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BALKAN JEWISH WOMEN

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Strategies of Survival: Balkan Jewish Women and Cultural Representations of Memory

PREFACE

This issue of *Studia Judaica* is in several respects unique and, for this reason alone, exceptional. First, it transcends and thereby expands the journal's existing profile by addressing issues related to Judaic studies in relation to the Balkan Peninsula, going beyond analyzes of Polish-Jewish contacts and focusing also on Sephardic studies. Second, it is devoted to Balkan Jewish women, to the study of their rather superficially researched and modestly described heritage, and focuses attention on interrelated aspects of this heritage from the perspective of both gender and memory studies. Third, the issue is intentionally entirely in English, because we wanted this exploratory issue of *Studia Judaica*, with its focus on cultural representations of Balkan Jewish women, to reach the widest possible group of researchers and help promote international discussion, providing a catalyst for further research, including comparative studies. As the guest editors of this thematic issue, we are grateful to the editor-in-chief, Professor Marcin Wodziński, for his trust and for providing us the opportunity to initiate this dialogue with Balkan studies concerning the study of gender and Jewish women in the Balkans on the pages of such a renowned journal. It is our hope that interest in this rarely addressed issue will only strengthen the rank and prestige of the subject, and will open up new research perspectives and expand current ones.

The history of Jewish culture in the Balkans is rich and complex. It chronologically begins with the Sephardi community, the most numerous

group, which first arrived there in the sixteenth century after their exile in 1492 from the Iberian Peninsula. It was on the Balkan Peninsula, within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, that they found a new home, at the invitation of Sultan Bayezid II. Ashkenazi Jews appeared there much later, arriving in large numbers only in the nineteenth century, though their community was smaller than that of the Sephardim. Jews, however, regardless of whether they belonged to the Sephardi or Ashkenazi community, always constituted a minority in the Balkans, often hermetically sealed within their own native languages (Ladino and Yiddish), religion, and customs, and as they underwent assimilation/acculturation processes over time, they constructed a fluid double identity, which was also in some sense a provisional one. The multi-dimensionality of this issue becomes more prominent when we turn our attention to Jewish women, who have rarely been presented as major protagonists in cultural history. In their communities, they were burdened with the stigma of a double otherness—as women and as Jews. With this issue of *Studia Judaica*, we want to break the relative silence on this subject, focus attention on them, and restore their memory. An additional challenge is the multi-lingual character of Jewish literature originating in the Balkans or referring to Balkan reality. Such an expansive research area requires that we interpret the legacy of Judaism in the context of a diverse, but mutually related, group of Balkan national cultures, which constitute the context within which Jews in the region functioned. We have attempted here to address the problematics arising from this diversity in a multi-dimensional manner: examined within this issue are both literary texts that function more widely in public space, as well as little-known or recently discovered memoirs, ethnographic testimonies, and translations; sociolinguistic aspects of the Ladino language (Judeo-Spanish) are also addressed.

Gender and feminist trends in Judaic research can be found in the almost every major research center since the 1990s.[1] In Poland, important research in the field of Jewish gender studies is also being pursued more and more vigorously. This study has resulted in several publications: a major collected monograph edited by Joanna Lisek, *Nieme dusze? Kobiety w kulturze jidysz* [Voiceless Spirits? Women in Yiddish Culture];[2] a book

[1] See e.g. Lynn Davidman, Shelly Tenenbaum (eds.), *Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies* (Yale, 1994); and Judith R. Baskin (ed.), *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective* (Detroit–Michigan, 1991).

[2] Joanna Lisek (ed.), *Nieme dusze? Kobiety w kulturze jidysz* (Wrocław, 2010).

published by Agata Araszkiewicz and restoring the memory of Zuzanna Ginczanka;[3] Bożena Umińska's work on images of Jewish women in Polish literature;[4] studies on the experiences of women (and men) in Holocaust narratives;[5] Karolina Szymaniak's publication of the works of Rachel Auerbach[6] and her books on Debora Vogel;[7] books devoted to Anka Grupińska[8] and to the work of Amy Levy[9] have also been recently published. These are just a few key examples, but they show a clear revival in gender studies in Polish research. However, we can still see the dire need—and not just in Poland—for more extensive, in-depth research on this subject with regard to the development of the cultures of communities in the Balkans. The lack of monographs devoted to Jewish women from this region is particularly noticeable in this respect.[10] The American researcher Harriet Freidenreich wrote about this anxiously almost a decade ago.[11] Admittedly, individual works by authors such as the Belgrade researcher Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, Sarajevo Romanists Muhamed Nezirović and Eliezer Papo, and Israeli author Dina Katan Ben-Zion were published earlier; however,

[3] Agata Araszkiewicz, *Wypowiadam wam swoje życie: Melancholia Zuzanny Ginczanki* (Warsaw, 2001).

[4] Bożena Umińska, *Postać z cieniem: Portrety Żydówek w polskiej literaturze od końca XIX wieku do 1939 roku* (Warsaw, 2001).

[5] See Bożena Karwowska, *Ciało. Seksualność. Obozy zagłady* (Kraków, 2009); Aleksandra Ubertowska, "Kobiece 'strategie przetrwania' w piśmiennictwie o Holokauście (z perspektywy literaturoznawcy)," in Sławomir Buryła, Alina Molisak (eds.), *Ślady obecności* (Kraków, 2010), 317–335; ead., "'Niewidzialne świadectwa': Perspektywa feministyczna w badaniach nad literaturą Holokaustu," *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2009), 214–226; Agnieszka Nikliborc, *Uwięzione w KL Auschwitz-Birkenau: Traumatyczne doświadczenia kobiet odzwierciedlone w dokumentach osobistych* (Kraków, 2010); Joanna Stöcker-Sobelman, *Kobiety Holokaustu: Feministyczna perspektywa w badaniach nad Shoah. Kazus KL Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Warsaw, 2012).

[6] Rachela Auerbach, *Pisma z getta warszawskiego*, ed. Karolina Szymaniak, trans. Karolina Szymaniak, Anna Ciałowicz (Warsaw, 2016).

[7] Karolina Szymaniak, *Być agentem wiecznej idei: Przemiany poglądów estetycznych Debory Vogel* (Kraków, 2007).

[8] Jagoda Budzik, Beata Koper (eds.), *Niezależna: Próby o Ance Grupińskiej* (Kraków, 2015).

[9] Ilona Dobosiewicz, *Borderland: Jewishness and Gender in the Works of Amy Levy* (Opole, 2016).

[10] There have been only isolated attempts, for example, the publication in Bulgaria of a memoir by Lea Cohen: Lea Cohen, *Ti vyarvash: 8 pogleda varhu Holokosta na Balkanite* (Sofia, 2012); in Serbia a study on the writings of Judita Šalgo: Silvia Dražić, *Stvarni i imaginarni svetovi Judite Šalgo* (Novi Sad, 2013); and in Croatia a book on Laura Papo: Jagoda Večerina Tomaić, *Bohoreta – najstarija kći* (Zagreb, 2016).

[11] Harriet Freidenreich, "Yugoslavia," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, Jewish Women's Archive (2009), https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/Yugoslavia [retrieved: 12 Oct. 2017].

the subject of Jewish women's participation in culture was viewed from within the wider context of the history of Sephardic literature,[12] and in the work of Katan Ben-Zion, published in Hebrew, a language not present in Balkan cultures.[13] Ben-Zion emphasized metaphorically that the "feminine voyage" in Jewish literature of the countries of the former Yugoslavia began with the work of two writers born in the same year—Laura Papo Bohoreta (1891–1942) of Sarajevo and Paulina Lebl-Albala (1891–1967) of Belgrade. However, it was not until 2005, many years after their deaths, that the books of both authors first appeared: Papo Bohoreta's essayistic monograph *Sefardska žena u Bosni* [Sephardic Woman in Bosnia] and Lebl-Albala's memoir *Tako je nekad bilo* [It Used to Be Like That]. The case of these writers seems to confirm emphatically that texts written by women—hidden away in archives or family collections—still need to be found, described, and introduced into the region's history and culture.

In interdisciplinary reflections on the history and culture of Jews, the phrase "strategies of survival" is often closely associated with the Holocaust.[14] To our mind, the proposed topic is an attempt to extend the framework of this metaphor. The authors of the articles within this issue examine, on the one hand, the particular strategies used by authors in relation to the memory of their own fate and of those around them, including experiences during the interwar period, before the Holocaust. On the other hand, we also attempt to highlight strategies that helped authors develop a process for the recovery of the history of the group with which they identified. In this regard, we are interested in both searching in primary texts for "invisible testimonies"[15] and various representations of culture (literary texts, personal documentary narratives); moreover, detailed case studies on a single writer/activist and large-scale studies (covering a wider time range) provide a synthetic account of the activities characteristic of a given community. Descriptions of these strategies, we believe, give us the opportunity to get closer to answering the question of what memory of Jewish women in the Balkans has survived and how it functions today.

[12] Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, *Kultura španskih Jevreja na jugoslovenskom tlu: XVI–XX vek* (Sarajevo, 1990; first edition 1986) and Muhamed Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost* (Sarajevo, 1992).

[13] See Dina Katan Ben-Zion, *Nashim kotvot 'olam: sofrot yehudiyot be-Yugoslavia leshe-avar* (Jerusalem, 2013), and also ead., "The Feminine Voyage in the Post-Holocaust Jewish Literature of Former Yugoslavia," *Interkulturalnost. Časopis za podsticanje i afirmaciju interkulturalne komunikacije* 7 (2014), 186–191.

[14] See e.g. Ubertowska, "Kobiece 'strategie przetrwania'."

[15] Ubertowska, "'Niewidzialne świadectwa'."

At the same time, we would also like to help initiate a broader theoretical reflection on the subject of the continuation of memory of Jews in the culture of the Balkans, and the relative absence and sadly still modest body of research on their artistic and cultural achievements.

This issue consists of nine studies written by researchers from several university centers in Poland (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Wrocław, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, University of Opole), Serbia (Institute for Literature and Arts in Belgrade), Israel (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), and Germany (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin). They address "cultural performances of memory,"[16] define strategies for remembering and recovering from so-called "structural amnesia," describe activities that took place at the borderlands between cultures, and highlight various flows, transfers and limitations, but also the emissive power, of texts written by Balkan Jewish women who worked in the ethnically complicated, transcultural areas of the borderland. The subject of analysis here includes both Slavic (Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Yugoslav, and Bulgarian) and non-Slavic (Greek and Albanian) contexts. Most of the texts that comprise this issue are varied in character and present multi-dimensional and in-depth case studies. Their heroines are Laura Papo Bohoreta of Bosnia (Magdalena Koch), Magda Bošan Simin and Nevena Simin of Serbia (Krinka Vidaković-Petrov), Eva Nahir Panić of Yugoslavia/Israel (Katarzyna Taczyńska), Daša Drndić of Croatia (Sabina Giergiel), Dora Gabe of Bulgaria (Adriana Kovacheva), Rachel (Rae) Dalven, a Romaniote Jewish woman of Greece (Yitzchak Kerem), and Irene Grünbaum and Jutta Neumann of Albania (Agata Rogoś). One of the texts is an overview and presents in a panoramic manner—using the author's own musical metaphor—a "symphony of unique voices" and their literary testimony in Yugoslavia after World War II (Dina Katan Ben-Zion). An important and unique element in the present issue is a study involving sociolinguistic analysis of the linguistic image of Sephardic Jewish women in texts written in Judeo-Spanish and printed in the interwar Sarajevo periodical *Jevrejski glas* [Jewish Voice] (Aleksandra Twardowska and Agnieszka August-Zarębska).

We hope that the studies included in this issue will enrich existing knowledge about the history, activities, and creativity of Balkan Jewish women. We are convinced that thanks to this publication—and many

[16] Mateusz Borowski, *Strategie zapominania: Pamięć a kultura cyfrowa* (Kraków, 2015), 29.

others that will likely appear in the future—we will be able to expand the horizons of how we view these issues, enriching our knowledge with detailed research on the history of women in the Balkans. Once again, we would like to thank the editor-in-chief of *Studia Judaica* for the trust he has placed in us by making the pages of this issue available to us. We are also grateful to our *alma mater*, the Institute of Slavic Philology and the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, for co-financing this publication. The help and linguistic consultation of Izabela Dąbrowska and Thomas Anessi during our work on the English-language number was also invaluable.

We hope you enjoy it.

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Lost–Regained–Revised: Laura Papo Bohoreta, Sephardic Women in Bosnia, and Transcultural Survival Strategies in Memory

Abstract: This paper specifies and describes the main four stages and strategies of intercultural and memory survival of Sephardic women in Bosnia in the past (during the interwar period) and in the contemporary world (before, during, and after the collapse of Yugoslavia). The first strategy, named here as a (manu)script and orality/textuality one, is illustrated by a study *Sephardic Woman in Bosnia* (1932) by Jewish Sarajevo feminist Laura Papo Bohoreta (1891–1942). The second one, labeled as a translation and print strategy, is connected with the activity of Muhamed Nezirović (1934–2008), especially his translation of Papo's book from Ladino into Bosnian (2005). The third one, recognized here as a cultural transfer strategy, is represented by the novels *The Scent of Rain in the Balkans* (1986) and *The Ballad of Bohoreta* (2006) by contemporary Serbian female writer Gordana Kuić (1942). And—last but not least—the fourth strategy of digitizing manuscripts and archival texts by Laura Papo is represented by Edina Spahić, Cecilia Prenz Kopušar, and Sejdalija Gušić, a team who prepared and has recently edited three collected books with Papo's manuscripts (2015–2017).

