Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich
Jacek Partyka
(eds.)

Jews and Non-Jews: Memories and Interactions from the Perspective of Cultural Studies

Warsaw Studies in Jewish History and Memory

PL ACADEMIC RESEARCH

The book adds new studies of memories and interactions between Jews and non-Jews to the historical and cultural research on this topic. It gathers in one volume the results of work by scholars from several countries, while the topics of the articles cover various disciplines: history, sociology, psychology, literary and language studies. The specific themes refer to the cultures and interactions with non-Jews in places such as Kiev, Vienna, Ireland, Springfield, Sosúa as well as reflect upon interactions in literary texts by Czesław Milosz and other Polish writers, some contemporary Jewish-American novelists and South American writers. Finally there are texts referring to the experience of the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust trauma as well as German-Israeli and Polish-Jewish relations and heritage.

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and Małgorzata Pakier

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Introduction

It goes without saying that the perceptions of Jews, their culture and religion have played an important role in developing norms and standards of social life in Western nations. Since ancient times, the experience of Jewry has been marked by what in Hebrew is called *galut*, "exile", the deliberate choice or, more often, repeated necessity to function as a community outside its home in the Land of Israel. The Jews gradually evolved to create a form of communal existence in the Diaspora – the nation without its own state managed to preserve its language, customs and ethnic identity within foreign, sometimes unfavorable or even hostile, contexts. Refusing to perceive their homelessness and displacement as a curse, the diasporic Jews adopted a strategy of controlled assimilation into the cultures that they chose or were forced to live in, without renouncing their ethnic separateness. The gift to reconcile the need of *fitting in* and *remaining outside* has become an almost stereotypical characteristic of Jews ever since. Throughout centuries the attitude to the "Jew" – simultaneously one of *us* and one of *them* – has become an index of tolerance in Western societies.

Within autonomous states, Jewish communities would often organize their own administrative units (e.g. *kehillahs* in Central and Eastern Europe), and they often resided together in parts of towns or cities. Despite their relative (because restricted) autonomy as well as their manifested difference, Jews were still part of local societies and, by their presence, would make significant contributions to local and national host cultures. However, otherness – intriguing as it is – provokes mistrust, aversion and, often, open hostility. The history of publicly (and religiously) sanctioned purgative attacks and spontaneous violent riots aimed at massacre or persecution of Jewish minorities spans almost two thousand years, and roughly overlaps with the history of the Diaspora.

Our ambition in the present book is to add new studies of memories and interactions between Jews and non-Jews to the already broad field of historical and cultural research. By gathering in one volume the results of work by scholars from several countries (Poland, the United States, Israel, Austria and Ireland) we also wish to demonstrate that Jewish Studies is a field of research both for Jewish and non-Jewish scholars (European ones, in particular). As Jeffrey Shandler[1],

1 Interview with Jeffrey Shandler by Roberta Newman. "Key Word 'Shtetl': Interview with Jeffrey Shandler". Posted 14 Feb. 2014. Web. 14 Mar. 2014.

speaking of the growth of scholarship by non-Jews in Eastern Europe, observes: "When you look at what Jewish Studies looks like in Europe, the involvement of people who aren't Jews plays a much larger role than it does in North America, where it's not *only* Jews, of course, but the majority of Jewish Studies scholars *are* Jews. In Europe, it doesn't play out that way." Most of the contributors to this volume are non-Jewish who consider Jewish culture part of their heritage.

As the topics of the articles cover various disciplines (history, sociology, psychology, literary and language studies), the volume offers a true plurality of voices as well as interdisciplinary perspectives to bring some new light to the issues under consideration. The contributors, representing different national and academic backgrounds, go beyond historical, political, geographical divides to offer reflections that finally bring together apparently quite disparate problems, and thus contribute to contemporary criticism and research in the field of Jewish Studies. In terms of its formal structure, the volume is organized thematically, though not divided in separate parts. This has been done on the assumption that the collection constitutes a monograph, the uniformity of which is underpinned by its subject matter, i.e. the complex and historically conditioned relations between Jews and other ethnic groups or nations.

The diversity of places under discussion in this book aptly reflects the range of Jewish quests for a safe place to live – from Kiev and Vienna to Ireland to Springfield, Missouri and Sosúa in the Dominican Republic. While *Victoria Khiterer* writes about "Kiev Jews in the Early Twentieth Century: National Identity and Culture", *Klaus Hödl* presents Vienna Jews in the same period, focusing on "Viennese Culture in 1900: Bridging the Divide". *Natalie Wynn* discusses the relationship of Jews with Irish culture and politics in the article "Ireland's Jewish Identity Crisis". *Mara W. Cohen Ioannides*, in her text "The Community Memory of Springfield, Missouri Suppresses the City's Jewish Past," draws our attention not only to how Jews settled down in Springfield, but also to how their presence is described in collective memory. *Anna Maria Karczewska's* article "Jewminicanos and the Sosúa Settlement" takes the reader to a relatively little-known episode in pre-Holocaust rescue of European Jews who were invited to the Dominican Republic in 1940, and thus were able to escape the tragic plight of their European compatriots (though, eventually, they failed to establish a permanent Jewish-Dominican settlement).

The character of mutual relations between Jews and non-Jews can be found in literary texts, coming from both sides. Hence we include a selection of research papers conducted upon literary evidence of Jewish – non-Jewish interactions in literatures as diverse as Polish and South American. *Hanna Komorowska* critically examines some excerpts from Polish literature, focusing

on language peculiarities and misunderstandings that manifest themselves in everyday conversations ("Stereotyping through Silence and Speech. Cross-Cultural Differences in Conversational Styles of Poles and Jews as Presented in Polish Literature"). *Annette Aronowicz* analyses the attitude of the Polish poet, Nobel Prize winner, Czesław Miłosz towards Jews, whom he remembered well from his Wilno (Vilna/Vilnius) days and whom he appreciated for their outstanding contribution to Polish literature ("No Longer Other? Jews in Czesław Miłosz's Landscape"). The article by *Magdalena Szkwarek*, in turn, takes us across the ocean to South America to show how classic Latin American authors incorporated Jewish themes in their fiction ("Manifestation of Jewishness in Literature of Latin America"). North American Jewish literature is represented in *Dorota Mihułka's* study of the novels by Allegra Goodman and Pearl Abraham ("Temptations of Non-Jewish Lifestyle in Allegra Goodman's and Pearl Abraham's Novels"). In these novels we observe the interactions between traditional Jewish communities and the surrounding non-Jewish American world. *Jacek Partyka* reconsiders the problems of race and religion in one of the first but still controversial Holocaust novels in American literature ("'False Veins Under the Skin': Does Edward Lewis Wallant's *The Pawnbroker* Fail as Holocaust Fiction?").

In Europe of the 1940s, the Shoah brought the unprecedented annihilation of Jewish population and of their material culture. *Maria Ferenc Piotrowska* reads diary excerpts and memoirs found in the Warsaw ghetto in the article "The Feelings of Survivors of the First Deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto". Next, *Ewelina Feldman-Kołodziejuk* analyses a 21st century poem by a second-generation artist to demonstrate how the survivor family trauma may turn into a permanent state ("The Mother-Daughter Dyad in Bożena Keff's *On Mother and the Fatherland*"). The painful process of discovering one's Jewish identity in post-war Poland is analyzed by *Justyna Sierakowska*. Her "A Quest for Jewish Identity in Contemporary Poland: Agata Tuszyńska's Family History" examines the history of a well-known Polish journalist who, as an adult, discovers both the Jewishness of her mother and her Polish father's attitude that verges on anti-Semitism. The book by Tuszyńska – and its reading by Sierakowska – is not only an insight into a personal identity quest but yet another footnote to difficult Polish-Jewish relations in the twentieth century.

There is no doubt whatsoever that literature plays a fundamental role in shaping the mind-sets of whole nations. In her text, *Na'ama Sheffi* shows that it can also have a political and conciliatory role. "Normalization through Literature: Translations from German into Hebrew during the 1970s" is an apt illustration of how literary translation projects may be beneficial in reviving mutual relations

between Germany and Israel, despite the still painful remembrance of the tragedy caused by Germans during the Holocaust.

The situation in Polish towns that used to be *shtetls* reflects the relations between Jews and their gentile neighbors in their historical and contemporary dimension. This can be observed in the state of Jewish cemeteries in Poland today: the people who buried their dead there are long gone, and the burial sites seem out-of-place in the greatly changed landscape of post-war Poland. In his article "The Sacralization and Secularization of the Jewish Cemetaries in Poland", *Yechiel Weizman* considers dichotomous attitudes of contemporary Poles towards the material remnants of the pre-Holocaust neighborhood, which, in turn, is reflective of collective memory and present-day awareness of the problem. The significance of the sites which Weizman discusses constitutes part of the public debate between Jews and Poles on their common heritage in Poland.

Understanding the richness and complexity of the subject matter, we remain hopeful that the insight into diverse manifestations of the relations between Jews and non-Jews presented in our volume will become a modest yet important contribution both to Jewish Studies and to the studies of cultural memory.

Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, Jacek Partyka

Victoria Khiterer

Kiev Jews in the Early Twentieth Century: National Identity and Culture

Exploring the question raised by Moshe Rosman in his book *How Jewish is Jewish History?* I will analyze in my article how Jewish was Jewish culture in Kiev before World War I. I will show that Rosman's claim that "Jews lived in intimate interaction with surrounding cultures to the point where they may be considered to be embedded in them" (82) works only for the Russified Jewish elite in Kiev.

Wealthy Jews in Kiev educated their children in Russian schools and universities or European universities, so they were quite embedded in Russian and European cultures. However, poor Jews, who made up the majority of the Kiev Jewish population, were completely immersed in Yiddish culture. They could not afford to study in gymnasiums and universities, not just because of the high tuition but also because of the percentage quota for Jewish students in the Russian Empire. Many poor Jews in Kiev barely spoke Russian and did not know any Ukrainian at all. So they could not be embedded in the surrounding cultures; instead they had their own Yiddish culture. Kiev Jewish writers and poets understood this quite well and published in Yiddish to reach the largest number of Jewish readers.

Often the cultural views of Kievan Jews were influenced by various ideologies. Many Jewish socialists and populists became strong adherents of Yiddish culture as the culture of the "toiling masses", while Zionists considered Yiddish a dialect of German, a "jargon", and believed that Jewish culture can develop only in Hebrew. Assimilated Kievan Jews demonstrated contempt toward everything Jewish and considered Jewish culture inferior to Russian and European cultures. So at the turn of the twentieth century, Kievan Jewry was split in its cultural orientations between Russian, European, Yiddish and Hebrew cultures.

The Jewish community in Kiev at the beginning of the twentieth century was one of the largest in the Russian Empire. In 1913 over eighty thousand Jews lived in Kiev (Khiterer 75). Although the city was exempted from the Pale of Settlement in 1835, from 1859 on only certain categories of Jews, including those with higher education, had the right to live there. This explains why Kiev had a high concentration of Jewish intelligentsia in the early twentieth century. According to the census of 1897, 14.3% of the Jewish population of the city were engaged in the "liberal professions," i.e. were intelligentsia (*Evreiskaia* 527–528). The city also was one of the largest Jewish student centers in the Russian Empire. Saint

Vladimir University in Kiev had the largest concentration of Jewish students of all Russian universities. In 1911 the university had 888 Jewish students, which comprised 17% of all students.[1]

The Jews of Kiev were quite divided in their cultural and political orientations. Some became strong adherents of assimilation and developed a negative attitude toward Jewish culture as being inferior to Russian and European. Other Jewish intellectuals chose to actively participate in Jewish national life.

Many Russian intellectuals who lived in the capitals Moscow and Petersburg had a disdainful attitude toward cultural life in the provinces. The Russian Jewish press evinced the same arrogant attitude toward cultural life beyond Petersburg and Moscow. For example, the Russian Jewish weekly *Evreiskii Mir* was divided into two sections: news from Petersburg and Moscow versus provincial news. Thus not only Kiev, but even Odessa, with its prominent Jewish writers and poets, such as Menachem Mendel Sforim and Hayim Nachman Bialik, was included in the category "provintsiia" (*Evreiskii mir* 15).

Kiev had the reputation as a merchant city, where people came to make money. The often arrogant intellectuals from the Russian capitals thought that high culture was impossible in Kiev – only popular culture could thrive there. Popular culture was certainly well-developed in Kiev; however, intellectual life was also present.

While the Russian Jewish periodical considered Jewish cultural life in Kiev as provincial, Russian nationalists completely denied the existence of any other culture in Kiev than Russian culture. The Russian philosopher Petr Struve wrote that it was impossible to be a participant in the cultural life in Kiev without knowledge of the Russian language. He stated that Russian culture dominated in Kiev, Mogilev, Tiflis (now Tbilisi) and Tashkent, "because this culture is an internal, powerful fact of all parts of the Empire, except the Kingdom of Poland and Finland" (Jabotinsky, *Izbrannoe* 140–141). Of course Struve did not mention that this "fact" had not appeared by itself, but was due to the forced Russification of national minorities. "Kiev was, is and shall be Russian!" was the slogan of the state-sponsored newspaper *Kievlianin,* published in the city since 1864 (Klier 182). All state schools and universities in Kiev provided education in Russian. The wealthy Kiev Jewish elite, educated in Russian gymnasiums and universities, became strong adherents of assimilation with Russian or European cultures and considered Jewish and Ukrainian cultures as inferior. Jewish elite in Kiev adopted the lifestyle of the Russian nobility and wealthy merchants and

1 See also: Estraikh 21–29; *Encyclopedia Judaica* 993.

rarely interacted either with the poor Jews who lived in the Podol and Plossky districts or with Ukrainians. Zvi Gitelman wrote that "Jews apparently felt no strong affinity for Ukrainians… Consciously or unconsciously adopting the view of imperial Russian officialdom, Jews and others thought of Ukraine as 'Little Russia'" (146–147).

Certainly there were some exceptions from the rule: a few populist Jewish authors contributed to Ukrainian literature. The Zionist leader Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky (1880–1940) wrote in 1911 in his article "Urok iubileia Shevchenko" ("The Lesson of Shevchenko's Jubilee") about the Ukrainian roots of Shevchenko's creativity and the great potential of the Ukrainian national movement and culture (*Vybranni* 71–79). The Yiddish poet David Hofshtein recalled that in the years of political reaction in the Russian Empire, when the authorities did not allow celebrations in honor of Shevchenko, Sholom Aleichem intentionally came to the city Kanev to put the flowers on Shevchenko's grave (Shaginian 26). Some Jewish nationalists supported the Ukrainian nationalist movement. However, there were significantly more Jewish intellectuals who contributed to Russian and Jewish cultures than to Ukrainian.

In spite of all of the efforts of the authorities to make Kiev a Russian city, and the assimilation of the Jewish elite with Russian culture, Jewish cultural life was present in Kiev at the turn of the twentieth century. Certainly it was not as rich as in Petersburg, Moscow or Odessa, but definitely some interesting writers, poets, musicians and thinkers lived in or visited the city.

Sholom Aleichem

Among the Jewish authors who lived in Kiev, the most prominent was Sholom Aleichem (pseudonym of Sholom Yakov Rabinovich, 1859–1916). Sholom Aleichem knew Kiev quite well: he first visited the city illegally in 1879 and then returned in 1887, living there, with interruptions, for almost twenty years. Sholom Aleichem received the right to live in Kiev not as a renowned Jewish writer, but as a merchant. Later, when he lost his fortune, Sholom Aleichem received the right for residence in the city for the education of his children. Certainly Jewish children, who studied in Kiev gymnasiums and universities, were a "real treasure" for their parents who had the right to live in the city for their education (*Krovavaia* 262–263). Initially, Sholom Aleichem attempted to combine his literary work with speculation on the Kiev stock market. His financial endeavors were unsuccessful and finished quite badly for the writer. He had to leave Kiev in 1890 for three years, hiding from his creditors. In these years Sholom Aleichem lived in Odessa and Chernovtsy, he also spent some

time in Paris and Vienna. In 1893 he returned to Kiev after his mother-in-law used her inheritance from her late husband to help cover his debts (Shkol'nik). Sholom Aleichem lived in Kiev for the next twelve years and ultimately left the city after the pogrom of October 1905.

Literary critics often compare two authors: the Russian Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol (1809–1852) and the Jewish Sholom Aleichem. Both of them were born in provincial towns in Ukraine, and both moved to large cities, where they became well-known writers. The influence of Gogol on the writing of Sholom Aleichem was obvious and recognized by many Russian and western scholars.[2] Both writers use the idea of laughing through tears. However, the reasons for laughter and crying were quite different in Russian and Jewish societies. Gogol's laughing is often acrid and sarcastic; he shows little mercy toward his naïve, rude, and greedy characters. His laughter has the taste of bitterness when he writes about the imperfections of society. Sholom Aleichem's humor is gentler; the author has far more compassion for his characters than Gogol. This approach of laughing through tears appeared in the early works of Sholom Aleichem, but is even more distinct in his descriptions of the life of Jews in Kiev.

In spite of the hostility of the local authorities and the cruelty of the police toward Jews, Kievan Jews loved their city as confirmed in a number of their memoirs. Sholom Aleichem was no exception. He wrote to his niece, the wife of a Kievan lawyer, after his travel to Europe:

> How pitiful now Kiev looks after shining Paris and clean Berlin! And nevertheless, if I have to choose one of these three cities, I'll choose only Kiev, even though it does not smell so sweet and is not so comfortable. (Kal'nitskii, "Vmesto Berlina"[3])

The Kievan years were the most productive for Sholom Aleichem, he wrote there the most famous of his novels *Tevye der Milkhiger* (*Tevye the Milkman*) and *Menakhem-Mendl*. He described Kiev, which he called Yehupets (Egypt), and Kievan Jews in his novels. Tevye the Milkman delivers his goods to Yehupets' market, and the unlucky Menakhem-Mendl, like Sholom Aleichem in his younger years, unsuccessfully attempts to make his fortune in the Yehupets stock market. Sholom Aleichem many times returned in his work to the life of Jews in Kiev after he left the city forever in 1905. He wrote about Kiev in his autobiographical novel *Funem Yarid* (*From the Fair*) and in his novel *The Bloody Hoax*, written in 1912–1913 in reaction to the ongoing Beilis Affair.

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2 For example by Wisse Ruth in *The Modern Jewish Canon* and David Roskies in *A Bridge of Longing: The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling*.

3 All Russian quotations translated into English by Victoria Khiterer.

The Jewish manager of a Kiev brick factory, Menahem Mendel Beilis, was accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy Andriusha Iushchinskii and was arrested in Summer 1911. The Beilis Affair continued for over two years and ended with the acquittal of Beilis. During the Beilis Affair there was a continuous pre-pogrom situation in Kiev. Russian nationalist organizations called for revenge against all Jews for their alleged involvement in ritual murders. Jews in the entire Russian Empire lived in great anxiety in anticipation of a new wave of violence if Beilis was convicted (Tager 129).

The literary critic and essayist Maurice Friedberg said that Sholom Aleichem's novels are "a wondrously realistic social history" (*The Bloody Hoax* ix). Friedberg wrote that a part of the novel *The Bloody Hoax* is "quite literally, a chronicle of current events" (xi). Sholom Aleichem described his work as a "completely new novel about Jewish life in Kiev. It is completely humorous and sensational. The novel portrays the political events, which shook Jewry as an earthquake" (*Krovavaia* 261). The novel is the story of two young men, a Russian noblemen Grigorii Popov and a Jew Hersh Rabinovitch, who, for one year, exchanged their documents. While the real Rabinovitch enjoys the easy life of a Russian nobleman, Grigorii Popov becomes well acquainted with all difficulties of Jewish life in Russia. As a "Jew" he was denied admittance to the university and then accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy to use his blood to make matzo. The story has an almost happy ending as the father of Grigorii Popov comes to court and makes a statement that "Hersh Rabinovitch" is really his son, a Russian nobleman. The absurd accusation of ritual murder failed, and Popov and Rabinovitch instead received a comparatively minor punishment "for the hoax of assuming a false name" (373). Sholom Aleichem finished his novel before the conclusion of the Beilis affair: the novel was completed on January 7, 1913, while the trial lasted until October. The novel, which shows the nonsense of the accusation against Beilis and all the difficulties of Jewish life in Russia, was very popular among Jewish readers. It was serialized by the Warsaw Yiddish newspaper *Haint* (*Today*) in 1912–1913. The publication of chapter forty eight caused the newspaper to be confiscated. The authorities could not tolerate an objective discussion in the chapter of blood libels against Jews on the eve of the Beilis trial.

In spite of the persecution of Jews in Kiev, Sholom Aleichem dreamt of returning one day to the city, and he probably would have returned if his illness and untimely death had not prevented him. Sholom Aleichem was very upset when, due to his illness, he could not attend in 1908 the celebration of twenty-five years of his literary work in Kiev. This anniversary was widely celebrated in many Jewish communities of Imperial Russia. But the writer gave a special meaning to the celebration of the anniversary in Kiev. Sholom Aleichem wrote to his friend

Naum Solomonovich Syrkin[4] that the congratulations which he received from Kiev "moved me to tears. This is from Kiev. Kiev is my city. It is impossible to come everywhere for the celebration of the anniversary, but that I cannot go to Kiev makes me feel depressed" (*Sobranie* 19).

Sholom Aleichem loved Kiev and that is why, sensing the approach of death (he spent the last two years of his life in America), he asked to be buried in a Kiev cemetery near the grave of his father. Sholom Aleichem died on May 13, 1916 in New York, but due to World War I, it was impossible to fulfill his final request (*Sobranie* 19). So he was buried in the Old Mount Carmel Cemetery in New York City.

Other Kiev Jewish Writers and Poets

The worldwide fame of Sholom Aleichem overshadowed other Kiev Jewish writers and intellectuals whose contribution to the Jewish culture was quite significant. Some of the older generation of Kiev Jewish intellectuals, whom Sholom Aleichem called "khakhame Kiev" ("Sages of Kiev") were Jewish *maskilim*, the "product of Jewish Enlightenment, Haskalah" (Estraikh, *In Harness* 8). Among them were the Hebrew poet Isaak Kaminer (1834–1901) and the Yiddish poet and composer Mark Varshavskii (1848–1907). Both of them graduated from Russian universities: Kaminer was a physician and Varshavskii was a lawyer; these professions provided them with an income, but they devoted their free time to Jewish culture. Kaminer's early poetry was influenced by both the Haskalah and socialism. After the pogroms of 1881–82 Kaminer became a Palestinophile, "a follower of *Hibat Tsiyon* (*Lovers of Zion*) and subsequently was one of the most ardent admirers of Theodor Herzl" (*YIVO*). Kaminer expressed his Zionist views in his poems. His collected works were published posthumously in 1905.

Varshavskii wrote melodies and lyrics for Yiddish songs, which he sang to his friends. Sholem Aleichem encouraged him to publish them. The first edition of *Yidishe folkslider mit notn* (*Yiddish Folk Songs with Music Notes*), with Sholem Aleichem's introduction, was published in Kiev in 1901. Many of Varshavskii's songs became popular among Yiddish speakers in Russia and abroad; perhaps the best known of them *Der alef-beyz* or *Afn pripetshik* (*The Alphabet* or *On the Hearth*) (Estraikh, *In Harness* 8; *YIVO*).

At the turn of the twentieth century the Jewish poet Yehalel (acronym of Yehudah Leib Levin), the writer Yitskhok Yoel Linetskii, and the writer and

4 Naum Solomonovich (Nachman) Syrkin (1868–1924), a leader of the Socialist Zionism and a writer.

Jewish public figure Gershon Badanes (the pen name of Grigorii Gurevich) lived in Kiev. They were not as significant for Russian Jewish culture as the best Jewish writers and poets such as Mendele Moicher Sforim, Chaim Nachman Bialik or Sholom Aleichem, but their presence in the city, especially after the departure from Kiev of Sholom Aleichem, preserved Jewish literary life there.

The War of Jewish Languages

In the early twentieth century a group of talented young Jewish writers appeared in Kiev, among whom were the future founders of *Kultur Lige* (*Culture League*)[5]: Moshe Litvakov, Yekhezkel Dobrushin, Nakhman Meisel and David Bergelson (Estraikh, *In Harness* 31). Young Yiddish poets and writers met in Kiev either at the OPE library [6] or at the "salon" of Rakhil Isaevna, who provided her house for meetings of the young talents. Some of them, such as David Hofshtein and Osher Shvartsman, first wrote their poetry in Hebrew, Russian and Ukrainian, before they switched into Yiddish (Estraikh, *In Harness* 14–15). In 1909 they created in Kiev the publishing house "Kunst-verlag" (Arts Publisher), which specialized in the publication of literature in Yiddish (Kazovsky 6). Hillel Kazovsky wrote, "A little later, this circle grew into the "Kyiv Group" that became a noticeable phenomenon in the history of new Jewish literature in Yiddish" (6). Gennady Estraikh showed that many of the young Jewish writers were "equally fluent in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian" (*In Harness* 16). Yiddish was their conscious choice, being the vernacular language of the majority of the Jews to whom they addressed their works. Even though these writers lived in Kiev, they wrote more about the life of shtetl Jews: "Kiev Yiddish prose and poetry was populated by young Jewish shtetl-dwellers, villagers, or recent urbanites" (*In Harness* 16). The young Yiddish writers and poets shared populist and socialist principles. So they wrote about the life of Jewish masses, which was also supposed to be more interesting for their readers. This interest in provincial life put Yiddish writers somewhat apart from the mainstream of the modernist urban literature of the time.

While the populist Jewish writers promoted Yiddish literature in Kiev, Zionists believed that such literature and even the language itself should not exist. The

5 *Kultur Lige* was a Jewish cultural organization, which was established and worked in Kiev in 1918 – the early 1920s, whose aim was to promote Yiddish language, literature, theater and culture. There were branches of Kultur Lige in other countries in the interwar period.

6 OPE, the abbreviation of *Obshestvo dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdu evreiami v Rossii* (Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia).

lecture of Vladimir Jabotinsky about Jewish languages in Kiev in February 1911 provoked heated debates. He denied the right of Yiddish to exist "on the Jewish street." A report about Jabotinsky's lecture was published in the Jewish weekly *Evreiskii Mir* on February 24, 1911:

> *Kiev*
>
> *The Lecture of Jabotinsky about Jewish Languages*
> On February 7th in the Jewish Literary Society and by invitation of its Committee V. E. Jabotinsky presented a lecture about Jewish languages.
>
> The debated question about languages, the orator said, is the question regarding the hegemony of the language of Jewish national culture. One may guess that national Jewish values can be created either in the old Jewish language (so-called Hebrew), or in Jewish (Yiddish), or in Russian…
>
> Perhaps when the epoch of democratization and decentralization begins in Russia, then Jews along with other national minorities will receive the opportunity to use the Jewish language, if it is still alive by this time… However, it [Yiddish] will never become the language of Jewish national culture. Among the two languages which contend with each other for the first place in our national school, the victory will remain with the old Jewish language…
>
> The Jewish nation, according to the lecturer's opinion, will be united and undivided, only in the case of the recognition of the old Jewish language as the language of culture and education. Only the language of the prophets is the clamp which is able to unify the numerous Jewish "leftover bits" scattered around the world, only the old Jewish language was and will be the language of Jewish cultural values, Jewish spirit and poetry…
>
> "It is not a problem, Mr. Jabotinsky said, that a simple Jew or an intelligent Jew may cry when he listens to the Jewish [Yiddish] song: the tears are water!"
>
> Then Jabotinsky attacked the jargon [as Yiddish was called] but promised to defend it from the "external [i.e. gentile] world." However, he declared an eternal struggle against Yiddish on the Jewish street. He concluded his speech by the exclamation: "So I recognize full rights only for the Hebrew language in Jewish life, and lawlessness for all others!"

Jewish Artists

Many Jewish artists studied in the Kiev Art School, established in 1900, and in the Art Studio of Aleksandra Ekster. Art schools did not have a percentage quota for Jewish students, so they attracted gifted Jewish youth. The well-known Jewish artists: Abram Manevich, Aleksandr Tyshler, Mark Epshtein, Zinovii Tolkachev, Isaac Rabinovich, and many others studied there. Hillel Kazovsky wrote that Kiev Jewish artists were inspired by the aesthetic ideals and national and cultural ideas

of Kiev Yiddish writers (6). Many of the Jewish artists made illustrations for the works of the Yiddish writers and poets. Jewish artists and Yiddish writers joined the Kultur Lige, when the organization was established in 1918.

Abram Manevich (1881–1942) is the best known Kiev Jewish artist. He was born in Belorussian shtetl Mstislavl' and came to Kiev in 1900 at the age of nineteen with one desire: to become an artist. He studied in the Kiev Art School, from which he graduated in 1905, and then in the Munich Academy of Arts in 1905–1907 (Stech). An art critic wrote about Manevich's works in the early twentieth century, "Manevich synthesized in his creativity all new forms of arts, giving them his own sense" (Zhbankova). Manevich produced many paintings in a modernist style, depicting landscapes and city scenes. The artist devoted his many works to Kiev landscapes and some of his works nostalgically return us to the Jewish shtetls, for example,"Vinnytsia: The Ierusalimka District," and "Ghetto" (Stech). Manevich lived in 1910–1915 in Switzerland, Italy, Great Britain and France. He received international recognition after his successful exhibition at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in Paris in 1913. However, he declined offers to move to London or New York and returned to Kiev in 1915 (Stech). After the revolution Manevich, along with well-known Ukrainian artists Aleksandr Murashko, Fedor Krichevski, and Georgii Narbut, was elected as a Professor of Landscape Art of the newly created Ukrainian Academy of Arts (Zhbankova). However, after his only son Boris was killed during the civil war in Ukraine in 1919, Manevich with his wife and daughter emigrated to the U.S. in 1921. There, he successfully continued his artistic career. He had personal exhibitions in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, Montreal and Toronto. He died in New York in 1942. In 1928 the Russian Marxist thinker and the first Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatolii Vasilievich Lunacharsky (1875–1933), wrote about Manevich's art that it has "very deep Jewish roots. It is difficult to define these Jewish features. Manevich likes very much typical Jewish subjects: old half-ruined synagogues… and small houses on a hilly shtetl street." (quoted in Zhbankova)

The other Kiev Jewish artists mentioned above were younger than Manevich, and their talents flourished after the revolution.

Jews in Popular Culture in Kiev

The acting and musician professions were quite popular among Kievan Jews, because the actors and musicians could receive a residence permit in the city, at least temporarily during the performance season. If a troupe was popular, often the residence permit in Kiev could possibly be extended for additional seasons.

Jewish theaters and performances by Jewish troupes were officially forbidden in Russia between 1883 and 1905 (*Kratkaia* 795–798). In 1905 this prohibition was lifted by Nicholas II. But thereafter the performers needed to obtain permission from the local administration. It was very hard to receive such permission in practice. Jeffrey Veidlinger and Antony Polonsky wrote that performances in Yiddish were forbidden in 1908 in Vilna, Siedlce and Kiev (*Jewish* 181; *The Jews* 399).

Sometimes Jewish troupes called themselves Jewish-German and pretended that they were performing in German, while they really used Yiddish as the language of their performance. For a while this worked well. For example, in 1906 the Jewish-German troupe of impresario Semen Novikov received permission from the Kiev Governor to perform twenty plays in German in Kiev in the *Chateau de Fleurs* (*Castle of Flowers*) Theater. The Kiev Governor imposed only one condition – that all these "plays be performed exclusively in German without the use of Jewish jargon, and as soon as this condition is broken the first time the further performances should be immediately stopped."[7] However, the condition to perform in German was not possible to fulfill for Jewish-German troupes: neither the actors nor their audience – common Jewish people – understood German well. Therefore the Jewish-German troupes continued to perform in Yiddish. This "trick" was soon discovered by the authorities, who forbade the performances of Jewish-German troupes in Kiev and in the Southwestern region.

The historian of Yiddish theater Bernhard Gorin wrote that the Jewish intelligentsia in Russia "would go to the Russian or Polish theater and would never allow themselves to be found patronizing the Yiddish theater" (Veidlinger 182). The Russified Jewish elite definitely considered Russian culture superior to Yiddish. But in the case of Kiev we can see that local Jews did not have much choice, Yiddish performances, lectures, and concerts of Jewish music were not allowed in the city. In this way the authorities pushed the Jewish intelligentsia toward further acculturation and assimilation. The officials did not care at all about the cultural needs of the poor Jews who did not or barely understood Russian and who, with the ban on Yiddish culture, were deprived of any cultural life at all.

Jewish acculturated elite liked and often attended the Kiev Russian theaters. One of them, the Russian drama theater, was even purchased by Leon Brodskii. The theater building was constructed in 1898 (now it is the Ukrainian Drama Theater of Ivan Franko) (Kovalinskii 236). Brodskii leased the building to the

7 According to the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in city Kiev (TsDIAK U), f. 442, op. 636, d. 415, ll. 1–2.

Solovtsov's troupe, after whom it was called Solovtsov's theater. The theater staged many Russian and foreign plays and was very popular among the Russian and Jewish elites.

Some Jewish actors also played in Ukrainian troupes that were called Mallorossiiskii (Little Russian). The Jewish actress Lubov' Bolotina (probably not her real name, but a stage pseudonym) applied to the Kiev governor with a request to allow her to live in Kiev during the summer 1900 season to perform with the "Russko-Maloruskaia" (Russian-Ukrainian) troupe.[8]

Jewish youth who studied abroad often brought back to Russia Western innovations and new ideas. Sergei Andreevich Frenkel', who studied in Belgian universities and became an electrical engineer, established an enterprise for the electrification of plants and factories in Kiev. In 1906 he founded in the city the first company for showing movies with its own movie theater *Luks* (Luxury) with 300 seats. Four years later he transformed this company into the Joint-Stock Cinematograph Society named after himself "Sergei Andreevich Frenkel," which had branches over all Russia "from Feodosiia to Tomsk and from Vil'no to Tashkent" (Kal'nitskii, "Kino"). Each regional branch of his company had a large collection of movies, including foreign films. The foreign companies, which provided these films to Frenkel', gave him the right for their exclusive screening in Russia. The advertisements of the Frenkel' company often stated that he had the monopoly for showing movies all over Russia (Kal'nitskii, "Kino"). His company showed many foreign and Russian movies: comedies and dramas, love stories and thrillers. Frenkel' was personally acquainted with movie stars. In a photo taken at the time he is depicted together with the famous French actor, Max Linder (Morozov, Derevianko 19).

Jewish audiences certainly liked Jewish-themed movies. For example, Frenkel's company and the movie theater *Carmen* in Belaia Tserkov signed a contract in 1914 about screening a series of films from Jewish life (Morozov, Derevianko 18–19). There was no shortage of such pictures, three were shot about the Beilis Affair, one documentary and two fictional: *The Kiev Mystery or Beilis Process* (1913), director Iosif Soifer and *Vera Chibiriak* (subtitled *The Blood Libel*, 1917), director Nikolai Breshko-Breshkovskii (Morozov, Derevianko 58–61). Some Jewish movies were based on Biblical stories: *Zhizn' Moiseia* (*The Life of Moses*), *Zhertvoprinoshenie Avraama* (*Abraham's Sacrifice*), and *David and Saul.* Many fictional films depicted modern Jewish life: usually they were tragedies such as *Rakhil'* (*Rachel*), *Tragediia Evreiskoi Kursistki* (*The Tragedy of the Jewish Student*), *Gore Sary* (*The*

8 According to TsDIAK Ukraine, f. 442, op. 630, d. 47, l. 32.

Grief of Sara), and *Kaznennyi Zhizn'iu* (*Executed by Life*) with the subtitle: *The Terrible Tragedy from the Life of Kievan Jews*.

This last film was made by the Kiev movie studio *Svetoten'* (*Chiaroscuro*) in 1914. Unfortunately, it has not survived. The description of the movie says that it was about Jewish youth, their struggle with old prejudices and their search for new ideals. The film also depicted the generational conflict (Morozov, Derevianko 61–62).

The film *Kaznennyi Zhizn'iu* (*Executed by Life*) was shot by the leading movie director of the *Svetoten'*, Iosif Abramovich Soifer, who also performed in the movie. Soifer was a student of the renowned Russian theater director Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold (1874–1940). He began his career in 1907 in the Moscow Art Theater, but in 1910 he moved to Kiev, worked in Solovtsov's Theater and then became a movie director. During his Kiev years (1910–1916) he made a number of films on Jewish themes.

Jewish movie directors and screenwriters made film adaptations of Jewish and world classics. In 1915 Soifer shot the movie *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* (*Humiliated and Insulted*), based on the Dostoevsky novel. In the same year Iosif Soifer made *Rabyni roskoshi i mody* (*Slaves of Luxury and Fashion*). The screenplay for the film was written by Grigorii Naumovich Breitman, the editor of the Kiev newspaper *Poslednie Novosti* (*The Latest News*). His screenplay was based on the novel by Emil Zola *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Paradise*) combined with scandalous press accounts of the prosecution of a Moscow tailor who took advantage of the passion of some of her prettiest customers for expensive clothing to convert them into prostitutes (Morozov, Derevianko 62–63).

Jewish movie directors and the companies which screened these movies often came into trouble with the authorities, which banned many Jewish-themed movies for various reasons. The movie *Kiev Mystery or Beilis Process* (1913) was banned after its first showing. The Kiev Governor, in a secret directive to the chiefs of police of Kiev Province ordered them on October 17, 1913 "not to allow on any pretext the showing of cinematograph pictures related to the Beilis Affair. In the case of requests to show such pictures they should be turned down without citing the order of the Minister."[9] Although the Kiev Governor did not mention the full title or name of the "Minister" we can guess that the order was given by the Minister of the Interior, because it is located in an archival folder with other orders of the minister regarding the Beilis Affair. The producers of the movie *Kiev Mystery or Beilis Process* (1913) successfully sold the picture for screening

9 According to TsDIAK Ukraine, f. 278, op. 1, d. 187, l. 134.

in Western Europe and the U.S. after its ban in Russia (Kal'nitskii, "Kino"). Based on a decision of the Synod,[10] censors also banned movies based on Biblical stories. Russian nationalist organizations, the so-called Black Hundreds, made sure that this decision was strictly enforced (Morozov, Derevianko 26).

In spite of strict censorship there were many movies on Jewish themes that the public enjoyed: comedies and tragedies, which showed different aspects of Jewish life in Russia and abroad. These movies raised many acute questions that were widely discussed by Jews: life in the Pale of the Settlement and beyond the Pale in the movies *L'Haim* (*For Life*), *Tragediia Evreiskoi Kursistki* (*The Tragedy of the Jewish Student*); the problems of intermarriage and conversion in the movies *Zhidovka-Vykrestka* (*The Converted Jewess*), *Rakhil* (*Rachel*); the conflict of young and old generations and the struggle with old traditions in *Gore Sary* (*The Grief of Sara*), *Kaznennyi Zhizn'iu* (*Executed by Life*); and Jewish prostitution in *Bog Mesti* (*The God of Vengeance*) based on a play by Sholom Ash. Movies addressed Jewish emigration from Russia and Jewish life abroad: *Za Okeanom* (*Beyond the Ocean*), *Zhizn'evreev v Palestine* (*The Life of Jews in Palestine*), *Zhizn' evreev v Amerike* (*The Life of Jews in America*).

Jewish themes became fashionable and Jewish movies attracted not only Jews, but also the gentile public. For example, the movie *L'Haim* was successfully shown in cities where Jews were just a small minority (Morozov, Derevianko 27). Producers of Jewish movies were both Jews and gentiles. For example, the movie *Beyond the Ocean* was made by the Russian movie producer Dmitrii Ivanovich Kharitonov in Khar'kov in 1912. As a plot he used a play by Yakov Gordin and invited actors of Jewish theaters to perform in the movie (Morozov, Derevianko 29–30). The interest in movies in general and in Jewish movies in particular was so great that starting in 1907 the trade journal *Cine-Phono* was published in Russia twice per year and provided all important news on the movie industry. The journal's publisher was the Jew Samuil Viktorovich Lur'ie (Morozov, Derevianko 71).

Conclusion

In spite of the arrogance of Petersburg and Moscow intellectuals who believed that true intellectual life could exist only in the Russian capitals, we can see that Kiev had a vibrant cultural life. Kievan Jews enjoyed all the diversions of urban culture and made numerous valuable contributions to it. Among Kievan Jews there were many actors, singers and musicians, because these professions gave

10 The Synod, or Holy Synod, was the highest governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church between 1721 and 1918.

them a temporary or permanent residence permit in the city. Kievan cultural life was nourished by the generous donations and investments of wealthy local Jewish merchants.

Certainly the strong anti-Semitism of the authorities and many gentiles, Jewish pogroms of 1881 and 1905, and the Beilis Affair badly affected Kievan Jews. The authorities continuously suppressed Jewish culture in the city: they banned Jewish newspapers, theatrical performances, film screenings and literary readings. State anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence in Kiev found their reflection in the works of Kievan writers and artists. After the pogroms some of them left the city forever.

However, for many Kievan Jews the benefits of life in a large modern city overweighed the fear and reality of anti-Semitism. Along with other city dwellers Jews enjoyed the atmosphere of modernity in Kiev, an atmosphere which was utterly absent in the backward shtetls. Jewish writers, poets and artists contributed by their works to the creation of modern Kievan culture. Kievan Jews who studied and travelled abroad and adopted European culture, brought to the city many European technical innovations and influences including electricity, cinema, public transportation and modern architectural and artistic styles. Under their impact Kiev became a more European and modern city.

Kiev Jews had diverse cultural tastes. The Russified Kievan Jewish elite preferred either Russian or European culture, while Jewish populist authors promoted Yiddish culture. At the beginning of the twentieth century the city became an arena of heated debates between Yiddishists and Hebraists. The diversity of political and cultural views of Kiev Jewish intellectuals and their debates about the future of Jews were fruitful for the formation of the Jewish national ideology and consciousness.

There were many different approaches toward Jewish cultural life in Kiev, as well as many different national cultures were represented simultaneously in the city: Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Polish, Czech and German. There was a place for each of them in the Kiev cultural mosaic. In spite of all efforts of the Imperial Russian authorities to Russify the city, Kiev has always remained a multi-national and multi–cultural metropolis.

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Klaus Hödl

Viennese Culture in 1900: Bridging the Divide

By and large, the historiography of Austrian Jews, but also generally all Central European Jews in the 19th and 20th centuries, is characterized by a one-sided perspective. It primarily traces entry by Jews into the 'middle-class' and the adoption of societally prevalent cultural standards, which can be classified as belonging to high culture (Storey 32–47). This narrative found its paradigmatic expression in Steven Beller's book, *Vienna and the Jews*, in which he describes Jews' contributions to high culture. Beller's outstanding publication explains the reasons for the large share of Jews among the producers of Viennese fin-de-siècle culture. It is rightly considered to be a standard work on Austrian Jewry at the turn of the 20th century. Yet in his book the cultural articulations of everyday life have been omitted and references to popular culture are missing. Beller's book gives the impression that Jews had nothing to do with the distractions and amusement of popular culture. The vast majority of other publications regarding the history of Austrian Jews also deal exclusively with high culture, that is, when they address cultural activities at all.[1]

There are only very few isolated works that focus on Jews in Viennese popular culture. Almost all of them deal with the field of music. Yet, they are largely ignored by historians of Viennese Jewry. These immensely insightful but widely neglected publications include, above all, works on Jewish *Volkssänger* and musicians of *Wienerlieder* as well as on *Jargon* theatres.[2] Besides, a few

1 See, for example: Botstein, Leon: *Judentum und Modernität. Essays zur Rolle der Juden in der deutschen und österreichischen Kultur 1848 bis 1938.* Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 1991. Botz, Gerhard, Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak (eds.): *Eine zerstörte Kultur. Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19.* Jahrhundert. Buchloe: Verlag Obermayer 1990. Wistrich, Robert S.: *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph.* Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization 1990. Rozenblit, Marsha L. *Juden in Wien 1867–1914. Assimilation und Identität*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 1989.

2 See Philip V. Bohlman, „Auf der Bima – Auf der Bühne. Zur Emanzipation der jüdischen Popularmusik im Wien der Jahrhundertwende", in: Hilscher, Elisabeth Th., Theophil Antonicek (eds.): *Vergleichend-systematische Musikwissenschaft. Beiträge zu Methode und Problematik der systematischen, ethnologischen und historischen Musikwissenschaft*. Tutzing: Hans Schneider 1994. pp. 417–449. Bohlman, Philip V.: An

additional publications at least touch upon Jews in relation to Viennese popular culture.[3]

This striking lack of research and publications is not due to Jews not having been active in the realm of popular culture. On the contrary: they were strongly involved in it, but have not yet been the subject of research.

In the following, I look at some aspects of Jews in Viennese popular culture, mainly theatrical pieces by Jewish *Volkssänger*, and indicate how historiography could benefit from addressing their activity in this field as a worthwhile focus of research. Above all, they show how much performances of so-called lowbrow culture can serve as an important source for the everyday life of Viennese Jews.

Going beyond the acculturation/assimilation narrative

As has been mentioned by various scholars, such as Barbara Hahn (121) and Moshe Rosman (56–57), popular culture – broadly understood as comprising everyday life, attitudes and mentalities – represents an exemplary realm of Jewish and non-Jewish togetherness and social interaction. This can also be ascertained in the field of the popular entertainment industry, as has been pointed out with respect to the United States, Germany and other societies, and even in regard to Eastern European countries (Most; Portnoy; Otte). This holds true for Vienna as well: Jews and non-Jews jointly shaped the scene of the *Volkssänger*, the cabaret, the movie sector, and many more areas of the Austrian, especially Viennese, entertainment sector (Hödl, "The Quest").

Jews and non-Jews interacted more than can be inferred from a large part of the available historiographic literature. It was not until the recent past that historians explored the multifarious nature of Jewish and non-Jewish social encounters

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Endgame's "Dramatis Personae": Jewish Popular Music in the Public Spaces of the Habsburg Monarchy. In: Botstein, Leon, Werner Hanak (eds.): *Vienna. Jews and the City of Music 1870–1938*. Hofheim: Wolke Verlag 2004. pp. 93–105. Bohlman, Philip V.: *Jüdische Volksmusik. Eine mitteleuropäische Geistesgeschichte*. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 2005. Pressler, Gertraud: „Jüdisches und Antisemitisches in der Wiener Volksunterhaltung". In: *Musicologica Austriaca* 17 (1998). pp. 63–82. Wacks, Georg: *Die Budapester Orpheumgsellschaft. Ein Varieté in Wien 1889–1919*. Vienna: Verlag Holzhausen 2002.

3 Gluck, Mary, "Jewish Humor and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Budapest", in: *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (2008). p. 1–22. Haug, Christine, Franziska Mayer, Madleen Podewski (eds.): *Populäres Judentum. Medien, Debatten, Lesestoffe*. Tübingen: Niemeyer 2009. Veidlinger, Jeffrey: *Jewish Public Culture in late Russian Empire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2009.

and mutual entanglement that helped to shape cultural processes.[4] Their findings tend to conflict with the common narrative in Jewish historiography, still prevalent, according to which Jews adapted above all to the middle-class sector of non-Jewish society.

