29

Widok. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture

title:

Ashantis in Warsaw: Notions of "Blackness" in Polish Society at the Turn of the 20th Century – A Preparatory Contribution to Polish Colonial History

author:

Agata Łuksza

source:

Widok. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture 29 (2021)

URL:

https://www.pismowidok.org/en/archive/2021/29-images-and-imageries-of-race-histories/ashanti-in-warsaw

doi:

https://doi.org/10.36854/widok/2021.29.2344

publisher:

Widok. Foundation for Visual Culture

affiliation:

SWPS University

University of Warsaw

keywords:

Ashanti; colonialism; ethnographic shows; race; Warsaw

abstract:

The author recognizes Włodzimierz Perzyński's comedy Aszantka as a meaningful remnant of „blackness" in the history of Polish theatre, and therefore she uses it as a point of entrance into a broader inquiry about the entanglement of Polish society into European colonial project, and the ideas, values, and cultural practices it entailed. That is why in the article the author attempts to reconstruct possible concepts and images of "blackness" which Warsaw dwellers might have shared at the end of the 19th century by analysing the reception of the performances of alleged representatives of Ashanti people in the Warsaw circus in 1888. From "Ashanti" performances on, the popularity of this type of entertainment – so called ethnographic shows or human zoos – grew in the colonized capital of the Kingdom of Poland. The author points to "savageness" and "nakedness" as constitutive traits of "blackness" which she understands as a specific human condition, experienced both by overseas colonized societies as well as subaltern social groups (to which "Aszantka" from Perzyński's comedy belonged) in European societies.

Agata Łuksza - Assistant professor in the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw. She is the author of Glamour, femininity, performance. Actress as an Object of Desire (Warsaw University Press, Theatre Institute 2016) as well as of numerous articles both in Polish and international journals. Her research interests include: the history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century theatre, particularly theatre fandom history and women's history; colonial and postcolonial histories; gender, body and sexuality; gothic studies and fan studies. She is a Board Member of the European Association for the Study of Theatre and Performance and the co-editor of its journal European Journal of Theatre and Performance.

Ashantis in Warsaw: Notions of "Blackness" in Polish Society at the Turn of the 20th Century – A Preparatory Contribution to Polish Colonial History

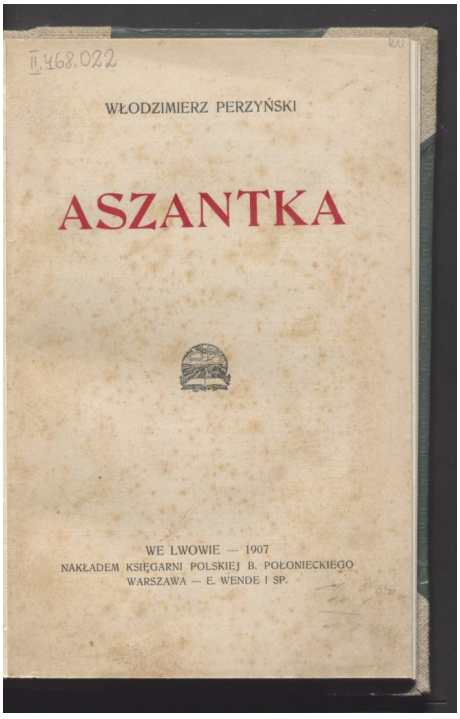
The opening act of *Ashanti*, the somewhat forgotten play by Włodzimierz Perzyński, unfolds in the Warsaw apartment of landowner Edmund Łoński. Baron Kręcki, who procures women for members of the high society, has brought over a young working-class girl, Władka. Charmed by her "savage appeal," the men bestow upon her the pseudonym "Ashanti." "Kręcki: Imagine, when it's dressed, coiffured, learns some etiquette… It's completely wild now. Ashanti girl! Łoński: (*Laughing*) I like it, let's name her Ashanti!"[1] The girl asks about the meaning of her new nickname:

> Łoński: Ashanti? A member of that tribe, a sort of wild creature that lives far… far away, on the shores of a vast sea…
> Władka: (*Laughing*) I live by the Vistula River.
> Łoński: That's why… you… are the Ashanti girl… of Warsaw.
> Władka: Is that different?
> Kręcki: Just as dark and even wilder.[2]

The Ashanti girl of Warsaw debuted on stage on June 11, 1906, at the Miejski Theater in Lviv. The role was initially played by Zofia Czaplińska, followed by a who's-who of top Polish actresses. The premiere in Kraków featured Irena Solska; Maria Dulęba was cast in the Warsaw production, staged at the Mały Theater in 1907, followed by a performance from Maria Przybyłko-Potocka at the Letni Theater a year later. Ewa Partyga places Władka on a list of Polish melodramatic heroines which includes the main characters of Gabriela Zapolska's *Małaszka* and – from the realm of comedy – *Marcowy Kawaler* [*The March Bachelor*] by Józef Bliziński. The scholar briefly explains the meaning of the nickname "Ashanti," but her

attention is primarily drawn to the asymmetry of the male–female relationship inscribed within the play.[3] Meanwhile, Władka's pseudonym, which references the "Ashanti" performances and other ethnographic shows popular at the turn of the twentieth century, creates an opportunity to introduce a postcolonial/decolonial perspective into the Polish historiography of theater and spectacles.[4] I want to draw attention to the "Blackness" of Perzyński's Ashanti – or perhaps what remains of it – without ignoring the connection between Władka and the melodramatic imagination, which, in its metropolitan environment, pushes an ambitious young girl into the role of a mistress. It is as if any other future or avenue of social promotion were beyond her reach. Władka's doppelgängers, after all, include both Bronka, of Stanisław Krzywoszewski's *Edukacja Bronki* [*The Education of Bronka*], and Stefka, of Zapolska's *Panna Maliczewska* [*Miss Maliczewska*].

The sobriquet "Ashanti" reveals that, in a way, the socially immobilized bodies of these people were, in early twentieth-century Polish culture, vestiges of "Blackness" in the sense of a human condition, as understood by Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe. In Perzyński's play, Ashanti is, above all else, a white man's beautiful slave ("A white man comes and takes the Ashanti girl into captivity"[5]), one who, due to the "savage" qualities ascribed to her, provides him with a source of strong sensations and an antidote to excessive form and convention. Ashanti/Władka emerges from Perzyński's text as a phantasm of captive



Włodzimierz Perzyński, *Aszantka*, Lwów, Warszawa 1907

freedom, as a subjugated and dominated subject, haunted by specters of a utopian freedom, by possibilities and opportunities that have not been "spoiled" by a civilization – what Kręcki calls her "savage appeal" – the very qualities that make her so attractive. However, enslavement (which Łoński associates mainly with endless lavish entertainment) inevitably results in exposure to "civilized" European ideas. Once "it" has been dressed, coiffured, and learned some etiquette, it unexpectedly becomes inappropriate – a hybrid that begins to resemble an upper-class woman without actually being one. As someone who is "almost the same, but not quite,"[6] Władka liberates herself from her relationship with Łoński, who ends up forfeiting his life and entire fortune. Yet the girl neither sheds the identity of Ashanti/slave, nor does she attempt to escape it; on the contrary, she adopts it and makes it her own. Władka's hybridity – which combines the "black" condition with the mimetic performance of an upper-class white woman – complicates established networks of power/knowledge. From this perspective, Perzyński's play articulates a fear of colonial mimicry which involves repetition rather than re-presentation, implying "at once resemblance and menace,"[7] and therefore a fear of the unexpected metamorphoses of hybrid identities.