Keywords: Sephardic women, memory strategies, orality/textuality, cultural transfer, digitizing archival texts, Laura Papo, Muhamed Nezirović, Gordana Kuić.

Introduction

"Little has been written about the history of women in former Yugoslavia and even less is as yet known about the history of Jewish women in the Balkans,"[1] noted, in 2009, Harriet Freidenreich, professor emerita of history at Temple University in Philadelphia and a specialist in Jewish history, European women's history, and gender history. While her first assertion is thankfully slowly losing currency due to a significant rise over the past quarter century in the number of books and interdisciplinary projects focused on women in the culture and history of the former Yugoslavia, which have been systematically filling this lamentable gap in cultural history,[2] the latter part of her claim, unfortunately, still appears to hold true. There continue to be few books available about Jewish women of the former Yugoslavia,[3] and to this day, this group has not

[1] Harriet Freidenreich, "Yugoslavia," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, Jewish Women's Archive (2009), https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/Yugoslavia [retrieved: 12 Oct. 2017].

[2] I will list here as examples titles from various areas (history of literature, history, biography, mediaeval history, cultural history), but it needs to be emphasized that this list is far from complete. Cf. Celia Hawkesworth, *Voices in the Shadows: Women and Verbal Art in Serbia and Bosnia* (Budapest, 2000); Magdalena Koch, *Podróże w czasie i przestrzeni: Proza Isidory Sekulić* (Wrocław, 2000); Francisca de Haan, Krasimira Daskalova, Anna Loutfi (eds.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries* (Budapest, 2005); Biljana Dojčinović Nešić, *GendeRings: Gendered Readings in Serbian Women's Writing* (Beograd, 2006); Magdalena Koch, *Kiedy dojrzejemy jako kultura: Twórczość pisarek serbskich na początku XX wieku (kanon – genre – gender)* (Wrocław, 2007), Serbian expanded edition: ead., *Kada sazremo kao kultura*, trans. Jelena Jović (Beograd, 2012); Svetlana Tomin, *Knjigoljubive žene srpskog srednjeg veka* (Novi Sad, 2007); Slobodanka Peković, *Isidorini oslonci* (Novi Sad, 2009); Ivana Hadži Popović, *Isidora – eros i tajna* (Beograd, 2009); Slavica Garonja Radovanac, *Žena u srpskoj književnosti* (Novi Sad, 2010); Dunja Detoni Dujmić, *Ljepša polovica književnosti* (Zagreb, 1998); Maša Grdešić (ed.), *Mala revolucionarka: Zagorka, feminizam i popularna kultura* (Zagreb, 2009); Natka Badurina, *Nezakonite kćeri ilirije: Hrvatska književnost i ideologija u 19. i 20. stoljeću* (Zagreb, 2009); Andrea Zlatar, *Tekst, tijelo, trauma: Ogledi o suvremenoj ženskoj književnosti* (Zagreb, 2004); Jasmina Čaušević (ed.), *Zabilježene – Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, 2nd edition (Sarajevo, 2014), https://pl.scribd.com/doc/258137781/Zabiljezene-Zene-i-Javni-Zivot-Bosne-i-Hercegovine [retrieved: 7 Nov. 2017); Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke: Društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji 1945–1953* (Beograd, 2011); Neda Todorović (ed.), *Izuzetne žene Srbije XX i XXI veka / Exceptional Women of Serbia XX and XXI century* (Beograd, 2016). Also important is the digital interactive feminist project "Knjiženstvo, teorija i istorija ženske književnosti na srpskom jeziku do 1915. godine," financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia under the project no. 178029 (2011–2017).

[3] One of the first to write about them was Dina Katan Ben-Zion in her Ph.D. thesis, followed by a book titled *Nashim kotvot 'olam: sofrot yehudiyot be-Yugoslavia leshe-avar* (Je-

yet been the subject of a major work of cultural history. Although this phenomenon arouses objections and a growing sense of frustration, it is really not surprising, as there has long been a great deal of negligence in this area of study in general. Up until the 1990s, knowledge about the participation of women in various fields was quite modest, so filling gaps here will remain an ongoing process that will continue for years to come. It can even be said that in research this field had been previously pushed to the margins, most likely out of the belief that it was of little importance, because it did not seem to contribute much to findings or narratives of a general and universal nature. Such a way of thinking, which has persisted for centuries, reflects a general, though in my opinion, erroneous belief that the voices of women in culture do not bring/add anything new. This situation has caused the voice of Jewish women from the Balkan periphery of Europe to be ignored all the more because they had even less influence and visibility than women representing the majority cultures in the region (e.g. Serbian, Croatian). It should be remembered that Jews in the Balkans (and therefore in the areas encompassing the former Yugoslavia) have always belonged to a minority ethnic group. This holds true regardless of whether we are talking about the Sephardic community, which after being expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 settled in various places on the Balkan Peninsula in the sixteenth century (especially in Istanbul and Thessaloniki, but also in Skopje, Bitola, Dubrovnik, Split, Sarajevo, and Belgrade), or about the Ashkenazi community, which came to the Balkans only in the mid-nineteenth century, especially after the Congress of Berlin in 1878, as a result of which Bosnia and Herzegovina came under the patronage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; this was also a time when a major migration was taking place among the Jewish population within the Habsburg Monarchy overall.[4] This does not change the fact that both groups were deeply immersed in the multiculturalism of the Balkans. My primary interest here, however, is the situation in (former) Yugoslavia and the

rusalem, 2013), as well as in her article, see ead., "The Feminine Voyage in the Post-Holocaust Jewish Literature of Former Yugoslavia," *Interkulturalnost. Časopis za podsticanje i afirmaciju interkulturalne komunikacije* 7 (2014), 186–191. Another book was also recently published, Jagoda Večerina Tomaić, *Bohoreta – najstarija kći* (Zagreb, 2016), based on the author's doctoral dissertation.

[4] Cf. Nebojša Popović, *Jevreji u Srbiji: 1991–1941* (Beograd, 1997), 11–24; Joseph J. Lévy, Yolande Cohen, *Żydzi sefardyjscy: Odyseja sefardyjskich Żydów od czasów inkwizycji do naszych dni, 1492–1992*, trans. Krzysztof Pruski (Warsaw, 2005), 50–51.

multilingual mosaic of languages spoken there: in the regions historically under the influence of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the Turkish language was dominant, while in the areas of influence of the Habsburg Monarchy, German and Hungarian prevailed, and after 1918, that is, following the creation of a common state of southern Slavs—the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929)—Slavic culture and the Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian language system achieved a dominant position. These processes involving external linguistic influences overlap with Jews' own nurturing of their cultures and languages: Ladino (Sephardim) and Yiddish (Ashkenazim). The Sephardic community in particular was actively dedicated to nurturing and developing the traditions it had carried with it from the Iberian Peninsula, and, hence, remained relatively closed, fending off assimilation processes and preserving its cultural heritage in as pure a form as possible. It developed in its own, isolated environment, in which it preserved its Jewish identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Ladino language (Judeo-Spanish) and cultivation of traditions.[5]

I am focusing my reflections here on Sephardic Jewish women in an effort to help fill the aforementioned gaps, and restore both the *her*storical (matrilineal, feminine) and *his*torical (complementing mainstream history) memory of their culture, which it undoubtedly deserves. The primary motif used here in relation to Balkan Jewish women who were active in culture will be the Miltonian paradigm, which has been preserved in culture and revolves around a triad of concepts: lost–regained–revised. As Moshe Rosman has emphasized in writing about Jews in general, without any specification of gender: "Wherever they lived, Jews were a minority, usually a colonized one, whose identity depended on being defined apart from the majority while in truth they were more a part of the society in which they lived than separate from it."[6]

Given such a situation, Sephardic Jewish women can be seen as having been doubly marginalized for centuries, not only in the official cultural discourse of their region, but until recently, also in research. For one, they have largely gone unnoticed, as members of an ethnic minority regarded

[5] This topic has been treated more broadly in Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, *Kultura španskih Jevreja na jugoslovenskom tlu: XVI–XX vek* (Sarajevo, 1990; 1st edition 1986), and in Muhamed Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost* (Sarajevo, 1992), particularly 7–72.

[6] Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?* (Oxford, 2007), 32.

as peripheral in both Bosnia and Serbia (I am limiting the scope of my enquiry to these communities, though it most certainly reflects a broader "Balkan perspective"); secondly, as women, they have been invisible among their own people in public discourse due to their inferior gender position, a situation we can associate with the phenomenon of "structural amnesia."[7] Their inscription in memory as a distinct group and as a subject of specialized studies has faced a double challenge. Now, after years of having been lost, the memory of them is slowly being restored, and their place in culture "revised." I would like to introduce here an important Sephardic woman from Bosnia, Laura Papo Bohoreta,[8] in order to distinguish several strategies due to which, in my opinion, Yugoslav Jews have managed to survive in memory and culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and are slowly becoming the subject of separate analyzes within Sephardic studies.

Sephardic Women from Bosnia and Laura Papo Bohoreta

Laura Papo Bohoreta (b. Luna Levi, 1891–1942) represents a cornerstone in the Sephardic Jews' strategies for survival in memory and culture. The first prominent Sephardic female intellectual, and an author, folklore collector, campaigner, and feminist, she was particularly active during World War I and the interwar period.[9] She was born in Sarajevo in Bosnia

[7] This term was introduced in 1947 by John A. Barnes for his study of genealogies. It describes the process of remembering only those family/cultural links that are of social significance (they are thus strongly patrilineal and patriarchal). It also refers to the process of forgetting the names of ancestors who are not recognized as an important link: male lines are far more memorable than female ones. John A. Barnes, "A Structural Amnesia," in id., *Models and Interpretations: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, 1947).

[8] Bohoreta was her nickname because this is the name traditionally given to the first-born daughter in Sephardic families (the first-born son was given the analogous nickname Bohor/Behor).

[9] Among the first to focus critical attention on Laura Papo were Vidaković-Petrov, *Kultura španskih Jevreja*, and Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost*. Very active were also Eliezer Papo and Željko Jovanović. See Eliezer Papo, "Entre la modernidad y la tradición, el feminismo y la patriarquía: Vida y obra de Laura Papo 'Bohoreta,' primera dramaturga en lengua judeo-española," *Neue Romania* 40 (2011), 89–107; id., "Laura Papo-Bohoreta: Kommentierte Forschungsbibliographie zum literarischen Werk einer bosnischen Sefardin," *Transversal: Zeitschrift für Jüdische Studien* 13 (2013), 2:65–80; see also Željko Jovanović, "Endangered Judeo-Spanish Folk Material: Collection, Re-creation and Recovery by Twentieth-Century Sephardic Authors from the Former Yugoslavia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2015, supervisors: Dr. Louise Haywood and Prof. Alison Sinclair). Jovanović devoted the whole long chapter to Laura Papo Bohotera, especially pages 10–85. I am very grateful to the author for making the text of his Ph.D. in a pdf form

as Luna[10] Levi, and between 1900 and 1908 lived with her family in Istanbul, where she attended the Alliance Israélite Universelle school for Jews.[11] In the interwar period, she became active in the Jewish community in Sarajevo and Bosnia, where she promoted the development of culture in the Ladino language, and was a central figure in Jewish life there. In 1942, she died of illness in Sarajevo, where she was buried in an unmarked grave during World War II, perhaps unaware that her two sons, Leon (b. 1918) and Bar-Kokhba (b. 1919), had died during their deportation by Croatian fascists to the extermination camp in Jasenovac.[12] She set for herself the project of recording the personal histories

accessible to me. In Poland, works focusing on her have included: Aleksandra Twardowska, "*La mužer sefardi de Bosna*: Literacka i kulturalna działalność Laury Papo-Bohorety," in Katarzyna Taczyńska, Szymon Sochacki, Miloš Zečević (eds.), *Poznać Bałkany: Historia – Polityka – Kultura* (Toruń, 2011), 205–213; and Agata Jawoszek, "Czwarty element – obecność w przestrzeni kulturalnej Bośni i Hercegowiny sefardyjskich Żydów a motyw Sarajewa jako Małej Jerozolimy," *Południowosłowiańskie Zeszyty Naukowe* 8 (2011), 123–133. In 2006, Anetta Buras-Marciniak wrote a doctoral dissertation at the University of Łódź titled "Żydzi sefardyjscy w dziejach, literaturze i kulturze Bośni i Hercegowiny" (her advisor was Zdzisław Darasz). The dissertation was never published, however, and its influence has been unfortunately very limited.

[10] As Jagoda Večerina Tomaić has written in her book on Laura Papo, the name Luna was changed to Laura during the family's stay in Istanbul (1900–1908) for assimilation purposes, in order to hide her Sephardic origins while living in this foreign environment. Cf. Večerina Tomaić, *Bohoreta – najstarija kći*, 24. When she married the Sephardic Jew Danijel Papo in 1916, she began to write under her husband's surname and has since then been known as Laura Papo.

[11] This organization was founded in Paris in 1860 by Adolphe Crémieux, a French Jewish lawyer, to protect the rights of Jews in various countries, but it was also a platform for promoting mutual support, solidarity, unity, and professional development. Over time, especially after 1890, it expanded its mission to include improving the welfare and education of Jews in the Middle East, the Balkans, and North Africa through contact with French culture and language. Its first schools were opened in Africa (Morocco) and Asia (Baghdad). In total, more than sixty schools operated in the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, Iran, and North Africa. Jewish children were provided with both a primary and vocational education. Many teachers educated in Alliance schools for teachers later worked in Turkey and France. See Frances Malino, "Jewish/Israel Organizations: Alliance Israelite Universelle," *Jewish Virtual Library*, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0001_0_00834.html [retrieved: 10 Jan. 2017]. Laura Papo also graduated from such a school in Istanbul, and hence knew French well; she later spent six months at Alliance Française in Paris at the Sorbonne, where she obtained a diploma entitling her to teach French and literature.

