
Tearing off the masks:¹ Narratives on Jewish communists

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Abstract: The paper presents an analysis of the contemporary Polish debate on Jewish communists. The analysis was performed in the framework of colonialist theories. I deconstructed narrations about Jewish communists, which belong in the Polish political mainstream, and are regarded as moderate, objective and devoid of any ideology. The tropes shared by the colonialist discourse and the debate on Jewish communists are: orientalisation, eroticisation, infantilisation, presenting the object of research outside the historical context, abolishing the context of social and political inequalities, and declaring the victims guilty of the violence they experience.

Keywords: anti-Semitism, colonialism, essentialism, Orientalism, racism, anti-communism

‘It is for your sake, dear Sirs
– for your superiority and your pride –
that we wear our masks
and our miserable clown costumes
day in, day out...’

Władysław Szlengel, *Maska Purymowa*, 1939²

The dominant narratives on Jewish communists published today exhibit a set of recurrent features; they are also based on certain implicit assumptions. These narratives are dominant in terms of their quantity – recently, their number has increased substantially. However, they are also dominant in the qualitative sense – in the Polish mainstream they are regarded as reliable, important and worth reading. Moreover, it is claimed that they live up to scientific standards and are devoid of prejudice. In order to analyze the features and assumptions that appear in narratives about Jewish communists I use analytical tools developed by researchers of the colonial discourse. This helps me also to avoid an analysis that would merely answer the question whether those narratives are true or not. Instead, I investigate the structure of the stereotypes that these narratives generate, and I reconstruct the overall image that they produce.

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- 1 I refer here to the title of Frantz Fanon’s book *Black Skin, White Masks* from 1952. He argues that bringing children up in colonized countries in accordance with the white racist standards of the colonizers results in the black self-hatred, who – despite their utmost efforts – cannot live up to the standards of the colonizers’ culture (Fanon, 2008).
 - 2 Szlengel, 2013, pp. 105–106. In Polish: ‘Z waszej, Panowie, łaski – / Dla waszej wyższości i dumy – / Nosimy rok cały maski / I nędzne, błazeńskie kostiumy...’ The book gives the original date of publication as 1939, *Nasz Przegląd*, issue 64.

I employ post-colonial discourse analysis for three reasons. Firstly, an analysis of the colonial discourse requires a definite challenge of the belief that there is a grain of truth in every stereotype.³ Bhabha claims that '[t]he stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 75). Thus, Bhabha challenges the conventional conviction about an alleged connection between the stereotype and the reality that the stereotype claims to represent. Secondly, instead of just categorizing images generated by stereotypes as positive or negative, the definition of stereotype generated by the analyses of the colonial discourse puts more emphasis on 'an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 67). In other words, the point is to discover the 'regime of truth,' instead of merely investigating the representations generated by the regime and 'subject[ing them] to a normalizing judgement' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 67). Thirdly, the discursive figures and the language used to talk about Jews also belong to the Orientalist discourse, what I will show by analyzing an exemplary narration on Israel that is emblematic for the contemporary Polish mainstream discourse.

In this article I deconstruct the narration about Jewish communists that is regarded as non-anti-Semitic by the mainstream Polish public discourse, which instead represents it as an expert, well-balanced opinion that is far from any ideological stance. I will analyze the following books as examples of this narration: *Trzy twarze Józefa Światły* (*The Three Faces of Józef Światły*) by Andrzej Paczkowski, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm* (*Communism, Legitimization, Nationalism*) by Marcin Zaremba, *Żydokomuna* (*Commie Jews*) by Paweł Śpiewak and *Nowoczesność jako źródło cierpień* (*Modernity and Its Discontents*) by Marci Shore. I devote most attention to the last two publications, because Jewish communists constitute the main subject of these books, but also because the books aspire to provide comprehensive analyses of the historical phenomenon. The publications I will analyze here do not provide an exhaustive overview of current narrations about Jewish communists. Moreover, some of these books do not focus exclusively on Jewish communists. The reason I have chosen these particular publications is because they are considered neutral in political debates. More to the point, by their scientific character they claim impartiality. As an example of a contemporary discourse about Jews, which is seen as non-anti-Semitic and devoid of any political sympathies I decided to include one more example in my study: Paweł Smoleński's *Izrael już nie frunie* (*Israel Does Not Soar Anymore*). Jewish communists are not the book's main concern, but it is rather about Jews in general, mainly because Smoleński perceives Israel as a Jewish country. Smoleński's essentialist perception of Jewishness and Israel constitutes the lens through which he observes the object of his interest. Even though he treats Israel as a modern country, Smoleński's essentialist understanding of Jewishness situates his narration within the Orientalist tradition.

³ See Tokarska-Bakir (2008) on the category of the 'grain of truth.'

A number of motifs that construct the narration on present-day Jews are very similar to the ones that construct the contemporary narration on Jewish communists. This suggests that it is the essentializing ethnic and national discourse that shapes the latter. In such discourse, Jews (similarly to 'the natives' in Orientalist narratives) display a certain set of essential and inalienable features, according to which any enterprise Jews take part in becomes Jewish. This discourse imposes the categories of perception and valuation, through which Jewish communists are observed and described in the narratives I analyze.

I will quote Paweł Smoleński's book extensively, because it helps understanding that the categories used to describe Jewish communists have been adopted from the cultural repertoire that provides the tropes, motifs and vocabulary used to talk about Jews in general; the repertoire consists of figures analogical to those that form the colonialist discourse. In particular, I am interested in the relations between and similarities shared by authors writing about Jewish communists and those who write about the Orient, which Edward Said describes as follows: 'When a learned Orientalist traveled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the *civilization* he had studied; rarely were Orientalists interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty *truths*' (Said, 1977, p. 52). In the case of the discourse on Jewish communists, it is the *commie Jews* (in Polish: *żydokomuna*)⁴ that constitutes the said 'civilization' under study. As a Polish topos, *commie Jews* arose as a result of a fusion between the Orientalist discourse with the anti-communist paradigm; compliance with the latter is essential for any opinion to be legitimized in Polish public debate.⁵

Said writes: '[W]e need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do, as Dante tried to do in the *Inferno*, is at one and the same time to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe, and only for Europe' (Said, 1977, p. 71). I analyze a number of narrations on Jews and Jewish communists, on the basis of which I will try to explain why, analogically to what postcolonial theory suggests, we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Jewish communists and the Jewish communists themselves. The aim of these narrations is to describe the object of study in a manner that would distance the reader from the object, express its negative valuation, as well as present it as something familiar, even though it may appear novel or unfamiliar at first. Hence, when using the term *Jewish communists* I do not refer to people who call themselves Jewish communists, because their auto-identification consisted of both communism and Jewishness, but rather I refer to the *location of (Polish) culture* (Bhabha, 1994) generated by the dominant discourse, and especially adopted by historiography.

4 The Polish term *żydokomuna* is quite difficult to translate into English, but phrases like 'commie Jews' and 'kike bolshevism' express quite well the negative component of this denomination. Throughout the text I will consistently use the term 'commie Jews' (translator's note).

5 For an analysis of the anti-communist paradigm see Zawadzka (2009, pp. 218–223).

Irrationality

In the narrations in question Jewish communists display a set of specific features, which are never called into question by the authors – they usually treat these categories as a handy lexicon providing the vocabulary they need. Above all Jewish communists are irrational. The irrationality of Jewish communists is a discursive structure built from multiple parts. First of all, Jewish communists were extraordinarily emotional: their behavior was based on impulses, rather than on careful analyses or reflection. Contemporary narratives create an image of people who made crucial, often tragic decisions on a whim: on a dance floor, while drinking alcohol, or in an ecstatic outburst of anger or pleasure. In the first part her *Modernity and Its Discontents* Marci Shore describes the behavior of Jewish communists in the inter-war period as determined by irresponsibility, madness, fever or rage (Shore, 2012, p. 39). Similarly Śpiewak writes about the ‘demonic and destructive nature of communism,’ whose ‘cardinal virtues, just as in the case of fascism, were strength, courage, loyalty and sacrifice. It left no space for rationality, wisdom or inner maturity’ (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 166). The very features he mentions – strength, courage, loyalty and sacrifice – often also characterize Polish national heroes. Hence, these features appear immature only in relation to communism. In the case of patriotism, however, they are presented as highly valued and desirable.