The term used in this context is *acculturation*.[5] Sometimes even the obsolete term *assimilation* is still applied.[6] However, the employment of acculturation as an analytical tool is problematic for various reasons.[7] A more adequate term than acculturation/assimilation is interaction. It comes to the fore in all societal realms, but especially in the field of popular culture. Therefore, as mentioned above, popular culture represents a paradigmatic field in which Jewish and non-Jewish cooperation and entanglement – instead of Jewish acculturation – can be brought to light.

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4 See above all Hundert, Gerson David: *The Jews in a Polish Private Town: The Case of Opatów in the Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1991. Presner, Todd Samuel: *Mobile Identity. Germans, Jews, Trains*. New York: Columbia University Press 2007.

5 An example of a more recent publication that even contains the term acculturation in the title is: Frank Stern and Barbara Eichinger (eds.): *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900–1938. Akkulturation – Antisemitismus – Zionismus.* Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 2009.

6 For an explanation of the difference between acculturation and assimilation, see Gordon, Milton: *Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins.* New York: Oxford University Press 1964. pp. 71–77.

7 First, it is based on a static understanding of culture. But culture is, as many studies show, highly dynamic. (Müller-Funk, Wolfgang: *Kulturtheorie*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2006.) Secondly, acculturation departs from a dichotomous categorization of Jews vs. non-Jews – a perspective that also must be questioned. In addition, the term acculturation conceives of Jews as comprising a minority that has to accommodate to the predominant cultural standards in order to be accepted as members of society at large. (Aschheim, Steven E.: "German History and German Jewry: Boundaries, Junctions and Interdependence." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XLIII* (1998). 315–322. Gotzmann, Andreas: „Zwischen Nation und Religion: Die deutschen Juden auf der Suche nach einer bürgerlichen Konfessionalität"., in Gotzmann, Andreas, Rainer Liedtke, Till van Rahden (eds.): *Juden, Bürger, Deutsche. Zur Geschichte von Vielfalt und Differenz 1800–1933. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck* 2001. 241–261.) This understanding of cultural adaptation neglects indications that cultural processes are generated by all members of a society, which is to say, by both Jews and non-Jews. (For an outstanding example of a historiography that stresses Jewish and non-Jewish cooperation and the multifaceted cultural reciprocity between them, see Biale, David (ed.): *Cultures of the Jews*. New York: Schocken Books 2002.)

The problem with Jewishness as an analytical category

In various publications I have tried to trace Jewish and non-Jewish interaction. In so doing I have dealt with Jews whose Jewishness was known, for instance by their membership in the Viennese Jewish community or their being born of a Jewish mother. I have considered people active in popular culture Jewish if their 'formal Jewishness' could be determined.[8] This criterion, however, does not show whether they themselves entertained a Jewish identity or were aware of their Jewishness when they participated in popular cultural processes (Kilcher). It is possible that among some of them a Jewish consciousness was absent and no distinction between these 'formal Jews' and non-Jews existed. In this case, the assertion that Jews and non-Jews jointly shaped popular culture is of no relevance.

This problem can be illustrated by shedding light on Gabor Steiner, the founder of the entertainment area *Venedig in Wien* and director of several variety theatres (Rubey, Schoenwald). For some time, I considered him a paradigmatic example of Jews in the popular entertainment industry, and thus clearly participating in shaping popular culture. Yet nothing in his activities is related to Judaism and thus indicative of his Jewishness. He even converted to Protestantism. Consequently, dealing with Gabor Steiner is only possible if his Jewishness is presupposed by inference from his Jewish descent. This approach, however, is highly problematic and casts serious doubt on whether it is warrantable to include him among Jews in popular culture.

But how can the problem of drawing upon a preconceived notion of Jewishness be solved? Is there an approach to exploring Jewish and non-Jewish intermingling which deals only with people as Jews who actually evince at least traces of a Jewish identity? And can their Jewishness be determined unless they articulate it explicitly, or can it be inferred from their observance of religious laws and rituals in their everyday lives?

In a recently published article (Hödl "The Elusiveness"), I sought to explore circumscriptions of Jewishness in theatrical plays by Viennese Jewish *Volkssänger*

8 Hödl, Klaus, „Jüdische Differenz' in der Wiener Populärkultur." *Medaon – Magazin für jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung* 6: 11 (2012). 1–11. Web. Hödl, Klaus, „Jüdische Differenz in der allgemeinen Populärkultur. Einblicke in die jüdisch-nichtjüdischen Beziehungen in Wien um 1900.": Norbert Honsza, Przemysław Sznurkowski (eds.): *Deutsch-jüdische Identität. Mythos und Wirklichkeit. Ein neuer Diskurs?* Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang Verlag 2013. pp. 57–69. Hödl, Klaus, "The Blurring of Distinction. Performance and Jewish Identities in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna". *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 3: 2 (2009). 229–249.

(Koller). The major thesis I tried to confirm claimed that the Jewishness of the authors is reflected in their work and can be ascertained by an adequate examination of these texts. Since none of the plays which I perused refer to religious beliefs or activities as an indicator of Jewishness, I conceived of Jewishness as an ensemble of traits which distinguish Jews from non-Jews; consequentially, I comprehended Jewish consciousness as an awareness of, or even identification with, these marks of difference. As I was able to demonstrate, this 'Jewish difference' was volatile, permanently changing, hard to pin down to something concrete, and therefore elusive. In order to confirm the thesis of a connection between the described 'Jewish difference' in the texts and the Jewishness of the authors, I compared the latters' biographies with the Jewish characters in the plays. In this way, I was able to discern a significant congruence between them.

This approach de-constructed essentialized notions of identity. The Jewishness of the *Volkssänger* could be presented as contextual and inclusive, i.e. its traits can be adopted by non-Jews as well. The difference between Jews and non-Jews was described as fluid.

However, these findings raise new questions. First, is research on Jews in general popular culture feasible at all if Jews are no longer apprehensible as Jews? Under what circumstances can studies focus on Jews if they are not (or are only barely) distinguishable from non-Jews? Second, the method of looking for references to Jewish consciousness by scanning textual sources is of very limited use. It can be applied to examining the identity of Jewish *Volkssänger*, writers and other people who have left behind written material. However, it cannot be applied to ascertaining the Jewishness of impresarios if nothing else is known other than the programmes of their theatres, where no Jewish groups performed or Jewish topics were dealt with. How can the identity of these managers be determined?

The answer to both questions, as my thesis suggests, lies in enlarging the employment of 'Jewish difference' as an analytical tool. In this respect, the apparent lack of 'solid', at least 'less-elusive', elements in the Jewishness of the *Volkssänger* may be due to my having explored too narrow a range of sources, comprising solely a mere dozen theatrical pieces. An expansion of the number of theatrical pieces to be analysed will thus help to solve the methodological problem of how to do research on Jews in popular culture if they are indistinguishable from non-Jews.

Concerning the Jewish impresarios, their work must be compared with that of non-Jewish impresarios. This is not to say that this procedure brings to light exclusively 'Jewish' patterns of activities. But certain characteristics may be found more often among Jewish than among non-Jewish impresarios. In sum, these properties are indicative of a specific mode of behaviour among the former

which distinguishes them from their non-Jewish colleagues. These elements thus constitute 'Jewish difference'. And if Jews identify with it, it can be asserted that they harbour a (secular) Jewish consciousness.

One of these characteristics seemed to be a stronger propensity to introduce new trends to Vienna's entertainment industry and a greater readiness to avail themselves of international networks. The afore-mentioned Gabor Steiner, as well as Ben Tieber, the founder and long-time director of the Viennese Apollo Theatre, may be taken as paradigmatic examples of such 'Jewish impresarios', even if they both converted to Protestantism. They frantically sought to excel in their work by putting on ever more spectacular performances; both engaged the most renowned artists from abroad, and both relied on a densely woven network of foreign contacts. In this respect they clearly surpassed other (non-Jewish) impresarios. Albert Hirsch represents another instance. Together with many other Jewish (and some non-Jewish) *Volkssänger,* he staunchly opposed the demands of other (mostly non-Jewish) *Volkssänger* to bar foreign ensembles from performing in Vienna. He even helped foreign groups to gain a foothold in the city.

Such activities, it should be emphasized, were not exclusive to Jews. But they were more conspicuous among them than among non-Jews, thereby constituting a mode of 'Jewish difference'. Interviews and reports in newspapers and journals indicate that the above-mentioned impresarios were aware of this 'Jewish difference' and their 'otherness' resulting from it. In this context, a particular kind of activity was perceived as Jewish, both by Jews and non-Jews.

Based on the analytical tool 'Jewish difference' I consider it possible to explore Jewish and non-Jewish interaction in popular culture without taking recourse to essentialized notions of Jewishness, such as descent. Popular culture remains a paradigmatic field of Jewish and non-Jewish togetherness and intermingling, and shows how they shared in the production of cultural meaning.

Benefits of research on Jews in popular culture

In what follows I delineate a few aspects of Viennese popular culture which could also be of benefit to the historiography of Viennese Jews. They extend the present state of knowledge of the past of Viennese Jews as well as of historiography in general. In terms of research, the topic 'Jews in Viennese popular culture' is thus a desideratum that needs to be tackled.

(A) Insight into Jewish everyday life

The first point concerns the Jewish *Volkssänger*. A large bulk of theatrical pieces written and performed by them are stored in the archives. These plays, so I argue,

provide an important and informative insight into the lives and identities of Viennese Jews at the turn of the 20th century and disclose the contemporary discourses in which they participated. To the extent that the plays served for the entertainment of both Jews and non-Jews, they can be utilized as historical sources as well. I claim that the theatrical plays contribute to and complement the knowledge of Viennese Jewish life presented by historiography. Their analysis will support many aspects of the historical narratives of Viennese Jewry; but they will also modify some views and interpretations. The picture of Jews in the city around 1900 will become more colourful and complex.

Two pieces which I have come across in the archives tend to substantiate this thesis. The first play, *Die Reise nach Grosswardein* (Traveling to Grosswardein) is a burlesque by Joseph Armin, and was performed by the *Budapester Orpheumgesellschaft* (Budapest Orpheum Society), an overwhelmingly Jewish group playing in *Jargon* in 1894. As I interpret it, it sheds light on some elements of Viennese Jews' attitudes toward Zionism. The story takes place at a railway station in Vienna. A few Jews are waiting for the train to Grosswardein, a town in Hungary (present-day Oradea in Romania). They had read an announcement in a daily newspaper, according to which an Englishman was looking for a companion for his journey there. Each of them wants to join him in order to leave behind their dismal lives, which are characterized by harassment, physical abuse and ill health. Grosswardein is imagined as a refuge to which they desire to escape in order to improve their lot. When the Englishman finally shows up, it turns out that he is not from England, but a Viennese. He was mistaken for an Englishman since his name is (Fritz) Engländer. And he is a member of one of Vienna's student fraternities, which represented the vanguard of the anti-Semitic movement (Armin). Going to Grosswardein with (Fritz) Engländer thus does not seem to be the best way to extract oneself from a hostile environment.

In various respects, *Die Reise nach Grosswardein* reminds a reader of the piece or a member of the audience of the Zionist project: similar to the Jews at the railway station bound for Grosswardein, many Jews in the diaspora also lived in drab and difficult circumstances, were persecuted, and consequently suffered from various ailments (Gilman; Efron). And many of them looked for a safe haven where they could dwell without discrimination and fear of mistreatment. Like the Jews in the play who appeared to wait for the train in vain, many Viennese Jews likewise thought the Zionist goal to re-settle in the ancient homeland was a project that would never come true. At the turn of the 20th century Theodor Herzl became the foremost representative of the Zionist movement (Kornberg; Bein). Like Fritz Engländer, Herzl was a member of a student fraternity. For the realization of the Zionist ideology he hoped for

support from the British government. Jews, so to speak, had to trust in the English, as did the Jewish characters in the play.

The association of Grosswardein with Zion becomes even more compelling by following another lead. In the theatrical piece, the idea of travelling to Grosswardein occurred to the so-called Englishman when he heard people singing and whistling 'Nach Grosswardein'. This song actually existed. It was composed by Hermann Rosenzweig around the turn of the 20th century in Budapest and became immensely popular in Vienna. The cover of the sheet music depicts four Chassidic Jews dancing in front of the silhouette of an apparently Oriental city which could be "situated somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean" (Bohlman 2004, 96). Grosswardein, so to speak, could thus signify Palestine.

But Grosswardein could also be a substitute for Palestine, and serve as an alternative refuge for Jews, an imaginary space for those who did not really want to emigrate, but in times of affliction envisaged themselves to be somewhere else, under more propitious circumstances. This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the play pokes fun at Zionism. After all, the mistreatment the above-mentioned Jews at the train station had to endure was inflicted on them by their wives. And the sickness they suffered from was a mild form of diarrhoea. In this way, *Die Reise nach Grosswardein* emphasizes that the Zionist reports on Jewish existence were grossly exaggerated and had no real substance. Viennese Jews, or at least a portion of them, thus did not sympathize with Zionism, nor did they find their own living conditions as depressing as asserted by the movement.

A second piece that serves as a worthwhile historical source of Viennese Jewish history at the turn of the 20th century focuses on the cremation of the dead. This alternative to burying them became legal in the early 1920s. However, the subject was part of contemporary discourse from the late 19th century on (Langer). It was dealt with in exemplary fashion in the play *Begraben oder Verbrennen* (Bury or Cremate), which was performed in Vienna in 1898 (Hirsch, *Begraben*). Basically, the piece illustrates the rift the controversies over this topic caused in the Viennese population, and above all the irrationality with which people argued about it. But the play is also indicative of the Jews' participation in contemporary discourse. Jews showed strong interest in public issues and thereby helped to shape them. A look at these theatrical pieces thus discloses aspects of Jewish life which may not be found by perusing Jewish newspapers and other material.

(B) The overlapping of high and popular culture

The theatrical pieces of the *Volkssänger* disclose not only numerous aspects of the attitudes, mentality, and interests of Viennese Jews. They also blur, as I

argue, the distinction between high and popular culture. The plays deal with many issues which were elaborated and discussed in scientific texts and the feuilleton sections of contemporary leading respected newspapers, such as the *Neue Freie Presse*.

This comes paradigmatically to the fore in the piece *Die Wiener Gemütlichkeit* by Albert Hirsch. It focuses on cases of mistaken identity and acquires a humorous tone by various misunderstandings due to the foreigners' unfamiliarity with the semantic nuances of the Viennese idiom. These foreigners, a German and a Bohemian, misinterpret the intentions and behaviour of Viennese people, thus causing much confusion and fuss (Hirsch, *Die Wiener*). *Die Wiener Gemütlichkeit* appears to be an ideal play for entertaining people in search of distraction. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that alongside generating a hilarious atmosphere, it also addresses a political issue. The plot revolves around the question of whether and how disputes can be solved by communication based on mutual understanding instead of fighting and war due to misapprehensions and language problems.

The issue of whether language can serve as a means to avoid misunderstandings and produce clarity in conversation was much debated in Austria (Luft, 17). It was related to the historical context of the multi-ethnic monarchy and its pluralism of languages (Soxberger). The Austrian government pursued a policy which granted predominance to German over Slavic languages and obviated the official acknowledgement of minor languages, thereby fanning nationalist sentiments and political crises. Language policy and politics thus became a major reason for the state's dissolution during and after World War I (Leinfellner-Rupertsberger).

Not only did the issue of language preoccupy Austrian politicians and fill the pages of contemporary newspapers and magazines; it also attracted the attention of scientists, artists, and other people. It became an important subject in the thinking of philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Fritz Mauthner (Johnston), and was dealt with by intellectuals such as Karl Kraus and the writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal (Lorenz). Even the *Volkssänger*, as pointed out above, made it a subject of their plays.

The examples taken from popular and high culture thus attest to an overlap of the two cultural realms in content, in the particular case of dealing with the shortcomings of language. Together with the proposition that popular culture draws on no specific theories or analytical tools, all claims to the contrary notwithstanding, they dispute the dichotomous categorization of the two cultural realms (Hecken). This conclusion has far-reaching repercussions. Above all, it questions the value of studies on popular culture if the larger societal context is not taken into due account. This is not to say that research on specific phenomena deemed to belong

to popular culture should be refrained from. Yet their adequate understanding is possible only if their connection with broader cultural processes is taken into consideration.

This perspective impacts on Jewish studies as well. It has direct consequences on the historiography of Jews in Vienna around 1900: focusing exclusively on high culture (or vice-versa on popular culture), it may be argued, constructs at best a fragmentary but more likely distorted picture of Viennese Jews. Their dealing with political issues on the stages – and probably in other fields of popular culture as well, and consequently their participation in contemporary discourse – indicates that Jews active in popular culture were strongly enmeshed in the texture of contemporary Viennese society. They helped to shape society at large and, implicitly, Jewish culture as well. Consequently, to leave them out distorts any historical account of Viennese Jews.

As I mentioned it above, the proposed overlap of high and popular culture allows for an exploration of parallels between the two realms. In this regard, specific 'Jewish patterns' of activities in high and popular culture no longer have to be explained separately. For example, relative to their proportion in society at large, Jews were represented in disproportionately high numbers in various sectors of both high and popular culture. Various studies attest to the large share of Jews in the former realm (Beller). The inordinate engagement of Jews in popular culture can be inferred from references in various (non-Judeophobic) media.[9] Since high and popular culture coincide in part with each other, it may now be argued that for Jews, the motives for their involvement with either cultural field were largely the same. Consequently, the Jews' propensity to engage in cultural activities may be seen as a mark of 'Jewish difference'.

I claim that one of the reasons for Jewish participation in popular and high culture was the theatrical nature of Viennese society. It provided for conditions under which people could articulate their ambitions very effectively through cultural activities. Since Jews were (at least unofficially) barred from various institutions through which people could make themselves heard, culture remained one of the accessible realms through which they could express their attitudes, opinions, and ambitions.

This interpretation contradicts long-held assumptions about Jewish cultural involvement as have been put forward, among others, by Carl Schorske. According to him, Jews took to art after the defeat of liberalism. They saw art as a retreat from the political realm and history (Schorske). 'Schorske's paradigm' has been

9 See, for example, Illustrirtes Wiener Extrablatt (25.9.1904) 18.

criticized from various angles, above all for its 'failure of liberalism' thesis.[10] Many critics have come up with their own explanations of Jewish involvement in high culture. What all of them fail to provide, however, is a reason that comprises the motives of Jews turning to popular culture as well. In my view, this is largely due to their dichotomous conception of culture.

(C) Specifics of Viennese Jewry

A last element accruing from exploring Jews in Viennese popular/mass culture shows some specifics of Viennese Jewry. For example, it is very striking that Austrian/Viennese Jews ran only very few department stores. Whereas Jews in Germany, France, and the United States had a decisive role in the development of this kind of consumer culture, Jews in Austria or Vienna established only a small number of such *Warenhäuser* (Lerner). Among well-known establishments there were Gerngross, Zwieback, and Rothberger (Meißl). Despite the comparatively small number of Jewish storeowners, the popular mind widely associated department stores with Jews in Vienna at the turn of the century, and this served to increase anti-Semitism.

The economic structure of Austrian society may partly account for the restricted number of Jewish department stores. The government tended to support small shop owners at the expense of department stores. In addition, socialist cooperatives represented viable alternatives to 'Jewish stores'. There may be other reasons for the relative paucity of Jewish department stores in Vienna, a question which still has to be investigated. Although the relationship between Jews and the economy has recently become a major research focus, almost nothing has been written about this subject to date (Reuveni and Wobick-Segev).

Comparative work on Jews in Austria, Germany, France and other countries may also help to explain the low number of Jewish department stores in Vienna. Furthermore, it will highlight particular properties of Austrian Jews, who are still frequently subsumed under 'German Jewry' or 'German-speaking Jews'. In this sense, more research on Jews in popular/mass culture may rectify inappropriate generalizations.

Summary

Popular culture is a paradigmatic field in which processes of Jewish and non-Jewish interaction can be explored. First of all, it highlights their mutual entanglements and thereby indicates how cultural processes in society at large were

10 See in particular the anthology edited by Steven Beller *Rethinking Vienna 1900*.

produced jointly by Jews and non-Jews. This corrects dichotomous categorizations of Jews and non-Jews, and consequently the analytical tool of acculturation.

Besides highlighting their mutual entanglement, research on Jews in general popular culture is of great benefit to (Jewish) historiography as well. It can substantiate, complement, and revise certain aspects of historical narratives.

For various reasons, studies on Jews in popular culture are scarce and wanting. This may be due, for example, to the prevalent narrative in Jewish historiography which lays stress on Jewish adaptation to Viennese society and culture (see above). Another reason may be the fact that researchers tend to use Jewish instead of general newspapers as contemporary textual sources. But Jewish newspapers used to be dismissive of general popular cultural articulations and hardly reported on them. Whatever motivated scholars to neglect the topic 'Jews in Viennese popular culture', filling this gap is indispensable in order to expand the knowledge of the Jewish past.

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Natalie Wynn

Ireland's Jewish Identity Crisis

> An identity in crisis is not incoherent nor episodic, but is an inescapable experience of modern life …
>
> Ken Koltun-Fromm (9)

Whatever its context, Jewish identity is widely recognized to be a notoriously complex and often tortured matter. This is no less the case in a small country such as Ireland which up to recently has had a largely monolithic national culture and sense of identity. Even though Ireland has become increasingly cosmopolitan in recent years, its ethnic and religious minorities, especially the smaller ones, continue to be stranded on the margins of Irish society and culture notwithstanding sometimes considerable contributions to various areas of national life (Goldstone, "Reflections" 108).[1] This is very much the case for one of Ireland's oldest minorities, the Jewish community.

This paper investigates the impact of Ireland's national, political and cultural milieu on the Jewish sense of identity and belonging. The paper opens with a thumbnail sketch of Irish-Jewish history and the relationship of Jews with Irish culture and politics. We then move on to explore the way in which these issues have influenced Jewish identity construction in Ireland, focusing mainly on how articulations of Irish-Jewish identity have evolved since 1945 with relation to a number of key questions. Can there really be such a thing as Irish-Jewish identity and, if so, how can we classify it? Why has it been necessary continually to define and reiterate the nature of Irish-Jewish identity over the years? What purpose does this ongoing restatement of Irish-Jewish identity serve, and in whose interests might it be? While there are probably more questions than there are answers, in raising them standard perceptions of the Jewish experience in Ireland are challenged. This allows us to push the boundaries of the current, typically one-dimensional thinking in favour of more modern and sophisticated understandings.

1 The well-documented Jewish contribution to Irish culture, politics, business, sport and other fields is briefly considered below, in relation to the traditional Irish-Jewish communal narrative.

Irish Jewry: A Brief Historical Context

Until the late nineteenth century, Jewish settlement in Ireland remained sporadic, generally isolated, and driven by colonial and/or commercial concerns. Consequently the small communities that were periodically established were easy prey to political unrest, civil disabilities and economic depression. Ireland's two principal congregations of Dublin and Belfast were established, in 1822 and 1861 respectively, by small circles of Central and West European Jews. From the mid-1870s, the "native" communal leadership was faced with a major influx of poor East European immigrants which peaked in the years 1890 to 1905. During this period, further small communities were established in the cities of Cork and Limerick, as well as in a number of smaller cities and towns throughout Ireland, such as Derry/Londonderry in the north and Waterford in the south.[2] Ireland's Jewish population peaked in the 1940s and, after a brief "golden age" of communal life in the 1950s, Jewish settlement patterns gradually reversed themselves. Since the 1980s, the effects of snowballing emigration have increasingly been felt, and nowadays the future of the Irish community as a whole again hangs in the balance, as it did in the 1870s on the eve of the mass emigration period.[3]

It is important to state at the outset that this paper focuses on the factors that shaped Jewish identity in the south of Ireland and principally in Dublin, and that these do not necessarily apply wholesale to other parts of the country. Due to the lack of records for the smaller Irish communities, however, the tendency until now has been to present the Dublin experience as normative for all of Ireland by omission if nothing else. In fact, although it is a very small country and its Jewish

2 The most comprehensive, though largely descriptive, study to date of Irish Jewry in this period is Hyman's *The Jews of Ireland*. For a more anecdotal account of the Litvak (Lithuanian) community from the 1880s to the present, see Rivlin's *Shalom Ireland*. Records are scant for all of the Irish communities except for Dublin and Belfast, in particular for the early period of East European settlement. No records have survived for smaller communities such as Waterford or Lurgan, beyond the occasional reference to communal activities in the *Jewish Chronicle*. As a result most historians have, to date, concentrated on Dublin.

3 For some recent assessments of the community's situation, see Jason Walsh. "In Bloom: The Story of Jewish Dublin" *The Dubliner* September 2009: 35–39; Moritz Piehler, "*Little Jerusalem* auf der grünen Insel." *Das Jüdische Echo* 58 Cheschwan 5770/Nov. 2009: 233–235; Cian Traynor. "Young, Jewish and Irish." *Irish Times Weekend Review*, 12 Dec. 2010: 1. Compare with *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 Oct. 1870: 5; 27 Sep. 1872: 356; 13 Feb. 1874: 771; 29 Jan. 1875: 709; 27 Oct. 1876: 475.

population has never constituted more than a tiny minority, Ireland has been host over the years to more than one form of Jewish identity. Political context, in particular the difference in atmosphere between north and south, has played a strong role in moulding Ireland's Jewries, but one that has rarely been recognized (Wynn, "An Accidental *Galut*?"; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2). The contrasting character of individual towns and cities, owing to broader social, cultural and economic circumstances, has been crucial in determining the nature of relations between the various Jewish communities and wider Irish society. Wherever Jews settled in Ireland, daily relations with the host community appear to have been marked by a generally unacknowledged ambivalence, which varied in nature and intensity according to setting. Finally, it should be noted that, although little documentation or information has survived concerning constructions of Jewishness that may have existed outside of the Irish communal mainstream, we should not necessarily take this to mean that there have been no alternative expressions of Jewish identity in Ireland. Altogether these factors add up to a far more nuanced and complex historical reality than is generally recognized by historians of Irish Jewry.

Jews and the Irish National Narrative

An appreciation of Ireland's colonial past is crucial to a proper understanding of Irish society during the foundation period of the current Jewish community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is equally significant that the main period of Jewish immigration and integration into Irish society coincided with the crystallization of a modern Irish identity. This was, like all other nationalisms, predicated on a national-cultural narrative that is strongly grounded in a particular religious identity, in this case Roman Catholicism. Consequently, as Mervyn O'Driscoll has observed, Irish nationalism and Catholicism were practically interchangeable in the popular imagination in the early years of the twentieth century (141).

The Irish national narrative has left a strong imprint on Irish-Jewish collective memory. The standard Irish-Jewish narrative claims that there was a significant amount of Jewish support for the Irish nationalist cause, based on the efforts of a handful of prominent activists. Contemporary sources, in contrast, display a strong sense of British patriotism. On the individual level, this was tied in to feelings of gratitude towards the British authorities for their relative tolerance towards Jews (Wigoder 73, 91; Bloom "The Old Days", 31–32). British patriotism was also, to an extent, the reflection of a general Jewish disconnectedness from the Irish Catholic majority, that has been well demonstrated by the findings of Cormac Ó Gráda. At the communal level, it was expressed through ongoing

commemorative activities related to the British royal family and the colonial administration, and by a notable level of support for the British war effort between 1914 and 1918 (Wynn, "Jews" 63–64; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2). In practical terms Ireland's Jewries considered themselves, and were considered by others, to be British "provincial" communities until Ireland achieved its independence in 1921 (DHC; *Jewish Chronicle*; Wynn, "The History" chap. 3) This was entirely natural, given the largely "British" character of Ireland's principal cities and towns in this period.[4]

The reality, therefore, corresponds to evolving constructions of Irish national history and identity, and lies somewhere in the middle ground of this apparent contradiction in terms. The evidence suggests that the Jewish community has consistently taken its cue from the political mood of the Irish mainstream, which was radically transformed within a relatively short space of time. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was considerable popular support for the modest aspirations of constitutional nationalists, to achieve devolved government under British patronage. However, the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising created a sudden but permanent groundswell of sympathy for more militant expressions of nationalism.[5] The ensuing national narrative is correspondingly polarized, and public engagement with the complexities of Ireland's colonial past is a recent and gradual phenomenon which only began in earnest under the presidency of Mary Robinson (1990–1997).

It is clear is that during the last one hundred years the Jewish community has been increasingly at pains to write itself into the Irish political mainstream in order to reinforce its desired image of being authentically "Irish". Although the sources indicate that, by the early years of the twentieth century, the majority of Irish Jews had adopted the moderate nationalism of the host community, current narratives are at pains to present the community as favouring the cause of militant nationalism.[6] These pay scant attention – if any – to the consideration of

4 On the "Britishness" of Dublin at this time see, for example, Allen's "Loosening Gravity".

5 The unexpected change in the Irish political landscape that occurred as a result of the 1916 Rising is effectively depicted in Sebastian Barry's novel *A Long Long Way*. London: Penguin, 2005.

6 Correspondence to the *Jewish Chronicle* implies that, notwithstanding a degree of ambivalence (see below), the communal majority favoured moderate and constitutional forms of nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, in the absence of more substantive evidence, this cannot conclusively be confirmed. The cumulative effects of the Irish national narrative on the Jewish

Jewish attitudes towards British rule, either ignoring the primary evidence altogether or failing adequately to analyze it in terms of collective popular memory. Nevertheless, when Irish identity has historically been so closely linked to a particular religious affiliation, this Irish-Jewish "indigenization" project can only go so far. Such enterprises might, therefore, validly be seen as being representative of an unconscious sense of alienation from the national majority. It is revealing that despite these concerted efforts, the contribution of Jewish activists to the cause of Irish independence, while notable, remains unacknowledged within the mainstream nationalist narrative (Wynn, "The Jews" 65–66; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2; Moore 7).

Assessments of the Jewish Experience in Ireland

Communal narrative is sharply divided regarding the Jewish experience in Ireland and this is unavoidably linked to each individual's personal perception of anti-Semitism in the Irish context. According to the official narrative, Jews have been very well treated in Ireland and there is little or no anti-Semitism; as a result Jews have prospered and made a disproportionate contribution to Irish politics, business, medicine, the arts and so on (Benson xiv; Rivlin chap. 7–10; *Irish Jewish Museum*. "Museum Objectives"). This version of events is vocally promoted by communal representatives, who are anxious to avoid causing offence by suggesting that Ireland has been anything less than fully embracing of its tiny Jewish minority.[7] Most members of the community follow the establishment lead by

consciousness over the ensuing years are well illustrated by a comment in an official report by the chair of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, Maurice Cohen. In recalling his attendance at the 2013 commemoration of the Easter Rising, Cohen described the event in politically-loaded terms as honouring "martyred patriots" (Maurice Cohen. "Chair's Report." Biennial Meeting of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland. 30 June 2013).

7 For example, Joe Briscoe, a former member of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, has classed the Limerick Boycott of 1904 as "an aberration in an otherwise almost perfect history of Ireland and its treatment of the Jews" (quoted in *Irish Jewish Museum* "Jews in Ireland"; Rivlin 32; contrast with Wynn, "The History" chap. 2). In 1993 Briscoe (4), in his official capacity, penned an article for community magazine *The Jewish Voice* asking Jews to keep their criticisms of negative media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "in the Family" rather than airing them publicly. Goldstone (Email to Natalie Wynn 29 Jul. 2013) believes that elements such as gender and political orientation, as well as the nature of one's views on Irish anti-Semitism, contribute towards determining whether or not one falls

insisting that they have encountered little or no prejudice in Ireland, and this is the narrative that has been unquestioningly adopted by most scholars (Keogh 238–241; Fallon 222–223; Ó Gráda chap. 9).

The ambivalent reality of the Jewish experience in Ireland has nevertheless been well documented in a host of memoirs and recollections over the years, spanning different phases of communal history. Various factors have conspired to facilitate the suppression of this testimony and to keep dissenting voices at the margins of most discussions concerning Jewish integration in Ireland. For example, the willingness of Jewish interviewees to be forthright about unpleasant personal experiences within the host community depends on whether a given conversation or interview is intended for popular or academic consumption. How their views are interpreted is contingent on the perspective of the interviewer which, in turn, is informed by his or her professional and personal background (Goldstone "Rewriting" 102–109). Negative or conflicted reflections tend to be aired in private and low-key settings, and to recall minor incidents. These therefore remain largely anecdotal and outside of the formal historical record, where they are easily ignored or brushed aside. The impact of unfavourable academic findings on subjects such as anti-Jewish prejudice and conflicted identity is contained due to its limited readership. Gerard Moore's 1984 doctoral thesis highlights the exclusive, conservatively Catholic nature of Irish nationalism and the Irish political scene, especially in the formative years of the state. Surveys conducted by Mícheál Mac Gréil between the early 1970s and late 1980s found traditional economic stereotypes regarding Jews to have been pronounced in Irish society notwithstanding the small size of the Jewish community, its concentration in the major Irish cities and its lack of involvement in Irish economic affairs (*Prejudice and Tolerance* 333–347; *Prejudice in Ireland* 210–218; Laqueur chap. 8). More recently, Ronit Lentin and Katrina Goldstone have pointed to their own personal experiences of anti-Jewish prejudice and to the exclusive nature of "Irish" identity, in order to interrogate the actual degree of Jewish belonging in Ireland, past and present ("Ireland's other diaspora" 153–166; *After Optimism?* 115–124; Goldstone, "Images of Jews" 167–176). Such analyses are conveniently ignored by the mainstream communal narrative.[8]

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within the communal mainstream and, consequently, whether one is acknowledged or endorsed by the Jewish establishment.

8 One example of the way in which unfavourable findings are simply brushed aside is the recent article by Melanie Brown for Ireland's leading newspaper, the *Irish Times* (18 Feb. 2014) the title of which, "Irish-Jewish community has evolved to be part of the social fabric", is extremely revealing in itself as to the official community's aspiration to be recognised as an intrinsic element of Irish society.

The unacknowledged ambivalence of the Jewish experience in Ireland has created an unconscious tendency towards self-censorship in memoirs and reflections. A good example is the following comment by Martin Simmons, who now lives in London:

> For me, Ireland was a wonderful place, plenty of opportunity for someone prepared to work hard and take limited risks. I never experienced serious anti-Semitism, just an odd ignorant remark on a couple of occasions. (Email to Natalie Wynn, 24 Feb. 2011)

In addition, there is a high degree of nostalgia within the community itself and among the Irish-Jewish diaspora for the vanished world of Jewish Ireland. This has given rise to a romanticized narrative in which anti-Jewish prejudice has little or no place (see Brest quoted in Wynn, "The History" Appendix II). In this version of events, the purportedly common traits of the Jews and the Irish are emphasized: their mutual histories of persecution wherein the British play a role; their efforts to revive ancient languages for everyday use, whereby the Jews experienced significantly greater success; and so on (Carew 26–28). Sentimentality feeds off, and has fuelled the recent appetite for Irish-Jewish history, as evidenced by the spate of activity in this field since the late 1990s. The communal establishment is keen to take advantage of expatriate nostalgia, as something that both reinforces its self-image and creates opportunities for promoting this among the wider Irish public. This is evident from its participation in "The Gathering Ireland 2013", a government initiative which was intended to bolster Ireland's flagging tourism industry. This encouraged individuals and groups to organize events that would bring members of the Irish diaspora and their families back to Ireland in 2013 (*The Gathering Ireland 2013*). A very successful week of festivities was organized by the Jewish community, which was subsequently recalled as "perhaps the most significant event of Irish Jewry in 150 years or more – at a time when our Community truly came alive for eight days of memorable festivity" (*Nachlath*, commemorative pullout).[9] The rose-tinted perception of the community that characterized the Jewish Gathering featured as the theme of this year's Rosh Hashanah broadcast on national television. This short transmission presented an image that Goldstone believes to have evolved little since the late 1960s and early 1970s.[10]

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9 This rather poignant comment is somewhat revealing as to current establishment perceptions of, and prognoses for the future of Irish Jewry. For the programme, see "Irish Jewish Gathering." *Programme of Events*.

10 I am grateful to Katrina Goldstone for her observations on televisual representations of Irish Jewry over the years.

Last but by no means least, any attempt to understand the Jewish experience in Ireland is confounded by the absence of an appropriate terminology. The frequent, vociferous denials of anti-Jewish prejudice from within the community, together with the undeniably minor nature of any such incidents, has prevented most scholars from applying the same standards of rigorous analysis that would be expected in other areas of research. As a result, opinion remains inconclusive and polarized, reflecting the diversity of individual opinion. The reductive nature of this debate does not help anyone to understand or critically analyze anything (Wynn, "Jews" 54–59; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2).

Defining Irish-Jewish Identity

The unexpectedness of the combination of "Irish" and "Jewish" has made the very notion of Irish-Jewish identity something of a joke from within as well as beyond the community. Nowadays people from all sides are content to capitalize on this novelty aspect by perpetuating unlikely tales of accidental Jewish arrival in Ireland, and by portraying the community as something of a curiosity (Wynn "An Accidental *Galut*?"; Goldstone, "Rewriting" 311–312). This is widely reflected in characterizations of Irish Jewry, which remain largely uniform notwithstanding the heterogeneous backgrounds of those who write about it. For example:

> A community "defined partly by [its] romantic quirkiness" (Tye 194); American journalist and author of a book comparing the Jewish diasporas of Dublin, Buenos Aires and New York.
>
> A "quaint hybrid" (Rivlin x); lifelong resident in Ireland and author of an anecdotal communal history.
>
> A "small and curious minority" (Lentin, "Review"); Israeli writer and academic, resident in Ireland since 1968.

Such uncritical, one-dimensional caricaturing allows commentators to take great liberties in their presentations of Irish-Jewish history and identity. It also encourages depictions of Irish Jewry as some kind of unique entity, which can be assessed outside of any wider Jewish context. In fact, a closer look at the sources reveals that this is entirely misleading and that the community, while displaying certain unique historical features is, in fact, firmly anchored in the history of the western Jewish diaspora (Diner; Wynn "An Accidental *Galut*?; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2–4).

Although records are scant for the early years, it is clear that identity was not much of an issue within the Jewish community at this time. The original,

so-called "native" element was evidently very anglicized and acculturated. The "natives" were comfortable in the Irish middle-class circles in which they mixed and related with relative ease to the Anglo-Jewish establishment in London. They appear to have subscribed to the same rather diluted forms of Judaism that were then in fashion among their English peers (DHC Correspondence; *Jewish Chronicle*; *Laws*; Wynn, "The History" chap. 2–4). Jewish immigrants, meanwhile, rapidly built up their own, close-knit social and communal infrastructure, which was insular and relatively traditional in outlook. Although most became naturalized British citizens and had daily contact with non-Jewish neighbors and clients, they appear to have remained primarily defined by their Jewish identity and, as has been noted above, to have kept their distance from non-Jews owing to the lack of common ground (Wynn, "The History" chap. 2–4, Ó Gráda). This is evident from their assessments of the broader political situation and of the quandaries that this raised for "outsiders".[11] It was only with the beginnings of the integration process, with the second and third generations, that the question of identity itself really began to emerge in its own right. It is this that I now wish to address, primarily in relation to three particular statements of Irish-Jewish identity.

In June 1945, an article appeared in *The Bell* magazine entitled "What it means to be a Jew". The writer, A. J. Leventhal, was a successful academic who taught French at Trinity College Dublin, and was an associate of the famous playwright Samuel Beckett. Leventhal opens with a quotation from the infamously conflicted German satirist Heinrich Heine, that Judaism is not a religion but a misfortune. Leventhal recalls what he describes as a "vague feeling of maladjustment" while growing up, as a result of his "difference in race" to the majority (207). This found expression in the bitter rivalries that arose between local Jewish and non-Jewish boys, when taunting escalated to the exchanging of missiles, often culminating in fisticuffs. Prejudice, in Leventhal's experience, was fully reciprocal; Christian stereotypes of the usurious Jew were answered in kind with Jewish

11 Jessie Spiro Bloom, for example, describes the way in which some Jews were caught in the middle of the ongoing political tensions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ("Recollections" 22). Correspondence to the *Jewish Chronicle* represents conflicting opinion as to whether or not Irish national aspirations constituted a threat to the position, and even to the personal security, of Jews within Irish society (e.g., 8 Sep. 1911: 5,15; 15 Sep. 1911: 20; 16 May 1913: 18; 23 May 1913: 17). On the other hand, Myer Joel Wigoder's only reference to the 1916 Rising was the difficulties it caused in obtaining *matzot* for Passover (Wigoder 99).

stereotypes of Irish alcoholism.[12] According to Leventhal, the Jewish boys knew nothing of Christianity itself; he recalls having regarded the crucifix as "a vaguely hostile symbol from which I averted my head" (209).[13] Leventhal eventually learned boxing from a classmate in order to defend himself against non-Jewish bullies. While he acknowledges that Jews elsewhere were in a much worse plight, he identifies a shared fellowship in the general Jewish exclusion from wider society. On the other hand, as he begins to wrap up the article Leventhal becomes anxious to relativize his childhood feelings of alienation, which he fears he may have exaggerated through "an inherited touchiness" (212).[14] Leventhal's closing remarks consist of a lengthy and all-too-familiar litany of the political, cultural and economic double-standards that he believes to have consistently been applied to Jews within the non-Jewish world (215–216). He concludes on an apologetic note, by defining from his own perspective what it means to be a Jew.

Leventhal's uneasiness with his identity and position within Irish society is clear from his scattered, grim and frequently bitter musings, which contrast with his somewhat token efforts to generalise his ambivalence in terms of broader Jewish/non-Jewish relations. The timing of Leventhal's article is significant, coming right at the end of World War Two, as the full extent of Nazi genocide was becoming increasingly known. Although Ireland remained neutral during the War, there was a significant degree of popular support for Germany, especially among militant nationalist circles, based on the axiom "my enemy's enemy is

12 Leventhal quotes the following street rhyme that he recalls from growing up: "Two shillies, two shillies," the Jewman did cry,/"For a fine pair of blankets from me you did buy;/"Do you think me von idjit or von bloomin' fool,/"If I don't get my shillie I must have my vool."/"Two pennies, two pennies," the Christian did shout,/"For a bottle of porter or Guinness's stout;/"My wife's got no shawl and my kids have no shoes,/"But I must have my money, I must have my booze" (208–209). Leventhal goes on ironically to observe: "While the Sassenach [English] might have referred to the drunken Irish, we merely saw tippling followers of Christ." Although Ó Gráda (chap. 9) is the only scholar to note the reciprocal nature of Jewish/Catholic prejudice in Dublin at this time, he does not adequately interrogate his findings in this respect (Wynn, "The History" chap. 2).

13 Compare with similar sentiments expressed by Berman (3), Bloom ("The Old Days" 30) and Marcus (156–171).

14 Leventhal (209–210) is also somewhat indecisive as to whether the derogatory term "Jewman" should be understood as a purely descriptive term, to be equated with "Frenchman" or "Englishman", although he does note that it was also used as "a contemptuous gibe". Ó Gráda (180–181) also stresses the possible linguistic origins of "Jewman", somewhat unconvincingly (Wynn, "The History" chap. 2).

my friend" (O'Donoghue). This created a somewhat uneasy atmosphere for Jews during the 1930s and the so-called "Emergency" period (1939–1945) (Keogh chap. 4–6; Moore chap. 5, 6; Goldstone, "Benevolent Helpfulness" 116–136). Leventhal displays all the symptoms of what his contemporary, the Cork-born author David Marcus, describes as "hyphenation", whereby the Irish and Jewish sides of one's character are in perpetual, irresolvable conflict. The Jewish characters in Marcus's novels confront their identity conflicts by leaving Ireland permanently for Palestine, where they would be able to live in a thoroughly Jewish environment.[15] Although Marcus opted to live, marry and raise his family outside of the Jewish community altogether, he appears to have retained his sense of "hyphenation" throughout his life (Marcus 2001).

In 1968 another, much briefer piece entitled "On Being Jewish in Ireland", appeared in the first edition of the magazine *Everyman*. This was penned by the artist Gerald Davis, who was perhaps best known locally for his involvement in Dublin's annual Bloomsday celebrations. Davis is depicted on the cover of Asher Benson's *Jewish Dublin: Portraits of Life by the Liffey* in full Bloomsday regalia. In contrast to the image of cultural fusion that this choice of cover may have been intended to convey, Davis's presentation of Jewish/non-Jewish relations in the late 1960s evinces little progress from Leventhal's bleak assessments two decades earlier. It is clear from his article that Jews remained very much a community apart from much of Irish society, even though Davis portrays the younger generation as increasingly secular and outward-looking, and keen to play a greater role in wider Irish life. Davis adopts a similarly apologetic stance to Leventhal, in attempting to explain to the outside world what was important to the Jewish community, albeit in more direct and personal terms: education, solidarity and security. Despite the optimism of his generation, Davis observed that old prejudices and misconceptions were slow to dispel. He concludes by quoting a very revealing pronouncement on the recreational habits of himself and his peers: "Surely you fellows don't drink pints?" That such a comment could be made by the groundsman of the Jewish sports club shows that this gradual Jewish adoption of Irish traits did not equate to anything approaching a complete or a reciprocal Jewish integration into Irish society.[16]

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15 For an analysis of Irish representations of Jewish identity with particular reference to Marcus, see Hezser.

16 A taste for alcohol was one of the "Irish" habits that Robert Briscoe, the celebrated Republican activist and first Jewish lord mayor of Dublin, identified as having been acquired by Irish Jews (Ganley).

Moving forward to 2002 a piece written by Ronit Lentin for *Golem* magazine, "Ireland's other diaspora: Jewish-Irish within/Irish-Jewish without", investigates the dual context of Irish Jewry. Lentin defines her subject as being simultaneously, from the local perspective, a Jewish diaspora in Ireland and, from a broader perspective, an Irish-Jewish diaspora. She argues that anti-Semitism and a sense of outsiderness have been direct causes of the decline of Ireland's Jewish community. Lentin observes that, despite the growing multi-ethnicity of Ireland, the Irish-Jewish presence is becoming increasingly insignificant.[17] Lentin discusses the recollections of Irish Jews who were, at the time of writing, in their late twenties and early thirties. Her interviewees express their nagging discomfort at being perpetually different, which was accompanied by a constant feeling of pressure to prove their Irishness. Like the characters from Marcus's novels, the only way to resolve their sense of hyphenation and disconnectedness from wider Irish society was to leave – in these instances for more cosmopolitan western countries where being Jewish is less of a curiosity.[18] The economic recession of the 1980s and early 1990s provided a timely and acceptable excuse to leave Ireland, given that emigration was the norm for so many other Irish people at the time.[19]

Whether or not Lentin is correct in her assessment of the underlying reasons for the Jewish exodus from Ireland, it is undeniable that the community remains in decline and that the coming decades are likely to be critical in terms of its future. Young Jews today continue to face the same dilemmas as those of Marcus and his fictional creations, with the middleground between assimilation and emigration remaining ambiguous and tricky to negotiate. The difficulties involved in accessing the material, spiritual and cultural elements of a Jewish (or even a "Jew-ish") lifestyle in Ireland increase apace with the community's falling numbers. Although the cultural barriers that had previously distanced Jews from the Irish majority have greatly diminished, other less immediately obvious impediments remain in the way of a fuller mutual understanding and empathy. As

17 This observation is, however, something of a truism given that the Jewish community is shrinking while many other minorities are growing.

18 Nevertheless the attraction of the Jewish state should not be underestimated; one recent communal publication (*Nachlath* 36) notes that Irish Jews have achieved the highest proportion of *aliyah* (resettlement in Israel) of any European Jewish community since 1948.