[12] Jasenovac was a concentration camp established during World War II by Croatian fascists (Ustaše) as part of the Independent State of Croatia. It operated from August 1941 to April 1945 and is known as the "Auschwitz of the Balkans" or the "Croatian Auschwitz." It was used as a place for the extermination of Jews, Serbs, Roma, and Croatians from the resistance movement. To this day, there are disputes between Croatian and Serbian politicians about the number of victims killed there.

of Sephardic women in Bosnia and showing this group as relevant to the development of the community and its cultural heritage. Although she was an educated and outward-looking person, from 1924 onward she chose to write mainly in Ladino (in its local, Bosnian version, though she was fluent in French,[13] Spanish, German, Turkish, and Serbo-Croatian), which functioned as her symbolic fatherland/motherland. She portrayed the world and daily life of Sephardic women in her short stories, plays, poems, and, above all, in her monograph *La mužer sefardi de Bosna* [The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia]. Yet, as she herself emphasized, she did not aspire to write high-brow, artistic literature, as her prime object was to serve as a guardian of not only her own traditions and culture but also, and above all, of the memory of Sephardic women and their socio-cultural roles.[14] They were to be credited, she insisted, with the passing down of traditions, customs, and language from one generation to the next, and thus reinforcing the memory of their group and not allowing its culture, origins, and roots to be forgotten. Raising the consciousness of Sephardic women, showing them their cultural potential (i.e. who they were/could be, how they embodied and built upon the strength of generations of women who had come before them), emphasizing their social role through continuity in preserving Jewish customs, rituals, rites, cuisine, folklore, and, above all, the Ladino language, became a lifelong mission for her. In this sense, she could be called the first Sephardic feminist, who exerted a tremendous influence on this community and on the culture and forms of remembrance related to it. Her goals were largely educational and pragmatic: to preserve the world of Sephardic women, to salvage it from oblivion, to kindle the memory of them, and, importantly, to convey her own admiration for the adaptive capacities of women from her culture and their forebears. She wrote about them analytically and with undisguised fascination in 1931, realizing that many of the elements of this world were undergoing rapid, deep transformations and, as a result, were in danger of being forgotten:

[13] It was in this language that she made her debut in 1908, writing a play in five acts titled *Elvira* under the pseudonym Laure Yvlé (reversed parts of her surname Levy). She was also the author of translations and adaptations from French: in 1907 she translated a play by Mme Émile de Girardin, *La joie fait peur: La alegria espanta* (*Veselje plaši* / *Joy Frightens*), and in 1910 the Jules Verne novel *Les enfants du capitaine Grant* (*Djeca kapetana Granta* / *In Search of the Castaways*). Cf. Večerina Tomaić, *Bohoreta – najstarija kći*, 38–44, 105–113.

[14] Cf. on this subject Vidaković-Petrov, *Kultura španskih Jevreja*, and Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost*.

> Let us examine carefully the life of a woman in her sixties![15] Her childhood was spent in a Turkish (Muslim) setting in the purest Orient. When she became an adolescent, the Austrians came[16] and with them European elements, which turned her notion of life upside down. How else? Once a woman of the harem, she had to adapt, willy-nilly, to the customs that the new conqueror brought in and the new government decreed. And when she reached the age when one becomes a grandma, Serbians liberated Bosnia[17] and she, a little Jewish girl . . . has kept adjusting shrewdly to all these regimes as her race's adaptive capacities prompted her to. Over half a century, she has watched three empires succeed each other, and she has lived in three environments—Oriental, Germanic and Slavic. And she's always been able to keep pace with her times. Now, doesn't that take great art?[18]

(Manu)script: From Orality to Textuality

The first strategy of the Sephardic women's community for survival in communicative and cultural memory was writing (down)—the act of (re)constructing history. This foundational act of memory is associated in Bosnia with the figure of Laura Papo. The impetus for her telling and preserving the history of Sephardic Jewish women was an article by the South Slavic feminist, ethnographer, cultural activist, teacher, and intellectual Jelica Belović Bernadžikovska (1870–1946),[19] entitled "Die südslavische Frau in der Politiek" and printed in the *Bosnische Post*[20] (no. 281, 10 Dec. 1916), a German-language daily published in Sarajevo, which provided the impulse for a detailed telling and consolidation of the history of Sephardic Jewish women. Belović Bernadžikovska devoted a section of her article to them; not knowing much about this hermetic community, she described these women in a superficial and unfavorable way, writing about their passivity, patriarchal subordination, their being limited to traditional roles, and their backwardness in comparison with women of other ethnic groups in Bosnia. A week later, in the same newspaper Laura Papo responded polemically

[15] Born ca. 1870.

[16] After 1878, following the Congress of Berlin, Bosnia became a protectorate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for 30 years, and was then annexed in 1908.

[17] This refers to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, created in 1918.

[18] Laura Papo Bohoreta, *Sefardska žena u Bosni* (Sarajevo, 2005), 65.

[19] For more on this author see: http://knjizenstvo.etf.bg.ac.rs/sr/authors/jelica-belovic-bernadzikovska [retrieved: 24 Oct. 2017] and the Croatian Bibliographic Lexicon (Hrvatski bibliografski leksikon), http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=1671 [retrieved: 24 Oct. 2017].

[20] For a time, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of the German-language newspaper *Bosnische Post*, published in Sarajevo from 1884 to 1918, was the first female journalist and editor in Bosnia, Milena Mrazović-Preindlsberger (1863–1927).

with an article titled “Die spaniolische Frau” (*Bosnische Post*, no. 287, 17 Dec. 1916),[21] in which she defended Sephardic women.[22] Muhamed Nezirović, a dedicated researcher of Bohoreta’s legacy and translator of her work (which will be discussed later in more detail), mentions another text by Belović Bernadžikovska titled “Die spaniolische Frau in Bosnien” from 1917, for which no response from Bohoreta appeared in the press.[23] A comprehensive response, however, came in the form of her in-depth study *La mužer sefardi de Bosna*. According to Papo’s own account, she was encouraged to write it by Dr. Vit Kajon, a collector of Jewish folklore in Bosnia. She chose to abandon German as a medium of communication and her superficial, reactive and emotional polemic with her opponent in the daily press. Instead, she turned to her native language, Ladino, seeing the writing of an in-depth ethnographic study as a chance not only for a comprehensive, substantive, factual description, but, moreover, as an opportunity to produce a detailed and accurate record of a passing world, and thus save from obscurity the traditions of her own culture, endangered in the interwar period both by increasingly strong assimilation processes among Jews, and by the slow, steady rise of fascism throughout Europe. In doing so, she drew attention to a group that was among the most marginalized, but also very close to her—Sephardic women.

We should recall that before World War I, throughout Europe (and thus also in the south, both in the Kingdom of Serbia and in Austria-Hungary, which included Bosnia and Herzegovina), the movement for the emancipation of women was spreading rapidly, and after the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, activism among feminist movements in the region increased greatly.[24] Papo herself, as well as her sisters (Nina, Klara, Blanka, and Rifka-Rikica),[25] became examples

[21] This issue was studied by Muhamed Nezirović, “Predgovor,” in Papo Bohoreta, *Sefardska žena u Bosni*, 31–34.

[22] This “harsh polemic” (“žestoka polemika”) with Belović Bernadžikovska’s article is mentioned by Papo Bohoreta herself in the Introduction (“Uvod”) to her book. Cf. Papo Bohoreta, *Sefardska žena u Bosni*, 41–42. At the end of this book there is a copy of the manuscript for this article written in German (11 pages in total).

[23] Cf. Nezirović, “Predgovor,” 33.

[24] This has also been written about by: Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* (Beograd, 1996); Koch, *Kiedy dojrzejemy jako kultura*; ead., “*Slavica non leguntur*: On a Feminist Project in Interwar Yugoslavia,” *Przekładaniec: A Journal of Literary Translation* 24 (2010), 131–143, https://www.wuj.pl/UserFiles/File//Przekladaniec_EN_24-7_prev.pdf [retrieved: 24 Oct. 2017]; Čaušević (ed.), *Zabilježene.*

[25] All were forced to work professionally: Nina and Klara opened the Chapeaux Chic Parisien milliner’s shop in Sarajevo in 1911, Blanka worked in a tobacco shop, and Rifka

of emancipation processes at work among Sephardic women, with Papo already then being considered (and still is) the first Sephardic feminist in Bosnia.[26] In her strategy of remembering, however, the issues of concern to her included both the past and the future of women from within her culture, and thus oscillated between tradition and modernity, or as Jagoda Večerina Tomaić writes, "between feminism and tradition."[27] Reading Papo's texts (poems, stories, articles), listening to her lectures, or watching her dramas or songs in Ladino on stage, women were simultaneously being not only educated and emancipated, but also reminded of their origins, history and culture—of their roots. In many texts, Papo challenged the stereotype of the passive, patriarchal, illiterate Sephardic woman, which also seemed to be a polemical act directed against the aforementioned description of Belović Bernadžikovska. Papo's priority was to educate women, to strengthen the educational component of their lives, because this would bring them independence from their male "guardians" (father, brothers, husband, sons). She also stressed the important role played by women in the community—she indicated education and work (as a means for independent living) as imperatives in their lives. In her stories and dramas, as well as in her active engagement as a cultural animator, social activist, Sephardic folklorist, and educated working woman (who raised two sons on her own after her husband Danijel Papo's mental illness and death), she provided models and incentives for self-development to Sephardic women, and tried to help them equip themselves to meet the requirements of the modern day, and thereby attain greater independence. Večerina Tomaić has even made the claim that in the interwar period, especially in the 1930s, Papo Bohoreta felt that the oral traditions, culture, and Ladino language of the Sephardic Bosnian community, threatened by processes that were leading to its slow extinction, would soon be forgotten.[28] She realized that one strategy for the survival of the community and its history was to save its language, proverbs, customs, and songs as primary carriers or storehouses of memory. For this reason, she treated the past as an important link in ensuring the continuity of her culture, though she was primarily interested in the matrilineal order and the role of Sephardic women as the guardians of tradition and language.

was a ballet dancer during the interwar period in the National Theatre in Belgrade. Cf. Večerina Tomaić, *Bohoreta – najstarija kći*, 24.

[26] This is how she is described in the first book on Laura Papo. Cf. ibid., 6, 12–15.

[27] Ibid., 35–37.

[28] Cf. ibid., 59.

In this context, it is not at all surprising that Papo Bohoreta gave up defending Sephardic women by means of polemics with other cultures (German/Austrian or Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian), and instead turned to these women directly, from within their shared Jewish heritage. She meticulously collected and gathered fragments of tradition into a coherent whole, combining them, describing them, and saving them from being lost to memory—"s ljubavlju i poštovanjem otima zaboravu" ("with love and respect saved from oblivion").[29] An example of this strategy for surviving in culture through the reconstruction of a community's recent traditions was the aforementioned ethnographic study on Jewish women. From July 1931 to August 1932, Laura Papo produced more than one hundred copybook pages of tiny handwriting that added up to her cultural, ethnographic, and folklore study *La mužer sefardi de Bosna*, devoted exclusively to the women of her own culture. Its thirty-four chapters present a panorama of life that she knew from the oral tales of two generations of Sephardic women—mothers and grandmothers. Papo shows a variety of aspects of women's everyday comings and goings—starting from their looks and garments, to cuisine, to their entertainments and neighborly relations. She describes festivals and rituals but also hygienic practices, basic medical knowledge, the course and customs of pregnancy, childbirth, the postnatal period, the naming of a child, maternity, matchmaking, conjugal life, and widowhood. The book ends with reflections on old age and death, including a detailed description of the preparation of clothes for the deceased, the rituals of mourning, and funeral prayers. In this way, the author participates in memory-making through her communicating with the community of Sephardic women. Within this relatively small community, she became an important link in the living communicative memory.[30] Moreover, the orality of Bohoreta's message is replaced by textuality; she described details, working within the "modus of biographical memories,"[31] referring to the experiences of a group of Sephardic women she herself knew, including those of her own mother, Estera. She was the first person to

[29] Ibid., 101.

[30] I refer here to Jan Assmann's concept of communicative memory. See: Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008), 109–118; see also: Jan Assmann, John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995), 125–133.

[31] Jan Assmann, "Kultura pamięci," in Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska (ed.), *Pamięć zbiorowa i kulturowa: Współczesna perspektywa niemiecka*, trans. Anna Kryczyńska-Pham (Kraków, 2009), 89.

give testimony to the history of the women within her own cultural circle, enriching and authenticating the image of a community that had been thus-far closed and inaccessible to others, recording it in a textual (though handwritten) medium. Her text was intended to serve—as Assmann would say—a mnemonic function,[32] that is, to maintain the memory and identity of Sephardic women, and, at the same time, to overcome stereotypes based on the false outsider perceptions of her recent adversary Belović Bernadžikovska. By writing this work, Papo fulfilled her social, community, and gender obligation to salvage memory by creating a record that constitutes a unique document of the epoch, and by becoming the guardian of the Bosnian/Sarajevo Sephardic women's collective memory, the memory that provides stability to their social identity within the wider context of women in Bosnia. The writtendown text proved to be an act of restoration of vanishing meanings, a form of "externalized memory."[33] The strength and, at the same time, a weakness of this strategy back then (during the interwar period) lay in her use of the local dialect of Ladino, isolated from a wider context, and the handwritten form of the copybook notes. Although the language played a crucial role in cultural communication and identity-perpetuation among Sephardic Jews and acted as a storehouse for their collective cultural memory,[34] it also restricted access to knowledge about these women, making it available only to members of the Sarajevo Sephardic community. More importantly and rather essentially, the strategy of writing (down) in Ladino was blighted by the fact that the study had no printed form and remained a manuscript only.[35] As such, the work of memory-making through the communication and preservation of cultural lore and meanings among Sephardic women in Bosnia had been done, but its reach was severely limited, if we can speak of any reach at all. However, against all odds, Papo's text has proven to be a valuable repository of social traditions and communication. The strategy

[32] Cf. also Tomasz Majewski, "Mnemotechnika," in Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, Robert Traba (eds.), *Modi memorandi: Leksykon kultury pamięci* (Warsaw, 2014), 240–245.