The second feature that makes Jewish communists irrational is their naivety. For Shore Adolf Berman’s letter to the Polish United Worker’s Party (PZPR) written on behalf of Poalej Syjon and declaring that they shared common goals and he would join them in their fight, was certainly written ‘out of naivety,’ or ‘to make his mark in History’ (Shore, 2012, p. 63). While such naivety would be understandable in case of children, in an adult person it rather arouses concern – it does not allow treating one’s words seriously. Shore argues that Jewish communists ‘wanted to change the world’ (Shore, 2012, p. 39) in the name of ‘utopia they dreamt of and fought for their entire lives’ (Shore, 2012, p. 100). She also describes them as fanatically trusting, absolutely selfless, willing to self-sacrifice, courageous, as well as concerned with issues of poverty, injustice and human suffering (Shore, 2012, p. 52). Shore’s description yields an image of a group of immature people full of delusions, who refused to see the true nature of the reality around them. Shore claims that by becoming involved in the communist ideology they made a dramatic mistake, which constitutes the chief argument supporting the thesis of communist Jews being irrational. She writes: ‘They made a tragic mistake. Their entire lives proved to be a failure, and the cause they had been fighting for turned into a disaster’ (Shore, 2012, p. 52). In his chapter on the Communist Party of Poland (*Komunistyczna Partia Polski*, KPP), Zaremba argues that ‘it would be difficult to analyze its [KPP’s] stance on the national matters, without taking into account its national structure’ (Zaremba, 2001, p. 73); then, he goes on to count how many Jewish members KPP had, and how many Jews belonged to the top management of the party. He calls the communists ‘orthodox comrades, with no concern for reality,’ who lost their cause because their doctrinarianism rendered them

blind to the needs of Polish people (Zaremba, 2001, pp. 75–76, 79). In Zaremba's account, communists lived according to their own illusions and dreams, instead of paying heed to the actual conditions in Poland, and adapting to them.

The third element supporting the thesis of Jewish communists' irrationality is that they were under influence of the party or the Soviet officials.⁶ Śpiewak describes them as 'passive and brutal tools in the hands of communism,' who were characterized by 'sectarianism and aversion to any forms of autonomous thinking': they were 'unconditionally loyal' and 'almost religiously devoted to the party' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 10), ready to even 'reject the established sense of taste' at the party's whim (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 133). '[Jewish communists]' entire life was controlled by the Party' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 123), because in order to belong to this group, they had to 'voluntarily renounce [their] autonomy and dignity' and display 'self-hatred, which meant a constant control over every word, every step and every relationship. Spontaneity was something unfortunate' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 133). Among Jewish communists 'there was no room for privacy, for independent opinions, or even for friendships,' because KPP 'would absorb you completely' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 134). Consequently, based on this portrait of Jewish communists and their traits, Śpiewak concludes that 'their activity in the organization changed and destroyed their personalities to such an extent that righteous and courageous people would often turn into submissive and fearful *apparatchiks*' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 145). According to him, Jewish communists either voluntarily, or as a result of manipulation, renounced rational thinking: they did not think independently, which means that they, in fact, did not think at all. They would only repeat what they had been told to – they would repeat it to themselves as well as to others. They turned into robots, machines, barrel organs, broken records, perfect propaganda tools. As for their world-views, they were completely conformist and entirely subordinated to party authorities. It is not a coincidence that Zaremba's chapter on the inter-war Jewish communists in Poland is titled *The Hard-line and Obedient KPP* (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 72).

Yet another argument is put forward, when it comes to Jewish communists' incapability of independent thinking: it is claimed that their membership in the communist party was not a result of an informed and conscious decision. This decision was in fact made for them by greater forces, which they were unaware of. Śpiewak argues that Jews were 'forced into a political radicalism' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 48) and that 'the Whites pushed the Jews into the hands of the Bolsheviks' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 83), whereas the Marxists displayed 'a false consciousness' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 68). According to Śpiewak no rational and sane person would voluntarily make a decision to become a communist. Thus, in this argument an active subject is replaced by a passive object, because a Jew who became a communist was just a passive weathercock turning in whichever direction the winds of history blew, following the contemporary fad. Such a Jew succumbed to the conformism

⁶ Fanon describes an analogical feature in the colonial discourse: it was claimed that the anti-colonial movement was in fact controlled by the USSR. The aim of such argumentation was to make the public opinion in the West disapprove of the movement, due to its affinity with communism (Fanon, 1985, p. 47).

of the group, to his own conformism, and, eventually succumbed to the communist party. Jewish incapability to act independently in the face of history constitutes the fifth element of the portrayal of Jewish communists that represented them as a group of people devoid of rational thinking.⁷

The sixth element of Jewish communists' irrationality is their sensuality, emphasized explicitly or implicitly through the attention paid to the physical features of described persons. In books on Jewish communists, their authors often use categories that refer to bodily features or employ physiological metaphors, in order to describe not only the people, but also cultural and social phenomena. Shore writes that Majakowski was 'stunningly handsome' and that communism and *Nowa Sztuka*⁸ 'seduced each other, flirted and went hand in hand' (Shore, 2012, p. 27).⁹ In his book about Józef Światło, Paczkowski claims that Światło loved to inflict physical pain, and concludes: 'some [authors] see a relationship between Światło's sadism and erotomania/hypersexuality. For many people this is an epitome of Evil. Maybe they are right?' (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 155). Wanda Wasilewska smoked cigarettes, drank coffee and wrote poetry (Shore, 2012, p. 67). Berman was 'slender and very pale'; he had 'a beautiful face and big dark eyes' (Shore, 2012, p. 104). Such information does not directly refer to their sensuality; however, it directs attention to their bodies and suggests that it is the source of communists' features.

The discourse on Jews and the discourse on the Orient share this emphasis on corporeality and sensuality. In Smoleński's reports from Israel and the Gaza Strip 'the old Hassid' has 'watery eyes' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 7), the waiters are 'cute in their sloppiness, very young, slim and beautiful with their jet-black hair,' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 49), while the Jews who came from Russia are 'loud' and 'heavy, bulky, unshapely and preemptively polite' (Smoleński 2011. p. 103), whereas one of Smoleński's interviewees is 'a tall, light-skinned and extremely beautiful boy in his twenties' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 15). To describe Israel the author employs images of 'naked boys and girls' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 11), 'many beautiful young women' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 8), 'aroused men and hot lascivious women wearing black, leather bikinis and holding whips in their hands' (Smoleński, 2011, pp. 10–11), and 'happy dancing crowds' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 12). The market he describes is brimming with people, sweat, eastern spices, cat urine, fresh meat, bloodletting, hallucinogenic drugs (Smoleński, 2011, p. 28) and butchereries, where 'the display windows are full of cow livers and tangled mutton intestines' as well as 'fresh pomegranates' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 27).

The ambience of sensuality and eroticism is claimed to have dominated among Jewish communists and influenced their political choices, or even constituted their main motor. Authors often introduce such ambience by putting emphasis on the gender of the

7 The phrase Domańska used in her book – 'to come down with communism' (in Polish: *zachorował na komunizm*) – perfectly illustrates the claim that communism was a destructive force that took control over Jews (Domańska, 2013, p. 17).

8 A magazine issued in Warsaw between 1921 and 1922, publishing avant-garde poetry. Although *Nowa Sztuka* had only two issues, it gave its name to the poetry Avant-guard of those times.

9 See Domańska (2013, p. 138) on 'flirting with communism.'

protagonists (especially women), in order to argue that their behavior, their decisions and their choices stemmed from the limitations and passions characteristic for their gender. For instance, Paczkowski claims that Izaak Fleischfarb's (later Józef Światło) heightened political activity in the inter-war years stemmed from the fact that he tried to show off in front of Fryda Zollman, because he fell in love with her (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 42). Shore also casts Jewish communists in a heavily eroticized scenery: she argues that communists 'had their muses and mistresses' and, following Yuri Slezkine, claims that 'communism gave a promise of masculinity to Jewish men' or 'to be exact – it finally enabled them to satisfy Russian women in bed' (Shore, 2012, p. 36). Shore concludes that satisfying a Russian woman must have been a difficult task to accomplish. Multiple times in her book, Shore suggests that Jewish communists were characterized by a profoundly permissive behavior: '[communists] left their wives in Warsaw' and soon most of them 'found mistresses in the East' (Shore, 2012, p. 44); 'it is likely that Wasilewska and Jakub [Berman] became lovers' (Shore, 2012, p. 69), etc. Shore often refers to her female protagonists' gender. These references are almost always accompanied by words describing their physical appearance: 'a very beautiful Jewish girl' (Shore, 2012, p. 63); 'Anna [Berman, Jakub Berman's sister], a beautiful and peaceful German philologist' (Shore, 2012, p. 75); Stefania Wilczyńska 'with a faint smile on her face' (Shore, 2012, p. 63). Nearly every woman in Shore's book, except from Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, is described with adjectives that refer to her physical appearance. Such mode of description puts primary emphasis on their 'womanhood' – their political activity is of secondary importance.

The hyper-sexualization of female protagonists is yet another narrative device shared by the discourse on Jews and communists, and the Orientalist discourse. Smoleński bases the whole sensual atmosphere of his narration about Israel upon describing women in terms of their appearance, beauty and sexual attractiveness. This is how women appear in his book: 'an ultra-orthodox woman, young, very beautiful' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 7); 'beautiful and wise' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 16); 'an old Arab woman, wrapped in a scarf' and beside her 'a woman wearing a short skirt and a skimpy tank top revealing her belly' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 17); 'a tall Swedish girl, who will be sunbathing topless at one of the beaches in Eilat tomorrow' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 18); 'girls in short, colorful dresses' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 35); 'an older dignified wrinkled woman' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 40); 'a nagging wife' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 256); 'grey-haired and stocky' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 271). Many of these women are Smoleński's interviewees and protagonists, his heroines or anti-heroines. Smoleński constructs the image of Israel through descriptions of female appearance and attire. He tries to make the reader imagine these women naked, spinning the yarn of his half-erotic and half-social fantasies – Smoleński endows his female protagonists either with sexual 'excesses,' or features stereotypically seen as characteristic for women.

