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„The heart is beating to the cha-cha rhythm”. Exoticism in Polish songs of the 1950s and 60s.

Abstrakt: Artykuł dotyczy motywów latynoamerykańskich w polskiej muzyce rozrywkowej drugiej połowy lat pięćdziesiątych i pierwszej sześćdziesiątych XX w. Autorka wykazuje, że moda na tego rodzaju egzotykę była nie tylko importem z Zachodu. Wynikała bowiem także ze względów politycznych, będąc swoistą ucieczką od wzorów narzucanych przez władze komunistyczne.

Słowa kluczowe: Muzyka rozrywkowa, egzotyka, komunizm.

One of the greatest pop music hits of the second half of the 1950s in Poland was a song titled *Baiao Bongo* by Heinz Gietz, a German composer, with the Polish lyrics by Zygmunt Sztaba (the song was originally performed by Katarina Valente). In Poland songs with Brazilian rhythms or beat were performed by a singer called Natasza Zylska. Her repertoire also included other exotic melodies like *Mambo Italiano*, the international hit song by Dean Martin or Perry Como, *Kolorowe Mambo* [the Colourful Mambo], *Karnawał w Rio* [Carnaval in Rio]. Singer Maria Koterbska also performed these types of songs including Zespół Gitar Hawajskich „Marimba” [The Hawaiian Guitar Band “Marimba”] and Duet Egzotyczny [The Exotic Duo]. Many other vocalists did the same.

In 2011 the Teddy records company issued the record titled “Gomułkowska egzotyka. Piosenki mórz południowych” [Gomułka exoticism. Songs of the Southern Seas] where one of the phenomena of the Polish pop of the second half of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s was successfully captured. The record included “exotic” musical pieces recorded by the Polish singers during the years 1957-1960 when Władysław Gomułka was the ruling party leader. In addition to “Gomułka exoticism”, visible in songs like *Aloha Oe* performed by female vocalist Zofia Szumer or *Cucu Rucu Cu* by Halina Kaspurowa, the Polish singers themselves created “exotic” melodies along with Polish lyrics to match the music genre. Their stage image and performance were appropriate and successful. The cultural phenomenon that I am going to present concerns the more complex issues.

The Gomułka exoticism mainly concerns the „Songs of the Southern Seas”, though some songs depict the East of pre-revolutionary Russia which was available for the Poles at the time. The East was present in the Soviet songs included in the repertoire of the Polish singers only sporadically like in *Tbiliso*, *Batumi*, *Bajka Amurska* [Amursk fairy-tale].

Domestic exoticism appears in songs of the time. Gypsies are present in many of them along with a Gypsy romance which is also a Russian romance. The Jews, or rather, the Israeli people only exceptionally appear, like in the song *Nagila Hava* from the repertoire of female singer Sława Przybylska.

Sporadically some songs evoke remote islands such as Hawaii (*Hawaj jest piękny* [a Hawaiian is beautiful]), Indonesia (*Indonezja*), *Kiedy Allach szedł* [When Allah walked] and the Philippines (*Manila*).

One article cannot discuss the songs of so many different cultural regions; therefore, I am going to present those connected with the South encompassing the area of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. I would like to show that fashion for exoticism was not accidental. It resulted from a fascination for a different culture, which fulfilled the need for others to escape everyday reality. It was also connected with political changes. The first factor also affected the second one. In PRL it was a mutual social conditioning.

This subject lies squarely in the genre of cultural history (Burke 2012) and will be examined from an anthropological perspective (Barnard 2006: 149-150).

The historical context

The songs of this type were not a novelty in Poland. They were popular and in fashion already in the inter-war period. Jerzy Petersburski composed *Tango Milonga* (*Oh, Donna Clara*) which became a worldwide hit.

The American music which came to Poland before the second world war also contained exotic music and themes

I know the street in Barcelona
Which smells like an apple tree which blossoms
I like to walk along it
When I am tired of the buzz of the city

This is not the only example of this type of song; others included *Argentyna* [Argentina] and rumba *Ameryka* [America] from the repertoire of Chór Dana [Dan's Choir]).