19 In a similar vein to Lentin, Stanley Waterman ("Dublin Jewry") has suggested that, in the past, professional "glass ceilings" had persuaded many of the second- and third-generation Irish-Jewish doctors and dentists to emigrate.

a country that has only ever had a tiny Jewish minority, and one that remained largely untouched by the horrors of world war and genocide, Ireland does not share the capacity of other west European countries for public engagement with these events and with their broader legacy.[20] Ireland's national narrative, with its insularity and its ambivalent memory of the "Emergency" years, is another significant stumbling block. The influence of unnuanced media portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on popular sentiment towards Jewish nationalism and the Jewish state is also a bone of contention for many Jews.[21]

Conclusions

One common thread that runs through all of the reflections that have been considered above is a sense of alienation, an ongoing lack of acceptance among the wider community. Although they constitute only a small selection of the many statements on Irish-Jewish identity, these articles express views that are representative in many ways of more general sentiments, whether conscious or unconscious. All raise the issue of dual loyalties, whether as a Jewish quandary or as an Irish perception regarding Jews. This ongoing interrogation of Irish-Jewish allegiance and integration has created a perpetual sense of "hyphenation", whereby "Jewish" and "Irish" are seen as contrasting or conflicting elements of one's identity, and the respective ratio of "Irishness" and "Jewishness" differs according to each individual and his or her own perception of self. Louis Lentin (11) describes the product of this process as "the inside-outsider, existing under a slightly cracked glass ceiling … The exotic other, conscious of a sense of being an irritation, tolerated but not truly understood. Not entirely *of*."

A second common aspect of considerations of Irish-Jewish identity is the need to constantly restate and reconsider what it means to be an Irish Jew. While postmodern thinkers might regard this ongoing process of reflection as a healthy and

20 Ireland's reception of the Holocaust, an issue that has hitherto received no scholarly attention, is to be addressed by Zuleika Rodgers in a forthcoming research project.

21 The evolution of Irish attitudes towards Israel is the subject of Stephen Murray's ongoing doctoral research ("Ireland's Attitude towards the State of Israel (1947–1972)"). David Landy has argued that divergent Irish and Irish-Jewish perceptions of the Israel-Palestine situation serve as a perpetual barrier to Jewish integration, in creating a neverending cycle of alienation and resentment within the Jewish community. As a pro-Palestinian activitist, Landy dismisses these negative Jewish sentiments as the consequence of the community's staunch and unquestioning Zionism.

normal element of identity construction,[22] the fact these musings have evolved little over a period of at least seventy years would appear to indicate precisely the opposite. An obvious undercurrent of unresolved alienation stands in stark contrast to the "official" line of complete and successful Jewish integration into Irish society. Communal representatives are perpetually compelled to respond to this underlying uneasiness by reiterating their positive counter-assertions as vocally and as publicly as possible, a reflex which can hardly be viewed as corroboration for their arguments. The discourse surrounding Irish-Jewish integration therefore reveals matters of identity and integration to be an ongoing preoccupation within all sectors of the community.

The ultimate question remains, is there really and can there ever be such a thing as an authentic Irish-Jewish identity? Beyond the superficial external traits such as speaking with an Irish accent or developing a taste for Guinness and Irish whiskey, are the two identities ultimately mutually exclusive? Can they ever be satisfactorily reconciled, or are Irish Jews doomed to perpetual "hyphenation"? Do these issues add up to a genuine identity "crisis" or do they merely normalize the Irish-Jewish experience in terms of the day-to-day pressures of Jewish diaspora life, past and present? Despite its growing multiculturalism, Ireland cannot necessarily be said to be that accepting of its ethnic minorities in general, old or new, and approval frequently hangs on the arbitrary, often reductive perceptions of the host society. As all of Ireland's minorities become more closely integrated into the fabric of Irish society, what it means to be Irish will of course have to change and evolve; whether or not this will be too late for the majority of Jews remains to be seen.[23]

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22 For a brief outline of contemporary conceptions of identity as a fluid and continually evolving construction, see Hezser.

23 Goldstone ("Reflections" 102–109) warns of the dangers that are inherent in glossing over uncomfortable aspects of the Jewish experience in Ireland. Drawing parallels with the controversial revival of Jewish culture in eastern Europe, Goldstone sees in Irish-Jewish tendencies the portents for a similar process whereby a congenial, superficial and unthreatening "faux" culture is constructed in order to fill the vacuum that is created by the lack of a dynamic Jewish presence and of an authentic Jewish culture.

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Mara W. Cohen Ioannides

The Community Memory of Springfield, Missouri Suppresses the City's Jewish Past

"Collective memory – the memory preserved by a group of people – mirrors the perception of what was meaningful from that people's past, and, in turn, what is salient in their present."
Mark R. Cohen, p. 149

Jewish religion is steeped in remembrances of times past. Every holiday, the Sabbath included, is based on the idea of remembrance. In some ways Jews are obsessed with memory. Joshua Foer, the 2006 USA Memory Champion and journalist, explains that "memories … are constantly shaping how we perceive the world. This is part of the genius of Jewish memory: our present is constantly being informed by the set of collective memories we possess as Jews" (58). It is this "set of collective memories" that recreates history. What is remembered is based on memory, sometimes people purposely select what to remember and other times they just forget. This paper examines what a particular Jewish community remembers about itself and how that parallels the documents available.

The first Jews in North America were of Spanish descent and landed in New Amsterdam (today's New York) in 1654, fleeing the Brazilian Inquisition. Their ship, *St. Catrina*, arrived in the New Amsterdam port bringing twenty-three Jews. For many years, Brazil had been a Dutch protectorate and had recently been recaptured by the Portuguese. These Jews hoped to be protected by the Dutch government once again.

Before President Thomas Jefferson bought the land that included Missouri, which in 1803 became a state, it was owned by the French and Spanish who forbade anyone but Catholics from residing there. The region called the Ozarks consists of pieces of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. It is a plateau region that geographically is bordered by four rivers, but culturally is a bit larger. Springfield, Missouri is the largest city in the Ozarks and the third largest city in the state of Missouri. It was founded in 1838 only seventeen years after the founding of the state of Missouri in 1821.

The first Jew to arrive in this new territory was Jacob Philipson. He arrived in 1807 and opened a store in the village of St. Louis to outfit trappers and explorers heading west (Makovsky 2, 4). In 1877 (the earliest statistic we have), the Jewish population of Missouri was estimated to be 7,385, over 6,000 of these in St. Louis and another 500 split between Kansas City and St. Joseph (Jacobs), making them

0.4% of the Missouri population (Jacobs). The main religions now are Assemblies of G-d and Southern Baptist. In fact, 67% of Greene County, the county in which Springfield resides, belongs to Evangelical Protestant churches, while only 0.2% are Jewish. Ninety-six percent of the county is Christian, with Jews, Muslim, Baha'i, and Zoroastrians making up the majority of the other 4% (*Greene County*).

While people around the world know of the large Jewish communities in New York, New York; Charleston, North Carolina; Chicago, Illinois; and Miami, Florida, they often do not know about various small Jewish communities scattered across the United States struggling to maintain themselves. Jewish communities had existed in America even before the beginning of the United States. Small Jewish communities are those defined as having one thousand or fewer Jewish people. Before World War II, most of American Jewry lived in small Jewish communities (Weissbach 108). It was quite common for these communities to dissolve during the Great Depression era. This pattern continues to this day, when communities end because the children of the immigrants leave. Jews migrated to an area and became merchants, partially because at least the first Jews in the regions, German Jews, were merchants in their previous Old World communities. Their children became educated, did not take up the family business and often left for larger communities where their skills were needed or they got better pay.

The issues that Jews in small communities have had to manage are oftentimes different than in larger ones. Most importantly, because they are small in numbers they cannot avoid interacting socially with the Gentile community. This has led to intermarriage rates that are higher than elsewhere and, most recently, to a larger acceptance of non-Jews as members of synagogues (Cohen Ioannides).

When did the first Jew arrive at this important crossroads in the middle United States? We cannot know for sure, but the earliest record of a Jew in the county is Jacob Lippman in 1857 (Lippman, Certificate 16891 homestead). During the American Civil War, or War Between the States, he registered to fight, but was discharged for ill health before he ever saw a battle (Lippman, Certificate of Disability).

Shannon Boyle and Julie March, who wrote what is considered the ultimate early history of Springfield, Missouri, declared the first Jew in Springfield to be Victor Sommers (29). He arrived in 1868 and opened a mercantile store (Holcombe, Chap. 31). The next year he married Bertha Bakrow from Louisville, Kentucky (Sommers and Backrow), the town where he, together with his parents and sisters settled after emigrating to the United States (Holcombe, Chap. 31). This history has been handed down as *the history*.

However, birth records show that Mrs. Augusta Levi, originally from Prussia, gave birth in 1865 (Valentine) or 1866 (Levi) in Springfield to Julius Levi. The

family stayed only a short time, and soon moved to Illinois. However, they were forgotten because of the length of time they stayed and because there was no community that they interacted with to remember them. Thus, without a living memory to pass on or a community to record the event, this family was totally forgotten. This lost memory pushes the involvement of Jews in Springfield forward by two years to the arrival of Victor Sommers.

The legend is that Victor Sommers brought his family after him (Boyle and March 29). American Jewish history tells us that this is how Jewish communities grew – beginning with one person, who then created or brought his family, and then their family and in-laws came and so-on. There is no support for this story, but there is circumstantial evidence that Sommers brought his extended family. The next family to arrive was the Cohn brothers, Julius, Gus, Emil, and Theo, who came before 1870 and opened J. Cohn Brothers and Company by 1873, including a branch in Joplin, Missouri ("1873 Springfield Directory"). In 1877, Jake Marx married Francis Cohn, a sister of the Cohn brothers. In 1878, Mr. Marx bought out his in-laws (Holcombe) and renamed the store The Marx Clothing Company. Among those providing capital for the venture were: Francis Cohn Marx, Gus Marx, and Julius Cohn, whom he had just bought out ("Clothing" 45). Interestingly, Victor Sommers' mother was Sara or Hannah Marks Sommers (Holcomb, Chapt 31; Summers).

Figure 1: The Marx Clothing Company

Jake Marx is third from left.
(Courtesy: Madelynn Marx Inness)

When the Sommers arrived in the United States, they settled in Louisville, Kentucky where the Marx and Cohn families resided (Holcombe, Chapt. 31; Sommers). It was not unusual for families to have multiple spellings of their names. Therefore, it would not be far-fetched to suggest that Hannah Marks Sommers and Jake Marx were somehow related, especially if we are to believe the oral history that Victor Sommers brought his family to Springfield, Missouri. Linda Cohn, whose husband David is a descendent of the family, and has been collating the family history, concurs that the pattern of arrival in New Orleans, the move to Louisville, Kentucky, and then to Springfield, Missouri is the same for both families, and that they all come from the same region of Germany. She does not disregard this connection, but neither can she confirm it. It seems this is lost to history.

Another possibility is that these families were not related, but knew each other quite well. Louisville, Kentucky was a hub for Jewish immigrants in the American Midwest. According to Carol Ely, "by 1850, 17 percent of Louisville's population was German-born" (32). The first synagogue, Adas Israel, was chartered in 1842. Among the incorporators was Judel (John) Bakrow (Landau 24; Ely 29) (very possibly related to Bertha because there were numerous Bakrows in Louisville). Additionally, there was a Benas Marx or Marks (both spellings are used) as a charter member (Ely 29). It was not until 1877 that the B'nai Jacob congregation was formally established (Landau 55). The beginning of the young men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) goes as far back as 1862; they were known for everything from lectures to dances and their mission was "to unite on a common platform the young men of the different synagogues and nationalities" (qtd. In Landau 91). In 1852 a chapter of the B'nai B'rith, the fourteenth lodge in the United States, was founded and met in Adas Israel. By the time of the Civil War there was also a Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, a Young Ladies Benevolent Society, and a burial society (Ely 37). One must presume that Victor Sommers and his parents and sisters knew the Cohns and Marxes from the German, or Reform, synagogue and various social groups. We must also keep in mind that in Louisville there were about three thousand Jews in 1881 (Ely 49); therefore, the chances of these families meeting and mixing is highly probable.

Springfield was, and still is, a shopping hub for the region. Some of the local businesses were known as far away as New York City. Most were branches of businesses from east of Springfield, like St. Louis, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Tennessee. One Jewish owned business, however, was founded in Fort Smith, Kansas (to the west), failed, and was subsequently forgotten. The Rodecker-Cohen Company, or Star Clothing Company, was

founded by Jacob Rodecker and Morris Cohen in Fort Smith, Kansas in 1866 (Culter). They had met in Leavenworth, Kansas when working for A. Levy & Company. A. Levy & Company financed the opening of Rodecker-Cohen in Fort Smith. By 1883, Jacob Rodecker and Samuel Cohen (Morris' brother who inherited his part in the business in 1880 (Marblestone 19)) had a branch in Springfield, Missouri with a third partner William W. Smith ("Mr. Jacob Rodecker"). Star Clothing was closed by 1891 because of the financial problems A. Levy & Company (Marblestone 17) was having, which Rodecker-Cohen had promised to cover (Marblestone 20).

Another early fact that has been improperly remembered is who was the first Jewish public school teacher? Nadine Arbeitman Smith, the granddaughter of a founder of the Orthodox congregation (Charter Members; Arbeitman), has often joked that she was the first Jewish public school teacher (*Home, Community, Tradition*). Howsoever, this is not true.

Lost in the community's memory, or history, is another Jewish public school teacher: Herman Rosenwasser. Nathan Karchmer, a founder of the Orthodox community (Charter Members), mentioned him as a teacher in an interview as did Rabbi Ernest Jacob in his review of the first fifty years of the synagogue. However, no one else remembers him being in Springfield. The only other record of Herman Rosenwasser being a teacher in Springfield, Missouri is a single line in a report that Rabbi Isaac Wise made in 1897 to The President and Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College: "Herman Rosenwasser…left the college temporarily and took a position as Sabbath School teacher in Springfield, MO" (3387). He but does not mention what else Rosenwasser did in the city. John Thomas Scopes, writing about the Scopes Trial, for which Rosenwasser wrote an important document for the defense, claims that Rosenwasser "was called to the rabbinate of the congregation in Springfield, Mo., and while there, in addition to his religious duties, taught in the public high school" (227). Scopes does not provide any sources for his statements. It is unlikely that Rosenwasser would have left his rabbinical training to take a post as a rabbi, especially as Rabbi Wise specifically stated he was going as a teacher. However, it can be verified that he was a public school teacher. The *Springfield High School Yearbook* has a picture of Rosenwasser captioned as the teacher of German in 1903 – the year he returned to Hebrew Union College to complete his rabbinic training (Scopes 227). It is interesting that this man has been relegated to a footnote of local history, yet in American educational legal history he played an important role as the advisor to legal counsel concerning Biblical accounts of evolution in the most famous legal battle concerning the teaching of evolution in American schools.

It is hard to gauge what the impact of having a Jewish teacher would have been on students; however, one cannot dismiss the idea that any positive contact with a minority group would help in creating good feelings towards that group. Smith began teaching in the 1960s, but the first public school teacher who was Jewish did so at the turn of the 20th century. Considering that Rosenwasser was one of a handful of Jews in the city at the time, the effect of meeting and learning from a Jew could have been quite forceful. By the time Smith was teaching, Jews had been established in the community as members of social and political groups. While they were a minority, they certainly were not unique.

As the Jewish community grew, they established a cemetery and Reform congregation, both in 1893 (Articles, 1893). This begs the question of where the community prayed. The community history that is part of living memory is that the Reform *and* Orthodox congregations (established in 1918 (Articles, 1918)) each rented rooms in the Masonic Lodge (Arbeitman; Fetter; Lotven). At one point, Rabbi Ernest Jacob, the rabbi for the Reform congregation, led the Orthodox High Holy Day services, while his son, Walter Jacob, a rabbinic student, led the Reform services. This is the history. This history is incomplete. What has been forgotten is that the congregation rented space in Martin's Music Hall in the Elks Arcade, which is only mentioned in passing in a short essay by Rabbi Ernest Jacob on the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation, and afterwards forgotten.

According to an advertisement in the 1894 local paper, the first High Holy Day services celebrated in Springfield, Missouri were held at the South Street Christian Church (Fig. 2). Rabbi Messing was brought in to give the sermons ("Jewish Services"). As best as can be uncovered, he was the Rabbi Henry Messing at United Hebrew Synagogue in St. Louis, Missouri (Boyd). The church has no records of such a loan or renting of their facility. The congregation has no memory of this. That the community took an advertisement in the paper, most likely to invite others in the region to the holy day services, is significant. They felt no fear of reprisals from anti-Semites, which would occur later and influenced the community's decision in the late 20th century not to advertise their services in the paper. More importantly, this shows the support of one religious community by another, in the willingness of the church to lend their facility to the Jewish community. This is perhaps the first evidence of interfaith work in the area. By forgetting that this happened the community lost some of their ties to other faith groups and to interfaith work, which did not really resurface until the 1960s.

Figure 2: South Street Christian Church in the 1880s

(Courtesy: South Street Christian Church, Springfield, Missouri)

The current congregation remembers Rabbi Karl Richter as "the first permanent Rabbi" ("One Hundred"), saved from the Nazis by Temple Israel in 1939. Lee Shai Weissbach continued this legend in his ground breaking work, *Jewish Life in Small Town America*, on small American Jewish communities. However, Jacob Lipman (Fig. 3) was the first permanent rabbi in Springfield. According to his

granddaughter, Lorraine Lipman Raskin, her grandfather was hired by Ben Karchmer to be the rabbi for the Orthodox congregation. He also opened a grocery store that would supply kosher meat ordered from Kansas City and slaughter fowl as Lipman was a *shocket* (ritual butcher). Part of the reason for opening the grocery store was the fact that the Orthodox congregation could not afford to pay him. He was both the rabbi and ran the store until his death in 1933, at which time his son and daughter took over the grocery and then the community had no rabbi until Karl Richter was hired. There are many reasons why this rabbi could have been forgotten. Firstly, he was not a full time rabbi – that is why he opened the grocery. Secondly, the Reform congregation was always a larger community, and when the Orthodox congregation merged with the Reform one in the 1970s, many of those members from the 1930s, when Lipman was the rabbi, were no longer around. The living memory was no longer alive. There was also a political issue in that the Reform congregation and the Orthodox congregation, until their official merging, did not always socialize, and even after their merging, there was still segregation in the way of members identified with one or the other religious group that was publicized in the synagogue directory.

Figure 3: Rabbi Jacob Lipmann

(Courtesy: Loraine Lipman Raskin)

In 1930, the Reform congregation dedicated their first building (Jacob). Long forgotten and purposely forgotten was the cross burning on the front lawn of the synagogue. Fannie Arbeitman, who arrived in Springfield, Missouri in 1935, brushes off questions about the cross burning with the words "long ago." Hal Lurie during an interview distinctly puts this in the 1930s; this could be because the interviewer places it at that time. While he distinctly remembers the indignation of the locals at the time, there is no reference to it in either the newspapers of the time, or in the minutes of the synagogue board. However, there is one reference in the B'nai Brith Lodge 717 minutes for June 1948. The Anti-Defamation League representative made a report, but it is not preserved. Some adults did recount the story, but only in the vaguest of terms making it impossible for their children to date the act (Federow). There is a general feeling in the community that one should not remember the bad things or stand out too much. Hyman Lotven, who immigrated to the community in the early 1920s and married a Holocaust refuge told the local press, "I think we should leave it alone" in reference to the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in 2001 (Leicht). This is typical of the attitude of Springfield Jews. Rabbi Stuart Federow, a Springfield native, refers to this as Jewish Uncle Tomism: Jews who are "afraid to be outwardly, openly, proudly Jewish" (xiii). He notes that Jews are taught to be invisible or indistinguishable from the majority (xiii). This often resulted in their unwillingness to report illegal activities to the police.

The Orthodox congregation joined in the use of the building in 1946 (Lotven). In exchange for the use of the building and sharing the rabbi, Sha'are Zedek, the Orthodox congregation paid off the mortgage (Cooper). In 1996, the now merged congregations renamed Temple Israel, moved to their new building, located outside the city limits. For those who joined the congregation after its move, there is no emotional attachment to the original building. However, for those who prayed and socialized there when a Messianic group rented the facility from whoever had purchased it, there was an outcry (Peavey). Clearly, it is more than memory that defines space. Without the personal relationship, the synagogue is simply an historical footnote.

The Jewish community of Springfield, the third largest city in the state of Missouri, has re-affirmed its roots with the installation of an exhibition of historical documents and photographs (Cohen Ioannides, "Finding and Saving"). The larger community of the city has acknowledged the importance of the Jewish community through the History Museum on the Square, the local history museum; they are including Jews and labeling them as such in their new permanent exhibit (Sellers).

There are two lessons to be learned from this research. The first is that memory is fallible. This is not necessarily a new lesson for anyone, but is a reminder to those of us who study history, folklore, and social sciences that there is truth

in what people say, but all that people say is not truth. The second lesson is that just because the memory is fallible it does not make memories less important or unimportant. Part of what has sustained the Jewish community in Springfield, Missouri comes from the memories that have been handed down from each generation to the next. This community has drawn strength from its memories that place its members at the center of the city's history and development. However, the Jewish community will grow stronger having also established its documented history, older than the memories, from which to draw strength and comfort. By re-learning its complete history the Jewish community will feel a deeper connection to the city, while the city should feel a stronger connection to its Jewish community. Springfield, Missouri is a homogenous community and this has hindered its economic growth because minorities and business do not wish to be part of a xenophobic city, but by re-incorporating the history of this minority group, and others that are being studied, the city will see itself as far more diverse then it has so far. This broader historical perspective should assist in making the community more accepting, helping the city develop its image as a diverse welcoming community.

"This is a book of stories, to be told from one generation to the next.
Tell the stories and pass them on. Whatever your child remembers that will be enough."
Shoshana Boyd Gelfand

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Anna Maria Karczewska

Jewminicanos and the Sosúa Settlement

> Let us imagine, for instance, Turkish *gast-arbeiters* prowling the streets of West Germany, uncomprehending or envious of the surrounding reality. Or let us imagine Vietnamese boat people bobbing on high seas or already settled somewhere in the Australian outback. Let us imagine Mexican wetbacks crawling the ravines of southern California, past the border patrols into the territory of the United States. Or let us imagine shiploads of Pakistanis disembarking somewhere in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, hungry for menial jobs the oil-rich locals won't do. Let us imagine multitudes of Ethiopians trekking some desert on foot into Somalia—or is it the other way around?—escaping the famine. Well, we may stop here because that minute of imagining has already passed, although a great many could be added to this list (Brodsky).

As Joseph Brodsky suggests in the aforementioned quotation from his essay *The Condition We Call Exile*, his list seems to be incomplete, and the examples of the victims of exile can be multiplied. Their stories and testimonies speak, among other things, of cultural multiplicity, a dispersed sense of self, of identity, of the creation of multidiasporic existences, of wartime experience, and of their new homes. I would like to add to Brodsky's list the story of Jewminicanos, as their history is one of the great rarely told stories of Holocaust refugees, almost unknown here (the name Jewminicanos is a blending of the English word Jews and the Spanish word *Dominicanos*, borrowed from the blog *Memoirs of a Jewminicana*).

The Dominican Republic was ruled for more than 30 years by a notorious dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. He established in the country one of the bloodiest and most oppressive tyrannies of the twentieth century. In the Trujillo era (1930–1961) Dominican citizens were brutally oppressed as the dictator and his family controlled almost all aspects of the society with an iron fist. The dictatorship was marked by violence and abuse, and its greatest crime was the 1937 Haitian massacre, when over a six-day period Trujillo's troops killed between 12,000 and 20,000 Haitians who were living on the Dominican side of the border (Krohn-Hansen 1). And here emerges one of history's small ironies, that a man feared and despised by many Dominicans and Haitians remains to many Jewish immigrants *El Benefactor.* The dictator offered them a home, citizenship and full liberty. The settlers often expressed heartfelt gratitude to Trujillo. The irony was that the refugees were changing one dictatorship for another, but they were in no position to be selective. The quotations below illustrate the refugees' mixed feelings:

> No one wanted us. He was the only one who took us in. […] He was a bad man who killed many, many people. … But to the Jews he opened his country (Wells xix).
>
> People spat and hissed at us on the streets of Vienna. Other people can call Trujillo a murderer, but he saved our lives (Wells xi).
>
> The person who wanted to help us was not a humanist. But did we have a choice? Hitler, the German racist, persecuted us and wanted to murder us. Trujillo, the Dominican racist, saved our lives. [We] were in the awkward position of having to be thankful to a dictator. I was grateful to Trujillo. If a murderer saves your life you still have to be thankful to the murderer (Kaplan 27).

The Trujillo regime eagerly welcomed those who were deemed "racially inferior" in Nazi Europe. Of the thirty-two nations present at the Evian conference in 1938, only the Dominican Republic offered refuge to the Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. Trujillo was willing to establish a haven for 100, 000 Jews, who were to settle in the rural region of Sosúa. As a result of the conference an agricultural Jewish colony was established, and the settlement remains a little-known chapter in the history of Holocaust refuges (Kaplan 11–16).

The purpose of this paper is threefold. Firstly, I will focus, among other things, on the colony's history and Trujillo's various motivations for the settlement. Secondly, I will try to discuss the relationship between the Jews and the Dominicans and the former's adjustment to their new environmental and cultural setting. Finally, my aim is to discuss the reasons why the colony's Jewish character slowly disappeared, why the number of Jews in the settlement declined, and why the projections failed to materialize.

Soon after the French conference a Jewish philanthropist, James A. Rosenberg, established DORSA (Dominican Republic Settlement Organization), which cooperated, with the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)[1], in providing funds to initiate the project and help settle Jews in Sosúa (Arbell 666). The deal was complete when, in 1940, the Dominicans made a confidential offer of land for the settlement of 100,000 refugees. It was a banana plantation that had been sold to Trujillo by the United Fruit Company. The 26,000 acre property was located ten kilometers east of Puerto Plata. It already possessed usable buildings, wire fencing, a few roads, some electricity, running water and the remains of a pier on the beach. The land contained some cultivable sections, grazing fields and a hilly area of forests. Generally, the whole area was

1 JDC is a nonpolitical organization which helped Jews in distress all over the world. It was founded on 27 November 1914 with the aim of centralizing allocations of aid to Jews adversely affected by World War I.

a problematic site with poor soil, sizeable areas of swamp and erratic rainfall, which made farming difficult (Kaplan 59). It appears that the director of the JDC, Joseph A. Rosen, even though fully aware of Sosúa's limitations, felt obliged to select Trujillo's property (Wells 80–81). Both Rosenberg and Rosen were fervent believers in colonization, and committed themselves to finding a haven for the desperate Jews. They had gained experience organizing colonization in the Soviet Union. Their previous experiment, the Crimean programme, was to serve as an influential model for other nations. Rosenberg and Rosen were also responsible for deciding whom to admit, and only Jews were allowed to apply as DORSA's funds came from purely Jewish sources.

The first settlers arrived in Sosúa on March 16 1940, and they were to become farmers in the tropics. By nationality the settlers were mainly German and Austrian, with others from Switzerland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Russia. The refugees arrived in the Dominican Republic having passed the process of extremely rigorous – if not discriminatory – selection by the JDC representatives in the refugee circles and internment camps of Europe. The recruitment was based on appearance, strength, age and gender. The selected settlers had to have some experience in agriculture and manual labour. They were also obliged to sign pledges that it was their intention to stay in Sosúa permanently. In this case there was no risk that the settlers would compete with local businesses or take jobs away from the natives (Gigliotti 22–50). At this point one begins to wonder what motivated the dictator to open his country's doors to refugees when others turned their backs on them. A long history of accepting Jewish immigrants did not seem to be a factor here. Reading Trujillo's words one assumes that the dictator undoubtedly believed that the immigrants would bring civilizing values to his country: "[e]fforts to intensify the cultivation of our lands are realized and, at the same time, indirectly, there is a favourable change toward ameliorating our ethnic problem, since these immigrating currents bring capable and desirable racial elements to our soil" (Wells 1). Trujillo made an energetic attempt to populate the land with the "right" sort of people – subsidized, ostensibly trained for agriculture, and "white." "Whiteness" (*blanquismo*) played a role in the invitation of Jews. Trujillo resented what he saw as the corruption of the purity of the Dominican population by Haitian workers' increasing presence in the frontier regions. The dictator desired to make his country a white republic by augmenting the white population on the island. The next reason for his humanitarian gesture towards Europe's Jews was an attempt to rehabilitate his image and distract attention from *El Corte*, the Haitian massacre. Furthermore, Trujillo clearly expected some material benefits. The dictator intended to grow and modernize the economy through recruiting European labour and increasing

agricultural productivity. Finally, rescuing Jews was Trujillo's strategy to improve relations with Washington and secure American military and economic support. Finally, Trujillo is alleged to have been motivated by personal matters. The dictator's daughter befriended a Jewish girl at school in France. This supposedly made Trujillo adopt a positive attitude towards the Jews (Kaplan 24–27). However, although the Dominican government encouraged Jewish immigration, and Trujillo himself donated the "best land" for the agricultural settlement, the dictator never visited it. Neither did he invest money in Sosúa, nor did he provide the infrastructure to make it a successful colony. The Dominican government was satisfied with the influx of the desired white immigrants and with the fact that somebody else was financing the project. The colony was not listed in the Ministry of Agriculture's publications or statistical data. Trujillo's publicists only irregularly published updates about the settlement's progress.

The media generally responded positively to the agreement. Numerous newspaper articles praised the project, although dissenting voices, especially in the Zionist press and among Dominican exile leaders, could be found as well. There, the agreement was called a publicity stunt, and concerns were raised about the agreement's legitimacy. Americans were accused of breaking bread with the most dictatorial regime in Latin America, and the *American Jewish Chronicle* reminded readers that Dominican people were devoid of rights, and warned against sending people there. In the Dominican Republic the project was carefully "advertised" and shared with the general population to show that the country offered hope and asylum. Dignitaries were invited to the ceremony of signing the agreement. The Generalissimo received messages praising his humanitarianism. *The New York Times* and *The Herald Tribune* gave the event front page coverage, mischaracterizing the ruler and obscuring the fact that the refugees were only an answer to the dictator's racial dilemma (Wells 76–84).

After the cumbersome recruitment the refugees had to obtain a Dominican visa and a U.S. transit visa. Then, they were transported to Ellis Island to wait for a steamer to take them to Ciudad Trujillo[2], where they received inoculations and waited for identification cards. After a few days the refugees were finally transported to Sosúa. They recalled the landscape as one of sheer beauty, green and inviting. Despite the lack of sufficient sanitary conditions, roads and modern conveniences such as gas or electricity, a few months after their arrival the

2 In 1936 Rafael Trujillo changed the name of the capital city Santo Domingo and named it after himself.

refugees started adjusting to the unfamiliar tropical climate and local conditions. Many settlers learned their first usable Spanish. DORSA negotiated with the Dominican government, constructed houses, brought in tractors, hired agronomists and trained the men in a variety of jobs. There was a strict gender division of labour. Women, many of whom were not used to physical work, performed stereotypical female jobs such as cooking, cleaning and sewing. Children and teenagers also worked. They delivered milk, learned how to castrate bulls, or helped with a malaria control programme. DORSA also required collective farm work, much like on a kibbutz. By June 1942 the number of settlers had reached 472. Within a year the settlers had built houses, paved roads, established different kinds of plantations and cleared areas of timber. The settlers also initiated meat and dairy industries (Symanski and Burley 366–378). By 1957 President Roosevelt was portraying Sosúa as a "significant step toward solution of the world refugee problem" (Symanski and Burley 78) and announced that the Sosúa settlement was completely self-supporting, with its school, garage, hospital, cinema, library and small industries. The immigrants tried to replicate their European way of life, and were successful in creating a Little Vienna in the tropics, organizing musical performances and staging plays in Yiddish. Some settlers reached out to educated middle-class Dominicans for friendship. For many settlers class background seems to have played a role in selecting friends. Limited social mixing and intermarriage resulted from the settlers' racial prejudices against people of colour and their arrogant and almost colonial relationship to the natives. Therefore, Dominicans started to resent the settlers' haughty attitude:

> Even a veneer of friendship and acceptance, however, could not conceal the enormous cultural divide between rural Dominicans and the Central European transplants. The settlers all too often looked at their neighbors condescendingly through the blinders of "civilization" and "barbarism". Words like primitive and backward crop up frequently in memoirs and interviews. As a result, misunderstandings and generalizations inevitably surfaced. (Wells 163)

The homesteaders also viewed Dominicans as lazy, and thought that they "had little sense of investment or hard work and multiplied much too quickly. […] That bias helps to explain the colony's persistent endogamy" (Wells 293). Although Sosúa had been proclaimed an ecumenical settlement, and most of the Jews were secular, some desired to keep the Sabbath. This also created tensions between the settlers and the local people, who, in turn, were unwilling to stand in for them and work on Sunday, when there were cockfights and other entertainments. Only a few intermarriages occurred between Jewish men and Dominican women. Although only some of the settlers engaged in deeper relationship with Dominicans, the majority learned from their experience and highlighted their

openness, friendliness and hospitality. Settlers learned enough Spanish to work with Dominicans and exchange rudimentary pleasantries. Even though DORSA objected to settlers hiring local people, as Rosen objected to the paternalistic landlord-peasant relations, the refugees depended on inexpensive Dominican labourers. The settlement provided badly-needed jobs for the local people. The colonists hired Dominican men for major infrastructure projects. Native women were also hired to perform domestic work. Dominicans taught the refugees that drinking water could be obtained from certain plants, or advised the settlers which plants grew well and lasted longer in the tropics. Locals patiently instructed the new arrivals in the "dos and don'ts" of their life in the new surroundings. No doubt the refugees developed their community in conjunction with local Dominicans. A Jewish hospital treated Dominican patients. The settlers and the natives played together in a local soccer team and began doing business together. The settlers started observing Dominican national holidays and acquired a taste for the popular Dominican dance – *merengue*. The Sosúans also tried to heighten awareness of Dominican culture in their school, in their musical and art presentations, and even when celebrating Jewish holidays. Generally, the settlers were surprised by the lack of anti-Semitism and found that most Dominicans did not discriminate against them either economically or socially, and that the Spanish word *judío* did not carry negative connotations. With very few exceptions, however, settlers voiced the opinion that "the better-class Dominicans rejected [them] totally" (Kaplan 113). On balance, researchers found that the Jewish respondents thought of Dominicans as warm and friendly people who had never expressed anti-Semitic behaviours or sentiments. They repeatedly underlined the tolerance of the natives, who did not distinguish "between an Israelite, a Protestant and a Catholic" (Kaplan 21).

The refugees were promised religious freedom, and although they did not observe daily rituals, they built a synagogue and almost all celebrated religious ceremonies such as circumcisions, bar mitzvahs and weddings. The settlers established a religious burial society and created a Jewish cemetery.

Climatologists, such as Ward and Balfour, claimed that the hot and humid tropics were not suited to the Caucasian race, and that the Whites were susceptible to physical and mental degeneration (Wells 36). Surprisingly though, the Sosúa "human experiment" demonstrated that a successful settlement of European refugees could be accomplished in the Western hemisphere under tropical conditions. However, it is not my intention to idealize exile in these specific Dominican conditions. Although the Jewish settlement achieved some economic stability and a modicum of success, and "Sosúans today stress the generosity of Dominicans and the beauty of the place, their idyll came at the cost

of extremely hard labor with very little respite" (Kaplan 167). The Dominican Republic appeared to be welcoming, and the settlers were grateful for their lives. Nonetheless, they faced a myriad problems and difficulties which were obstacles to settling in. In addition to agricultural challenges there was a drastic gender imbalance and a lack of romantic possibilities. Some Europeans could not adapt to the climate and the very primitive rural life. What was more, Sosúa offered only an elementary school, so there were very limited educational opportunities for teenagers. A survey of the residents indicated that the majority of settlers had been trained in commercial careers. Many had professional degrees, and they had never aspired to work the land or live in the Dominican Republic. They were "completely inexperienced 'settlers', who had been taken from the coffee houses of Berlin, Zurich, Prague and Vienna and dumped into totally unfamiliar surroundings where they should have been taught the fundamentals of farming" (Kaplan 70). Only a handful of the refugees were the hardy "human material" promised by Rosen and Rosenberg. Many immigrants had neither an interest in farming nor experience. Nevertheless, desperate to escape the Nazis and leave Europe, they told DORSA agents that they had the knowledge and qualifications to become farmers. They often changed their stories, backgrounds and appearance to fit the ideal immigrant profile.

> There were thousands upon thousands of refugees in various countries of exile in Europe, anxious to get out of the …. Inferno, ready to go anywhere, to promise anything, to misstate their cases, to hide their defects, and to conceal their real intentions… (Kaplan 135).

Many refugees had already experienced concentration camps after *Kristallnacht*. They were dispirited, and under those circumstances it was not easy to find suitable prospective settlers. This involuntary exile triggered many personal crises. Families suffered painful break-ups, and many settlers agonized about relatives left behind. No wonder it created perplexing psychological readjustment problems and psychological barriers. Many refugees were in a fragile emotional and physical state. Sosúa witnessed a number of severely traumatized people who suffered from depression and anxiety. Some residents contracted malaria and became emaciated and sick because of constant relapses. Last but not least, some settlers had difficulty living in such close contact with people who had completely different attitudes, came from completely different social strata, and had very different interests. For some refugees the idea of building a tangible settlement proved invigorating, but many did not feel compelled to make an effort to assimilate, and missed the large and dynamic Jewish populations they had been forced to leave. The tensions also resulted from conflicts over money between DORSA and the settlers, who accused the organization of erratic management

and lack of interest. The "fifth column scares" also impeded Jewish immigration, hampered rescue and prevented Sosúa residents obtaining visas for their relatives. For most refugees their only motivation to go to the Dominican Republic had been security. Although the diaspora community achieved some stability and the settlers had opportunities to take part in the social, economic, and political life of their adopted land, the majority had left the country by the early 1950s for the United States, Canada or Israel, and some dispersed to other locations in the Dominican Republic or Latin America (Kaplan 155–173).

Unquestionably, diasporic possibilities in the Dominican Republic opened for the European Jews, but then again the diaspora was forced. The uprooted and displaced people might have lived under the cloud of *galut*; in the conditions of involuntary dislocation, forced homelessness and an anguished longing to return to the homeland (Gruen 18). The sense of uprootedness and being somehow in the wrong place must have accompanied them to their country of exile, and this can be illustrated by a quote from *Fugitive Pieces* (1996) by Anne Michaels: "To survive was to escape fate. But if you escape your fate, whose life do you then step into?" (Michaels 254).

All these factors help us to understand the reasons for the original Jewish colony's disappearance and the dispersion of its settlers. The overall population declined steadily after 1943, and in the 1950s DORSA withdrew almost all support. Many settlers gave up their homesteads and moved away from Sosúa, although those who stayed seem to have prospered. This can be illustrated by the strongest settler enterprise, CILCA, which was the pride of the inhabitants and eventually grew into a nationwide market. By the early 1970s its products were marketed under the label *Productos Sosúa*[3], which is still in existence today and produces most of the country's meat and dairy produce. The local government of Puerto Plata cooperated with the settlement and the economic success and interactions with the local populations grew. Some settlers foresaw the future tourist trade. A Viennese couple established a guest house which supposedly helped to encourage local tourism and made Sosúa a famous holiday resort. An original settler from Vienna, Erik Hauser, Sosúa's wealthiest man, is the owner of the area, where hotels and restaurants were built on his original 80 acres. The population of Sosúa's twin communities (El Batey and Los Charamicos) has tripled since the 1970s. Sosúa witnessed a real estate boom and a foreign investment influx. Tourism and crime

3 The high property values along the coast made the boards of directors sell the CILCA plant to an all-inclusive resort, La Casa Marina Reef; later on, because of stagnating profits, the brand name "Productos Sosúa" was sold in 2004 to the Mexican conglomerate Sigma Alimentos.

have considerably transformed this quiet seaside community. Sosúa has become a tourist centre with a well-known sex trade. It has also become synonymous with HIV transmission, and has been labelled the north coast centre of vice.

Sosúa today has 3,000 full-time residents, with about 70 Jews. The remaining families try to preserve the settlement's legacy. The small Jewish community has a synagogue that holds services, and the annual Purim carnival is a major community event. There is also a museum dedicated to preserving the history and story of the town's original Jewish settlers (Gigliotti 43). Today, the Jewish presence and Sosúa's Jewish character are vanishing. The settlement's history is barely visible. Only the Jewish Museum, a synagogue, and the street named after Joseph Rosen exist as reminders of the Jewish settlement. The modest beginnings of Sosúa as the first all-Jewish agricultural colony seems to be forgotten. The landscape may appear idyllic to modern-day tourists, but in the 1940s the Dominican Republic was a desperately poor country, with a rich array of tropical diseases and almost no infrastructure. Although Sosúa became a haven for persecuted European Jews, it served mostly as a "waiting-room". It is true that Trujillo's ambition was never fully realized and Sosúa never exceeded a peak population of approximately 700 Jews[4]; yet the fact remains that it does not diminish the achievements of the refugees who settled there. Researchers found that the Jewish Dominicans believed that they had been given a "second life" in the Dominican Republic. At the same time, local Dominicans saw the Jewish presence as one that helped develop their part of the country and one that provided stable employment over time. When seen in this light, the colony's legacy should be seen as one of triumph and survival. Suffice is to mention the caption on an exhibit from the Sosúa museum that reads "Sosúa, a community born of pain and nurtured in love must, in the final analysis, represent the ultimate Triumph of Life" (Feldberg 217).

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4 476 (Gigliotti), 729 (Kaplan), 757 (Wells).

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Hanna Komorowska

Stereotyping through Silence and Speech. Cross-cultural Differences in the Conversational Styles of Poles and Jews as Presented in Polish Literature

Introduction

People make inferences about their conversational partners based on the way they speak. Ways of using silence and speech in interaction, together with types of content, pacing, pausing, taking turns, pitch and intonation are highly individual, yet certain patterns seem to prevail in particular speech communities. Both individual and cross-cultural differences in this field result in different meanings and negative personality characteristics ascribed to the way other people communicate. Mismatches in attributing psychological characteristics to conversational styles often lie at the root of the perception of otherness, and, in consequence, of distance and conflict. Therefore, in the present paper differences in conversational styles prevailing in Polish and Jewish communities as presented in Polish literature will be analysed in order to show how differences in interactional behaviour might have functioned as one more factor leading to the negative stereotyping of Jews in the Polish community. Examples will come from selected Polish novels and short stories of the 19th and 20th centuries by authors such as Konopnicka, Orzeszkowa, Prus, and Reymont, though the persistence of certain perceptions will also be sought in the literary work of the turn of the 21st century, such as recent novels by Chwin and Ostachowicz.

Conversational styles and their components

A basic assumption of conversation studies states that each conversation participant attempts to contribute appropriately to the exchange of talk, according to the Cooperation Principle with its four subprinciples related to the amount of talk (Quantity), truth-value (Quality), relevance (Relation) and clarity (Manner) (Grice). There are also universally valid rules of turn-taking (Mey), yet differences can be found in ways of using silence and speech on an individual level, while important differences can also be seen across particular ethnic groups, which often differ in how they communicate power and solidarity (Brown and

Gilman), social distance and roles (Goffman *Interaction Ritual*, Goffman *Frame Analysis*), or face-related issues manifesting linguistic optimism or pessimism, which enabled researchers to distinguish positive and negative politeness cultures (Brown and Levinson).

The ways in which people speak, fall silent and take turns while participating in interaction with other speakers tend to display certain characteristic patterns, referred to as *conversational styles.* Styles are usually characterized in terms of pacing, narrative strategies and paralinguistic devices. Usually, speakers do not use all the features of a given style, but decide on certain clusters of devices. What is more, speakers might move towards a certain cluster of features depending on their cognitive and affective characteristics, the way they perceive the situation, and their relationship to other speakers (Tannen *Conversational Style*). It is also evident that speakers assess themselves and others depending on their own expectations and experience.

Although ways of using silence and speech in interaction are highly individual, certain patterns or linguistic devices – as has been pointed out above – seem to prevail in particular speech communities, while others are clearly absent from their communication practice. Differences in the use of gesture have, for example, been noticed between Jewish and Italian communities, showing that Jews tend to use gesture to mark logical patterns, while Italians use them to intensify or replace the verbal component (Efron). A considerable number of cross-cultural research projects focusing on various groups soon followed (e.g. Harumi; Phillips; Sarangi; Scollon and Scollon *Athabaskan English Interethnic Communication*; Scollon "The Machine Stops"; Scollon and Scollon *Intercultural Communication*).

Particular groups have been found to prefer certain patterns, considering them more polite and more valuable, and for that reason promoting them both through family socialization and through education. Groups of people who in this way share rules for using and interpreting communicative practices are referred to as speech communities (Carbaugh). Yet, as Agar puts it, it is very difficult to decide what is cultural and what is not, as "not every difference has to be cultural" (Agar 25).

Considering the fact that ways of using silence and speech in interaction are not universal but culture-specific, what seems to be crucial is the ability to appropriately judge the meaning of silence in a given context, as misjudging might lead not only to linguistic misunderstandings, but also to deeper interpersonal, social and political conflicts.

Silence and speech in conversational styles as sources of stereotyping. The role of psychological and sociological attributions

Conversational styles play an important role in interpersonal relations because people perceive others through the lens of their use of silence and speech in conversation. They also interpret what is being said on the basis of their judgement of the interlocutor's intent; this, however, presupposes some shared knowledge and shared use of conversational devices (Gumperz). Sharing brings a feeling of conversational satisfaction, of being "on the same wavelength" and of belonging. Therefore, conversational style becomes the basic component of ethnicity (Tannen "Ethnic Style"). When styles are not shared, speakers become disappointed, a feeling of otherness creeps in, and the path to negative impressions and attributions lies open.

Important questions introduced by Deborah Tannen are: 'What accounts for impressions made when speakers use particular linguistic devices? What accounts for the mutual understanding or lack of it in conversation?' (Tannen *Conversational Style* 7). When these perceptions are similar and expectations do not differ, mutual understanding takes places, while in the case of different expectations – and these depend on individual perceptions of the situation – any linguistic device can cause problems due to its different interpretation (Tannen *Conversational Style* 40).

As early as 1927 Edward Sapir analysed style as a level of speech which plays an important role in judgments of personality, a statement repeated in his later publications (Sapir) and taken up by other researchers who linked linguistic and personality styles to gender (Lakoff *Language and Women's Place*) and investigated psychological correlates of silence and sound in conversation (Crown/Feldstein).

In a seminal study of a Thanksgiving conversation Tannen shows how shared conversational expectations and similarity of devices enhance communication, while differences in expectations and in functions fulfilled by these devices impede or even obstruct it. Latching utterances onto preceding ones and using conversational overlap together with fast, abrupt, 'machine-gun' questions, often presented in high pitch and in reduced syntactic forms, are devices which may be interpreted in terms of enthusiasm, solidarity and genuine interest in both the topic and the interlocutor by those who share the same style, but may also be considered rude or even aggressive by those with different ways of participating in conversation (Tannen *Conversational Style*).