[33] Jan Assmann, *Pamięć kulturowa: Pismo, zapamiętywanie i polityczna tożsamość w cywilizacjach starożytnych*, trans. Anna Kryczyńska-Pham (Warsaw, 2008), 39. English edition: id., *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge, 2011).

[34] Cf. Jacques Le Goff, *Historia i pamięć*, trans. Anna Gronowska, Joanna Stryjczyk, introd. Paweł Rodak (Warsaw, 2007), 103. English edition: id., *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall, Elizabeth Claman (New York, 1992).

[35] Unfortunately, to date nobody has been able to answer the question why this book was never printed in Ladino before World War II.

of (hand)writing was important insofar as it promoted survival, even if only in a time capsule, in a "dormant" form and in an easily perishable and risky carrier of memory (just how risky was shown by the experience of the Holocaust). It is hard to disagree with the statement of Andreas Huyssen that the "past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory."[36] The story of Sephardic women was articulated by Bohoreta, but it was exposed to the risk of annihilation, because it existed in the form of a single, unique item and was preserved in the idiom of a minority, moreover, one condemned during World War II to systematic extermination. The strategy of preserving the history of women in the form of a manuscript and in the short-range of the Ladino language in Bosnia could have been proven over time to be insufficient, had it not been for another strategy applied to the text of *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia* years later.

Translation and Print

The second strategy has been that of translation and publishing, a strategy used in the early twenty-first century by University of Sarajevo professor Muhamed Nezirović (1934–2008), a Romance studies scholar and distinguished expert on Sephardic culture. After a "floating gap"[37] of more than seventy years, Nezirović first discovered Laura Papo, describing her in his *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost u Bosni i Hercegovini* [History of Judeo-Spanish Literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina],[38] and then also writing about her study of Sephardic women. The "floating gap," as Assmann wrote, recalling a term coined by Jan Vansina,[39] is the distance in time between communicative memory and cultural memory, a gap between the community of experience that bonds past and future

[36] Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Making Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York, 1995), 3.

[37] Through a lucky twist of fate—*felix casus*, as Muhamed Nezirović would call it—Laura Papo's manuscripts survived in the Sarajevo Municipal Archives, though they had been held previously in the private archive of the Levi family, where they survived World War II. Most of the manuscripts were sold to the City Archives in the 1960s by Bohoreta's sister, Blanka (née Levi) Kuić, who lived in Belgrade. The remaining part was given to the institution in the late 1980s by the author's niece, Gordana Kuić, a writer herself, which will be discussed later in my text.

[38] He described her in his book as an important figure in Sephardic cultural life. Cf. Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost*, 503–556.

[39] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, 1985), 23.

generations, and the cultural symbolization of the world of the descendants that comes into being many years later.[40] From within this fluid temporal chasm, Nezirović, who was an accomplished researcher of Romance languages and knew Ladino fluently, rescued for a second time and in a double sense both this text and the figure of Bohoreta from the realm of oblivion. He made an active effort at reviving the memory and reinforcing the cultural memory of Sephardic women from Bosnia, joining a succession of guardians of their memory. He first translated *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia* from Ladino into Bosnian, and then published it in Sarajevo in 2005. The book thereby made its first public appearance, though in a language (Bosnian) that was "secondary" to the original vehicle of memory. Secondly, he also preserved the memory of Laura Papo herself, demonstrating her importance as an animator of Sephardic culture, and prefaced the translation of her study with a comprehensive introduction titled "Predgovor: Sudbina jednog nepoznatog a značajnog pisca" [Preface: The Fate of an Unknown but Important Writer]. It should be noted that the publisher of the book in Bosnia was the Connectum publishing house, which emphasized its role in "bridging" cultures, in this case, Sephardic and Bosnian. In line with the publisher's philosophy of integrating the cultural heritage of Bosnia, it took pains to produce a beautiful bilingual collector's edition (Ladino manuscript on the left, Bosnian text on the right) with a rich graphic design that featured the author on the front cover. The book's preface also contains photographs of Papo with her sons and sisters, and at the end of the book, there are a number of historical images of Sephardic women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition, the book includes an afterword by Dragana Tomašević, a Bosnian-Herzegovinian writer and researcher of women's activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, titled "Pogovor: Jedan književni biser" [Afterword: A Certain Literary Pearl], in which the author stresses the importance of Papo's writing to the study of the culture of women in Bosnia in general, and emphasizes the emancipationist and even feminist context of Papo's newly translated and published book. After having long existed within the realm of an almost lost communicative memory, her work was recovered and revitalized by joining two strategies side by side (the bringing together of the handwritten text and print, and of the Ladino and Bosnian languages). The published text began to serve as the

[40] Assmann, *Pamięć kulturowa*, 64.

founding text of the cultural memory of Bosnia's Sephardic women, and still functions in this role today. Consequently, an important context for the maintenance of memory is the fact that during the period of the floating gap, Papo's text on Sephardic women and the memory of both them and her role as a cultural spokesman were at risk numerous times of a disappearing forever from view. Let us recall that Bohoreta's text was created in the interwar period in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during a revival of Sephardic culture, among a community that had defined Sarajevo for centuries as the symbolic "Little Jerusalem" (*Yerushalayim chico*) due to its multiethnic and multicultural character. Bohoreta's manuscript helped shape a conglomerate of individual memories through a process of communication that transmitted an intergenerational message, containing a strong charge of cultural energy. World War II and the Holocaust not only fundamentally changed the status of the Jewish minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina,[41] but also radically transformed the political, social, and religious situation in the so-called second, socialist Yugoslavia, where the supranational, Josip Broz Tito's idea of "brotherhood and unity" was promoted, while the role of individual ethnicities within the federal state (including on religious issues) was limited. In 1992, as the greatly reduced Sephardic community was observing the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of their ancestors from the Iberian Peninsula, federal Yugoslavia was breaking up into smaller nation states, and besieged Sarajevo had become the scene of fratricidal battles laced with bitter nationalism and ethnic division. In 1995, ten years before the publication of the translation of Papo's book about Sephardic women in Bosnia, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a new state "under construction." It has experienced a difficult transition, which continues to this day, in which the memory of the Sephardic community has not been a priority. Thus,

[41] Karl-Markus Gauβ wrote that of the 14,000 Jews in Sarajevo before the war, only 900 remained there after it ended. Cf. Karl-Markus Gauβ, "Ostatni: Sefardyjczycy z Sarajewa," in id., *Umierający Europejczycy: Podróże do sefardyjskich Żydów z Sarajewa, Niemców z Gottsche, Arboreszów, Łużyczan i Aromunów*, trans. Alicja Rosenau (Wołowiec, 2006), 5–47. About the language situation of Sephardim also wrote Agnieszka August-Zarębska, "Ladino czy *judezmo*? O językach Żydów sefardyjskich," *Prace Filologiczne* 56 (2009), 85–102; and Agnieszka August-Zarębska, Zuzanna Bułat Silva, "Recalling the Past: Linguistic and Cultural Images of the *Kurtijo* Sephardic Courtyard," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 25 (2016), 1:96–117. See also Izabela Olszewska, Aleksandra Twardowska, "Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish as Determinants of Identity: As Illustrated in the Jewish Press of the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Colloquia Humanistica* 5 (2016), 79–103; and Tracy K. Harris, *Death of a Language: The History of Judeo-Spanish* (Newark, 1994).

a remarkable and surprising phenomenon has been the recovery in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in quite unfavorable circumstances (a state of tension and political ethnicization) of a text around which the cultural memory of nearly forgotten Sephardic women began to coalesce. After more than seventy years of hibernation, on the fringes of the wider mainstream culture, in the hermetically sealed capsule of the Ladino language, Laura Papo's message was disseminated in a transcultural manner. The translation should be appreciated all the more, because—let us not forget—after 1941 (after the outbreak of World War II in Yugoslavia) the Ladino language in Bosnia (for the preservation of which Bohoreta fought before the war) lost its effective power, and after 1991 generally attained the status of a language that was not only endangered in Bosnia, but already disappearing.[42] The translation into Bosnian, therefore, helped revitalize the memory of Sephardic women, effusing it with new cultural energy. After 2005, Papo's work was recognized not merely as a Sephardic achievement, but was also included into the wider field of the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an integral value. Paradoxically, however, the "freeing" of *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia* and its full activation in the cultural memory had only been made possible by the act of translation from Ladino into a language that for centuries had historically existed alongside Sephardic culture, but remained outside of it: Bosnian.[43] Yet, this language was an instrument with a somewhat wider scope of influence, though, admittedly, its own range was generally limited. Although it functioned locally/regionally and remained mainly within the culture of the former Yugoslavia, it benefited from the legacy of the wider Serbo-Croatian language system. The transcultural flavor of this second strategy was strengthened by the very interesting fact that the author of the translation which unleashed the energy of the memory of the Sephardic Jews in what was recently "Little Jerusalem" is a Bosnian with Muslim roots. It was he—alongside Krinka Vidaković-Petrov and Dina Katan Ben-Zion—who became their spokesperson in the cultural memory and an active link in reconstructing the community's past in Bosnia. This speaks of the very interesting, positive patterns in Muslim-Jewish relations in this region, and of the historical Bosnian

[42] Ibid.

[43] Until 1991, the language was named Serbo-Croatian, but after the collapse of Yugoslavia the language system was divided into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrian. In the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the language was also named Serbo-Croatian.

experiment to build an undivided community of Islam and Judaism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[44] This is a paradox and constructive irony of modernity—the survival in memory and culture of the world of Sephardic Jewish women is largely due to a Muslim.

Cultural Transfer and the Transmission of Memory

The third, rather contemporary strategy for the survival of the memory of Sephardic Jewish women (including Papo herself and her family, particularly her four sisters) is cultural transfer. We owe this strategy mainly to the literary activity of the contemporary Serbian writer Gordana Kuić, who was born in Serbia during World War II in 1942 (and thus in the year of Papo's death, a fact which symbolically underscores the continuity of activities related to Sephardic women's culture), after her parents fled from Sarajevo. She is an author with Serbian (after her father) and Sephardic (after her mother)[45] roots. Laura Papo Bohoreta was the writer's aunt, the sister of her mother Blanka Levi, and appears among a palette of other heroines—Sephardic Jewish women—as a literary character in her debut novel *Miris kiše na Balkanu* [*The Scent of Rain in the Balkans*, 1986], the first volume of a tetralogy and of a series of other books she wrote on the history of Sephardic Jews.[46] The novel begins the saga of a Sephardic family from Sarajevo told from within the matrilineal order, and thus from a feminine perspective. The writer, who fictionalized the microhistories of Sarajevo's Sephardic women, nevertheless drew abundantly from the history of the previous generation of women in her own family. The names of the sisters are authentic (Laura, Blanka, Nina, Klara, and Riki/Rifka); in the novel only the family's surname is changed—instead of the Levis, the Salom family appears in the book. The basis of the Serbian author's saga was the story of her mother and her sisters (with

[44] It is worth noting that the famous Sarajevo Haggadah (medieval codex of Sephardim) was also saved by Bosnian Muslims during World War II. Cf. Gauβ, "Ostatni," 44–45.

[45] Privately Blanka Levi (i.e. Branka Kuić, mother of Gordana Kuić, who during World War II changed her name "Blanka" to the Serbian "Branka" and later officially used this name) was the younger sister of Laura/Luna (Levi) Papo; she survived the war in Serbia and after the war lived in Belgrade. She held some of her sister's manuscripts, which she sold in 1961 to the City Archives in Sarajevo.