Also after WW II, in the second half of the 1940s, Polish vocalists recorded songs to South American rhythms as well as of the latest hits. Singer Marta Mirska recorded *Amado Mio* and *Manana*, a samba, while Henryk Roztworowski recorded *Tico-Tico*, *Siboney* and *Perfidia*.

After 1949 in Poland such hits were rarely if ever heard. That year the communist ruling party imposed a policy of socialist realism in Poland, which was a creative way for the party to exert power over all artistic activity so that it could fulfill its political guidelines (Brandenberg 2011:71-72; Kenez 1999:123-125). The censorship extended to all spheres of artistic activity, including pop music. Western music became perceived as suspicious and evoked negative political associations. Jazz music in particular was targeted and banned. This directly influenced the perception of music in Poland which I am discussing; international hits could not be broadcast if the names of their composers or vocalists sounded Anglo-Saxon. Thus, the rhythms of tango or beguine raised no reservations. ([Bittner 2015]). Yet, in the first half of the 1950s many international hits never reached Poland due to those restrictions. Whereas abroad at least several songs which drew from Spanish or Portuguese rhythms or lyrics appeared on international music billboards, for example in 1953: *Vaya Con Dios*, *April in Portugal*, *Delicado*.

This situation changed following the political thaw (Czubiński 1998: 351-385; Davies 1999: 1031-1034) which was directly connected with the death of Josef Stalin in March 1953. Then the Stalinist methods were given up gradually. In Poland the first signs of the "thaw" (the name derives from a novel of 1954 by a Soviet writer Ilia Erenburg) appeared a few months later along with the notion that the standard of living of the poor society should be

raised. There were also critical opinions about culture for schematics in the works. The following year brought real visible changes, the terror over the society was slowly disappearing. Nikita Khrushchev's report became a real turning point, as he criticized "the cult of an individual" and the previous period more generally, as period of errors putting the blame on Stalin. The news about Khrushchev's report quickly reached Poland and shook the PZPR authorities. The following month in April Bolesław Bierut, the communist party leader died. In June the whole society was shaken with the news of the rebellion of the workers in Poznań, located in the western part of the country, which was bloodily repressed by the communist authorities. This fueled turmoil throughout the country and political infighting within the party. To calm down the situation Władysław Gomułka was appointed the first secretary of KC [the Central Committee] PZPR. He successfully dissuaded Khrushchev from sending the Soviet Army to Warsaw. Overnight Gomułka became a national hero. As it later turned out he did not want to preserve all the achievements of the Polish "thaw", yet there was no return to the period of Stalinism. Many innocent people were released from prisons, and people could enjoy more civil liberties. In culture the doctrine of socialist realism as the only compulsory artistic method was finally rejected.

The "thaw" in culture began already before 1956 and was a vivid signal of the upcoming changes in politics. 1955 was a real turning point in culture, which also influenced popular culture: the list of banned authors and books was invalidated and popular literature, including crime and romances, was accepted for publication. Furthermore, the ban on American music was lifted. In 1955 the first Jam Session was held and Jazz 'tournaments' were organized. Ryszard Jamrosz's "Błękitny Jazz" [Blue Jazz band] was founded; jazz standards of pop music were recorded (*I'll Never Say Never Again, Again, On the Sunny Side of the Street, Alexander's Ragtime Band*), and female singer Maria Koterbska sang Polish covers of *Blue Skies* and *I'm Beginning to See the Light*. That year the fashion for exotic rhythms awoke. In addition to tangos, beguines or rumbas new music genres also appeared: cha-cha, samba, mambo and calypso, which all originated from Latin America. After gaining popularity in the USA, it spread further into other parts of the world.

They also reached Poland in the mid-1950s. The worldwide hits were recorded and Polish composers created songs in those fashionable rhythms. In 1955 Janusz Gniadkowski presented one of his greatest hits, *Piosenka Kubańska* [the Cuban song] at the end of the Worldwide Youth Festival in Warsaw. Maria Koterbska recorded *Kolorowa cha-cha* [a Colourful Cha-Cha], singer Zylska, *Pik-pik-pik*, and Fryderyka Elkana, *Soho-Mambo*. In the following years this fashion continued successfully and developed more sophistication.