As Deborah Tannen puts it

> The goal of all conversation is to make clear to others the intentions of the speaker; the degree to which one's meaning is understood as intended depends upon the degree to which conversational strategies, and hence use of devices are similar. Furthermore, the similarity of such devices makes for rhythmically smooth interaction. Both the rhythmic synchrony and the construction of shared meaning create a satisfying sense of harmony which often accompanies conversation among people who share social, ethnic, geographic, or class background. By the same token, the use of strategies and consequent devices that are not understood or expected creates a sense of dissonance which often leads to negative or mistaken judgments of intent. This, in turn, often leads one to walk away from an encounter feeling dissatisfied or disgruntled. Thus an understanding of conversational style explains in part what often appears as clannishness among members of certain groups, or discrimination or prejudice on the part of others. (Tannen, *Conversational Style* 150)

Other researchers also stress that miscommunication is often interpreted "in the light of racial stereotypes" (Maltz and Borker 172).

Polish and Jewish conversational styles as presented in Polish literature

Cultural differences in conversational styles account – at least in part – for cultural stereotyping, which is a form of extending to a whole group those impressions which are formed about individual speakers (Tannen, "Conversational Signals and Devices" 162). Speech patterns are then used as tools to categorize others (Ajtony).

In pre-war Poland a huge number of factors related to religion and economics led to discrimination against the Jewish population and to prejudice, yet most certainly the situation was aggravated by differences in Polish and Jewish conversational styles, an unfortunate pattern repeated in various places and at various times (cf. Tannen, *Conversational Style* 26). Conversational styles do not necessarily depend on the language used, therefore their features can be traced in the way interlocutors speak in their second or third language, as Polish was for most of the Jews in Poland. This text has no intention to point to differences in conversational styles as the main cause of distancing or the main reason for negative attitudes and anti-Semitism in Poland. Yet this factor, as one operating on an everyday basis, seems to be worth analysing.

In the popular Polish perspective of the end of the 19th c. and the interwar period Jews were considered noisy, self-centred and even patronizing, while in the xenophobic perspective they were seen as aggressive, opinionated, conceited and bad-mannered. I will, therefore, try to look at ways the Jewish style of handling conversation in Polish was presented in Polish literature in order to

identify features perceived as characteristic and link them to negative psychological attributions at the roots of stereotyping and prejudice on the part of the Polish population. Examples will come mostly from literary works dating from the end of the 19th c., though I will try to find out if ways of presenting conversation at that time have been taken up or reflected in recent novels. It should be pointed out here that the feeling of otherness was certainly strengthened by deviations from the linguistic norm frequent in the speech of Jews using Polish as a second or foreign language; I decided, however, to concentrate on conversational styles rather than on linguistic forms, as typical linguistic errors have so far been very well researched (Brzezina).

There are obviously features of conversational style which cannot be analysed based on literary examples. Among them one can list loudness, pitch, voice quality, rate of speech, or conversational overlap, i.e. characteristics connected with the auditory channel, but also those transmitted through the visual channel, e.g. facial expressions, eye contact or gesture (LeBaron and Streeck; Ephratt), though sometimes the narrator's comments on those features can be found in the text. If this happens to be the case, remarks of this kind tend to be presented in the form of adjectives describing the type of silence as, e.g. threatening, thoughtful or forbidding, as well as in the form of some basic information on the paralinguistics used. This, however, is rare, which has to impoverish any analysis based on literary texts.

Features absent from literary presentation can, however, be traced back through tips given in the times of World War II to Jewish people fleeing from the ghetto to live on the so-called Aryan side – pieces of advice my friends' parents, Holocaust survivors, used to quote (too late today to ask for their authorisation), tips also listed in non-fiction writings on the subject as well as in research papers (Nalewajko-Kulikov), and were usually presented in the form of imperatives:

- don't speak so fast, slow down;
- don't be too loud, speak softly;
- don't jump in with comments when other people speak, wait till they finish their turn;
- don't shoot abrupt, clipped questions, ask slower, well-rounded ones;
- don't use gesture so much, keep your hands close to your body;
- don't touch your interlocutor while talking,
- don't stand too close to other people, keep a physical distance, etc.

Advice of this kind points to the most salient characteristics of the Jewish conversational style as perceived by Jews themselves. It also shows awareness of the fact that when one speaker uses silence even slightly less often than another, the

two immediately polarise into talkative and taciturn, respectively (Scollon "The Machine Stops"). Therefore, in attempts to hide one's identity radical changes had to be introduced. Today we know that there are considerable cross-cultural differences in the use of silence, and that even balanced bilinguals tend to "retain a foreign accent in their use of silence in the second language" (Saville Troike, *Perspectives on Silence* 13).

It is important to note that many of the same features of verbal and non-verbal communication as those listed above were found in Tannen's analysis of the New York Jewish conversational style, especially because New York attracted Jewish immigrants of Eastern European origin. Overlap in turn-taking, avoidance of inter-turn pauses, and fast rate of speech, according to Tannen, signal empathy and reinforce a shared ethnic background among Jews. Yet she also stresses that it may put off those with different conversational styles (Tannen "New York Jewish Conversational Style").

Looking at the conversational styles of Jews on Polish territory, it is worth remembering that conversational traditions in this geographical area were mainly Hasidic (Komorowska). Rabbi Moshe from Kobryn, who taught in the first half of the 19th c., used to assert that when saying a word in front of God one should place oneself fully within it. When asked how a big man can fit into a small word, he answered: "We don't even speak about those who think they are bigger than the word" (Buber 218). A word can only be beautiful if it carries important meaning. Rabbi Baruch (1787–1810) from Mizrich (Międzyrzec), praised for the literary beauty of his speech, said "If I was to speak beautifully, I would prefer to be struck dumb" (Buber 114). The value of silence in important encounters and in didactic situations was often pointed out as well. Mendel, the son of the Warka tzadik, and Eleazar, the grandson of the Great Magid of Kozienice, travelled for a long time to meet for the first time and, on finally reaching the meeting point, spent a long time together in silence – to the astonishment of their followers who were waiting in the hall, not having been invited to witness the encounter. Only much later were they informed that the rabbis had understood what they wanted to understand without words, and at that point all their Hasidim could be allowed in. When asked where he mastered "the way of silence", Rabbi Mendel was at first going to answer, but then "decided to use the art he had mastered" (Buber 251). This shows that the conscious employment of silence is also a legitimate communicative act (Bruneau).

Understandably, speech rather than silence is presented in Polish literary texts. The Polish literature of the 19th c. shows first of all topic choices influencing conversational styles. What seems frequent are either matter-of-fact business talks

or philosophical and religious interpretations of the trivia of everyday life, which had also been illustrated much earlier in Martin Buber's legendary anecdotes: "the telephone tells us that what we say here is always heard up there", and "the cable shows that we pay for every word we say" (Buber 194). Both are in stark contrast to Slavonic small talk, complaint talk or boast talk. *A combination of generosity and romantic gestures with a businesslike attitude* in the same encounter created cognitive dissonance for the Polish speakers, who tended to see the two as mutually exclusive. This is precisely illustrated by the meeting of Ignacy Rzecki, a protagonist of *Lalka* [The Doll], a novel by Boleslaw Prus first published in 1890, with a Jew who not only honestly hands him a large sum of money sent by Jan Mincel, and offers a free gift of food and wine to the brave soldier who comes back after long wandering from the battlefields of Hungary in 1853, but also immediately engages in attempts to buy and sell what the soldier might have at his disposal, and even shows astonishment at the fact that one can go to war with no material benefit in mind (Prus, *Lalka* vol 1, 192). Everyday talk is full of every attempt to train the mind, clearly explained by the old Schlangbaum, who points out that Jewish adolescents engage in charades, solve puzzles and rebuses or play chess to develop patience and critical thinking, while the Polish youth engage in romantic fever (Prus *Lalka* vol 1, 276).

Conversational style as presented in the same novel shows *the way questions are used* in the Jewish conversational style. First of all, their frequency far exceeds that in the Polish style. Moreover, their distribution and functions are very different, as they are used in places where affirmative sentences would be used by most Polish speakers:

- *Łęcki jest pański klient?…*
- *Dlaczego on nie ma bycz mój?*
- *Co on ma?*
- *On ma… On ma – szostre w Krakowie, która, rozumysz pan, zapysała dla jego córki…*
- *A jeżeli ona nie zapisała?…*
- *Tylko mi pan nie mów takie głupie gadanie… Dlaczego szostra z Krakowa nie ma zapysać, kiedy ona jest chora?*

- Łęcki is your client? (an indirect question would be used in the Polish style, or else some form of mitigated inquiry – typical of the high considerateness style)
- Why shouldn't he be? (in the Polish style 'Yeah' would be used).
- What has he got? (a machine-gun abrupt question from the Polish point of view)

– A sister in Cracow who in her will donated to his daughter…
– What if she gave her nothing? (in Polish a phrase of the type 'Are you sure?' would be expected)
– Why shouldn't she give her something if she is so ill now? (in the Polish style a phrase of the type 'Yes, it is quite certain, especially as she is very ill' would be used.)

(Prus *Lalka. 419, transl. H.K.)*

Questions might be a sign of interest and appreciation, but at the same time they might be perceived as an unpleasant intrusion into the realm of privacy – messages and metamessages are at work here (Tannen, "Conversational Signals and Devices" 164). Questions offered instead of expected straightforward answers are interpreted as manipulation and cunning on the part of interaction partners with different conversational styles.

Ways of talking, and especially ways of using questions, are similar in the most recent novel by Igor Ostachowicz, entitled *Noc żywych Żydów* [The Night of the Living Jews] and published in 2012. The Polish cellar owner learns about the growing numbers of the walking dead, whose peace and safety he protects against skinheads by means of spreading the information that they are no more than historical reenactment groups. He then asks the main Jewish character in charge of the crowd:

– *Dużo ich jest?*
– *To ty nie wiesz ilu ich zginęło w Warszawie?*
– Are there a lot of them? How many? (straightforward information expected in the Polish style)
– You don't know how many of them lost their lives in Warsaw? ? (a question-shaped answer appears instead of straightforward information)

(Ostachowicz 160, transl. H.K.)

High speed of turn-taking can only be inferred from the type and sequence of utterances, but – as in Tannen's analysis – abrupt questions connected with avoidance of direct, affirmative answers – through more questions – are perceived as indices of negative psychological characteristics from the point of view of speakers using the typical Polish style.

Identical conversational strategies can be found in the writings published in Polish by Jewish authors. The example that follows comes from *Życiorys własny przestępcy* [The Autobiography of a Criminal], written in the years 1931–32 by Urke-Nachalnik, a pen name of Icek Baruch Farbarowicz, a Jewish criminal, a Jewish Jean Genet, who – while in prison – was encouraged to start a literary career by a resocialization researcher, Prof. Stanisław Kowalski, a pupil of the

famous Polish sociologist Florian Znaniecki, who himself approved of the idea in his letter of 2nd April 1932 sent from the US, where he was engaged in qualitative research of the Chicago school of sociology. Reporting on an everyday conversation, Urke-Nachalnik, later a very successful writer publishing in Polish and in Yiddish, quotes the following interaction:

– *A wiesz co dzisiaj na obiad?*
– *Nie wiem – a ty wiesz?*
– *Miałbym nie wiedzieć? dziś na obiad jest cymes okraszony cebulowymi łzami.*

– You know what's for dinner today?
– I don't know – you do?
– Wouldn't I know? Tzimmes seasoned with onion tears (Urke-Nachalnik 27, transl.HK)

This interchange also shows a tendency to insert bits of melancholic humour and irony showing *nostalgic distance from the difficulties of everyday life* (Żółkiewska).

A certain degree of verbosity *linking reflection with down-to-earth everyday themes* was also a characteristic feature of Jewish conversational style unknown in the Polish way of interacting. This was usually done through the constant repetition of a keyword, which reshaped every comment or piece of small talk into a cognitively and morally significant encounter.

Only then and only on such a foundation would a logical argument be built. In the Polish conversational style, as in many speech communities, both features – amount of talk and the introduction of philosophical aspects – characterize high status speakers (Smith-Lovin/Brody). In Polish-Jewish interactions both features characterize the speech of Jews which, if addressed to a Pole of a higher social and financial status, gives rise to the attribution of aggressiveness and self-conceit. It should be reminded that it is not the amount of talk, but the expectation of it on the part of the interlocutor that gives rise to mismatches and negative attributions (Tannen "Silence. Anything but").

Moreover, those negative attributions are aggravated by *repetition and the lack of hedging devices*, i.e. those reducing the strength of an opinion such as *maybe, perhaps, it seems*, etc. (Markkanen and Schroeder). An example of those features comes from Maria Konopnicka's *Mendel Gdański,* first published in 1890*,* in a conversation between a Polish anti-Semitic watchmaker and a Jewish bookbinder (Konopnicka 35).

To the statement that 'a Jew is always a Jew' (*Żyd zawsze Żydem*), and that Jews should not be strangers (*Chodzi o to żeby nie był on obcym),* the Jewish bookbinder answers with a philosophical statement rich in repetitions:

– *O to chodzi! No to niech mi tak od razu pan dobrodziej powiada! To jest mądre słowo! Ja lubię słyszeć mądre słowo! Mądre słowo jest jak ojciec i matka człowiekowi. Nu, ja za mądre słowo to by mile drogi szedł. Jak ja mądre słowo usłyszę to mi za chleb starczy. Jakby ja wielki bogacz był, wielki bankier, to ja by za każde mądre słowo dukata dał.*

– *… Pan dobrodziej powiada co by Żyd nie był obcy. Nu i ja tak samo powiadam. Czemu nie? Niech un nie będzie obcy. Na co un obcy ma być, na co ma obcym się robić, kiedy un i tak swój. Pan dobrodziej myśli, co jak tu deszcz pada, to un Żyda nie moczy, bo Żyd obcy? Albo może pan dobrodziej myśli, co jak tu wiatr wieje, to un piaskiem nie sypie w oczy temu Żydowi, bo un obcy?…*

– That is what it is about! You, good lord, should have immediately put it that way. This is a wise word. A wise word is like a father and mother to a man. Well, to hear a wise word I would be ready to walk a mile. A wise word is as good as bread for me. If I were a rich man, a banker, I would give a gold sovereign for each wise word…

– …You are saying, good lord, that a Jew should not be a stranger. That is exactly what I am saying. Why not? Let him not be a stranger. Why should he be a stranger, why should he make himself a stranger if he is from here anyway? You, good lord, you think that when it is raining here, the rain does not wet a Jew, because the Jew is a stranger? Or perhaps, you, good lord, you think that when the wind is blowing here, it does not throw dust into a Jew's eyes, because the Jew is a stranger?…

(Konopnicka 35, transl. H.K.)

This philosophical bent is also illustrated in Władysław Reymont's *Ziemia obiecana* [The Promised Land] from the year 1898, later filmed by Andrzej Wajda. A Jewish businessman, Halpern, in his conversation with Borowiecki, a well born Pole who wants to make money in the new industrial city of Łódź, claims the city is the only right place for him:

– *Co ja robiłbym na wsi? Co ja robiłbym z chłopami?*
– *Byłbyś pan pachciarzem.*
– *I pomiędzy nimi jest taka konkurencja, że z głodu umierają.*
– *Tylko ci, co nie umieją oszukiwać chłopów i obywateli.*
– *To jest gadanie? To jest tylko antysemickie gadanie, w które pan nie wierzy, bo pan dobrze wie, że płotkę zjada okoń, a okonia zjada szczupak, a szczupaka? Szczupaka zjada człowiek! człowieka zjadają drodzy ludzie, jedzą go bankructwo, jedzą choroby, jedzą zmartwienia, aż go w końcu zjada śmierć. To wszystko jest w porządku i jest bardzo ładnie na świecie, bo z tego robi się ruch.*

– What would I be doing in the country? What would I be doing with those peasants?
– You would be a tenant.
– Even among them the competition is so great that they are starving.

– Only those who do not know how to cheat those in the country and those in the town.
– What kind of talk is that? It is just this kind of anti-Semitic talk you yourself don't believe might be true, because you know that a roach is eaten by a perch and the perch is eaten by a pike and the pike is eaten by a man and the man is eaten by some nice people, by bankruptcy, by diseases, by worries and at the very end he gets eaten up by death. And this is OK, it is all very nice in this world, because it all means some movement.

(Reymont 189, transl. H. K.)

Similar devices are used by contemporary novelists when they want to no more than hint that a given person is Jewish, as in the following example from Stefan Chwin's *Esther*, first published in 1999.

Mueller vel Meyerling, faced with the question *Czego chcesz?* [*What do you want?*] answers:

– *O, mądry pan inżynier, że tak uprzejmie zapytuje. A ja mu tylko odpowiem, że ja tam nic od niego nie chcę, ja tylko mam coś jemu powiedzieć. Mesje inżynier nie ciekawy, co prosty człowiek ma jemu powiedzieć? Co on może powiedzieć takiej ważnej osobie, takiemu panu, co tylko mówi "odejdź, odejdź", żeby ubogiego na katorgę, najlepiej nad rzekę Karę wysłać albo do guberni kostromskiej, żeby on pazurami gołymi złoto w kopalni darł, a potem to już tylko papierosy z liści eukaliptusa, bo po płucach wspomnienie zostało…*

– Oh, what a wise master engineer to ask in such a nice way. And I would only answer him that I want nothing and that I only want to tell him something. Monsieur the engineer is not at all curious what a simple man might want to tell him? What can he tell such an important person who only repeats "go away, go away" to send a poor man to torture in labour camps some place on the Kara river or in the Kostroma district where he would scratch gold in the mine with his bare hands and then he can only hope for some eucalyptus cigarettes as his lungs are no more than a memory…

(Chwin 161, transl. H. K.)

In all the above examples, in the conversational style predominant among Polish speakers what would be expected is either a simple response or at best a response with a certain form of relexicalisation. Relexicalisation, frequent in the Polish conversational style, is a repetition of what has just been said, meaning acceptance of the content offered by the interlocutor with the introduction of a tiny new segment of speech to find out if this addition also seems acceptable to the conversation partner (Schmitt/McCarthy). Introduction of a long segment of speech with deep philosophical implications, typical of the Jewish style as perceived by Poles, shows radical differences in communication.

Another conversational strategy linked to verbosity, negatively perceived by Polish conversation partners and often encountered in Jewish interaction, consists

of *the use of irony to point out the absurdity argumentation*. In his memoirs Urke-Nachalnik quotes his reaction to the accusation of having stolen horses belonging to another Jew. He says,

– *Skądże miałem wiedzieć czy te konie są żydowskie czy nieżydowskie? Konie nie przemówiły do mnie ani po żydowsku ani po polsku gdy im żelazne pęta zdejmowałem i wyprowadzałem ze stajni…*

– How could I know if those horse were Jewish or not Jewish? Those horses did not start speaking to me either in Yiddish or in Polish when I was freeing them from their iron and taking them out of the barn.

(Urke-Nachalnik 269, transl. H.K.)

What, therefore, offers a sharp contrast to this lengthy and philosophical way of speaking is the ability to shift towards *conciseness of matter-of fact business conversation* which polarizes options and locates itself as far from the Polish conversational style as the former verbosity. Moreover, it creates a strong pressure on the conversation partner due to the fast rate of conversation and the *reintroduction of the topic* the Jewish speaker is interested in. An example of this aspect comes from *Placówka* [The Outpost] by Bolesław Prus, a novel first published in 1886. A Jewish businessman, carrying an important letter, arrives at a manor during a party given by the owner.

– *Jak się Pan ma, panie Hirszgold! … Co to za pilny list od teścia?…*
– *… Niech pan przeczyta.*
– *Jak to? Teraz? Ależ ja tańczę mazura, panie Hirszgold.*
– *A ja buduję dystans kolei.*
– *… Więc pan chce kupić mój folwark?*
– *I to zaraz.*
– *Ależ panie, ja mam bal w domu.*
– *A na mnie czekają koloniści. Jeżeli do północy nie skończę z panem, jutro będę musiał skończyć z pańskim sąsiadem. On zyska, a pan straci.*
– *No dobrze… to jest… Mój teść pisze o panu bardzo pochlebnie. Ale w takiej chwili?*
– *Potrzebuje pan tylko napisać parę słów.*
– *… Doprawdy, panie Hirszgold, jesteś nieznośny.*
– *To nie ja, to interesa. Chciałbym dogodzić pańskiej familii, ale przedłużyć krótkiego czasu nie potrafię.*
– How are you, Mr. Hirschgold? … What is this urgent letter from my father-in law?…
– …Read it!
– What do you mean? Now? I am just dancing a Mazur, Mr. Hirschgold!
– And I am just building a section of the railway.
– …So you want to buy my property?
– Right now.
– But I am just giving a party…

– And I am right now expected at the colonists' place. If I don't reach an agreement with you by midnight, I'll reach it with your neighbour tomorrow morning. He will gain, you will lose.
– OK… that is…my father-in-law speaks favourably of you. But at this time?
– All you need is to write a few words.
– Really, Mr. Hirschgold, you are impossible.
– Not me – it's business. I would be glad to satisfy your family, but extending a short notice is beyond my power

(Prus, *Placówka* 120, transl. H.K.)

It is interesting that no text points to any kind of conversational overlap or interruption, either marked (at the end of a clause) or unmarked (in the middle of an utterance), either power- or rapport-oriented. One explanation is that authors found it difficult to present the natural flow of speech in writing; another – more plausible to my mind – is that, with all the differences in conversational styles, none of the speakers found it desirable to add a communication-ruining factor to interaction which, after all, had a certain aim to achieve. Negative attributions come, therefore, not so much from the linguistic form or interruption tendencies, but from differences in cognitive styles, amount of speech, and ways of responding to messages.

Conclusion. Polish and Jewish conversational styles as presented in Polish literature vis-à vis cross-culturally identified styles

An important distinction made by Deborah Tannen ias early as the 1980s and still considered the most significant is that between high involvement and high considerateness styles (Tannen *Conversational Style;* Tannen "Conversational Signals and Devices").

A high involvement style is characterized by preferences for personal topics; speakers using it often speak in parallel with other speakers or intervene in the middle of their interlocutors' turns, clearly communicate attitudes and emotions, shift topics easily, do not get discouraged by other speakers' reluctance to take up a new theme, yet they pay attention to what others say – a feature often referred to as bonding tendencies or participatory listenership.

A high considerateness style is characterized by neutral topics, slow and hesitant moving to new themes in conversation, and dropping topics which do not seem to engage other interaction partners. A person using a high considerateness style tends to speak relatively slowly, but at the same time listens somewhat less carefully to what others say.

The above distinction shows two radically different ways of participating in conversation, yet in fact styles form a continuum (Tannen *Conversational Style;* Tannen "Conversational Signals and Devices"). Styles are also relative: a person with a slower speech rate will have a tendency to attribute psychological features of a high involvement style to any faster interlocutor.

The examples from Polish literature quoted above show a set of characteristic features forming the Jewish style in their conversations conducted in the Polish language with Poles, a style perceived as different from that used by their Polish counterparts. Those features include: fluency and verbosity, the use of questions in their assertive function and as a way of changing the course of conversation, the type of melancholic and ironic humour, frequent falling back on universal and philosophical subjects for which everyday details are an easy springboard, rapid change from slow philosophical monologue to abrupt, matter-of-fact business-oriented transaction, exerting pressure through a combination of speed with the reintroduction of a topic they find worthwhile. According to Tannen's typology of conversational styles, it seems that authors of the literary works mentioned above tended to present the conversational style used by Jews as a high involvement style. At the same time authors equip the style used by Poles with features typical of a high considerateness style.

Psychological attributions related to high involvement styles typically include negative characteristics such as being dominant, pushy, aggressive, opinionated, self-centred and insensitive, while those related to high considerateness styles include features such as being slow, passive, hesitant, insecure, disinterested, uncooperative or easy to manipulate (Tannen *Conversational Style;* Lakoff "The Triangle of Linguistic Structure").

Painful miscommunication occurs when styles differ considerably within a single conversation. Lakoff points out that strong feelings of both anger and fear are involved in a conversational encounter between a person using a high considerateness style and an interlocutor using a high involvement style. These feelings are often accompanied by a sense of being manipulated, and later may even lead to aggression caused, e.g. by agreement too easily granted (Lakoff "The Triangle of Linguistic Structure"). This imbalance of conversation, when high involvement speakers offer more narratives, take the floor much more often and generally say more, often in a humorous or a joking way results in high considerateness speakers feeling excluded or dominated.

Negative attributions built in the Polish community on the above characteristics of the Jewish conversational style – in line with attributions built on the high involvement style – present Jews as noisy, pushy, aggressive and conceited, but – due to the frequent introduction of metaphors and philosophical remarks – add

to those negative characteristics even more pejorative aspects of their constructed image, such as being cunning, dangerously clever, and self-presenting as better and wiser than their social status would ever permit them to be placed.

As the clusters of communicative devices described above prevailed – or were perceived as prevailing – in the Jewish community, this negative image was generalised from individual encounters onto the whole population and aggravated the situation in the growing xenophobia in Poland from the end of the 19th c., not only due to false attributions based on communication mismatches, but also in consequence of conscious manipulation of evidence on the part of anti-Semites.

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Annette Aronowicz

No Longer Other? Jews in Czesław Miłosz's Landscape

Jews appear frequently in Czesław Miłosz's writings, although they are rarely the object of systematic reflections exclusively devoted to them. It would be difficult to claim that these scattered references are somehow representative of Polish images about Jews as a whole, since Miłosz was often at odds with many of his countrymen, striving to redirect the conversation. Two of the poems he wrote in 1943, "Campo dei Fiori" and "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto," did indeed help to frame more recent discussions of Polish-Jewish relations in his country (Błoński, *Biedni Polacy* 5–74).[1] Since he (along with his brother Andrzej) were named Righteous Among the Gentiles by Yad VaShem in 1989, his life, and not just his writings, can also become a point of reference for understanding Polish-Jewish relations. In what follows, I will not focus on his work and life during the Second World War, however, but rather on his writings about Jews in the postwar period. These poems and essays capture a way of speaking about Jews, I contend, that, while addressed to Poles, extends beyond Poland to reflect the place of Jews in the imaginary of the broader contemporary Western world.

In drawing freely from a multitude of Miłosz's published postwar works, I can hope to retrieve only a fragment of a complex mosaic about Jews in his writings. This fragment is nonetheless important, for running through much of Miłosz's reflections on Jews is a central ambiguity regarding their status as the great Other of Western culture. On the one hand, he views them as just another human grouping, devoid of a special role either vis-à-vis the Nation or vis-à-vis Christianity. On the other hand, they retain a unique role in world historical events, even if this theme is more muted in his writings, and is not accompanied by the religious vocabulary it has been associated with in the past. Do Miłosz's writings confront us with the waning religious significance of Jews in the contemporary Western imagination? Or, on the contrary, do they confront us with

1 The author, through a study of the two poems, wished to come to grips with Polish attitudes regarding Jews. His essays evoked a flurry of responses in the Polish press and beyond. See also, Błoński, Edelman, Miłosz and Turowicz 413–423, which is the transcript of a conversation that took place in Krakow in 1993. For the place the two poems have in Milosz's oeuvre as a whole, see Laignel-Lavastine 273–290.

the Jews' continuing religious significance, present but in a more subterranean mode? Either way, Miłosz's postwar essays and poems invite us to consider this question.

Jews in Lithuania

Jews very frequently make their appearance in Miłosz's work in the context of his native Lithuania. He returns again and again to the mix of peoples in the land of his youth, and most especially in Wilno.[2] This area had once been part of the Union of the Kingdom of Poland and of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and even though that political arrangement had long dissolved by 1911, the year he was born, the linguistic and ethnic richness of the area still prevailed. The Jews were simply part of this multiplicity of peoples and in some ways symbolized this multiplicity. In many places, he points out the diversity, both political and cultural, within this one group, as if this multiplicity reflected the plethora of peoples in his land of birth ("Vilnius" 81).[3]

In Miłosz's many descriptions, Jews function according to sociological principles that also pertain to others in the same conditions. For instance, one of Jews' distinctive marks in his region is that they were a very large minority. An urban population in a land of peasants, in the cities and small towns, they could constitute the majority (*Wyprawa* 269). In Wilno, they made up nearly half of the city. This sociological fact – merchants in a land of peasants – leads Miłosz to compare the hostility toward them to that against the Chinese in Indonesia. They too were the commercial class in a predominantly agricultural country. In the twentieth century a visible number of the younger Chinese generation, seeing no other way of combatting the prejudice against them in Indonesia, joined the Communist Party, paralleling the path of many young Jews in Eastern Europe (*Wyprawa* 269). In *Emperor of the Earth*, he also compares the Jews to outsider groups who are stigmatized, like the Negroes and the Algerians, and in which the individual faces the choice of either betraying the group by pretending not to belong to it, or of making group characteristics even more strong in himself as a sign of loyalty (199).

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2 This is the Polish name of the city of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Miłosz calls it Wilno when referring back to his youth and adolescence, during most of which the city was part of Poland. He also uses the name Wilno when referring to earlier periods, when Polish language inhabitants dominated the area. (The Jewish name use for it was Vilne or Vilna.)

3 See also *Native Realm* 98, and *Wyprawa* 268.

Other features of the Jews' status turn out not to be unique. Of course, they were viewed as different, and in some ways as outsiders. Miłosz views them that way, when describing his own difference from his classmates in his Catholic school, he refers to himself as "a Jew among the *goyim*," clearly using the term "Jew" here as a metaphor for being "other" (*Native Realm* 76). It is astonishing, nonetheless, to see how un-other the Jews are in so many of Miłosz's descriptions. If it is true, for instance, that Jewish culture was not taught in the Polish gymnasium Miłosz attended in Lithuania, neither was Lithuanian folklore nor the Protestant literature of the region (97). If there were hardly any Jews in his high school, there were hardly any Protestants or Orthodox Christians or Muslims either, although they were represented in the population (69). If the Jews were considered outsiders to normative Polish culture, so were Polish-speaking Lithuanian gentry vis-à-vis their counterparts in central Poland. It was, in fact, his position as an outsider to central Polish society that as he says, "permitted him to enter the mentality of writers of Jewish extraction who also stood in front of closed gates" (102). He understood his own Leftist inclinations and those of his Jewish counterparts to come from the same source. "…Somewhere in the depths glimmered the thought that my Leftism and theirs was a disguise for our otherness. As they repudiated the ghetto, so I hid away the Grand Duchy of Lithuania among dusty souvenirs" (102). There remained a third barrier, that between the Lithuanian peasants and everyone else. In his *Treatise on Poetry*, Miłosz has the peasants say "But Mickiewicz is too alien for us. Ours is not a lordly or a Jewish knowledge. We worked with a plough, with a harrow. On feast days we heard a different music" (42). Defining who is the outsider becomes more complicated yet.

At times, he speaks of Jews not as a minority but as a nation comparable to other nations. He draws a comparison, for instance, between the Jews and the Poles. The collective memory of both was linked with pain and humiliation (*Year of the Hunter* 52), and both produced Messianic movements (*Native Realm* 82). Even when it comes to the Holocaust, a comparison between the Jews and others is not only possible but also necessary. He does not efface the specificity of the fate of the Jews. In a note to a verse in his *Treatise on Poetry*, he states unequivocally "In Poland, the Shoah amounted to the extermination of a whole nation of Polish Jews. It was not one event among many" (109–110). In his Nobel Prize lecture, however, after expressing his horror of Holocaust deniers, meaning specifically those who deny the existence of the death camps, he adds that "he feels anxiety when the meaning of the word Holocaust undergoes gradual modifications, so that the word begins to belong to the history of the Jews exclusively, as if among the victims there were also not millions of Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, and prisoners of other nationalities" (*Beginning* 278).

It would seem, then, that Miłosz wished to take away from Jews their exceptional status in order to place them squarely within history. He demystifies their image as the chosen people or the eternal people, or the accursed people. They are not, as he presents them a people playing a unique role in world events. It would be difficult to find in Miłosz's writings something corresponding to the statement of the younger Lithuanian poet Tomas Venclova in his essay "Jews and Lithuanians": "Their [the Jews] cultural role and their very fate are so enormous that they are for me the primary proof of the transcendental design which determines our historical existence" (44). For Miłosz, the Jews as a people are not associated with transcendence.

The Metaphysical Significance of the Jews

Demystifying the Jews as a people can be a two-edged sword, however. If it frees the Jews from the role they play in anti-Semitic mythology, in which they often appear as the great enemy of all other nations, it also frees them from their normative metaphysical understanding of themselves. For millennia, the Jews viewed themselves, and were viewed by Christians, as the eternal people, defying the laws of history, because of a special covenant with God. According to both theologies, although with obvious differences, the Jews have a unique and central role to play in history–as a necessary reminder of the oneness of God on the Jewish side, or as witnesses to the divine promises on the Christian side, just to give a couple of examples. But, while the Jews do appear most frequently in Miłosz's writings shorn of any theological dimension, this is not the whole story. A brief detour through the essay of one of his contemporaries, also from Lithuania, the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, may help us to see a submerged theological appreciation of the Jews in Miłosz's work.

In 1966, in an essay entitled "Nameless," Levinas speaks of the abyss that opened up during the Second World War. His point is that the categories of good and evil became irrelevant. Suddenly, only naked power was declared real, ethics an illusion. Civilization revealed itself to be nothing but a very flimsy human construction masking the real forces–the urge for power – that drive the world. In this context he speaks about the Jews as having a special role. When the abyss opens and good and evil collapse as points of orientation in the world, Jews are always the first to experience the consequences on their very persons, and the first also forced to defend the reality of good and evil, against all the evidence to the contrary (122–123). Asking whether to attribute this role to sociology or to metaphysics, he calls this a strange election (122). Given this Jewish role of being the last rampart of ethics, revealing the fragility of good and evil, anti-Semitism

in a particular society always indicates a catastrophe in the making, signaling the potential collapse of the civilizational order. Levinas sees in anti-Semitic language the revelation of "a nihilistic devastation no other discourse could evoke." Once again he refers to the chosenness of the Jews.[4] "That election is indeed a hardship" (123).

At first sight, the contrast between the two writers is clear. Miłosz avoids the language about the Jews that Levinas uses freely. Yet, upon further examination opposition to anti-Semitism is central to Miłosz's formation. He says in *A Year of the Hunter* that his fate was determined by his traumatic distaste for the Right wing in Poland (5). It is trauma for which he tries to find causes, but he is finally left with the question: "But what, in fact, is the key to the trauma"(6)? In the much earlier *Captive Mind*, he links the right wing explicitly to its central message: "My point of view can be defined negatively rather than positively. I disliked the right wing groups, whose platforms consisted chiefly of anti-Semitism"(8). The strength of this opposition to anti-Semitism also comes out in a letter exchange of 1967 with fellow Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert, regarding the civil rights movement. Herbert suggests that Miłosz's disgust with Poles who are beating up Blacks is based on his idealistic vision of human society, his socialism. Power relations are simply what they are. Miłosz is furious. He associates Herbert's views with the Endecja, the Polish right wing, and he reminds his younger colleague that he is acquiescing to a repeat of what happened to the Jews. To resist such options, far from being idealistic, is to defend the very nature of human beings as rational creatures: "You don't know whom you are defending, when you defend white pogromists…" (quoted in Franaszek 718).

The faint outline of the sentiment expressed in Levinas's text appears in this exchange. For Miłosz, to defend anti-Semites has catastrophic consequences. Of course, his debate with Herbert involved Blacks, and not Jews. Levinas, however, was in no way claiming in his essay that Jews are the only ones in need of defense. Rather, their election lies in being a point of reference for the fragility of the distinction between good and evil everywhere, which is basically Miłosz's point in his opposition to anti-Semitism. It was the great sign of the catastrophe to come in the interwar period, and that fate continues to remain a point of reference for other catastrophes. It is always a sign of the collapse of the categories of good and evil, in theory and in practice.

4 The election of the Jews, for Levinas, is dependent on the practice of the commandments, Jewish Law. It is not a function of Jewish birth by itself (122).

If Jews play a central role in his opposition to far right nationalism, since they are its target, they also seem central when it comes to Miłosz's other great enemy–Communism. On the one hand, the political system that went by that name is for him but a veiled nationalism, that of the Soviet empire. Under the guise of universalism, it wanted to bring about the Russification of all other national cultures (*The Captive Mind* 19). But, on the other hand, Communism brought several additional features, one of which is what he calls "intellectual terror," meaning that the party line always has to be accepted as a 100% correct. There cannot even be 1% of deviation (214). This homogenization of thought makes individual judgment merely subjective and illusory. Nothing that does not emanate from an all-knowing center can have a claim to truth. He goes on to say, "It is impossible to communicate to people who have not experienced it the indefinable menace of total rationalism" (215).

Given this description, it is significant that *The Captive Mind*, from which the above quotations are taken, begins with an epigram, the contents of which Miłosz attributes to an old Jew from Galicia.

> When someone is honestly 55% right, that is very good and there is no use wrangling. And if someone is 60% right, it's wonderful, it's great luck, and let him thank God. But what's to be said about 75%? Wise people say this is suspicious. Well, what about 100% right? Whoever says he is 100% right is a fanatic, a thug, and the worst kind of rascal. (v)

The opposition to a totalizing truth, leaving no room for uncertainty or fallibility, comes from a Jew. Confirming that this anecdote is indeed central to his understanding of their role, Miłosz speaks elsewhere of the Jews as "the leaven for all manner of heresies in Russia after 1917," as the first heretics in the Communist system, and of being the first not to be trusted in these regimes (*Emperor* 60). They are too aware of other possibilities, too aware of the relativity of the present moment against the background of their long historical experience, to remain too respectful of power (*Native Realm* 34–35). This in no way means that Miłosz bypasses the fact that many Communists were Jews, something he mentions often, as we have seen above in his comparison of Eastern European Jewish youth and Chinese in Indonesia, both drawn to the Communist Party. But, he points out that even when Jews worked loyally for Communist regimes, they did not coincide with them or not for long. They were viewed suspiciously from within and eventually removed from power. It is perhaps in this context that the only direct reference I was able to find to the Jews' metaphysical role occurs. In a letter of 1961 to the American Trappist monk and poet Thomas Merton, Miłosz mentions that the Jews in Poland working for State institutions dealing with foreign affairs were being made to register because Moscow considered them

to be a security risk: "Certainly there is a mystery of the Jews, of their vocation" (Faggen 116). This is a cryptic statement but rejoins the sense that the Jews, even against their will, do not fit neatly into a homogenizing movement and the march of history it proclaims. They represent a challenge to the dominant political formations of the twentieth century-right wing nationalism and Communism. He does not give this role a theological vocabulary. But the Jews as a people remain a kind of weather vane in the storms of the twentieth century.

Critical Reflections

The most that can be concluded from the above nuggets is that some flickering of the metaphysical/theological otherness of the Jews – their centrality in historical events – appears in Miłosz's thought. It is more buried than his withdrawal of the Jews' exceptional status, but it is nonetheless present. What to make of this pattern in Miłosz's thought? If he had limited himself to sociological observations, eschewing theological assumptions would be obligatory. By nature, these assumptions go beyond history to posit an eternal truth. But Miłosz does not limit himself to sociology in his other investigations, frequently searching for the metaphysical, if not theological, significance of political phenomena. For example, when talking about both Communism and American capitalism, he ponders their meaning in light of an eternal truth. He states: "Only when a metaphysical core is recognized in what seems to be merely social and political can the dimensions of the catastrophe that has befallen us be assessed" (*Visions* 180). In his dialogue "Metafizyczna pauza," he reflects on the metaphysical meaning of modern day nationalism (7–16). I would like to suggest, then, that the lack of reference to the Jews' metaphysical status, rather than being a sign of a theology gone missing, might be a theological sign in its own right, reflecting a certain kind of Catholic sensibility.

In the Catholic tradition in which Miłosz was educated as a child and young man, the commandments, Jewish law, at the heart of the Jews' relationship to God, and at the heart of their historical role, were the signs of an old covenant that had been superseded by the new, through faith in Christ. In speaking about the religion of the Jews, Miłosz rarely mentions the rabbinic tradition in his writings. He most often limits himself to the Old Testament, which he sees primarily not as a separate spirituality but as the Jewish contribution to Christianity. In one of his memoirs, for instance, he reproaches his old theology teacher in Wilno for never having taught the text of the Old Testament to his high school students, making only passing reference to the prophets as presaging the coming of Christ (*Native Realm* 83). As a result, Miłosz says, he never exposed them to the dynamic

nature of the human-divine relationship, "the constantly modified questions and constantly modified answers…that Christianity also inherited" (83). The Jewish contribution lies in the past, and has been filtered through Christian teaching, even if that teaching is not always adequate to its source. The Jews' significance beyond what can be found in the Old Testament is not mentioned.

Miłosz's fierce opposition to associating any group with salvation may also reflect an aspect of his Catholic education: "Christianity has never tolerated the concept of a 'chosen nation'" (*The Land* 119). Like many other thinkers in the twentieth century, he sees modern nationalism as a substitute religion, as a transfer of the sacred to the State or to the group, meaning that the defense and the promotion of its welfare become connected to the salvation of the world. But he does not see this with a merely historical eye. That is, he does not contemplate this as merely the inevitable change in the location of the sacred over time. Rather, for him, it has a negative theological meaning, as he bluntly states, "the transposition of the individual Messiah of the Bible to the collective is blasphemous" (*Beginning* 85). As a result, he asks whether the union of Polish Catholicism with Polish nationalism is not a form of secularization, a movement away from Christianity (87). But he goes further: "Even if it takes Christian and humane forms, religiously oriented nationalism threatens to abolish a clear distinction between what is due to God and what is due to Caesar. Yet Caesar means not necessarily the rulers of the State; Caesar can also mean the society at large and collective pressure" (88–89). The Jewish notion of chosenness becomes but another competitor in the struggle of nations against each other. "Two idols, Jewishness and Polishness, rival with each other," he muses, when searching for a possible deeper reason for Polish anti-Semitism" ("Metafizyczna" 12).

At this point, several questions present themselves. Why, for instance, would Miłosz need to acknowledge the special status of the Jews in the first place? He comes from a different tradition, and is in no way obligated to affirm or even show interest in a dominant strand of Jewish self-perception. But is not refusing to understand this millennia-old Jewish self-perception a refusal of the inner dimensions of what has made Jewish identity until very recently? Is it not a flattening out of the Jewish presence in history? Surely, in the myriad Jewish reflections on the meaning of Jewish peoplehood, and even more, in actual Jewish existence, much can be found pointing in directions quite different from nationalism as it developed in the modern period, and to which Miłosz was opposed. Can Jews be tolerated only if they shed what has made for their difference throughout the ages? Even the Catholic tradition as Miłosz was taught it reserved a special place for the Jews – as the accursed people, or as the witnesses to God's promises, or more recently as the elder brother. Can the relation

between Christians and Jews be based on one community being the bearer of a contemporary religiously significant message and the other not?

One might also want to know why uncovering this aspect of Miłosz's thought about Jews is significant at all. If one thinks, as I do, that in the process of removing the anti-Semitic sting, Miłosz also takes away an important dimension of Jewish self-understanding, what does this show except that great writers can sometimes be merely the product of their education, like everyone else? A reader can find many other fascinating aspects of Miłosz's thought, without focusing on this one. Yet, I do not think the ambiguity of his thinking regarding Jews can be dismissed so easily, because it is not only his but reflective of a much larger world, and that world is by no means limited to the strands of the Catholic tradition in which he was steeped.

Many Westerners, including many contemporary Jews, do not think of Jews as the Other any longer. At best, for them, this view is a residue of an older, less enlightened time. For example, in a recent issue of *Cwiszen*, a Polish journal dedicated to Yiddish culture, in an interview with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the director of the permanent exhibit in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, she is asked if the Poles will ever stop associating Jews with the stereotypical figure of Hassidim with peyes (sidelocks), the Other par excellence. She answers that it will take time but that she thinks this will happen because the Jews today are today simply like everyone else, indistinguishable (Geller 63). How to think of Jews as other when they no longer differ in dress, language, education, and sometime even in name, from most of their co-citizens? The image of the Jews as other was linked to a sociological reality, now very much on the wane. Miłosz would thus be expressing the normalization of the status of the Jews as citizens of their respective States.

Yet another side also persists in Miłosz's work, and beyond it. We recall that the Jews for him remain a corporate presence, and one at the heart of his twentieth century. As we have seen, they have a crucial placement in both nationalism and Communism, revealing the true dimensions of these phenomena.[5] In hinting at the central role of Jews in the historical process, Miłosz is certainly not alone, since there is no dearth of scenarios in the contemporary world in which the Jews retain that role. One need only to think of anti-Semitic sentiments, even in countries with little to no Jewish presence or of Christian Zionist visions of an imminent

5 See "Metafizyczna pauza," in which Miłosz states that one cannot avoid seeing Communism and National Socialism from a religious point of view (12). Their results, the concentration camps, and gas chambers, he says, immediately bring to mind the Jews.

Armageddon in the State of Israel, ushering in the Second Coming and Judgment Day. But one can also think of the centrality of the State of Israel in the political debates of the West, quite outside of any denominational belonging. These assessments of the Jews are often negative rather than positive but neither in a positive nor negative scenario do Jews become just another people. Perhaps Miłosz, in refusing the Otherness of the Jews on the one hand, and yet in retaining traces of their centrality on the other, is reflecting the clash of a new social reality with the old metaphysical vocabulary. Is that old metaphysical vocabulary – about the Jews' eternity – just a residue that will inevitably disappear? Or is that vocabulary a necessary element in the Western imagination of transcendence? Miłosz's voluminous writings on Jews expose us to this question.

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Magdalena Szkwarek

Manifestations of Jewishness in Literature of Latin America

Introduction

When we talk about a "diffusion" of cultures, and about "Jewishness" in different cultures of the world, we often forget that in Latin America the Jewish diaspora have also left a solid footprint. Studies on the Jewish diaspora in Latin America have been developed in numerous countries; in Poland, however, this subject remains almost unknown. The first Jews – or rather "marranos" or "conversos" – came to Latin America with Christopher Columbus. Jewish immigration in the New World began with Luis de Torres, considered the first Jewish settler. Some scholars claim that Christopher Columbus was a Jew himself,[1] and there are also those who claim that the Indians the Europeans met in the New World were descendants of one of the lost tribes of Israel. People of Jewish origin who arrived in both Americas have participated in shaping the states and societies on the continents, at various times and with varying intensity, but continuously. A fact which is poorly known in Poland is that Jews and their culture are an inherent element of Latin American reality.