[46] The remaining volumes are *Cvat lipe na Balkanu* (1992), *Smiraj dana nad Balkanom* (1995), and *Duhovi nad Balkanom* (1997). In addition, she also published other novels about the history of Sephardic Jews, and in particular, the history of Jewish women: *Legenda o Luni Levi* (1999), *Bajka o Benjaminu Baruhu* (2002), *Roman u slikama* (2015).

her two brothers, Isak and Elias, marked only in the background). This first volume of the tetralogy covers the history of the family from the attack in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 until 1945, the end of World War II in Yugoslavia. Later volumes cover the history of postwar Yugoslavia up to the 1990s and are more specifically a family micro-history told against the background of socialist Yugoslavia's macro-history until its collapse. Laura Papo, no longer one of many, but now a main character, is also the protagonist in Kuić's epistolary-journalistic novel *Balada o Bohoreti* [*The Ballad of Bohoreta*, 2006]. Both books enjoyed great popularity in Serbia and beyond, and each went through a dozen or so editions, attaining the status of pop cultural (mega-)hits and, along with Kuić's other novels on the history of the Sephardic Jews in the Balkans, have strengthened the cultural memory of Sephardic Jews in Serbia, especially the memory of Sephardic women. In this way, Kuić at the turn of the twenty-first century, just as Laura Papo had done at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, fulfills the obligation to shape the communicative memory of her family, while maintaining a social commitment to the cultural memory of the Sephardic women's community in Bosnia, from which she also in part (through her mother) traces her origins. It is through this memory, through the Ladino language and the exclusively Bosnian Jewish cultural space, that the Bosnian language used in the translation of Papo's book penetrated Kuić in a transcultural way as an important subject for an even greater regional culture, that is, Serbian. It should be remembered that the first volume of the tetralogy, *The Scent of Rain in the Balkans*, appeared in print in 1986, and so was within the formula of the "broad" homeland, that is, before the break-up of federal Yugoslavia, and hence had a greater impact. This time, the strategy of cultural transfer from Bosnia to Serbia (though the author is a Serbian writer) shifted from an authentic family document to the fictionalization of the history of Sephardic women, which significantly broadened the scope of the audience, in part due to the fictional nature of the texts. The popular form of the novel/story of the Sephardic women, using the threads of a family saga and (auto-)biographical motifs, becomes easier and more attractive in its reception, drawing in the average reader with its "authenticity." Kuić thus introduces the stories of Balkan Jewish women to the collective imagination of a mass audience in contemporary post-Yugoslav pop culture. It should also be added that in recent decades the spectrum of artistic forms popularizing the stories described by Kuić has also widened. A few years ago, ballet and theatrical productions were

made based on *The Scent of Rain in the Balkans*,[47] a TV series based on this novel was aired,[48] and numerous translations of *The Scent of Rain in the Balkans* were published in many large (English, German, French, Spanish) and smaller (Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Slovenian, Macedonian) languages.[49] It is clearly visible that through its transmission to other languages of the arts (ballet, theater, film) and foreign languages (mentioned above), we achieve an even wider field for strengthening the strategies for the survival of the memory of Sephardic women in culture, and obtain a much more complete picture regarding the range of cultural transfer and the various vectors within which it flows.

One should not forget that cultural transfer is a dynamic process, born in the interaction between cultures, and derives from the feedback, mutual fascination, and/or inspirations these exchanges create.[50] This involves a transcultural interpenetration of codes and tracking of mutual dependencies, intertextual relations/connections, and the continuation or transformation of cultural material. It often depends on the "reception situation/boom"[51] or cultural mobility, and may involve a radical reversal in the relationship between the source culture (in this case, Sephardic culture) and the host culture (Serbian culture, and through translation, to other, larger ones). It is also important that in interacting with one another, cultural phenomena, which were not previously placed at the center of a broader historical cultural narrative, regain a place in the

[47] For example, performed on the stage of the National Theater in Sarajevo in 1991 or another—in Belgrade in the Madlenianum Opera and Theatre, a dramatization by Nebojša Romčević, directed by Ana Radivojević-Zdravković—premiered on 12 April 2009.

[48] First the series *Miris kiše na Balkanu* was produced for the RTS (Radio-Television of Serbia) station in fourteen episodes and aired from December 2010 to March 2011 (dir. Ljubiša Samardžić), then the second chapter of a family history based on the Kuić novel *Cvat lipe na Balkanu* was filmed in thirteen episodes in 2011 and 2012 (dir. Ivan Stefanović). Both enjoyed and continue to enjoy great popularity with viewers, including versions broadcast via YouTube with subtitles in English, which has significantly increased the reach of both series.

[49] Into French (Lausanne, 2000), English (Belgrade, 2004; the US, 2012), Macedonian (2011), Slovenian (2012), Polish (trans. Magdalena Wąs, Borderlands/Pogranicze Foundation in Sejny, 2012), Hebrew (*Reaḥ ha-geshem ba-Balkan*, trans. Dina Katan Ben-Zion, Jerusalem 2012), and most recently German (Vienna, 2015), Italian (Turin, 2015), and Spanish (Madrid, 2015). More information on translations can be found on Gordana Kuić's official website: http://www.gordanakuic.com/pages/prevodi.htm [retrieved: 3 Nov. 2017].

[50] Paweł Zajas recently wrote about this phenomenon, although in the context of other cultures, approaching it also from a theoretical perspective. Cf. Paweł Zajas, *Niemilknące muzy: Wydawcy, pisarze, tłumacze i pośrednicy kulturowi na frontach Wielkiej Wojny (1914–1918)* (Poznań, 2016).

[51] Ibid., 25.

collective memory.[52] We are dealing here with just such a consolidation of the memory of Sephardic women through various cultural transfers in the work of Gordana Kuić and translations of her work into foreign languages, as well as into the language of film and other arts. The great commercial success of the author's texts shows that the aforementioned strategy of transmitting the memory of the Sephardic women through the use of literature/popular culture seems to have reached a broad, mass audience, and thus—at least for now—is not threatened with oblivion or a loss of memory. One is left, however, with the fear that through acts of massification and a broader impact, it is exposed in some sense to a process of trivialization or commercialization. However, forgetting is definitely not a threat.

Digitization of Manuscripts and Archival Texts

Today we can also observe yet another, more academic process of restoring memory, mainly through the figure and work of Laura Papo Bohoreta. I am thinking here of another strategy for survival in memory, one resulting from a combination of older methods and that make use of advancements stemming from achievements in the modern technosphere. This includes the digital archiving of texts and making use of the innovative possibilities offered by the dynamically developing digital humanities. The digitizing of texts allows them to be more quickly replicated and placed in the public sphere, which ideally supports the strategy of rescuing these texts from oblivion, disseminating them, and improving access to them. This strategy is also to be used to ensure the protection and preservation of other texts (dramas, stories, readings, poems, articles, lectures) written by Laura Papo Bohoreta about Sephardic women, and not just her study *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia*. This work is being overseen by a former student and now continuator of the work of Muhamed Nezirović, University of Sarajevo professor Edina Spahić, as well as by professor Cecilia Prenz Kopušar of the University of Trieste and Sejdalija Gušić of the Historical Archive in Sarajevo (Historijski arhiv Sarajevo), with the financial sponsorship and commitment of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This work was carried out over three years (2015–2017) in a project titled "Digitization and Publication of the

[52] Ibid., 26.

Private Collections of Laura Papo Bohoreta," the effects of which are already apparent. A pilot project and inspiration for the creation of the project for the preservation of manuscripts of Laura Papo's works was the publication of a digital version of her best-known and most often staged and popular drama *Esterka: Ritrato social de nueastros dias en tre actos* [Esterka: Scenes from Social Life in Three Acts] from 1930. In 2015, the first of three notebooks was published containing the manuscripts of Papo's dramas: *Ožos mios* [My Eyes], *Avia de ser* [It Used to Be So], *La pasensia vale mučo* [Patience Worth Its Weight in Gold], and *Tiempos pasados* [Past/Old Times]. The second notebook, which appeared in the autumn of 2016, contained dramas: *Shuegra ni de baro buena* [A Mother-in-Law Even Made of Mud Is No Good], *Hermandat-Madrasta – el nombre le abasta* [Brotherhood of the Stepmother – a Name That Speaks for Itself], and the aforementioned *Esterka*.[53] The third notebook appeared in June 2017 and contained essays, poems, texts about Sephardic customs, one-act plays, and Sephardic romances (*romanceros*) collected and preserved by Bohoreta. In this way, the digitized and published manuscripts of Papo were first secured in a larger number of copies, which protected them against loss or destruction. Second, their scope of access was expanded. They entered into a new, wider range of circulation, and were now available not only to a narrow group of privileged researchers, but had a path to bring them to a wider, interested audience. It must be remembered, however, that the publication of the three volumes of manuscripts from the Municipal Historical Archive is just the first stage of this project. Although these manuscripts have been secured and digitized, they still exist only in the Ladino language, and can only be read by people who know this language, which, as mentioned earlier, is a very narrow group, giving Ladino the status of an endangered language. In fact, the work of Papo would have attained a wider field of influence in the culture of the region if—like the study *The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia*—it had been translated into Bosnian. However, this stage still lies ahead. Nevertheless, the digitization and publication of manuscripts is a strategy for the protection of endangered elements of the national heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the category under which the legacy of Laura Papo

[53] We should also remember that Eliezar Papo has recently edited a critical edition of Bohoreta's drama *Avia de ser* in Judeo-Spanish. See Eliezar Papo, "Avia de ser, escena de la vida de un tiempo, kon romansas, de Laura Papo 'Bohoreta': Edision sientifika, anotada i komentada," in Paloma Díaz-Mas, Elisa Martín Ortega (eds.), *Mujeres sefardíes lectoras y escritoras: siglos XIX–XXI* (Madrid–Fankfurt, 2016), 339–364.

Bohoreta has been officially placed. Thus, the memory of Sephardic women has passed through two stages in the overall trajectory: lost-written and lost-regained. The third phase—revision—is still ahead of us, although the first signs of progress are visible. In this academic context, we should welcome with joy the first full monograph devoted to Laura Papo, written by the Croatian researcher Jagoda Večerina Tomaić, entitled *Bohoreta – najstarija kći* [Bohoreta – The Eldest Daughter] from 2016. This author in 2017 also published a book in Spanish entitled *Laura Papo Bohoreta, en el confín de mundos, culturas y lenguas: El estudio de la vida y obra de Laura Papo Bohoreta, primer escritora sefardí* [Laura Papo Bohoreta, on the Crossroads of Worlds, Cultures and Languages: A Study on Life and Work of Laura Papo Bohoreta, the First Female Sephardic Writer], which brought knowledge about Papo to Spain.[54] This country abounds in fateful significance in the cultural memory of Bosnia's Sephardic Jews, and has become the setting of a mythic prehistory and a metaphor of the lost homeland, both of which also functioned during the times of Papo as a mnemotopos,[55] a symbolically saturated place, evoking the memory of the Sephardic paradise from before their expulsion in 1492. The return of Laura Papo Bohoreta to the Spanish language through the Croatian Sephardic studies scholar Večerina Tomaić can therefore be regarded as somewhat symbolic.

Conclusion

Over the last hundred years, a transnational (Sephardic-Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian-Spanish) space of communication has developed, contributing to the preservation of memory of Sephardic women in Bosnia. This memory work was initiated by Laura Papo Bohoreta, who collected and wrote down the lore of her female compatriots. At the same time, the memory of Papo herself as one of the most spectacular figures among Sephardic women from Bosnia is also being preserved and revived. The four strategies I have distinguished for preserving memory, not only that of Laura Papo, but, first of all, of the Sarajevo/Bosnian Sephardic women's community

[54] See also Nela Kovačević, "El mundo sefardí en la obra de Laura Papo y el papel de la mujer en él" (Ph.D. dissertation, Universidad de Granada, 2014). I am grateful to Željko Jovanović for paying my attention to this text.

[55] Jan Assmann has written on the phenomenon of mnemotopos. Cf. Assmann, "Kultura pamięci," 92–93.

described in her copybook in 1932, have followed a spatio-temporal trajectory of mutual communication, based on the cultural mobility of the materials dedicated to Sephardic women. Each of these strategies—Laura Papo writing down the history of Sephardic women in Ladino in order to restore their dignity and highlight their relevance to the history of their own culture; later, the translation and publication of Papo's writings about Sephardic women (Muhamed Nezirović); then its cultural transfer and popularization in novelistic form (Gordana Kuić); and finally, the ongoing archiving and digitization of Laura Papo's remaining works (an international project) and serious academic interest in these texts (Jagoda Večerina Tomaić as well as Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, Eliezer Papo, and Željko Jovanović)—seems to have been well selected by the actors behind the transfer, who have played a role in creating the cultural memory of Sephardic women in Bosnia. Each of these strategies seems to have been optimal for the particular moment in time that it emerged and facilitated a maximum of success for the given conditions and specific historical moment. Through their interactions with one another, cultural phenomena that were previously not central to the narrative assumed a place in the collective memory. And all four strategies seem to have been necessary, each in its own time, while their combined power arises from their mutual complementarity. Moreover, only now, in the paradoxical situation of the very small remaining population of Sephardic Jews in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, serious studies on Sephardim have begun and the process of creating their cultural memory has originated. A testimony to this—in addition to the events and artefacts described above—is the "Bohoreta" women's club, established in the 1990s in Sarajevo by the "La Benevolencija" Jewish cultural, educational, and humanitarian association, and named in honor of Laura Papo. The charity association "La Benevolencija" was founded in 1892 to serve the Jewish population, and Papo was a committed activist for the cause during the interwar period; having ceased its activities in 1941 it was reactivated in 1992, a century after its founding, and continues to operate to this day.[56] Papo devoted her book on Sephardic women to this organization, writing: *A la "Benevolencija" valeros amiga del progreso* ("To 'La Benevolencija,' a brave friend

[56] More on the history of the association can be found on its official website http://www.benevolencija.eu.org/content/view/33/35 [retrieved: 6 Nov. 2017] and in the text by Anna Bianca Roach, "La Benevolencija," http://balkandiskurs.com/en/2017/04/03/english-la-benevolencija [retrieved: 6 Nov. 2017].

of progress"). The women's club associated with the "Bohoreta" club has a double meaning. On the one hand, it commemorates the name of Laura Papo and is a symbolic continuation of her work in spreading knowledge about Sephardic women, and, above all, plays an important social and humanitarian role (helping the elderly, the poor, taking care of children, organizing celebrations of Jewish holidays). On the other hand, it refers not to the name of the writer, but to her nickname "Bohoreta," which the firstborn daughters, the eldest sisters, in Sephardic families had bestowed upon them. This idea of a symbolic cultural sisterhood among contemporary Sephardic women in Bosnia and the region (post-Yugoslav countries) is also a form of commemoration of its patron and a specific space of memory. However, it primarily activates the metaphor of female subjectivity in active solidarity and emphasizes the continuation of the path taken by the "oldest sister." It also emphasizes a unity built around a Sephardic/Bosnian identity, with an emphasis on the women's community. One thing is certain. Thanks to the numerous survival strategies launched in the past and today, we are slowly beginning to recover the memory of Sephardic women and to update and revitalize it.