In Smoleński's narration, women – and thus Israel and Palestine that they come to symbolize – belong to the world of emotions and sensuality, not rationality. Maria, one

of his protagonists, is introduced by the following description: 'she is long-haired, blue-eyed, light-skinned and very warm. She kisses Benny on the cheek, she strokes his back [...]. It is possible that Maria is making it all up. [...] But these are her fears and emotions; we ought to believe in these' (Smoleński, 2011, pp. 111–112). According to Smoleński, the fact that girls who participate in the Israeli edition of *The Dating Game* are asked about their political inclinations is 'pure madness!' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 129). Smoleński describes a feminist activist as a 'beautiful 20-year-old girl' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 209); he evidently is not fond of her, because he writes about her with distance and sarcasm, which he does not display when writing about others. Smoleński drew a picture of a young radical, who would certainly only 'shrug her shoulders' if confronted with human suffering (Smoleński, 2011, p. 209), even though her words do not suggest such a conclusion. The inhabitants of Gush Katif, a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip, who claim that 'the Palestinians out there are just a bunch of wild uncivilized criminals,' are the only women that Smoleński did not objectify by the means of sensualization, sexualization or emotionalization (Smoleński, 2011, p. 269).

The sexualization and sensualization, the 'exing' of Jews and the Orient omnipresent in narrations about Jewish communists, render the protagonists as people driven by passions, desires and corporeal needs – they have no control over their own actions, because they are subjected to the biological, the physiological and the organic. For this reason the three techniques I describe constitute very important aspects of the general impression that Jewish communists were irrational. None of these techniques is on a par with the language generally used to describe political concepts. By reducing their protagonists to their sexual and gendered features, the authors writing about Jewish communists appear to locate the *signs of communism* or the reasons for any involvement in the communist movement, in their corporeality – as if they were searching for the birthmark that proves Satanic possession, a symbol of the Devil, a stigma that differentiates communists from others and allows to classify them, study them and learn how to manage them.

The aforementioned discursive elements used to describe Jewish communists as inside out irrational people – emotionality, naivety, submissiveness, passivity, sensuality, hypersexuality and gendered characteristics – all combined give an ultimate evidence in favor of the thesis that Jewish communists were 'seduced by Marxism' (Shore, 2012, p. 5). The word 'seduction' has been taken from the erotic imaginary, and thus, presented as a reason for engaging in communism emphasizes the passivity of the 'seduced,' submitted to a tempting, mysterious and extra-rational force, which comes from beyond culture and civilization. Subsequently, Shore argues that communism, in contrast to liberalism, appreciated human 'instincts' and the 'dark side of human nature' (Shore, 2012, p. 38), and this was the reason for its success – which does not, however, preclude her from claiming that Jewish communists failed (Shore, 2012, p. 53). Communism was so successful because the cynicism or madness of its doctrinaires gave vent to the desires and evil inherent to human beings. Śpiwak takes a similar stance and claims that the involvement in the

communist movement was motivated by 'a simple, or even crude, resentment,' 'seeking vengeance not justice,' nihilism, dandyism, and the carnivalesque desire to upend the social hierarchy (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 164). This type of argumentation also appears in Zaremba's book, where he writes that KPP activists were characterized by 'national nihilism' (Zaremba, 2001, p. 74). Finally, Śpiewak argues that becoming a communist could have had a non-rational and quasi-religious motivation: Jews displayed a large affinity for the messianic nature of the communist ideology (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 143).

Above, I decided to use so many brief excerpts and quotations because it is the repetition of certain themes (e.g. describing the appearance of Israeli women or alluding to the sexual lives of communists) that builds the general character of these narrations. If they appeared once, they would not attract the reader's attention. However, frequently and consequently repeated they reproduce and perpetuate the stereotype, because a stereotype is 'a form of knowledge 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' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66).

The irrationality of Jewish communists is presented by yet another motif: dance, which is also a very poetic theme. Being poetic is usually associated neither with rationality nor with careful consideration, but rather with emotionality and bouts of extreme feelings. The blurb selected for Shore's book cover paints a very powerful picture, which accurately reflects the general spirit of the book: by order of the communist party, an executioner is just about to kill an innocent man. At the same time, a friend of the convict, a 'utopian' communist, 'lost himself to dance' instead of making an attempt to rescue his friend. An adequate cover picture accompanies the excerpt: young people, probably drunk, are dancing and singing in a circle, their shirts unbuttoned, bodies damp with sweat; they are dancing hand in hand, shouting, maybe singing. Shore's book presents dance as an elitist pastime of artsy dreamers, a proof of sensuality and emotionality of the dancers. The emotionality and sensuality are the root of their disregard for reasonable thinking and, consequently, their stupidity and cruelty. In Shore's narration, dance might also symbolize effeminacy – in Polish culture, dancing in circles is associated with femininity. As a consequence of the colonial discourse, 'losing oneself to dance' evokes the impression of wildness, lack of restraint and exoticness, which also contributes to the overall image of irrationality of the dancers.

I would like to briefly mention Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, where the motif of dance also appears. Fanon's aim is to deconstruct the meanings imposed by the colonial discourse, rather than employing them. In his book, Fanon conducts a socio-historical analysis of the processes occurring in the colonized societies. This analysis enables him to extract these processes from a timeless void and strip them from a kind of 'naturalism,' through which the non-Western societies were conceptualized by their colonizers. Thus, Fanon sees dance as an activity that derives from the logic of domination:

'On another level we see the native's emotional sensibility exhausting itself in dances which are more or less ecstatic. This is why any study of the colonial world should take into consideration the phenomena of the dance and of possession.' In dance, 'the most acute aggressivity and the most impelling violence are canalized,' whereas '[t]he circle of the dance is a permissive circle: it protects and permits.' In the movements of the dancers 'may be deciphered as in an open book the huge effort of a community to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself' (Fanon, 1965, p. 57).

Feminization

Excessive sensuality and sexuality (especially faced with Western rationality), as well as the emphasis on the features of one's gender appear in the analyzed descriptions of communists, Jewish communists and citizens of Israel. Firstly, these figures of the Orientalist discourse render all people of the Orient as overly sensual and sexual, hence woman-like, which is an affront in patriarchal cultures of the colonizers and the colonized. Secondly, the Orient itself is presented as a land of irrationality. According to the colonial discourse, physiological aspects have power over the 'indigenous people' and take control over their entire lives. This stands in stark contrast to the lives of Westerners governed by reason, which exerts control over physicality and natural drives. In the Orientalist discourse '[r]ationality is undermined by Eastern excesses, those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values' (Said, 1977, p. 57).

Within the Orientalist discourse, women are subjected to multiple colonization – as inhabitants of the Orient and as women. According to the ideology still dominant in the Western world, women are less rational than men – they cannot control the extra-rational aspects of their personalities like emotions, feelings, drives, sexuality, hormones, etc. In contrast, men have this ability and thus they should exert control over women. The alleged excessive sensuality and hyper-sexuality of the women of the Orient is presented as an evidence for this conviction: this is how women behave, when there are no refined cultural constraints. For Orientalists they are a 'private zoo' (Gandhi, 1998, p. 85), in which they fulfill the role of 'hyper-feminine' monsters, as well as an 'exotic fruit,' which is a sexually attractive specimen. Among the colonized, their status is inferior. Not because non-Western societies are more patriarchal than European societies, but because the reaction of the oppressed to domination was channeled into forms imposed by the available – meaning misogynistic – cultural codes, often shared by both the colonizers and the colonized. '[T]he masculinity of empire was articulated [...] through the symbolic feminization of conquered geographies, and in the erotic economy of colonial *discovery* narratives' (Gandhi, 1998, p. 99). Hence, the men of the Orient tried to voice their protest against the feminization (perceived as threat to their honor) and reaffirm their masculinity by differentiating themselves from women and manifesting their power over them. The ultimate expression of this domination was rape performed on a white woman as

a proof of masculinity and a symbolic act of reclaiming their subjectivity from the colonizers (Gandhi, 1998, pp. 99–100).

A different species of human

In the light of the analyzed books, the assertion that women in the colonized countries serve as someone's 'private zoo' could be safely applied to Jewish communists. In the cited texts they are depicted in such a manner that they appear to constitute a different species of human. Certainly they are a species much different than the species to which the narrators belong. Śpiewak's book is full of information about the everyday lives, customs and vices of Jewish communists, without any citations that would refer to the source of that information. On the one hand, Śpiewak appears to possess a micro-level knowledge about Jewish communists, while on the other, he distances himself from the object of his narration – his distance is so great that it resembles disgust. His narration reads like a European ethnographer's report from fieldwork in the jungle: Jewish communists were 'fanatic, courageous and determined' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 124), as well as 'sectarian' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 130). Their 'houses were quite austere,' their tableware 'had no charm, because the food they served had no taste,' and 'the austerity of their lives was really natural. It was bordering abnegation' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 125). The author claims further that 'a communist perceived the world in black and white' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 132) and 'gave up the everyday joys of life for the ideological cause; fervency took place of the ordinary and risk propensity replaced normalcy. The life of a communist required real sacrifice and true heroism. The heroism ennobled them and filled them with strength, but it also distanced them from the normal world and commonsensical life' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 164). After the Holocaust, the communists were full of hatred for which they could not find a vent (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 211). Śpiewak, however, does not explain why only the communists felt the hatred, and not all people who experienced the Holocaust.

