vocabulary of postcolonial studies. They evoke

Poland's plight as a former 'colony' but not, or hardly ever, a 'colonizer', although the latter topic has been addressed by scholars. The reviewers focus on subjugation, struggle and migration, while the scholarly concept of hybridity, implying porous boundaries between the Polish self and the colonizers, hardly registers. Generally, the themes discussed in the academic output and the press reviews overlap although some ideas, which are counter-intuitive from the established national viewpoint, are mostly explored within academia.

I suggested in Chapter One that the question of Poland's relationships with non-European postcolonial people and the question of Poland's relationships with its 'colonizers' and 'colonized' are raised separately by the scholars. This study examined Polish perceptions of postcolonial peoples, favouring the former question, but it also asked if Poles saw similarities to their own quasi-colonial experiences, thus combining the two questions. My sense is that a project of re-narrating Polish history and literature from a postcolonial angle should somehow incorporate the issue of Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonials. I will very briefly map out a few directions for such incorporation, particularly at the level of disciplinary meta-reflection.

I find that the Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonial peoples oscillate between the perceptions of difference and similarity. My material and method may yield relatively many examples of declared similarity because I looked at the reception of postcolonial self-representations, I studied an elite group relatively likely to possess intercultural competence and I concentrated on the public sphere, which shuns outright discriminatory statements. In short, as I noted above, other studies may well show that the othering perceptions of postcolonial peoples, possibly verging on prejudice, actually prevail in Poland.²⁰⁸ What implications does the presence of othering perceptions have for studying Poland from a postcolonial perspective?

One could find it problematic to claim the label of postcoloniality for Poland if Poles hold some colonial-like perceptions of those who were first called postcolonial. I do not think this is a reason to shy away from postcolonial theory but I can see a need, and an opportunity, for some soul-searching, to be productively coupled with

²⁰⁸ For instance, studies of online comments on postcolonial literature by non-professional readers, studies of the public and semi-public discourses on immigration or sociological surveys regarding attitudes to foreigners among the representatives of various social groups.

the debates on Poland's postcoloniality. The number of postcolonial re-readings of the Polish canon is currently rising and if the approach gains a foothold, there is a chance for the combined debates on Poles as postcolonials and Polish perceptions of non-Europeans to reach a wider audience.

One could speculate about the reasons why a country may pose as postcolonial (or, more generally, a victim of history), while looking down on other postcolonial peoples. Is there perhaps a psychological or social, or political mechanism that urges the oppressed to oppress others and thus elevate themselves in a hierarchy?²⁰⁹ Maria Janion's claim about a link between the inferiority and the superiority complexes of Poles might imply the compensatory character of the prejudices against non-Europeans. Perhaps this sort of mechanism is also implied in Violeta Kelertas's observation that 'the Balts find being lumped together with the rest of the colonized humanity unflattering, if not humiliating, and want to be with the "civilized" part of the world' (2006:4)?

It would also be interesting to juxtapose Poles' perceptions of non-Europeans and their historical relations with their neighbours, not to propose simplistic cause-and-effect scenarios but to ask about possible correlations and coincidences. For instance, if one recalls that, according to Izabela Surynt, Leopold Neuger and Maria Janion, Germans would more or less explicitly compare Poles to the overseas 'primitives' fit for European colonization, one may wonder if by dissociating themselves from non-Europeans Poles were acting in a sort of discursive self-defence. Besides, scholars have demonstrated that Poles employed quasi-colonial discourses to represent Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians: would it be plausible to inquire (and how could it be tested) whether convergence with the West European colonial discourse served to reassert the Polish mastery in the eastern territories? And, on the other hand, whether the established Polish nobles' domination over Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarusian peasantry would have been the sort of collective experience which let Polish nobles relate to the activities of West European masters in overseas colonies (the 'civilizing mission', risk of rebellion, managing cultural differences, etc.)?

²⁰⁹ One could here consult postcolonial scholarship on the European 'colonies' of England, i.e. Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which also participated in British imperial ventures.

Another question I want to air is whether there might be a kind of competition for the role of a (postcolonial) victim. Contrary to my intuition that shared suffering unites, could it also be that those who require attention and aid actually vie for these limited resources with others who make similar claims? This observation could shed light on the émigré author Sławomir Mrożek's resentment that the decolonizing third world countries were fêted by the left-leaning Western intellectuals, while Poland's plight under the Soviet boot was ignored. In a satirical 'report to the United Nations' Mrożek even pleaded, 'I hereby report that Poles are also blacks, only white ones. Therefore they deserve independence'²¹⁰ (1983)...

My reasoning that Poles should somehow review their perceptions of postcolonial peoples while claiming their own victim status or postcoloniality rests on the ideal of integrity.²¹¹ In other words, it rests on the assumption that it is hypocritical to demand justice for one's harms, while being complicit or, worse, active in harming others. I have signalled some relativistic explanations for lack of integrity, as integrity is rare in the field of international politics and intercultural perceptions. Nevertheless, I believe that integrity is an ideal worth looking up to. I believe that an experience of harm is a glimpse of the pain of others. I believe it can lead to an imaginative identification and solidarity with others. In the final section I return to the conceptualizations of solidarity from the Introduction and to the Polish perceptions of similarity described in Chapters Six and Seven.

Several important points regarding solidarity emerged from my reading of Richard Rorty, David Featherstone, Chandra Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak and Józef Tischner. Namely, that solidarity may be discovered (as a response to an essential humanity) or must be invented (as a re-conceptualization of one's self in relation to others); solidarity may marginalize some groups while empowering others; it manifests itself as action or an attitude containing a potential for action; it is mobilized by the suffering of others; and, finally, literature and art foster solidarity by animating the plight of others and allowing a better understanding of them.

²¹⁰ In the original: 'Donoszę, że polacy [sic] to też murzyni, tylko biali. w [sic] związku z niniejszym należy im się niepodległość'.

²¹¹ I am referring to a collective of 'Poles' in general, not to the group of Polish postcolonial scholars.

I begin with the point that solidarity is founded on a common humanity, which underlies the Christian vision of solidarity presented by Tischner. Some examples in Chapter Six featured the imponderables of human life, drawing attention to the ultimate commonalities between Poles, postcolonial people and everyone else for that matter. Yet, I suggested that statements about human nature tended to reveal more localized standpoints; besides, the universalist discourses sometimes contained a small print condition that solidarity comes into effect once the other cultures sufficiently evolve.

My findings lend themselves better to the interpretation Rorty and others offered: that solidarity is constructed around the salient identity features. The reviewers speak about, and for, specific groupings; in fact, nowhere do I find instances of a national and regional 'Polish-postcolonial' identification, even though I use these terms as a convenient hypernym. The configurations are specific and dynamic. To illustrate this point I will recall some examples from the articles on the 'Rushdie affair', which appeared at the time of transition in 1989.

A few articles evoked the official pro-Arab stance, implying the solidarity of communist Poland with the Arab and other postcolonial peoples who were confronting the 'imperialist' West (two articles called Rushdie 'a mercenary of colonialism'). Another cluster of articles generally sided with Rushdie and the West, defending such values as freedom of expression, individual liberty and artistic licence. There were specific positionings: championing the cause of free speech, Polish dissidents were opposing the muzzle of Polish censorship (which manipulated the coverage of the 'affair' itself). A statement of solidarity with Rushdie from the Polish branch of the PEN-club, apparently banned from print, additionally signifies solidarity among artists, who share a profession or calling. Czesław Miłosz's and Adam Michnik's statements of solidarity, published in the *New York Times* alongside statements from other authors, and reprinted in *Literatura na Świecie*, also may testify to their individual poetic and intellectual credos more than general 'Polish' viewpoints.

As censorship crumbled, more coverage was allowed in the official press and the numerous articles suggest that the attitudes towards Rushdie were generally sympathetic; it also suggests that solidarity with a free-thinking postcolonial author sometimes came hand in hand with scorn for 'fanatical' postcolonial governments and masses. Yet, solidarity with the postcolonial people whose religious sensitivities

were offended emerged on the far-right of the new Polish scene and in some Catholic circles. Solidarity was forged among believers and against secularism.

A few more alliances should be mentioned: a Polish man hosted Rushdie when he was in hiding because the man's Jewish father had been given shelter and survived the Holocaust. This solidary gesture sprang from a traumatic family experience, marking solidarity with and among (former) victims of inhumane manhunt. An Iranian studies scholar argued that *The Satanic Verses* was mostly about immigrants, adding that Poles intimately know the alienating and humiliating dimensions of immigration, so they should not only sympathize with Rushdie's characters (and perhaps Rushdie himself) but also welcome the immigrants who come to Poland. She thus called for solidarity among migrants and those communities which suffer relative lack of freedoms and perspectives and hence see their members emigrate.

Highlighting the similarities between the individual fates of migrants, one lets the differences of the native culture, ethnicity and race fade from sight but the differences may return under spotlight. One comparison of Rushdie and Joseph Conrad, illuminating their hardships as foreigners in London, strikes a racial note by positing that Rushdie's lot must have been harder because of his skin colour. The example is a reminder that various aspects of individual and group identity – from political stance to professional and social status, to religious beliefs, to family and larger collective memories, to ethnicity and race – gain salience and provide a springboard, or a hindrance, for various solidarities.

It is worth remembering that solidarities are formed among groups to the exclusion of other groups. For instance, a review of *Midnight's Children* in a local Szczecin daily noted similarities between the lot of Rushdie's migrant characters and of the Szczecin inhabitants who, in the wake of WWII, were resettled from Poland's former eastern territories to the newly-acquired territories in the west. The use of Rushdie's story to signal the experience of resettled Poles may potentially lead to a sense of solidarity with the people of the Indian subcontinent affected by historical upheavals. One may wonder if such imaginary alliance would include or marginalize the Germans who were, in turn, resettled from Szczecin (previously Stettin) or the Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, who had been beneficiaries of the expulsion of Poles from the east (and who also fell victim to devastating Soviet

politics). Perhaps due to past hostilities between the nations it would be easier to forge solidarity with distant Indians than the neighbours.

The final example of marginalization resulting from solidarity groupings concerns women. Mohanty argued that workers' solidarity initiatives did not include females on an equal footing, which made women found their own organizations. It has also been suggested that while during the anti-colonial Algerian war women actively participated, carrying grenades under their veils, after independence they met with oppression by the postcolonial patriarchy (Loomba 1998:192–95). Halina Filipowicz explored the role – and marginalization – of Polish women in the nineteenth-century national uprisings (2002). Importantly, female Solidarity activists, such as Anna Walentynowicz or Henryka Krzywonos, were often forgotten after 1989 (see e.g. Penn 2003; Penn 2005). In the reviews I did find comparisons including Wałęsa, Michnik and Gandhi but not women leaders: I only encountered a mention of the (black) mother figure in the Negritude and Polish Romantic poetry. Mother figures – 'Mother Pole', 'Mother Africa' or 'Mother India' – are not equivalents of male leader figures but nominally prestigious roles, which confine women to child-bearing and care-taking. Similarly, the migrant Polish authors compared with postcolonial authors were all male, while female migrant authors, such as Danuta Mostwin, Eva Hoffman, Ewa Kuryluk or Ewa Stachniak, were overlooked.

I now move to the point that solidarity is an attitude which presupposes a potential for action. This study looked at the perceptions activated and revised in the process of reading, so actions and organized activism were not likely to register in the corpus (although such actions as writing letters of support for Rushdie or hiding him were reported). Other studies could inquire if partnerships between trade unions in Poland and postcolonial countries are being forged, petitions are being written, demonstrations and cultural exchanges organized, etc. One could also look at how solidarities are manifested and further developed in the work of the Polish non-governmental organizations supporting immigrants, fighting discrimination against non-Europeans, helping the Polish Roma communities or working for the Polish-Jewish, Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-German dialogue.

Besides, it seems accurate that solidarity is fostered by the awareness of suffering, particularly human-induced suffering, of others, as one can envisage how that suffering feels. The gestures of solidarity with Rushdie can be a case in point, as

his fear for his life could be imagined by anyone. Similarly, literary depictions of the cruelties committed by the colonizers could resonate with the memories of WWII and communist oppression, even if an association with the former was exploited by the communist propaganda, while the latter was only mentioned after 1989. An awakening of solidarity through an awareness of suffering does not lead to glorifying martyrology: the aim of solidary actions is to alleviate suffering and prevent it.

The final point is that the reviewers' acts of reading postcolonial prose generated impressions of difference but also universal and historical similarity. Those impressions confirm Rorty's, Tischner's and Spivak's belief that literature can give insight into otherness. Statements to this effect were also found in the reviews and sometimes translated literature was elevated above other textual sources of information as the most insightful.