The greatest immigration of Jews into Latin America took place during the fifty-year period between 1880 and 1930, and these were dominantly Ashkenazi Jews. What influenced their decision to leave Europe? There were many factors, e.g. pogroms in tsarist Russia, and increasing anti-Semitic sentiments and discrimination. Jews arrived in particularly large numbers in those countries that had an open immigration policy, notably Argentina. This country, rich in uninhabited land, in accordance to Juan Bautista Alberdi's statement "Gobernar es poblar" (to govern is to populate), encouraged immigration. Argentina's authorities were open to immigration from across the Atlantic, Jewish included, and this can be illustrated by the fact that the president of Argentina, Juan A. Roca, on 6 August 1881 issued an edict, according to which an Honorable Agent was appointed whose responsibility (among others) was to direct Jewish immigrants to the Republic of Argentina (Avni, *Judíos en América* 157). Another initiative worth presenting is the founding, in 1891 by

1 e.g. Günter Böhm or Estelle Irizarry.

the Mauricio Hirsch Jewish Colonization Association, an organization whose main focus was to support agrarian colonies, mainly in Argentina and Brazil; however, as Haim Avni, in his article "La Agricultura Judía en la Argentina, ¿Exito o Fracaso?" notes, the goal of the agrarian colonization was not fully achieved (535–548). It is estimated that before the outbreak of the First World War there was a population of 100 thousand Jews who arrived in Argentina from the territories of the Republic of Poland (Stone 425). In addition, it is worth remembering that among the trans-Atlantic immigrants there were also other nationalities (for example Polish, Italian, German). Latin America became a potential destination for emigration from the Republic of Poland at the turn of the nineteenth century, yet it needs to be remembered that Polish citizens had already reached its lands. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Polish legionnaires were sent to Haiti, also some Polish soldiers fought for the independence of some Latin American countries. After the November Uprising in Poland many insurrectionists left the country, among them Ignacy Domeyko, probably the best-known representative of the Polish diaspora in Latin America. At the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of so-called "Brazilian Fever", there "appeared a new phenomenon in the history of Polish direct relations with Latin America: the peasant mass migration" (Kula 60).[2] Up to present times Brazil and Argentina remain the most important Polish centers in South America.

Latin American Jewish Literature

My aim is to show that Jewish characters and themes have long been present in the works of art of the continent, and are permeated by native tradition and culture. A look at Jewish themes in Latin American literature, with a particular focus on Argentina, where the concentration of the Jewish diaspora is the highest,[3] will reflect some of the major problems the community has faced on this continent. For example, *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas,* by Alberto Gerchunoff presents the problems of the first Jewish settlers in agrarian colonies at the turn of the

2 This has been the topic of numerous interesting publications, e.g. Martin Pollack's *Cesarz Ameryki* (originally *Kaiser von Amerika. Die große Flucht aus Galizien*), Wołowiec: Czarne, 2011.

3 According to 2009 data, there were about 183,000 Jews living in Argentina (Della Pergola 315).

twentieth century. In *The Storyteller*, by Mario Vargas Llosa, we come across the protagonist's feeling of alienation in contemporary Peru. At the same time, it is also indispensable to mention Borges' fascination with Jewish themes, which are present in his poems and short stories, and often amount to political statements (e.g. in the famous work "Yo, judio", or poems about Israel, written after the Israeli wars of the 1960s). Obviously, it is not possible to mention all the Latin American authors who have used Jewish themes. Some of the Latin American books were translated into Polish (in the 1960s and 1970s the so-called "Boom"[4] increased the interest in Latin American literature in Poland, and as a natural consequence numerous works of renowned Latin American writers were translated); however, published in 1910, *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas*, by Alberto Gerchunoff (considered a precursor of Latin American Jewish literature) has not yet been translated. This book, which is a key work for understanding the phenomenon of Latin American Jewish literature, was included in 2001 Yiddish Book Center's list of the 100 Greatest Works of Modern Jewish Literature. What is more, it is worth mentioning that on this list Latin America is also represented by *The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner*, a book by the Peruvian writer Isaac Goldemberg. Hispano-American literature is still of great interest to Polish readers; however, it is almost never associated with Jewish authors or Jewish themes. A literary critic, Saúl Sosnowski, said: "When in addition to Latin American one adds the defining terms Jewish, it is easy to recall astonished gazes and conflicting images of the accepted and simple clichés for both" (299)[5].

Without any doubt, the problem with the perception of Latin American literature in its Jewish context, or Jewish literature in its Latin American context, is how to define both of these categories. What does it mean to create Jewish literature? What, and to what extent, decides the "Jewishness" of the literature? The writer? The subject matter? The language? This has been, and will be, the subject of numerous debates – I am not able to resolve this issue; however, for me the most accurate is Hana Wirth-Nesher's definition. In her 1994 critical essay entitled "What is Jewish Literature?" she asserts that "Characterization as Jewish will

4 Adam Elbanowski (19) proposes to use this term in two senses: the wider meaning of a literary movement, and a narrower one to describe the literary circle of Julio Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez.

5 This is the attitude I come across when I conduct classes on the Jewish diaspora at the Centre of Latin American Studies at the University of Warsaw – students are utterly shocked when I propose looking at Latin American prose or poetry from its Jewishness perspective.

depend upon the reader and all of the circumstances of its reception" (5). Here, Jewish themes used by non-Jewish authors will also be looked at.

One of the first attempts to define the phenomenon of Jewish-Latin American literature was Isaac Goldberg's article "Jewish writers in South America", published in Harvard's *The Menorah Journal* in 1925. Investigating Jewish themes in the works of the continent's writers, the author focused solely on Argentina, as he had believed that it was in Argentina where Latin American Jewish literature was, so to say, "born". In her article, Florinda F. Goldberg quotes Isaac Goldberg's reflection regarding the importance of the Argentinian context: "Perhaps we have here the beginning of Spanish-Yiddish literature" (Goldberg 310).

Alberto Gerchunoff

As mentioned in the introduction, it is Alberto Gerchunoff who is considered to be the precursor of Latin American Jewish literature. The author, a refugee from then Ukrainian territory, in 1910 (the year of the centenary of the May Revolution, considered the beginning of Argentina's independence from Spain) wrote *Los Gauchos judios* (*The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas*), a book of 24 short stories in which he describes the life of Jewish settlers in the Argentinian Pampa. Although Gerchunoff declares in his autobiography: "I am not aspiring solely to describe Jewish life, above all I am an Argentinian" (Degiovanni 367), his descriptions of the life of Jews in Argentina opened up a symbolic space for Jewish immigrants in the literature of the country. In *Encyclopaedia Judaica* we read that: "This first Spanish account of immigration to the New World remains as the founding work of Jewish Latin American writing, though his intent to show that the return to agriculture was creating a new harmonious Jew who would enjoy full acceptance in Argentina has been strongly criticized by later generations" (Goldberg 506). Up to the present, Gerchunoff's vision of the rural life of Argentinian Jews has been a reference point for writers and literary scholars. In 1975 Gerchunoff's book was filmed by Juan José Jusid. Gerchunoff was not only a precursor of Latin American Jewish literature, but he can also be considered a part of the generation that renewed Latin American literature between 1885 and 1915 (Stavans, "Literatura żydowska" 28). Jorge Luis Borges, in his prologue to Gerchunoff's book *Retorno a Don Quijote*, wrote about the author of *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas:*

> Not having such a purpose, and probably even not being aware of this, he was the oldest type of master: one who in the written word could see a kind of substitute for the spoken word, and not a holy object … Alberto Gerchunoff took the same pleasure in dealing with oral or written language: in his books there is the fluidity of a good conversationalist, and

in his conversation (I think I can even hear him) there is a generous and flawless literary precision[6]. (Borges, *Obras completas*, vol. II 552)

Jorge Luis Borges

In a sense, Luis Borges is the successor of the Jewish tradition in Argentinian literature. A prominent Argentinian writer, an erudite and an intellectual, in his works he drew on the abundant Jewish tradition which fascinated him.[7] In a reply to the accusations of the right-wing nationalistic magazine *Crisol*, which in 1934 incriminated him for hiding his Jewish origins, Borges published a declaration entitled "Yo, judio" ("Me, Jew") in which he claimed "The thought of being Jewish did not disgust me," and later in the text: "Two hundred years and I can't find the Israelite; two hundred years and my ancestor still eludes me"[8] (*Textos recobrados* 90). Although he was not a Jew, he looked for Jewish roots in his genealogy, and in his poem entitled "A Israel" (Eng. „To Israel") he asked a question: "Quién me dirá si estás en el perdido laberinto de ríos seculares de mi sangre, Israel?" ("Who shall tell if you, Israel, are to be found in the lost labyrinth of the labyrinth of secular rivers that is my blood?"[9]). According to the Mexican literature scholar Illan Stavans, "[i]n the context of Argentine letters and, by extension, in the Hispanic world in general, Borges is a rara avis. No other non-Jewish author from the region addresses Jewish themes with his depth and complexity" ("Yo, judio" par 9). In my opinion, it is to Borges, the author of "Alef", to whom we owe our acquaintance with Jewish themes in Latin American literature. After all, who, having read Borges' short stories, has not remembered fascinating Jewish protagonists such as Don Santiago Fishbein ("Unworthy"), David Jerusalem ("Deutsches Requiem"), Marcel Yarmolinsky ("Death and the Compass"), or Baruch Spinoza, or has not become intrigued by the Kabbalistic tradition?

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6 In the original: "Sin proponerselo y y quizas sin saberselo, encarnó un tipo mas antiguo: el de aquellos maestros que veian en la palabra escrita un mero sucedaneo de la oral, no un objeto sagrado … manejó con igual felicidad el lenguaje oral y el escrito y en sus libros hay fluidez del buen conversador y en su conversación (me parece oirlo) hubo una generosa y e infalible precisión literaria" (translated into English by M. Sz.).

7 Numerous works about Jewish motifs in Borges' books have been written – it is worth mentioning texts by Edna Aizenberg (especially "The Aleph Weaver: Biblical, Kabbalistic and Judaic Elements in Borges"), by Jaime Alazraki, Daniel Balderston and Saúl Sosnowski.

8 Translation into English after Stavans's "Yo, Judío. Borges and the Jews".

9 Translation into English after Stavans's "A Catalogue of Jewish Symbols".

We cannot omit Borges' politically engaged poems about Israel (dating back to 1967 and 1969), in one of which he wrote:

> What else were you, Israel, if not that nostalgia,
> the will to safe-keep,
> from the inconstant shapes of time,
> your old magical book, your liturgy, your solitude with God?
> I was wrong. The oldest of nations
> is also the youngest.[10]

The Argentinian author visited Israel twice (the second time was in 1971, when he was awarded the Jerusalem Prize). In addition, it is also worth quoting an excerpt from Borges' article "Israel", published in 1958 in the Argentinian daily newspaper *Sur*, evidence of his great respect and recognition of two great cultures, which, according to him, were the foundations of western civilization: "Every citizen of the western world is Greek and Jewish" (*Miscelánea* 422). Borges' fascination with Jewish tradition and references to Jewish culture can be found in his numerous essays, book reviews and newspaper articles. It also had an impact on his decisions and attitude: in response to growing anti-Semitic sentiments in Argentina in the 1930s, in 1938 Borges joined the "Committee against Racism and Anti-Semitism in Agentina" founded in Buenos Aires.

A Jewish Prostitute

A Jewish prostitute is rarely portrayed in Latin American Jewish literature, although the trafficking of Jewish women was very well established at the turn of the twentieth century, especially in Argentina. At that time in Buenos Aires brothels were owned mainly by Jews who emigrated from Poland, and the girls were "recruited" in the shtetls of central and eastern Europe (this phenomenon is the subject of some research papers, e.g. Nora Glickman's "The Jewish White Slave Trade in Latin American Countries," which also notes that "Polaca" ["Pole"] was the generic name applied to all Jewish prostitutes in Argentina, whether they came from Poland, Russia, or Romania"). One organization involved in the white slave trade of young Jewish girls was "Zwi Migdal", outlawed in 1930 thanks to the testimony of Raquel Libermann. Although Jewish prostitutes are rarely mentioned in Latin American Jewish literature (Zwi Migdal's activity was an inglorious part of Jewish history in Argentina), in the literature of the 1920s we find traces of this shady business, for example in "*Versos*

10 Ibid.

de una…", Ibergus, and "*Nadie la conoció nunca*". *"Versos de una…"* was a collection of poems supposedly written by a prostitute and published in 1926. In fact, the real author of these poems was Israel Zeitlin, known as Cesar Tiempo, who came to Argentina from Ukraine. *Ibergus* was a drama released in 1926 – a book on the white slave trade, written by Leib Malach. Another work portraying prostitution was Samuel's Eichelbaum's drama "*Nadie la conoció nunca."* In the following years this subject was not present in Argentinian literature, although there were already some study papers on the topic, like *Trilogía de la trata de blancas: rufianes, policía, municipalidad* by Julio Alsogaraya (1933). In subsequent years, more research papers on human trafficking and prostitution were published[11]. Also in contemporary fiction we come across Jewish prostitute protagonists, for example in Tomas Eloy Martinez's *The Tango Singer*, published in 2004 (the Polish translation, *Tango w Buenos Aires*, was released in 2007), or in Elsa Drucaroff's 2005 *El infierno prometido. Una prostituta de Zwi Migdal* (the Polish translation was published in 2010).

Particular attention should be paid to the second book: a mixture of melodrama, romance, historic fiction and crime story. Elsa Drucaroff powerfully reflects a society in which the young protagonist Dina lives. The characters in the book are complex and the choices they make are ambiguous. Drucaroff's novel is also a story of (a lack of) solidarity among women, while another interesting subject is the question of whether the girls knew what future awaited them in Buenos Aires. An answer to this question can be found, for instance, in interviews with Elsa Drucaroff[12], or in a book by Stanisław Milewski *Ciemne sprawy dawnych warszawiaków* (*Dark business of former Varsovians*). In his book Milewski quotes correspondence sent to "Kurier Warszawski" in 1891, in which it says that "Miss N. from Warsaw, having found out on a ship where they were heading and learning the purpose, near to Montevideo jumped into the sea" (104). In addition, it is worth mentioning that some traces of organized prostitution can also be found in Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Scum* (1991).

11 e.g. "Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina" by Donna J. Guy, or "The Jewish White Slave Trade and the Untold Story of Raquel Liberman" by Nora Glickman.

12 In the Polish edition of the book, and the quarterly magazine *Ameryka Łacińska* 2 (68) 2010.

Mario Vargas Llosa

As mentioned at the beginning, Jewish themes were relatively rare in Latin American literature; however, a book written by the 2010 Nobel Prize laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Storyteller*, published in 1987 (Polish translation in 1998), is an exception. This novel is of great importance as the Peruvian writer portrays a contemporary Jewish protagonist, Saúl Zuratas, whose Jewishness gives him a personal understanding of persecution. Zuratas, known also as Mascarita, and living in Lima, feels lost in this huge city, and while gradually isolating himself from friends and the world he finds a connection to the marginalized and persecuted Machiguengas people who live in the Amazonian Forest. He says: "A Jew is better prepared than most people to defend the rights of minority cultures" (Vargas Llosa 104). Machiguengan history can, in a sense, be compared to Jewish history; in one of the last paragraphs of the book the narrator compares Saul's mission as a Story Teller (so as the person who maintains memory and a group's identity) to Aliyah (the return to the Holy Land, although for the protagonist of Vargas Llosa's book, it is Amazonia that is the Holy Land). The interesting fact is that research papers regarding Vargas Llosa's book focus mainly on the "indigenous" aspect of the novel, and the Jewish identity of the main protagonist, Mascarita is of secondary importance. On the other hand, for me Mascarita's double exclusion (as a Jew and as a person having a mark on his face) is a clue to understanding his mission among the Indians and his involvement in the fight for Machiguenga's cultural continuity. Apart from *The Storyteller* Mario Vargas Llosa is also the author of *Israel/Palestine: Peace or Holy War* (2006), a collection of his articles for *El Pais*, which he wrote during his stay in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

Alvaro Mutis

Finally, one more publication ought to be mentioned, namely *Ilona Comes with the Rain* (1987) by the Columbian author Alvaro Mutis. In this novel Jewish motifs can scarcely be found; however, there are some Jewish characters portrayed, for example Ilona Grabowska-Rubinstein, whose surname suggests that she is of Jewish descent. Some other Jewish characters in the book are the owner of a guesthouse, "Astor", and the wife of one of the protagonists Wito, originating from a Jewish family from Amsterdam. Interestingly enough, the most remarkable character of Jewish descent can be found in the dedication of *Ilona Comes with the Rain*. Namely, Mutis dedicates his book to "the memory of a dear friend, unforgettable master, and always present Kazimierz Eiger."

Originally from Warsaw, Kazimierz Eiger Silberstein (or Casimiro, as he was called in Spanish) was "the best-known Pole in Colombia, praised *as the father*

of contemporary Colombian art" (Piotrowski 64). He arrived in Bogota in 1943, and in the years 1946–1952 he was a chargé d'affaires of the Polish government-in-exile; he was also a university lecturer and the owner of an art gallery, and "in the 50's he was the first and the most esteemed art critic in Colombia" (Piotrowski 64). Eiger never renounced his Polish citizenship, and he never acquired any additional citizenship. He died in Bogota in 1987.

In 1940s Eiger met Alvaro Mutis, and he became his friend and mentor. It was Eiger who supported Mutis at the beginning of his literary career. "Alvarito, stop putting things away in drawers where they rot. Either burn them or publish them," Eiger is supposed to have said to Mutis when the future Miguel de Cervantes Prize laureate did not want to publish his first poems (Prados). Thanks to this dedication in Mutis' book, Kazimierz Eiger is no longer anonymous, and the reader has an opportunity to learn about one of the most prominent representatives of the Jewish diaspora in Columbia – thus, although Eiger is not a fictional character, it seems significant to mention him. What is also important, especially to Polish readers, is the fact that Alvaro Mutis' friend was a brother of the poet and translator Marek Eiger (known as Stefan Napierski), who died in 1940 in Palmiry (a site of mass execution performed by Nazi Germans during WW II).

Conclusion

When analyzing broadly defined Jewish motifs in Latin American literature, scholars and researchers look from different perspectives. In this article I wanted to draw attention to Jewish themes in Latin American literature, especially those appearing in the works of authors of non-Jewish descent. Jewish protagonists' presence in literary works confirms their being an inherent element of the continent's reality. From Columbus' voyage (four crypto-Jews participated in his voyage of 1492), through the colonial period, and up to modern times Sephardic and Askhenazi Jews have been present in Latin America. For this reason it is even more surprising that, as mentioned in the introduction, in Latin American literature Jewish themes are not visible at first glance, and *The Storyteller* by Mario Vargas Llosa is an exception. For instance, quoting again after Illan Stavans, "Octavio Paz, the Nobel Prize winner in 1990, never addressed Jewishness in an upfront fashion. Paz covered every single imaginable topic in the humanities in his magisterial oeuvre, yet not a single poem of his deals with the Jews in general, let alone those in the Hispanic world" ("A Catalogue"). This was also the case with Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez. On the other hand, Carlos Fuentes, a recognized Mexican author, wrote several novels on the subject, for example *The Hydra Head* or *Terra Nostra*. When we

make the effort to investigate in detail the works of Latin American writers, we are able to see traces of Askhenazi and Sephardic Jews, who, during the centuries of their presence in Latin American countries have shaped reality, becoming an indispensible element of Latin American culture.

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Dorota Mihułka

Temptations of Non-Jewish Lifestyle in Allegra Goodman's and Pearl Abraham's Novels

This paper juxtaposes and analyses Allegra Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls* (1998) and Pearl Abraham's *The Romance Reader* (1995), two contemporary novels written by representatives of third-generation Jewish American female writers. One of the central issues addressed in the books is the problem of American and Jewish identities in the late 20th century, as well as the exploration of tensions and conflicts between Orthodox Judaism and contemporary American secularism. Another important preoccupation of Goodman's and Abraham's fiction is the return of contemporary Jewish women to Jewish religious practice, spirituality and communal life. In her autobiographical article "Writing Jewish Fiction In and Out of the Multicultural Context", which can also in part be regarded as a literary manifesto for many of the third-generation Jewish American writers, Allegra Goodman proclaimed that "Jewish American writers must recapture the spiritual and the religious dimension of Judaism" ("Writing" 273) in order to revive and sustain it. In much of their fiction, and especially in their novels, *Kaaterskill Falls* and *The Romance Reader*, Allegra Goodman and Pearl Abraham have succeeded in achieving that purpose.

Even more specifically, the aim of this paper is to discuss the position of women in Jewish Orthodoxy as depicted in *Kaaterskill Falls* and *The Romance Reader*, as well as to present the various outcomes of the characters' attempts at negotiating the sacred and the secular in their lives. In both books, the secular refers not only to non-religious, but also, to some extent, non-Jewish because it stems from the protagonists' attraction to non-Jewish culture. The female characters of both novels start to rebel against the restrictions and limitations that traditional Judaism imposes on them. It is important to note, however, that they do not wish to reject Judaism altogether or replace it with a secular lifestyle. Instead, they rebel against the structure of Judaism and "desire […] a radical transformation of tradition" (Rubel 50), hoping to create in this way a distinctly feminine form of Judaism for themselves.

Not only *Kaaterskill Falls* and *The Romance Reader*, but also other more recent novels by such Jewish American female writers as Tova Mirvis, Dara Horn, and Myla Goldberg, demonstrate the emergence of feminist challenges to the patriarchal structure of the Jewish Orthodox world. The feminist definition of Jewish

patriarchy is based on Simone de Beauvoir's classic 1940's analysis of Western patriarchy, in which man is the Subject, woman is the Other (16). When applied to Judaism, de Beauvoir's definition highlights the role of Jewish men as the subjects as well as the authors and interpreters of Jewish texts and laws, and demonstrates the marginalization of women's experiences, and the almost complete absence of women's voices.

The interaction between feminism and Judaism has undergone serious development in recent decades. Feminist theologians have maintained that Western religious traditions have systematically excluded women's voices, that religious institutions have been predominantly male-oriented, and that many canonical religious texts, written almost exclusively by men, contain numerous misogynistic statements (Rudavsky 324). Since the 1970s Jewish feminists, influenced by their feminist peers, have begun to level significant attacks at Judaism and call for radical changes within it. At the core of their criticism against Judaism lies the absence of equality between the sexes which, they believe, is rooted in patriarchal institutionalism. This type of patriarchy is perhaps best expressed by Judith Plaskow in her seminal work *Standing Again at Sinai*:

> Underneath specific legislation [is] an assumption of women's Otherness more fundamental than the particular laws in which it finds expression. Halakhah in its details discriminates against women because the world of law is male-defined and places men at the center. Women are objects of the law but neither its creators nor agents. […] Laws concerning family status assume the essential passivity of women. Women are "acquired" in marriage and are passive in the dissolution of marriage, so that the law deprives them of control in important areas of their lives. (63)

As can be seen from this description, Jewish men are the actors in religious and communal life because they are the normative Jews. Women are 'other' than the norm, they do not count as full people. This otherness of women as a presupposition of Jewish law is then its most central formulation.

The issues addressed by Allegra Goodman and Pearl Abraham in *Kaaterskill Falls* and *The Romance Reader*, respectively, such as dissatisfaction with a Judaism that does not uphold egalitarian principles between the sexes, and a call for a reinterpretation of tradition in order to redefine contemporary American Jewish life, reflect both the feminist and broader socio-cultural perspectives.

Allegra Goodman, raised in the Orthodox tradition in Hawaii and the Catskills in New York state, has been a leading voice on nearly every major issue concerning Diasporic Jewish life in America for almost thirty years. Much of Goodman's work focuses on such issues as women in patriarchy, nature, history, legacy, utopian social formations, religious conflicts and spiritual quest. Despite her relatively young age, she has already established herself as one of the major

contemporary figures in the Jewish American literary world, "a guardian of the [Jewish] culture and high standards," to use Ezra Cappell's expression (136), and a best-selling author.

In her first novel, *Kaaterskill Falls*, published in 1998, and a National Book Award finalist, Allegra Goodman explores the closed world of American Orthodoxy, paying special attention to the examination of the religious/secular boundary. By focusing on the Jewish family, community and synagogue as the essential ingredients of Jewish life, Goodman portrays the reality of the Orthodox milieu in Kaaterskill Falls, a small mountainous town in upstate New York. It has become a summer retreat for the followers of Rav Kirshner, a strict Orthodox rabbi, who left Germany just before *Kristallnacht* in 1938 and resettled with hundreds of his followers in Washington Heights, New York City. The novel follows several Orthodox Jewish families over the course of nearly three years, from the summer of 1976 to the spring of 1978, in Kaaterskill Falls and Washington Heights.

At the heart of the Orthodox community represented in the novel is the ageing Rav Elijah Kirshner, afflicted with Parkinson's disease, a rabbi who "is a rationalist, interested in law, not myth. People do not flock to him with supplications, or for blessings on their enterprises. […] It is not for him to pull happiness out of a hat, exorcise evil, or divine misfortune in the misshapen letter of a mezuzah" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 99). The members of the Kirshner community earn a living in the secular world and return to Kaaterskill every Friday to celebrate the Sabbath. Unlike Hasidic Jews the men are clean-shaven, without sidelocks, "almost modern-looking" in their black suits, except that they wear black wool fedoras even in the summer (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 4). The Kirshner women wear long skirts, long-sleeved blouses and white stockings, buy kosher products; if married, they cover their hair with kerchiefs or *sheitels* (wigs), and are surrounded by numerous children.

The Kirshner community, according to Ruth Wisse (68), represents a sociological rarity among the Orthodox Jews because, although on the one hand the Kirshners accept dynastic leadership just as Hasidic Jews do, on the other hand they follow traditions that are rational, not ecstatic. The Kirshners' beliefs are based on the 19th-century teachings of Samson Raphael Hirsch, who encouraged traditionalist Jews to receive a secular education, while at the same time advocating separation from those Jews who diverged from *Halakhah*, the religious law.[1]

1 The changes that Hirsch, the leader of Neo-Orthodoxy in Germany, actively promoted, that is a possibility for Jews to live in two worlds: the secular, public world and the sacred, private Jewish world, however, did not affect the lives of Orthodox Jewish women. On the contrary, as Alexandra Martin observes, "Hirsch's theoretical

As Rav Kirshner approaches the end of his life he must appoint his successor, as well as reconcile his feelings for his two sons, Jeremy and Isaiah; the former is a brilliant Queens College professor of philosophy who has turned against the religious life and immersed himself completely in the secular academic world, the latter – an unimaginative but devoted Talmudic scholar and a dutiful son. The two brothers are completely different: "Each has what the other lacks" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 109). As a result of their education and upbringing, each man lives exclusively in his own world and is utterly unable to reconcile the sacred and the secular.

In addition to Rav Kirshner's family, other families who represent various degrees of religious observance also appear in the book – for example, the family of a Hungarian, Andras Melish, a middle-aged non-observant Holocaust survivor, his Argentinian wife Nina, and their rebellious teenage daughter Renée, who would rather spend time with Stephanie, an American girl of Arab descent than practise the piano or work as a counsellor at the day summer camp for Jewish children.

However, it is the Shulman family and their five growing daughters to whom Goodman devotes most of her novel. It is through the eyes of the main character of the novel, Elizabeth Shulman, a young mother of five daughters (the sixth one arrives at the end of the novel), that we can explore and try to "understand the complex allure of confinement in an age enamoured of open-endedness – the solace as well as suffocation that religious belief can bring" (Merkin 13). Elizabeth, who was born in Manchester, England, is an avid reader of literature, and has "spent her pregnancies with Austen and Tolstoy" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 10), but above all, Elizabeth is a pious Orthodox Jewish woman who attends synagogue services, prepares Sabbath meals every Friday, as well as during all other Jewish festivals throughout the year, runs a kosher home and raises five daughters with her husband, Isaac. Elizabeth can be described as a perfect example of 'a woman of valour'[2], who performs her duties conscientiously and with natural

framework in particular, and the Jewish enlightenment in general, left traditional female roles untouched" (238).

2 *Eshet Chayil*, "A Woman of Valour" (Proverbs 31: 10–31) is a poem in praise of the perfect woman who "labours long hours in caring for her family and household. This section praising the ideal woman […] is sung by the father and children every Friday night in the Jewish home in appreciation of their wife and mother" (Unterman 61). However, according to Rabbi Elyse M. Goldstein, the poem focuses not only on the woman's role as wife and mother, but also presents a very well-balanced portrait of a woman, which "can be divided into three distinct sections: woman as wife and mother,

ease. Elizabeth also admits that "her religious life is not something she can cast off, it's part of her. Its rituals are not rituals to her; not objects, but instincts" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 57). Yet during the summer of 1976 she begins to feel incomplete. For the first time in her adult life (since her marriage to Isaac at the age of 20) Elizabeth has some free time for herself and so much energy that she is eager to undertake a project of her own. Moreover, at the end of the first chapter, while pondering her daughters' dreams, she also recalls that, as a child, she loved "the idea that there are secret forests where you can become someone else" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 13). Her dissatisfaction, though not yet fully expressed, has begun to grow.

Elizabeth is also a character with "a romantic streak" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 54), but her romantic yearnings relate to the outside world – secular America, to theatre, dance, art, literature, and to nature:

> Elizabeth does not romanticize religion. God and the scriptures, worship and ritual, are all simple, practical things for her. […] For her religion is such a habit, ritual so commonplace, that she takes it for granted. […] The sacred isn't mysterious to her, and so she romanticizes the secular. Poetry, universities, and paintings fill her with awe. […] Elizabeth partly recognizes her romance of worldly things, art and theatres, exotic people. (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 54; 57)

Elizabeth experiences a sudden moment of revelation outside the boundaries of the religious community in a local museum, when standing in front of Thomas Cole's painting entitled "Falls of the Kaaterskill." The beauty of the waterfall depicted in the painting strikes a deep chord in Elizabeth and makes her react to the painting very emotionally. She realizes that:

> [m]ore than ever she wants to do something of her own. She has to make something; she has so much energy, she feels so strong. Fearless. […] Elizabeth looks intently at the painting, that brilliant piece of the world, and gazing at the colour and the light of it she feels the desire, as intense as prayer. (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 83)

As Karen Grumberg rightly points out, "it is this confrontation with […] the wild place that inspires her to re-evaluate her limitations as an Orthodox woman" (230). To Elizabeth Shulman and other women in Kaaterskill Falls the patriarchal hierarchy of the Orthodox Kirshner community is undisputed. Women are restricted to certain roles within the community and the family. There are

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woman as business manager and independent financial source, and woman as spiritual being" (24). For more information about the portrayal of women in the Torah from a feminine perspective, see Elise M. Goldstein. *Seek Her Out. A Textual Approach to the Study of Women and Judaism.* New York: UAHC Press, 2003.

two places that define and limit the sphere of the Orthodox women, namely their homes, to which they are confined through their daily duties, and the synagogue, where their role is not so active as it is in the house. The synagogue, however, remains essential to their lives because, as Karen Grumberg explains, "it is from the synagogue that the Orthodox woman is more or less excluded, yet it is also from the synagogue that her life, from the tiniest details to the greatest decisions, is determined" (229).

Thus, Elizabeth's decision to open, with the permission of her rabbi, Elijah Kirshner, a small kosher grocery store in Kaaterskill Falls stems not only from her source of inspiration, the waterfall in the painting, but also from the realization that the home and the synagogue do not give her a sufficient sense of purpose in life. She wants to create something that would be hers alone "in the shimmering, spinning secular world" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 57). The store, which she finally opens in the summer of 1977, caters to the needs of her city friends and neighbours, Kirshner followers, who spend their summers in the Catskills. Elizabeth's growing success as a shopkeeper, which makes her feel proud since "[…] this is her project, […] she has created something of her own, even within the tight weave of associations in Kaaterskill – the family, the Kehilla, the neighbourhood" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 205), is hindered by Rav Isaiah Kirshner after he succeeds his father as the new leader of the community. In the eyes of the new Rav, Elizabeth's thoughtlessness by catering a private birthday party with food from a district beyond her old rabbi's sphere of supervision makes her guilty of disobeying rabbinic authority and must result in his repealing the consent his father granted to her. Elizabeth, as a submissive Orthodox woman, will never go against the rabbi's judgment, she must accept it. Moreover, at the same time, Elizabeth finds out that she is pregnant again.

Right after the closure of her store Elizabeth realizes that her position in the community has changed. Although she "sits among [the women in the synagogue], […] she feels perfectly alone. […] She knows she has lost something. She does not belong to them in the same way anymore" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 247). At the same time Elizabeth understands that her emotional attitude towards her position in this religious community has shifted mainly because she is now intrigued by the secular: "Now, more than ever, the outside fascinates her: the people there, the way everyone moves about, […] the time never delineated between work and Shabbes, the food never separated, the men and women mixed together so well; so many decisions made rather than received" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 227).

Although Elizabeth's faith is put to the test by the way in which the new Rav handles her case, it is worth emphasizing that it does not bring about her

separation from Judaism because Elizabeth, as Susan Jacobowitz (94) observes, "has a deep connection to her religion through prayer":

> […] Elizabeth will pray in the house as soon as she can, in the time she finds. She will not put on tefillin, but, like Isaac, she will bind herself with the commandments, she will not fold herself in a tallis, but like him, she will fold herself in prayer. She will never cast the life away. But when, she wonders, will she view the pattern of her days as brightly, or say her prayers as gratefully? When will she observe the holidays with the pleasure of past years? When will she cook again with such joy? (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 294–95)

Elizabeth decides to stay within the constricting world of traditional Judaism even though her desire for freedom has been destroyed; however, thanks to her resilience, an important feature of her character, she is able to regain control of her life. First of all, her pregnancy turns out to be a blessing after all. Secondly, it is her non-observant neighbour's words, "this is the United States of America. You can do whatever you damn well please" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 271), that encourage Elizabeth at the end of the novel to look for a job as an assistant in her local grocery store in Washington Heights, enabling her, at least partly, to fulfil her dream – to build again something new from the materials available to her. Of course, Andras Melish's words are not taken literally by Elizabeth and do not indicate that she is free to do anything she wishes in her tight, restricted world. Yet she comes to understand that America has given her the choice, and it is up to her to decide which path, with its unique consequences, to follow in order to gain a sense of fulfilment in her life. Goodman's character is a true Jewish heroine who decides to "stifle her urge, […] look for resolution within the status quo […] and rediscover the joy of limits" (Wisse 69).

Nevertheless, Elizabeth's story is more complicated than that. Even though Elizabeth chooses to remain within the oppressive Kirshner community, she imagines that her six daughters "will test and even breach the boundaries that she has accepted for herself, and that makes her feel hopeful" (Jacobowitz 94). The very fact that Elizabeth has given her daughters two names, two alternatives – the first in Yiddish and the other on their birth certificates, sophisticated English ones (Annette, Margot, Rowena, Sabrina and Bernice), the secular names that will never be used at home – reveals "the quiet disjunction within Elizabeth's sensibility, […] the split in her allegiance – between the unyielding demands of tribalism and the wide perimeters of fantasy" (Merkin 13). The same naming procedure repeats itself when her sixth daughter is born at the end of the novel. Her Yiddish name is replaced by an English one, Celia, on the official secular birth certificate. In this way, Elizabeth wishes to ensure that in a world full of new and better possibilities, all her daughters will have the chance to participate in both the sacred and secular spheres when they grow up, "to be part one thing

and part another, […] journalists, travellers, philosophers – and then somehow return home" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 282).

Pearl Abraham, a writer from a Hasidic background, in her debut novel, *The Romance Reader* (1995), gives us a peek into the hidden world of ultra-Orthodoxy, observing it from an insider position. Like Allegra Goodman, Abraham deals with the confrontation between materialistic America and spiritual Judaism, the problematic position of women in Jewish religion, and religious transgression. Torn between her Jewish heritage and contemporary modern America, Abraham's female protagonist has to negotiate constantly between tradition and the contemporary secular world. This confrontation between the two cultures results in either conflict, or in an attempt to amalgamate the two worlds and achieve "multiple affiliations," to borrow Bart Lievens's term (191).

The Romance Reader, similarly to Goodman's *Kaaterskill Falls*, is set in the 1970s, but unlike the latter the story is situated in the stricter ultra-Orthodox Jewish community, among the haredim.[3] The novel is told from the perspective of Rachel Benjamin, the daughter of a Hasidic rabbi, and the eldest of eight brothers and sisters. As a female member of the ultra-Orthodox community she has been trained from an early age to obey and fulfil numerous strict rules and regulations based on *Halakhah*, which organizes the life of a Hasidic woman. The adolescent

3 The 'ultra-Orthodox' or 'haredim' are those separatist, fervently observant Jews who oppose acculturation and who adhere to a restorative Eastern European Jewish ideology. They constitute only a tiny minority of contemporary American Jewry. Jews represent about 2 per cent of the total U.S. population; about 12 per cent of American Jews are Orthodox; and of that group, about a third are haredi. Ultra-Orthodoxy is a broad term that includes both Hasidic and non-Hasidic groups who, to outsiders, are often seen as a monolithic group of religious Jews, easily identifiable in the streets by the men's black coats, hats and always a beard (as prescribed in the Torah), and the women's modest dress and head coverings. Ultra-Orthodox Jews reject the values of modernity – they perceive the secular world as full of corrupting influences, and because of this worldview, they live in insular communities, often speaking only Yiddish, and not allowing their children to attend universities since "secular education represents the most dangerous of these outside influences" (Rubel 8–12). Hasidism, which was started in the 18th century in Ukraine by Israel ben Eliezer, also known as the Baal Shem Tov, is a movement that emphasizes mysticism and claims that "simple faith, inward passion and fervent prayer [are] as important as Talmudic scholarship" (Harris 49). For more information on ultra-Orthodoxy, see Samuel C. Heilman. *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; and on Hasidic Judaism, see Jerome R. Mintz. *Hasidic People: a Place in the New World.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.

protagonist, however, is a rebel who starts challenging the existing patriarchal religious and social structure of the haredi world.

Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews are obliged to observe the laws and regulations as they appear in the Torah (both written and oral), which is believed to have been given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, and later expanded by the rabbis. In Rabbinic Judaism, there are separate roles and responsibilities for men and women. Women are required to perform all negative mitzvot ('do not do this'), but are exempt from observing the "fixed-time" commandments, the so-called positive mitzvot ('do this') which have to be carried out at a specific time of day in a public place. First and foremost, women do not have to put on the *tallith* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (phylacteries) while reciting daily morning prayers. This mitzvah is reserved solely for men, who in this way are bound head and heart to God (Zahavy 182). The Orthodox feminist Blu Greenberg remarks that "from the exemption of women from tefillin the rabbis derive several other exemptions: counting the omer, hearing the shofar, and reciting the *Shema*" (82). Orthodox women do not qualify for religious leadership within their own communities, either: they are not counted in the *minyan* (the official quorum for public prayer of ten adult Jews), cannot be ordained, and cannot read from the Torah at the *bimah*. Gender-based tasks which a woman is supposed to fulfil focus on marriage and family rather than female influence and participation in public rituals of prayer and the synagogue. A Jewish wife and mother is not expected to do anything which might interfere with the responsibilities of motherhood and the maintenance of a pious family life (Zahavy 183–184).

Growing up in a Hasidic household, Rachel observes her mother's dissatisfaction with her life as a mother and housewife. Mrs Benjamin's position as a rebbetzin in the community cannot compensate for the poor and ordinary life she leads, and "[s]he doesn't lose a minute letting everyone know what she thinks. […] What kind of life is this, a husband who's not working, not bringing home enough to live on, and what for do we need a synagogue?" (Abraham 14). Mr Benjamin is only concerned with holy matters, fulfilling his daily mitzvot like all Hasidic men do, and not with his family's well-being. He cannot understand why a woman cannot be happy in Ashley, with seven healthy children and a life lived according to the Torah.

Mrs Benjamin serves as a negative role model for young Rachel because, even though Rachel's mother loudly complains about her living conditions within the family, she does not show her discontent outside; neither does she take any steps to improve her situation, abiding in this way by the appropriate rules of conduct in Hasidism. By the end of the novel, however, Mrs Benjamin succeeds, at least partially, in improving her situation as a wife, housewife and mother without violating

the boundaries of ultra-Orthodox tradition. Upon returning from Israel, where she has been sent to recuperate after a failed suicide attempt, she achieves a greater control over her body by applying a natural method of contraception behind her husband's back. Mrs Benjamin's apparently rebellious act is approved of by a lenient Israeli rabbi, "someone [Rachel's] father would never consider going to", who admitted that "after seven children, God will forgive [her]" (Abraham 234). Mrs Benjamin also takes a further step towards greater personal independence from her husband and the domestic sphere, namely she accepts a job outside the house in the secular world:

> […] I want my own money, so I don't have to wait until you pull your torn wallet. And I want to get out. I'm a human being too." […] Father continues to argue against it. "Think how it looks," he says. "A mother of seven children, a Chassidic mother, selling fabric. A saleslady." "I'm not ashamed. What's wrong with a saleslady? Better than a shnorrer. You won't see me put my hand out for money, the way you do. (Abraham 196)

Mrs Benjamin's decision to start earning her own money is, as a matter of fact, only the continuation of a centuries-old Hasidic pattern and is still standard practice in numerous ultra-Orthodox households today: the wife takes the role of the family's breadwinner, whereas the husband studies (Jacobs 593).

Seeing the unequal treatment of the sexes in her religious community – both in the domestic sphere and in public religious worship – Rachel starts opposing the traditional female gender roles in ultra-Orthodox Judaism and the exclusion of women from certain religious practices. Through her behaviour, she challenges long-established customs, rituals, rules and regulations.

Feeling deprived of full participation in the synagogue and access to sacred religious texts solely on the grounds of her sex, Rachel secretly turns to secular literature, "books written by some evil, dirty mind" (Abraham 35). She voraciously reads masterpieces of American and English literature, and, as the title of the novel implies, trivial romance fiction by authors such as Barbara Cartland and Victoria Holt. These "goyishe" and "trafe" books (Abraham 118) provide Rachel with a source of information about the outside world, allowing her to experience vicariously other people's regular lives without arranged marriages and embarrassment concerning their sexuality.

As a result of reading the forbidden books, Rachel realizes that the outside secular world abounds with so many new perspectives and opportunities denied to her within the Hasidic society that she herself wishes to participate in this forbidden world and taste the freedom it offers. Her rebellious acts against her tradition are numerous. Apart from buying or even stealing romances from the local supermarket, Rachel and her younger sister Leah invent a clever plan which will allow them to read whatever they want free of charge, namely they

decide to obtain a library card. Their scheme, however, rebounds on them when their parents discover the truth. Rachel's father remonstrates with her over her sin of assimilation: "A Jew […] is never liked by other nations. A Jew only reads Jewish books and must remain separate" (Abraham 34), and warns her, "If I catch you reading goyishe books, you will stop going to school" (Abraham 35). Thus, "assimilation, or an attempt to combine tradition with modern elements, is unfeasible and unwanted in the eyes of the father" (Lievens 192).

In their parents' four-week absence, both Rachel and Leah are responsible for running the house and looking after their younger siblings. This period is also conducive to deeper exploration of the freedom and the pleasures of secular American life. Rachel is fascinated by American *shiksas* (a derogatory name referring to a Gentile girl or woman), and tries to imitate them by wearing modern clothes such as sheer stockings, a forbidden item of clothing among the Hasidim, where women are supposed to wear thick opaque stockings with seams.[4] In addition to the changes in their appearance, Rachel and her sister begin taking lifeguarding lessons at the pool, paying for the course out of the money that their mother left for maintaining the house. Half way through the course, their mother suddenly returns home from Israel and destroys their modern stockings and the snorkelling equipment. Later on the girls are given the same familiar sermon on a woman's modesty – something their father always does whenever they misbehave:

> The Jews escaped slavery in Egypt because of three things […]. Name, dress, and language. You two call each other by your goyishe names, Rachel instead of Ruchel; you speak a goyishe language; and now you're changing the way you dress. I will not have any of that in this house. This is a Chassidishe home. (Abraham 137)

Even in their jobs, Rachel and Leah are constantly reminded of the importance of *tznius* (laws concerning modesty, both in dress and behaviour) by their parents. When Rachel's mother finds her in a bathing suit during her job as a lifeguard at the local pool, she attempts to teach her daughter Hasidic manners through

4 The theme of control over women's lives through the monitoring of their appearance appears frequently in narratives about the ultra-Orthodox, for example in Tova Mirvis's book, *The Outside World* (2004). In such fictional narratives, as noted by Nora Rubel, "the female protagonist[s] [are] plagued by the sense that someone is always watching [them], judging the length of [their] sleeves and [their] skirts, and criticizing the colour or thickness of [their] stockings" (63).

humiliation: "Quietly, for only me to hear, she says, 'Aren't you ashamed? Walking around in front of these small children like that, naked. Showing everything you've got to these children'" (Abraham 185).

In her struggle to find a proper balance between her religious background and modern society Rachel criticizes the submissive role of women in Jewish tradition. Her criticism centres especially on her arranged marriage with a pious young Jewish man. A match is made for seventeen-year-old Rachel shortly after she has started teaching at a Hasidic girls' school, which she finds depersonalizing. Her initial opposition to marriage gradually weakens due to the fact that Rachel starts perceiving her marriage as a way out of her parents' home and control. She says: "I don't care whom I marry. Once married, I at least won't have to worry about it. Married, I'll do and wear what I want. I'll be who I am" (Abraham 204). She lets her parents marry her off to a young Hasidic scholar, Israel Mittleman, whom she has met only twice and for whom she does not feel any affection, envisioning that marriage will bring her the independence she has read about in secular books. She could not be further from the truth: in her marriage Rachel feels even more alienated and dependent. Even though she contemplates rebellion at the beginning of her marriage by deciding not to wear a hat over her wig, she eventually conforms to the strict rules of modesty, in which the covering of a woman's hair is considered essential. Rachel's husband takes the place of her father and demands even more modesty than her father did before. Rachel quickly discovers that Israel discusses all the everyday issues with her father, their topics ranging from simple things, such as what to wear, to more serious and intimate ones concerning, for instance, the most appropriate time when he should have sexual relations with his wife so that she can conceive.

Ultimately, Rachel's unsatisfying marriage fails. Grasping the first opportunity that arises, Rachel runs away from her marriage and finds refuge in the city, where she rents a hotel room and is finally able to taste the freedom of the outside world: she watches television, eats non-kosher food, carries money on the Sabbath, takes luxurious hot baths, and sleeps in the nude. The removal of her clothes can be regarded as a symbolic gesture: a short time before, as a married woman, in a traditional Jewish family, bound by the decisions of the two men in her life – father and husband – she was wearing both a wig and a hat. Now for the first time in her adult life Rachel is free to make decisions concerning her life by herself. She even expresses a wish for a world without men, in which she could enjoy her independence, "[…] I don't want to see any men. I want to live in a world with no men: with no fathers, no husbands; a world free of men" (Abraham 286). Yet after a brief moment of freedom in the

secular world, Rachel returns home to her family feeling even more isolated than before: "I'm home but not home. […] I can never be one of the children again. I'm a stranger in this house. […] I don't belong here" (Abraham 294). Her future as a divorced Hasidic woman in her conservative religious family and community seems uncertain, and so Rachel makes a decision to go away again: "I won't be here, on their hands, for long" (Abraham 295). However, even though Rachel considers independence in the secular world and "[…] is impatient to drop her religious burden, she is undeniably determined by her past," as has been noted by Bart Lievens (194). The past will always bind her to her family through Hasidic communal ties, which is also supported by Rachel's words: "I watch Ma light candles, and a spreading glowing pain is in my chest. Father's kiddish hurts. I love them and I don't. I know this is what I'll miss when I go: the children at the table, Ma lighting candles, Father's kiddish" (Abraham 295–296). The final line of the novel, in which Rachel wonders "how high [she] will get before [she] fall[s]" (296), further reinforces her ambivalence about her sense of belonging, which is accurately described by Bart Lievens, "[Rachel] feels stranded in a no man's land, belonging neither to the world from which she wants to escape, nor to the secular world she wants to conquer, and yet belonging to both" (194).