The songs of German composer Heinz Gietz enjoyed great popularity. (He worked in Western Europe and his songs successfully complimented the fashion for exotic rhythms which had come from the USA.) Some of them were big hits: *Baiao-Bongo* (Zylska), *Tipitipitipso* (Hanna Rek), *Bella Bella Donna* (Gniadkowski and Jan Danek). Those hits were performed in Polish with the lyrics close to the English or German originals. The exotic rhythms were popular throughout the second half of the 1950s and the majority of the most popular singers had in their repertoire songs in the rhythm of mambo, cha-cha, samba mambo or calypso. With the beginning of the 1960s the fashion for exoticism in Poland and other countries faded. The generational change influenced musical styles and performances worldwide. In Poland this trend appeared in conjunction with the loss of the achievements of "the thaw". The 1960s became the period of "small stability", when people lived poorly but safely. There was no place for exoticism.

The concept of exoticism and its exemplifications

The term “exoticism” constitutes the category which has long been discussed by musicologists. Carl Dahlhaus, who discussed the concept in his book *The Development of the European Music in the Nineteenth Century*, pointed to a significance of “exoticism” in music culture. Yet the underlying meaning of “exoticism” is imprecise. In general it is connected with presenting an appropriate song title or including in the lyrics the names of foreign and remote places (Dahlhaus 1989: 302; Piotrowska 2011: 164-165). The “remote places” stand for non-European countries or the Antipodes of Europe i.e. the countries lying at the peripheries of the continent which are also of less political and economic significance (Galtung 1985: 5-6). Among the peripheral areas were the Pyrenees Peninsula, Eastern Europe and the Balkan Countries.

The songs I have presented so far clearly illustrate the definition of exoticism in music. This regards the Spanish and Portuguese rhythms or those from the countries which are culturally connected with them like Latin America. Usually the song titles and lyrics refer to the mentioned areas, but an exact depiction of the foreign culture in songs was not necessary except for certain elements which were commonly associated with those areas. Among them were exotic rhythms: rhumba, samba, mambo, cha-cha, and calypso. The lyrics had words like *senorita*, *gaucho*, *castanets*, and *palm tree*, with geographical names like Mexico, Andalusia, Tampico, and Rio. Sometimes they were written in the song titles as well.

The discussed songs included three, two, or only one of the exotic elements like exotic rhythms, words or only a song title. Male singer Gniadkowski sang a Samba song about love to a nurse at the dentist's, while female singer Lidia Czerska sang *Stary zegar* [the Old Clock] discussing what happens when the household clock is slow. Female singer Koterbska used exotic rhumba rhythm in a song *Odmieniam ciągle imię twoje*, [I Always Say Your Name in Many Ways] to sing about feelings she had for Janek [Johnny] whom she met during a lecture at a Polish University

The title of a song which referred to the name of a Latin dance or the place of the story in a song was often the first hint that it would have exotic rhythms. Natasza Zylska sang *Kakaowe mambo* [Cocoa Mambo], *Karnawał w Rio* [Carnaval in Rio], *Jesienną rumbę* [Autumn Rhumba], *Mexicana*. Lidia Czerska sang *Tata gra mambo* [Daddy is playing Mambo]; Gniadkowski, *Piosenkę Kubańską* [a Cuban Song], *Mexicana*, female Singer Maria Koterbska *Pracunki z Portugalii* [Washerwomen from Portuguese], *Posłuchaj oto cha-cha* [Listen that's Cha-Cha], *Serduszko puka w rytmie cha-cha* [the Heart is Beating in the Cha-Cha Rhythm]; and Sława Przybylska *Pucybut z Rio* [Shoe Cleaner from Rio] and *Noc Kastylijską* [the Castilian Night].