The thesis opened with a case of mistaken identities: the anti-communist Solidarity complained that their supporters by mistake donated money to the pro-communist Committee of Solidarity with the Nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and warned that 'solidarity had many names'. Although that article referred to a naming coincidence and implied no interest in postcolonial peoples, in the present thesis I delved into the topic of Polish perceptions of and solidarities with postcolonial people to find that solidarity indeed is a protean enterprise, allowing people to favour some aspects of their identities, to find similarities with others and fashion solidarities. The perceptions of difference between Poland and non-European postcolonial countries are also prominent in the reviews I studied in the period 1970–2010. Some reviewers, however, look past the traditional divisions of blood, colour and creed to see similar sufferings, experiences and values.

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Appendix One: Polish Quotations from Reviews

Chapter Three: Discourse on Translation

p. 109

‘[Lest] various black boys and beautiful Ihuomas should block our view on Africa’s true image’ — ‘By różni czarni chłopcy i piękne Ihuomy nie zasłaniały nam prawdziwego obrazu Afryki’.

114

‘Not for nothing have generations of Poles been raised reading Kipling!’ — ‘Nie na darmo wiele pokoleń Polaków wychowało się na Kiplingu!’

117

‘[It was] a sort of cultural surprise. . . . [O]ne doesn’t read such books everyday; in any case, I hadn’t had much to do with Indian/Hindu culture before’ — ‘[To był] rodzaj zaskoczenia kulturowego, ponieważ nie czyta się takich książek na co dzień, ja przynajmniej z kulturą hinduską bardzo niewiele miałam do czynienia’.

118

‘[U]sually [the translation] is done in such a way as to sound well to the Polish reader, even at the cost of minor discrepancies with the original’ — ‘[Z]wykle robi się to tak, by brzmiało dobrze dla czytelnika polskiego, nawet kosztem drobnych rozbieżności z oryginałem’.

123

‘[T]he translator cares more for the fluent flow of the narrative and dialogues than clarity of setting details and accuracy of the local colour’ — ‘[T]łumacz dba bardziej o potoczystą gładkość narracji i dialogów niż o wyrazistość szczegółów obyczajowych i wierność lokalnego kolorytu’.

124

‘[Why does the publisher] disfigure a text of a good translator by not including footnotes?’ — ‘[Dlaczego wydawca] szpeci tekst bardzo dobrej tłumaczki brakiem przypisów?’

‘Polish idiomaticity is generally well harmonized with the atmosphere of the Indian originals’ — ‘[P]olska idiomatyka na ogół dobrze harmonizuje z nastrojem indyjskich pierwowzorów’.

‘Parnowski’s translations generally read more fluently than the more literal, philological translations of academic Indianists’ — ‘[P]rzeklady Parnowskiego czyta się na ogół gładziej niż filologicznie dosłowniejsze przekłady uniwersyteckich indianistów’.

‘[I]t is good that he does not slavishly stick to the “letter” of the original but, aiming at logical consistency and clarity of the translation, is able to successfully change the word order and sentence order, paraphrase titles and cross out some overly “moralizing” passages — ‘[D]obrze, że się nie trzyma niewolniczo „litery” oryginału, lecz w dążeniu do logicznej spójności i czytelności przekładu potrafi udatnie zmieniać szyk i kolejność zdań, parafrazować tytuły, skreślać niektóre zbyt „moralizatorskie” fragmenty’.

126

‘[R]ender[ing] the direct, primitivizing style with moderation, fortunately avoiding the danger of trivializing or even ridiculing the seemingly simple text’ — ‘[O]ddaje . . . bezpośredni i prymitywizujący styl z umiarem, szczęśliwie omijając niebezpieczeństwo strywializowania czy nawet ośmieszenia pozornie prostego tekstu’.

127

‘[A]n unusual novel, which stems from a cultural background different to ours; . . . although we read the novel in Polish, it is part of Africa’ — ‘[Mieć do czynienia z] powieścią niezwykłą, wyrastającą z odmiennego niż nasze podłoża kulturowego, . . . chociaż czytamy ją po polsku, jest ona częścią Afryki’.

Chapter Four: Discourse on Knowledge

144

‘[The collection] does not give us a full picture of contemporary India’ — ‘Nie daje [ta antologia] nam całkowitego obrazu Indii współczesnych’.

145

‘It should suffice if I say that the affairs of India and its inhabitants cover a much wider range of problems than those raised by Morris in *The Bombay Meeting*’ — ‘Wystarczy jeżeli powiem, że sprawy Indii i ich mieszkańców obejmują krąg problemów znacznie szerszy niż te, które porusza Morris w „The Bombay Meeting”’.

147

‘I have been repeating for years that it’s really necessary that publishers work with Africanists, who are glad to provide advice and share their knowledge...’ — ‘Powtarzam od lat, jak bardzo konieczna jest współpraca wydawców z afrykanistami, którzy chętnie służą radą i wiedzą...’

148

‘We, people of this part of Europe . . . have lost sensitivity to the [human] suffering that our media have been blatantly thrusting down our throats for years’ — ‘My, ludzie z tej części Europy . . . straciliśmy wrażliwość wobec krzywd podtykanych nam nachalnie całymi latami przed nos przez nasze media’.

‘We get to know the events from the front pages of newspapers in a completely different light, as they are depicted through characters, situations, and . . . fortune’s whims’ — ‘Poznajemy w zupełnie innym świetle, odmalowane postaciami, sytuacjami i nieprzewidywanymi kaprysami fortuny wydarzenia z pierwszych stron gazet’.

150

‘Was Rushdie able to bring closer to us the image of his heterogeneous, multifaceted and (in the Polish perception) completely exotic motherland?’ — ‘Czy Rushdie potrafił . . . przybliżyć do nas obraz swojej heterogenicznej, wielowątkowej i kompletnie egzotycznej (w polskiej percepcji) ojczyzny?’

151

‘[The similarities between *Kim* and *Midnight’s Children* are] crowded commotion, heartiness, mixture of naivety and roguery’ — ‘[*Kim* przystaje do *Dzieci północy*] tłumnym ruchem, rubasnością, mieszaniną naiwności i szelmostwa’.

153

‘[P]rovides insights into Muslim religiousness, whose knowledge in Poland is scarce and distorted by stereotypes’ ‘in the novel [the religion] emerges as a source of strength that lets people preserve their humanity’ — ‘[D]aje wgląd w mało u nas znaną i zniekształconą stereotypami religijność muzułmańską – tu źródło siły pozwalającej ochronić człowieczeństwo’.

‘The so called ordinary Polish citizen, who knows little about the [Arab] world, will link it all very simply: an Arab – a fanatic – a terrorist – a bad person. And it’s not like that!’ — ‘Tzw. Szaremu polskiemu obywatelowi, który niewiele wie o tamtym świecie – ułoży się to wszystko bardzo prosto: Arab – fanatyk – terrorysta – zły człowiek. A tak nie jest!’

‘[J]uxtaposition of today’s stereotype of the Islamic countries with the lives of the characters, who enjoy themselves much more freely than one could think’ — ‘[Z]derzeni[e] dzisiejszego stereotypu krajów islamskich z życiem bohaterów, którzy bawią się daleko swobodniej niż można by przypuszczać’.

‘[Stereotypical Arabs] shower green notes [and are] customers of “working girls”’ — ‘[S]tereotyp. . . Araba – sypiącego zielonymi banknotami, klienta „panienek”’.

154

‘[The book gives] insight into the predicaments of young independent countries’ — ‘[Powieść pozwala] wnikać głębiej w zjawiska państw borykających się z młodą niepodległością’.

‘[I]t is good to read a wise and beautifully written book . . . by someone from there, which . . . illuminates at least a small fragment of the tangled matters’ — ‘[D]obrze jest przeczytać książkę mądrą i pięknie napisaną, . . . przez kogoś stamtąd, która . . . rozjaśnia bodaj drobny wycinek spraw pogmatwanych’.

155

‘[The book will] expand the information the reader has about contemporary African village life’ — ‘[Książka] rozszerzy krąg . . . wiadomości [czytelnika] o . . . współczesnej wsi afrykańskiej’.

‘[Literature] can help to lower the threshold of difference dividing the worlds, theirs and ours’ — ‘Literatura może stać się pomostem, może przyczynić się do obniżenia progu inności dzielącego światy, ich i nasz’.

156

‘[The world of India] so difficult to understand for people from the Mediterranean cultural circle, for whom everything that comes from [Indian] cultural circles still has an air of an exotic *Arabian Nights* tale about it’ — ‘[Świat Indii jest] jakże trudny do zrozumienia dla ludzi, z kręgu kultury basenu Morza Śródziemnego, dla których wszystko, co z tamtych kręgów kulturowych się wywodzi, ma mimo wszystko posmak egzotycznej baśni z 1001 nocy’.

157

‘[One cannot expect Gordimer] to make her novel into a fictionalized textbook of [South African] history’ — ‘[Nie można oczekiwać od Gordimer,] aby z powieści swej uczyniła fabularyzowany podręcznik historii [RPA]’.

‘[T]he book itself is not everything and sometimes one needs knowledge to understand it well’ — ‘[S]ama książka to jeszcze nie wszystko, czasem trzeba trochę wiedzy, by książkę dobrze zrozumieć’.

‘Villon’s and Balzac’s Paris, . . . Dickens’s and Thackeray’s London, . . . Geographical space filled in with living people. But South Africa was not on that map’ — ‘Paryż Villona i Balzaca, . . . Londyn Dickensa i Thackeraya . . . Przestrzeń geograficzna wypełniała się żywymi ludźmi. Ale RPA nie istniało na tej mapie’.

158

‘[An image of India with] fakirs frozen in the lotus position, . . . starving children in the streets, . . . Gandhi, Mother Theresa . . . and dignified English lieutenants from Agatha Christie’s detective stories’ — ‘[Obraz Indii z] fakirami zastygłymi w pozie lotosu, . . . z

głodującymi dziećmi na ulicach . . . , z Gandhim, z Matką Teresą . . . [i] dystyngowan[ymi] angiels[kimi] pułkowni[kami] z kryminalów Agathy Christie’.

159

‘[The book allows one to] gain insight into a mysterious world of Indian women’ — ‘[Książka pozwala] wniknąć w zagadkowy . . . świat indyjskich kobiet’.

‘[In the book] there are senses: touch, smell, sight, hearing. Details happen to the senses: a special colour, darkness, bare skin, delicious *pierozki*’ — ‘[W tej książce] są zmysły – dotyk, węch, wzrok, słuch. To zmysłom zdarzają się szczegóły – wyjątkowy kolor, ciemność, naga skóra, smaczne pierozki’.

‘[*White Teeth*] was published a year before 9/11 and although a few novels referring directly to the terrorist attacks have since appeared, Smith’s book best shows the complexity of the world in which the attacks were possible’ — ‘[Książka *Białe Zęby*] ukazała się na rok przed 11 września, a choć od tamtego czasu ukazało się kilka powieści wprost odwołujących się do ataków terrorystycznych, to właśnie książka Smith najlepiej pokazuje złożoność świata, w którym zamachy były możliwe’.

‘The popularity of the literature about immigrants written by immigrants [in Britain] proves a hunger for knowledge about them’ — ‘Popularność literatury o przybyszach pisanej przez przybyszy to dowód na głód wiedzy o nich’.

160

‘[Well, South Africa is] the ends of the earth: hard to get there and even harder to understand it . . .’ — ‘No cóż – finis orbis – trudno tam dotrzeć, jeszcze trudniej zrozumieć’.

‘Unless one takes for a guide – as I did during a recent journey to South Africa – Coetzee’s latest book’ — ‘Chyba że za przewodnika weźmie się, tak jak ja podczas niedawnej podróży do RPA – najnowszą książkę J.M. Coetzee’go’.

‘[T]he north-east of India rarely makes it to the front pages of newspapers’ — ‘[P]ółnocny wschód Indii rzadko trafia na pierwsze strony gazet’.

‘Whatever the author was not able to convey with finesse was put into dialogues. . . . In Lalwani’s writing there is no mystery altogether: just valuable knowledge’ — ‘Wszystko, czego autorka nie potrafiła przekazać w finezyjny sposób, powkładała w dialogi. W pisarstwie Lalwani nie ma ani odrobiny tajemnicy – tylko cenna wiedza’.

‘[T]he real India is in Ghosh’s books – too complex to be described. One can only, as Ghosh does, show it bit by bit’ — ‘Prawdziwe Indie są w książkach Ghosha – zbyt skomplikowane, by dały się opisać. Można jedynie, jak on, ukazywać je po kawałku’.