My interpretation of Ashanti/Władka as a local figure of "Blackness" provides the impetus to further expose Poland's entanglement in the history of colonialism and the deep structures of racism. This involvement was shaped by the experience of colonialism, including encounters with the Other at ethnographic shows, which, for the Polish public, were a kind of substitute for colonial encounters "in the field."

"A wave from the Antipodes"

A caravan of "Ashantis" – alleged members of the African Ashanti people, part of the Akan group, inhabiting what is now Ghana, Togo, and the Ivory Coast – arrived in Warsaw in

January 1888, giving performances at the circus on Okólnik Street. In addition to this local event, a crucial role in the genesis of Perzyński's *Ashanti* was played by the journalistic and literary discourse surrounding the so-called Ashanti village that sprung up in the Vienna Teirgarten in the summer of 1896. This was the first large-scale deployment of the concept of the "native village."[8]

It was described by the popular writer and scandalmonger Peter Altenberg in the novella *Ashantee*, published in Polish translation in 1904.[9] Furthermore, by the time Perzyński wrote his play, European societies, including those of Central Europe, had become accustomed to the "African" caravans and villages that roamed the region. The "Ashanti" and "Dahomey" (and from a certain point above all else the Dahomey women – so-called "Dahomey Amazons") were especially frequent guests in European cities; their popularity was additionally buoyed by the battles they waged against English and French colonial powers in the late nineteenth century.[10]

Wilhelm Gause, Ashantis in the Vienna Zoological Garden, 1897, Wien Museum in Vienna

Before the launch in 2016 of the research project *Staged Otherness. Human Oddities in Central and Eastern Europe, 1850–1939*, led by Dagnosław Demski, performances in Poland by members of non-European cultures, particularly colonized people – shows also known today under the controversial term "human zoos"[11] – had been relegated to the margins of Polish historical and cultural debates. One of the few scholars who wrote about them was Witold Filler, who called the shows a "colored epidemic" sparked by a fleeting fad for all things exotic. While the language of his text, which includes words such as "savages" and "Negroes," is itself

evidence of the persistence of racial stereotypes, Filler argues that:

> The wave of guests from the Antipodes fell just as suddenly as it had surged. It left no trace save for the title of a Perzyński comedy and the slangy nickname "Zulus," given to striplings who, not being members of the Warsaw Rowing Association, nonetheless rowed their boats on the Vistula in white WRA caps.[12]

Written in 1963, the passage exemplifies the conviction, well-established in Polish discourse, that Polish society had played no role in European colonialism. Filler's use of the wave metaphor is an expression of the desire to disassociate himself from the morally compromised colonial project, both at the level of ideology and of practice, thereby refusing to take any responsibility for it whatsoever. He assigns the ethnographic shows to a characteristic place of oblivion in Polish historiography, as phenomena that are irrelevant and fleeting, and therefore forgettable, forgotten, and – ostensibly, at least – without consequence. It is therefore a different type of colonial oblivion than amnesia founded on repressed trauma, or even "colonial aphasia," a term Ann Laura Stoler uses to describe the simultaneous knowing and unknowing of colonial violence.[13] In both of these cases, there comes the recognition at some point of the significance of the erased or marginalized experience. Colonialism and its attendant cultural practices were categorized as a fluke of history, a foreign body that never found a foothold here, but instead rushed onward, washing over us like a wave, leaving no permanent mark on the Polish identity. All that is left are a handful of words, and even these are regarded as nothing more than frivolous anecdotes or historical trivia. In this article, I adopt a radically different perspective, treating the linguistic traces of colonialism, glossed over by Filler, as meaningful relics

that point to places where one could begin to write an unconventional Polish colonial history.

The seductive power of colonialism

One of the first scholars to apply the postcolonial framework in an attempt to rethink the Polish historical and identitarian narrative was Maria Janion. In *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna* [*Uncanny Slavdom*] she exposes local variants of the colonial condition and colonial obsessions of Polish society, which she identifies as the source of the "vicious cycle of inferiority and superiority" that defines the Polish mentality – a *de facto* circle of impotence and "endless struggle." She explicitly calls Poland a postcolonial country, citing its partitioning and post-war dependence on the Soviet Union, as well as the repressed trauma of brutal Christianization, while also exposing the colonial nature of Poland's policies vis-à-vis the cultures of its eastern neighbors, legitimized in the myth of the "Borderlands."

> As a result of Poland's colonization through partition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its dreams of colonizing others, expressed in the works of Henryk Sienkiewicz, the country has developed an (at times paradoxical) postcolonial mindset. It is expressed in a sense of powerlessness and defeat, in the perceived inferiority and peripherality of Poland and its story. This widespread feeling of inferiority to the "West" is juxtaposed, within the boundaries of the very same paradigm, with a messianic pride, articulated in narratives about our extraordinary suffering and merits, our greatness and superiority over the "immoral" West, and about our mission in the East.[14]

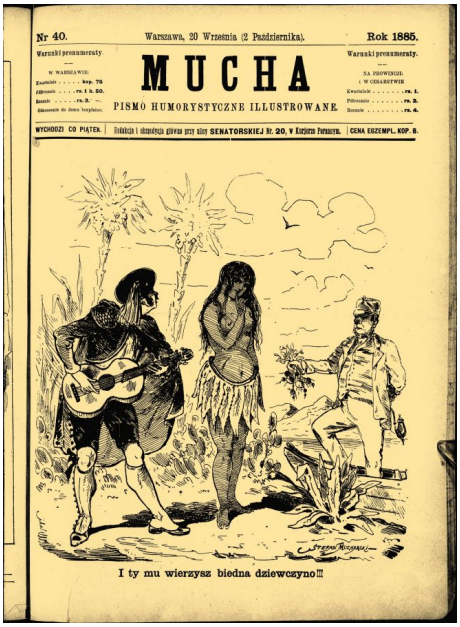
Poland's dual status as both colonizer and colonized, a country suspended in the multicultural melting pot of Central and Eastern Europe, has become a defining feature of Polish postcolonial studies.[15] Perhaps its most compelling analysis was