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Memory Mediation by First- and Second-Generation Survivors: *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War* by Magda Bošan Simin and Nevena Simin

Abstract: The reasons for researching the works of Yugoslav author Magda Bošan Simin are several: (1) her novel *When the Sour Cherries Bloom* (1958) was probably the first literary representation of the Holocaust written by a woman author in Yugoslavia; (2) Bošan Simin represents the Holocaust in multiple formats (documentary prose, memoir, autobiographical novel); (3) the book *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War* (2009, English edition 2015) is a narrative comprised of texts written by both Magda Bošan Simin as a Holocaust survivor and her daughter Nevena Simin as a second-generation Holocaust survivor. The research focuses on Holocaust survivors and their post-Holocaust children, issues of memory in Holocaust representation, types of memory, memory mediation, author's intentionality, gender and identity issues.

Keywords: Holocaust representation, formats of Holocaust representation, role of memory and memory mediation, primary and secondary memory, first- and second-generaton survivors as co-authors, gender in Holocaust representation, identity.

Introduction

Magda Simin (b. Bošan) was born in 1922 in Senta, a town in the Vojvodina region of Serbia. Her parents and grandparents were members of an Ashkenazi family that had lived in multi-ethnic Vojvodina from at least the nineteenth century, in Austria-Hungary, and later, from 1918, in Yugoslavia. Simin lived in several Vojvodina towns (Senta, Kikinda,

Čurug) prior to 1941, when Nazi Germany and its allies invaded and dismembered Yugoslavia. Germany occupied one part of Vojvodina (Banat) and Hungary the other section, called Bačka.

That same year the new Hungarian authorities arrested Simin as a member of a larger group that had organized resistance under the leadership of the Federation of the Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ). She was interrogated, tortured, and finally sentenced to 13 years of prison, while some of the members of this group were executed. In the first period she was treated as a political prisoner and sent to serve her sentence in a prison in Hungary called Maria Nostra (Márianosztra). In March 1944, Jewish women convicts in the Maria Nostra prison (15 of them from Yugoslavia and 50 from Hungary) were separated in "a ghetto within a ghetto," transferred to the Gyüjtofőgház and Komárom prisons (also in Hungary), and later handed to the Germans who deported Magda to Dachau-Allah, Bergen-Belsen, Fallersleben,[1] and finally to Salzwedel.[2] Freedom for Magda came when the Salzwedel camp was liberated by the Americans on 29 April 1945.

On returning to Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the war, Magda married Živko Simin, a Serb from Vojvodina who had survived the Mauthausen camp. These two survivors lived in Novi Sad, the cultural center of Vojvodina. They had two children. Their daughter Nevena was born in 1950. Magda Simin worked as an editor for the main public radio station in Novi Sad in the Hungarian-language department; she was a journalist

[1] In order to carry out the planned V-1 "flying bomb" attacks on the United Kingdom, Germany built a number of military installations including launching sites and depots. Some of the installations were huge concrete fortifications. The unpiloted aircraft was assembled at the KdF-Stadt *Volkswagenwerke* (described as "the largest pressed-steel works in Germany") near Fallersleben, at Cham/Bruns Werke, and at the Mittelwerk underground factory in central Germany. See "V-1 Flying Bomb Facilities," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-1_flying_bomb_facilities [retrieved: 25 Dec. 2017].

[2] In 1943, the Neuengamme concentration camp built a female subcamp in Salzwedel, capable of holding more than 1,000 female prisoners. Eventually more than 3,000 women were held there, both Jews and non-Jews. The guard staff at the camp included sixty SS men and women. On 29 April 1945, the U.S. Army liberated the Salzwedel women's subcamp, and also a nearby men's camp for male non-German political prisoners. They were shocked to find more than ninety corpses of women who had died of typhus, dysentery and malaria. At the beginning of 1945, prior to the arrival of American ground forces, Allied war planes attacked the main train station of Salzwedel, killing 300 people. The U.S. Army eventually turned over the control of the city to the Soviet Red Army, causing Salzwedel to become part of the German Democratic Republic. See "Salzwedel," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salzwedel [retrieved: 25 Dec. 2017].

and also a writer. She received several important decorations and awards[3] and died in Novi Sad in 2006.

Among Simin's books are novels, a memoir, a travelogue (on Israel), and documentary publications. We will deal with several of her works that were published in Serbian in the following chronological order: *Dok višnje procvetaju* [When the Sour Cherries Bloom, 1958; Hungarian-language edition 1959], *San mladosti* [The Dream of Youth, 1983], *Bačvanke političke osuđenice u ratu 1941–1945* [Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945, published in 2003]. Our special focus is on a book co-authored by Simin and her daughter Nevena: *Zašto su ćutale? Majka i ćerka o istom ratu* [2009; English-language edition: *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War*, 2015].[4] What is common to these books and what separates them from the rest of Simin's works is their autobiographical character.

The Dream of Youth deals with the pre-war era and consists of Simin's memories of her parents and grandparents, their family life, school and friends, remembrances of childhood and adolescence, including the years 1939–1940 when the situation in Europe was changing radically (with the partition of Poland, invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the introduction of antisemitic legislation in Yugoslavia).

Twenty-five years prior to this memoir Simin wrote her most important novel, *When the Sour Cherries Bloom* (1958). Her experiences of war and the Holocaust from 1941–1945 were central themes in her life as well as in her writing. Her first book, the most important one, was complemented forty-five years later (in 2003) by a documentary narrative, *Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945*, based not only on her own memories but on a variety of additional sources: testimonies of other participants, letters and diaries of her prison mates, and scholarly studies on topics written by professional historians and published in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and mostly in the 1980s.

The last book of our focus—and from our point of view the most interesting one—is *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One*

[3] The City of Novi Sad October Award (1971), the Decoration of Work with a Golden Wreath (1975), the Charter of Novi Sad (1984), and the Award for Life's Work of the Writers' Association of Vojvodina (1999).

[4] *Dok višnje procvetaju*, Novi Sad, 1958 (Hungarian edition, Novi Sad, 1959; second Serbian edition published in Zagreb, 1980); *San mladosti*, Novi Sad, 1983 (Hungarian edition published in Novi Sad, 1988); *Bačvanke političke osuđenice u ratu 1941–1945*, Novi Sad, 2003; *Zašto su ćutale? Majka i ćerka o istom ratu*, Novi Sad, 2009 (English edition: *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War*, Novi Sad, 2015).

and the Same War (2009). The co-authorship needs to be explained. Magda Simin's part of the book consists of the documentary text *Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945*, reprinted three years after her death. Nevena Simin's part is a commentary on her mother's text, a meta-text.

We consider this book unique in Yugoslav/Serbian Holocaust literature for multiple reasons: (1) it combines, complements, and confronts first- and second-generation survivors' narratives; (2) the co-authors are in the closest kinship relation; (3) they are both women; (4) it intersects Holocaust and post-Holocaust experiences in a specific Yugoslav/Serbian historical context; (5) it opens the complex issue of identity and its multiple aspects—ethnic, social, cultural, ideological, gender, and generational.

Second-Generation Survivors: Mediation, Communicative and Public Memory, Meta-Memory, Yugoslav Contextualization

The term "Holocaust survivors" usually refers to members of the age group that actively participated in or experienced the impact of the Holocaust as members of several generations (the elderly, adults, adolescents, children). They should be distinguished from children of survivors born in post-Holocaust times who therefore have no personal memories of the Holocaust. The children's memory regarding the Holocaust is mediated by definition, due to which Eva Hoffman introduces the notion of "post-ness." This notion is not only chronological, but emotional, and existential: "Our relationship to them [parents] has been defined by our very 'post-ness' and by the powerful but mediated forms of knowledge that have followed from it."[5]

The defining factor providing coherence to this group are the psychological and emotional consequences of the traumas caused by the Holocaust in their parents' lives and the indirect effects of these traumas in their own.[6] Members of the second generation are more involved with the past (as the source of these effects) than generations chronologically more removed from the Holocaust. That is why mediated memory—transferred by parents to children—plays a more important role in the second generation's own worldview and their self-perception.

[5] Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (New York, 2004), 25, 70.

[6] Ibid., 27.

Mediated memory involves intergenerational transmission as well as two types of memory: primary and secondary or meta-memory. The former is associated with the first generation (Holocaust survivors) and the latter with the second generation (post-Holocaust children of survivors). Secondary memory is what Marianne Hirsch calls postmemory:

> Postmemory describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before—to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.[7]

All memory is mediated by recall. The distinguishing feature of secondary memory or postmemory is its *meta* character: it is how children of Holocaust survivors remember the memories of their parents. They cannot remember the events they did not experience, but they remember how their parents presented the events *they* experienced, how they talked about them, how they enacted their traumas. The main distinction lies in the fact that primary memory moves from reality/experience to image (memory), while secondary memory moves from image to image, which is why it would be more precise to call it secondary or meta-memory rather than postmemory. The articulation of memory in general, including meta-memory, involves imagination, projection, and interpretation because personal, generational, psychological, social, cultural, and other aspects of the individual influence it. Secondary memory can never be simply a copy of primary memory. It is always something else and something more.

What are the forms of transmitting primary memory? The most direct form is what Assmann calls communicative memory, involving personal interaction through the means of verbal communication.[8] In addition,

[7] Marianne Hirsch indicates the following: "I first used the term 'postmemory' in an article on Art Spiegelman's *Maus* in the early 1990's. Since then I've been trying to define and refine it, on the basis of personal experience and my reading and viewing of the work of writers and artists of the postgenerations. A number of my essays over the last two decades, several co-edited volumes, as well as the three books . . . have been devoted to this project. Much of this work has been done in collaboration with Leo Spitzer." See Marianne Hirsch, "Postmemory.net," http://www.postmemory.net/ [retrieved: 25 Dec. 2017].

[8] See Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge, 2011), 117. Assmann defines communicative memory as shared and conveyed within a social group defined by common memories of personal interaction through the means of verbal communication over a time span of only 80 to 100 years.

communication can be non-verbal, consisting of body language: gestures, gaze, weeping, fits of anger, and expressions of fear, nightmares, or sweating. Personal interaction is possible between closely related individuals or groups such as family members and close friends. This form of communication is extremely important because "it is only among family, or among intimates that the intimate symptoms of psychic injury are evident."[9] Other rather indirect forms of transmission belong to the public domain. Such forms are published texts such as testimonies, memoirs, diaries, letters, and autobiographical novels. They are complemented by historical studies of general scope or on specific topics. In addition, the post-Holocaust generation grew up on both fictional and documentary TV series and feature films dealing with the Holocaust, complemented by representations of the Holocaust at art exhibitions, museums, monuments, and memorials.

While the main emphasis of the historians of the Holocaust was on documenting and studying the actions of the perpetrators, the rise of Holocaust literature, art, TV productions and film—such as versions of *The Diary of Anne Frank* or Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*—re-oriented attention to the victims. This in turn opened a new field of interest focused on the subjective world of Holocaust victims. The Holocaust thus became a new field of study for disciplines such as psychology, the social sciences, cultural studies, and gender studies.

Helen Epstein's book *Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors* opened the theme of second-generation survivors in 1979. However, the rise of second-generation awareness in the West was not mirrored in Eastern Europe or Yugoslavia, where Nevena Simin's postwar generation was considered especially "lucky" because the dominant belief or hope was that it would be a generation exempt from the experience of war. Nevena would have been perceived as a member of the *first* postwar generation rather than a *second*-generation survivor. This new generation was to mark a discontinuity rather than continuity with their parents' generation. "Brotherhood and Unity" sought to erase the differences between the various ethnic groups and their very different destinies during the war. Public policy swept wartime wounds and traumas under the carpet, but the differences remained latent and were remembered if not publicly, then in personal and family memories.

Thus the "lucky" post-Holocaust generation in Yugoslavia realized their lives were controlled both by internal domestic policies and external factors

[9] Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge*, 37.

of the Cold War. Yugoslavia made a break with the Soviet Union in 1948, introducing "socialism with a human face." In 1961 Yugoslavia became the leader of the non-aligned countries, boosting its international standing and developing good political and economic relations with African, Asian, and Latin American countries. However, when West Germany began importing foreign workers due to economic need, the work force came from Spain, Turkey, and also Yugoslavia. West Germany denied Yugoslavia war reparations because it was a socialist country, while no reparations were demanded from East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria because these were ideologically friendly socialist countries. Thus victims like Magda Simin never sought or received any kind of apology or reparation.

While the Yugoslav war narrative insisted on the heroic saga of the Partisans, Simin's novel offered insights into the world of prisoners and camp inmates. Furthermore, while most attention was dedicated to men, Magda was an author presenting an insider's view of women. The fact that she wrote her autobiographical novel at a time when her memory of these events was not yet substantially mediated by postwar experiences contributes to the authenticity of her narrative. Simin was in fact one of the first women authors to cope with this theme in Yugoslav literature.

Magda Simin wrote about her war experiences in two formats—documentary prose, *Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945*, and the autobiographical novel *When the Sour Cherries Bloom*. Both deal with referential truth. However, while documentary prose tends to reduce the narrative to a chronological report of events based on impersonal facts, the autobiographical novel expands the narrative to include subjective, personal responses to these facts.