‘[B]ig politics does not interest Malkani: in London’s suburbs racist acts are but teenage hooligan pranks’ — ‘[W]ielka polityka nie interesuje Malkaniego – na przedmieściach Londynu akty rasizmu ograniczają się do chuligańskich wybryków nastolatków’.

161

‘Is it a true image of that country? Generally yes, but very one-sided, exaggerated and importunately neorealist’ — ‘Czy jest to prawdziwy obraz tego kraju? W ogromnym stopniu tak, choć bardzo jednostronnie przedstawiony, przerysowany i natrętnie neorealistyczny’.

Chapter Five: Discourses of Difference

168

‘[T]heir thought was not tamed/made familiar by an alphabet of their own’ — ‘[Ich] myśli nie oswoił własny alfabet’.

‘Our [European] idea of literature is governed – still – by rationalism’ — ‘Naszym pojęciem literatury rządzi – mimo wszystko – racjonalizm’.

170

‘And so on. We can treat ourselves to many explanations of one sort or another’ — ‘I tak dalej. Wiele sobie można zafundować takich czy innych tłumaczeń’.

172

‘[T]he Great Chatter of the current times’ — ‘[W]ielkie Gadanie obecnych czasów’.

‘[T]he stagnation, inefficiency, stupidity and cruelty of the half-civilized societies are to a large extent *their own fault*’ — ‘Zastój, niewydolność, głupota i okrucieństwo społeczeństw niedocywilizowanych są w dużym stopniu *ich własną winą*’.

174

‘What makes the East differ from the West is the distance between word and reality: in the East, they are two domains, independent, in the West . . . the word matches the reality’ — ‘Wschód różni się od Zachodu odległością słowa i rzeczy: na Wschodzie to dwie dziedziny, same dla siebie, na Zachodzie . . . słowo odpowiada rzeczy’.

‘[It was] before I was told to adore the blacks, to make apologies to them (and for what should I apologize, really?), before *black* had to be *beautiful*’ — ‘[Z]anim nie kazano mi Murzynów wielbić, przed nimi się kajać (a niby ja za co się mam kajać w tej sprawie?), zanim *black* obowiązkowo stało się *beautiful*’.

175

‘[E]ven though whole herds of them flash by on our TV screens almost every evening’ —
‘[C]hoć całe tabuny migają niemal co wieczór na ekranach naszych telewizorów’.

176

[I] had already come across such a suggestive literary vision of a woman who magically initiates us into Africa. Yes, she exists briefly at the end of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* . . . A black woman, treading proudly, decked with trinkets and amulets: “She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent . . . Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene”. In Coetzee’s prose one also finds images which are like revelations — ‘. . . [G]dzieś w literaturze zetknęłam się z tak sugestywną wizją kobiety, wtajemniczającej magicznie w Afrykę. Tak, istnieje ona przez chwilę w zakończeniu „Jądra ciemności” . . . Dumnie stąpająca Murzynka, obwieszona świecidłami, amuletami: „Była dzika i przepyszna, płomiennooka i wspaniała; jej powolne posuwanie się naprzód miało w sobie coś złowieszczego. (...) Wtem otworzyła nagie ramiona i poderwała je sztywno w górę, jak owładnięta niepohamowanym pragnieniem, by dotknąć nieba - a w tejże chwili chybkie cienie wypadły na ziemię i ogarnęły rzekę, obejmując parowiec w mrocznym uścisku. Straszliwa cisza wisiała nad krajobrazem”’.

178

‘[T]he enormous power of the bush, when human life is destroyed by . . . the darkness of the continent’ — ‘[O]krutn[a] sił[a] buszu, gdy życie ludzkie zostaje zniszczone w zetknięciu z mrokiem kontynentu’.

‘[Naipaul uncovers] authentic jungle culture, voice of the primordial consciousness’ —
‘Naipaul odkrywa tutaj autentyczną kulturę dżungli, głos świadomości pierwotnej’.

‘[R]eality of magic, bloody ritual and violence’ — ‘[R]eczywistość[ć] magii, krwawych rytuałów i przemocy’.

180

‘[P]rimordial African instincts’ — ‘[P]ierwotne instynkty afrykańskie’.

‘[V]oice of primordial consciousness’ — ‘[G]łos świadomości pierwotnej’.

‘[Laye] lets the rational Western world approach the mysteries of Africa, [whose value lies in] emotions, faith in the meaning of life and strength gained through communion with phenomena that are invisible to the eye’ — ‘[Laye] pozwala przybliżyć się racjonalnemu

światu zachodniemu do tajemnic Afryki [których wartość to] emocj[e] i wiar[a] w sens życia, czerpanie siły z obcowania z niewidzialnymi dla oczu zjawiskami’.

181

‘Yes, I am dividing the world . . . “Them” means Africa, “Us” means Europe’ —

‘Tak, dzielę świat . . . „Oni” to Afryka, „My” to Europa’.

‘[A]fter all he is not the first to have been in that situation’ — ‘[P]rzecież nie on pierwszy znalazł się w takiej sytuacji’.

182

‘[T]riumphant leader of the anti-imperial revolution in Iran’ — ‘[Z]wycięski wódz antycesarskiej rewolucji w Iranie’.

184

‘On the one hand there is the Western world, with rationality, linear history, civilizational inventions, objective language. On the other hand, history without dates, *spirituality and mysteries* of other peoples, which cannot be captured by our categories’ — ‘Z jednej strony istnieje świat Zachodu, racjonalności, linearnej historii, cywilizacyjnych odkryć, obiektywnego języka. Z drugiej historia bez dat, duchowość i tajemnice innych ludów, nie dające się ująć w naszych kategoriach’.

187

‘[S]tall with exotic “souvenirs”’ — ‘[S]traganik z egzotycznymi “pamiątkami”’.

‘[T]he processes of awakening a new [political] self-consciousness of these nations’ — ‘[P]rocesy budzenia się nowej samoświadomości [politycznej] tych narodów’.

188

‘[T]he author’s growing maturity and the deepening of his artistic consciousness’ — ‘[D]ojrzewania i pogłębiania się świadomości pisarskiej autora’.

189

‘[Adiga does not] immerse himself in the rich Indian culture or describe exotic landscapes, tastes and smells of the Subcontinent, so as to tempt more . . . Western tourists’ — ‘[Adiga nie chciał] zanurzyć się w bogatej kulturze Indii, opisywać egzotyczne krajobrazy, smaki i zapachy półwyspu tak, by zachęcić doń kolejnych . . . zachodnich turystów’.

‘[Instead], Adiga chose to look at the social relationships in the “world’s largest democracy”, whose complexity we know so little about in the West’ — ‘[Zamiast tego] Adiga wołał jednak przyrzeć się panującym w „największej demokracji świata” stosunkom społecznym, o których złożoności wciąż tak mało wiemy na Zachodzie’.

190

‘This is the real India, not imagined India. This country is still seen in the West, but also by the local middle and upper class, through a rosy glass of mysticism’ — ‘To Indie realne, a nie wyobrażone. Ten kraj wciąż widziany jest na zachodzie, ale również przez lokalną klasę średnią i wyższą, przez różowe szkiełko mistycyzmu’.

192

‘[I]t is through those books that my desire for other tastes and desire for travel were born’ — ‘[P]rzy tej książce narodziło się pragnienie innych smaków i pragnienie podróży’.

194

‘The publisher decided to frighten us a little with the black folk, which is a common practice in publishing African authors. . . . The publisher simply thinks that the book will sell better if the title emanates exoticism’ — ‘Wydawca . . . postanowił nas jednak postraszyć czarnym ludem, co jest nagminną praktyką w przypadku wydawania autorów afrykańskich. . . . Wydawca sądzi po prostu, że książka będzie się lepiej sprzedawała, jeśli jej tytuł będzie dostatecznie . . . tchnący egzotykiem’

195

‘[The words “wild Africa”] were a sort of magic charm, synonym of adventure and mystery’ — ‘[Słowa „Afryka dzika”] w dziecięcych grach i zabawach były czymś w rodzaju zaklęcia, stanowiły synonim przygody, tajemnicy’.

‘Soyinka is not a tribal or exotic author. He is not one to be put in a *Cepelia* [folk arts and crafts store]’ — ‘Soyinka nie jest pisarzem plemiennym ani egzotycznym, nie nadaje się do żadnej *Cepelii*’.

‘Unlike some of his fellow writers, [Narayan] does not try to win readers over with exoticism. The cultural setting is naturally embedded in the narrative, . . . it is not there for the sake of a foreign reader’ — ‘[Narayan] nigdy – w przeciwieństwie do niektórych swoich kolegów po piórze – nie kokietuje egzotyką. Warstwa obyczajowa wtopiona jest w narrację w sposób naturalny . . ., [nie jest] puszczeniem oka do cudzoziemskiego czytelnika’.

196

‘[The plot] is dressed with a liberal serving of hot Indian curry, made for this purpose of a big portion of exoticism, extraordinary sex and a certain number of ghosts’ — ‘[Fabuła] podlan[a] jest obficie ostrym indyjskim sosem curry spreparowanym na ten użytek z dużej porcji egzotyki, niebanalnego seksu i pewnej liczby duchów’.

197

‘[T]he underground prison Tazmamart, physical tortures and spiritual struggles of the inmates, come from an exotic Moroccan world, a desert land of scorpions and Qur’anic

suras’ — ‘[P]odziemne więzienie Tazmamart, fizyczne męki jego mieszkańców i ich duchowe zmagania pochodzą z egzotycznego marokańskiego świata, pustynnej ziemi skorpionów i koranicznych sur’.

‘I vote for *Kroniki abisyńskie* by Moses Isegawa. Exoticism, engaging language, and mysteries of Africa, of which only some of which [sic!] Kapuściński discovered for us, like Isegawa’ — ‘[G]łosuję na *Kroniki abisyńskie* Mosesa Isegawy. Egzotyka, porywający język, tajemnice Afryki, które nam tylko niektóre [sic!] odkrył Kapuściński, podobnie jak Isegawa’.

‘It is about the authenticity of experience, which is attractive in its exoticism like *The Arabian Nights*, even if [Dirie] does not talk about sultan’s palaces . . . but about a makeshift shelter made of mats’ — ‘Chodzi o prawdę przeżycia, która pociąga swoją egzotyką jak *Baśnie z tysiąca i jednej nocy*, mimo iż nie mówi o sultańskich pałacach . . . , tylko o tymczasowych siedzibach z mat’.

Chapter Six: Discourses of Universalism

209

‘[I]nfusing the forms of the social life with truly human meanings’ — ‘[N]adanie prawdziwie ludzkiej treści formom życia społecznego’.

‘[M]arch[ing] forward towards higher forms of social life’ — ‘[M]arsz naprzód ku wyższym formom życia społecznego’.

‘[T]o ask penetrating questions’ about ‘the hidden . . . goals of the political and ideological game, which in the eyes of the young . . . African movements looks like an act of pure and disinterested solidarity’ — ‘[P]ostawić docieklive pytania [na temat] ukrytych . . . intencji tej gry ideologicznej i politycznej, które dzisiaj niekiedy wydają się młodym . . . ruchom w Afryce aktem czystej i bezinteresownej solidarności’.

210

‘[C]ertain European societies, which she considers totalitarian, despite basic differences in the political systems’ — ‘[P]ewnych społeczeństw europejskich, niezależnie od podstawowych różnic ustrojowych, uważanych przez pisarkę za totalitarne’.

‘[W]e love them as younger brothers. We want to carry powdered milk and penicillin to their little huts. We want to teach them how to make injections and read Montaigne. Because in our heads lingers on *W pustyni i w puszczy*’ — ‘[K]ochamy ich jak młodszych braci.

Chcemy nieść mleko w proszku i penicylinę do ich chattek. Chcemy ich nauczyć, jak się robi zastrzyki i czyta Montaigne'a. Bo w naszych głowach wciąż mającą *W pustyni i w puszczy*'.

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'[Tutuola is] sipping cold coca-cola, taking out ice from a fridge, watching colour TV, sending messages by telex' — '[Tutuola] popija zimną coca-colę, wyjmuje lód z lodówki, ogląda kolorową telewizję, nadaje teleksem'.

212

'[T]here is no civilizational alternative. In the end all of us, black and white, will become citizens of the world, and whether the world will be happy is a different matter' — '[N]ie ma alternatywy cywilizacyjnej. W końcu wszyscy czarni i biali staniemy się obywatelami świata, a czy on będzie szczęśliwy, to już inna sprawa'.

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'The new world is coming into being irrespective of our will, it is . . . a reality of our similarity in loneliness, fear of death, hunger and toil of everyday work' — 'Nowy świat powstaje niezależnie od naszej woli, jest . . . realnością naszego podobieństwa w samotności, w lęku przed śmiercią, głodem i znojem codziennej pracy'.