carried out by Jan Sowa in *Fantomowe ciało króla* [*The King's Phantom Body*]. Bearing in mind the significance of the observation regarding Poland's colonial ambivalence,[16] I would like to use such practices and spectacles as the "human zoo" as lenses through which to investigate Polish involvement or complicity in the European colonial venture, which has been suppressed by the discourse of the "innocent bystander." This subject remains marginalized in Polish postcolonial debates, neutralized – in Filler's writing and elsewhere – by the common-sense observation that, in the absence of a Polish state and colonies, no comparison can be drawn between nineteenth-century Polish society and colonial empires. This narrative is challenged by studies of Poland's appetite for colonies in the inter-war period, exemplified by the booming operations of the Maritime and Colonial League, which had a million members at its peak.[17] Suffice it to point out that, in 1938, 40,000 protesters took to the streets of Poznań, demanding that Poland acquire colonies of its own. However, the colonial ambitions of the Second Polish Republic did not materialize out of thin air: they were offshoots of nineteenth-century discourses, an observation made by Marta Grzechnik, who notes that "a nation does not need to be a colonial power to take part in the colonial system – it doesn't even need to be sovereign."[18] The lack of a colony, even the lack of a state, is not necessarily synonymous with the absence of colonial power relations and regimes of truth, the lack of colonial fantasies, and immunity to the seductive charm of coloniality, which is inherently entangled with modernity.

My proposal, therefore, is to anchor the Polish historical and cultural debate in the increasingly dynamic academic current that is the study of the colonial mentality and the colonial "complicity" of countries and societies that had no colonies of their own. Although they did not play leading roles in colonial ventures, they were more than just the innocent victims of such efforts. This current is developing in Central and Eastern Europe,

and, interestingly, in the Nordic countries, where, as in Poland, the identity narrative has served to uphold the conviction that these countries were outside the scope of colonial power relations, reinforcing the notion of having been "unscathed by the legacy of colonialism."[19] This narrative is beginning to meet with resistance, both in academia and in broader society, as a result of mounting efforts to decolonize European epistemologies and their supporting institutions such as museums and universities.[20]

After all, humans, ideas, and capital cross borders. Countries without colonies approved of and replicated the colonial regime and derived economic benefits from it, while their representatives took part in expeditions and research voyages, and were involved in the entertainment ventures that produced colonial representations of the Other. Spectacles of Otherness – ethnographic shows and villages – played a particularly salient role in this area. The goal, therefore, is to illustrate, based on these examples, how, in Warsaw, in a context defined by subordination to Tsarist Russia, and in a society peripheral to the colonial project, a "colonialism without colonies" developed.[21] How did coloniality, understood as a particular matrix of power, structure relations between the local population and colonized peoples outside Europe, considering that the elites were oriented toward the "West," which played the role of a "surrogate hegemon"?[22] A similar analysis was recently conducted by Lenny A. Ureña Valerio, who examined the Polish colonial imagination in



Stefan Mucharski, „Mucha" issue 40, 1885

the Prussian partition, tracing the cultural echoes of the colonial system in the region while also inquiring about its influence on overseas colonial projects (particularly Polish and German ones).[23]

Transnational histories of this type enable one to retrace the genealogy of contemporary racism and xenophobia, which were fully exposed by the migrant crisis. It is time to finally investigate the cultural consequences of colonialism without colonies, its modern-day repercussions, and the production and reproduction of colonial knowledge. The lack of a sense of responsibility for colonialism has made it impossible to process coloniality and the colonial imaginary, thereby preventing a critical examination of local conceptualizations of "race" and "Blackness."[24]

Democracy's bitter sediment

The tradition of putting members of other cultures on display – "ethnological show business" – has a long history in Europe, reaching back to the Age of Exploration.[25] It wasn't until the mid-eighteenth century, however, that these events lost their elite character – that of a semi-private attraction reserved for the upper classes – and became a pastime for the urban masses, couched in scientific discourse and labeled with supposed educational value. This evolution reached a turning point in 1875, when the impresario and wild-animal trader Carl Hagenbeck brought a group of Sami people, together with their reindeer herds, to Hamburg for his first ethnographic show (*Völkerschau* or *Völkerausstellung*).[26]

As with their predecessors – the cabinet of curiosities, private menageries, and other collections, as well as institutions that developed in parallel, namely the zoo and the museum – ethnographic shows were a response to the modern need to create systems of classification and hierarchization, coupled with a compulsive fascination with anomaly, wonder, and weirdness.[27] As such, they constituted a crucial component of what Tony Bennett calls the "exhibitionary complex": a network

linking "sites for the development of new disciplines" such as anthropology, "and their discursive formations [...] as well as for the development of new technologies of vision."[28] They were also exemplary "object lessons in power – the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display."[29] This type of power subordinates the people ("the citizenry") by seduction rather than terror, placing them on its side as subjects and beneficiaries. It employs, to this end, the rhetoric of imperialism, drawing a distinction between the body of the citizen and the non-civilized body upon which this power can be unleashed.[30] After the Parisian Exposition Universelle of 1878, the first event of its type to feature what was called a *village indigènes* (a village populated with 400 "natives" from the French colonies), various forms of ethnographic show became integral parts of international and colonial expositions.[31] Their history is an illustration of how, in the Age of Empires, a powerful alliance was struck between propaganda, entertainment, and science.[32]

The ethnic shows presented in Warsaw inevitably lacked the panache of those in Paris and London; the most spectacular ventures were organized as part of world expositions, where they were most directly used to legitimize the colonial order and to create and maintain a racial hierarchy. The events staged in Warsaw could more aptly be described as caravans rather than villages, and were private, not public, undertakings – ethnographic performances were often components of larger circus and variety show programs. However, the fact that these shows were not part of state colonial propaganda does not mean that the

Stefan Mucharski, *At the time of the syngaleses' being*, „Kolce" nr 34, 1889.

colonial ideas encoded in them were blurred, nor that the colonial ideology lost its resonance. "Human zoos," traveling menageries, and a short-lived zoo on Bagatela Street[33] served as primary, if temporary, spaces for colonial encounters, where colonial fantasies, affects, and ambitions were born and fully articulated, and where a Eurocentric categorization of the world, based on radical segregation and hierarchy, took shape. In this sense, they were primarily "self-referential," meaning that they told a story about the culture that had produced them.[34]