The literary component of many of these songs is equally important. The rhythm, and most predominantly the lyrics, refer to the “exotic” Ibero-American countries to emphasize their uniqueness, contrasting them with the ordinary life of the music recipients. The varied subject matter of the songs require systematization for the purpose of the analysis. However, they belong to mass culture for mass audiences, so the lyrics are not sophisticated, in contrast to, for example, Polish cabaret songs (Kiec 2001).

I would like to draw your attention to the environmental elements like “Kakao, kokosy i ryż” [“Cocoa, Coconuts and Rice”], – as Jadwiga Swirtun sings in the song *Manila* written by Jeremi Przybora

Cuba the island hot like a volcano,
Oe-la! [Oe-la!] E-ja! [E-ja!]
Palm tree fans spreads toward the sun,
The sun is smiling to her.

Gniadkowski sang this song for the first time in 1955 before the Cuban revolution during Batista's rule. Zygmunt Sztaba wrote the Polish lyrics. The melody is of folk origin and was popular in the 1930's; its original title was *Kubatierra* (Michalski 2010: 571-572). The song's folk origin was a good reason to present it at the end of The Youth Festival and not risk accusations of supporting Batista's regime.

The songs contain various names which sound strange for a Polish recipient: Rosita (*The Castilian Night*), Inez (*By Hot Night*), Dolores (*Dolores*), and Malaguena (*Malaguena*). These are the names of the main female characters called *senoritas* in the songs sung by Sława Przybylska. *Senores* or *Caballeros* fall in love with the *senoritas*. These words have been preserved in the Polish language.

Other Spanish words also appear, but they are rather short and simple. In *The Castilian Night* the Spanish language is called "hyacinth sweet talk". The lyrics were written by a well-known poet Jerzy Ficowski. The Spanish language was little known in Poland; therefore, even "Si, señor" sang by Maria Koterbska made an impression on the listeners.

The Indians do not appear in the songs, but they also were part of the world which song writers presented. The only songs in which they were mentioned were *Galapagos* and *Mexicana*. The native people of the New World might evoke associations with the American Wild West.

The great joy of life is present in these songs, which is an important feature of the Spanish, Portuguese and all the Latin peoples. It is visible during the carnival (*The Carnival in Rio*) and during daily activities (*Washing Ladies from Portuguese*, *The Shoe Cleaner from Rio*). With the shining sun, the abundant blossoming of nature, a glass of wine and beautiful *senoritas* around you life cannot be bad or too extreme.

Natasza Zylska had in her repertoire a lot of exotic songs. In 1962 she left Poland for personal reasons to live in Israel where she got married and subsequently gave up her music career. Her name is therefore exclusively connected with the period of the "thaw". Zylska eagerly sang rhumbas, cha-chas, sambas and mambos. All the songs tell about the great joy of life, sometimes about love: *Corn* ("where lovers can hide"), *Cacao Mambo* ("joyfully growing cacao trees, a song spreading around") *Carnival in Rio* ("all of them dancing until the daylight"), *The Autumn Rhumba* ("all of them are surprised that I am laughing all the time"), *Ju-bi-ju-ba* ("I am singing without memory", etc. In the Zylska songs all people play, love, dance and sing even while growing corn or cacao. The songs resemble a hymn to praise simple joys of life, cherish everyday life and *mañana* does not exist.

We should draw attention to the Bacchanalian element of the songs. Sometimes joy of life and love become ecstatic. In *Baiao-Bongo*, Zylska sings:

The procession of lovers joyfully goes dancing,
Surrounded by laughing and singing girls,
When I am looking at you I would always like to
Dance with you night and day to this rhythm.

Those elements in the songs and the need for such lyrics and rhythms in the songs is not accidental in the period of the "thaw". Similar elements can be seen in songs about love by other vocalists. They are always full of passion (*The Castilian Night*), so the torn lace coat does not surprise us (*La Gitana*). In Mexico or Brasil, love is not taken too seriously. Even the lover's betrayal should not be the reason to worry. Maria Koterbska gives advice to a betrayed girl: "Little *senorita* do not be angry, Little *senorita* many others will give you their hearts" (*Cha cha seniorita*). Hanna Rek sings: "with calypso rhythms everything ends well" (*Tipitipitipso*).