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'Achievements of the world civilization have been added to the pure vision of India (I had): Elvis Pelvis with his pompadour haircut . . . , panoramic cinema screening the American film *The Sound of Music*, plastic pens with pictures of London floating inside, a blue Plymouth and coca-cola' — 'Do czystej (mojej) wizji Indii dołożono dorobek światowej cywilizacji: Elvis Pelvis z czubem na głowie, . . . kino panoramiczne, w którym leci amerykański film „Dźwięki muzyki”, plastikowe długopisy z pływającymi w środku obrazkami z Londynu, błękitny plymouth i coca-cola'.

'I discovered, among other things, that the Indians are so similar to all other people. That Western civilization, its idols, its paraphernalia, ruthlessly entered the world of tradition' — 'Dla mnie odkryciem było między innymi to, że Hindusi są tak bardzo podobni do wszystkich innych ludzi. Że zachodnia cywilizacja, jej idole, jej rekwizyty wtargnęły bezpardonowo w świat tradycji'.

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Pacewicz: 'We, Europeans, are sometimes accused of . . . being oversaturated with freedom'.
Roy: '. . . That West of yours has been exploiting our world since the colonial times, so I find the talk about your problems with freedom a little annoying.' —
Pacewicz: 'Nam Europejczykom zarzuca się czasem . . . , [ż]e jesteśmy przesyleni wolnością'.

Roy: ‘. . .Ten twój Zachód wykorzystuje nasz świat od czasów kolonializmu, dlatego trochę mnie denerwuje mówienie o problemach, jakie macie z wolnością’.

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‘[O]ur sad faces show very well, and so does the chill in our hearts. And indifference as our signature mark’ — ‘Widać dobrze nasze smutne twarze, a w sercach chłód. I obojętność jako znak rozpoznawczy’.

222

‘[T]here is more to unite people . . . than to set them apart’ — ‘[W]ięcej ludzi łączy . . . niż dzieli’.

‘No people are so exotic that we could not recognize ourselves in them’ — ‘Nigdzie nie ma ludzi na tyle egzotycznych, byśmy nie mogli się w nich rozpoznać’.

‘[Dib’s book] has a universal appeal, as it deals with. . . an eternal and powerful . . . human strife for freedom’ — ‘[Książka Diba] ma wymowę uniwersalną, mówiąc o . . . wiecznym i potężnym. . . dążeniu człowieka do wolności’.

223

‘[B]etween the Scylla of backwardness and the Charybdis of the kitschy modernity, which makes everything uniform’ — ‘[M]iędzy Scyllą zacofania a Charybdą unifikującej wszystko i tandetnej nowoczesności’.

‘Narayan made swindling (i.e. feigning values) into a sign of the times, a marker of a modern human being’ — ‘Z hochsztaplerstwa (a więc z udawania wartości) uczynił Narayan znak czasu, wyznacznik współczesnego człowieka’.

‘[A]n indication of cultural and social development or stagnation, or even regression of African nations’ — ‘[W]yraz rozwoju czy zastoju, a nawet regresu kulturalnego i społecznego narodów afrykańskich’.

224

‘[I]n the contemporary writing of the [African] continent one cannot as yet discern any . . . visible national features’ — ‘[N]ie można jeszcze wyróżniać we współczesnym piśmiennictwie tego kontynentu jakichś . . . widocznych cech narodowych’.

‘An African writer faces a choice, which is no longer known to us in Europe: which language to write in’ — ‘Pisarz afrykański staje wobec nie znanej nam już w Europie konieczności wyboru, w jakim języku pisać’.

‘Africa was deemed a land unable to produce self-efficient state structures, and its culture was perceived by the colonizers as early, childish efforts’ — ‘Afryka uchodziła za ląd niezdolny do wytwarzania samodzielnych struktur państwowych, a w jej kulturze kolonialisci widzieli tylko dziecinne pierwociny’.

225

‘[P]eople are closer to one another than it seems. . . . [cultural differences] are not an obstacle to a full spiritual understanding’ — ‘Ludzie są sobie bliżsi niż się na pozór zdaje. . . . [Różnice kulturowe] nie stanowią przeszkody w pełnym duchowym porozumieniu’.

‘[Habibi’s book] reads swiftly and, curiously enough, without a sense of foreignness [The book] acquires a universal dimension’ — ‘[Książkę Habibiego] czyta się wartko i, co najdziwniejsze, bez poczucia obcości [Książka] nabiera wymiarów uniwersalnych’.

‘[A] search for eternal features of human nature’ and with ‘the limits of human condition, loneliness, pain, suffering, madness and faith’ — ‘[P]oszukiwani[e] wiecznych cech natury ludzkiej, granic kondycji ludzkiej, samotności, bólu, cierpienia, obłąd i wiary’.

‘[Algerian writers return to] human strife for dignity, to an analysis of human psyche, to identifying the limits of faithfulness’ — ‘[Pisarze algierscy powracają do] człowieczej walki o godność, do analizy ludzkiej psychiki, do określenia granic wierności’.

‘This is universality of the experiences of the contemporary world. This is Brotherhood in Death!’ — ‘Oto uniwersalność doświadczeń współczesnego świata. Oto Braterstwo w Śmierci!’.

226

‘But we will begin to care, believe me, because the world is becoming small like an apple’ — ‘Ale nas to zacznie obchodzić, proszę mi wierzyć, świat się robi bowiem maleńki jak jabłuszko’.

‘One more local curiosity is elevated to be an expression of human experience. . . . We are poisoning thousands of people in Bhopal but our fragile mechanisms of cultural debate are becoming more universal and just’ — ‘Jeszcze jedna osobliwość lokalna zostaje wyniesiona do rangi ogólnoludzkiego doświadczenia. . . . Trujemy tysiące ludzi w Bhopalu, ale nasze kruche mechanizmy dyskusji kulturalnej stają się coraz bardziej uniwersalne i sprawiedliwe’.

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‘[There is] both exoticism – but exoticism that is domesticated and comprehensible for a European – and universalism, which unites various ways of understanding the human condition’ — ‘Jest tutaj i egzotyka, ale oswojona, zrozumiała dla mieszkańca Europy, i uniwersalizm, jednający różne rozumienia ludzkiej kondycji’.

‘Your child, too, could kill, Gordimer says. And what would you do then?’ — ‘I twoje dziecko mogłoby zabić, mówi [Gordimer]. I co byś wtedy zrobił?’

‘[Brink’s books are about] a human being thrown into a destructive machinery of dictatorship, politics and custom’ — ‘[Książki Brinka traktują o] wierności, miłości i buncie. A także o człowieku uwikłanym w niszczące tryby dyktatury, polityki i obyczajów’.

228

‘[S]hame and shamelessness, which stem from violence and create contemporary history’ — ‘[H]ańba i bezwstyd wywodzące się z przemocy, a tworzące współczesną historię’

‘It is about us. . . . The Moor’s exile can be a figure for our exile, his feeling of lack can be a sign of our feeling’ — ‘To o nas. . . . Wygnanie Maura może być figurą wygnania każdego z nas, jego odczucie braku może być znakiem naszego odczucia’.

229

‘[The former colonizers] admit the angry younger brothers under the umbrella of their language and culture, as if it was happening on a London street’ — ‘[Byli kolonizatorzy] przyjmują rozgniewanych młodszych braci pod parasol swojego języka i kultury, jakby to było na londyńskiej ulicy’.

‘[It] makes the novel interesting not only because of its exoticism but also universal purport’ — ‘To czyni powieść interesującą nie tylko z powodu jej egzotyki, ale także uniwersalnego przekazu’.

230

‘[S]uffering in its very different shades: suffering which we witness, which we inflict on others and which happens to us’ — ‘[C]ierpienie w jego najrozmaitszych odcieniach: którego jesteśmy świadkami, które zadajemy innym i które staje się naszym udziałem’.

‘Separation is a trap. Such truths flash in *The Inheritance*.... Will we have enough courage not to overlook the flashes?’ — ‘Separacja jest pułapką. Tymi prawdami przebłyskuje „Brzemie...”. Czy wystarczy nam odwagi, by na te błyski nie zamykać oczu?’

‘[S]queezed between one sex scene description and another, the reflections on Bush and the war in Iraq tend to lose importance. However, through this strategy *Before I Forget* is also a very universal text’ — ‘[Przemyślenia na temat Busha i wojny w Iraku] przez wciśnięcie między jeden opis sceny łóżkowej a drugi tracą na znaczeniu. Jednakże dzięki takiemu zabiegowi „Zanim zapomnę” jest również tekstem bardzo uniwersalnym’.

231

‘[T]he contradiction between history and the everyday, and between the public and the private sphere, is disappearing, as is the idea of ethnically uniform culture’ — ‘[S]przecznosc między historią a codziennością, między sferą publiczną a prywatną, stopniowo zanika, podobnie jak zanika pojęcie jednolitej etnicznie kultury’.

‘[Wasn’t Mrabet] an exotic attraction from a still innocent world for the old Bowles’ — ‘[Czy Mrabet nie był] dla Bowlesa egzotyczną atrakcją z wciąż niewinnego świata’.

Chapter Seven: Statements of Similarity

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‘Let us honestly admit that our cultural status also had something to do with the Partitions, i.e. a sort of partial and temporary colonization. For some time one had to go to a colonial metropolis to make a name for oneself: to Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin . . . Ms Skłodowska married a Frenchman to leisurely do her radiation, Przybyszewski bet on Berlin and Scandinavia, while Conrad worked for British ship owners. Besides, Germany tried to conquer Eastern Europe twice and Russia once (in the twentieth century) to gain foothold in the game of world domination. And even now, when from the East we have become the South, we must court the former colonizers to get some capital. So we can understand the wretched of the earth as homeless or rootless people. We can understand the multiple entanglements and subtle tentacles of the colonial past’ — ‘Powiedzmy bowiem sobie szczerze, że nasz kulturalny status też się o rozbiory, a więc jakby o częściową i przejściową kolonizację otarł. Przez pewien czas trzeba było jechać do kolonialnej metropolii, żeby się wybić: do Petersburga, Wiednia, Berlina. . . . Pani Skłodowska poszła za Francuza, żeby sobie spokojnie promieniować, Przybyszewski obstawiał Berlin i Skandynawię, a Conrad pracował dla armatorów brytyjskich. Niemcy też dwa razy, a Rosjanie raz (w tym stuleciu) próbowali podbić Środkową Europę jako odskocznię do gry o globalną dominację. A i teraz, kiedy z krainy wschodu zostaliśmy krainą południa, trzeba się do byłych kolonizatorów uśmiechać o kapitał. Możemy więc zrozumieć głos wyklętych tej ziemi jako ludzi bezdomnych. Możemy zrozumieć wielorakie uwikłania i subtelne macki kolonialnej przeszłości’.

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‘[Negritude is based on] spiritualism and a pre-eminence of the metaphysical and spiritual values of the black man, whose cognition is intuitive, rather than empirical-rational as in a European’ — ‘[Murzynność jest oparta na] spirytualizmie, prymacie wartości duchowych i metafizycznych Murzyna, którego poznanie jest intuicyjne, a nie zmysłowo-racjonalne jak u Europejczyka’.

‘The whole affair is deceptively similar to the Polish messianism . . . with its mythical self-images and equally arbitrary depictions of the nations of Western Europe’ — ‘Całość sprawy do złudzenia przypomina mesjanizm polski . . . , z jego mitycznymi wyobrażeniami o sobie samych i równie dowolnymi charakterystykami narodów zachodniej Europy’.

241

‘It is worth being aware of the diversity of cultures but also of their accessibility to everyone. It is worth seeing one’s reflection also in foreign sources, to realize one’s own deficiencies and one’s own hopes...’ — ‘Warto jednak zdawać sobie sprawę z różnorodności kultur, ale i z ich dostępności dla każdego. Warto przejrzeć się i w obcych źródłach, by uświadomić sobie własne braki i własne nadzieje...’

243

‘[Principle of ketman] allows believers to [ostensibly renounce their faith and hide their views in unfavourable circumstances] — ‘[Kieruje się zasadą ketmanu] zezwalającą wyznawcom na pozorne zaparcie się wiary i zatajenie swych poglądów w nie sprzyjających warunkach’.

‘Of course, according to the ketman principle, the service does not imply internal convictions’ — ‘Oczywiście zgodnie z zasadą ketmanu ta służba nie łączy się z wewnętrznymi przekonaniem’.