These spectacles can essentially be viewed as a stage upon which the subject is produced in modern society, in which an unmarked norm serves a point of reference. In America, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson writes, freak shows – a category in which she includes ethnographic shows – "produced a generalized icon of corporeal and cultural otherness that verified the sociopolitical status quo and the figure of the unmarked normate, the ideal subject of democracy."[35] A similar type of dependence of the modern subject on confrontation with the ("exotic") Other can be observed in European societies. Ethnographic shows, after all, provided cultural dramatizations of an identitarian discourse which Stuart Hall calls "the West and the Rest":

> Without the Rest (or its own internal 'others'), the West would not have been able to recognize and represent itself as the summit of human history. The figure of 'the Other', banished to the edge of the conceptual world and constructed as the absolute opposite, the negation, of everything which the West stood for, reappeared at the very centre of the discourse of civilization, refinement, modernity and development in the West. 'The Other' was the 'dark side' – forgotten, repressed and denied; the reverse image of enlightenment and modernity.[36]

In Hall's view, the Rest facilitated the emergence of Western political, economic, and social groups, and, no less importantly, played a fundamental role in the coalescence of "Western identity" (i.e. the modern liberal-democratic entity) and Western forms of knowledge, which also had an impact on Polish society. Anne McClintock argues, in a similar vein, that imperialism and the invention of "race" were both "fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity."[37] Both authors' lines of reasoning found their culmination a decade later in the writings of Achille Mbembe, who perceived the colonial and slave systems to be "democracy's bitter sediment": "The colonial world, as an offspring of democracy, was not the antithesis of the democratic order. It has always been its double or, again, its nocturnal face. No democracy exists without its double, without its colony – little matter the name and the structure."[38] Mbembe thus brings together that which the West has always sought to separate, because modernity/coloniality is, by its very nature, grounded in a utopia of radical separation, in an illusion of pure and distinct categories.[39] This, he says, is the reason why we struggle today to admit that:

> in truth, our ego has always been constituted through opposition to some Other that we have internalized – a Negro, a Jew, an Arab, a foreigner – but in a regressive way; that, at bottom, we are made up of diverse borrowings from foreign subjects and that, consequently, we have always been beings of the border [...].[40]

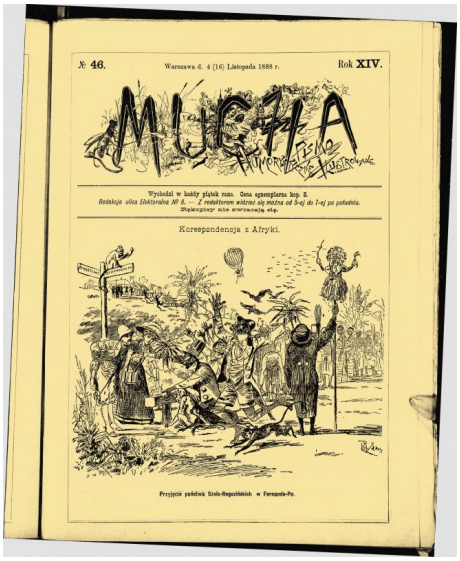
The question that remains to be asked involves the matter of borrowings and representations of identity in the Ashanti performances at Schuman's Circus on Okólnik Street in January 1888.

Savage and naked

While "Zulus" had already appeared in Warsaw in 1879, it was with the arrival of the "Ashantis" that a relatively regular stream of ethnographic shows began to pass through Warsaw, arriving from Paris and a number of German cities, heading deep into Russia. In 1888 alone, circus audiences in Warsaw had the chance to see Arabs from the western Sahara, a family of Japanese acrobats, and a trio of Dakota Native Americans, as well as a large caravan of Sinhalese and their elephants, who lived together and performed at the zoo in the summer. It is apparent that, as in many other European cities (both in the western and central-eastern parts of the continent),[41] events of this type enjoyed enormous popularity in Warsaw.[42] The ethnographic shows weren't an isolated or accidental phenomenon, nor an instance of a fleeting "foreign" fad for the exotic; rather, they were one element of vast map of colonial fascinations in Polish society at the time, part of a prolonged process in which its national icons and values took shape.
This was a time when world news sections were full of articles about colonial battles and non-European cultures, and when newspapers ran coverage about world and colonial expositions, as well as reporting on ethnographic shows in other European cities. There are repeated efforts to impose discursive order on the natural and human worlds (*Gazeta Świąteczna*, for example, ran a series of articles about people of different races in 1895–1896: white, black, red, chestnut, and yellow), and selected works of the colonial literary canon were published in Polish translation, including *King Solomon's Mines* by H. Rider Haggard (1892), and *In Darkest Africa* by Henry Stanley (1891). The figure of the charismatic hunter and explorer[43] – exemplified by men such as Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, Stanley, and Hagenbeck (as well by his rival Carl Marquardt) – was used to popularize imperialism and colonialism, and became a dominant, key notion

of masculinity. The embodiment of this model in late-nineteenth-century Polish society was the explorer Stefan Szolc-Rogoziński, extolled by Henryk Sienkiewicz (and Sienkiewicz himself, of course!).

In this complex web of colonial signifiers, the Ashanti occupied the pole of primitivism,[44] which columnists would invoke as a point of reference every time a new ethnographic show came to town. Descriptions of Ashanti culture – encouraged to some extent by the promoters of the events – emphasized its cruelty and savagery:



Correspondence from Africa, „Mucha" issue 46, 1888

> A law of draconian severity, under which even the slightest offense is punishable by death. For spilling oil on the ground, for breaking an egg, for dropping a sack of bananas: death. […] Countless lives are taken at every opportunity – the greater the national or religious observance, the greater the slaughter of the guilty and innocent alike; often the streets of the entire city are bathed in the blood of thousands, murdered in a bloodthirsty, unrestrained frenzy.[45]

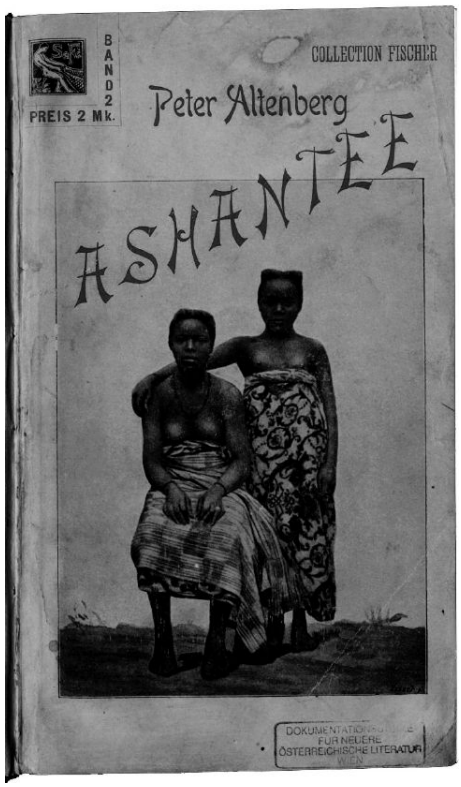
Ashantis were said to be rash, brave, and belligerent – traits they expressed through the music and dances they performed at the circus on Okólnik Street, which often culminated in "terrifyingly savage screams"[46] (it should be noted that Władka's spontaneous dance is what affirms Łoński in his conviction that she is an "Ashanti"). Only the Ashantis' impresario was able to control them – and then only by resorting to the use of vodka, flogging, and the angelic charms of his Swedish wife. Savagery thus became a constituent feature of Blackness, and the figure of the "savage" was put to work in the negotiation of differences