Shore supplements this set of communists' characteristic features with another one – their ambivalent attitude towards imprisonment: 'Polish communists perceived prisons as places where people wrote proletarian poetry and sang revolutionary songs' (Shore, 2012, p. 420). Shore depicts prisons as nearly cultural institutions and claims that communists were fond of being there, because it allowed them to play the role of a romantic hero.¹⁰ Shore concludes a passage about a prisoner coming back from an interrogation where he had been tortured with the following words: 'yet, his eyes were smiling' (Shore, 2012, p. 42). Paczkowski wrote that 'time spent in prison – whether during an investigation or after one has been convicted – was a perfectly *normal thing* in the life of a member of an illegal and anti-state political organization' (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 37). Paczkowski's paternalist and condescending account appears very restrained compared to Shore's narration,

¹⁰ 'A prison cell was a small taster of a communist Shangri-La' (Domańska, 2013, p. 87). Domańska's grandmother spent four years in prison, when the police had found communist leaflets in her bag in 1931. Domańska, in her *Ulica cioci Oli (Aunt Ola's Street)*, writes about her grandmother's life (she was a Jewish communist) and seeks the real motivation for her political activity.

where imprisoned communists ‘translated Gogol’ (Shore, 2012, p. 66) and ‘studied Marx, recited poetry and went on hunger strikes. They played chess on heaters. They communicated with their comrades from adjoining cells by tapping the Morse code on the walls. They did not even need the Morse code to encrypt their language – it was already cryptic enough without it’ (Shore, 2012, p. 40). Their language was ‘encrypted,’ because nobody else could understand this insider indoctrinated code of the prison intimate bonds. Analogically, Śpiewak claims that communists ‘used a specific dialect,’ exemplified by their frequent use of the word ‘imperialism’ (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 111).

Hence, the communists appear to be a different, exotic species of human. This species created its own distinctive culture, cultivates its strange customs, a new habitus and a language that is incomprehensible to others. A fascinating specimen, which the authors observe just as Bronisław Malinowski observed the inhabitants of the Triobrand Islands. The authors frequently use the formula ‘is,’ deconstructed by Said, as the one which requires ‘[n]o background’ and each time it is said ‘the author of the statement gains a little more authority in having declared it’ (Said, 1977, p. 73). The words used to emphasize the essential difference of Jewish communists evoke fear and fascination at the same time: ‘the communist mentality’ and ‘the Jewish revolutionary type’ (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 74).

The word ‘type’ is adequate here, because within this discourse communism becomes a race: the species difference attributed to Jews gains more ground in the discourse, until it is extrapolated onto the communists and becomes a toolbox used to describe them from now on. Jewish features are imposed onto communists: their physical, mental and emotional traits; in consequence, Jewish communists constitute a prototype of all the traits. ‘The Jewish revolutionary type’ represents a figure analogical to a ‘non-European’ in the colonial discourse: ‘He is either a figure of fun, or an atom in a vast collectivity designated in ordinary or cultivated discourse as an undifferentiated type called Oriental, African, yellow, brown, or Muslim’ (Said, 1977, p. 252).

I will be able to explain the transformation of communism into a racial category by referring to the analysis of the colonial discourse once again. Said writes: ‘It shares with magic and with mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system, in which objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter’ (Said, 1977, p. 70). The alleged Arabic perdurability is one of the figures that contribute to the ‘for-all-timeness’ mentioned by Said: ‘as if the Arab had not been subject to the ordinary processes of history’ (Said, 1977, p. 230). This figure is supplemented by another one saying that an Arab: ‘remains the same’ and ‘accumulates no existential or even semantic thickness’ (Said, 1977, p. 230). In other words, if an Arab thinks about something, feels, experiences or expresses something, it does not happen because some event in his life induced it, but because he is an Arab: ‘An Oriental man was first an Oriental and only second a man’ (Said, 1977, p. 231). Fanon draws similar conclusions about ‘being

a Negro': 'Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro' (Fanon, 2008, p. 133), whereas 'I wanted to be a man, nothing but a man' (Fanon, 2008, p. 85). Bhabha concludes: 'the stereotype impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of *race* as anything other than its *fixity* as racism' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 75). Communists are subjected to an analogical process: whatever they experience, think, do or not do is interpreted through the lens of them being communists. Hence, they belong to a group different from the general human population that the interpreters count themselves into.

Islamophobia and Anti-communism

While a communist in the anti-communist discourse corresponds to an Arab in the Orientalist discourse, communism corresponds to Islam. Islam due to Orientalism '[came] to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians' (Said, 1977, p. 59). Islam is interpreted with 'limited vocabulary and imagery,' because '[t]he Christian concept of Islam was integral and self-sufficient' (Said, 1977, p. 60). Therefore, this concept actually says nothing about Islam, but rather meets the needs of the Western world. This vision is not deprived from some kind of knowledge, however, the knowledge is indirect – it does not concern the object itself, but rather gives an idea of the world that produced it: 'it is [...] Western ignorance which becomes more refined and complex, not some body of positive Western knowledge which increases in size and accuracy. For fictions have their own logic and their own dialectic of growth or decline' (Said, 1977, p. 62). Analogically, Jean Paul Sartre tries to understand violence of the anti-colonial revolution in the foreword to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*: 'Our victims know us by their scars and by their chains, and it is this that makes their evidence irrefutable. It is enough that they show us what we have made of them for us to realize what we have made of ourselves' (Fanon, 1965, p. 13).

Smoleński's book provides a good source of information about the Western misinformation and lack of knowledge about Islam. For this reason I will use it to reconstruct the Orientalist vision of Islam. Smoleński's narration is brimming with islamophobic myths used to depict the Arab world as a coherent, backwards and barbarian whole. In this narration a typical Arab is represented by a Palestinian: 'they are nice, they smile at you and always shake your hand. Probably, they are also vigilant, but you just cannot see that' – this description corresponds to the Polish stereotype of the Vietnamese. Later Smoleński writes: 'their offices are always the same, whether they are in Gaza or Ramallah' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 172). Probably, they are the same, because their nature is determined by their Arabness.

This idea of Arabness involves a lot of dirt, mediocrity and backwardness: Arab offices are full of 'sweaty stains and worn out chairs' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 172); 'when [Etgar; one of the book's protagonists] was watching Barak talking to Arafat, he had an impression that he is watching a CEO of an American hi-tech company negotiating with a sheikh'

(Smoleński, 2011, p. 132). In a room furnished in Arabic style, Smoleński felt 'as though [he was] in the palace of a sultan or a nineteenth-century sheikh' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 172).

Yet, Arabness, besides the primitivism, involves hatred: 'in Israel you can love, even your enemies. In West Bank you have to hate' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 105). Palestinians represent the 'hordes of hated barbarians,' who wreak terror and destruction, as mentioned by Said. Smoleński uses the phrase 'the Arab mob/rifraff' and claims that they 'kill, plunder and rape' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 153). He asks 'what should we do with the Palestinians then?' and shortly goes on to explain who he means: '[with whom, or what?] with Shaheed suicide bombers wearing belts packed with semtex? With insurgencies, intifadas, bombings and plane hijacks? With children throwing stones? With the cursing mob?' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 32). Often, even though it is not really clear why, Smoleński compulsively/obsessively pushes the imagery of destruction and religious fundamentalism against the word 'Palestinian': 'Hardly any word about Palestinians, their bombs and their intifada. Every shahid will get a few dozen houris, gallons of wine and sweet dates' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 70). For Smoleński the suicide bomb attacks in Israel are not perpetrated by terrorists, or not even by any specific political group, but by the Palestinians in general. At times, he strikes a sarcastic note: 'yet another Palestinian blew himself up in front of the pub'¹¹ (Smoleński, 2011, p. 138) – as though Palestinians represented such a degenerated *type* of humans that inflicting pain to others and themselves were a pastime for them. The Palestinians – and, consequently, Arabs in general – would like to 'bring another Holocaust upon us,'¹² but, luckily, they will fail because they are too primitive: 'they will never defeat us, because, as a rule, guerillas never win wars they wage against regular armies' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 65). 'Take a look at Palestinians. Notice how they live. They have no food and no medicaments. They do not even have running water. And what do their leaders do? Nothing. They only know how to send out more suicide bombers – anything else would be too difficult for them,' says one of the protagonists in Smoleński's book (Smoleński, 2011, p. 67).

Smoleński quotes most of his protagonists' words in free indirect speech, which makes it virtually impossible to discern whose opinion a given passage represents: the protagonist's or the author's. The lack of clear distinction between the quotes and author's narration merges his opinion with the opinions of his interviewees, and allows Smoleński to distance himself from the words if needed. Any time he can safely say: 'it's not me, it's my protagonist' or deliberately claim that one has wrongly interpreted the book. The free indirect speech is a technique often used in non-fiction documentary literature, and for a specific reason – it provides legitimization for the author's words, because he/she is merely a person who observes, asks questions, listens to people and then reports what he/she has seen and heard. Thus, he/she remains impartial. Moreover, the free indirect

11 In Polish 'to blow oneself up' and 'to have a good time' is the same phrase. Smoleński purposefully used this phrase as a sarcastic literary tool (translator's note).