244

‘For the Polish reader they are an encounter with another world . . . Without Auschwitz and Gulag, without Hitler and Stalin, without Wojtyła and Solzhenitsyn’ — ‘Dla polskiego czytelnika te książki są spotkaniem z innym światem . . . Bez Oświęcimia i Gułagu, bez Hitlera i Stalina . . . bez Wojtyły i Sołżenicyna’.

247

‘And yet a Polish reader easily recognizes the atmosphere . . . of dictatorship, of disdain and powerlessness; a world where a human becomes an object; a world of police omnipotence, where some lack hope, while others live . . . happily as long as they don’t try to think about all that — ‘A przecież polski czytelnik łatwo rozpoznaje klimat . . . dyktatury pogardy i bezsilności; świat, gdzie człowiek staje się przedmiotem; świat wszechmocy policji, w

którym dla jednych nie ma nadziei, a inni żyją . . . szczęśliwie, jeśli tylko o tym wszystkim nie próbują myśleć.’

251

‘[T]he instable world [of the novel], in which everyone can become a stranger, refugee and enemy, is very clear in this part of Europe’ — ‘[T]en niestabilny świat, w którym każdy może stać się obcym, uchodźcą i wrogiem, jest w naszej części Europy bardzo czytelny’.

‘Fluidity of borders, resettlements, expulsion from the country – we have it in our blood’ — ‘Płynność granic, przesiedlenia, wyrzucanie z kraju – mamy to we krwi’.

‘In Poland we feel similarly about our neighbours, the former colonizers and those whom we ourselves colonized’ — ‘W Polsce do sąsiadów, dawnych kolonizatorów i tych, których sami kolonizowaliśmy, żywimy podobne uczucia’.

252

‘The scenes from a queue for an American visa could be happening in Warsaw twenty years ago’ — ‘Sceny z kolejki po wizę amerykańską mogłyby się rozgrywać w Warszawie 20 lat temu’.

255

‘[T]he forces of reaction would have suffered a devastating defeat, in tune with the principles of historical justice, and the morning star of freedom would shine over the reborn country’ — ‘[S]iły reakcji poniosłyby druzgocącą klęskę, zgodnie z zasadami dziejowej sprawiedliwości, a nad odrodzonym krajem wreszcie zaświeciłaby jutrzienka swobody’.

256

‘[Orzeszkowa], too, had to divide the world into two parts (Poland, Russia; gentlewomen, peasant woman . . .; a stupid parvenu, . . . a wounded freedom fighter [*powstaniec*], etc., etc.’ — ‘[Orzeszkowa] również musiała dzielić świat na dwie części (Polska, Rosja; panienki ze dworu, chłopka . . ., głupi dorobkiewicz, . . . ranny powstaniec, itd., itd.’.

257

‘He was accused of insufficient “negritude” and undervaluing the working masses (sounds familiar, doesn’t it?)’ — ‘Zarzucono mu i niedostateczną „murzyńskość”, i niedocenywanie mas ludowych (skąd my to znamy?)’.

‘[*Kinsman and Foreman*] reads like a novel about Polish corruption and bureaucracy’ — ‘[*Sądny dzień w Iballi*] brzmi jak powieść o polskim łapówkarstwie i biurokracji’.

‘[Rushdie] reinstates the seriousness of literature, he reinstates its pride and its dignity’ — ‘[Rushdie] przywraca literaturze powagę, przywraca jej dumę i jej godność’.

258

‘Don’t the phenomena described in the novel occur in the old, wise Europe too?’ — ‘Czy zjawiska opisywane w powieści nie występują także w także w starej, mądrej Europie?’

261

‘[That is a country of camps of which] we know very little, preoccupied as we are with our historical camp martyrology. We don’t always realize that the time of camps is not over’ — ‘[Bo jest to kraj obozów], o których niewiele wiemy, zajmując się swoją historyczną, obozową martyrologią. Nie zawsze do nas dociera, że epoka obozów wcale się nie skończyła’.

262

‘[T]he emigrant complex has concerned Poles, too, for many generations’ — ‘[K]ompleks emigranta przez całe pokolenia dotyczył także Polaków’.

‘Here is where the book ends for Americans and starts for me. I can easily imagine not only the Indian woman, but also myself as the Indian woman’ — ‘Tu książka kończy się dla Amerykanów, a dla mnie zaczyna. Z łatwością mogę sobie wyobrazić nie tylko hinduską kobietę, ale i siebie jako hinduską kobietę’.

‘All [Rushdie’s] writing . . . is an attempt to free himself from the roots, which must be more of an obstacle in London for a swarthy-skinned author than they were for Conrad’ — ‘Cała jego literatura . . . jest próbą uwolnienia się od korzeni, które pisarzowi o śniadej skórze przeszkadzają w Londynie znacznie bardziej, niż przeszkadzały Conradowi’.

264

‘[N]ew people and new ideas imposed forcefully, against common sense’ — ‘[N]owych ludzi i nowych idei narzucanych siłą, wbrew zdrowemu rozsądkowi’.

‘[C]uriosity for all the parties involved and understanding for human smallness’ — ‘[Z] ciekawością dla wszystkich stron, ze zrozumieniem ludzkich małości’.

265

‘Józef Korzeniowski had to become Joseph Conrad to be successful’ — ‘Józef Korzeniowski musiał się stać Josephem Conradem, żeby zrobić karierę’.

266

‘About the Poland in which we will live, when in some five or fifteen years we will become an integral part of a multiethnic, multicultural Europe and world’ — ‘O Polsce, w jakiej żyć będziemy, gdy za lat kilka czy kilkanaście staniemy się w pełni częścią multietnicznej, wielokulturowej Europy i świata’.

‘[About] the Poland which we won’t have if we see in Poland the victory of the forces that claim to guard tradition . . . and wish no “motley” here’ — ‘[O] Polsce, której mieć nie będziemy, jeśli zwyciężą u nas siły, które utrzymują, że stoją na straży tradycji . . . i nie życzą sobie u nas „pstrokacizny”’.

267

‘The Polish novel has yet to enter a post-xenophobic or post-anti-Semitic phase, equivalent to Western postcolonialism’ — ‘Polska tradycja powieściowa ma jeszcze przed sobą epokę postksenofobiczną, czy postantysemityczną, która będzie odpowiednikiem zachodniego postkolonializmu.’

‘[P]arochialism, anachronism, a sense of mission and resentment against the whole world’ — ‘[P]rowincjonalizm, anachronizm, poczucie misji czy pretensje do całego świata’.

Appendix Two: Polish Translations of Postcolonial Literature (1945–2010)

Abbreviated names of the publishing houses:

Czyt – Czytelnik

KiW – Książka i Wiedza

LSW – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza

NK – Nasza Księgarnia

PIW – Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy

Prósz – Prószyński i S-ka

Św. Książki – Świat Książki

Św. Lit. – Świat Literacki

WL – Wydawnictwo Literackie

Zysk – Zysk i S-ka

Definition of ‘postcolonial literature’: as noted in Chapter Two, for the purpose of the thesis I define postcolonial literature as writing by authors from Sub-Saharan and North Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia and the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean (including migrant and second generation immigrant authors who trace their origins to those regions) who engage with postcolonial peoples and cultures in sustained and meaningful ways and have some legitimacy to represent them due to their links to postcolonial places and cultures.

Note regarding transliteration: original Arabic, Hindi and Bengali titles have been obtained from the Polish National Library catalogue. Whenever possible, a British transliteration, obtained from the British Library or School of Oriental and African Studies library catalogue, has been substituted for the Polish one. The strategy may have led to inconsistencies in the transliteration.

Note regarding re-editions: the list only includes first editions: re-editions are not listed.

Year	Author	Title of translation	Translator	Publisher	Original title
1948	Peter Abrahams	Murzyn z kopalni złota	Teofila Ranicka	Prasa Wojsk.	Mine Boy
1949	Mulk Raj Anand	Wielkie serce	Ewa Fiszer	Czyt.	The Big Heart
1949	Anand, Mulk Raj	Niedotykalny	Bolesław Miga	Książnica-Atlas	Untouchable
1950	Aimé Césaire	Rozprawa z kolonializmem	Zofia Jaremko-Żytyńska	Czyt.	Discours sur le colonialisme
1950	Mulk Raj Anand	Kulis: powieść	Maria Skibniewska	Czyt.	The Coolie
1950	Mulk Raj Anand	Dwa liście i pąk	Bolesław Miga	Czyt.	Two Leaves and a Bud
1951	Bhabani Bhattacharya	Tak wiele jest głodów	Krystyna Tarnowska	KiW	So Many Hungers
1954	Alan Paton	Płacz ukochany kraju	Jerzy Gawroński	Pax	Cry, the Beloved Country

1955	Mulk Raj Anand	Idylla kaszmirska i inne opowiadania	Grażyna Spychalska	Czyt.	A Kashmir Idyll
1955	Bhabani Bhattacharya	Człowiek, który jedzie na tygrysie	Irena Doleżał-Nowicka	Czyt.	He who rides a tiger
1956	Peter Abrahams	Szlakiem gromu	Wanda Górkowa	Czyt.	Path of Thunder
1956	Doris Lessing	Mrowisko	Agnieszka Gliczanka	PIW	Five Short Novels
1956	various	Adżanta [Indian short stories]	Bohdan Gębarski et al.	Pax	various
1956	Alan Paton	Za późno ptaszku	Wacław Niepokólczycki	Pax	Too late the phalarope
1957	Mohammed Dib	W kawiarni	Hanna Szumańska-Grossowa	Czyt.	Au café
1957	Alexandre Cabral	Gorąca ziemia	Helena Czajka	Iskry	Terra quente
1958	Mouloud Feraoun	Ziemia i krew	Stefan Kozicki	Iskry	La terre et le sang
1958	Kwame Nkrumah	Autobiografia	J. Smoliński, I. Gruzewska	KiW	Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah
1958	Rabindranath Tagore	Dom i świat	Wincenty Birkenmajer	PIW	The Home and the World, trans. from Bengali by S. Tagore,
1959	Rabindranath Tagore	Rozbicie	Jerzy Bandrowski	PIW	The Wreck, trans. from Bengali by R. Tagore
1960	R.K. Narayan	Przewodnik	Henryk Krzeczkowski	Czyt.	The Guide
1960	Malek Haddad	Ostatni obraz	Hanna Szumańska-Grossowa	PIW	La dernière impression
1961	Rabindranath Tagore	Głodne kamienie i inne opowiadania	Jerzy Bandrowski, Franciszek Mirandola	Czyt.	The Hungry Stones, transl. from Bengali
1962	various authors	Poezja czarnej Afryki [African poetry]	Bronisław Kamiński-Durocher	PIW	various
1963	Bhabani Bhattacharya	Muzyka dla Mohini	Henryk Krzeczkowski	Czyt.	Music for Mohini
1964	R.K. Narayan	Ekspert finansowy	Henryk Krzeczkowski	KiW	The Financial Expert
1964	Nadine Gordimer	Świat obcych ludzi	Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa	PIW	A World of Strangers
1965	Kwame Nkrumah	Afryka musi się zjednoczyć	Ewa Danecka	KiW	Africa Must Unite
1965	Shanta Rameshwar Rao	Opowieści staroindyjskie [stories of old India]	Krystyna Szerer	NK	Tales of ancient India
1965	Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai	Prawo morza	Zofia Sroczyńska	PIW	Chemmeen