and conflicts among the local population. In response to the performances given by peoples of West African in Prague and Vienna, local discourse adopted the terms "Ashanti" and "Dahomey" as derogatory epithets used for the purpose of "barbarizing" political opponents.[47] In Warsaw, meanwhile, the Ashanti shows offered a pretext to satirize the deteriorating, "savage" customs of Poles. In the article "Dzicy (Wrażenia Aszanta w Warszawie)" [Savages: An Ashanti's Impressions of Warsaw], an Ashanti visitor admits to his own savagery while in fact exposing Poles as being even more savage, on account of social vices such as their inability to achieve compromise and their butchery of their native language.[48]

The savage was naked, and therefore sensual, even sexual – a quality which Filip Herza also observed in the reception of the Ashanti in Vienna and Prague, particularly in the repeatedly recounted tales of their sexual relations with the audience. The Ashanti performed in Warsaw in their "birthday suits," wearing nothing but loincloths and ornaments (feather headdresses, necklaces, and bracelets); Ashanti women in this state of undress could only be viewed backstage or in illustrations, as they would don knee-length "tiger-skin tunics" for the performances. Opposite these near-naked bodies, in the winter, sat white bodies, clothed from head to toe; analogous exposure would have been impermissible and unimaginable.[49] It is unsurprising, therefore, that nakedness was attached to black bodies and essentialized, drawing a connection between Blackness and hypersexuality (but not with conventional sexual attractiveness), and that the press repeatedly printed descriptions of delicate skin that required special care, bathing, and rubbing with palm oil. Hence, the desire to interact with Otherness through senses other than sight, and instances of audience members touching Ashantis, who deliberately roamed the auditorium after each performance, soliciting gifts. Though the motto of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, "To see is to know,"

implied that sight was emerging at the time as the fundamental sense of perception, it proved insufficient in the context of the erotic myth of Blackness.

Perhaps the most distinct testimony of this perception of the Ashanti is Altenberg's novella, in which the narrator recounts his intimate encounters with several young Ashanti women. We witness in the text the absolute sexualization of the black female body, which is turned into a means of providing pleasure: skin is described as being "wonderfully smooth," "shimmering like silk," and "cast in bronze"; there is mention of the "splendor and majesty of dark, naked beauties," and the "fragrance of clean, noble, young bodies." It seems that the intentions underpinning the novella were good: after all, there are a number of passages exposing the deliberately manufactured illusion of the savagery of the Ashanti (who were forced to go naked, despite the cold weather, and to perform ecstatic dance routines on demand), and criticism of audience members' racist behavior (attempts to buy sexual favors from the Ashanti women; comments expressing the perception that they were non-human or belonged to an inferior category of people). In essence, however, Altenberg simply replicates the colonial stereotype of black sexuality, "an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation," fixating on "race" in the form of racism.[50] The Ashanti village in Vienna is depicted as Altenberg's private "porno-tropics,"[51] a fulfillment of the colonial fantasy of the black female body as a reservoir of both

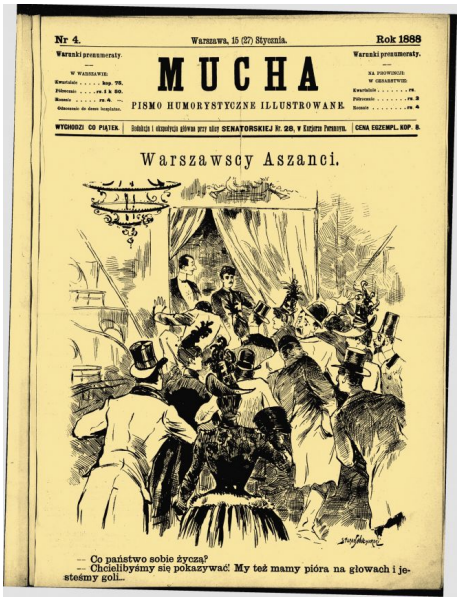


Peter Altenberg, *Ashantee*, S. Fischer, Berlin 1897, Dokumentationsstelle, Literaturhaus, Vienna

untrammeled sexuality and innocence. It is from this matrix that Perzyński's Ashanti emerges.

An analysis of the press coverage of the Ashantis' performances in Warsaw points to the use of savagery and nakedness, in the literal sense, as interpretive categories to describe the black body (with the caveat that these categories were employed by those who had a voice in the public sphere; far be it from me to claim that a uniform image of "Blackness" emerged at the time, much less that of a black woman). These are attached to the bodies so firmly as to essentially define them and determine their place in the world. The naked and savage "black man" thus constituted in the hegemonic discourse is the very one whom Fanon describes as "genital" and the "essence of evil." "For the black man is nothing but biological. Black men are animals. They live naked. And God only knows what else..."[52] The "Blackness" expressed in this fashion acquires a metaphoric character, detaches itself, and begins to mark certain white bodies, thereby referring not to that which is supposedly biological and corporeal, but to economic and social conditions.

The Ashanti performances gave rise to the widespread ridicule of nudity and nakedness as symbols of poverty. One illustration, titled "Warszawscy Aszanci" [The Warsaw Ashantis], depicts a crowd gathered in front of a theater curtain, with the caption: "How may we help you? / We want to be put on display, too! We have feathers on our heads and we're naked..."[53] There occurred a shift from the realm of biology and nature to that of culture;


Nr 4. Warszawa, 15 (27) Stycznia. Rok 1888

MUCHA

PISMO HUMORYSTYCZNE ILLUSTROWANE.

Warszawscy Aszanci.

— Co państwo sobie życzą?
— Chcielibyśmy się pokazywać! My też mamy pióra na głowach i jesteśmy goli...

Stefan Mucharski, *The Warsaw Ashantis*, „Mucha" issue 4, 1888

that which was permanent and inalienable (because it was inscribed in the body) became temporary; in other words, "race" became class. Perhaps it would be better to say that in late-nineteenth-century Polish culture, "Blackness" was produced at the intersection of these two major categories which fractured and subjugated society, and served to discipline subordinate social groups. Władka/Ashanti exposes the association and proximity between subjects colonized beyond the boundaries of Europe defined as a metropolis, and subjects subjugated within the metropolis itself. An encounter with this savage, naked human being may be dangerous (this possibility is, in itself, a source of excitement), which is why it must take place as part of a spectacle, in a designated, structured, hierarchical space. There is no way to predict the damage "Blackness" could do to a stable regime – or at least one striving for homeostasis – were it to escape such confines.