12 It is not at all clear who Smoleński means by 'us' – it is either Jews, or Israelis, or the entire civilized world, that is the world that does not include Palestinians.

speech enables the author to avoid questions about the choice of interlocutors, the order in which the quotations appear, and the role of the narrator's memory, as well as his/hers likes and dislikes, prejudices and preconceptions that are part of his/hers fieldwork equipment.

In consequence, Palestinians and Arabs in general seem to constitute a separate species of human, analogically to Jewish communists. It is a dangerous species, much closer to animals than the species represented by Smoleński. He writes: 'Even a Palestinian cannot survive a week without water and food' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 62). Since his book belongs to the genre of non-fiction literature, it enjoys a status of a reliable source of information; Smoleński himself is thus regarded as the reporter who has actually been there, seen it all and now merely documents the facts. The reporter further writes that 'the rules for drunkards are the same as the rules for lunatics and drug addicts. They are even the same as the rules for Arabs' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 56). Thus, the Arabs are situated in the hierarchy of social respect somewhere below drunkards, lunatics and drug addicts. They come close to animals, who will survive without food and water for a longer time than people, albeit not much longer.

As far as reporters working in the colonized countries are concerned, Fanon writes that '[t]he photos which illustrate the article are simply a proof that one knows what one is talking about, and that one has visited the country. The report intends to verify the evidence: everything's going on badly out there since we left' (Fanon, 1965, p. 77). Smoleński's book ends with a photograph of a few armed and masked men, one of whom has his face covered with a keffiyeh, while another holds a copy of the *Quran* in his hands. The photographs in the book serve to reinforce the impression that the narration is an actual report from the area. The author's aim is to render his writing neutral and objective; to achieve this, he takes advantage of the trust vested in the reporter's trade. During the Algerian War, when French reporters were accused of being biased, 'they replied in all good faith that they were being objective' (Fanon, 1965, p. 77). Fanon concludes that '[f]or the native, objectivity is always directed against him' (Fanon, 1965, p. 77), while Said adds that the objectivity of an Orientalist consists in the fact that he knows the truth and exerts ultimate control over it, because there are no opinions legitimate enough to undermine or question the truth (Said, 1977, p. 310).

Orientalists' investigations of the Dark Continent and, analogically, studies on communism conducted under the anti-communist paradigm generate a vicious circle: they do not refer to the reality, but to other studies, and also force the reader 'to accept Orientalist codifications' (Said, 1977, p. 75). Thus, the truth does not stem from the nature of the object under investigation – it is more of a value the judgment. The object exists because this judgment gave rise to it. Thus, communism is merely a derivative of the anti-communist discourse, just as the Orient is a derivative of Orientalism. The empirical data do not make much difference here, besides being used to legitimize the judgments of those who refer to it. Whereas '[t]he Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited

extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe' (Said, 1977, p. 63), communism is not part of the history of ideas and the socio-political history of the world, to which its observers pertain, but a separate stage, where the dominant discourse of today acts out its legitimization.

Outside of the history

Orientalism and anti-communism share yet another element – they present their objects of study with no regard for the historical and the social context. In Smoleński's narration, Israel is located outside of time and outside of history, in a special sphere where eternal, unique and extraordinary processes take place: 'It is just the way it is there, because Israel is *the whole world*' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 10); Israel is also referred to as 'the gift of Providence,' 'the promised and the scarred land,' 'the only place like this in the entire world' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 13), and 'a state of mind and spirit' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 14). In consequence, one has an impression that Israel, just like a lens, focuses all that is typically Jewish, typically Arab and generally typical for this culture, because it is not just history that takes place there, but it is *the* history. Not just a trivial history, which could take place in any other place in the world' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 18). Smoleński presents Israel as 'the Holy Land,' 'the cradle of civilization' and 'the beginning of all things' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 312). Hence, history does not exert its control there. Israel is governed by immobilizing magic, by sacrum creating a timeless void, or force majeure placing it outside of time; Smoleński refers to this force as 'the Mystery' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 31), or 'the Almighty' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 26). Jerusalem is the place, where one can best experience the workings of this force, because 'this extraordinary city,' this 'Holy City,' the 'most extraordinary city of the world' (Smoleński, 2011, pp. 15, 17, 29) makes 'a sane, rationally thinking man believe that he is a Biblical character, as soon as he enters the great white walls of Jerusalem' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 23). The hallucinogenic allure of Jerusalem is so strong that even a man of the West, a reporter, goes to pray in front of the Wailing Wall, because 'if God really comes here, he would hear my prayers too' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 26).

Smoleński's narration belongs to those works that present 'the Orient [as] synonymous with stability and unchanging eternity' (Said, 1977, p. 240). Orientalism would lose its legitimization without the permanence of the Orient – it is based on the conviction that the studied 'peoples,' as well as the cultures and societies they create, are essential, and that they exist in isolation from the micro – and macro-processes of history. Even though it aspires to be scientific, Orientalism is a *vision* rather than a *narration*, which according to Said 'violates the serene Apollonian fictions asserted by vision,' because it imbues the picture of the Orient with history (Said, 1977, p. 240). History does not fit into the Orientalist discourse, because this discourse aims at equating the new with the familiar; it reminds that we see the Orient, which *is already defined* and it will forever remain

so. Should a narration enter the vision, it would put violence and conflict on the map of Orient, and thus disrupt the serenity and the harmony present in the Orient since time immemorial. It would also introduce the long-standing relations of domination – the domination of the colonizers over the colonized, as well as other relations of domination inside the Orient itself.

In Smoleński's narration the erasure of the disruptive elements takes the attention off the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has its beginning and its history. Smoleński devotes much attention to Jewish settlers in Palestine – they are objects of his compassion and concern. The description of how Jewish settlers were displaced by the Israeli army is virtually identical to the Palestinian descriptions of Nakhba: '[they came to] bulldoze their houses, plough their crops under, destroy their greenhouses, cut their water pipelines and tear down their synagogues' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 13). 'Only here, I was able to see real Jewish lament [...] a lament for their lost past' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 278) – this description of removing the Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip resembles the lament for those who died in the Holocaust.

When discussing the conflicts in Israel, Smoleński focuses on the conflict between the settlers, the government and the liberally-minded Israelis: '[t]he worst case scenario is that Israelis will start to shoot other Israelis' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 118). By Israelis, Smoleński does not mean the Israeli Arabs, but the Jewish settlers; thus, his narration completely excludes Palestinians. Palestinians are not part of the narration also when it comes to the beginnings of Israel: 'Every Israeli child knows that: had there been no vision, the Israeli state and nation would not exist now.' This vision was 'amazingly democratic': 'some Izaak from Warsaw, or Natan from Odessa, or Professor Ariel from Vienna, or doctor Szmul from Munich came to Israel. [...] And suddenly, they became equal' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 305). Smoleński asks: 'how could anyone want to emigrate from a country, where everyone descended from a common ancestor, but at the same time, where everyone immigrated to?' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 310). Here, Israel is presented as a community whose members are equal and have equal rights. On the death of Ariel Sharon: 'the last of the great has passed away. They knew what it was like when the Jewish state had existed only in their dreams' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 150). Smoleński talks about Israel in terms of a dream come true; consequently, he marginalizes or even ignores everything that would contradict this picture.

'For the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space – representing the nation's modern territoriality is turned into the archaic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism. The difference of space returns as the Sameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition, turning the People into One' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 149).

There are, however, some people in the West who raise the issue of the rights of Palestinians, but they make Smoleński 'angry', so he calls them 'know-all/smartass Westerners' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 278). For the author they are just a bunch of ignorant outsiders and

artsy dreamers who do not know anything about the reality. In Smoleński's not narration, the relations between Palestinians and Israelis are symmetrical at most: both Arabs and Israelis spray insults aimed at each other on the walls (Smoleński, 2011, p. 156). This snapshot of Hebron accurately reflects the general picture that the book paints. Shore's book provides an analogical symmetry when she discusses the relation between communism and nationalism. In Shore's opinion, both ideas form very similar derivatives of liberalism, which aimed at creating 'a theory of everything' (Shore, 2012, p. 5) – the only difference between them was that the former exterminated people in Soviet camps, while the latter did it in gas chambers (Shore, 2012, p. 51). Analogically to Smoleński, Shore in her narration about the interwar Jewish communists does not take into account the fact that one side of the conflict was overwhelmingly stronger (i.e. the state) and it monopolized the means of power and domination. Only at the very end of the chapter about Adolf Berman and Jakub Berman, Shore mentions the complex nature of the situation, the vicissitude of what they felt, their ethnicity, class and social status (Shore, 2012, p. 109). Still, she does not open a debate on these categories, neither does she take them into account in her narration. Polish anti-Semitism and various other variables (e.g. financial, political and cultural conditions) are mentioned only in passing – they are not considered to be important as far as the decision to become a communist is concerned.