Sometimes love does not bring happiness. Sława Przybylska cries out in dismay: "Inez, Inez drop that dagger" (*By Hot Night*), but she does not prevent the tragedy. Unhappiness

can also be lovers parting like in the international hit by Mary Ford *Vaya con Dios*, with lyrics by Janusz Biliński, and sung by Jan Danek. The group Trio Egzotyczne [The Exotic Trio] sang about parting in their most popular song *Pamelo, żegnaj* [Farewell Pamela]. Millions of listeners were moved by the word *parlando* which started the song:

Can you hear, Pamela,
that singing and the sound of guitars?
The Boys from our Pueblo are singing
Tomorrow at dawn we are going far away.
Hunger forces us out from that barren grassland
Where only prickly opuntias grow
We may find some bread in a distant city
And little happiness?

The Argentinian tango was commonly perceived as the dance to express violent feelings or tragic passions, as in *Uliczka w Sewilli* [a Street in Sevilla] by Wiesław Frejmanow, or *Hiacyntowe tango* [the Hyacinth Tango] by Marta Mirska. Other Latin American rhythms reflected more cheerful, mild emotions, love, joy, and careless fun like at a fiesta or carnival. Tango was associated with the pre-war period, which became popular in Poland in the 1910s and gained the status of a traditional music genre. The lyrics concerned rather serious matters, and the image of male and female singers was adequate for this. Their appearance rather resembled the pre-war vocalists. Female singers Zylska and Koterbska did not sing tangos; they preferred more modern rhythms. Koterbska used swing in singing and was the first singer in the Stalinist period who was not afraid to do this, almost ruining her career in the process. Both vocalists looked attractive, fashionable and dynamic on stage, Zylska sometimes danced. They perfectly reflected the time of the political “thaw” with modern songs and stage image, cheerfulness, energy, which is still heard on the records.

The cover of the record “Gomułka exoticism” includes a short unsigned piece of information: “At the end of the 1950s and beginning of 1960s fashion for exoticism appeared in , and it was so different for us. In the winter we enjoyed exotic lemons, oranges, sometimes green, unripe bananas which were imported only for Christmas. In the summer people mostly went on family holidays to the Baltic Sea organized and sponsored by companies they worked for, which was called FWP [Workers’ Holiday Fund]. There were also those shirts with Hawaiian Palms on them from relatives in America envied by most of us”. This may explain why the exotic music was popularized in Poland, i.e. to compensate the Poles for the lack of contact with foreign exotic countries.

If we were to answer the question about the aim of all the efforts to popularize a certain culture, we first need to explain who this aim concerns. And this does not only regard the artists. Władysław Szpilman, Zygmunt Sztaba, Natasza Zylska – a composer, song writer, singer earn a living by participating in cultural life. However, some of their songs are a manifestation of a certain culture. Its recipients therefore must also be included. Thus, this involves all the Poles living in Poland during the first half of the rule of Władysław Gomułka.

Polish culture in the mid-1950s during the “thaw” began to rapidly transform; socialist realism was no longer the only compulsory method of artistic creativity. The ban on western mass culture was lifted and the domestic artists could draw from it. However, the total freedom of the cultural exchange between Poland and the West did not exist. Agnieszka Osiecka, who both witnessed and took part in those changes, wrote that in the previous period “ there were three Europes:

1. The Recommended Europe – going to “Spartakiada”, youth sports tournaments in a friendly country;
2. The Allowed Europe – Picasso

3. The Forbidden Europe – Kafka

But in 1955 Kafka was out of reach. The Allowed Europe had an increasing pace of change and opportunities opened up to us ” (Osiecka 1985: 45). Most of the culture was still unavailable to Poles until the end of the communist rule in Poland. This culture contradicted the communist ideology and policy. Also, the ordinary citizens could not afford to partake in it.