The persistence of colonialism

Neither "Blackness" nor "race" in general are stable constructs, nor do they elicit a uniform response. They are fluid and susceptible to various changes and transformations, including anachronistic projections. Addressing this problem, Zine Magubane explains how contemporary American notions of "Blackness" were imposed in academic literature onto the reception of the London performances of Saartjie Baartman – even though at the time the Khoikhoi were regarded as less "black" than the Irish "race," whose origins were said to be "Africanoid."[54] Hence the need to ask, again and again: "What exactly does it mean to be Black?" (and, to paraphrase Genet, "what is a black person's color?")[55] – a question Europe constantly asked itself in the nineteenth century – in order to reconstruct racial/racist notions and thus dismantle them. These achieved a certain degree of stability in the Age of Empires, and

began to naturalize as a result. In 1900, Mieczysław Brzeziński, a distinguished educational and social activist, likely did not think twice about describing a member of the "Black, Negro race" as follows:

> His skin is black or brown, very shiny and reeks of sweat. His hair is curly, like a sheep's wool; his stubble is sparse. His mental capacities are very limited, and he struggles to learn, but when it comes to manual labor, he has plenty of strength and agility. A large number of the Negro peoples continue to live as savages; there are even cannibals among them.[56]

Fanon claimed that France is a racist country because in it "the myth of the bad nigger is part of the collective unconscious."[57] Is Poland any different simply because it did not have sovereignty (let alone colonies) when France was at the peak of its imperial might? And who is this "Negro" described by Brzeziński – our pre-eminent educator – or the savage and naked Ashanti, if not variations on Fanon's "bad nigger"? And why did Perzyński give Władka the nickname Ashanti? These figures of "Blackness" show that the historical processes that shaped, in Poland, colonial stereotypes and power relations vis-à-vis non-European cultures, must be re-evaluated, and that they demand a genealogical analysis that would reveal how they unfolded, what vestiges remain of them, and the resulting permanent ruptures and persistent traces that are so inextricably woven into the fabric of social life as to have become invisible. "How do colonial histories matter in the world today?" Ann Laura Stoler asks.[58] What is left of empire? How do colonial pasts persist and return? The contemplation of spectacles such as the Ashanti performances, framed as reflections on local identity discourses – a conceptualization of "race" and "Blackness" – contributes to

a broader examination of the question of the persistence (or "duress," as Stoler calls it) of the phantasmatic-aspirational colonialism in Polish society.

1 Włodzimierz Perzyński, *Ashanti*, in: idem, *Invisible Country: Four Polish Plays*, ed. and trans. Teresa Murjas (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012), 65–66.

2 Ibid., 68.

3 Ewa Partyga, *Wiek XIX. Przedstawienia* (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN–Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2016), 149.

4 See: Gurminder K. Bhambra, "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues," *Postcolonial Studies* vol. 17, no. 2 (2014), 115–121. In this article I draw on concepts developed in the fields of postcolonial and decolonial studies, while setting aside the debates taking place between them.

5 Perzyński, *Ashanti*, 22.

6 Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984), 126.

7 Ibid., 127.

8 Dominika Czarnecka, "'A w niedzielę szło się oglądać ludzi'. Pokazy etnograficzne we wrocławskim ogrodzie zoologicznym, 1876–1930," *Etnografia Polska* vol. 62, no. 1–2, 193.

9 Peter Altenberg, *Ashantee*, trans. Katharina von Hammerstein (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2007).

10 According to statistics collected by the French research group ACHAC, three out of four ethnographic shows were held in Europe, mostly in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, and over half of them featured displays of black Africans. Pascal Blanchard et al., "Human Zoos: The Greatest Exotic Shows in the West: Introduction," in: *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, eds. Pascal Blanchard et al., trans. Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 24.

11 The term "human zoo" was coined and popularized by the research group ACHAC, led by Pascal Blanchard. Dominika Czarnecka and Dagnosław Demski discuss the controversies associated with the term in the article "Contextualizing Ethnographic

Shows in Central and Eastern Europe," *East Central Europe* 47 (2020), 167. Czarnecka deliberately avoids using the phrase in her writing.

12 Witold Filler, *Cyrk, czyli emocje pradziadków* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1963), 112.

13 See: Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2016); see also: T. J. Demos, "A Colonial Hauntology: Vincent Meessen's *Vita Nova*," in: idem, *Return to the Postcolony: Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 45–70.

14 Maria Janion, *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna. Fantazmaty literatury* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006), 12.

15 Klemens Kaps and Jan Surman, "Postcolonial or Post-colonial? Post(-)colonial Perspectives on Habsburg Galicia," trans. Jolanta Aleksandruk-Foulds, *Historyka. Studia Metodologiczne* 42 (2012), 7–35.

16 For further discussion of the history of Poland as a colonized country in the context of the twentieth century, see: Izabela Surynt, "Post-Colonial Research and the 'Second World': German National-and-Colonial Constructs of the 19th Century," trans. Marta Skotnicka, *Teksty Drugie* 1 (2014), 143–166; and Clare Cavanagh, "Postcolonial Poland," *Common Knowledge* vol. 10, no. 1 (2004), 82–92. On the subject of Poland's pre-partition colonial ambitions, see: Daniel Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński. Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2005).

17 See: Grażyna Borkowska, "Polskie doświadczenie kolonialne," *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2007), 15–24; Bolaji Balogun, "Polish *Lebensraum*: The Colonial Ambition to Expand on Racial Terms," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 41, no. 14 (2018), 2456–2579. In 2017 an exhibition on this subject, titled *Everything Is Getting Better: Unknown Knowns of Polish (Post)Colonialism*, curated by Joanna Warsza, was held in Berlin. https://savvy-contemporary.com/en/projects/2017/everything-is-getting-better (accessed March 16, 2021).

18 Marta Grzechnik, "The Missing Second World: On Poland and Postcolonial Studies," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* vol. 21, no. 7 (2019), 1011.

19 Diana Mulinari et al., "Introduction: Postcolonialism and the Nordic Models of Welfare and Gender," in: *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*, eds. Suvi Keskinen et al. (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 2. In the same volume, Ulla Vuorela introduces the concept of "colonial complicity" ("Colonial Complicity: The 'Postcolonial' in a Nordic Context," 19–33), and Mai Palmberg writes about "The Nordic Colonial Mind" (35–50).