1966	Mourad Bourboune	Janowcowe wzgórze	Hanna Szumańska-Grossowa	Czyt.	Le mont des genêts
1966	R. Frelek (ed.)	Jak słońce [Indian short stories]	Zofia Kierszys, T. J. Dehnel	KiW	various
1966	Sudhin Natha Ghose	Opowieści hinduskie	I. Tuwim	NK	Folk tales and fairy stories from India
1966	Chinua Achebe	Boża strzała	Maria Skibniewska	Pax	Arrow of God
1966	Nadine Gordimer	Na pewno w któryś poniedziałek [short stories]	Agnieszka Gliczanka	PIW	various
1966	Doris Lessing	Pokój nr 19 [short stories]	Wacław Niepokólczycki	PIW	A Man and Two Women [selection]
1967	Kusum Nair	Kwiaty w pyle	Krystyna Szerer	Iskry	Blossoms in the Dust: The Human Factor in Indian Development
1967	Z. Łanowski (ed.)	Na południe od Sahary [short stories]	Z. Kiersysz et al.	PIW	Various
1967	Mongo Beti	Biedny Chrystus z Bomby	Wanda Błońska	PIW	Le pauvre Christ de Bomba
1967	Hans Stumme (ed.)	Przy kawie i nargilach: bajki Tunisu	Anna Miodońska-Susułowa	PIW	Tunisische Märchen und Gedichte
1968	Peter Abrahams	Ciemność	Zofia Kierszys	Pax	A night of their own
1968	various	Opowiadania z wysp karaibskich	trans. Z. Kierszys; ed. Andrew Salkey	KiW	Stories from the Caribbean
1969	Kedar Nath	Trzecie oko boga Siwy	M. Kozłowski	Czyt.	Third Eye of Shiva
1970	Francis Bebey	Syn Agaty Mudio	Krystyna Arciuch	Czyt.	Le fils d'Agatha Mudio
1970	Alex La Guma	Nocna wędrówka	Zofia Kierszys	KiW	A Walk in the Night and Other Stories
1970	R.K. Narayan	Sprzedawca słodczy	Juliusz Kydryński	KiW	The Vendor of Sweets
1970	various authors	Skorpion - opowiadania egipskie	Jolanta Jasińska (ed.); trans. Józef Bielawski et al.	PIW	various
1971	Premchand	Pańska studnia [short stories]	Juliusz Parnowski (ed.), trans. J. Parnowski et al.	Czyt.	various
1971	V.S. Naipaul	Marionetki	Maria Zborowska	KiW	The Mimic Men
1971	V.S. Naipaul	Wybory w Elwirze	Maria Zborowska	KiW	The Suffrage of Elwira
1971	Ghoshal Hiranmoy	Księga Walhalli	Devadan Bogdan Ghoshal, Barbara Grabowska	MON	Mahattara yuddher prathama adhyaya
1971	Francis Selormey	Wąska ścieżka	Maria Skibniewska	Pax	The Narrow Path: An African Childhood

1971	Fadhma Ath Mansour Amrouche	Dzieje mojego życia	Maria Kindler	PIW	La histoire de ma vie
1972	V.S. Naipaul	Utrata Eldorado	Maria Zborowska	KiW	The Loss of Eldorado
1972	R.K. Narayan	Koń i dwie kozy: opowiadania	Zofia Kierszys	KiW	A Horse and Two Goats
1972	Ngugi Wa Thiong'o	Ziarno pszeniczne	Maria Skibniewska	PIW	The Grain of Wheat
1972	Mouloud Feraoun	Syn biedaka	Jerzy Pański	PIW	Le fils du pauvre
1972	Elechi Amadi	Piękna Ihuoma	Zofia Kierszys	PIW	The Concubine
1972	Ngugi Wa Thiong'o	Chmury i łzy	Zofia Kierszys	PIW	Weep Not Child
1973	Camara Laye	Czarny chłopak	Zbigniew Stolarek	Iskry	L'enfant noir
1973	K. Natwar-Singh (ed.)	Opowiadania indyjskie	Krystyna Szerer	PIW	Stories of India
1974	V.S. Naipaul	Miguel Street	Maria Zborowska	KiW	Miguel Street
1974	V.S. Naipaul	W wolnym kraju	Maria Zborowska	KiW	In a Free State
1974	Various	Antologia poezji afrykańskiej	Wanda Leopold & Z. Stolarek (ed.)	LSW	African poetry anthology
1974	Rabindranath Tagore	Dom i świat	Agnieszka Gliczanka	PIW	The Home and the World, trans. from Bengali by S. Tagore
1974	Bata Kindai Amgoza LoBagola	Życiorys afrykańskiego dzikusa przez niego samego napisane	Maria Traczewska	WL	An African savage's own story
1975	Mongo Beti	Król cudem ocalony	Maria Skibniewska	Pax	Le roi miraculé
1975	Ahmadou Kourouma	Fama Dumbuya, najprawdziwszy. Dumbuya na białym koniu	Z. Stolarek	PIW	Les soleils des indépendances
1976	Doris Lessing	Lato przed zmierzchem	Barbara Rewkiewicz-Sadowska	Czyt.	The Summer Before the Dark
1976	various	Sandały [Hindi short stories]	Juliusz Parnowski	Czyt.	various
1976	Cyprian Ekwensi	Gdy płonie trawa	Zofia Kierszys	KiW	Burning Grass
1976	Cyprian Ekwensi	Jagua Nana	Maryla Metelska	PIW	Jagua Nana
1976	Mohammed Dib	Królewski taniec	Barbara Durbajło	PIW	La danse du roi
1976	various	Liście oliwek [Palestinian poetry]	S.Shoukr, A. Witkowska	PIW	various
1977	various	Taniec siedmiu zasłon. [Indian short stories]	Tatiana Rutkowska (ed.), trans. T. Rutkowska et al.	Czyt.	various

1977	Rabindranath Tagore	Poezje wybrane	R. Stiller (ed.), trans. J. Bandrowski et al.	LSW	various
1977	Wanda Leopold (ed.)	Eposy Czarnej Afryki (incl. Zulus Czaka & Sundzata albo Epopeja Mandingu)	Ewa Fiszer from Eng, from Sotho by F.H. Dutton; & Z. Stolarek from French, into Fr by D.T. Niana	LSW	Chaka the Zulu & Soundjata, ou, L'épopée mandingue
1977	Andrée Clair Boubou Hama	Albarka – znaczy szansa	Katarzyna Witwicka	NK	L'aventure d'Albarka
1977	Mohammed Dib	Kto pamięta o morzu	Wiera Bieńkowska	Pax	Qui se souvient de la mer
1978	Sembène Ousmane	Xala	Czesława Żuławska	Czyt.	Xala
1978	various	16 opowiadań afrykańskich [African short stories]	Ed. Maryla Metelska, trans. M. Metelska et al.	Iskry	various
1978	Aimé Césaire	Poezje [poetry]	Zbigniew Stolarek		various
1978	Agostinho Neto	Palmy nadziei	Ireneusz Kania	WL	
1978	Wole Soyinka	Interpretatorzy	Ewa Fiszer	LSW	The Interpreters
1979	Nadine Gordimer	Gość honorowy	Zofia Kierszys	KiW	A Guest of Honour
1979	V.S. Naipaul	Masażysta cudotwórcy	Maria Zborowska	KiW	The Mystic Masseur
1980	V.S. Naipaul	Partyzanci	Maria Zborowska	Czyt.	Guerrillas
1980	Metelska, Maryla (ed.)	19 współczesnych opowiadań nigeryjskich [short stories]	Metelska et al.	Iskry	various
1980	Christiaan Barnard	Odrąceni	Anna Mysłowska	Pax	The Unwanted
1980	Jusuf Idris	Egiptski erotyk	Janusz Danecki	PIW	Q'al-madina
1980	Breyten Breytenbach	Cały czas [poetry]	A. Braga	WL	selected poems
1980	Mouloud Mammeri	Opium i kij	Krystyna J. Dąbrowska	MON	L'opium et le bâton
1981	Mohammed Dib	Talizman, Wielki dom	Barbara Durbajło Wiera Bieńkowska	Pax	Le talisman; La grande maison
1982	Phanisvaranatha Renu	W Meri Gandżu zwykłej wiosce	Juliusz Parnowski	Czyt.	Maila ancala
1982	Meja Mwangi	Ulica Rzeczna	Maryla Metelska	Iskry	Going Down the River Road
1982	Tawfiq al-Hakim	Dom nie spełnionych marzeń	Janusz Danecki	KAW	Awdat al.-ruh

1982	Nadine Gordimer	Zachować swój świat	J. Milnikiel	KiW	The Conservationist
1982	Naguib Mahfouz	Hamida z zaułka Midakk	J. Kozłowska	KiW	Zuqaq al.-Midaqq
1982	Satyajit Ray	Podróże profesora Šanku	Elżbieta Walterowa	NK	Sabasa prophesara Sanku
1982	Taha Husajn	Księga dni	J. Bielawski	Pax	Al.-Ayyam
1982	Ghassan Kanafani	Głowa kamiennego lwa [short stories]	J. Danecki	PIW	Al.-Kisas as-Kasira
1982	Wole Soyinka	Kuranty i inne wiersze [poems]	Ewa Fiszer	PIW	various
1982	R. K. Narayan	Bogowie, demoni i inni	Z. Reszelewski	WL	Gods, Demons and Others
1983	Hatif Janabi	Księga wschodu [poems]	Janusz Danecki	Iskry	various
1983	Amos Tutuola	Smakosz wina palmowego; Moje życie w puszczy upiorów	Ernestyna Skurjat	Iskry	Palm-Wine Drinkard; My Life in the Bush of Ghosts
1983	R. K. Narayan	Malarz szyldów	Wacław Niepokólczycki	KiW	The Painter of Signs
1983	Gurdev Singh	Agonia [poems]	Zdzisław Reszelewski	Kujawsko-Pomor. Tow. Kult.	various
1983	Fuja Abajomi	Opowieści ludu Joruba	Maryla Metelska	NK	Fourteen hundred cowries
1983	Ravi Shankar	Ja i mój dziadek	Katarzyna Żukrowska	NK	Life with Grandfather
1983	various	Pieśni gniewu i miłości [Arabic poetry]	K. Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, J. Danecki, A. Witkowska	PIW	various
1983	Castro Soromenho	Martwa ziemia	A. Lenczewska	WL	Terra Morta
1983	various	Ziemia smutnej pomarańczy [Arabic short stories]	Jolanta Kozłowska (ed), trans. J. Kozłowska et al.	LSW	various
1984	Maryla Metelska (ed.)	24 współczesne opowiadania południowoafrykańskie [short stories]	Metelska et al.	Iskry	various
1984	Nadine Gordimer	Zapach kwiatów i śmierci	Agnieszka Gliczanka, Blanka Kuczborska, Piotr Niklewicz	KiW	Selected Stories
1984	R. K. Narayan	Ramayana: współczesną prozą opowiedziany epos indyjski	Kalina Wojciechowska	KiW	Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version
1984	Ghada as Samman	Koszmary Bejrutu	Hanna Jankowska	PIW	Kawābis Bayrūt
1985	Ibrahim al-Koni	Tajemnice pustyni	no information	no information	no information
1985	V.S. Naipaul	Zakręt rzeki	Maria Zborowska	Czyt.	A Bend in the River

1985	Seydou Badian	Krwawiące maski	Leszek Kossobudzki	Pax	Le sang des masques
1985	Frantz Fanon	Wyklęty lud ziemi	Hanna Tygielska	PIW	Les damnés de la terre
1985	Dan Jacobson	Taniec w słońcu	Edward Maruszak	WL	A Dance in the Sun
1986	T.M. Aluko	Sądny dzień w Ibali	Ernestyna Skurjat	Iskry	Kinsman and Foreman
1986	Lal Behari Day	Opowieści ludowe Bengalu	Elżbieta Walterowa	NK	Folk-Tales of Bengal & a 1977 version by Lila Majumdar in Bengali
1987	Camara Laye	Spojrzenie króla	J. Krzywicki, J.Jarnuszkiewicz	Iskry	Le regard du roi
1987	Hatif Janabi	Rozbite wiersze [poems]	Jan Leończuk	KAW	various
1987	R. K. Narayan	Moje dni: autobiografia	Zdzisław Reszelewski	KiW	My Days
1987	Jean Rhys	Szerokie Morze Sargassowe	Maryla Topczewska-Metelska	WL	Wide Sargasso Sea
1988	Hamidou Cheikh Kane	Dwojaki sens przygody Samby Diallo	Ewa Fiszler	Iskry	L'aventure ambiguë
1988	various	Opowieści ludu Hausa	Nina Pawlak	NK	Labaru na Da da na Yanzu and others
1988	Emil Habibi	Niezwykłe okoliczności zniknięcia niejakiego Saida Abu an-Nahsa z rodu Optysymistów	Hanna Jankowska	PIW	Al-Waqā' i' al-gharībah fī ikhtifā' Sa' id Abī al-Nahs al-Mutashā' il
1989	Salman Rushdie	Dzieci północy	Anna Kołyszko	Czyt.	Midnight's Children
1989	Miriam Tlali	Muriel w Metropolitan	Maryla Topczewska-Metelska	Czyt.	Muriel at Metropolitan
1989	Hardev Singh	Ahalja i księżyc [Punjabi tales]	Andrzej Turczyński	Glob	Folk tales and proverbs of Panjabi people
1989	Chinua Achebe	Świat się rozpada	Małgorzata Żbikowska	Iskry	Things Fall Apart
1989	André Brink	Sucha biała pora	Tomasz Wyżyński	Iskry	Dry White Season
1989	Naguib Mahfouz	Opowieści starego Kairu	Jolanta Kozłowska	PIW	Bayn al-qasrayn
1990	Gamal al-Ghitani	Barakat	Hanna Jankowska	PIW	Al-Zeini Barakat
1990	Tahar Ben Jelloun	Dziecko z piasku; Święta noc	Małgorzata Cebo	PIW	L'enfant de sable; La nuit secrée
1990	Doris Lessing	Pamiętnik przetrwania	Bogdan Baran	WL	The memoirs of a survivor
1990	J.M. Coetzee	Czekając na barbarzyńców	Anna Mysłowska	Czyt.	Waiting for the Barbarians
1991	Hatif Janabi	Dziki kontynenty [poems]	Jan Leończuk	Staro-miejski Dom Kultury	Al-qarat al-muta'lahhisze