The metamorphoses also concerned music, particularly pop music. Music may generally seem to constitute an abstract form of art carrying no meaning. However the communist regime which took power in Poland after the WW II also controlled this sphere of culture. At the end of the 1940s and the beginning of 1950s American music was banned while music from other western countries was broadcast only within certain limits. The vocalists and musicians who admired those musical genres were forced to perform underground. This may be seen in the careers of Polish jazzmen who could not perform on stage for several years (Michalski 2010: 637-666). Along with the successive change in the Polish politics and culture, the ban on the western music was lifted. Polish radio broadcast the latest French, Italian and even American pop hits. Sometimes the lyrics of the western melodies were Polish, or the Polish hit songs were modeled on the western ones. The Poles identified themselves with western culture, and any ban on the western music met with widespread discontent. The “socialist” culture imposed by the communist ruling party was strange and unattractive. (Tyrmand 2001: 168-176). Therefore, Polish artists used the opportunity so that western pop music widely and increasingly spread in the second half of the 1950s in Poland.

The fashion for the exotic rhythms came to Poland and the Western Europe from the USA which neighbored Latin America, where this music was rooted. The USA conducted the “Good Neighbor Policy” between both countries and music infiltrated naturally into the country. The American policy was initiated by Franklin D. Roosevelt directly before the war when he stated that the USA relinquished any claims against South and Central American Countries. The USA was uneasy about the economic and political expansion of Germany over those territories. The “Good Neighbor Policy” was even more valued in the beginning of the 1940s following the outbreak of the WW II in Europe and the increased activity of German intelligence in South America (Friedman 2003: 6-7, 74-84). The certain limited interest in culture of those countries, like fashion for the Latin American rhythms (Kingman 1979: 79-78, 273,317; Roberts 1999:76-146), was the effect of that policy. Hollywood greatly contributed to the increased production of musicals with Brazil and Argentina as the venue where Latin American music was performed. (Taylor 1989: 148).

The policy of the USA influenced to some extent music fashions. American citizens eagerly visited especially Central American countries usually for entertainment.

The location of America was not the only reason why the Americans paid interest in the Spanish and, even more, Latin American cultures. Said [2005: 30] assumes that all people of the West need the East likewise the South to define themselves in opposition to one another. Based on Ruth Benedict’s (1966: 149-150) analysis of the Apollonian and Dionysian (concept) cultures, the American culture may belong to the Apollonian culture while the Latin American to the Dionysian one. The great popularity of some songs by Perry Como, Nat “King” Cole or Bing Crosby in the USA can therefore be explained as the need to search for those elements of culture which are not present in our own. (Urbański 1981: 150-164). In addition, loosening of the ties between ethnicity and an ethnic group understood as a blood-related community where the first one began to function outside the ethnic group is called “poetniczość” [“after-ethnicity”] (Żelazny 2006: 105-108). A similar phenomena appeared to some extent in Poland. The “socialist” culture, intensely endorsed in Poland in the first half of the 1950s, may seem to belong to the Apollonian culture, regarding its rationally justified moderation. Even if this assumption is too far fetched (Tyrmand 2001:

175-176), we should consider the socialist culture features like principality, authority, mass targeting, the cult of science. The Poles forced to participate in socialist culture took the unexpected opportunity in the mid-1950s to extricate themselves from that regime and felt joyful dancing, rhumba, or mambo because zestful, spontaneous and passionate South American rhythms were better to express their feelings to than marches played during the First of May procession (the International Workers' Day).

We can assume that politics contributed to some extent, in Poland and earlier in the USA, to the development of musical exoticism. Contrary to the Poles, the Americans focused on the Ibero-American culture given its proximity and political links.

In Poland, songs in the fashionable cha-cha or mambo rhythms could be played as a result of the important political changes. There is also another, previously mentioned, apolitical factor. The Ibero-American culture was described as Dionysian while the prevailing American culture was called the Apollonian. The WASP culture is based on a rational element: work and moderation. In relation to this the cultures of neighbouring Latin America where there is a place for carnival and carelessness are opposite. They were perceived in that way. In a song of 1948 titled *Mañana*, Peggy Lee as a Mexican girl sang:

Mañana is soon enough for me

The Latin American culture was similarly perceived in Poland. The rhythms of Argentinian tangos, not waltzes or familiar Polkas, were used to tell the stories about passionate and tragic love affairs.