20 A telling sign of the shift in how colonialism is viewed in Central Europe was an anonymous protest in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, in which someone spray-painted "HE WAS A RACIST. BLACK LIVES MATTER" on a plinth holding a statue of Winston Churchill. See Markéta Křížová, *Intellectual Colonialism in a Country Without Colonies: The Case Study of Czech Anthropological Museums in the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries*, online lecture for Laval University in Quebec, delivered November 19, 2020, www.facebook.com/leCELAT/videos/197253485253197 (accessed March 8, 2021).

21 "Colonialism without colonies" is a concept used by Barbara Lüthi, Francesca Falk, and Patricia Purtschert ("Colonialism without colonies: examining blank spaces in colonial studies," *National Identities* 1 [2016], 1–9) in reference to societies that think of themselves as being situated outside the realm of colonialism – i.e. were neither colonial powers nor (non-European) colonies – but which were nevertheless involved in various ways in the colonial project and profited from it.

22 See: Ewa Thompson, "Whose Discourse? Telling the Story in Post-Communist Poland," *The Other Shore: Slavic and East European Cultures Abroad, Past and Present* vol. 1, no. 1 (2010), 1–15. See also: Dorota Sajewska, "Perspektywy peryferyjnej historii I teorii kultury," *Didaskalia* 156 (2020), DOI: 10.34762/t5dw-es52.

23 Lenny A. Ureña Valerio, *Colonial Fantasies, Imperial Realities: Race, Science and the Making of Polishness on the Fringes of the German Empire, 1840–1920* (Athens GA: Ohio University Press, 2019).

24 Lüthi, Falk, and Purtschert, "Colonialism without colonies," 5.

25 Bernth Lindfors, "Ethnological Show Business: Footlighting the Dark Continent," in: *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York–London: New York University Press, 1996), 207.

26 Carl Hagenbeck's activities are analyzed by Nigel Rothfels in: idem, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

27 Blanchard et al., "Human Zoos," 1–2.

28 Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988), 73.

29 Ibid., 76.

30 Ibid., 80.

31 See: Raymond Corbey, "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870–1930," *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 8, no. 3 (1993), 338–369.

32 Scientists were often granted free admission to these shows; as a result, over 80 scholarly articles were published in France alone based on observations conducted at shows in Paris between 1873 and 1909 (Gilles Boëtsch and Yann Ardagna, "Human Zoos: The 'Savage' and the Anthropologist," in: *Human Zoos*, op. cit.,116). Agents tasked with procuring people for ethnographic shows would sometimes also search for exhibition pieces for museums and scientific associations: Johan Adrian Jacobsen, for example, was one of Hagenbeck's main agents and also an official "collector" for the Berlin Anthropological Society.

33 Cf. Marianna Szczygielska, "Elephant Empire: Zoos and Colonial Encounters in Eastern Europe," *Cultural Studies* vol. 34, no. 5 (2020), 789–810.

34 Monika Żółkoś, "Voyeuryzm ogrodu zoologicznego," *Didaskalia* 111 (2012), 29.

35 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 79–80.

36 Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in: *Formations of Modernity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: The Open University–Polity Press–Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 314.

37 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York–London: Routledge, 1998), 5.

38 Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 20, 26–27.

39 In his online seminar *Theory from the Margins*, Achille Mbembe argued that the essential elements of colonialism were closure, separation, and division, and that decolonial efforts should therefore be geared toward the pursuit of "radical openness." www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWHYQ6CqP20&ab_channel=TheoryfromtheMargins (accessed March 8, 2021).

40 Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 30.

41 See: Dominika Czarnecka, "Black Female Bodies and the 'White' View: The Dahomey Amazon Shows in Poland at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *East Central Europe* vol. 47, no. 2–3 (2020), 288.

42 *Gazeta Polska* no. 15, January 20, 1888, 2.

43 See: Edward Berenson, "Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880–1914," in: *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York–Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 21–40.

44 *Kurier Warszawski* no. 17, January 17, 1888, 3.

45 *Kurier Poranny* no. 19, January 19, 1888, 5.

46 *Gazeta Polska* no. 13, January 18, 1888, 2.

47 Filip Herza, "Black Don Juan and the Ashanti from Asch: Representations of 'Africans' in Prague and Vienna, 1892–1899." *Visualizing the Orient: Central Europe and the Near East in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Adéla Jůnová Macková, Lucie Storchová, and Libor Jůn (Prague: AMU, FAMU, 2016), 102–103.

48 *Kolce* no. 4, January 28, 1888, 26.

49 Czarnecka, "Black Female Bodies," 299. For this reason, Renée Green titled one of her pieces, which deals the exhibition of Saartjie Baartman, *Permitted* (1989), implying permission to look at a naked black female body. See: Debra S. Singer, "Reclaiming Venus: The Presence of Sarah Bartmann in Contemporary Art," in: *Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot,"* ed. Deborah Willis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 92–93.

50 Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," *Screen* vol. 24 no. 6 (1983), 29.

51 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 22.

52 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), ch. 6.

53 *Mucha* no. 4, January 27, 1888, 1.

54 Zine Magubane, "Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the 'Hottentot Venus'," *Gender & Society* 15 (2001), 816–834.

55 Jean Genet, *The Blacks: A Clown Show*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Grove Press, 1960).

56 Mieczysław Brzeziński, *Rośliny, zwierzęta i ludzie na kuli ziemskiej. Z licznymi rysunkami* (Warsaw: Skład główny w księgarni G. Centnerszwera, 1900), 59–60.

57 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, ch. 4.

58 Stoler, *Duress*, 3.

Bibliography

Altenberg, Piotr. Jak ja to widzę. Translated by Aurelia R., Jan Fiszer. Warsaw, 1904.

Balogun, Bolaji. "Polish Lebensraum: The Colonial Ambition to Expand on Racial Terms." Ethnic and Racial Studies 41, no. 14 (2018).

Beauvois, Daniel. Trójkąt ukraiński. Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2005.

Bennett, Tony. "Kompleks wystawienniczy." Translated by Małgorzata Szubartowska. Widok. Teorie i Praktyki Kultury Wizualnej" 10 (2015), http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/313/613.

Berenson, Edward. "Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880–1914." In Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Edited by Edward Berenson, Eva Giloi. New York–Oxford: Berghahn 2010.

Bhambra, Gurminder K. "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues." Postcolonial Studies vol. 17, no. 2 (2014).

Bhabha, Homi K. Miejsca kultury. Translated by Tomasz Dobrogoszcz. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2010.