Goodman's Elizabeth Shulman of *Kaaterskill Falls* and Rachel Benjamin, the main character of *The Romance Reader*, living within the closed communities of Orthodox Judaism, are largely confined to domestic lives and have to act according to the appropriate rules of conduct, abiding by the laws of modesty and family purity. The protagonists of both novels realize that as women of Orthodoxy they are denied the opportunities available outside this circumscribed community, in the secular world of America. Throughout the novels the secular American lifestyle is constantly tempting the female protagonists. Gradually, they start opposing the traditional female gender roles in Orthodoxy – at first, rather innocently, by turning to literature, which serves as an indispensable source of information and knowledge about the outside world, filling themselves "with confused longings for change and new experiences" (Goodman, *Kaaterskill* 70), and later, more courageously, by actually tasting, for a brief moment, the freedom of the outside, secular world. However, towards the end of the novels, both protagonists feel ambivalent about their future. They realize they have to make a choice: either to remain in the Orthodox community, or to escape to the secular world and try to find fulfilment there. Although Elizabeth Shulman chooses not to reject Judaism and remains in the Kirshner community, she hopes for her young daughters to have the best of both worlds when they grow up. The trick of giving her daughters double names is an interesting

device indicating this future expectation.[5] Rachel Benjamin, on the other hand, seems determined to find fulfilment on a secular and sacred level outside ultra-Orthodox Judaism, in a more modern form of Judaism. However, her optimism about her chances of self-realization in the secular world remains partial.

Both Allegra Goodman and Pearl Abraham refuse to provide easy solutions to the question of the possibilities for women within Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities. As Gloria Cronin notes, both authors structure their novels "around a series of unanswerable questions surrounding 'woman' within orthodoxy, and the inevitable tensions within Biblical covenant community" (121); so they are more interested in setting up a problem than in seeking an unambiguous resolution. Instead, both authors, through the voices of their heroines, encourage readers to think carefully and attempt to negotiate the uncomfortable relationship between Jewishness and gender, Judaism and feminism, and Judaism and contemporary American secularism for themselves.

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5 *Kaaterskill Falls* provides other examples of doubling, which, according to Tresa Grauer, "externalize the identity conflicts that Elizabeth feels within herself. [T]ensions between the individual and the community, the sacred and the secular, the traditional and the modern are played out between family members who each represent one pole of the debate" (276). Such examples of doubling are characteristic of contemporary Jewish American writing in general.

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Jacek Partyka

"False Veins Under the Skin": Does Edward Lewis Wallant's *The Pawnbroker* Fail as Holocaust Fiction?

I.

The 1960s was the time of the first attempts to elevate the Holocaust to the status of a significant theme in Jewish-American literature. The reasons for the subject matter being almost absent or at most marginally present in American fiction during the previous fifteen years are perhaps rather difficult to elucidate, or, paradoxically, quite obvious. And this paradox should not be "defused" as it testifies to the still thought-provoking problem of representing the unrepresentable, of adjusting the existing language to a radically foreign experience. To name such an experience necessitates at least some basic understanding of it, and for the few survivors of Treblinka, Auschwitz, Chelmno or Bergen-Belsen this must have been an intellectual (and emotional) challenge, if not a virtual impossibility. Besides, the fact of personal suffering does not guarantee an ability to adequately render the pain and the loss into words. It is therefore hard to say whether the "literary" silence on the Holocaust was a required phase in preparation for "mature" writing (a "larval" stage in the peculiarly American, indirect development of Holocaust literature), evidence of helplessness, or a mixture of both. The fact is that for almost fifteen years Holocaust literature in America seemed to be overwhelmingly overshadowed by the already mature, unsurpassed testimonies and analyses of the Europeans: Tadeusz Borowski, Primo Levi, Zofia Nałkowska or Eli Wiesel. This literature, however, was written by former concentration camp prisoners, survivors or witnesses of the catastrophe; nonparticipants from across the Atlantic might have been accused of sacrilege; of treading on forbidden land.

"The sixties marked the beginning of widespread American interest in Holocaust literature, and the ensuing decades have witnessed the development of a substantial body of work" (Kremer, *Witness* 15). So the time was ripe, but why the sixties? An outline of the political and social context may come in handy, although it does not provide an all-encompassing explanation. What galvanized public opinion at the beginning of the decade was the trial of Adolf Eichmann. One of the key agents in the deportation of European Jewry to the killing centers, the brains behind Holocaust logistics, captured in 1960 in Argentina by Israeli

Mossad and abducted to Israel, Eichmann was found guilty of crimes against the Jewish people and executed in 1962. The proceedings before the court of justice in Jerusalem re-kindled world interest in the Holocaust: inspired by the event, Hannah Arendt formulated her (in)famous notion of the "banality of evil".

The postmodern contention that the relationship between individual experience and its verbal representation was seriously weakened (if not severed) after the Holocaust still functions as a commonplace in the humanities. The alleged inexpressibility of the genocide has led to radical formulas such as "negative representation" (Lyotard 56), or to notoriously overused terms such as: aporia of sense, silence, emptiness. Yet, paradoxically, such proclamations of the "negative" judgments have been accompanied – since the 1960s mainly – by, on the one hand, a virtual deluge of Holocaust literature, both documentary and fiction, and, on the other, by a proliferation of theoretical works concerning the field. And therefore the contradiction observed in the dynamics of the two phenomena (i.e. the fact that the allegedly inexpressible Holocaust has founded a sort of "factory" producing fictional and scholarly discourses) implies that, in one way or another, language *can* cope with extreme experience.

However, Holocaust literature is expected to meet rigid standards so that "the character of a subject or topic will … have some direct bearing on the form of its expression" (Lang x). In other words, it is almost commonly agreed that there exists a set of controlling agencies that must always be applied while attempting to represent the Holocaust in a written (or visual) form: historical accuracy, moral responsibility and respect for the victims.

II.

Personally, I doubt whether Edward Lewis Wallant's novel *The Pawnbroker* (1961), one of the trail-blazers of its kind in America, needs a thorough critical re-consideration–much has already been done by American scholars. My purpose is rather modest; namely, perceiving some occasional interpretative malpractice concerning the text, I will take the risk and try to "take it out" from the narrow Holocaust pigeonhole in order to see in it more universal problems that the novelist wanted to examine.

S. Lillian Kremer, pointing to a series of "contrapuntal arrangements" that inform the structure of *The Pawnbroker*, emphasizes the significance of locating Holocaust survivors within the context of American ghetto space, Harlem in New York–the decision that strongly encourages the reader to draw a more or less direct parallel, or perhaps a contrast, between the plight of the two groups, i.e. the Jews and the Blacks (*Witness* 63). Putting aside for a moment the question

of whether a juxtaposition of this kind may or may not be justified at all, we must admit that such a setting for a literary work explicitly (because of its central character) dedicated to the Holocaust trauma brings to the foreground, in a condensed and out of necessity synecdochical form, *not one* but *two* fates, and *not one* but *two* histories of suffering: the Final Solution and discrimination against colored Americans.

There exists a certain disagreement among critics on the value of Wallant's book. Not wanting to delve into details of differences in opinions, I would like to highlight one aspect of the story that both sides, in my opinion, fail to address in a satisfactory manner. Kremer, who generally praises the novel, implies that the ghetto setting is for the author purely instrumental, chosen for the sake of strengthening the main theme: "By setting the novel in the midst of American ghetto degradation, Wallant enables his readers to follow the survivor's free association, nightmare, and spontaneous recollection of Holocaust horrors." ("Edward Lewis Wallant" 1284). Then she goes on to assert that: "Harlem is the *objective correlative* of Nazerman's fractured post-Holocaust existence. Wallant's ghetto is realistic and metaphoric, evoking the tormented mental state of a man remembering his brutalized family, a man mourning for his slaughtered innocents. Dark images of filth, disease and pollution objectify the survivor's weariness with life and his own sense of impending collapse" (1284). But the assumption that Harlem is merely the "objective correlative" of the protagonist's internal torments belittles the predicaments of a comparatively large group of the novel's other characters. On the other hand, Alan L. Berger disapproves of *The Pawnbroker* on the grounds that it ignores historical detail and trivializes or even inappropriately universalizes the Holocaust (164–165). However, my contention is that the Harlem context is neither a semi-abstract but useful objective correlative, nor does it, in the form it was given by its author, detract from the magnitude of Sol Nazerman's trauma and suffering.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Wallant's decision to set his story in ghetto Harlem and Westchester *can* be understood as an invitation directed at readers and critics to draw a clear-cut comparison between the plight of Holocaust survivors and marginalized groups of colored minorities in the America of the late 1950s. This perspective, in turn, *can* automatically trigger the question of whether, by any chance, the author had a surreptitious intention to undermine the centrality of the Holocaust in twentieth-century history–after all, any uniqueness, by definition, resists comparisons. However, not only does such a juxtaposition lead to an inevitable valuation of suffering (a rather risky move), but it also–unnecessarily, in my opinion–reduces literature to a set of conflicted viewpoints within an ideological (if not political) agenda, which is always detrimental to the

reception of the former. By the same token, all the Christian motifs and symbols that manifestly embroider the fabric of *The Pawnbroker* can be perceived as outrageous blemishes that spoil the whole pattern–mostly in view of the fact that manipulative exegesis of the *New Testament* has always allowed for sanctioning anti-Semitic attitudes. Yet, again, such a reasoning will sustain its persuasive force only as long as Wallant's novel is read within, let's say, the frame of Jewish Orthodoxy. But, intended as fiction and meant for the general public, the text is far from being a religious treatise camouflaged as a novel.

Sidestepping the slippery paths of those critics that tend to feed on the abovementioned controversies, I prefer to consider the story of Sol Nazerman as one that goes against the all-too-easy ways of thinking about the horrific legacy of the Holocaust. Its major merit and value lie in the fact that it exemplifies a literary discourse that successfully reconciles the particular with the universal, without trespassing the boundaries of required respect for those whose lives were irredeemably stigmatized by the genocidal Nazi project. The problem that Wallant's protagonist faces cannot, I contend, be narrowed down to the mere (im)possibility of overcoming the trauma; the task he sets for himself is to salvage all the remnants of humanity from his shattered soul, even despite his frequently proclaimed disbelief in God, people, the benevolence of art, and the ideas that founded Western civilization. The discord, very telling in itself, between Nazerman's alleged nihilism and his (often carefully masked) comportment in the spirit of brotherhood and empathy, illustrates the condition of the modern man–paradigmatically, his strivings for secular redemption stem from the experience of the Holocaust and, at the same time, go beyond it. What is at stake here is not the ramifications of the particular historical experience but the fragility of hope. And much as adversity *is* a constant, unavoidable companion of human life, hope *should be* its major existential index.

Avoiding maudlin characterization, Wallant's novel is free of cheap sentimentality, tear jerker scenes or–perhaps expected among its first American and Jewish American readers–idealization of Holocaust survivors. And considering its main theme, this should be counted as an advantage. The non-obvious, puzzling protagonist–a man who is well-aware of the cultural connotations of being a pawnbroker, but whose frail ends of humanness, even if imperceptibly, tower above the petty-mindedness of other characters–is, in the end, Wallant's successful attempt at deconstructing the stereotypical image of a gruesome Jewish usurer. One may even venture the opinion that Nazerman assumes the hated role deliberately, in a gesture of provocation–he accepts the rules of the discriminatory "game" enforced and spread by anti-Semites so as to expose (through his behavior at the end of the novel) the flimsiness of their reasoning. Twenty-five

years after the publication of *The Pawnbroker*, Art Spiegelman, in his *Maus*, resorted to an analogical, let's call it *homeopathic*, strategy of turning upside down the discriminatory logic of xenophobia as well as racial and ethnic hatred, the main inspirations for this graphic novel coming from Hitler's proclamation that "The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not humans" (Spiegelman 10) and from the images of Jews-as-vermin that were splashed across the pages of Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic weekly, *Der Stürmer*. By sketching his Jewish characters as human mice, the American cartoonist "accepted" the metaphors permeating the language of Nazi propaganda, but he did so to emphasize their atrocious absurdity.

Nazerman's Holocaust-wrought insensitivity is a misleading façade hiding an inner struggle, and his case illustrates only one instance of coping with the recollections of extreme experience. The whole book may, in fact, be seen as a study in the diversity of Holocaust survival, featuring Mr. Goberman, a nagging con man suspected of having collaborated with the Nazis, who financially profits from the post-war guilt of expatriate Jews living in the area; Tessa Rubin, a resigned, spiritually burned-out widow; and her agonizing father, Mendel Solowitz, whose present life consists in giving home spectacles of ultimate bitterness and fury about his fate. It is in the relationships between these survivors and other, black, inhabitants of the ghetto that Nazerman's charitable disposition becomes clearly seen: he safeguards financial means for two families and offers a helping hand to a Negro prostitute and to a Puerto Rican minor clerk, who soon becomes his apprentice in the lending business. One of these generous commitments puts him to a great deal of personal risk as his pawnshop becomes a cover for a mob's money-laundering practices.

The colored people that the reader comes across on the pages of the novel (often anonymous and mentioned in passing) are victims of a different kind–in the Harlem ghetto they live lives of economic, social and ethnic disgrace. We suspect that these two time perspectives and two settings in *The Pawnbroker* are introduced for a reason. Nevertheless, to claim, as Kremer does, that "[f]or Nazerman, the significance of present misery … [has] its value as Holocaust referent" (*Witness* 69) may lead to an erroneous, biased reading of the story. Admittedly, the nightmarish images of the past are frequently superimposed by the protagonist onto the realistic urban context of New York and its surroundings: chimney smoke evokes concentration camp crematoria, the interior of a city train echoes the stifling conditions of freight transports to Buchenwald, a meeting with a black prostitute triggers the memories of Nazerman's wife's tribulations in a Nazi brothel, etc. Still, however, the misery of Harlem is real and not without a significant influence upon the pawnbroker's behavior. Having a relatively secure

financial status, he–once a professor of literature at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow who became part of the Sonderkommando–is a careful yet taciturn observer of a "new" world populated by outcasts, beggars, petty criminals and streetwalkers; a world which is controlled and underlined by the cynicism of the corrupt mighty operating audaciously under the policemen's noses. The fact of the matter is that Harlem gives a name for the sphere of sanctioned inequality and depravation stemming from a racist ideology. In the magnitude of the devastation caused, the American ghetto does not, of course, match the Nazi factories of extermination, but is, nevertheless, a sinister reminder that human evil is impossible to eradicate–it is always there, irrespective of your whereabouts, present in seemingly insignificant gestures and acts, like a deadly germ awaiting favorable conditions to erupt as an epidemic.

The Christology in *The Pawnbroker*, albeit intentional and easily noticeable, does not violate Jewish religious taboos and does not amount to obvious parallels. Phonetically, the very name "Nazerman" generates a series of conflicting symbolic associations: the Hebrew word *nazir* describing a "consecrated" or a "separated" one; *Nazarite*, a person who took the vows stipulated in "Numbers" (6: 1–21), both "holy unto the Lord" and expected to bring a sin offering, and therefore an ideal and a trespasser at the same time; *Nazarene*, a term used to designate a Christian in Jewish tradition; and last but not least, simply a "Nazi man", a purely symbolic, and somewhat perfidious stigmatization of one who involuntarily became implicated in Nazi crimes by his work in a Sonderkommando crew. An apparently natural temptation to see the character of Jesus Ortiz, the pawnbroker's colored assistant, as a Christ-figure also multiplies the ambiguity and ambivalence. A man from an underprivileged minority who notoriously defies the official authorities and who, at the end of the novel, decides to sacrifice his own life to save his employer is, in fact, a two-faced fledgling crook, not without anti-Semitic inclinations. His meditation in a church abounds in sacrilegious and cynical thoughts:

> … it was quiet here; the candles and the smell of incense eased his relentlessness. Would he have dared to come if he believed? "Bless me in my plans," he said sardonically. The blood hung in the wooden wounds. And a white Jesus Christ at that! "Oh man, you don't know the half of it," he said silently to the statue above him; "it too complicated for you." And He was a Jew, too, just like the Pawnbroker; there's a laugh for you. He tried to imagine the Pawnbroker in a position like that, nailed up on the cross, the heavy, graceless body broken and naked, the great puffy face bent to one side…with the glasses on! He began to chuckle, harshly. (Wallant 238)

The roles of Jesus and Judas from the Gospels are thus reversed, and their final meaning blurred. The vagueness of such a representation should, arguably, prevent the reader from jumping to hasty conclusions and over-generalizations. Granted,

as Kremer remarks, the history of Europe provides countless examples of the instrumental use of–interchangeably–philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism, depending on the political and social needs of a given state at a given historical moment (*Witness* 77). It also cannot be denied that the proverbial Jewish business skills would occasionally equip them with an outstanding economic power, which Europeans exaggerated to a serious threat and a justification for organizing pogroms. Finally, anti-Semitism certainly found fertile ground in *Christian* societies. Jesus Ortiz, however, is not a European, and–more importantly–as an individual of dubious reputation can hardly pass for the epitome of national stereotypes with all their deadly consequences. His hatred of the Jew may be a deeply thought over and conscious attitude, but the more convincing explanation will have us see him as a petty criminal, a hereditary pariah and the "product" of ghetto debasement, driven by greed and instinctive aggression toward the vulnerable well-off, irrespective of their ethnic background. Interpreting Ortiz as a demonstrative *locus* of a certain ideology simply detracts from his verisimilitude as a character in a realistic novel.

In the article "Suffering as a Moral Beacon. Blacks and Jews" Laurence Mordekhai Thomas considers the problem of suffering not only in terms of its, if only theoretical, measurability, but also in terms of a hidden or implied rationale behind such a risky attempt. Scales or magnitudes of suffering relatively easily find a demonstrative formula in pure statistics: the Nazi project to eradicate a whole people resulted in the loss of approximately six million lives; American slavery, spanning a much longer period of time, claimed, it is estimated, roughly twice as many victims. But is body count alone a sufficient criterion for diminishing one tragedy at the cost of the other? Or, perhaps, the data require further supplements, such as, for example, a comparison of the logistics of both plans, "innovative", unprecedented ways of discrimination and causing death, or the ultimate purposes behind each project? Yet, statistical data and meticulous analysis of the external circumstances accompanying the suffering of Blacks and Jews give us no insight into the problem of whose suffering was worse–after all, pain is not subject to quantitative estimation; it is resistant to mathematical figures. Putting aside the issue of the measurability of suffering as futile and unsolvable, Thomas focuses on a much more intriguing issue that, as he claims, often informs, or even drives debates, or "rivalries" concerning the uniqueness of particular–racial or ethnic–tragedies:

> I would like to suggest a view that should be a part of any complete explanation. This is the view that the one who has suffered the most thereby has a greater moral understanding of all other forms of suffering. Suffering is thus thought to bring in its wake an otherwise unattainable level of moral sensibility. For better or worse, suffering is seen as the key to a form of moral knowledge. (Thomas 200–201)

Such intuitions can be traced both in the *Old* and the *New Testament* (Job, Jesus). As Thomas sees it, the issue at stake can be viewed from yet another standpoint, namely not as a "petty", "despicable" rough-and-tumble over the scale of evil one had to cope with, but as the suggestion that through exceptional trials and tribulations a certain group has reached a "profound level of moral knowledge", thus becoming a "moral beacon" to others (202). Such reasoning, however, generates at least one question and one serious doubt. So, firstly, there arises the question of whether understanding of suffering is "transitive", i.e. whether the experience of an extreme situation can equip one with some superior capacity to empathize and comprehend the pain of others better than they themselves do. Secondly, any public claim to being a "moral beacon" would be at least deplorable; it would be, as Thomas asserts, "a fulsome display of arrogance" (203). In other words, to signify some genuine, authentic quality, this label should always be given to you by others; it should never be self-proclaimed (similarly, if someone claims to be a saint, one thing is certain–he or she is not).Things get further complicated when we take into consideration the fact that living in destitution and experiencing outrageous injustice do not prevent one from developing attitudes of prejudice. "Neither Blacks nor Jews are the exceptions here" (206). In fact, no nation or ethnic group is or can ever be.

Drawing upon the arguments put forward in Thomas's article seems most relevant here not only because they convincingly show the problem of suffering as unsettled, more complex than it is, regrettably, often assumed, but, more importantly, because of the author's conclusive remark that clearly re-affirms, even if inadvertently, the intuitions pervading Wallant's story:

> … if on account of the Shoah and American slavery humanity better understands the risks that it takes when it permits acts and the kinds of behavior that are readily co-opted by evil, then those who have died will not have died in vain… The Shoah and American slavery have given Jews and blacks, respectively, an extraordinary and incomparable occasion to cast some light on the ways of human beings. (Thomas 210)

So, why not combine these two shafts of light so as to see better; to understand better? Only some people were marked by "false veins under the skin" that at closer scrutiny would form themselves into bluish camp numbers, and only some were forced to recognize the blackness of their skin as the trait that qualified them as a species closer to animals than humans, but none of them should forget that deposits of evil that harbor in the hearts of potential oppressors have not come any closer to being depleted, and may, at some future time, provide fuel for yet another civilizational catastrophe.

III.

Alan L. Berger's accusation that *The Pawnbroker* "is … more representative of a literature of misery than a literature of atrocity" because it does not view the Holocaust "as an epoch-making event but as an instance … of human cruelty whose effect can be overcome through healing contact with other caring humans" (165) is more a re-classification than a condemnation. Admittedly, the story's "concern is to elicit the phenomenology of suffering" (167), but should this not be seen as its great asset? If it fails as Holocaust fiction, does it fail as good literature?

Edward Lewis Wallant died prematurely of a stroke at the age of thirty-six, and his literary output is rather modest, comprising four novels, two of which were published from manuscripts after his death: *The Human Season* (1960), the critically acclaimed *The Pawnbroker* (1961), *The Children at the Gate* (1964) and *The Tenants of Moonbloom* (1963). They are all set on the margins of life: in slums, sinister hospitals and ghetto areas. While writing about contemporary American society, Wallant was particularly drawn to its darker side: suffering, alienation, sexual abuse, and the dilemma of the individual confronted with inextricable evil. Considered as a whole, his fiction is marked by the same motif of yearning for spiritual rebirth and affirmation:

> [T]here is a timeless quality to Wallant's depiction of the search for an authentic self–one that enriches through allusions to Jewish, Christian, and pagan mythologies. Similarly, while it is often necessary to explicate particular allusions to Jewish ritual in order to appreciate individual episodes in the novels, the spiritual impulse which informs Wallant's vision ultimately transcends religion and creed. There is, perhaps, no surer indication of a writer's stature than this ability to fuse the particular and the general – to be distinctly "of his time" and for all time. Wallant's recurrent subject was man's capacity for spiritual regeneration, and he sounded it with increasing joy and authority throughout his brief literary career. (Galloway 10)

Without offering easy consolations, Wallant tried to demonstrate that transcending the hellish circles of human misery and evil is possible. He was fascinated by the intricacies of the human mind, which often oscillates on a slippery borderline between reason and madness. Deeply anchored in the historical specificity of the times he lived in, in the *hic et nunc* of post-war America, his prose is informed by the ambition to reach beyond the restricting categories of Jewish, American-Jewish or Holocaust literature. Its universal dimension locates Wallant in an entirely different context: as a writer he was, arguably, an American disciple of Fyodor Dostoevsky.

The Russian classic was probably one of the first authors of modern camp literature. Published in 1861, his *The House of the Dead* is a partly autobiographical,

partly fictional tale based on the experience of four years of exile with hard labor at a *katorga* prison camp in Omsk, Siberia, in which he expressed his morbid fascination with the "absolute darkness" of human nature; a nature, as was his conviction, impossible to be fully comprehended, and defying any rationalization. About ninety years later this type of literature, with the publication of camp books by Borowski, Herling-Grudziński, Levi and Wiesel, became a separate genre. Wallant, not a survivor himself, relates to this tradition in the external analepses of his novel. Even more tangible traces of an affinity between the Russian and the American writer can be identified if you take into consideration *Crime and Punishment*: the misery of the dwellers of a huge city, the stifling world of the "humiliated and insulted", the women compelled into prostitution, the thieves, the plan to kill a pawnbroker, and the ideology of a super-race or superhumans. When Ortiz asks himself "I don't owe that Sheeny nothin' really. What is he too me?" (Wallant 202) he emulates the reasoning of Raskolnikov before the murder of Alyona and Lizaveta.

By recognizing this link I do not mean that Wallant embarked on a most risky, if not foolhardy, task of writing an American version of *Crime and Punishment* (this had already been done in Richard Wright's *Native Son* in 1940). The correspondence of the above-mentioned elements in both novels is often rough and not exact, yet it is conspicuous enough to be mentioned briefly. The story of Raskolnikov exemplifies both the pathetic fall and the possibility of redemption through repentance, and *The Pawnbroker* sketches a picture of a man who, as a result of his Holocaust experience, is plunged into the depths of nihilism but manages to regain his integrity. While Dostoevsky mapped out the battleground for the contention between reason and (religious) morality, Wallant–resorting to secular terms–explored the forces of despair and hope. Both stories recognize a somewhat sinister correlation between the sophistication of the human mind and its ability to legitimize homicide; but neither stops at the threshold of pessimistic conclusions.

However, the most significant affinity between the texts lies yet elsewhere. It can be argued that Wallant, following in Dostoevsky's footsteps, intended to elevate the very concrete, atrocious experience of the Holocaust to the plane of a more universal reflection. As Ryszard Przybylski remarks, in *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky entered into a dispute with nineteenth century utopian socialism, driven–as it was–by the thought of Ludwig Feuerbach and his anthropotheistic claim *homo homini deus est*, and with Hegel's philosophy of history, according to which all the suffering caused by natural disasters, wars, or even by deliberate human cruelty finally lead to some positive values, e.g. the improvement of the quality of life and the progress of the human spirit (157,189). The

German philosopher's hinting at a teleological end to history's development, which was not only a means of accounting for the evil within it but also a justification (in certain cases) for transgressing all established rules and norms, can be detected in the reasoning of Rodion Raskolnikov: he believes that there are individuals destined to greatness and able to benefit humanity, and therefore their deeds, even if immoral, are beyond good and evil. Yet his act of cleansing the society of a "lousy" pawnbroker is not an epoch-making event but a murder–an atrocious consequence of the belief in one's exceptional status of a superhuman or semi-god. In a sense, the fate of Sol Nazerman shows that Dostoevsky's diagnoses and warnings were not exaggerated but almost prophetic. Seventy-three years after the publication of *Crime and Punishment* the policy of irredentism and *Lebensraum* and, most importantly, the belief in the existence of an Aryan race (superior to all other races) that possessed almost the whole German nation, effected a tragedy that shook the very foundations of Western civilization.

As Stanisław Lem notes in his critical comments on Dostoevsky's novels, at the most abstract level there can be distinguished two very general and at the same time the two most rudimentary modes of interpreting the complexity of the world around us: the "sociological" and the "ontological" (195). The former sees all human miseries and catastrophes, the multiplicity of philosophical doctrines and ideologies, the disharmonies and existential aporias that plague individuals, the tension between the cravings of the body and the cravings of the spirit, et cetera, as utterly and solely conditioned by the facts of social life. They all are, in other words, derivatives of particular systems that communities generate within themselves. From such a perspective, the depiction of suffering and injustice in literature, or in any other type of art, is tantamount to criticism of a certain social (dis)order that is held responsible for the *status quo*. The latter mode of interpretation, the "ontological" one, sees the source of values, contradictions and conflicts that govern human life in the very fact of "being". They are constituent parts of human existence; intrinsic and inseparable. Although given different expression in different historical epochs, they are not relative but constant.

It seems that both critical modes are a far cry from being mutually exclusive; on the contrary–they complement each other, working together toward a broad and more illuminating perspective on life. Literature that aims at reflecting both "existence conditioned by social factors" and "existence as such" is more likely to survive the test of time–this, above all else, is the ultimate benchmark for any piece of art. Paradoxically, the merit of *The Pawnbroker* becomes more prominent when the book is not considered as *merely* Holocaust fiction.

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Maria Ferenc Piotrowska

The Feelings of Survivors of the First Deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto

The aim of this article is to analyse the feelings of people who survived the first wave of deportations from the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, whose close relatives (parents, wives and husbands, children) were deported. I want to focus particularly on how people perceived themselves in relation to their family members who were deported to the Treblinka death camp, and how they judged themselves. The following analysis will focus on the feelings of shame and guilt that some of the authors mention in accounts. How did they describe those emotions? Why did they feel ashamed and guilty?

Sources and methods used

The sources used in the analysis presented in this paper are diaries and memoirs about the Warsaw ghetto that were written during the war or soon after the war. Some of the materials used remain unpublished. When using personal documents the issue of representation must be addressed. I want to stress that it is difficult to obtain an 'adequate representation' and to generalize the conclusions resulting from the analysis of a small sample of examples. Personal documents (accounts, diaries) are always produced in a certain social context, so the question of who was writing and why must be posed. We should keep in mind that members of the middle and upper classes are more inclined to write and produce personal documents in general, while the lower classes sometimes lack the social and cultural capital (i.e. time, energy or fluency in descriptive writing) to do so. On the other hand, personal documents allow us to understand and interpret the feelings or individual experiences described, as well as to analyze their representation in the narrative. It can also draw our attention to aspects omitted in the master narratives, which are often focused on facts, important events, as well as the actions of famous historical figures.

The aim of this paper is not to build generalizations, but rather to look closely at particular cases and arrive at a phenomenological representation of the conclusions. Such results are typical for usage in qualitative research as a research method. The conclusions are limited due to the fact that descriptions

of feelings such as shame and guilt appear only in some testimonies. Nevertheless, the descriptions cover different ways of coping with emotions, as well as complex attitudes to what was perceived as 'normative' by their authors. Some of the motives occur in several testimonies, so it can be presumed that at least some of the feelings expressed more universally after the deportation of families have been analysed here.

Definition of family

In my analysis I will use the working definition of family, focusing strongly on relationships between parents and children, and relationships between spouses. I consider them the most important family ties for my analysis. The family is considered to be a social group that gives people meaning and a sense of belonging, creates strong social bonds, provides emotional stability, and allows people to think of themselves in terms of group interest and group solidarity.

Theoretical background

Most sociologists agree that at least some emotions are socially constructed. The normativity of feeling, or *feeling rules* (Hochschild 552) are an important aspect of this social realm of emotions. Feeling rules make people shape their emotions according to social expectations (on what one should feel and how those feelings should be expressed). Theoreticians tend to categorize both shame and guilt as complex emotions that contain similar basic emotions (i.e. anger and sadness) but are structured differently (Turner and Stets 26). According to Turner and Stets (190), people feel guilty if they judge their own failure in moral categories. As Lewis puts it, guilt is more connected to a person's deeds, while shame touches upon the very essence of the person, her/his own self (31). Nevertheless, in this paper I will not draw strong lines between shame and guilt: sociologists tend to agree that they are similar to each other in their more basic emotional content. Sociologists interpret those emotions as an outcome of people's engagement in social rules that they feel obliged to observe (Turner and Stets 200). David Ausubel argues that guilt appears if a person realizes that her/his behaviour is not in accord with her/his rules or values (Pawlik 124). According to Scheff, shame is the most important *social* emotion – we are proud when we observe rules according to expectations, and we are ashamed if we break them. Pride and shame make people feel rewards and sanctions for their behaviour even if there is no external control (Pawlik 126).

Another theoretical point of reference for this analysis is literature dedicated to the phenomenon of survivor guilt, to which much literature on the psychological

consequences of the Holocaust has been devoted. The research proves that some survivors are haunted by irrational guilt – the feeling that they could have done more to save their families. Others feel that they live instead – or in place – of their loved ones who perished during the Shoah, and therefore they are in a way indebted to them (Engelking *Zagłada i pamięć* 217). Leys (6) argues that in recent research there has been a shift from guilt to shame, as the latter emotion better defines the condition of post-traumatic stress. Another issue is that the very word 'guilt' is loaded with judgement (Leys 7). According to Langer, the notion of survivor guilt also deflects blame from perpetrators onto victims (Langer 36). According to Leys, the notion of shame captures better the condition of survivors because it can be defined in anti-intentionalist terms (11). I argue that anti-intentionalism contributes significantly to our understanding of a survivor's emotions, regardless of whether we describe them as shame or guilt. Lifton differentiates between two kinds of guilt, the first being psychological guilt, a feeling of contempt for oneself, and the second – juridical or moral guilt, which is rooted in the rational judgement of a bad deed. Survivors suffer from the first kind of guilt ("The Concept of the Survivor" 117–130). Lifton and Olson also argue that survivor guilt results from the survivor's identification with the dead (48, 53). According to Engelking, survivor guilt can be understood as an expression of loyalty to the perished family, as well as an unwillingness to symbolically end the period of mourning and to forget about what happened. Survivor guilt originates in the fact that survivors feel that they escaped the common fate that was planned for all the Jews (*Zagłada i pamięć* 220).

It must be noted, however, that the feelings discussed in this paper must not be equated with the phenomenon of survivor guilt. The latter is experienced retrospectively, sometimes many years after the events experienced. The authors of the testimonies discussed here report that they experienced this kind of anxiety almost immediately, during the events, before they *survived*. Some of the authors of the testimonies discussed here survived the war (Simcha Binem Motyl, Stefania Staszewska), others did not (Abraham Lewin, Stanisław Sznapman, Emanuel Ringelblum), although they all survived the great deportation of 1942. Apart from that, their descriptions go beyond differentiation between shame and guilt as they did not always name the anxiety they wrote about.

Analysis

In this analysis I will use sources that relate to what is called the great deportation from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka death camp that started on July 22nd and ended on September 21st 1942. Firstly, there were many groups of

people exempt from deportation: people working for the Judenrat, the Jewish police, Jewish social institutions, and for so-called "szopy" – factories manufacturing for the Germans. Their families – children, husbands and wives (but not parents) – were also allowed to stay in the ghetto. However, gradually, Germans limited those groups, and more and more people were deported (the average for deportation was ca. 6000 people per day) (Engelking and Leociak 723–748). For the first weeks of the action people did not know where the trains were heading, but in August escapees from Treblinka reached Warsaw and recounted the tragic truth. From this moment on at least some people knew that the deportation meant death. This information gradually spread throughout the ghetto.

In my analysis I want to focus on those who were separated from their family members – those whose family members were taken to the Umschlagplatz without them, or who were trying to escape the deportation and stay in the ghetto. Some of those who stayed felt guilty or ashamed of not going with their families, of not dying with them. Why was it so?

Here, I also want to note that I deliberately omit the testimony of a Jewish policeman from Otwock, Calek Perechodnik, a man who repeatedly asked his wife, to whom his diary is addressed, "Anka, did you really forgive me?" (Perechodnik 265). Perechodnik's position was extremely complex. Some researchers (Bilewicz and Vollhardt 3) suggest that he occupied all the three roles of victim, perpetrator and bystander. One does not have to agree with them to argue that Perechodnik's position is different from those analyzed in this paper.

My point is not to make judgments but to look closely at descriptions of people's feelings in the face of the death of their closest ones and their own struggle to survive. I want to reflect on how this issue relates to the individual-collective tension. My further analysis is based on the interpretation of a few excerpts from diaries and memoirs, the authors of which described their feelings after their closest ones had been deported.

> We dragged ourselves forward, toward the gate [of Umschlagplatz] […] Suddenly Mother shook my arm [and said:] "Listen, child, if the Germans let you go and send me to the trains, don't come with me. You're young; you have to live. I'm already old, 40 years old and sick, but you have to live". Oh Mother, mother, why did you say those terrible words, why did you implant in me the thought of saving myself only?

wrote Stefania Staszewska in her memoir (qtd. in Grynberg). Staying with one's family to the very end seems to be for Staszewska something non-negotiable in moral terms, something that should not be put in question. This is why Staszewska found the thought of "saving herself only" so dreadful, something she would never even think of or voice herself if her mother had not done it for her. Once

she heard it from her mother, the thought was planted in her brain, but it still caused a painful conflict.

Barbara Engelking, in her text devoted to everyday life in the provincial ghettos of the Warsaw District ("Życie codzienne Żydów" 205–206), wrote that some parents begged their children to save themselves during the deportation. Parents gave meaning to their death by making it a sacrifice for the life of their family (so that at least one person from the family would survive). The behaviour of Staszewska's mother can be interpreted in a similar way.

Stanisław Sznapman gives a slightly different perspective on family relations during the deportation:

> Our psyche got poisoned. Our souls had been depraved. Our closest ones became a burden, an obstacle to us. We wanted to be alone, to escape the death and destruction more easily. We were like animals in the cage, before the slaughter, like castaways on the sinking ship. Everyone wanted only to find his or her path to survival. People lost their minds. Our despair had no limits. We lived in the constant fear of selections. We only thought about finding a shelter, a hiding place […] Many people went mad. We envied the dead.

he wrote (Sznapman). Sznapman described the state of mind of people who already knew that deportation meant destruction and death: they struggled desperately between instinct for self-preservation and love towards their closest ones. This quote expresses the tension that the Germans created: the opposition between moral and rational order. Rationality called for saving one's life at any cost, even if other members of the family would die (Engelking *Zagłada i pamięć* 210–212). Here, we can clearly observe the tragic tension between the individual and the collective, a struggle between the natural instinct for self-preservation and survival, and the love for one's family and one's need to share their fate. This tension can also be seen in Simcha Binem Motyl's description of his feelings after he discovered that his little daughter had been deported to Treblinka.

> I wondered: why am I still conscious? Why do I still care whether I die or not? Why do I try to save myself? Am I so egoistic and vain that I am still thinking about saving myself after my child, the dearest person in my life, perished? But this is how it was […] Only after I arrived home and informed my wife I felt a reaction. When I saw my wife sobbing, I burst into tears too. (130–131)

He felt torn between two contradictory instincts: love for others (which expresses group solidarity and instinct for group preservation), in this situation the love for his daughter, and love for oneself (which is the result of one's survival instinct and is expressed through avoidance of one's death) (Kępiński 54).

Contradictory instincts were in conflict, and Binem Motyl was no longer able to understand himself ('Why do I still care whether I die or not?') or the

motives that provoked his behaviour. In this fragment we can also observe the normative aspect of emotions – 'feeling rules': Binem Motyl burst into tears when he saw his wife doing so, and when he reconnected with the norms of behaviour prescribed for the situation. His wife reacted to the tragedy with auto-destructive behaviour that is often a part of the reaction to parting with a loved person. The depressive crisis enacts deep and complex feelings of anger, guilt and anxiety that cannot be soothed (di Nola 16).

Very deep and complex feelings of guilt were also described in the diary of Abraham Lewin after his beloved wife Luba was deported.

> Eclipse of the sun, universal blackness. My [wife] Luba was taken away during a blockade […] I have no words to describe my desolation. I ought to go after her, to die. But I have no strength to take such a step […] The Świeca family has perished. He gave himself up after seeing how his wife and two children were taken […]. I feel a great compassion and admiration for this straightforward person. Strong in mind as well as strong in body. I think that Luba would have done the same, but I didn't have enough strength to die with her, with the one I loved so much.

he wrote (Lewin 153–154, 179). Firstly, we must note that Lewin stayed in the ghetto with his and Luba's 15-year-old daughter, which was certainly an important factor in his decision not to follow his wife.

However, staying with the family till the very end seemed to Lewin to be an expression of spiritual strength. He described his own guilty feelings in clear contradistinction with the behaviour of others who had chosen to go with their families: he ascribed a bigger moral value to their behaviour. Moreover, he imagined that the person around whom his guilty feelings evolved – his wife – would have behaved differently from himself.

We are confronted with the very intimate perspective of a man who lost his wife, whom he deeply loved. "Only now do I understand the full meaning of the words of the Bible: *Thus a man leaves his father and his mother and goes unto his wife and they become of one body*", he noted on October 30, 1942 (Lewin 46). In his pain and despair he felt guilty for not dying with her; he was tortured with his own thoughts and fantasies about what could have happened, repeatedly returned to the subject of her death, and was haunted by his own mourning and grief, which sometimes took the form of guilty feelings.

Now, in reference to the motif present in Lewin's quote, I want to deepen my analysis of more general comments on people's behaviour in relation to their families during the deportation. I interpret feelings of guilt and shame as resulting from a conflict of values. The analysis of more general comments can help to reconstruct the social model that people felt they should aspire to.

"Mother wouldn't go without a child. Father wouldn't come without his wife. And then everyone went to the train. Because of children, hundreds of families went to Umschlagplatz", wrote Emmanuel Ringelblum. In this quote Ringelblum is making a general statement about families facing the deportation. People did not want to part with their children and spouses, so "everyone went to the train". Ringelblum was not judgemental of them. In fact, there was grief, resignation and hopelessness in what he wrote; yet, on the other hand, his statement seems quite general ("Because of children, hundreds of families went to Umschlagplatz").

> On August 6th an announcement was published on the ghetto streets that those who would present themselves voluntarily for deportation would not be separated from their families. The desire to stay with the dearest person till the very end was so strong in everyone, and the fear of separating was so great, that this announcement, which gave people a chance to go together towards death or redemption, caused an increased turnout on the Umschlagplatz. People started to come voluntarily.

wrote an anonymous woman in her memoir (Anonymous author). She also describes how much people wanted to stay with their families till the very end. Even the choice of words ("desire […] so strong", "fear […] so great"), loaded with emotions, is very significant here. The increased turnout at Umschlagplatz resulted from people's willingness to grasp any chance to stay with their families. This willingness would make them go together even towards death if only they were promised not to be separated. The author had a lot of sympathy for those who went to Umschlagplatz with their families–their decision seemed to her both natural and general ("the desire to stay with the dearest person till the very end was so strong in everyone").

In a similar context Staszewska stressed the fact that 'the choiceless choices' were nevertheless being judged at the time. He described a little child torn from the arms of its mother by a German soldier. She hesitated for a little while and then she turned away and left without her child. "We all sensed her pain and despair. But we could not forgive her. Unfortunately, there were many mothers and children like this" (qtd. in Grynberg 135–136). Staszewska and other witnesses of the scene judged the mother negatively; the extreme situation did not cease the process of evaluating others' behaviour. It must be underlined that ghetto inhabitants understood the tragic character of the choices that had to be made during the deportation. At the same time it did not stop them from judging and referring to moral norms. In this context, people who didn't go with loved ones to their death had to deal with their own guilt on one hand, and with negative evaluations of their behavior on the other.

The conflict of values that many of them felt is proof that values did not become flexible in the extreme situation. The problem was that pre-war values were not

applicable to the situation in which the inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto found themselves. Value systems were no longer consistent, and their contents started contradicting themselves. The core experience of those whose closest ones were to be deported was the feeling of being torn between protecting their own life and their love for others.

Conclusions

Feelings of shame and guilt are very specific and important emotions that also carry social meanings and are socially constructed. They often appear in confrontation with the death of close ones, and also in extreme situations in which saving one's life is put in opposition to one's feelings towards other people, as well as to the community values and norms that this person believes in. According to research on survivor feelings, guilt and shame often accompany those who survive, even many years after tragic events. Survivors cannot get rid of the idea that they live in place of somebody else. The point of this paper was to show how these feelings arise almost immediately after losing the object of love, and how these emotions turn out to be a destructive part of the mourning process.

My analysis of the accounts describing the great deportation of 1942 shows that the inhabitants of the ghetto wanted to stay with their families till the very end, even if they knew that deportation meant death. Family unity seemed to be one of the most important values in this community. Separation of the family caused suffering, and individualization of survival made people feel guilty because of breaking group solidarity with their closest ones. This led to a paradox: it was difficult to survive together and slightly easier alone, but those who survived were condemned to suffering because of feeling guilty towards their closest ones, with whom they identified. The confrontation with this paradox was deeply humiliating for those who did not go to their death with their families, and who had to acknowledge firstly that their survival would be a miracle.

My analysis can also serve as an example of the mental "grey zone" in which victims, deprived even of their absolute innocence (Levi 61), start to feel guilty as well. However, my understanding of the "grey zone" is broader than Levi's, and it includes victims' feelings that in order to survive they have to accept the fact that they will survive by themselves, without their families, and that their survival instinct will win over their love for other people and the values of family unity and solidarity. Sometime before the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto started, Janusz Korczak wrote in his diary: 'After the war, for a long time people will not be able to look in each other's eyes in order not to see the silent question: *How come you survived, you are still alive? What did you do?'* (Korczak 92).

This question captures the horror of pulling the victims inside the mechanism of destruction, burdening them with the felling of guilt for merely surviving.

I want to avoid suggesting that those situations resulted from the victims' choice. I would instead stress the fact that people tend to blame themselves when they feel that their situation is not in accord with their internalized values, even if it was not the result of their own decisions. Those who lost their families during the deportations felt grief and mourning, and wondered endlessly if they could have done anything more to save their loved ones, and this recurring thought made them feel guilty. But there were no good choices in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942. The situation was beyond the control of the Jewish inhabitants of the ghetto who were doomed to be deported. Thus, we can only speak of "choiceless choices" rather than of actual choices, or forced decisions in a situation of extremely limited agency (Langer 36).

A short quote from Yitzkhok Katzenelson's "The Day of My Great Disaster" captures best this complex paradox of feeling guilty that is disconnected from being actually guilty: "One call and I come, just a call… /I beg, not being guilty, forgive" (Katzenelson).

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Ewelina Feldman-Kołodziejuk

The Mother-Daughter Dyad in Bożena Keff's *On Mother and the Fatherland*

In a poignant farewell scene from Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* the character of Augustine's sister – Lista – poses a question which is crucial to the understanding of the post-Holocaust experience and literature, namely: "Is the war over?" (193) This query of manifold interpretations among many implies the impossibility of total liberation from war experiences. It echoes Alvin Rosenfeld's apprehension, contained in his essay "Primo Levi: The Survivor as Victim", that "Levi's violent end raises once again the possibility that the Nazi crimes might continue to claim victims decades after Nazism itself had been defeated" (187). The psychological burden of personal torture, the experience of collective persecution, the witnessing of Nazi atrocities, as well as the act of surviving made the post war life of many a Jew a constant agony, frequently resulting in suicide (Rosenfeld 187). Therefore, for the children of Holocaust survivor parents like Art Spiegelman, whose *Maus* was a pivotal point of reference for *On Mother and the Fatherland,* and for Bożena Keff, the war will never be over. The trauma of War World II left their parents marred, and even though they made an effort to progress with their lives – i.e. have families and bear children – the specter of the Holocaust constantly loomed at the back of their heads, thus, indirectly affecting the lives of their offspring. The author herself confirms the autobiographical nature of the text under consideration: "I am not denying that my mother was the template here, and some passages are a close record of her speech" (qtd. in Bryś 31). The objective of this article is to investigate how the mother's experience of the Holocaust may have overshadowed and hindered the formation of a congenial mother-daughter relationship.