While, for example, only a few pages are dedicated to the Maria Nostra prison in *Women from Bačka*, the description of Magda Simin's almost three-year-long internment in this prison is described in fifty-five pages in *When the Sour Cherries Bloom*. This latter description includes not only more details, some of them perhaps not significant for the purposes of a testimony, but necessary and functional in a novel. These details appear in numerous dialogues, flashbacks, and interpretations integrated into a narrative about the specific destiny of a Yugoslav Jewish woman of exceptional courage, strong communist convictions, and a profound sense of solidarity with victims—of social, political, and racial discrimination.

Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War

Magda did not write a book together with her daughter Nevena. It was Nevena who wrote a book with her mother Magda. Magda's part in *Why They Said Nothing* consists of the documentary narrative *Women from Bačka*, segmented thematically in such a way as to allow Nevena's narrative to be inserted as commentaries for each segment. The two narratives present several important differences:

(1) Magda's text holds a primary position, while Nevena's is a secondary meta-text.

(2) The text is intentionally documentary, while the meta-text is the opposite: facts are a point of departure for reflections, memories, subjective responses, personal observations, and expressions of emotional states. In this respect, the two texts are both contrasting and complementary.

(3) The first- versus second-generation time difference is emphasized. Magda's objective factual account deals with events that took place during the war/Holocaust, while Nevena's includes wartime experiences transferred to her by her parents and other sources (e.g., books and films), extending the timeline to the experiences of a second-generation survivor living in postwar Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslavia.

(4) There is a difference in the narrative approach to time. In Magda's narrative, time evolves as a linear succession of events connected by cause–effect, while her daughter's narration moves back and forth and consists of fragments connected by association in dispersed time.

(5) Magda's narration (text) refers to the realities she experienced, while Nevena's narration (meta-text) makes direct reference to her mother's text included in the book, and indirect reference to her mother's novel and memoir (subtext).

Despite the differences, the text and meta-text share a common spatial frame. This is the personal geography of Magda's confinement in prison / concentration camp / forced labor factory leading from Vojvodina, to Hungary and Germany, then back to Yugoslavia. Magda's writing and her memories communicated to Nevena in personal interactions between mother and daughter created in Nevena's mind images of these places. In 2005 Nevena set out on a journey to visit the places of her mother's wartime confinement. These were sites of memory she wanted to exteriorize by confronting them with the physical buildings that survived their

wartime past, assuming new roles in the present. Nevena's journey is like a pilgrimage stripped of the latter's religious substance. It is a secular but very personal and emotional pilgrimage to prisons and camps, the "monstrous" places that have haunted her imagination.

The very first encounter with such a place, the Yellow House in Subotica where Magda was tortured, highlights a basic and recurrent discrepancy: "the Yellow House I am looking at in 2005 seems to me like a pale caricature of that invisible monster that had overshadowed my childhood and adolescence with suffering."[10] The emotionally packed image was "a constant companion in the train of my life," wrote Nevena. This subjective fact overshadows her perception of the same building many decades later. The confrontation of the material structure and Nevena's pre-existing image of it results in the contrast between two time frames—past (Holocaust) and present (post Holocaust). The first one is packed with emotion and meaning, while the second is stripped of both. At first it seems like a tangible stage with no traces of the human drama "performed" there long ago.

Nonetheless, a new drama will take place on such a stage when Nevena visits the Maria Nostra prison in Hungary. On reaching Maria Nostra, Nevena exclaims "Oh my God, it exists!" It is real, but only a building and a yard. Nonetheless, the physical contact with the convent/prison was like "a slap in the face"[11] marking the inception of a new drama whose main protagonist is Nevena rather than Magda. Here it is important to distinguish the text of the Holocaust survivor (Magda), which proceeds from reality via memory to image, from the meta-text of the second-generation survivor (Nevena), proceeding from image via memory to reality. In relation to the reality of the Holocaust, Magda's memory is primary, Nevena's is secondary. However, in relation to the present-day reality, Nevena's memory is primary: she interprets Magda's experiences from the point of view of a second-generation survivor confronting the reality of her own generation. The new drama begins with "a slap in the face," a disruption marking Nevena's stepping out of the world of secondary memories and stepping into the here and now. At this point Nevena's meta-text moves away from her mother's past in order to focus on her own present. While Magda proceeds from reality to image, Nevena proceeds

[10] Magda Simin, Nevena Simin, *Zašto su ćutale? Majka i ćerka o istom ratu* (Novi Sad, 2009), 31. The quoted excerpts are translated by the author of this article.

[11] Ibid., 42–43.

from mediated image to reality and further to new images, concepts, and approaches typical of the culture of second-generation survivors. In Nevena's case they include the drawing of analogies between racism and ecology, the linkage between Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the pilgrimage to death camps through TV programs and Holocaust "tourism," gender issues, elements of postwar youth culture,[12] psychological issues,[13] children of victims versus children of perpetrators, postwar international politics, travel to non-Holocaust places, and post-Yugoslavia.[14]

Maria Nostra as a Complex Disciplinary Structure

Nevena's commentaries offer insights into how her mother's Holocaust life affected her, how her own generational and personal experiences influenced her interpretation of the former, what changes in her self-perception (identity) occurred, and what the Holocaust meant to a second-generation survivor in Yugoslavia sixty years after the war and in the context of events leading to post-Yugoslavia. Last but not least, her meta-text elucidates the generation gap between parental and peer cultures.

Since the segment on Maria Nostra holds a central position in Magda's narration as well as in the commentaries of her daughter, we have selected it for close analysis. Among Magda's prisons and camps, Maria Nostra also stands out as the place of her longest confinement and as a microworld that is clearly gender marked although originally it was a male convent to which a prison was added in the nineteenth century.[15] Located in northern Hungary, Maria Nostra was an example of "Siamese twins," as Nevena called it: a female Catholic convent combined with a prison for female convicts. The nuns served God, but at the same time operated the

[12] "There was probably no gulf wider than that between the ethos of postwar youth culture in America and the mental world of survivors" (Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge*, 89). This gulf was narrower in socialist Yugoslavia.

[13] "The children of survivors, in contrast to their parents, did belong to a psychologically oriented generation" (ibid., 63).

[14] Simin, Simin, *Zašto su ćutale?*, 70, 131–133, 97, 112–116, 133.

[15] The male convent was established in the fourteenth century. In 1858 a prison was built next to it. Magda describes the entrance with a big iron gate. On top of it was a specific ornamental detail: a triangle with an eye in the center, from which sunbeams radiate in all directions. The nuns, "clean, very pure, supernatural beings," made a point of avoiding contact of their robes with the incoming dirty prisoners. Passing through the convent, the convicts reached the prison, where the corridors were lined with cells for solitary confinement. See Magda Simin, *Dok višnje procvetaju* (Novi Sad, 1958), 56–61.

prison entrusted to them by the secular authorities. Both as a convent and a prison, it was isolated from society at large, but ultimately controlled by official institutions—the church and government bodies. The convicts consisted of two groups: criminals and political convicts such as communists (who fought against Nazism and fascism) and members of the Jehovah's Witnesses religious group (who were against war). Among them were Hungarian, Serbian, and Jewish women, but until 1944 the Jewish were not segregated.

Disciplinary institutions are designed to punish, reform, and produce conformity. Michel Foucault, who introduced the concept of disciplinary institution in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975), viewed such institutions as individual manifestations of a vast network that included prisons, schools, military institutions, hospitals, and factories. We might add convents as they too are isolated and closed settings operating under the control and imposition of strict regulations. The Maria Nostra convent-prison was a specific institution of this kind. In its case, two originally distinct disciplinary institutions merged into a single, more complex structure. Although a convent is a religious institution one joins voluntarily, albeit in some cases under pressure (of social and economic factors), it had the same kind of the rigorous regulation of space and time as a prison. Noticing this analogy, Magda wrote that the nuns were also prisoners, but of a different kind: "Yes, these nuns, exerting power over hundreds of miserable women, gripping the keys to solitary confinement cells in their hands, are also confined here, but for life and with no hope of freedom."[16] From her point of view, the nuns had power over the prisoners, but they too were prisoners, powerless to ever retrieve freedom.

In this case, the convent was a primary religious disciplinary institution, the prison a secondary and secular one. There was an internal hierarchy among the nuns (descending from the abbess and her deputy to the youngest nun) within the convent and an external hierarchy in which the nuns controlled the prisoners. A capo was selected from among the criminal convicts (in this case it was a woman convicted for multiple murders who had already served 12 years in Maria Nostra), who mediated between the nuns and the prisoners, but only in certain situations.

There were three reasons why this complex power structure was flexible and porous. First, nuns rather than professional administrators ran the

[16] Ibid., 66.

prison. Second, both administrators and inmates were women. Third, the prison was not a concentration or death camp designed to kill the inmates, but rather to punish and reform them. Although Maria Nostra was a punitive institution, the nuns placed a high priority on "curing" the inmates of their criminal behavior perceived as an illness. In this sense the prison assumed the function of a hospital for women with "criminal" disorders. The second priority, especially regarding political prisoners, was to isolate and re-educate them. In this sense the prison assumed the function of a school. In addition, the Catholic nuns sought to involve the inmates in religious education promoting conversion to the "true [Catholic] faith," with special reference to inmates of the Christian Orthodox denomination, Jehovah's Witnesses, and atheists. Thus, Serbian women were regularly taken to Catholic Sunday mass, while a "reform" (Protestant) priest was assigned to deal with Jewish inmates.[17] The prison/hospital/school thus had a flexible power system allowing for some degree of negotiation between the nuns and the political inmates, who were distinguished from criminal inmates by their higher degree of education, social status, and culture. One example was the situation when the nuns were planning to stage a Nativity play in which the convicts would participate by performing various roles. Although religious in its essence, the play had obvious albeit naïve political overtones as well as references to current events. This is illustrated by the introduction of a new character to be played by one of the communist inmates: it was a captured Soviet soldier who was reformed in captivity to the extent that he renounced communism and in addition embraced the "true" faith.[18] This character was the model the nuns hoped to promote by education rather than force. Other results of negotiation were compromises such as allowing the inmates to sing, work in the orchard, stage their own plays, receive books and enjoy the use of paper and pencils, receive packages (three annually for Jewish inmates, six for everyone else). The initial solitary confinement was replaced by allowing two inmates to share a cell.

[17] Ibid., 69, 82.
[18] Ibid., 84–88.

Text, Meta-Text and Subtext

Magda's novel *When the Sour Cherries Bloom* includes many dialogues, among them three of particular interest. One was Magda's discussion with a Jehovah's Witnesses inmate on religion and communist ideology. Another was her conversation with the deputy abbess, who was willing to hear Magda's communist views, if not to accept them. The third dialogue is of special importance because it was conducted between Magda and her mother, whom she would never see again. Magda mentions only one visit of her mother to Maria Nostra, which took place in early 1944. "'It will end soon,' she began to console me. – 'I hope by spring. . . . When the sour cherries bloom,' she added."[19] Magda commented that both she and her mother had no idea how far away the Soviets were and how long it would take them to reach Hungary. "Spring arrived, the sour cherry flowers came and went, the fruit ripened, but not for her. In April 1944, when Hitler formally occupied Hungary, they deported her together with the family and my two brothers to a camp."[20] They were deported as Jews and precisely in this segment Magda recalls the late 1930s, when Jewish refugees were coming to Yugoslavia hoping to move on to other, safer places. She also described this situation in her memoir *The Dream of Youth*, but in the latter she includes an important detail associated with her father and her own Jewish identity, which generally is not given much attention in her narrative. Her father put "an old-fashioned Jewish sign" on their gate, a miniature Torah, so the refugees would know that they could find shelter and food in the Bošan home. At that time Magda's mother, unable to see the writing on the wall, believed there would be no war,[21] just as in early 1944 she believed the war would end in a few months. Magda stresses the irony of her mother's *naïveté* by highlighting two events. In April 1944 Magda was finally identified as a Jew, in addition to being a communist: Jews in Maria Nostra were separated and placed in solitary confinement, and after that the nuns were ordered to transfer them to the Germans, who deported them to death camps.[22] At the same time, in April 1944, her mother and siblings were deported to Auschwitz. The title *When the Sour Cherries*

[19] Ibid., 111.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 112.
[22] Magda describes how the nuns earnestly wept as did all the remaining inmates, who bid them farewell by singing "The East and West Wake Up." Ibid., 113.

Bloom is strongly associated with her Jewish identity because it was in the spring of 1944 that the Jews from Hungary, including Magda from the Maria Nostra prison and her mother and siblings from the occupied Yugoslav town of Čurug, were sent to death camps. Magda survived, but her family, including mother, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and their children, never came back from Auschwitz. The "blooming of the sour cherries" is a metaphor of Magda's realization that Nazism was not only an ideological issue, but also a racial policy implementing the Final Solution.

When the Sour Cherries Bloom and *The Dream of Youth* both function as a subtext in *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War*. These two books highlight the Holocaust as part of the war narrative, compensating the lack of Holocaust themes in Magda's documentary *Women from Bačka*. The subtext is very important because Nevena's meta-text refers not only to the theme of women political prisoners, but also to Holocaust themes and associated topics elaborated in Magda's novel and memoir. Nevena's narration structured on the principle of association moves with ease between Magda's documentary functioning as text and Magda's novel and memoir functioning as subtext. This is also manifested in Nevena's symbolic itinerary: Nevena visits Auschwitz, where most of Magda's family and cousins were murdered, in addition to the places associated with Magda's individual ordeal. Without the subtext Nevena could not expand her narrative with the elaboration of the central Holocaust theme and its ramifications.