1992	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi	Prawda jest naczelną zasadą: (myśli)	Mieczysław Kozłowski	Miniatura	An Autobiography, trans. from Gujarati by Mahadev Desai
1992	Salman Rushdie	Szatańskie wersety	Anonymous	Unknown	The Satanic Verses
1992	Hatif Janabi	Pył gazeli [poems]	Hanna Jankowska, Małgorzata Szyburska	Dialog	Ghubār al-ghazāl
1992	Doris Lessing	Piąte dziecko	Zofia Kierszys	Marba Crown	The Fifth Child
1992	Christopher Hope	Odrębne światy	Agnieszka Kuc	Rebis	A Separate Development
1992	André Brink	Chwila na wietrze	Magdalena Konikowska	WL	An Instant in the Wind
1992	Rabindranath Tagore	Noc ziszczenia	Franciszek Mirandola [Jerzy Bandrowski]	Oskar	various
1993	Salman Rushdie	Harun i morze opowieści	Michał Kłobukowski	Adamski i Bieliński	Haroun and the Sea of Stories
1993	Bharati Mukherjee	Jasmine	Ewa Romkowska	Akapit	Jasmine
1993	Christopher Sherlock	Noc drapieżcy	Beata Brynkiewicz	Graph Media Film	Night of the Predator
1993	Maitreyi Devi	Mircea	Elżbieta Walterowa	PIW	Na Hanyate
1994	André Brink	Ambasador	Tomasz Wyżyński	Czyt.	The Ambassador
1994	Lewis Nkosi	Miłosny lot	Tomasz Wyżyński	Szczepan Szymański	Mating Birds
1994	Christopher Hope	Moskwa! Moskwa!	Maria Bilińska	Rebis	Moscow! Moscow!
1994	Abd al-Aziz Makalih	Skarga do Abu Nuwasa [poems]	Marek M. Dziekan	Zakład Arabist. i Islamis.UW	various
1994	Ben Okri	Droga bez dna	Krzysztof Mazurek	Zysk	The Famished Road
1994	Hanif Kureishi	Budda z przedmieścia	Maria Olejniczak-Skarsgrd	Zysk	The Buddha of Suburbia
1995	Christopher Hope	Czekoladowy zbawiciel	Radosław Zubek	Rebis	My Chocolate Redeemer
1995	Christopher Hope	Pogodny dom	Joanna Skórska	Rebis	Serenity House
1995	Hatif Janabi	Aniołowie miłosierdzia [poems]	Marek Dziekan & Hatif Janabi	Św. Lit.	various
1996	Hanan Al-Shaykh	Kobiety z piasku i mirry	Hanna Jankowska	PIW	Misk al-ghazāl
1996	J.M. Coetzee	W sercu kraju; Życie i czasy Michaela K.; Foe	Magdalena Konikowska	PIW	In the Heart of the Country; Life and Times of Michael K.; Foe
1996	Nadine Gordimer	Nikt ze mną nie pójdzie	Jan Rybicki	WL	None to Accompany Me

1997	Salman Rushdie	Ostatnie westchnienie Maura	Wojśław Brydak	Rebis	The Moor's Last Sigh
1997	J.M. Coetzee	Mistrz z Petersburga	Wacław Niepokólczycki	PIW	The Master of Petersburg
1998	Rashid al-Daif	Kochany Panie Kawabato	Ewa Machut-Mendecka	Dialog	'Azīzī al-sayyid Kawābātā: riwāyah
1998	various	Czterojęzyczna chrestomatia pendzabska [short stores]	Anna Sieklucka, Juliusz Parnowski	Dialog	various
1998	Jamaica Kincaid	Autobiografia mojej matki	Ewa Horodyska	PIW	The Autobiography of my Mother
1998	Janabi Hatif	Babilon poszukuje Babilonu [poems]	Janusz Danecki et al.	Św. Lit.	various
1999	Kiran Desai	Zadyma w dzikim sadzie	Małgorzata Dobrowolska	Prósz.	Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard
1999	Nadine Gordimer	Broń domowa	Dorota Filipczak	Prósz.	The House Gun
1999	Patrick Chamoiseau	Texaco	Adam Szymanowski	Prósz.	Texaco
1999	Yahyā al-Tahīr Abd Allāh	Naszyjniki i bransolety	Jolanta Kozłowska	Dialog	At-Taūk wa al-iswirra
2000	Moses Isegawa	Kroniki abisyńskie	Alicja Dehue-Oczko	Albatros	Abessijnse kronieken, Abyssinian Chronicles
2000	Salman Rushdie	Grimus	Krzysztof Filip Rudolf	Rebis	Grimus
2000	Arundhati Roy	Bóg rzeczy małych	Tomasz Bieroń	Św. Książki	The God of Small Things
2000	Waris Dirie (& Cathleen Miller)	Kwiat pustyni: z namiotu nomadów do Nowego Jorku	Marek Wrześniewski	Św. Książki	Desert Flower. The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad
2000	Hanif Kureishi	Czarny album	Ewa Rajewska	Zysk	The Black Album
2000	Salman Rushdie	Wstyd	Mariusz Ferek	Rebis	Shame
2001	Hasan Nasr	Uliczki starego Tunisu	Jolanta Kozłowska	Dialog	Dār al-Bāshā
2001	Jann Turner	Dolina marzeń	Anna Kraśko	Libros	Heartland
2001	Salman Rushdie	Ziemia pod jej stopami	Wojśław Brydak	Rebis	The Ground Beneath Her Feet
2001	J.M. Coetzee	Hańba	Michał Kłobukowski	Znak	Disgrace
2001	Amitav Ghosh	Koło rozumu	Jolanta Kozak	Zysk	The Circle of Reason
2001	Hanif Kureishi	Intymność	Alina Zielińska	Zysk	Intimacy
2001	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Mistrzynie przypraw	Klaudia Michalak-Palarz	Zysk	The Mistress of Spices
2001	Vikram Seth	Niebiańska muzyka	Elżbieta Waluk	Zysk	An Equal Music
2002	Mahi Binebine	Ludożercy	Grażyna Majcher	Dialog	Cannibales

2002	Waris Dirie (& Jeanne D'Haem)	Córka nomadów	Krystyna Chmiel	Fakty	Desert Dawn
2002	Hari Kunzru	Impresjonista	Dorota Stadnik	Muza	The Impressionist
2002	V.S. Naipaul	Masażysta cudotwórca	Maria Zborowska	Noir Sur Blanc	The Mystic Masseur
2002	V.S. Naipaul	Dom pana Biswasa	Krzysztof Oblucki	Noir Sur Blanc	House for Mr Biswas
2002	V.S. Naipaul	Nasza ulica	Robert Sudół	Noir Sur Blanc	Miguel Street
2002	V.S. Naipaul	Rozjaśnić tło	Robert Sudół	Noir Sur Blanc	Finding the Centre
2002	Salman Rushdie	Furia	Jerzy Kozłowski	Rebis	Fury
2002	Jhumpa Lahiri	Tłumacz chorób	Maria Jaszczurowska	Znak	Interpreter of Maladies
2002	Zadie Smith	Białe zęby	Zbigniew Batko	Znak	White Teeth
2002	Amitav Ghosh	Chromosom z Kalkuty	Jacek Spólny	Zysk	The Calcutta Chromosome
2002	Nalo Hopkinson	W kole stań, dziewczyno	Kinga Dobrowolska	Zysk	Brown Girl in the Ring
2002	Vikram Seth	Pretendent do ręki. T. 1	Anna Jeleniewska	Zysk	A Suitable Boy
2002	Vikram Seth	Pretendent do ręki. T. 2	Anna Jeleniewska	Zysk	A Suitable Boy
2002	Nirmala Moorthy	Maja. Historia pewnej Hinduski	Monika Nowakowska	Dialog	Maya
2003	Moses Isegawa	Gniazdo węży	Alicja Dehue-Oczko	Albatros	Slangenkuil, Snakepit
2003	Salam Pax	Blog z Bagdadu	Izabela Szybilska-Fiedorowicz	Gruner + Jahr Polska	Baghdad Blog
2003	Sudha Koul	Bogini z tygrysem: wspomnienie o Kaszmirze	Rafał Lisiński	Bertelsmann Media	The Tiger Ladies: A Memoir of Kashmir
2003	David Davidar	Dom Błękitnych Mango	Anna Dobrzańska-Gadowska	Św. Książki	The House of Blue Mangoes
2003	Indu Sundaresan	Dwudziesta żona	Maciejka Mazan	Św. Książki	The Twentieth Wife
2003	Manil Suri	Wisznui umiera	Klaudia Michalak-Palarz	Zysk	The Death of Vishnu
2003	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Siostra mojego serca	Klaudia Michalak-Palarz	Zysk	Sister of My Heart
2003	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Liana pragnień	Klaudia Michalak-Palarz	Zysk	The Vine of Desire
2003	Vikram Seth	Pretendent do ręki. T. 3	Anna Jeleniewska	Zysk	A Suitable Boy
2004	Anita Rau Badami	Prawdziwy bohater	Danuta Stasik	Dialog	The Hero's Walk

2004	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Fioletowy hibiskus	Jan Kraśko	Amber	Purple Hibiscus
2004	Anita Desai	Czas postu, czas uczyty	Magdalena Pańnikowska	Dialog	Fasting, Feasting
2004	Shashi Tharoor	Bollywood	Artur Karp	Dialog	Show Business
2004	Yasmina Khadra	Owieczki Pana	Beata Kowalska, Jolanta Kozłowska	Dialog	Les agneaux de Seigneur
2004	Hari Kunzru	Transmisja	Dorota Stadnik	Muza	Transmission
2004	Preethi Nair	Kolory miłości	Agnieszka Pokojaska	Muza	The Colour of Love
2004	Preethi Nair	Sto odcieni bieli	Agnieszka Pokojaska	Muza	100 Shades of White
2004	V.S. Naipaul	Pół życia	Marek Fedyszak	Noir Sur Blanc	Half a Life
2004	Ken Bugul	Widziane z drugiej strony	Anna Gren	PIW	De l'autre côté du regard
2004	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Strażnik muszli	Hanna Pasińska	Prósz.	The Conch Bearer
2004	Sujata Massey	Żona biznesmena	Barbara Gadomska	Św. Książki	The Salaryman's Wife
2004	Anita Nair	Przedział dla pań	Hanna Pustuła	Św. Lit.	Ladies Coupé
2004	Amitav Ghosh	Szklany pałac	Maria Zborowska	Zysk	The Glass Palace
2004	Monica Ali	Brick Lane	Tomasz Bieroń	Zysk	Brick Lane
2004	Hanif Kureishi	Dar Gabriela	Alina Siewior-Kuś	Zysk	Gabriel's Gift
2004	J.M. Coetzee	Wiek żelaza	Anna Mysłowska	Znak	Age of Iron
2004	J.M. Coetzee	Żywoty zwierząt	Anna Dobrzańska-Gadowska	Św. Książki	The Lives of Animals
2005	Yasmina Khadra	Jaskółki z Kabulu	Barbara Przybyłowska	Amber	Les hirondelles de Kaboul
2005	Yasmina Khadra	Kuzynka K.	Barbara Przybyłowska	Amber	Cousine K.
2005	Yasmina Khadra	O czym marzą wilki	Barbara Przybyłowska	Amber	À quoi rêvent les loups
2005	Indu Sundaesan	Święto róż	Maciejka Mazan	Bertelsmann Media	The Feast of Roses
2005	Robert Solé	Tarbusz	Jolanta Kozłowska	Dialog	Le tarbouche
2005	André Brink	Tamta strona ciszy	Michał Kłobukowski	Noir Sur Blanc	The Other Side of Silence
2005	V.S. Naipaul	Podróż karaibska do pięciu społeczeństw kolonialnych	Maryna Ochab	Noir Sur Blanc	Middle Passage