One obstacle, however, needs to be singled out at the outset, namely, that though *On Mother and the Fatherland* is an autobiographical tale in nature, in the process of writing it definitely evolved into a universal narrative. Accordingly, in the case of certain passages of the discussed book the experience of the Holocaust may be read as a broad metaphor for a traumatic experience per se, rather than the actual aftermath of the Shoah. On one hand, *On Mother and the Fatherland* directly stemmed from the need to convert second-generation Holocaust trauma into a liberating literary experience, inspired to a great extent by the aforementioned *Maus*, for as Keff (Bielas 2) confesses, these are the children of those who survived – like

Spiegelman and herself – that are most gagged. On the other hand, the author wished to avoid the trap her own mother had fallen into, that is, locking herself up in a private tale. It must be emphasized that she successfully managed to universalize her private mother-daughter relationship by featuring the moments and events generally recognized as decisive but irksome or dramatic for the mother-daughter dyad: adolescence, choosing a career, getting married and having children, among many. Ergo "the monster text", as Keff described *On Mother and the Fatherland* (Bielas 2), reads like a tale of power politics between a parent and a child in general, and the author herself acknowledges that aspect of the book:

> I think that with this text I unintentionally tapped into a great, and now ripe need in Poland to express the experience of being a daughter. And of being a child – the experience of submission, muteness, the unheeded protest which gives rise to aggression. (qtd. in Bryś 35)

Thus, Keff herself sets her "poetically organized" text in a broader context. And though the primary narrative is the account of a fraught relationship between a Polish Jew and her born-after-war daughter, *On Mother and the Fatherland* may be interpreted as a more universal narrative.

The two central characters are dubbed Meter and Usia to denote the mother and daughter, respectively. The choice of these terms of reference indubitably sets the narrative in the framework of the Greek myth of Demeter and Kore-Persephone. Usia is a diminutive form of the Polish Kora – with Korusia as an intermediate term – whereas Meter, deriving from Demeter, in Greek literally means 'a mother'. Reducing the names of the characters to their family roles – that of a parent and her child – emphasizes the archetypal nature of this relationship. Meter and Usia do not develop an individual relationship; they instead enact the roles predefined by the aforementioned myth. In the light of Jungian thought it is not surprising at all that the mother should turn to the myth for a pattern of behavior. Carl Gustav Jung observed that archetypes tend to emerge in critical situations. When individuals know of no available scenario they could employ at times of crisis, they turn to the collective unconscious for ready-made solutions (Prokopiuk 21). In the case of Meter, the crisis did not only stem from the actual atrocities of the Holocaust, but it was additionally aggravated by the sociopolitical situation in post-war Poland (Engelking et al. 175–186). Aware of the burden of being branded a Polish Jew, Meter opts for a new, safer identity, that of a mother.

> **Chór**
> *Oi moi oi moi*
> z pustego w próżne
> porodziła dziecko.

Narratorka
Aby mieć rodzinę, aby nie być samą,
dziecko jest zawsze swojej Matki Dzieckiem,
matka zaś jest MATKĄ. Będąc Matką
kobieta nie zgubi się w świecie
i zyska jakąś tożsamość.

Chorus
Oi moi oi moi
from the empty into the void
she bore a child.

Narrator
To have a family, not to be alone,
a child is always its Mother's Child,
and a mother is the Mother. Being the Mother
a woman will not lose herself in the world
and will gain some identity. (Keff 9–10, Trans. EFK)[1]

Reducing her identity to motherhood, Meter becomes possessed by the archetype of the Great Mother in general, and by the Demeter complex in particular. In *Psychology of Greek Myths* Zenon Waldemar Dudek observes that women suffering from the Demeter complex are so focused on their motherhood that it constitutes all of their identity and sense of life (85). Moreover, they perceive reality through the maternal paradigm. The most significant features of the Demeter complex are possessiveness and reluctance or even resistance to change. In *The Great Mother* Erich Neumann distinguishes two primeval characters of the feminine: the elementary character and the transformative character (24). For the wholesome development of an individual their mother should be capable of alternating between these two primary characters – starting with the elementary one, which manifests itself through catering to a baby's physiological and psychological needs, and slowly moving away from this early union of a mother and child towards greater autonomy in order to facilitate the child's individuation process. However, mothers in love with their motherhood wish to retain the first union between the mother and the infant – when the baby's identity has not yet fully emerged and it still sees its mother as part of him or herself. And that is the very

1 At the moment of submitting this article, *Utwór o Matce i Ojczyźnie* has not yet been translated into English. In private correspondence with the author of the book under consideration, Bożena Keff, I have been informed that the English translation is in progress. Therefore, all the excerpts from *On Mother and the Fatherland* included in this paper are my own translations.

case of Meter, who talks of Usia as if she were her bodily extension: "she likes to admire her produce/her own flesh, just on the outside" (Keff 36). In the light of this quote it can be argued that though the Mother has given birth to Usia, thus moving her from the inside of her womb to the outside world, she has never cut the umbilical cord, hoping to keep her daughter fully dependent on her.

Simultaneously, the aforementioned quote may also indicate another problem, namely, Usia's protest against being reduced to "fifty kilograms of first class meat and offal, too" (Keff 36). Her innermost desire is that Meter should take a human interest in her and finally ask how she is. (Keff 47). But as Maria Janion and Izabela Filipiak observe, the Mother's incapability to perceive Usia as a person endowed with an intellect and emotional life may stem directly from the trauma of the Holocaust, when she herself was reduced to a mere body (89–90). Transported in cattle cars, accommodated in the most dehumanizing conditions of concentration camps, and slaughtered on a mass scale, the Holocaust victims were stripped of their humanity, which the author accounts for in the following words: "this was the Jewish demise that was less than human" (Bryś 33). Unsurprisingly then, their primary goals were to stay alive and survive the war, which literally meant maintaining bodily functions despite torture, starvation and widespread disease. *On Mother and the Fatherland* is permeated with bodily references such as blood, entrails, viscera, cadaver or flesh, among many, which effectively foregrounds the barbarity of the Holocaust. As some critics point out, as a consequence of war trauma the Mother suffers from logorrhea, which is supposed to mask her internal havoc (Gajewska and Lisek 177). While Usia perceives this never-ending monologue as an act of verbal rape of her personal space or an attempt at self-glorification through martyrdom, for Meter it is not a matter of choice; it is an internal imperative. Silence is tantamount to annihilation; I reminisce, therefore I am. Through her compulsion to incessantly refer to her war experiences, Meter may inadvertently be guarding the collective memory of the Final Solution. Most likely it is the very mechanism about which Werner Weinberg writes: "There are wounds that defy healing, and the reason is that they must not be allowed to heal" (Rosenfeld 193).

Matka szarpie swoją historię
za skórę, za flaki, zanurza rękę w trzewiach padliny,
nigdy nie wiadomo co wyciągnie,
tyfus, wostocznyje obłasti, głód w Wołgogradzie, getto we Lwowie

The Mother jerks her story
by the skin, by the viscera, submerges her hand in the entrails of the carrion
you never know what she will pull out
typhoid, Vostochnyy Oblast, starvation in Volgograd, the ghetto in Lviv (Keff 39)

Stuck in a time warp, ceaselessly commemorating, or rather scratching open, her war wounds, the mother reduces her daughter to an *Ear*, whose primary function is to listen and to save her parent from solitude, as well as from the ghosts of the past. However, this behaviour has nothing to do with sustaining intergenerational memory. On the contrary, claiming a monopoly on suffering and history, Meter excludes her daughter Usia from participating in the transgenerational Holocaust trauma for it all happened to the mother, and the daughter has nothing to do with it. The author herself acknowledges the autobiographical nature of that trait:

> I sensed that my mother awarded herself the right to attention, for she had the right to a history, narrative, misfortune, and tragedy. But I have no history or narrative, and my emotions are completely subordinate to hers. (qtd. in Bryś 31)

Because Usia was born after the war she would never be her Mother's equal, for her life would never be as tragic as her parent's. Yet, she is forced to listen to Meter's war narrative day by day till her home turns into a museum of the Shoah, inhabited by dead relatives as well as late historic figures (Gajewska and Lisek 178).

> **Meter**
> *Teraz, kiedy Hitler, który mi wymordował rodzinę*
> *I Stalin, oby go piekło pochłonęło, nie żyją*
> *Tylko ty mi zostałaś, moje dziecko*
> *Z bliskich.*
>
> **Meter**
> *Now, when Hitler, who murdered my family*
> *And Stalin, may he rot in hell, are dead*
> *You, my child, are only left*
> *Of the closest ones* (Keff 59)

The intended ambiguity of the text, including Hitler and Stalin in the realm of the closest ones, emphasizes the absurdity of Meter's way of thinking, namely that anything that happened after the Shoah is of little or no importance, neither her own present life nor the life of her daughter. In her fixation on the past Meter enacts another vital role in the myth of Demeter and Kore, that of Hecate, who is believed to be the governess of liminal regions, and this is the exact term Usia uses at one point in the narrative to address her mother and display her scant approval of Meter's deeds (Keff 61). In the Greek myth Hecate was the one to whom Demeter went looking for advice when she discovered the disappearance of Kore, for as a three-faced goddess Hecate knew and saw more than others. She was also the one who accompanied Kore in her journey to and from the Underworld.

However, some scholars portray Hecate primarily as a chthonic deity who wreaks vengeance or imposes a penance (Stankiewicz 157). In order to facilitate revenge, as the guardian of the subterranean world watching its threshold she could allow the dead with unresolved conflicts to return to the world of the living. Though Meter is not possessed by any particular *dybbuk*, her psyche constantly evokes the ghosts of late relatives. On one hand, this may be a psychological attempt at keeping them alive through sustaining their memory. However, on the other hand, she might be haunted by the feeling of guilt not uncommon among Holocaust survivors (Engelking et al. 176). What seems to be the most harrowing recollection of all is the day Meter last saw her own mother.

Usia
A więc dziś w tym miejscu Pisma Oralnego jesteśmy,
tam gdzie ona opuściła matkę, żeby się ratować.
Zważ dobrowolny przechodniu ten moment
znaczący –

Usia
So here we are today at the place of Oral Writing
where she left her mother to save herself
Mark benevolent passer-by this moment
significant – (Keff 15)

The fact that sheds additional light on the gravity of this reminiscence is that for 5 decades Keff's mother had no knowledge of her family's plight. It was not until the 1990s, when Russian and Ukrainian war archives could be accessed, that she found out that all the family members she had left behind had been executed in the forest soon after the German invasion of Ukraine. Consequently, for nearly 40 years Usia had been forced to listen to the perpetual lament of Meter, who kept speculating about what could have become of her mother and siblings. Unimaginable as the experience was, it was unfortunately shared by thousands of other war survivors. For decades knowledge of certain Jewish executions was discredited as rumor, for there were no archives or written records of these events. As Alina Cała points out, though oral history gained legitimacy in the United States in the 80s, Poles still seem to undermine its credibility, as the case of Gross's *Neighbors* proved (qtd. in Surmiak-Domańska 15). Hence, alluding to Oral Writing, Keff may either want to emphasize the importance of war narratives that for different reasons remained off the record, or she may also be referring to the long-standing tradition of preserving national, cultural or family identity through storytelling.

In *The Psychological Aspects of the Kore*, arguing that "Every Mother contains her daughter in herself and every daughter her mother and every mother extends backwards into her mother and forwards into her daughter", Jung accentuates

the psychological aspects of matrilineage, which may be interpreted as inter-generational memory (58). In the case of Meter, though she lives in the shadow of her late mother, and simultaneously stretches her tentacles towards her daughter seeking salvation from the dead, she, paradoxically, disentitles Usia to her matriline, which is manifested in the following passage:

– Mówisz więc o mojej babce – powiada Usia – mówisz o ciotce mojej.
– Babka? – powtarza Meter, czyś się szaleju objadła? Co ci herosi, dziecko,
mieli z tobą wspólnego? Ta historia mnie się przydarzyła.
Ja sama musiałam to przeżyć.
Ty z Niczym nie masz Niczego Wspólnego.

– So, you are talking about my grandmother – says Usia – talking about my aunt.
– Grandmother? – Meter repeats – are you crazy? What did these heroes, child,
have anything to do with you? This story happened to me.
I had to live it.
You have Nothing to do with Anything. (Keff 42)

One of the reasons for Usia's exclusion from the Holocaust experience, and probably the most crucial one, is explained by the author herself: "My actual mother or the Mother from [*On Mother and the Fatherland*] bars access to history for various reasons, including the fact that she wants to defend the Daughter from the cruelty of the past" (Bryś 31). Because this defense mechanism is an automatic unconscious reaction rather than a deliberately employed strategy, Meter is unaware of the fact that Usia interprets this exclusion as an act of egotism rather than protection. Viewing the world as a threatening place that jeopardizes the well-being of the child is a common characteristic of the Demeter constellation. Such mothers believe their offspring should be protected at all costs, including through death, since an extreme case of the complex is extended suicide (Dudek 90–91).

Nevertheless, mothers possessed by the archetypal figure of the Great Mother are generally harmless at the early stages of a child's development, when they can still enact their role of a nurturer, but they may become destructive the moment their child strives for an identity of their own. Demeter-like mothers perceive the natural process of a child's individuation in terms of a coup d'etat against their maternal authority, for the power of the mother is in direct proportion to the child's submission.

[Matka]
permanentnie produkuje dziecko w dziecku, by ono produkowało w niej matkę,
by Matka nie traciła dobytku i władzy. Dziecko jest tanią siłą roboczą
z krajów nierozgarniętych umysłowo i uczuciowo
i stale reprodukuje zasięg jej władzy.

[Mother]
permanently produces a child in the child so that it would produce a mother in her
lest the Mother loses her possessions and power. The child is cheap labour force
from the countries mentally and emotionally undiscerning
and it constantly reproduces the scope of her reign. (Keff 65–66)

Since Meter seems incapable of separating from her daughter and refuses to recognize the adult woman in her, Usia must psychologically reject her parent in order to live a life of her own. Like Kore, Usia also abandons her Mother for a man. Nonetheless, her primary motivation is a desire to run away from Meter rather than a romantic feeling. This, as Jung indicates, is typical of a daughter with the negative mother complex, whose patterns of behavior are shaped predominantly in opposition to that of the mother (22). "This complex is seen to result in marital difficulties, indifference to family-based societal organizations, and sometimes an extreme intellectual development" (Rothgeb 49). All of these are true of Usia, who desires divorce, has a dire problem with the anti-Semitic Fatherland, and chooses to be a poet. Her intellectual development and activity spring from the need to have a realm to which the Mother would not have access. Usia repeatedly underlines the fact that she reads and watches different things from her mother. Jung elucidates that the daughter's compulsion for intellectual progress is grounded in the desire to destroy the mother's power with the use of intellectual critique and knowledge in order to reveal all of her follies, errors in reasoning and educational deficiencies (23). This is particularly conspicuous in the passages when the author, disguised as Usia, talks of the nature of motherhood in relation to patriarchy and matriarchy, engaging in a discourse typical of a scholar. Privately, Bożena Keff is a lecturer in Gender Studies and a shrewd feminist activist; therefore, to some extent, *On Mother and the Fatherland* is also a form of a manifesto of an enslaved daughter, not only by her actual mother, but also by the sociopolitical system and culture.

Nevertheless, despite the Daughter's endeavors to break free from maternal oppression, escape is beyond the bounds of possibility. Having suffered from the empty nest syndrome, a common feature of the mother complex, Meter resolves to reclaim her daughter. She turns to emotional blackmail, evoking stories of maternal martyrdom and personal sacrifice.

Narratorka
Ach, ty!!! – szczeka – Przez ciebie!!
wyszłam za mąż za tego łajdaka,
Bo tobie!! chciałam dać ojca!! Teraz mnie opuścił, znalazł młodszą sobie!
Więc ty będziesz moim mężem, moją matką-ojcem,
bo to było dla ciebie przez ciebie z twojego powodu!

A ty nie jesteś nawet dość rodzinna, żeby to zrozumieć,
żeby rozumieć jakie wobec matki ma się obowiązki!
Z szuflady kuchni trzask! łup! Wyciągała nóż by się przebić,
żeby się zabić przez to dziecko złe, winne wszystkiemu.
By nad trupem matki było jeszcze bardziej winne,
na popiół roztarte!

Narrator
Oh, you!!! – she barks – Because of you!!
I married that bastard
Because to you!! I wanted to give a father!! Now he left me, found a younger one!
So you will be my husband, my mother-father
as it was for you through you and because of you !
And you are too little of a family person to understand it
to understand what duties one has to one's mother!
Out of the kitchen drawer crash! bang! She would pull a knife to stab herself
to kill herself because of that evil child, guilty of everything.
So that over its mother's corpse it would be even more guilty,
pounded to ash! (Keff 23–24)

When emotionally blackmailing Usia into staying with her mother does not bring about the desired effects, Meter intrudes on the privacy of her daughter's new family home. Asked how long she is planning on staying, the Mother exclaims to her offspring "You're like Adolf Hitler, who also changed my life into the steppes of solitude" (Keff 27). The blatant inadequacy of that comparison, let alone the psychological brunt the daughter bears, once more points to the mother's inconsistency. On one hand, she repeatedly bars her daughter from the Holocaust experience, while on the other, insulting Usia with the harshest invective for a Jew, Meter draws her into the very experience.

The only moments when the Mother and the Daughter come to terms with each other are those spent in front of the TV watching the news of yet another monument to a Polish nationalist figure, Roman Dmowski, being erected. Keff expounds this in the following words: "The Mother and the Daughter are locked in a conflict, yet they are able to sense the external forces squeezing them into a single category; they know that out there they'll be 'dirty Jews' – end of story" (qtd. in Bryś 34). Victimhood is the only common ground the mother and daughter share in the face of anti-Semitism, but victimhood is also the dynamic in their personal relationship. Possessed by the Demeter complex, which either overlaps or stems from the war trauma, Meter constantly places her daughter in the position of a victim, a position of total submission and muteness. In an interview, Keff elucidates: "The Mother completely fails to comprehend any other aspect of closeness. For her, only another victim can be someone close" (qtd in Bryś

31). And though Usia generally seems to be rejecting or contradicting Meter, her life choices are markedly dependent on that mother-daughter relationship. Even when the daughter starts a family of her own, her primary motivation is to escape the family home and the tyranny of her mother (Keff 26). As Nancy Chodorow elucidates: "The mother is very important in the daughter's psyche and sense of self, such that core psychological and interpersonal experiences for women can be understood in terms of this internal mother-daughter lineage" (viii). And though at a certain point in life Usia openly confronts and defies her mother, only to hear that if she does not like her she should kill her (Keff 56), all in all, the daughter seems to be empathetic towards her mother. At a deeper level, she fully comprehends Meter's anguish and bitterness, for they both share the experience of being the Other, of being a Polish Jew. One cannot exclude the possibility that it was the private war narrative of her mother that pushed Bożena Keff towards research on the roots of anti-Semitism, resulting in such works as *Postać z Cieniem* [Character with the Shadow] and *Antysemityzm. Niezamknięta historia* [Anti-Semitism. Unclosed History].

Concluding, unable to free herself from the war trauma, Keff's mother reduced her own and her daughter's lives to the commemoration of war wounds, while by locking herself in the safest of all the known identities available to her, namely that of a mother, she became possessed by the archetype of the Great Mother. This inevitably resulted in the daughter's depression, which required professional advice. It was the psychotherapy, which coincided with Keff's first reading of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, that gave her the idea she might free herself from her mother and her own second-generation Holocaust experience through writing. Keff's suffering from post-Holocaust trauma is evident from page one of *On Mother and the Fatherland*, as the book opens with a dream scene in which the writer stands at a railway station holding a bloody tatter which, though resembling a child, is not one. The author feels that this bundle, which keeps wriggling and yelling, needs to be protected, and for some inexplicable reason she knows it is something she will never be able to dispose of. The word "trauma", taken from German, literally means "a dream", and it may be argued that in the case of the second generation of Holocaust survivors the psychological burden of indirect war experience frequently manifests itself through the unconscious, taking up forms which are often too vague or intangible to confront, and which are eventually converted into recurring and unsettling oneiric visions. Nevertheless, *On Mother and the Fatherland* is a successful and powerful endeavor at liberation from personal trauma via literature. The book's ingenuity, however, partly stems from Keff's conscious effort to universalize her private tale, thus making it more accessible and intelligible to a wider public. Though the reduction of the two

central characters to the mythical figures of Demeter and Kore may be seen by many a critic and reader alike as a trivialization of post-Holocaust trauma, it is the writer herself who resolves to employ that device. Like Art Spiegelman, whose *Maus* transgressed many social and literary conventions through, for instance, the use of a comic strip and animal imagery, Bożena Keff also violated many taboos with her *On Mother and the Fatherland*. It is one of very few works – if not the only Polish literary text – to boldly explore a number of difficult themes, such as the nature of motherhood and its critique, the trauma of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, and the sense of national identity. Most importantly, however, it is a very daring attempt at describing the anguishing experience of being the daughter of an oppressive mother. Though in the case of Keff's narrative the Mother's tyrannical nature most likely has its roots in her war experiences, the text can easily be read as a universal tale of mothers possessed by the archetype of the Great Mother.

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Justyna Sierakowska

A Quest for Jewish Identity in Contemporary Poland: Agata Tuszyńska's Family History

A Family History of Fear[1] by Agata Tuszyńska is an emotional story written in order to come to terms with a double, Jewish-Polish legacy. Published in 2005, the book became a bestseller; not only did it receive positive reviews, but it was also nominated for the Prix Medicis.

According to many critics, Tuszyńska's narrative book is one of the most important testimonies of the Jewish-Polish experience after World War II (Wróbel). This combination of biography, family saga and confession is a rare example of personal non-fiction in Polish literature, where "there are still very few literary works of that kind"[2] (Sitek). Ryszard Kapuściński praised the author for her courage in writing an important chapter in the story of Polish-Jewish relations, and for her thoughtful reflection on the problem of the Otherness (Rev. of). Reviewers complimented "the innovative structural approach" (Radgowski), "honesty" (Dobrołęcki) and its "effort to present the complex truth about pre- and post-war interconnections between Jews and Poles" (Bratkowski).

The book met with an enthusiastic reception from readers, and Tuszyńska received hundreds of positive e-mails and letters. Certainly, such a response is a sign of the emotional weight and importance of the subject. The painful past of Polish-Jewish families has still not been worked through; the traumatic experience of anti-Semitism has prevented many from admitting their Jewish roots. Although the book reconstructs the history of one particular family, there are many more similar stories in contemporary Polish literature.

A Family History of Fear begins with the uncovering of a secret that has life-changing repercussions: at the age of nineteen the author's mother reveals to her that they are Jewish. The book is a record of the gradual discovery of and acceptance of Jewish-Polish identity:

1 The book, translated by Antonia Lloyd-James, is being prepared for publication in the US. Fragments of that translation are published on Tuszynska's page http://www.agatatuszynska.com.

2 The fragments of press reviews quoted within the text are translated by J. S.

> This book has been inside me for years, like this secret, ever since I found out that I'm not who I thought I was – from the moment my mother decided to tell me she's a Jew. (Tuszyńska 2)[3]

For several years Tuszyńska was not ready to emotionally accept the truth: "I didn't immediately understand the meaning of [my mother's] words, or their consequences." Thus, the discovery is followed by a period of a "schizophrenic split", the inability to accept what she calls the "terrible truth." At least ten years passed before she was able to "begin to assimilate the idea, and several more before [she] was able to do something about it." Eventually, in her thirties, Agata Tuszyńska, by then an established writer[4] of historical non-fiction, decided to write the history of her family.

The author is determined to define her identity. Is she a Pole like her father, Bogdan Tuszyński, a famous sports journalist in the era of communist Poland, brought up in a family of Polish Catholics and railway workers in Łódź? Like him, she has fair hair and blue eyes; her paternal grandfather was an officer in the Polish Army, and a large part of the family helped in raising Warsaw from the ruins. Or is she a Jew like her mother, Halina Przedborska, a journalist, raised in a family of assimilated Jewish intelligentsia? Is she a Jew since her ancestors had Hebrew names, and her three great-grandparents, grandmother, as well as other distant relatives died in the Holocaust?

The author spends four years investigating the past of her family. The book is an attempt to create both a personal and a familial story anew. The motto, "that what is not described, does not exist", inspires her to reconstruct the life-stories of her father, mother, aunts, uncles, grandparents and great-grandparents. Analyzing her family tree, listing family affinities and finding out the names of streets, she follows the traces of her ancestors.

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3 All quotes from *A Family History of Fear* are translated by Antonia Lloyd-James, with the exception of the quote on p. 11.

4 Agata Tuszyńska (born 1957) is a biographer, reporter, and poet, who has won the Polish PEN Club Ksawery Pruszynski Prize. Among her most acclaimed works is a biography of Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Landscapes of Memory* (1994). She also edited the memoirs of, Irena Krzywicka, *Confessions of a Scandalous Woman* (1999), and the story of her struggle with her husband's cancer is the subject of *Exercises of Los*s (2007). The most controversial work in her literary production is *The Accused: Vera Gran* (2010), the story of a singer from the Warsaw Ghetto accused of collaborating with the Germans.

Desperate for the tiniest fragments of the past, the author travels around Poland to Łęczyca, Łochów, Otwock, Kalisz and Łódź, searching for birth certificates, photographs and shattered tombstones. Tuszyńska discovers facts and collects memories of pre-war, wartime and post-war Poland. Some of her Jewish ancestors perished as victims of the Holocaust, some of them were miraculously saved. Among Polish members of her family she finds both anti-Semites and Poles who saved Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto.

The author does not present a version of Polish-Jewish history in black and white; on the contrary, she exposes herself and the weakness and fears of her loved ones. Piotr Bratkowski argues that "[t]he thing that makes Tuszyńska's biography an outstanding book … lies in its non-obvious character" (Bratkowski).

After the war, several of the author's family members became enthusiasts of the Polish People's Republic and were prominent members of the Communist Party. For example, her Jewish grandfather wholeheartedly supported the communist ideology and experienced severe depression after Poland regained freedom in 1989; her cousin was a popular television journalist who was expelled from Poland in 1968, the year of the anti-Semitic campaign.

Furthermore *A Family History of Fear* examines the roots of Jewish-Polish antagonism. There is a focus on both pre-war and post-war Poland. After the tragedy of the Holocaust many people forgot that

> the crisis of Jewish Polish identity began in Poland long before Hitler … several million people lived here according to a completely different cultural pattern; they frequently did not feel a part of the larger Polish community; sometimes they were even two antagonistic groups. (Bratkowski)

During her investigation Tuszynska encounters anti-Semites not only among the people she meets, but also in her own family. Her father, although married to a Jew, accuses Jews of ruining his career. Her Polish uncle, Oleś, who saved several people from the Warsaw Ghetto, believes that Jews were partially responsible for the communist regime in Poland. The author herself, for many years, does not want to be identified as a Jew; she resigns from participation in an international conference, where her Jewish cousin is expected to appear. Also, her mother does not want anyone to connect her with Jewry; in 1968, she refuses to help a cousin who decided to emigrate from Poland to Israel.

The author creates a report from the search for the truth. The story is built on two levels: the first is the past life of her family, and the second is her personal search for understanding. Kapuściński compares this to a reporter's journey, whose aim is to answer the question about the relationship between the past, memory, and individual consciousness.

Moreover, it is a journey in space and time, called by the author the "journey into the past." The themes of self-discovery and forbidden truth allow us to read Tuszynska's experience in a metaphorical way. Her story resembles the mythical hero's journey as identified by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). The search for Polish-Jewish identity becomes both an archetypical quest into an unknown world and an attempt to gain knowledge and insight. Its structure reflects the narrative pattern of the Hero's Journey.

The employment of the archetypal myth to explain Tuszyńska's search for her Jewish roots does not have as its aim a diminishing of the tragic uniqueness of the unprecedented historical events of the Holocaust. On the contrary, it should be emphasized that the experience of the Holocaust and the Second Generation is so unique that finding a means to communicate it is extremely difficult (which Tuszyńska herself underlines). The enormity and horror of the Holocaust leads to the impossibility of describing it. For years the writer was not able to speak about her family past; the trauma also impacts the children of Holocaust survivors.

The structure of the Hero's Journey serves here only as a vehicle to communicate the experience. Tuszyńska's life's journey is expressed through the narrative pattern that reflects the mythical Hero's Journey. This scheme functions as a kind of a matrix that helps to systematize and express the unique life-story of the Second Generation.

Whether Tuszyńska uses this plot structure consciously (recently the mythic structure has become an inspiration for writers and screenwriters;[5] also creative writing handbooks and courses encourage future authors of memoirs to perceive their lives through Campbellian lenses) or unconsciously (according to the Jungian view people have used this narrative plot since the dawn of history because the collective subconscious is structured that way) remains unknown. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Joseph Campbell argued that "the most important truths of our lives are on the invisible plane of the myth" (Rainer 175).

The Hero's Journey is a universal story structure first identified by Joseph Campbell. Studies in comparative mythology inspired him to recognize a common thread within stories existing in diverse cultures. Campbell's structure charts the story of an individual who leaves home and embarks on a quest to the unknown world. During the journey the hero is tested by ordeals, goes through

5 See: Christopher Vogler. 2007. *The Writers' Journey. Mythic Structures for Writers*. Studio City: Micheal Wiese Productions.

a period of hopelessness, and is aided by real or supernatural beings. Eventually, the protagonist returns triumphant and with a boon to help their community.

Campbell describes seventeen stages[6] along such an archetypical quest. Nevertheless, very few myths contain all the identified elements. Some contain only a few; others may focus on only one of the stages, or deal with the stages in a different order. These phases may be organized into three sections: Departure, Initiation and Return.

In the interpretation inspired by Campbell's theory, Tuszyńska becomes an archetypical hero. Traditionally, the Hero's Journey has been viewed as a masculine narrative structure; nevertheless, it has also been applied to real life and fairytale heroines. Maureen McCormack argues that the heroine's journey, in contrast to the linear quest of a male hero, is "a continuous cycle of development, growth and learning" (4). However, since the journey in search of the hidden Jewish past does not seem to possess significant gender-related aspects, I will follow the classic version of the Hero's Journey; I will also refer to the protagonist as the 'hero.'

The hero is at first inexperienced and naïve; however, after undergoing a series of difficult trials, gains understanding and knowledge. The elements of Tuszyńska's journey repeat the pattern of the mythical Hero's Journey. She discovers the truth about places and people, meets allies as well as enemies, trespasses thresholds, and experiences events that profoundly change her. After delving into the unknown world, she learns the truth, and then returns with the boon.

At the beginning the hero lives in a mundane situation of normality (in the book it is the description of her childhood in the Communist Poland of the 60's). In the myth, a parental figure might be a herald that gives the heroine a reason to rethink what she knows. Tuszyńska's mother reveals the secret that is a call to confront the unknown past of her Jewish family.

In the stage called the Call to Adventure, the hero is given a task which only he can complete; he is faced with a choice to accept or refuse the quest. Often, the next phase of the journey is Refusal of the Call. The hero dismisses the calling because he must gather courage to face the long journey. Likewise, for many years Tuszyńska refuses to acknowledge the fact that she is Jewish:

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6 Campbell formulates seventeen stages of the Hero's Journey: The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the Fist Threshold, Belly of the Whale, The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, The Ultimate Boon, Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the return Threshold, Master of Two Worlds, Freedom to Live.

> Years must have gone by before I found the strength to take this information on board, before I let it get through to my consciousness, which had been defending itself against it. I needed time to take it in – not yet to accept it, but to consider the possibility. (Tuszyńska 3)

Once the hero has committed herself to the quest, a guide or mentor appears. Tuszyńska meets her Jewish cousins who tell her about the past. Her Polish uncle, Oleś, an extraordinary personality living in a bigamistic relationship with two wives, a Pole and a Jew, serves as an initial guide to the unknown realm of the Jewish-Polish past. Since he remembered pre-war Poland and knew the author's grandfathers, he helps in reconstructing the memory of past.

There is also a Polish historian from Łęczyca who helps the author in researching public registers and the population census. The man offers his assistance out of sheer sympathy; only he has the knowledge and persistence to study local archives. Moreover, as an inhabitant of the town he is painfully aware that Łęczyca is still suffused with anti-Semitic myths, and that traces of the Jewish past have been almost completely removed.

The mythological hero must be confronted with enemies. During her journey across Poland the author encounters Polish anti-Semites: her grandmother's neighbours who might have given her away to the Nazi. Other people do not want to reveal information because of their antipathy towards Jews.

One of the most shocking stories that Tuszyńska learns is the description of the escape from the Warsaw Ghetto; her grandmother and mother (at that time five years old) managed to get through the ghetto's gate unnoticed. Nevertheless, someone on the street recognized them as Jewish escapees and started screaming. At that moment a Polish doroshky driver came to rescue them from the enraged crowd. The woman and the girl started to believe they were finally safe: "They hurriedly leaped into the droshky, and the mother gave a pre-arranged address. There was more than just relief in her voice as they set off." However, the shocking truth was yet to come:

> The doroshky drove into Szuch Avenue, and soon stopped outside the Gestapo building. The driver turned round on the box and said: "Well then, Jewess, did you really think I wouldn't take you back to your rightful place?" He smiled and pushed them towards a side entrance. (Tuszyńska 6)

Although they later succeeded, almost miraculously, in escaping the oppression (with the help of uncle Oleś), the fear of Polish anti-Semites was tremendous. The story, told several decades after the event, still evokes a sense of betrayal and despair.

In Łęczyca Tuszyńska finds shattered tombstones from a Jewish cemetery hidden in the woods. Unable to leave them, she takes the pieces of gravestones to her

trunk and later puts them in her basement. The author's trip to Łęczyca is similar to the stage called Crossing First Threshold, i.e. the point where the person actually crosses into the field of the unknown. By entering this stage the hero shows a willingness to undergo a metamorphosis.

The gesture of keeping the mitzvots becomes the turning point of the story; from that moment on the protagonist cannot deny her emotional involvement. However, the decision to store the gravestones in the basement also has a deeper, symbolic meaning: her Jewish origin, like the mitzvots, must stay hidden in the dark because she is still unable to reveal the truth to the outside world.

In mythology the hero, having crossed the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown abyss, where he is confronted with death and loss. Tuszyńska finds emptiness in the place of the destroyed Jewish world. She is painfully aware that the whole universe disappeared in extermination camps, in burnt barns and collapsed buildings. She learns the hidden truth about her Jewish grandmother's death and realizes the immensity of the loss. From that moment the tragic Jewish history becomes an essential part of her identity. The pain and the inability to forget about her ancestors will stay with the author forever.

In the act of her symbolic Rebirth she learns about Jewish culture and tradition and becomes a member of the Diaspora. The woman enters a phase of fascination with Judaism. In Canada and New York she meets Jewish immigrants who become her extended family and a support group. Their attitude towards Jewish-American or Jewish-Canadian identity serves as an inspiration for her to perceive herself as Jewish-Polish.

Finally, she approaches The Innermost Cave, the most dangerous and dark part of the journey. In Tuszyńska's case it is her father's anti-Semitism. The confrontation with anti-Semitism within her own family might be compared to the confrontation with The Shadow. It is the painful truth that she must face in order to gain understanding. During this phase of the quest the writer experiences humiliation, fear and anger.

She learns the details of her father's changing attitude towards the Jewish minority in post-war Poland. His hostility and the accusations he made occurred in the wake of an unhappy personal life (his wife, a Jew, left him for another man) and a sudden downward turn in his professional career. Since that time he "only used the term 'Jew' in a mocking voice." (quoted in Steinem)

The next phase of the archetypical quest is Atonement with the Father. After learning the life-story of her father she is ready to face him and oppose his worldview. As a result he rethinks his hostile attitude toward Jews and undergoes a deep transformation. From that moment the author is able to forgive him. Although she considers herself an atheist, they spend Christmas together.

Eventually, she understands why the Jewish legacy was kept secret from her, as well as why for a long time she had been unwilling to talk about it openly. She realizes that her mother concealed the history in order to protect her: "I make an effort to think of this as the greatest possible expression of a mother's love for her child." (quoted in Steinem) The author finally sees why her fair hair and blue eyes were always a source of pride for the dark-eyed, dark-haired mother:

> She didn't want me to carry a burden. She was happy to have given birth to a blue-eyed child with fair hair. The girl had a Polish father. She brought me up to live in this country, and she didn't want to encumber her child with an onus that she wouldn't be able to bear. She didn't want her daughter to grow up in fear, or with a sense of wrong. She reckoned she could broach the subject once her child was able to take it on, and ultimately to defend herself. (quoted in Steinman)

Even after the publication of the book, the 80-year-old mother was frightened of what the neighbours would say: "She cannot help it. It is a legacy from the war. She cannot let go of the legacy of fear" (quoted in Steinman). All her life she has experienced the fear of being the Other, a fear that has a long history in her family.

According to Kapuściński, *A Family History of Fear* discusses one of the most dramatic subjects of our time: "how to co-exist, how to live together with the other, the external other, but also, perhaps more importantly, the internal other". Moreover, Tuszyńska asks a question about the structure of identity: "to what extent 'I' consists of only one's immanent being, and to what extent 'I' comes from the family, the ancestors and the environment of people who have existed around the 'I'" (Kapuściński).

By crossing the final threshold of accepting her double identity, the hero becomes the Master of Two Worlds; she becomes a Polish Jew among Jews and Poles. At the end of the journey Tuszyńska finds herself in between two cultures, two worlds. Initially, she did not want to accept her Jewishness; later she did not want to reject her Polish identity:

> I'm Polish, I'm a Polish Jew, and I was born, and I live still, in Poland… I'm now proud of it, so this was the work of building my own identity… I'm no longer afraid as I was in Poland, feeling like my mother felt–being constantly in this weird state of fear. When I decided to write this book, it was a liberation for me. (quoted in Riederer)

She returns with The Ultimate Boon, which is the goal of the quest: a double heritage, an ability to look simultaneously from two perspectives. Her insight is that she is both a Jew and a Pole:

> This book has no ending because the story doesn't end. It doesn't have an ending because I do not want to choose only one heritage. Two heritages – Polish and Jewish – live in

> me. Polish and Jewish legacy formed me. Even if they fight with each other, even if they accuse each other – I belong to them. Let it stay that way. (Tuszyńska 225)

Tuszyńska's gift is the double legacy, the new identity, the acceptance of the fact that she is Polish-Jewish; this is the insight that she describes in the book. The last task of the archetypical heroine is to communicate her discoveries and the boon for all humanity. She gives author talks in Polish schools, telling her own story of growing up in a Jewish family in Poland:

> Every family has a history. Many Polish families have tragic histories. In those days parents did not always tell their children about their wartime experiences, their involvement in the resistance, the Home Army, the Warsaw Uprising or the forest. Only years later did they start to talk about their experiences, including both the suffering and the heroism. This built ties between the generations and gave both of them strength. (quoted in Steinman)

The author convinces others to reflect on their own historical past: "I say to them, 'Don't be ashamed. Remember this address. Ask what it means. At the end of the day … it is you. Your grandparents, your soil, your landscape.'" As an example, she gives her complex Jewish Polish identity, and her courage to accept the hidden past: "I am blue eyes. Poland. Umshlagplatz. Treblinka. I am all of those things." (quoted in Steinman) Tuszyńska declared that A *Family History of Fear* was a necessity for her as a person and as a writer; it seems that there are more Poles who have the analogical need to talk openly about their Jewish-Polish roots.

Tuszyńska's story might be categorized as working through trauma using 'the writing cure.' The author had to struggle in order to be able to deal with the horrible truth, but writing about it had therapeutic value, both for her and for her readers. The plot scheme of the Hero's Journey provides a convenient structural frame for presenting the unique life journey of the Second Generation of Holocaust survivors; it serves as a matrix for the organization of Tuszyńska's experience, which was extremely difficult to communicate.

In the process of collecting elements of the past the author reconstructs the history of her Jewish family, but she also constructs a story of acquiring a new identity. *A Family History of Fear* shows an intimate, personal story structured as a metaphorical path to a personal transformation; nevertheless, it also situates the history of the family in a broader social context. It presents the parallel experiences of Poles and Jews in pre-war and post-war Poland. While the story of Tuszyńska's family is a dramatic confrontation with the sometimes grim national history of Poland, it also provides a multidimensional view of Polish-Jewish relations.

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Na'ama Sheffi

Normalization through Literature: Translations from German into Hebrew during the 1970s

Following four decades of troubled relations between Israelis and Germans, the 1970s marked a relative relaxation. The reason for these disrupted relations was the rise of National Socialism. Since then, the *Yishuv* (the Jewish settlement in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel) and the State have manifested deep awareness and sensitivity regarding the nature of contacts with Germany, Germans and German culture – ranging from politics to legislation, and from diplomacy to culture. Only a decade after the capture, trial and execution of Adolf Eichmann, and a few years after the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1965, the 1970s offered Israelis new and different experiences vis-à-vis Germany (Zertal 11–15). Major sports events that took place in West Germany were broadcast on the single state-owned Israeli television channel and received calmly, despite the abundance of German flags on the screen. The heated public debate over stage performances of music composed by Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss – which reached new heights in 1966 – had faded away (temporarily, and only until 1981) (Sheffi, *The Ring* 85–120). Moderation was also evident in the literary world – the range of books translated from German into Hebrew, which had been somewhat limited during the first two decades of statehood, had grown into a multifaceted array of literary works, allowing the infiltration of contemporary highbrow and lowbrow German literature. Thus, the translated German works appeared like any other translated corpus, comprising a wide range of genres and literary eras. However, this seeming change could also be regarded as a continuation of the standards that had typified the translation project from German into Hebrew since its early days: rich, open, well-informed, and highly responsive to current cultural-political events.

The history of the German-to-Hebrew translation project abounds with examples of this spirit. Since its beginning in the 1780s and for a century afterwards efforts were focused on the formation of a 'classic bookshelf' in Modern Hebrew which would serve as an addition to or a substitute for the limited usage of Hebrew, which until then had been confined to liturgical purposes. It included writings by major German-Jewish thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn, and leading German

intellectuals such as Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Heinrich von Kleist and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. In addition to the classics, the translated corpus included children's books in praise of the pioneering spirit of America and the great discoveries by the German Joachim Campe, as well as Jewish legacy by the members of the Jewish Philippsohn family, and books about nature studies. From the 1880s through to the rise of National Socialism translations were targeted primarily at children, as they constituted the first generation of individuals whose lives were conducted solely in Hebrew; the stories collected by the brothers Grimm comprised a major part of these works. At the same time the range for adults was extended from mostly prose and poetry to plays and non-fiction, including modern scholarly works. As the Nazis seized power, Jewish authors became, for the first time, the majority of writers translated into Hebrew, including key literary figures such as Stefan Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Franz Werfel, Franz Kafka, Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau. The non-Jewish German literature in the translated corpus of that era was represented by classic authors and opponents of Nazism, including, among others, Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, and Bertolt Brecht (Sheffi, *Vom Deutschen*). The characteristics of the translation project in the 1930s and 1940s endured through the first two decades of Israeli statehood: the classics, Jewish authors, and opponents of Nazism comprised the German-into-Hebrew Trinity (Sheffi "Between").

It was only in the 1970s that this trend changed. The body of critical literature about Germany and the Germans grew wider, and at the same time a flood of lowbrow literature inundated the translated range, with a handful of romance novels and dozens of 'cyber-espionage' suspense titles. Indeed, this change can be understood as a remarkable break from the past. But at the same time it may also attest to the change in tone of the political arena and the willingness of many Israelis to relate to Germany not only as the successor of the Nazi regime, although criticism of West Germany was still heard in the 1970s with regard to anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish terror attacks on German soil; it may well be that the translation project reflected a wider political-cultural transformation. In this article I wish to describe and analyze this transformation, focusing on these two seemingly new phenomena – the new generation of authors criticizing German society, and writers of popular literature, including genres that until then had scarcely been translated from German into Hebrew. I will argue that this dual route was part of the normalization between Israelis and Germans – as shown in previous studies (Zimmermann), and of the return of the range to its old characteristics. I support this argument with specific examples.

Since the 1780s and during the next century only a handful of books were translated from German into Hebrew. This modest effort fulfilled two goals: an

expression of the high esteem that German and East European Jews felt toward German culture; and a means to adapt the ancient biblical Hebrew into a modern secular language. The volume of translations grew as the Zionist movement and organized *Aliya* (Jewish immigration waves to Jewish Palestine) occupied a greater place in the life of European Jewry, increasing from a hundred books in the first century to almost 400 in the next fifty years. The output broadened to include various genres, dominated mainly by children's and youth titles; since the 1880s and until the rise of National Socialism such titles comprised one-third of all translations, clearly suggesting that the primary focus of local translators and publishers had been the education of the first native generation of Hebrew speakers.

During the 1930s and 1940s the translation project reached an annual average of 17–20 books, an increase driven by the accelerated translation of German-Jewish authors whose books were being burnt in the Third Reich's town squares. This was the first time that works by Jewish authors were the majority of the translations. Thus, the political perspective of the project became clear: initiated as a means to generate and disseminate everyday Hebrew language, and at the same time to create an appropriate cultural framework for the nascent modern Hebrew culture, it gradually shifted into a tool in the making of the first native Hebrew speakers, and was later extended into a means of expressing abhorrence toward the Nazi regime (Sheffi *Vom Deutschen*).

It would be reasonable to assume that the Holocaust had terminated or at least decreased the volume of translations from German into Hebrew. Nevertheless, in the first two decades of Israeli statehood an average of 14 translated books were printed every year. Most of these publications, however, were reprints, new translations of classic titles that had been previously translated, and books by Jews and by authors who were considered anti-Nazi. The choice of such a range can be explained by the general atmosphere surrounding everything German in the young state of Israel. The *Yishuv* society had already been mourning the Holocaust as it was happening (Ofer). Following the establishment of the state several laws were enacted with regard to the Holocaust: The Law for the Punishment of Nazis and their Collaborators was passed in 1950, and in August 1953 the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed the Law of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance, which was the keystone for the establishment of Yad Vashem, Israel's central commemoration archive and museum. Later that decade the day of remembrance was reformed into The Day of Remembrance of Holocaust and Heroism (1959) (Weitz; Dinur).

The Nazis and Nazi Collaborators Punishment Law (1950) enabled the prosecution of Jews who had collaborated with the Nazis. Most famous among these

was Rudolph Israel Kastner, a Hungarian Jew who emigrated to Israel after the war, and was accused of cooperation with the Nazis and convicted in June 1955 as a "collaborator with the devil". Kastner's appeal led to his acquittal, but the court's ruling only took place in January 1958, ten months after his assassination near his home in Tel-Aviv. It was only in 1961 that the law was used to prosecute a Nazi war criminal, Adolph Eichmann. Eichmann was convicted in a high profile trial which was broadcast all over the world and raised much interest in Israeli society; it was the first time that Israelis had been attentive to testimonies regarding everyday life in the concentration and death camps (Yablonka).

The 1950s also witnessed the uproar regarding the official relations between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany. In September 1952 Israel signed a Reparations Agreement with West Germany. Although the reparations would ultimately bring much-needed relief to Israel's depleted treasury, the negotiation process gave rise to a wave of protest across the country. At a time when the State was still trying to define its attitude to the Holocaust, any contact with Germany was perceived as a sin against those who perished in the concentration camps (Balabkins 1971; Segev *The Seventh Million* 211–252). Parties and factions from both the right and the left joined in condemning the reparations agreements, but this was not the only political manifestation of opposition to anything associated with Germany, as shown below. This obstinate hostility to Germany and German culture, which began with the Nazis' rise to power in the late 1920s, intensified as concentration camp survivors began arriving in Palestine. The more facts came to light concerning the horrifying dimensions of the European massacre, the tougher the anti-German stance became. Nevertheless, in 1965, the two countries established full diplomatic relations, disregarding the general suspicions related to the involvement of German scientists in Egypt only a couple of years earlier, and the resentment expressed by some sections in Israeli society (Ben-Natan).