It might seem that communists were acting in a vacuum and, consequently, they did not react to any social processes – they rather generated them. Zaremba's narration is an example of this type of thinking, when he writes that by raising the issue of minority rights, KPP 'provoked ethnic conflicts' (Zaremba, 2001, p. 75). Similarly Śpiewak postulates that the stereotyped group bears responsibility of mitigating the effects of them being stereotyped: '[Jews], regardless of the fact that we condemn the anti-Semitic actions, take or should take responsibility. Yet again, it turned out that people in Poland are against full assimilation of Jews (in contrast to other national minorities), so it was to be expected that their foreignness would be reminded and highlighted to them' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 233).¹³ Paczkowski reports that Józef Światło followed the advice: in 1947 he resigned from an important managerial position, because (as his wife Justyna Światło told Paczkowski) 'he realized that in the times of heightened anti-Semitism he, being a Jew, ought not to occupy such a prominent position' (Paczkowski, 2009, pp. 102–103).

The claim that Jews brought the problems upon themselves, because they ignored the nature of anti-Semitism in Poland, is similar to the opinion that minorities in fact impose their own laws on the majority, when they ought to be more tolerant.¹⁴ According to Zaremba, the fact that they were intolerant is reflected in the 'nationalisms among national minorities,' which provided the legitimization for KPP (Zaremba, 2001, p. 75).

13 Domańska presents a similar opinion in the aforementioned book: 'are Jewish leaders aware that communism among the Jewish masses results in the increase of anti-Semitism?' (Domańska, 2013, p. 115).

14 It has become popular for the right-wing media to accuse minorities of being intolerant when making claims for equal rights. These media outlets claim that the said minorities demand tolerance, but are intolerant themselves, because they fail to recognize the majority's need to dominate. This discursive trick is used especially in relation to sexual minorities.

Most likely, Zaremba's phrase 'nationalisms among minorities' refers to KPP's postulate of equal rights for Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other minorities. In Zaremba's narration the political minority and the national minorities appear to be at least as powerful as their opponent: the state and Polish nationalist ideology. He also positions communists during the war in another vacuum – he claims that in 1939, instead of fighting for Polish freedom, they hastily fled to the USSR (Zaremba, 2001, p. 790). In his account of communists' alleged cowardice Zaremba seems to ignore the punishment awaiting people for their ideological and political affiliations from the invading Germans.

Śpiewak mentions the aspect of domination in his narration, however, he does it only in order to ridicule it, claiming that it was invented by communists themselves. 'They conjured up quite a compelling picture of the world order: they put the raging fascism and crypto-fascism against people's need to defend peace, order and social justice' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 121). Therefore, 'fascism and crypto-fascism' were only a figment of the communist propaganda, which had nothing to do with the actual situation in the inter-war period. Yet, some pages later, Śpiewak argues that 'when Hitler came to power, Poland saw the establishment of the Radical Nationalist Camp [in Polish: *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*],¹⁵ [...] communists and their useful idiots had to only try to eliminate the radical leftist intelligentsia' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 130). Thus, Śpiewak makes it virtually impossible for the reader to understand whether he claims that fascism did exist and communists did not engage in the fight against a real threat, or whether they fought against a non-existent phantom. Analogically to Zaremba, Śpiewak claims that communists did not actually try to counter real problems – they created them out of their own recklessness. 'The communists achieved goal they had set for themselves: they managed to create a clear division between the progressive and tolerant parties on the one hand, and the anti-democratic and anti-Semitic on the other. This division is still vivid today' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 122). Hence, the communists did not diagnose the antagonisms – they were actually responsible for creating them, and they bear this responsibility until today. Further, Śpiewak writes: 'Probably, most people thought that the Soviet invasion of Poland would protect them against the German violence' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 181). It is merely what 'most people thought,' just an opinion. Similarly, the claim that there are anti-Semitic and anti-democratic parties in Poland was also a matter of opinion – a subjective opinion that had its roots in the communist ideology. Śpiewak does not even attempt to verify or negate these opinions. He merely quotes them, as though he was talking about some rumors or folk beliefs.

The claims that the minorities 'asked for' the violence themselves and that this violence quickly turned out to be a figment of their ideological propaganda, consequently lead to the only possible conclusion: 'the minorities have only themselves to blame.' Śpiewak writes about Jewish communists that '[t]hey are partially responsible for the Poles' dramatically negative attitude towards Jews' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 185). While communists were

¹⁵ The National Radical Camp was a Polish extreme right, anti-communist and nationalist political party that has been revived as an organization in 1993 and functions until today (translator's note).

responsible for the fact that nationalism became more and more popular, because they exaggerated its importance, Jews were actually responsible for anti-Semitism, because they had 'fabulous careers,' while they should have anticipated that their careers would stand out a mile for the Polish majority (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 234).

The essence

The devaluation and dissolution of the context in which these people lived and acted, this 'big picture,' prevents from understanding their place in the socio-political constellations of dominance and in the hierarchy of legitimization. It is aimed at 'distilling' the very essence of the protagonists and thus bringing out their invariable features assigned to them by nature or a divine order. Putting Jewish communists – just as it is done with the Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians – inside a vacuum, outside of any historical processes or narration, is an essentializing practice. In narrations on Jewish communists it is the Jewishness and the nation that are taken for granted – as categories too obvious to be explained, and evoking a preconception that the protagonists share some features that developed outside the society and outside the history.

In this vein, Paczkowski writes that Józef Światło 'most likely [that is in accordance with what anti-Semites claimed] did support Jewish organizations, or at least some particular activists' (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 104), because he was 'sensitized to Jewish problems'; one symptom of his 'sensitivity' manifested itself in the fact that he had a negative opinion about anti-Semitism, and that he could read in Jewish, he knew the language and liked it (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 166). Later, Paczkowski quotes Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, who claimed that Światło, after he had fled Poland lived near Washington, where he opened a meat shop. Paczkowski asks: '[A meat shop?] Maybe a kosher butchery?' (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 240). The analysis of Światło's social life leads the author to a conclusion that 'this is the very core of the issue of commie Jewishness, whether one likes it or does not' (Paczkowski, 2009, p. 133). Therefore, it was the Jewishness that channeled Światło's actions, decided what he liked and disliked, and therefore allows explaining his behavior. Every aspect of Jewishness in Światło's life reveals some fact about him that he tried to conceal, deny or play down.

Shore presents a very similar treatment of her protagonists' Jewishness. She claims that Berman 'was certain that because he is a Jew, he couldn't be anybody else' (Shore, 2012, p. 110). Even though Shore attributes this opinion to Berman, it appears to be her own – a conviction that forms the basis of her narration about Jewish communists. Shore argues that the fact that Berman got married 'under a chuppah' was a proof of his Jewishness, which he tried to conceal (Shore, 2012, p. 103). Śpiewak claims that Berman, like many Jewish communists, 'wanted to forget about their roots' and 'their Jewishness was a taboo' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 173). Even though Berman 'forgot his roots' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 169), his Jewishness manifested itself in the fact that he helped Zofia Kossak-Szczucka

– the fact that ‘she saved so many lives, his brothers and sisters’ must have touched him (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 172). Kevin MacDonald, the author of ‘an evolutionary analysis of Jewish involvement in twentieth-century intellectual and political movements,’ uses similar arguments to denounce Rosa Luxemburg’s Jewishness: ‘Luxemburg’s only important sexual relationship was with a Jew, and she continued to maintain ties to her family. [...] Luxemburg’s dwindling friendships within the party had become more exclusively Jewish, whereas her contempt for the (mostly non-Jewish) leaders of the party became more open and vitriolic. Her references to the leadership were often laced with characteristically Jewish phrases’ (MacDonald, 1998, p. 54). This led MacDonald to a conclusion that ‘Luxemburg was in fact a crypto-Jew or [...] she was engaged in self-deception regarding her Jewish identity’ (MacDonald, 1998, p. 54). According to the author she was not the only one to have done so: ‘although they [i.e. Polish Jewish communists] themselves appear not to have noticed the Jewish collective nature of their experience [...] it was observable to others – a clear example of self-deception also evident in the case of American Jewish leftists’ (MacDonald, 1998, p. 60).

In the analyzed narrations, the nation and the Jewishness both function as neutral and descriptive terms, which are not subject to discussion, negotiation, historical processes or deconstruction – neither in the lives of individuals, nor in the life of the community. Zaremba writes that ‘Polish communists did not understand the nation’s need for freedom in its own country’ (Zaremba, 2001, p. 72), as if this need and this nation had been objectively existing and permanent entities. The evidence for the extra-social nature of the nation is the universality of the mechanism that operates within it: Zaremba argues that ‘it is a universal phenomenon’ that ‘a nation regards its own members more positively than outsiders’; he also sees nation as a ‘community’. Then, he concludes that ‘[i]t could be theoretically possible and historically well-motivated that the process occurs in an opposite order [here, Zaremba alludes to Gellner’s theory that defines nation as a derivative of nationalism – A.Z.]: first, there needs to be a national awareness and even the smallest seed of a nation (a proto-nation? an etnia?), only then a nationalism can emerge.’ Hence, according to Zaremba, we could regard nation as ‘an objectively existing social reality’ (Zaremba, 2001, p. 25). This allows the author to come to another conclusion, namely that, allegedly, ‘national minorities were not emotionally attached to the Second Polish Republic’ (Zaremba, 2001, p. 77). After having read Zaremba’s book, one can do nothing but agree: how could they had been emotionally attached, if they did not share the same ethnic origin?