2005	Doris Lessing	Podróż Bena	Anna Gren	PIW	Ben, In the World
2005	Mia Couto	Ostatni lot flaminga	Elżbieta Milewska	PIW	O último voo do flamingo
2005	Ken Bugul	Ulica Félix-Faure	Jacek Giszczak	PIW	Rue Félix-Faure
2005	Waris Dirie (& Corinna Milborn)	Przełamać tabu	Barbara Tarnas	Św. Książki	Schmerzenskinder
2005	Anita Nair	Opowieść żony, która spróbowała czarów	Jolanta Kossakowska, Hanna Pustuła, Agata Zygiewska	Św. Lit.	Satyr of the Subway and Other Stories
2005	Arundhati Roy	Algebra bezgranicznej sprawiedliwości	Justyna Grzegorzczak	Zysk	The Algebra of Infinite Justice
2006	Justin Cartwright	Obietnica szczęścia	Hanna Pawlikowska-Gannon	Muza	The Promise of Happiness
2006	Andrea Levy	Wysepka	Izabela Matuszewska	Albatros	Small Island
2006	Yasmina Khadra	Zamach	Beata Kowalska	Amber	L'attentat
2006	Ahmed Abodehman	Hizam, znaczy pas	Jadwiga Abraham	Dialog	La ceinture
2006	Tarun J. Tejpal	Alchemia pożądania	Krzysztof Oblucki	Noir Sur Blanc	The Alchemy of Desire
2006	Lavanya Sankaran	Czerwony dywan	Katarzyna Komorowska	Noir Sur Blanc	The Red Carpet
2006	Jhumpa Lahiri	Imiennik	Bogumiła Nawrot	Prósz.	The Namesake
2006	Vikas Swarup	Kto wygra miliard?	Łukasz Praski	Prósz.	Q&A
2006	Salman Rushdie	Śalimar klaun	Jerzy Kozłowski	Rebis	Shalimar the Clown
2006	Athol Fugard	Tsotsi	Paweł Cichawa	Sonia Draga	Tsotsi
2006	Nadine Gordimer	Zrozumieć życie	Marek Fedyszak	Sonia Draga	Get a Life
2006	Ahdaf Soueif	Mapa miłości	Jolanta Kozak	W.A.B.	The Map of Love
2006	Caryl Phillips	Odległy brzeg	Zofia Zinserling	Muza	A Distant Shore
2006	Rohinton Mistry	Sprawy rodzinne	Monika Nowakowska	Książnica	Family Matters
2006	J.M. Coetzee	Elisabeth Costello	Zbigniew Batko	Znak	Elisabeth Costello
2006	J.M. Coetzee	Powolny człowiek	Magdalena Konikowska	Znak	Slow Man
2006	Zadie Smith	O pięknie	Zbigniew Batko	Znak	On Beauty
2007	Assia Djebar	Oran, martwy język	Iwona Badowska	Dialog	Oran, la langue morte
2007	Edwidge Danticat	Oddech, oczy, pamięć	Maria Olejniczak-Skarsgård	Gruner + Jahr	Breath, Eyes, Memory

2007	Kunwar Narain	Przez słowa [poetry]	Agnieszka Kuczkiewicz-Fraś, Renata Czekalska (eds)	Księgarnia Akademicka	various
2007	Damon Galgut	Dobry lekarz	Andrzej Kostarczyk & Piotr Kostarczyk	Media Lazar Pigmalion	The Good Doctor
2007	Naguib Mahfouz	Złodziej i psy	Jacek Stępiński	PIW	al-Liss wa-al-kilab
2007	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Tłumaczka snów	Anna Bańkowska	Prósz.	Queen of Dreams
2007	Ala al-Aswani	Chicago	Izabela Szybińska-Fiedorowicz	Smak Słowa	Chicago
2007	Gautam Malkani	Londonistan	Maciej Świerkocki	W.A.B.	Londonistani
2007	Helen Oyeyemi	Mała Ikar	Jolanta Kozak	W.A.B.	The Icarus Girl
2007	Vikram Chandra	Święte gry	Witold Kurylak	Sonia Draga	Sacred Games
2007	J.M.Coetzee	Chłopięce lata: sceny z prowincjonalnego życia	Michał Kłobukowski	Znak	Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life
2007	J.M.Coetzee	Młodość: sceny z prowincjonalnego życia II	Michał Kłobukowski	Znak	Youth : Scenes from Provincial Life II
2007	Kiran Desai	Brzemie rzeczy utraconych	Jerzy Kozłowski	Znak	The Inheritance of Loss
2008	Amitav Ghosh	Żarłoczny przytyw	Krzysztof Oblucki	Noir sur Blanc	The Hungry Tide
2008	Doris Lessing	Martha Quest	Magdalena Słysz	Albatros	Martha Quest
2008	Alaa Al Aswany	Kair: historia pewnej kamienicy	Agnieszka Piotrowska	Capricorn Media Lazar	No information
2008	Alain Mabanckou	Kielonek	Jacek Giszczak	Karakter	Verre cassé
2008	Tahar Ben Jelloun	To oślepiające, nieobecne światło	Małgorzata Szczurek	Karakter	Cette aveuglante absence de lumière
2008	Mia Couto	Lunatyczna kraina	Michał Lipszyc	Karakter	Terra sonâmbula
2008	Doris Lessing	Mężczyzna i dwie kobiety	Marian Leon Kalinowski et al.	PIW	A Man and Two Women
2008	Doris Lessing	O kotach	Anna Bańkowska	Prósz.	On Cats
2008	Aravind Adiga	Biały Tygrys	Ludwik Stawowy	Prósz.	The White Tiger
2008	Kamila Shamsie	Sól i szafran	Katarzyna Maciejczyk	Red Horse	Salt and Saffron
2008	Nadine Gordimer	Córka burgera	Paweł Cichawa	Sonia Draga	Burger's Daughter
2008	Doris Lessing	Szczelina	Anna Dobrzańska-Gadowska	Św. Książki	The Cleft
2008	Doris Lessing	Trawa śpiewa	Joanna Puchalska	Św. Książki	The Grass Is Singing

2008	Mohammed Mrabet	Miłość za kilka włosów	Paweł Lipszyc from English, from Moghrebi by Paul Bowles	Św. Książki -	Love with a Few Hairs
2008	Naguib Mahfouz	Rozmowy nad Nilem	Jacek Stępiński	Św. Książki	Tharthara fauq an-Nil
2008	Doris Lessing	Lato przed zmierzchem	Barbara Rewkiewicz-Sadowska	Czyt.	The Summer Before the Dark
2008	Nikita Lalwani	Utalentowana	Olga Mason	WL	Gifted
2008	Doris Lessing	Przed zstąpieniem do piekieł	Anna Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska	W.A.B.	Briefing for a Descent into Hell
2008	Derek Walcott	Mapa Nowego Świata	Magda Heydel (ed.), trans. M. Heydel et al.	Znak	various
2008	J.M. Coetzee	Dziwniejsze brzegi	Anna Skucińska	Znak	Stranger shores
2008	J.M. Coetzee	Zapiski ze złego roku	Michał Kłobukowski	Znak	Diary of a Bad Year
2008	Mohsin Hamid	Uznany za fundamentalistę	Alina Siewior-Kuś	Sonia Draga	The Reluctant Fundamentalist
2008	Salman Rushdie	Czarodziejka z Florencji	Jerzy Kozłowski	Rebis	The Enchantress of Florence
2009	Vikram Chandra	Czerwona ziemia i obfity deszcz	Alina Siewior-Kuś	Sonia Draga	Red Earth and Pouring Rain
2009	Deon Meyer	Martwi za życia	Maria Rei from Eng, Madeline van Biljon from Afrikaans	Amber	Dead Before Dying
2009	Biyi Bandele	Chłopak z Birmy	Wojsław Brydak	Rebis	Burma Boy
2009	Nadeem Aslam	Bezowocne czuwanie	Mirosław P. Jabłoński	Rebis	Wasted Vigil
2009	Alain Mabanckou	African Psycho	Jacek Giszczak	Karakter	African psycho
2009	Teji Grover	Błękit	Kamila Junik	Księgarnia Akadem.	Nīlā
2009	Rawi Hage	W co grał De Niro	Agnieszka Lakatos	PIW	De Niro's Game
2009	Chinua Achebe	Wszystko rozpada się	Jolanta Kozak	PIW	Things Fall Apart
2009	Naguib Mahfouz	Opowieści starego Kairu. Kamal	Jolanta Kozłowska	PIW	Kasr asz-Szauk
2009	Aravind Adiga	Między zabójstwami	Agnieszka Barbara Ciepłowska	Prósz. Media	Between the Assassinations
2009	Vikas Swarup	Sześcioro podejrzanych	Ludwik Stawowy	Prósz. Media	Six Suspects
2009	Kamila Shamsie	Kartografia	Katarzyna Maciejczyk	Rebis	Kartography
2009	Salwa Bakr	Złoty rydwan	Izabela Szybilska-Fiedorowicz	Smak Słowa	Al-'Arabah al-dhahabīyah lā taṣ'ad ila al-samā': riwāyah

2009	Miral at-Tahawi	Namiot Fatimy	Izabela Szybilska-Fiedorowicz	Smak Słowa	Al-Khabā'
2009	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Półówka żółtego słońca	Witold Kurylak	Sonia Draga	Half of a Yellow Sun
2009	Mohammed Hanif	Wybuchowe mango	Olga Masoń-Kędzierska	Znak	Case of Exploding Mangoes
2009	Doris Lessing	Złoty notes	Bohdan Maliborski	Św. Książki	The Golden Notebook
2009	Waris Dirie	List do matki: wyznanie miłości	Joanna Pierzchała	Św. Książki	Letter to My Mother
2009	Mia Couto	Taras z uroczynem	Elżbieta Milewska	Św. Książki	A varanda do frangipani
2009	Salwa An-nu'ajmi	Smak miodu	Marek M. Dziekan	W.A.B.	Burhān al-'asal
2009	Doris Lessing	Alfred i Emily	Anna Kołyszko	WL	Alfred and Emily
2009	Doris Lessing	Znów ta miłość	Jolanta Kozak	W.A.B.	Love, Again
2009	J.M. Coetzee	Ciemny kraj	Magdalena Konikowska	Znak	Dusklands
2009	J.M. Coetzee	Białe piarstwo. O literackiej kulturze Afryki Południowej	Dariusz Żukowski	Znak	White writing : on the culture of letters in South Africa
2009	Leila Aboulela	Minaret	Anna Zdziemborska	Remi Katarzyna Portnicka	Minaret
2010	Iyke Nnaka	Black factor	Anna Borzecka-Selwyn	e media	Black Factor
2010	Jhumpa Lahiri	Nieoswojona ziemia	Anna Kołyszko	Albatros Andrzej Kuryłowicz	Unaccustomed Earth
2010	Pepetela	Tajny agent Jaime Bunda: historia pewnych tajemnic	Zofia Stanisławska	Claros curo	Jaime Bunda, agente secreto: estória de alguns mistérios
2010	Tahar Ben Jelloun	O mojej matce	Jolanta Kozłowska	Dialog	Sur ma mère
2010	Alain Mabanckou	Black Bazar	Jacek Giszczak	Karakter	Black Bazar
2010	André Brink	Zanim zapomnę	Hanna Falińska	Noir sur Blanc	Before I Forget
2010	Salman Rushdie	Luka i ogień życia	Michał Kłobukowski	Rebis	Luka and the Fire of Life
2010	Tayeb Salih	Sezon migracji na północ	Jacek Stępiński	Smak Słowa	Mawsim al-riḥlah ilā al-shamāl
2010	Nadine Gordimer	Trudny wybór	Paweł Cichawa	Sonia Draga	The Conservationist
2010	Doris Lessing	Pod skórą: autobiografia do roku 1949	Anna Gren	Św. Książki	Under My Skin
2010	Doris Lessing	Spacer w cieniu: autobiografia 1949-1962	Elżbieta Kowalewska	Św. Książki	Walking in the Shade: Vol. II of My Autobiography 1949-1962

2010	Mia Couto	Naszyjnik z opowiadań [short stories]	Dorota Kwinta, Jakub Jankowski, José Carlos Dias	Inst. Studiów Iberyjskich i Iberoam.	various
2010	Doris Lessing	Fala po burzy	Magdalena Słysz	Albatros Andrzej Kuryłowicz	A Ripple from the Storm
2010	J.M. Coetzee	Lato: sceny z prowincjonalnego życia III	Dariusz Żukowski	Znak	Summertime: Scenes from Provincial Life
2010	Zadie Smith	Jak zmieniałam zdanie	Agnieszka Pokojska	Znak	Changing my Mind
2010	Chinua Achebe	Nie jest już łatwo	Jerzy Łoziński	Zysk	No Longer At Ease
2010	Abd ar- Rahman Munif	Miasta soli. Zagubieni	Magdalena Kubarek	Smak Słowa	Mudun al-milḥ