Blanchard, Pascal et al. "Human Zoos: The Greatest Exotic Shows in the West: Introduction." In Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires. Edited by Pascal Blanchard et al. Translated by Teresa Bridgeman. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Boëtsch, Gilles, Yann Ardagna. "Human Zoos: The 'Savage' and the Anthropologist." In Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires. Edited by Pascal Blanchard et al. Translated by Teresa Bridgeman. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Borkowska, Grażyna. "Polskie doświadczenie kolonialne." Teksty Drugie no. 4

(2007).

Brzeziński, Mieczysław. Rośliny, zwierzęta i ludzie na kuli ziemskiej. Z licznymi rysunkami, Warsaw: Skład główny w księgarni G. Centnerszwera, 1900.

Cavanagh, Clare. "Postkolonialna Polska. Biała plama na mapie współczesnych teorii." Translated by Tomasz Kunz. Teksty Drugie no. 2–3 (2003).

Corbey, Raymond. "Ethnographic Showcases 1870–1930." Cultural Anthropology vol. 8, no. 3 (1993).

Czarnecka, Dominika. "'A w niedzielę szło się oglądać ludzi'. Pokazy etnograficzne we wrocławskim ogrodzie zoologicznym, 1876–1930." Etnografia Polska LXII, no. 1–2 (2018).

Czarnecka, Dominika. "Black Female Bodies and the 'White' View: The Dahomey Amazon Shows in Poland at the End of the Nineteenth Century." East Central Europe 47 (2020).

Czarnecka, Dominika, Dagnosław Demski. "Contextualizing Ethnographic Shows in Central and Eastern Europe." East Central Europe 47 (2020).

Demos, T. J., "Widmologia kolonialna. 'Vita Nova' Vincenta Meesena." Translated by Maja Wójcik. Widok. Teorie i Praktyki Kultury Wizualnej 7 (2014), www.pismowidok.org/pl/archiwum/2014/7-postkolonialne-archiwa-obrazow/widmologia-kolonialna.-vita-nova-vincenta-meessena.

Fanon, Frantz. Czarna skóra, białe maski. Translated by Urszula Kropiwiec. Kraków: Karakter, 2020.

Filler, Witold. Cyrk, czyli emocje pradziadków. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1963.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. Niezwykłe ciała. Przedstawienia niepełnosprawności fizycznej w amerykańskiej kulturze i literaturze. Translated

by Natalia Pamuła. Warsaw: Fundacja Teatr 21, 2020.

Gazeta Polska 13 (January 18, 1888).

Gazeta Polska 15 (January 20, 1888).

Genet, Jean. "Murzyni. Błazenada." Translated by Maria Skibniewska, Jerzy Lisowski. In Teatr. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970.

Grzechnik, Marta. "The Missing Second World: On Poland and Postcolonial Studies." Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies vol. 21, no. 7 (2019).

Hall, Stuart. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." In Formations of Modernity. Edited by Stuart Hall, Bram Gieben. Cambridge: The Open University, Polity Press, Blackwell Publishers, 1992.

Herza, Filip. "Black Don Juan and the Ashanti from Asch. Representations of 'Africans' in Prague and Vienna, 1892–1899." In Visualizing the Orient: Central Europe and the Near East in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Edited by Adéla Junová Macková et al. Prague: AMU, FAMU, 2016.

Janion, Maria. Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna. Fantazmaty literatury. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006.

Kaps, Klemens, Jan Surman. "Postcolonial or Post-colonial? Post(-)colonial Perspectives on Habsburg Galicia." Translated by Jolanta Aleksandruk-Foulds. Historyka. Studia metodologiczne XLII (2012).

Kolce 4 (January 28, 1888).

Křížová, Markéta. Intellectual Colonialism in a Country Without Colonies: The Case Study of Czech Anthropological Museums in the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries, online lecture, Lavala University, Quebec, November 19, 2020. www.facebook.com/leCELAT/videos/197253485253197.

Kurier Poranny 19 (January 19, 1888).

Kurier Warszawski 17 (January 17, 1888).

Lindfors, Bernth. "Ethnological Show Business: Footlighting the Dark

Continent." In Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body. Edited by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. New York–London: New York University Press, 1996.

Lüthi, Barbara, Francesa Falk, Patricia Purtschert. "Colonialism without Colonies: Examining Blank Spaces in Colonial Studies." National Identities vol. 18, no. 1 (2016).

Magubane, Zine. "Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the 'Hottentot Venus'." Gender & Society 15 (2001).

Mbembe, Achille. Polityka wrogości; Nekropolityka. Translated by Katarzyna Bojarska. Kraków: Karakter, 2018.

Mbembe, Achille. Out of the Dark Night, online seminar "Theory from the Margins," October 24, 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWHYQ6CqP20&ab_channel=TheoryfromtheMargins .

McClintock, Anne. Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest. New York–London: Routledge, 1998.

Mucha 4 (January 27, 1888).

Mulinari, Diana et al. "Introduction: Postcolonialism and the Nordic Models of Welfare and Gender." In Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region. Edited by Suvi Keskinen et al. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009.

Palmberg, Mai. "The Nordic Colonial Mind." In Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region. Edited by Suvi Keskinen et al. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009.

Partyga, Ewa. Wiek XIX. Przedstawienia. Warsaw: IS PAN, PIW, 2016.

Perzyński, Włodzimierz. Aszantka. Lwów–Warsaw: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego, E. Wende i Sp., 1907.

Rothfels, Nigel. Savages and Beasts: The Birth of Modern Zoo.

Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Sajewska, Dorota. "Perspektywy peryferyjnej historii i teorii kultury." Didaskalia 156 (2020), doi: 10.34762/t5dw-es52.

Singer, Debra S. "Reclaiming Venus: The Presence of Sarah Bartmann in Contemporary Art." In Black Venus 2010: They Called Her "Hottentot." Edited by Deborah Willis. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.

Szczygielska, Marianna. "Elephant Empire: Zoos and Colonial Encounters in Eastern Europe." Cultural Studies vol. 34, no. 5 (2020).

Stoler, Ann Laura. Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times, Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2016.

Surynt, Izabela. "Badania postkolonialne a 'Drugi Świat'. Niemieckie konstrukcje narodowo-kolonialne w XIX wieku." Teksty Drugie no. 4 (2007).

Thompson, Ewa. "Whose Discourse? Telling the Story in Post-Communist Poland." The Other Shore: Slavic and East European Cultures Abroad, Past and Present no. 1 (2010).

Valerio, Lenny A. Ureña. Colonial Fantasies, Imperial Realities: Race, Science and the Making of Polishness on the Fringes of the German Empire, 1840–1920. Athens GA: Ohio University Press, 2019.

Vuorela, Ulla. "Colonial Complicity: The 'Postcolonial' in a Nordic Context." In Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region. Edited by Suvi Keskinen et al. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009.

Żółkoś, Monika. "Voyeuryzm ogrodu zoologicznego." Didaskalia 111 (2012).