Whatever Paczkowski, Śpiewak, Shore and Zaremba do not mention explicitly in their narrations, is articulated by MacDonald. ‘Aletheia,’ the publisher of the Polish translation of his *The Culture of Critique* uses the following words to market the book:

‘Even though his critics often claim that his research is anti-Semitic in nature, and right-wing extremists often refer to it, the methodology of MacDonald’s studies is impeccable. The book proves that the author is an exceptionally erudite scholar, capable of producing

very compelling argumentation (one can read the book just for the smashing critique of the Frankfurt school). MacDonald broke open a taboo: the Jewish ethnicity, because he harbors an opinion that the lack of adequate analyses of this issue is caused only by the prejudices of political correctness.¹⁶

MacDonald poses a hypothesis that Jews had a 'group evolutionary strategy,' which included communism, because it was essentially a Jewish concept, as well as a Jewish movement that supported Jewish actions (MacDonald, 1998, p. 51). MacDonald, in relation to KPP, writes that:

'In the prewar period even the most *de-ethnicized* Jews only outwardly assimilated by dressing like gentiles, taking gentile-sounding names suggesting deception), and learning their languages. They attempted to recruit gentiles into the movement but did not assimilate or attempt to assimilate into Polish culture; they retained traditional Jewish *disdainful and supercilious attitudes* toward what, as Marxists, they viewed as a *retarded* Polish peasant culture' (MacDonald, 1998, p. 60).

It is not difficult to guess what conclusions MacDonald draws: 'anti-Semitic reactions to individuals like Luxemburg and other outwardly assimilating Jews' were justified because '[they] may be viewed as resulting from an attempt to prevent deception [...] such Jews often maintained informal social and business networks' (MacDonald, 1998, p. 55).

I do not claim that any of the analyzed authors would declare an open support for MacDonald's theses. Nevertheless, they are a direct result of thinking about the nation and Jewishness in essentialist, extra-historical and extra-social terms – it constitutes the ultimate conclusion of such thinking, it dots the i's and crosses the t's of these narrations. There is a *continuum*, rather than a rupture, between the mainstream narrations and the MacDonald's one – possibly an unwished relation for the authors I mention. The first symptom of this *continuum* is the presence of a revealing (or unmasking) discourse: the authors assume that their protagonists hide behind masks, so they try to peak underneath the disguise to reveal a Jew behind the mask. Secondly, they all avoid or even refuse to discuss the categories and concepts key to the narration. Shore, for instance, claims that Esperanto is 'an invention of a Polish Jew from Białystok'; then she lists more than a dozen names of scholars and intellectuals, e.g. Freud and Erenburg, and comments that 'every one of them was of a Jewish origin, even if they tried to reject their Jewish identity, which they usually did. Nevertheless, this is an entirely different issue' (Shore, 2012, pp. 29–30). In my opinion, however, despite being placed in a footnote, this claim constitutes the essence of Shore's argument – the essentialist concept of Jewishness, rooted in the nineteenth-century concept of the heterogeneity of human races, determines the subject of Shore's research as well as her treatment of this subject. Shore treats Jewishness just as Zaremba treats the nation. Only such an approach allows to argue that 'Jews fought for an impossible cause,' because the communist internationalism stands in stark opposition to the need to cultivate the Jewish culture (Shore, 2012, p. 45); and that 'Jews always yearned for some universalist ideology or world-view' (Shore, 2012,

16 <http://www.alatheia.com.pl/tytul/115/kultura-krytyki> (3/5/2013).

p. 106). Only such an approach allows describing both communism and the anticommunist movements as 'an exceptional Jewish contribution to the history of Central Europe' (Shore, 2012, p. 53).

Śpiewak's essentialist concept of the nation and Jewishness led him to a conclusion that communism was 'an act of a Jew's apostasy' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 170). 'A communist ceases to be a Jew, because his feelings of love and responsibility for the Jewish nation are severed,' 'identifying with the revolution and communism, he becomes de-nationalized and leaves his community' (Śpiewak, 2012, pp. 168–169). The evidence of Jewish communists' 'betrayal' of 'the Jewish nation' are among others: Rosa Luxemburg's anti-Semitism (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 60), the anti-Semitism of the Red Army (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 83) and the fact that 'even Gestapo did not kill as many communists as Stalin' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 130). Śpiewak's accusations that Jews betrayed their 'own nation' reflect his conviction that Jewishness, similarly to Polishness as understood by Polish nationalists, is a sort of commitment that one can neither choose, nor reject – a commitment which will be the benchmark of one's achievements. Smoleński aptly, even if unintentionally, formulated this idea, when he wrote about one of his Israeli protagonists: 'she experiences the mystery of Jewish DNA, a secret code of identity. Now, she knows that there is a relationship between biology and the spirit' (Smoleński, 2011, p. 31).

'The mystery of Jewish DNA' – the *modus operandi* of the analyzed narrations on Jewish communists – entails that the protagonists of these narrations will either stay Jewish forever (because this attribute is irrevocable, just as the category of race defined by racists), or they cannot be Jews because they decided to become communists. Rosa Luxemburg is an emblematic figure for the anti-communist discourse and functions as its 'crush test dummy' some claim that she was is a liar, or a 'crypto-Jew,' because one can never reject one's Jewishness, even if one makes universalist and internationalist statements; others, however, argue that she was an anti-Semite because her rejection of Jewishness was an expression of her hatred towards Jews.

Both methods, despite their apparent incompatibility, actually share the same symbolic violence, which renders a 'person under anti-Semitic violence'¹⁷ stripped from the right to choose their own identity. Two explanations are available for such people's behavior. On the one hand, they might be governed by powers beyond their control, what soon 'emerges' in their behavior and eventually 'reveals' the truth denied by the individual.¹⁸ On the other hand, they might be striving for the impossible: they refuse to reject their Jewishness, even though they ought to. In both cases the identity of the described is defined by those who describe them. The individual choices of the described are rendered

17 I use this phrase following Elżbieta Janicka, because it allows avoiding the violence in question – the violence of imposing identity.

18 I put the words 'reveal' and 'emerge' in inverted commas, because they suggest that Jewishness, in popular opinion, is an uncomfortable 'truth' that one should conceal – it is assumed that it is concealed by default, but, at the same time, it cannot be entirely hidden.

completely irrelevant – they constitute the mask that the investigators must tear off in order to reveal the ultimate truth.

Bringing the new and the familiar to a common denominator – in this case communists to traitor's of the nation and Jewish communists to Jewishness – is yet another feature of the Orientalist discourse. Orientalism poses the power of generalizing, evening out differences and 'converting instances of a civilization into ideal bearers of its values, ideas, and position' (Said, 1977, p. 252). As a result of the workings of the Orientalist discourse:

'Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing' (Said, 1977, p. 58).

The Jewish communist is the foreigner here. In the anti-communist discourse he becomes an inflection of an already familiar thing: a Jew, or an individual unaware that they are defined by their 'origin.' An old entity developed into a new type: a Jew took the guise of a communist and Jewishness was concealed behind communist ideas. The well-known treason has a new variation now – in the case of Jews it is a double treason: a betrayal of Jewishness and a betrayal of Poland. Thus, thanks to turning the new into the familiar '[t]he threat is muted, familiar values impose themselves' (Said, 1977, p. 59).

In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha writes, that modernity is characterized by the 'ethics of self-construction,' which entails that the subject and the reality undergo constant fluctuation and re-construction. In the light of this kind of ethics there is another side to the coin: the right to self-construction is denied to those subjects who are defined in an essentialist manner, due to intra – or extra-cultural colonization. Bhabha asks: '[W]hat is modernity in those colonial conditions where its imposition is itself the denial of historical freedom, civic autonomy and the 'ethical' choice of refashioning?' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 241). Through the workings of the discourse, the 'colonial conditions' are created by the narrations about communists, especially those about Jewish communists. As far as subjecthood is concerned, modernity puts the focus on constant rediscovery and redefinition of oneself. Thus, one's subjecthood is defined by the capability of rediscovery and redefinition – if one is refused the right for rediscovery and redefinition, one is expelled from the human community. This is exactly how the false universalism described by Bourdieu works: if any quality becomes a human one, but the possible conditions to gain it are not made universal, only those who have a chance to achieve it qualify as humans, while the rest becomes expelled from the human community. Consequently, one loses the status of a subject or – if one has never achieved this status – it further reinforces the causes of one's not being a subject (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 93–127).

The false universalism of modernity consists in self-construction as a universally human feature, and, at the same time, distributing the capability of self-construction in

a particularistic manner. This is probably why modernity is a source of discontent.' Fanon recognizes the emancipatory value of this suffering, because 'the native who has seen the modern world penetrate into the furthestmost corners of the bush, is most acutely aware of all the things he does not possess' (Fanon, 1965, p. 74). Emancipation consists in the deconstruction of the false universalism through focusing modernity on the fight for the right to equal conditions for practicing the qualities that are regarded as universally human.¹⁹ Shore, however, goes the opposite way: she recalls the historical and the social context, hence also the anti-Semitic and anti-communist contexts in which her protagonists were submerged. In their novel attempts at empowerment she looks for what is already familiar: the evidence for their Jewishness. The biographies of Jewish communists can be regarded as '[C]ounter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries – both actual and conceptual – disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which *imagined communities* are given essentialist identities' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 149). Within the anti-communist paradigm one can observe a movement in the opposite direction: the essentialist identity is protected from the communist counter-narration. Fanon interprets it as a colonizing gesture and 'an obvious intention [of the colonisers] to objectify, constrain, enslave and harden' (Fanon, 1965, p. 104).