In the second half of the 1950s the political and cultural factors intermingled. The cultural factor was in relation to the political one. The "thaw" was an unusual period in the history of the PRL, one of the three short periods (including the after-war and the Solidarity periods) when freedom of speech was to a certain extent practiced. It followed the years of bloody terror when the principles were clear and unchangeable: no one could criticize the Soviet Union with its army stationed in Poland. In those circumstances we observed an unusual phenomenon in mass culture in Poland; its authors began to criticize social pathologies while on the other hand, tried to create a reality detached from the real one. This concerned film (Skotarczak 2004: 98-110) and pop music. The Latin American rhythms matched the atmosphere of fun and cheerfulness following the Stalinist times to contradict the gloomy, pompous and schematic period of the socialist realism. They also help to release stress and tension in play and celebrations, avoid politics and escape from reality. However, Big Brother was not sleeping, and in October 1956 Poland barely avoided the tragic events similar to those which happened in Hungary. The Dionysian culture involves fiesta and carnival. However after the carnival comes the time of penance and fasting.

Similarly in Poland, after the "thaw", at the beginning of the 1960s, we observed the gradual loss of many of its achievements. Gomułka (the communist party leader) calmed down the general social tension. The 1960s were a period of "small stabilization" (economic and political) when dullness and roughness prevailed everywhere in society. The initial fashion wave for exotic rhythms gradually disappeared. Zylska left Poland; Koterbska included in her repertoire fewer and fewer rhumbas and cha-chas. New vocalists and music trends appeared. The young people wanted to listen to rock and roll. Yet, the music market outside the mainstream also developed including the musicians who still enjoyed great popularity despite the negative criticism of the music critics. Tercet Egzotyczny [The Exotic Trio band] was one of the most heavily criticised for kitsch songs (*Pamela*) and their stage image (they wore sombreros). The audience was in favour of the band, therefore this music genre survived though its status worsened, and the songs were then performed by singers of lower status. In the overwhelming "greyness" of the 1960s the colourful Ibero-American

culture must have seemed particularly abstract. The communist authorities did not accept fashions which might perniciously affect imagination. Travel to Argentina or Brazil was banned except fortunately for Cuba, for there socialism was also in force.

Some other aspects of the reception of the discussed fascination of the Ibero-American culture should also be considered. For the listeners this culture may constitute the one undifferentiated cultural and ethnic unity like in the songs by singers Koterbska, Przybylska or Gniadkowski. The beautiful *senoritas* live both in Madrid and in Rio and all men wear *sombreros*. This stereotypical simplification is characteristic of the works of popular culture. (Macdonald 2002:19).

A Pole had no opportunities then to learn about those countries. Despite a big number of Polish immigrants who settled in South America, the contacts with that region were minimal. It resulted from both economic and political reasons, which affected the citizens of western countries too because cheap flights were not available at that time. The communist authorities did not want the Polish people to become familiar with the ideology of the hostile West. The political elite could travel abroad, sometimes having their close family present. In the Gomułka period (1956-1970) the number of people travelling to the West did not exceed several thousand people annually, but was restricted to one country only. (Sowiński 2005: 149).

The knowledge about the South was shaped based mainly on the songs which did not say much about the reality there. In Peggy Lee's *Mañana* from 1948, issued by Marta Mirska the same year with Polish lyrics, *manana* stands for the girl's name. The correct translation was less important which showed very little concern for depicting the real reality in the songs.

In the second half of the 1960s the fashion for the songs which evoked Spanish and Latin American cultures were slowly passing away. In the next decade they seemed an anachronism and often were subjects of mockery like the song *Farewell Pamela*, the greatest hit of The Exotic Trio. However, the band which survived kept in its repertoire those songs until present times. Jerzy Stuhr, a well-known Polish actor and director included this song in his film titled *Obywatel* [The Citizen] (2014), to tell about the last half-century of the history of Poland, and the song represented the unfulfilled dreams of the Polish people.

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