One may argue that despite the political moderation on the official level, general sentiments toward Germany remained burdened. The early 1970s saw several terror attacks against Israelis and against Jews on German soil. In two of these attacks Germany was directly or indirectly accused of insensitivity to Israelis. The attack on Israeli tourists arriving at Munich airport in February 1970 ended with the terrorists' hasty release by German authorities, which disappointed Israel (Herzinger). The 1972 XX Olympic Games were an even harsher experience, as eleven Israeli sportsmen were massacred during a German attempt to release them from their Palestinian captors. While the hostages were still alive the Israeli press directed its arrows at the "Arab terrorists" and called for an international reaction: "It is not only Germany, the Olympics' host, that must draw the necessary

conclusions; other countries, even those who adopt a hostile policy toward Israel, will have to sweep away the Arab nests of crime from their territories." ("Conclusion: A Counter-War"). Immediately after the failed German attempt to rescue the Israeli hostages, and before the Israeli press published news regarding the tragedy, Zvi Zamir, head of Mossad (Israel's Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations), concluded his secret report on the fiasco to Prime Minister Golda Meir thus: "Regarding human lives, they [the Germans] place no value either on their lives or the lives of others. They had no further contingency plans for events as they unfolded, as well no means for improvising alternative courses of action." The professional criticism regarding the false interpretation of earlier warnings and the failure to improvise an alternative rescue plan thus turned into indignant moral condemnation (Mossad Head, Confidential Report).

Despite such horrific events attitudes toward German culture did eventually shift. It may well be that the outburst of emotions during the Eichmann trial, on the one hand, and the glorious victory of the 1967 Six Day War, on the other hand, contributed to this change, together with the formal relaxation through the establishment of full diplomatic relations. In the 1970s it became apparent that there were no longer any restrictions on German culture within the Israeli cultural scene, as manifested by the substantial translated literary repertoire.

The 1970s saw a sharp increase in the volume of translations – 277 books – including reprints and new versions of titles that had been translated previously. The dominant and quite atypical component of this body of work comprised 93 suspense paperbacks, published under the pen name Dan Shocker, and a few romance novels and erotic paperbacks. The presence of lowbrow literature in the corpus was in fact nothing new or odd, but a renewed trend, as criticism of the choice to translate mediocre books had already been expressed in the 1940s by a number of *Yishuv* intellectuals (Steinmann 1174).

The rest of the repertoire met familiar standards: 22 stories by Hermann Hesse, including four reprints of *Narziß und Goldmund* and three of *Siddhartha*, both highly fashionable in those years thanks to their intensive distribution by the military pocketbook publishing house *Tarmil* (lit. 'bag/sack'); 22 stories by Karl May; and 15 tales by the brothers Grimm. Fewer books by notable authors were also translated: Max Frisch, whose renowned *Homo faber* had been translated in 1963; Siegfried Lenz, whose play *Die Zeit der Schuldlosen* [The Time of the Guiltless] had been translated as early as 1962, only a year after its original production (the play was adapted into a film in 1964); as well as Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass and Peter Weiss. This mixture of established and new writers who met highbrow standards has characterized the translation project since its beginning. The inclusion of new voices that represented the paramount achievements

of German literature had been a trademark of the translation project, and the 1970s output was no exception.

The sharp rise in the number of translated books can be explained within the context of wider changes in Israeli society at the time. Since the 1967 Six Day War Israeli society experienced an economic boom as a result of its swift transformation from a small country with meager resources into a major regional power, tripling in size, and with the addition of a million Palestinians who took part in the Israeli economy as low-paid workers and potential consumers. This transformation was typified not only by a substantial improvement and expansion of the state infrastructure, but also by a new openness in the cultural sphere. Israeli society, which until then had felt isolated, became eager to adopt modern western culture (Kimmerling 112–129; Segev *1967*).

It may well be that this social-cultural atmosphere allowed the change in attitude toward Germany, Germans and German culture as a whole. The 1972 Olympic Games in Munich were broadcast on the single, state-owned Israeli TV channel, and the tragedy that terminated the Israeli participation in the games was interpreted as part of the contemporary Israeli-Arab conflict, and barely related to the burdened Jewish-German history. The 1974 World Cup games were also aired in Israel. Unlike previous occasions of protest against the consumption of German products and culture, this time Israelis did not wish to miss exciting games such as the one between East and West Germany in the first round, despite the multitude of German flags surrounding the pitch, or as one of the critics put it:

> Only the evening before last, the entire nation sat glued to their television sets, watching with excitement and true sporting fervor the determined struggle waged on the soccer field between the national teams of the two Germanies [the World Cup match in West Germany, first round]. We have not heard of a single citizen who turned off his set to register a protest; I have not heard of any reaction indicating any emotional undercurrents of any kind in the spectators' attitude toward this game. We were all, without exception, very "good sports" and very "impartial" – may the best team win. (Bar-Kadma)

This new atmosphere was apparent in the translation project as well. About one-third of all the translations of the 1970s were of lowbrow literature: popular genres such as suspense, science fiction, romance, and erotic titles. Most prominent among these was a series by Dan Shocker, one of the 14 pen names used by the Hessen-born Jürgen Grasmück (1940–2007). His series focused on suspense plots that involved supernatural powers and science fiction. His Israeli publishing house, *Ramdor* (later *Shalgy*), specialized in typical pulp fiction staples, such as crime and erotic paperbacks, and Shocker suited their catalogue perfectly.

Contrary to the assumption that Shocker's English-sounding pen name may have been used to conceal his German descent, on the back cover of his 1973 Hebrew translation, titled *Shout and Keep Shouting*, the publisher advised the readers:

> *An amazingly powerful series!* This is the European and American critics' opinion of the series by *Dan Shocker*, who depicts with outstanding talent fearful events throughout the world. The series, which has captured tens of thousands of readers in Germany and continues to be published regularly, became a bestseller thanks to its slogan: *Only for readers with strong nerves!* (Shocker, 1973, back cover)

This clearly suggests that Shocker's German origin was never concealed; on the contrary, his success in Germany was paraded as a seal of quality. Moreover, the plot of the specific book which presented Shocker's German origin took place in East Germany and insinuated a continuity between the Nazi experiments on humans and those revealed to have taken place in the Soviet Union, a topic that could have been too sensitive for Israeli society only a decade or two earlier, when German scientists were advising the Egyptian army (Bar-Zohar). Consequently, it seems that the Israelis had developed an ability to distinguish between the painful past and their current cultural life.

Two books of the thriller series *Perry-Rhodan* appeared in 1979, and two more were printed a year later. Despite the series' English-sounding name, its author, Karl Herbert Scheer (1928–1991), lived most of his life in the Taunus area, where he invented a full cosmology and typology for this 57-book series. Hebrew translations followed the successful publishing of 50 books of this series throughout Europe and the USA.

Thus, the translation of both these series and other lowbrow titles, such as *Der Wunschbaum* [The Wish Tree] by Sandra Paretti, a pen name of Irmgard Schneeberger (1935–1994), a successful Bavarian author, whose novels – including this one – have been adapted for TV, was part of ordinary cultural life in 1970s Israel. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew translation of *Der Wunschbaum* appeared in 1975, the same year it was originally published in German. Previously, the proximity of a translation to the original publication had been linked with current political events, as in the case of *Im Westen nichts Neues* [All Quiet on the Western Front] by Erich Maria Remarque, which was translated promptly due to its pacifist message; the same is true for the translation of *Die Welt von Gestern* [The World of Yesterday] by the Jewish Stefan Zweig, only two years after its original publication – during World War II, and while the author fled the Third Reich's extermination mechanism. In the case of *Der Wunschbaum*, the proximity is peculiar, since the subject had no special meaning for the Israeli reader. The plot takes place in Steglitz, south-west Berlin,

in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and unfolds the story of a society undergoing extreme changes.

An even more intriguing choice for translation was that of Friedrich Gustav Schilling's *Denkwürdigkeiten des Herrn von H., eines teutschen Edelmanns* [The Commentaries of Sir von H., a Germanic Nobleman]. The protagonist, probably an impotent military man who paid his huge debts through storytelling, focused on erotic plots. The translation of this content, which was originally published in 1787, is rather unusual; most of the choices of works from earlier centuries had focused on the classics, and none of them ever touched upon eroticism. This choice attests to the new understanding of the repertoire as one that could accommodate and represent ideas other than German culture as a basis for *Bildung* or the burdened history of Germans and Jews.

Still, the authors' nationality did play a significant role when it came to the selection of highbrow literature. Reading the 1970s translations from German into Hebrew, it is easy to detect the norms that had already been established in the 1930s: German classics, Jewish authors, and authors who were considered critical of German society in general and of the Nazi regime in particular. However, the classics now included mainly writings for children and youth, such as a new version of *Max und Moritz* by Wilhelm Busch, reprints, and new versions of the brothers Grimm's short stories, reprints of the already outdated Wilhelm Hauff, many new translations and adaptations of Karl May's Wild West sagas, and reprints of the works of the locally beloved Erich Kästner. The children's range attests to a non-political approach: German folklore (Grimm), Hitler's beloved author (May), and a criticizer of the Nazis who had also cooperated with them (Kästner) comprised most of the corpus.

The offering for adult readers included Georg Büchner's *Dantons Tod* and *Woyzeck*, as well as new and old translations of Reiner Maria Rilke. The best-known German classic trio – Schiller, Goethe and Heine – were absent, except for *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* [The Sorrows of Young Werther], which was included in the high-school literature curriculum. The absence of Heine, whose reprints were still being regularly published in Israel until the mid-1960s, was later explained by his perception as a convert, a traitor to the Jewish fold, in sharp contrast to the bear hug he had received during the twelve years of the Third Reich.[1] The short list of translated Jewish authors included many titles and reprints

1 Yigal Lossin, an Israeli television journalist who developed a series on Heine, had his project rejected due to the political objection of religious politicians to the elevation of a convert to Christianity. Lossin became one of the prominent fighters for a suitable commemoration of Heine in Israel (Lossin). One small street was named after him

of Kafka's books, which were translated into Hebrew thanks to the initiative of his friend Max Brod, whose short biography of Kafka was reprinted in 1976. Kafka's *Der Process* was also part of the high-school literature curriculum. The almost total absence of Jewish authors can be explained by the circumstances – most of the Jews who remained in Europe until after 1939 were exterminated; the Jewish literary centre migrated to Palestine-Israel, and to some degree, to the USA (Shavit; Wirth-Nesher and Kramer). The repertoire also included some of the old critics of German society – Bertholt Brecht, Robert Musil, and Thomas Mann, all of whom were dead by the 1970s.

A remarkable subdivision of the translated work consisted of several contemporary authors who were part of critical circles. The West Germans Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, and Siegfried Lenz, the Swiss Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, and the Polish-East German-Jewish Jurek Becker were among the new voices that infiltrated the translated books gradually from the 1960s. All of them dealt with dilemmas faced by post-war western society.

Surprisingly, Becker received the least attention of all. His first novel, *Jakob der Lügner* [Jacob the Liar], appeared in Hebrew in 1979, a decade after its original publication and five years after the release of its cinematic adaptation. This was the only DEFA film ever to be nominated for an Academy Award for best foreign language film. Because at the time Israel had no diplomatic, business or cultural relations with the German Democratic Republic, the film's purchase was arranged through a third party, who negotiated the deal for the single Israeli state-owned channel in the late 1970s. The film was also screened in the main cities' cinematheques in the early 1980s. It is interesting to note that the film's participation in the then West Berlin Film Festival was reported in the press in 1975: "The East German film *Jacob der Lügner* was screened yesterday at the West Berlin International Film Festival. This is the first East German film to be screened in West Berlin during its twenty-five years of existence […] The film was received by the West Berlin audience with enthusiasm" ("*Jacob der Lügner*").

Despite the minimal attention to his book, Becker – a native of Łódź, born in 1937, who had survived the Holocaust and emigrated to the German Democratic Republic – had been compared to leading translated German authors, such as Böll's *Gruppenbild mit Dame* [Group Portrait with Lady], *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* [The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum], and *Billiard um halbzehn* [Billiards at Half-past Nine] (his *Wo warst du, Adam?* [Where were you, Adam?]

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in Haifa; the two other major cities, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, finally dedicated small streets to his name only in the 1990s.

and *Ansichten eines Clowns* [The Clown], were also translated in the 1970s) (Ben-Ezer). The book's translation into Hebrew in 1979 was scarcely reviewed, with the focus mainly on the work's origin: "Becker lives in East Germany. [But] [T]here is not even a hint at the local prevalent doctrines. [The book's] structure bears no trace of the typical writing solutions that are so common behind the Iron Curtain" (Zehavi). East German works were rarely translated into Hebrew at the time, and Holocaust writing seems to have been perceived as the almost-exclusive domain of Israeli Holocaust survivors (Gil). From the literary perspective critics applauded Becker's outstanding gift for portraying specific characters and life in general in that stressful environment. His style was compared not only to that of Böll, but also to Aaron Apelfeld and Jorge Semprun. Becker's Jewishness was not discussed, and the fact that he was a Holocaust survivor was merely implied by stating that he "looked for communicative paths to the reader who had not experienced the Holocaust" (Zehavi).

The overall empathetic, even compassionate reception of the novel in Israel is rooted in the transformation that Israeli society had already undergone in the 1960s. The Eichmann Trial and, moreover, the 1967 Six Day War, at last allowed Israelis to express empathy for those survivors who had failed to meet the heroic standards of the young State; as a result, in the 1970s Holocaust survivors became more integrated in Israeli society (Zertal).

Günter Grass represents the other end of the spectrum of attention given to the voices of the younger generation in Germany. His *Katz und Maus* [Cat and Mouse], *Hundejahre* [Dog Years], *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke* [From the Diary of a Snail], along with the celebrated *Die Blechtrommel* [The Tin Drum], had all been translated into Hebrew during the 1970s. Grass achieved world fame with the 1959 publication of his first novel *Die Blechtrommel*. From then on he often expressed his political criticism. A literary profile of Grass was published in Israel as early as 1965 (Hermon), almost a decade prior to the first translation of a book by him into Hebrew. The reason for that article was Grass's open letter to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, accusing the latter of being disrespectful to Israel by backing the Egyptian President's idea to declare a statute of limitation on Nazi crimes (Grass). Two years later, in early 1967, Grass visited Israel and, in interviews before and during his visit, he made two controversial statements. First, he accused Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion of enabling German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to create the 'Other Germany' façade, which permitted the acceptance of West Germany as a normal state (Deutschkron). Then, during his visit, Grass emphasized that the younger generation of Germans still owed a "moral mortgage" for their predecessors' deeds, although he maintained that the dominant tradition of German politics was that of social

democracy (Ya'ad). Once the author had publicly touched upon these delicate matters the political context and the sensitive history became part of the intellectual discourse.

Such attention can explain the flood of translations of books by Grass since the 1970s, and the many articles dedicated to him and his works in literary magazines and newspaper supplements. *Die Blechtrommel* drew much attention not only because of its literary qualities, but also thanks to its charged content. *Haaretz* critic Nitza Drori associated the ugliness of the book's hero, the repulsive dwarf Oskar, with Grass's approach to the demonization of Hitler, quoting Grass's statement in an old interview: "Hitler was no demon. We do him a favour by presenting him this way, thereby stopping people from understanding his true spirit. He was a small disgusting piece of filth." (Drori). An excerpt from another interview allowed another critic, Yaffa Berlovich, to frame the novel within the literary history of Germany. On the one hand, she emphasized the fable-like style that Grass adopted in order to handle the horrific proximate past, alluding to the German tradition of gruesome tales. On the other hand, the *Tin Drum*'s adolescent-novel-like qualities were compared to Goethe's bildungsroman *Wilhelm Meister* (which is alluded to in Grass's book). Berlovich's familiarity with German culture became even more apparent in her reference to the contradictory responses to the novel from her German colleagues (Berlovich). This degree of proficiency in the German literary world, which was characteristic of the Hebrew cultural circles prior to the establishment of the state, had lasted through the early years of statehood, but has diminished since the 1990s (Weiss).

A few contemporaneous essays have emphasized the historical context even further. Yehudit Orian, the literary critic of the then widely-circulated *Maariv*, shared her thoughts with readers:

> When Eichmann was captured, a photo of him during a physician's examination in the prison cell was printed in the newspaper […] Psychologists noted that this kind of photo softens the monstrous image we wish to preserve in children's eyes […] I mention this in order to demonstrate the contradiction in *The Tin Drum* […] The reader's feelings toward the private character – Oskar the dwarf – are transferred to the symbolized – defective Germany – and vice versa. (Orian Ben-Herzl)

The presence of Eichmann's trial in the consciousness of Israeli society was thus vivid and explicit; Israelis were reading the new highbrow literature from the perspective of their own experience of the commemoration of the Holocaust in Israel. Four years later, now as the film critic of the popular women's weekly *Laisha*, Orian insisted that it was impossible to adapt *The Tin Drum* into a film, although it did contain quite a few powerful scenes (Orian).The immense interest in the book is

indicated by the sheer number of reviews and their place of publication. Remarkably, these include not only the major newspapers' literary supplements, but also the leading women's weekly and the National-Religious Party's mouthpiece.

On the face of it, the surge in and diverse range of book translations from German into Hebrew in the 1970s can be seen as marking a change from previous German-to-Hebrew translation patterns. But reading it in context – and moreover, reading specific cases of its marketing methods and critics' responses – ascertains that, as unusual as it may seem, the 1970s corpus was consistent with the old standards of the translation project from German into Hebrew. It included a variety of genres, of generations of writers, and of 'quality grades'; the contemporary highbrow literature was received by the critics with great sensitivity to the complex Jewish-German history, whereas the lowbrow literature was overlooked by the same intellectuals and taste arbiters. Thus, the 1970s output and the literary supplements' reviews indicate a return to the old patterns of the translation project. First and foremost, like their predecessors, the Israeli literary critics of that period were highly proficient in German culture, and capable of reading its highbrow products in their political and cultural contexts, rather than simply assessing their literary qualities. This approach also characterized the reviews of German films, as can be seen in the critics' columns regarding the New Wave of German Cinema, such as the works of Volker Schlöndorff and Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

In addition, the contemporary literary circles offered no special treatment to Jewish authors; this tendency had characterized the translation project prior to the Nazi era, and became even more pronounced after the war. The reasons for the post-1945 approach may have to do with the growing number of authors writing in Hebrew, and the shift of interest in Jewish communities from post-war Europe to the American-Jewish communities. And last but not least, the 1970s repertoire is evidently the consequence of the return to almost normal relations between Israelis and Germans. The increase in commercial contacts between the two states was an overt aspect of the normalization process. A more covert trait can be found in a survey conducted in the late 1970s, in which Israeli ninth-grade students were able to evaluate the characteristics of ordinary Germans and Nazis in the 1930s using a semantic differential scale. According to Israeli historian Moshe Zimmermann, the students' ability to differentiate between the two categories is clear proof of the change in the atmosphere of Israeli society, where Israelis had become capable of distinguishing between the historical 'evil' German and the contemporary German (Zimmermann). The younger generation of readers was thus much more open to the challenges presented by the new range of books translated from German into Hebrew.

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Yechiel Weizman

The Sacralization and Secularization of the Jewish Cemeteries in Poland

Introduction

These days in many cities, towns and villages in Poland, the Jewish cemetery remains the only material remnant and testimony to the historical presence of a Jewish community. Out of an estimated number of 1,400 Jewish cemeteries in Poland today, only a few are still functioning as burial places for the current Jewish communities in Poland (Gebert and Datner). While many of the cemeteries have been preserved and reconstructed in recent years, others are neglected, abandoned or destroyed. In some towns, only remnants of a wall or a clearing in the forest mark the place where once a Jewish cemetery stood. But in order to thoroughly answer the question of what remains of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland we must understand this question not only in material terms, but also in terms of collective memory and consciousness.

The aim of this essay is to tell the post-Holocaust story of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland from the point of view of Polish society. I intend to do so by using the conceptual framework of the sacred and the profane. More specifically, I would like to analyze the material and symbolic transformation of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland since the Holocaust as an ambivalent and dialectic process of "sacralization" on the one hand, and "secularization" on the other. I would like to offer this sacralization-secularization dichotomy as an explanatory model for understanding how the Jewish cemeteries were perceived by Christian Poles, and how the existence or rather the nonexistence of Jewish cemeteries was and is experienced and articulated.

I will show how, in an ambivalent way, Jewish cemeteries in Poland after the Holocaust were perceived as some sort of sacred and desecrated places at the same time. Through concrete examples I will try to show why analyzing the transformation of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland under this "sacred-profane" discourse is crucial in order to understand the transformation and construction of the memory of the Jews in Poland. I would argue that in many ways, the history of the perception of the Jewish cemeteries by Polish society is an ambivalent story of dialectic movement between the sacred and the profane.

Conceptual clarification

Since some of the terms that I use contain different meanings and tend to be vague and idiosyncratic, a short conceptual clarification is needed here. By using the "sacred-profane" framework I am not trying to make any essentialist argument about the sacredness or profaneness of a certain place, but rather to define these terms phenomenologically – as they are experienced and perceived. Although I understand here the sacred-profane dichotomy mainly as a sociological construction, I will not confine myself to the strict Durkheimian dichotomy.[1] Rather, I will try to use these terms in the very broad sense of the word – as they are understood and perceived both in the religious world and in the social sciences.

According to the Oxford English dictionary, the sacred is "regarded with great respect and reverence by a particular religion, group, or individual".[2] The philosopher Mircea Eliade defines the sacred as different from normal realities, and as such the sacred is not necessarily a divine entity (Eliade). As Durkheim also claims, the sacredness of an object or place derives from a set of social prohibitions that differentiate it from the profane sphere, and sacralize it. Indeed, what is common to almost all cultures and religions is the prohibited nature of the sacred.

Very often we tend to think of the sacred as something threatening and frightening. A "sacred place" is not only important and different from other places in the public sphere, it is also considered, in popular culture and in certain religions, as a "forbidden place". Another element that very often characterizes the sacred is its irrational nature, or rather, the irrational sphere in which the sacred sometimes functions. "In the immediate vicinity of the sacred, everything may appear a little irrational" writes the literary theorist Cesareo Bandera (69). According to the theologian and scholar Rudolf Otto, the sacred is not only overwhelming and powerful, but also irrational in its essence. This strong connection between the sacred and irrationality is also psychologically and medically recognized as "Hierophobia" – a fear and anxiety caused by sacred objects or places.

After analyzing briefly the phenomenology of the sacred, we can understand the profane, for the sake of argument, as something which is not sacred; thus, it also lacks the uniqueness or transcendence of the sacred. While a sacred place is different from all other places in its threatening-admired alterity, we may define

1 For the Sociologist Emile Durkheim, the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane is the essence of religion, see Durkheim.

2 "Sacred." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. 3rd ed. 2010. Print.

a profane place as part of the normal and rational public sphere, but also as a place that was profaned and deprived of its holiness. In the next sections of my paper I will show how this sacred-profane vocabulary that I am suggesting can function as an interpretive framework for understanding the transformation of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland.

Before the destruction

In order to analyze the transformation of the Jewish cemeteries after the Holocaust, we need first to understand the place of the Jewish cemetery in pre-war Polish culture and folklore. How did non-Jewish Poles perceive and treat the Jewish cemetery in their town? Did the Jewish cemetery have a religious or spiritual significance in the eyes of Polish neighbours? And to what extent was the Jewish cemetery perceived as a "sacred place" not only by Jews?

The perception of the Jewish religious sites by the local Polish population, especially in villages and small towns, as ethnographic research has shown, was often a combination of fear and respect, fascination and loathing (Parciak). One of the most exotic and liminal places in the town or village was the Jewish cemetery. In its alterity it was not only, in a way, the ultimate "forbidden place", but also a place with "supernatural" or even demonic qualities (Cała, "The Image" 236). Stories about ghosts and other threatening entities in the Jewish cemetery were common in Polish folk culture, and so were myths about the healing and positive power of the cemetery and the religious Jewish sites (Cała "The Image" 141–142). Often non-Jews would adopt esoteric Jewish traditions performed in the cemetery – for example, taking a married couple to the Jewish cemetery to perform a dance for good luck and protection (Ibid).[3] The famous Jewish-Hassidic tradition of placing "Kvitelach" (notes with personal prayers or requests) on the grave of the local "Tzadik",[4] was also adopted by local Poles (Cała "The Cult" 16–19). In some towns and villages the Tzadik was considered, not only by Jews, as a "holy man". His grave was perceived as a special and holy place with supernatural qualities.[5]

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3 In the play "The Dybbuk" by Anski there is a famous scene where Hannan and Leah'le are taken to the cemetery in order to perform the marriage ceremony next to the grave of a Jew who was killed by the Cossacks.

4 In Hassidic culture the "Tzadik" is a spiritual and religious leader. He is often considered by his followers to possess a special connection to god.

5 A popular urban legend in the town of Leżajsk that I personally heard while visiting there tells of three SS officers that during the German occupation tried to destroy the

S. Anski, in his ethnographic reports from Eastern Europe, wrote about non-Jews who were protecting deserted and inactive Jewish cemeteries as "holy sites". According to a story he heard in one of the villages, farmers who worked the land in the territory of the Jewish cemetery died in mysterious ways (Parciak 16).

Alongside this "ambivalent respect" that the Jewish cemetery sometimes received as a sacred or special place, we also learn about acts of profaning and desecrating cemeteries and "matzevot"[6] by Poles (Cała, "The Image" 226). Nevertheless, those acts of profaning the matzevot show how the boundaries between the sacred and the profane can be blurred – as parts of the matzevot and even corpses from the desecrated cemetery were integrated into the walls of cow-sheds and stables in order to heal animals (Ibid). In many ways this ambivalent religious-mythical approach to the Jewish materiality was an embodiment of the general perception of the Jews in the eyes of their neighbours in Polish folk culture.[7]

According to Cała, the strangeness of the Jews "has always given rise to ambivalent feelings similar to those felt in the presence of holiness: fear, awe, and at the same time fascination and admiration" ("The Image" 220). The Jew in the Polish village was "a liminal figure with a special supernatural unique force" (Goldberg-Mulkiewicz 381).[8] As a result of the extermination, and with the absence of Jews, this ambivalent-magical perception, as we will see now, was "transformed" into the perception of the material traces, mainly the cemetery.

After the Holocaust

As early as during the war the German occupiers used matzevot to pave roads and sidewalks. Jewish cemeteries were vandalized, and some were completely destroyed and physically erased. Immediately after the war the first attempts were made, mainly by returning Jewish survivors, to reconstruct and save the remnants of the cemeteries (Finder and Cohen). However, as communist rule was consolidated towards the end of the 1940s, and with the mass emigration of Jews, the Jewish cemeteries entered an era of a literal and mental process of

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grave of the famous local tzadik, Rabbi Elimelech, because they heard that the rabbi was buried in a golden robe. According to the legend, when they opened the grave they were afraid and ran away. Later they went insane.

6 The plural form for "matzeva" – A Jewish headstone.

7 Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz writes about Jewish objects, such as old books, that were used by Poles for healing. See Goldberg-Mulkiewicz 380.

8 Unless otherwise cited, all of the quotes in Hebrew or Polish were translated by me.

desecration. This process was the result of political, historical and social circumstance, caused by different agents and from different motives. Local authorities and entrepreneurs, sometimes backed by the state, were constantly using areas of destroyed Jewish cemeteries for construction, and matzevot were removed and conserved for other uses by the former neighbours of the Jews.[9]

In Olsztyn during the 1960s the authorities removed the matzevot from the Jewish cemetery in order to prepare the place for public use. The rationale behind this act was articulated in a resolution passed in 1962 by the Municipal National Council: "… Because of the advanced state of damage, these cemeteries cannot be reconstructed but converted into green areas and municipal parks" (qtd. in Bartnik 182).[10]

While some Jewish cemeteries were still in use, mainly in big cities and until the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, in many cities, towns and villages the Jewish cemeteries remained abandoned and deserted. In some places thick grass and vegetation that have grown without disturbance have literally and symbolically covered the matzevot and turned the remnants of the cemeteries into thick forests. After the events of 1968, and with the forced emigration of most of the Polish Jews, the Jewish issue was almost totally silenced and tabooed. As the memory of the Jews and the Holocaust was not only repressed but also expelled, so was the place of the Jewish cemeteries in the Polish consciousness.[11] In certain towns the Jewish cemetery was actually erased from the official maps (Bergman and Jagielski 483).[12]

But how did the Jewish cemeteries function in their absence? To what extent did they exist in the local memory map? In Judaism the sanctity of the cemetery is eternal, even when no single matzeva has remained. In what sense did the ambivalent sacredness of the cemetery, as in the eyes of pre-war Polish society, survive?

The Jewish cemetery in Tarnów is considered one of the oldest cemeteries in Poland. During the Nazi occupation the Germans destroyed the cemetery and

9 For a thorough summary of the legal aspects of Jewish property, including cemeteries, in post-war Poland, see Krawczyk.

10 This resolution regarded not only Jewish cemeteries but also protestant (German) cemeteries.

11 Michael Steinlauf defines the period between 1948 and 1968 in Poland as "memory repressed", and 1968–1970 as "memory expelled". See: Steinlauf.

12 While visiting Miechów in 2012 I was told at the town's official information centre that there had never been a Jewish cemetery in the town. In fact, the Jewish cemetery there was completely destroyed by the Germans. Today in its area there is an open field.

used matzevot for their own purposes. The large and thriving Jewish community of the city, which had constituted 45% of the population before the war, ceased to exist. Adam Bartosz, who grew up in Tarnow in the 1960s, writes about a mysterious place in one of the districts of the city: "some sort of a thicket of trees and bushes, surrounded by a crumbling wall" (Bartosz 353). Nobody entered this place, and though located in the centre of the city, it was considered an exterritorial place. Only the language, in a sense, retained the repressed Jewish past. Bartosz remembers that the Tarnów cemetery was referred to by everybody as the "kirchoł", a word that he came to understand later.[13]

> In the consciousness of Tarnow's residents, the presence of Jews in the past seems an empty concept, not one which would arouse reflections or questions. Just as if the area of the Tarnow Jewish cemetery was a sort of hole, an illegible stain on the city map. It was located nearly in the centre of the city, but no one ever went in there … I made my first attempt to enter the Jewish cemetery, which proved an impassable jungle, a thirty- year-old forest … its depths were a campground for groups of tramps, drunks and similar types. (Bartosz 353)

Another description that shows how the absent Jewish cemetery was present in a mysterious way as some sort of "forbidden place" was written by Piotr Kwiatkowski. When he was a child growing up in the 1960s the neglected Jewish cemetery in his hometown was considered anything but normal. Its mysterious and almost metaphysical nature demonstrates the dialectics of the absent-present memory in communist Poland.

> The Jewish cemetery remained abandoned, nobody's- in other words: unneeded. On the outskirts of the town … as children, we rode there several times a year on our bicycles to experience an unusual, slightly thrilling feeling … We stood at the border of the cemetery looking down into that melancholy, rubble-strewn ground. Each of us felt the tension: the antechamber of a mystery stood open before us. From that place everything led to the unknown … we entered it solemnly, with gravity and with something like fear… The Jewish cemetery was like an open door to the abyss. (Kwiatkowski 253–254)

It seems that the presence of the Jewish cemetery, in both descriptions, is acknowledged and denied at once. Real or symbolic boundaries separate the cemetery from the allegedly normal and every-day reality. Similarly to the perception of the sacred, it is unreachable, unknown and unintelligible – but it is

13 "Kirchoł" is one of the many ways the Polish language describes an old Jewish cemetery. It is similar to the term "kirkut", which is more common. Several Jewish cemeteries in Poland are referred to by Polish citizens as "kirchoły", mostly in the area of former Galicia.

there. While the cemetery in these memories is allegedly desacralized, it seems that below the surface the sacredness of the cemetery not only did not vanish, but in many ways became even more mysterious and demonic. The cemetery is experienced as "nobody's" and as "sort of a hole", according to Bartosz and Kwiatkowski, but it exists in a haunting way. This esoteric "presence of absence" was also manifested after the Holocaust in local legends about ghosts in abandoned Jewish cemeteries.[14] While ghosts in Jewish cemeteries had already "appeared" in pre-war Polish folk culture, it seems that after the war these ghost stories became more threatening and haunting (Cała "The Image" 133). In 1998, the Polish-born Israeli writer and journalist Benjamin Yaari visited the Jewish cemetery in Częstochowa, and noted:

> From a distance I saw two young boys approaching and moving away from me on and off. After a while they came closer to me and one of them asked in excitement: "Sir, aren't you afraid to be here?" "Why should I be afraid," I asked, and he answered: "Why, there are demons here!" (Yaari 16)

While stories of the destruction and instrumentalization of Jewish cemeteries in Poland became a matter of routine during communism, we can see a certain sense of uneasiness and discomfort regarding the use of cemeteries and matzevot for profane uses. An awareness of the problematical nature of using cemeteries is expressed in a document from the Olsztyn District National Council's Presidium in 1972, concerning the fate of the destroyed Jewish cemetery in Olsztyn:

> Special caution is needed when dealing with decisions about the conversion of Jewish cemeteries for other purposes. We have to remember that cases of using Jewish cemeteries for other purposes are used by hostile circles as deliberate malice of the state toward believers of the Mosaic faith. Unused Jewish cemeteries belong to the state and may be closed, but, until the time when these sites are converted for other purposes, they should be kept by local national council presidiums according to the general principles for the maintenance of unused cemeteries. (qtd. in Bartnik 183)

The text above shows how political and utilitarian considerations were significant in the formation of official policy towards Jewish cemeteries during communist rule, but it may also reveal an acknowledgment of a sort that there is something

14 Stories about ghosts in Jewish cemeteries are not uncommon today, either. On some Internet forums it is possible to read "reports" about encounters with Jewish ghosts. See for example: „Cmentarz żydowski w Częstochowie" *Katalogi.pl*. n.p. web. 18 January 2007; Paranormalna: „Duch na Cmentarzu Żydowskim? (Nowy Sącz)." *Paranormalne.pl.* n.p. web. 18 January 2011.

problematic in the "conversion of Jewish cemeteries for other purposes".[15] The view that building on areas of former Jewish cemeteries is wrong was not uncommon. In Starachowice, at the beginning of the 1980s, the local authorities gave to a local citizen a piece of land for building a house. When he started digging in order to lay the foundations, he discovered human bones and realized that this area was a Jewish cemetery. The man decided to stop the construction and abandoned his plans (Parciak 52). In Przeworsk, where on the ruins of the Jewish cemetery a bus station was built, a local woman told Alina Cała: "That was wrong, a lot of good people were buried there. People have talked about this; they say that the memory of the Jews should be respected" ("The Image" 213).

The uneasiness regarding the desecration of the Jewish cemetery was caused not only by a rational recognition of the moral injustice or political sensitivity, but also by much less rational factors. Fear of "revenge" by the disturbed dead, or some sort of collective repressed guilt, led to the development of popular beliefs about a causal connection between the desecration of Jewish religious sites and divine punishment (Parciak 51).[16] Mysterious death cases or car accidents in certain Polish towns were sometimes explained as a "curse" resulting from the desecration of the local Jewish cemetery (Cała "The Image" 133–134).[17]

Political, cultural, historical and social factors contributed to the ambivalent perception of the Jewish cemeteries after the Holocaust. The aftermath of the extermination, and the communist policy of the repression and manipulation of the Jewish issue created a "pathological silence" regarding the memory of

15 Another example showing how the Polish authorities were sensitive to the world's opinion concerning the treatment of Jewish cemeteries is an internal letter written by the office of public utilities. In the letter there are specific instructions on how to respond to inquiries from abroad about the situation of the cemeteries. See Urban 783–785.

16 Urban legends about cursed buildings that were built on Jewish ruins are common in Muranów, a district in Warsaw that was built on the ruins of the Ghetto. According to another famous legend, when, on the ruins of the Great Synagogue in Tłomackie street in Warsaw attempts were made to build a skyscraper, the constructors faced many setbacks and difficulties. The explanation was that the ghost of the last Rabbi of the Synagogue was responsible for the setbacks. For interviews with Muranów residents that speak of Jewish ghosts there, see Mallet 78–81.

17 As I mentioned earlier, in pre-war Polish folk culture Jews were often considered as possessing special supernatural powers – both healing and demonic. Such perceptions, as we see, continued to function after the extermination of Jews, and in many ways became more connected to the material remnants of Jewish culture – mainly cemeteries.

the Jews (Hoffman 31).[18] In this atmosphere the perception of the cemeteries was a paradoxical mixture of fear, respect, silence, repression, desecration and enchantment.

Regaining sacredness?

In the mid 1980s the communist regime in Poland was weakening, and new possibilities for dealing with the silenced parts of Polish history and culture emerged. More and more voluntary and state-sponsored projects on discovering and preserving abandoned Jewish cemeteries were taking place. A certain change in the official policy towards the material Jewish heritage resulted in agreements with Jewish organizations regarding the protection and preservation of cemeteries (Bergman and Jagielski 480).

How did the weakening and, eventually, the collapse of communist rule in Poland affect the status and social function of the Jewish cemeteries? How did the ambivalent and pathological perception of the cemeteries change in light of the political transformation? And to what extent should we perceive the transformation of the Jewish cemeteries since the fall of communism as a process of sacralization?

One of the first large scale projects aimed at dealing with desecrated Jewish material traces took place in Kazimierz Dolny, a resort town that had a Jewish majority before the Holocaust. During the war the Nazis completely destroyed the Jewish cemetery in the town. Some of the broken matzevot remained scattered on the site, and others were taken by the Nazis, who used the stones for construction. During the next 40 years the site of the cemetery on the outskirts of the town stood neglected, and parts of matzevot continued to function as pavements or as parts of stone walls (Young 199–203). In 1984 the local authorities decided to commemorate the Jews, and a Polish artist was selected to build a monument in the area of the Jewish cemetery. With the help of Polish and Jewish activists attempts were made to locate parts of matzevot from different places in the town and to bring them to the site of the cemetery. Some of the stones were symbolically placed back at the site, and from the remaining broken ones the artist created a "lapidarium" – an impressive memorial wall.

18 For an analysis of the political and social circumstances that prevented a rational discussion regarding the memory of the Jews and the Holocaust in Poland, see Steinlauf; Irwin-Zarecka.

(The Memorial Wall in Kazimierz Dolny. Photos taken by the author.)

In August 2011, when asking the locals in Kazimierz Dolny for directions, I discovered that many of them referred to the monument as "Ściana Płaczu" (the Wailing Wall)[19]. According to Jewish tradition, as is well-known, it is customary to place slips of paper containing prayers or requests into the cracks of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.[20] In the photograph on the right we can clearly see slips of paper placed between the broken matzevot in a way that bears immediate association with the Wailing Wall. Is this a sort of a syncretic adoption of the Jewish practice? Apparently, this new local "tradition" of placing slips of paper between the stones of "Ściana Płaczu" developed spontaneously. Many of the papers, I was told by the locals, were placed by school children from the surrounding areas, who came there as part of school activities.

Another possible explanation for this practice might be associated with another Jewish tradition – placing slips of papers ("kvitlach") with personal requests on the grave of the "Tzadik". As I mentioned earlier, in some pre-war Polish towns and villages this practice was also adopted by Poles who believed in the sanctity of the Tzadik and in his super-natural powers. In a way, the story of the "Wailing Wall" in Kazimierz Dolny might be a good example of the process of symbolic sacralization of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland. A place that for 40 years was deserted and practically nonexistent functions today as one of

19 "Ściana Płaczu" is also the name of this monument according to official tourist brochures and web pages of the town.

20 The Wailing Wall (also known as the western wall) in Jerusalem is generally considered the most sacred place for Jews. The wall, which is one of the four parts of the external wall that surrounded the second temple in Jerusalem, is the only remnant of the second temple.

the main "attractions" of the town, and as a kind of a contemporary pilgrimage destination for Jews and Poles alike.[21]

Since the political transformation in 1989, projects on the reconstruction and preservation of Jewish cemeteries have become the most common practice of commemoration and dealing with Jewish memory in Poland. These projects are initiated and funded by numerous different official and unofficial organizations and associations, from Poland and abroad, at governmental and grassroots levels.[22] Local schools, churches, and even prisons are involved in many of these initiatives.[23] As the fate of the desecrated Jewish cemeteries was the most tangible evidence of the erasure of Jewish memory and culture in Poland during communist rule, the post-communist projects of preserving and protecting the cemeteries are, in many ways, the most tangible expression of the attempts of part of Polish society to reconstruct the memory of the Jews in Poland.

During the first years of post-communist Poland, as interest in Jewish issues was growing, the Jewish cemeteries became more and more visible in the public sphere. Attempts to deal with the aftermath of communism and to build a democratic and Western country led to an increasing awareness of minority rights, and in a way compelled the new authorities to deal with the problematic status of the Jewish religious sites:

> The Jewish religion sees places of burial as uniquely sacred. Cemeteries are treated with great respect, regardless of their condition and of what remains of them. They do not cease to be holy, even when they have neither fences nor headstones. In this sense, the word "cemetery" has a much broader meaning than its visible and statutory meaning. Judaism does not know the concept of cemetery liquidation; the laws of this religion do not permit any other use of the land – once it has been designated for burial – apart from burials. The Polish state, on the grounds of showing regard for the convictions and traditions of all religious communities, also wishes to respect the uniqueness of cemeteries in the Jewish religion. (qtd in Bergman and Jagielski 480)

This letter, which was written by representatives of the new Polish Government in 1990, is maybe the first official post-communist recognition of the Jewish

21 At the town's information centre for tourists, the cemetery is on the list of the most recommended places to visit.

22 Many of these projects are funded and organized by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODŻ). On the website of the foundation there are reports and information about ongoing preservation projects. See: fodz.pl.

23 "Tikkun – Naprawa" is a project, organized by FODŻ and the Polish prison service, in which prisoners from Polish penitentiaries are reconstructing cemeteries as their way of performing community service. See Easton.

cemetery as sacred. It embraces Jewish definitions for determining the ontological status of the cemetery as a holy place. While using the particular arguments of Jewish law, it seems that the writer of the letter is also appealing to Catholic sensibilities, and trying to strengthen the perception of the Jewish cemetery as equal to Catholic cemeteries.

Of course, this process of the gradual "sacralization" of Jewish religious sites was, and is, far from being simple and easy. Alongside the growing interest in Jewish cemeteries after the political transformation, Poland witnessed a wave of anti-Semitic manifestation in the public sphere during 1989–1990, which also included acts of vandalism and desecration of Jewish cemeteries (Michlic 262). While cases of vandalizing Jewish cemeteries still occur, the growing interest in the material traces of the lost Jewish culture has led to many projects of protecting, rebuilding, documenting and mapping Jewish cemeteries all over Poland.[24] In many of these projects, taking care of the Jewish cemetery functions as a first step in dealing with local Jewish history, a history which is often still repressed and forgotten.

One of these projects was "Instrukcja powrotu macewy" ("Instructions for returning matzevot"). The project, which was organized by the Warsaw-based NGO "Towarzystwie Inicjatyw Twórczych ‚ę'", took place during 2007–2010 in 10 Polish peripheral villages and towns.[25] The aim of the project was to encourage people to take care of the Jewish memory in their communities by tracing and bringing back remnants of matzevot to the local Jewish cemeteries.[26] The locations for the project were chosen according to the prior knowledge of the places in the towns where parts of matzevot from the local Jewish cemeteries were used as roads, pavements or walls. As the project's activists discovered, the matzevot were also used by individual households. Some people used matzevot as furniture, construction material or as decorative objects. According to Dorota Borodaj, the project organizer, the activists were very careful not to act as "intruders", which might arouse antagonism and seclusion among the locals (Borodaj). In order to avoid pointing the finger at the locals, the organizers made sure not

24 The project "Pamięć w Kamieniu" (Memory in Stone) is an Internet documentation and mapping project of Jewish cemeteries. It is part of the website "virtual sztetl", which belongs to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

25 The website of the project: instrukcjapowrotu.blogspot.co.il.

26 The project was in cooperation with the photographer Łukasz Baksik, who took pictures all over Poland in places where matzevot from Jewish cemeteries are being used as sidewalks, pavements, sandboxes, grindstones, etc. The photographs were part of his exhibition "Macewy codziennego użytku" ("Matzevot for everyday use").

to rebuke or judge people that kept matzevot in their houses. They published instructive posters in central places in towns. The posters contained phone numbers and e-mail addresses for reporting places where matzevot could be found, and also a list of places where it was possible to bring matzevot and to leave them there anonymously. A short explanation was included in the posters about the importance of the project:

> … Judaism forbids removing the matzevot from the ground. It is very important not to desecrate the grave and disturb the eternal rest of the dead … the Matzeva is part of the grave, and it should not have any use other than as a memorial to the people who died … We know of places where matzevot are in the possession of private individuals or part of public property; thus, we have to do something about this issue.[27]

The message of the posters is very carefully worded, and in many ways appeals to the universal and religious sensibilities of the readers. The religious explanation that using matzevot is a disturbance of the serenity of the dead can be interpreted as another attempt to compare the Jewish cemetery to a Catholic cemetery and to endow it with universal sanctity. Bringing back the matzevot, in other words, is not only a moral obligation but also a religious one.

In some of the towns and villages the activists were able to collect a substantial amount of matzevot material. Together with local volunteers, matzevot were found and brought to the site of the Jewish cemetery, where they were symbolically placed back. In certain places the return of the matzevot to the former site of the cemetery resulted in additional initiatives by the locals (Borodaj). Digging and searching for parts of matzevot around the town, the activists tried to help, or even to force, the local citizens to perform a metaphorical excavation of what was tabooed and buried under layers of silence and repression (Borodaj). In this sense the project was an attempt to create the possibility of learning and talking about the Jewish local history of the given town.

A similar project for tracing matzevot has taken place recently in Grodzisk Mazowiecki. Some of the matzevot in this town were found buried in the backyard of a private house and taken to the Jewish cemetery. According to Joanna Sarnecka, the curator of the project: "It is not good that so many years after the war, people walk on matzevot and it is normal. It is not normal … Matzevot are part of the cemetery and they are sacred" (Sarnecka). Again, we see how an attempt to retrieve the sacredness of matzevot and to put an end to the desecration of memory functions as an act of the normalization of the abnormal perception of the Jewish cemeteries.

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27 The posters can be viewed at the project's website: instrukcjapowrotu.blogspot.co.il.

This abnormal and pathologized perception, which has amounted to silence, repressions, fear, stereotypes and irrationality, is in many ways the result of the Holocaust and communist rule. As we saw earlier, the Jewish cemetery in pre-war Polish folk culture was perceived as a sacred place in a very ambivalent way. The aftermath of the Holocaust, and the cultural, social and psychological implications of communist rule have only pathologized and complicated this perception. As Jewish cemeteries were profaned and desacralized, literally and symbolically, a sense of haunting presence and repressed religious charge constructed the perception of the cemeteries during communist rule as an ambivalent and haunting mixture of a sacred-profane relationship.

In this sense, the act of reconstructing a cemetery functions not only as an attempt to sacralize a desecrated space and to regain its status as sacred, but also as an attempt to secularize a highly charged religious-pathological atmosphere. Thus, returning the matzevot to the cemetery is a necessary first step in normalizing the misperception of the Jewish cemetery. This material "memory work" not only sacralizes a desecrated space, but perhaps also desacralizes an environment overloaded with repressed and irrational religious presence that prevents a normalization and rationalization of the Jewish memory in Poland.

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