The golden mean

Jewish communists' counter-narration is depicted as unreliable. Besides depriving her protagonists of their capability for rational thinking and exposing their features rooted in Jewishness, Shore creates even more distance between them and the reader by ironically commenting the language they used. '*Overcoming* was a communist imperative, and there was a lot to *overcome* indeed,' 'in our great socialist motherland,' 'Zionism suddenly turned out to be a cosmopolitan and bourgeois ideology,' 'in good old Stalinist style,' 'fighting for the cause' – these are but a few fragments where Shore tries to recreate the communist jargon (Shore, 2012, respectively pp. 41, 43, 46, 61, 92–93). She mocks it to emphasize that one must not take earnestly neither what was expressed with such words, nor those who used them.

However, Shore's narration spares one person from crushing his credibility: namely, Władysław Bartoszewski. Shore takes Bartoszewski to be the one and only reliable source of information; she does not shed any doubt on his narration – to the contrary, his narration serves as 'the golden mean' of her story. Bartoszewski is the voice of truth, because he stands away from both the anti-Semitic and communist narrations. The distance between Bartoszewski and communism is obvious – it suffices to study his biography; he

19 Aránzazu Calderón Puerta in her analysis of Nałkowska's story *Przy torze kolejowym* (*By the Train Track*) wrote about the false universalism dominant in Polish narrations about Jews. 'Cultural experts interpret the situation depicted by Nałkowska through the lens of universalism. They treat it as a symbol of the tragic war choices, irresolvable moral conflicts and human tragedy.' However, 'the story and its film adaptation clearly show that the protagonists of this story are not some abstract subjects of the eternal moral dilemmas. They are not *people in general*, but men and women, policemen or laborers, Jews from behind the ghetto wall and Poles from the Aryan side' (Calderon Puerta, 2010, p. 152).

is also far from being an anti-Semite, because his opinion on Jews was more than balanced. Even though he had been tortured during his incarceration, he did not 'bear any grudge' against Jews, while Jews working for the Office of Public Security in Poland had been perfectly aware that the person they were holding had helped them during the war (Shore, 2012, p. 81). Similarly, 'he did not accuse his friend [Adolf Berman] of anything,' even though he 'had been silent' instead of having tried to intervene, when 'Żegota's' members had been persecuted by the communists after the war (Shore, 2012, p. 102).²⁰

One can easily discover the mode of 'the golden mean' between anti-Semitism and commie Jews narrations from the interview with Bartoszewski published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Just as in Shore's book Bartoszewski's role here is threefold: he is a witness of the history, who knows what happened because he saw it; a hero, because he helped Jews; and a moral authority, because he fought against communism. Bartoszewski refers to the Uprising as 'madness on the part of Poles and Jews'; he is of an opinion that it broke out as an expression of a 'Polish-Jewish community' and because Jews had been educated on Polish books. To support his claim, Bartoszewski quotes Jewish insurgents who asked Poles for support in their struggle, using the pronoun 'we,' in order to evoke a feeling of co-responsibility for what was happening. Bartoszewski claims that the Uprising caused a stir among people living on the Aryan side, who crossed their fingers for the Jewish cause and shed tears for their fate; what is more, the Home Army (in Polish: *Armia Krajowa*, AK) provided as much help to Jews as it could. Bartoszewski concludes his story with a philo-Semitic paean, claiming that gratitude is a Jewish national feature and that a monument commemorating the Righteous should be erected in the area where the Warsaw Ghetto once stood (Klich, Kurski & Bartoszewski, 2013).

To date, multiple studies that investigate the issues of: the Jewish-Polish relations before and during the war, analyze the course of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, and the reactions of Home Army and the civil population living on the Aryan side, as well as the reaction of AK and the Polish population to the Holocaust have been published (cf. Drozdowski, 2003; Engelking & Libionka, 2009; Janicka, 2011; Libionka, 2006; Lubetkin, 1999; Margolis, 2005; Tokarska-Bakir, 2012 etc.). They present evidence sufficient to conclude that Bartoszewski's narration serves as an 'anesthetizing fable.' The fable creates a picture in which Jews and Poles co-existed in harmony, mutually enriched each other's lives, and eventually gave rise to the 'brotherhood in arms' in the tragic moment brought about by the aggressor. The fable performs a function similar to the practice of erasure of the temporal horizon, the context and history, present in the colonial discourse. As

20 'Żegota' was a codename for the Polish Council to Aid Jews (in Polish: *Rada Pomocy Żydom*) established by the end of 1942 under the auspices of the Polish Government in Exile in London. Today regarded as proof that Polish government in exile was concerned with the fate of Jews during the Holocaust, this small organization was established very late – already during the liquidation of the ghettos. It provided financial aid to people hiding in the so-called 'Aryan side.' It was financed exclusively by Polish and foreign Jewish organizations. Part of the funds dedicated to 'Żegota' had been confiscated by the Polish Underground State and used for other purposes. See Urynowicz (2009, pp. 79–93). I owe the information and literature about the financing of 'Żegota' to Elżbieta Janicka.

a result, it erases the relations of domination and power that the Polish majority wielded over the Jewish minority.

Generations

Shore's interpretation of the history of Jewish communists is based on the psycho-analytical concept of patricide. Shore argues that Jewish communists committed a ritual killing of their fathers, the pious orthodox Jews, so that their own children could 'atone for their fathers' sins,' ritually killing them using anti-communism (Shore, 2012, p. 53). Śpiewak comes to similar conclusions: 'In our region, communism did not have much to do with the class struggle. It was rather characterized by national and generational conflicts' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 206). Both authors structure their narrations on the internal dynamics within the Jewish society: the struggle between the younger and the older generations, as well as the attempts of the young to identify with something different than their Jewishness.

The motif of fathers and sons appears also in Sartre's preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1965). Sartre, however, does not annihilate the history through an interpretational *perpetuum mobile*, psychoanalysis in this case. He analyses inter-generational relationships in their unique social and political context: the colonized country and the onset of an anti-colonial insurgency. Sartre writes: 'For the fathers, we alone were the speakers; the sons no longer even consider us as valid intermediaries: we are the objects of their speeches' – in this passage, the pronoun 'we' refers to the colonizers (Fanon, 1965, p. 10). Sartre ridicules the psychiatric discourse, because it individualizes social experiences and renders them pathological: 'Three generations did we say? Hardly has the second generation opened their eyes than from then on they've seen their fathers being flogged. In psychiatric terms, they are *traumatized for life*' (Fanon, 1965, p. 17). In contrast to Shore, Sartre assumes that the colonized create their own identity and strategy against the colonizers, not against the previous generation of the colonized. After having read *The Wretched of the Earth*, he is convinced that it was the colonizers that provided the negative point of reference, which influenced the political choices of the new generation of the colonized. To present her protagonists in such light, Shore would have to describe the colonizers first, that is the dominant Polish majority, and analyze the nature of this domination.

'Europeans [...] their fathers, shadowy creatures, *your* creatures, were but dead souls; you it was who allowed them glimpses of light, to you only did they dare speak, and you did not bother to reply to such zombies. Their sons ignore you; a fire warns them and sheds light around them, and you have not lit it' (Fanon, 1965, p. 13).

Had Shore used the above interpretative technique instead of Freudianis to analyze the interwar generation of the Jewish communists, she might have come to a conclusion

that it was the relations between the dominators and the dominated, not between the fathers and the sons that determined the identities and choices of Jewish communists.

Judith Butler argues that 'it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible' (Butler, 1997, p. 5). In the analyzed narrations it is the 'commie Jews' that constitute the interpellating code-word, that is at the same time an insult and a persecuting stereotype. According to Shore 'we must not interpret *commie Jews* as an anti-Semitic stereotype, or a sociologically determined inclination. We should rather see it as a biography, as an epic tragedy of the humankind, where both the size of the experiment and the size of its failure are immense' (Shore, 2012, p. 53). Śpiewak states that he 'will not put the label of a stereotype on this negative image of the Jews. It would be too easy. This is just the way it was, this is what people felt. One cannot deny them, regardless of what the lives and the behavior of Jews were really like' (Śpiewak, 2012, p. 178).

'It is recognizably true that the chain of stereotypical signification is curiously mixed and split, polymorphous and perverse, an articulation of multiple belief' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 82). The definitions of 'commie Jews' are no longer shocking, if one tries to assemble the chain of signification in accordance with the analyzed narrations. This chain implies that a Jewish communist was a very specific type of a person, deprived of rational thinking, self-deceiving and shaped by extra-historical factors. At the same time, he or she enjoyed equal rights and equal legitimization as a social actor, who in neutral circumstances made political choices and took decisions regarding his/her life – therefore, he/she is guilty of the crime of communism, but also is responsible for the suffering of other Jews and for the nationalist sentiments becoming more radical. This is the picture of Jewish communists that is painted in the analyzed narrations.

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