On the level of real space Nevena "followed" her mother as well as other members of the family. On the level of semantic structuring, Nevena proceeded in the opposite direction. We will explain this on the example of Maria Nostra. Namely, Maria Nostra was real for Magda and everything derived from her imprisonment there was also real—sensory impressions, emotional responses, reflections, relations with other inmates and prison administrators, etc. After the war these were stored in her memory. Subsequently they were retrieved from memory and integrated into a narrative from which a complex image of Maria Nostra emerges. Nevena proceeded in the *opposite* direction: her point of departure is Magda's complex image of Maria Nostra which is elaborated further in Nevena's own imagination. However, the original image was transferred to her not only by her mother's texts, both novelistic and documentary, but also by her mother's *enactments* of certain details.

One such example is the following: in her meta-text Nevena describes how her mother imitated the never-ending prayers of the nuns. However, Magda's vocal enactment continues with auditive and visual images from Nevena's own imagination, leading her to one of the essential questions of Holocaust literature:

> Whenever Magda mentioned those prayers, she would start singing to the Virgin Mary and I can retrieve those tones from memory very clearly. I would always imagine that scene: political convicts huddled in their cells where they could hear the prayers of the nuns, who were at the same time merciless prison guards. Even now, when I close my eyes, I hear them, those voices coming from the church, getting louder as they reflect off the thick walls, continue into the yard, creeping into the cells and solitary confinement on the upper floors, humming, humming, humming. . . . While the girls and women, most of whom didn't understand Hungarian, thought of their own God, asking him why he had thrown them into this locked, cold and stinky hole.[23]

Carrying this mental and emotional baggage—Magda's primary images as well as her own secondary images—Nevena finally makes the journey and comes face to face with the present-day, tangible Maria Nostra, the building of the convent-prison. Prior to arriving she wondered: "Can any kind of building overshadow the memories of events in which I didn't participate, but which have definitely impacted me by burdening my back with a heavy cross?"[24] In both text and meta-text memory plays a mediating role, but the realities associated with the Holocaust survivor and the second-generation survivor are very different. Nevena observes the convent-prison exhibiting fluttering flags of Hungary and the European Union. There is no trace of the war or the Holocaust, so the initial encounter with Maria Nostra means nothing to her. Nevena therefore decides "to return" to her "memories," both her mother's and her own of her mother.[25] Since all memory is selective, it is interesting to see which memories Nevena chooses to comment on and what their source is. Although Magda's contribution to the joint book is the text *Women from Bačka*, the memories Nevena refers to in the segment on Maria Nostra are mostly provided by the subtext (*When the Sour Cherries Bloom*) and her mother's remembrances transmitted orally or enacted in the form of communicative memory. One such example is the above-mentioned sound of the nun's prayers filling the

[23] Simin, Simin, *Zašto su ćutale?*, 43.
[24] Ibid., 42.
[25] Ibid., 45.

whole space of confinement. In Nevena's commentary this sound image leads to a question: why has my God punished me, why didn't he prevent the dehumanization and murder of innocent people?

The second example refers to a visual impression. Magda mentions small windows placed very high up in the cells. From there the inmates could now and then catch a glimpse of the Danube. Nevena narrates how she wandered around the Maria Nostra buildings in search of a view of the Danube, but she could only see guard towers and barbed wire. Suddenly a prison van passed by, triggering a typical second-generation response:

> Only then did I realize that I was in the outer prison yard, and as the prison van passed, suddenly, right in front of me, the iron gate was being shut. I won't have time to pass through! It happened again. I cannot precisely say "what," but I had a similar feeling when in December of 1994 I passed through the gates of Auschwitz. I felt as I was not there for the first time, but now they can do me no harm! "I will get out!", I repeated the same sentence to the gate in Maria Nostra.[26]

Nevena can partially identify with her mother as a Holocaust survivor, but she is at the same time aware that such an identification is possible only in her imagination. It is like waking up from horrifying nightmare and realizing it was not real. This segment also shows how Nevena's narrative proceeds along the line of association, moving from Magda's image of the prison window to the Danube, to the prison yard, the real prison van and gate, back to the image of the Holocaust survivor, ending in reality and the consoling feeling that she can always wake up from the Holocaust nightmare.

The third example is Nevena's narration of Magda's enactment of the sensation of solitary confinement in a tiny cell. In *When the Sour Cherries Bloom* Magda describes how the very limited space of isolation affects the mind of the prisoner:

> Four steps long, two steps wide. Four gray walls and high up under the ceiling a window with bars. This is the prisoner's world. At the beginning it seems the four walls are not a big deal, that within them you could place the whole world you have experienced with its richness of impressions, feelings, sensations. Soon you notice—or perhaps you don't—how that world shrinks, narrows, until it is finally reduced to those four walls. In some rare moments, however, you manage to move the walls away again, as if they were curtains on the scene of a theater behind which the performance of life is underway, but only for a short, very short while. Then the walls move in again, they harden, press on your chest, suffocate you, and

[26] Ibid., 44.

> then you turn from human being into a prisoner again, someone wasting days and not counting them.[27]

This description functions as a subtext. Nevena, however, complements it by describing how Magda enacted the physical image of her cell fifty years later in Nevena's kitchen. Nevena's friend Miroslav Mandić, a Serbian poet of her own age, was sitting in her kitchen. This man was a passionate walker and would walk with a pedometer twenty kilometers every day because "he planned to inundate Europe entirely, to walk across all the states from one monument to the next, to pay his respect to all the great European writers."[28] But it was the nineties and the conflicts leading to the destruction of Yugoslavia and international sanctions (including visa restrictions) limited his route to Vojvodina and Serbia. Miroslav had spent a brief time in jail after he had said or written something critical of the government. Magda asked him how large his cell had been and then began pacing the kitchen to show how many steps her cell in Maria Nostra was long and wide, where the bed was, the window, the loo.[29] This segment shows how Magda, a political prisoner during the war, is associated with Miroslav, a postwar poet jailed because he had made politically incorrect statements. This leads Nevena to reflect and generalize on the theme of freedom of thought and expression, but also on the secret bond between prisoners from different times punished for ideological transgressions.

The fourth example has to do with this bond. Nevena's narrative in this case is not based on any of Magda's written sources, but on a scene that took place in their home where Magda's prison-mates would often get together. When they discussed and remembered Maria Nostra, they would stop speaking only in Serbian and start switching back and forth between Hungarian and German. At one point one of the ladies commented on what "a good time" they had in Maria Nostra. Nevena was shocked and confused, so her mother explained that what was good was the fact that they were part of a *ženski kolektiv*, a feminine collective, community, organization.[30] Magda mentions the *kolektiv* throughout her narratives on the prisons and the camps. The *kolektiv* was designed for survival: every scrap of food was equally divided, all the women helped each other if they were ill or could not endure the hardships, together they shared

[27] Simin, *Dok višnje procvetaju*, 96.
[28] Ibid., 45.
[29] Simin, Simin, *Zašto su ćutale?*, 46.
[30] Ibid., 47–52.

information and organized resistance, established communication channels to distribute news about the front, the Partisans, events in the camp, all kinds of information. The *kolektiv* provided a feeling of equality, support, solace, and most importantly, a strong sense of belonging to a group, a family, albeit non-biological, a social structure protecting them through persistent solidarity. The female *kolektiv* continued functioning for years after the war, providing a support network in any adverse circumstance, including the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. It was "a perfect machine for survival,"[31] a manifestation of genuine solidarity that Nevena interprets as being strongly gender marked. Maria Nostra became for Nevena "a mine of incredible knowledge about human nature,"[32] especially regarding generational differences.

Holocaust and Gender

The idea of combining in a single book segments written by Magda and her daughter Nevena came from the publisher Ženske studije (Women's Studies), located in Novi Sad. Here is how Nevena described her decision to write commentaries on her mother's testimony:

> They [the publisher] said it would be very interesting to complement that text with commentaries written by me, Magda's daughter, giving the same importance to the fact that I was a second-generation survivor of World War II. Mother and daughter, first- and second-generation survivors, dealing with the same topic from two perspectives. I accepted. We easily agreed on how to proceed: I would tread the same path across Europe along which the Nazis and their allies arrested, beat, tortured and abused Magda and hundreds of her wartime friends, political convicts, women, and transported them as if they were inhuman objects. Following in Magda's wartime footsteps and occasionally also the wartime path of my father Živko, I kept delving into my own inner labyrinth, wrenching the words I present to the reader from my wounded soul, that of a second-generation Holocaust survivor. Although most of my life I believed that a person that had experienced evil would be better off forgetting it, I do not regret having agreed to reopen that door of evil within me.[33]

[31] Ibid., 52.

[32] Ibid., 46.

[33] Ibid., 5. This is a reference to "Ženske studije i istraživanja" (Women's Studies and Research), an NGO active in Novi Sad since 1997, whose goals are education in Women's and Gender Studies, organization of public talks, seminars and conferences, research and documentation, as well as publishing. Nevena Simin does not mention the names of persons she discussed the project with. Women's Studies and Research was the co-publisher

The project, designed and suggested by a publisher specializing in gender studies, took into consideration not only Nevena's wish to draw attention to her mother's wartime memories, but also her double awareness of gender issues and her own status as postwar child of Holocaust survivors.

Gender studies had been developing in Yugoslavia since the mid-nineties, when the first feminist journal, *ProFemina*, began publication (1994), while the Center for Women's Studies began publishing its journal *Women's Studies* in 1995. Both journals contributed significantly to the development of awareness regarding gender issues. Since 2011 there has been a third journal, *Knjiženstvo: časopis za studije književnosti, roda i kulture*.[34] During the conflicts of the 1990s, the journal lent itself to politicization, but nevertheless contributed significantly to the development of awareness regarding gender issues. In the specific post-Yugoslav framework, Nevena Simin introduced a new perspective in gender studies by linking the latter to the domain of Holocaust topics. The view of the Holocaust from women's perspectives was first introduced into the academia and public discourse in 1983, when university professors Esther Katz and Joan Ringelheim organized a conference at Yeshiva University's Stern College about women's experiences in the Holocaust. The groundbreaking work of Carol Rittner, John K. Roth, Dalia Ofer, Lenore J. Weitzman, and Joan Ringelheim[35] was followed by other excellent studies, memoirs, testimonies, and narratives on women and the Holocaust.

The project proposed by Women's Studies was new because it introduced this linkage into post-Yugoslav literature and did so in a specific way, by combining three themes: gender, Holocaust, and second-generation survivors. The mother–daughter co-authorship manifested as text and

of Magda and Nevena Simin's book. This organization should not be confused with the Center for Women's Studies in Belgrade, publisher of the journal *Women's Studies* (in 2002 renamed *Genero: Journal of Feminist Theory and Cultural Studies*).

[34] *ProFemina: časopis za žensku književnost i kulturu* (*ProFemina: Journal for Women's Literature and Culture*) was a quarterly published in Belgrade by B92 since 1994; *Women's Studies* / *Genero* was published in Belgrade by the Center for Women's Studies since 1995; *Knjiženstvo: časopis za studije književnosti, roda i kulture* (*Knjiženstvo: Journal for Studies in Literature, Gender and Culture*) has been published since 2011 by the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. *Knjiženstvo* is a combination of two Serbian words: literature (*književnost*) and *ženstvo* (pertaining to women).

[35] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth (eds.), *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (New York, 1993); Dalia Ofer, Lenore J. Weitzman (eds.), *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven, 1998); Joan Ringelheim, "Women in the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research," *Signs* 10 (1985), 4:741–761.

meta-text stresses the gender aspect. The Holocaust aspect does not hold a central place, which is already suggested in a paratextual element, the title: *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War*. The Holocaust is implied in the word *war*, but is not highlighted. This can be interpreted as a reminiscence of the early postwar period when the Holocaust was not yet distinguished from the war in general and its many variations of horrors and atrocities. It is, however, more intrinsically connected to the essence of the narrative. Namely, for the most part of the war, Magda was targeted as a political/ideological enemy (a communist) and only in 1944–1945 as a Jew. The fate of Magda's husband, a survivor of Mauthausen, was not considered part of the Holocaust because he was Serbian. However, the death of Magda's family members, all deported to Auschwitz as Jews, was directly part of the Holocaust. Therefore, the story of Nevena's parents and other family members brings together the Nazi persecution of Jews and Serbs as well as of political-ideological adversaries, so it had to be presented in the general war context rather than the Holocaust.

As mother and daughter refer to the same war, there is an obvious difference between the two with regard to their perception of gender roles. Born in 1922, Magda internalized the heritage of the first sexual revolution. The status of women changed after World War I. Due to the reduction of the male population in the aftermath of the war, women were more intensively included in the work force. The suffragist movement, advocating equal rights in the voting process and the social domain, provided women with more opportunities for education and integration into the public, including political life. Quite expectedly, the dominant figure in Magda's self-perception was her father, an advocate of social justice and equal rights, rather than her mother, who was relegated to the traditional gender role typical of her generation. Magda felt she was equal to men and her fervent leftist political involvement and solidarity with "the damned of the world" projected an ideal world cleansed of discrimination, be it social-, ethnic- or gender-based.

In contrast to Magda, the dominant figure in Nevena's self-perception was her mother. It is obvious that she appreciated her mother as a representative of the most progressive women of the previous generation, a person willing to sacrifice for her political and personal convictions, and a personality strong enough to endure the tribulations imposed on her during the war and the Holocaust. Nevena, however, internalized

the benefits of the second sexual revolution of the sixties, so her worldview is imbued with a different kind of gender awareness: while Magda's generation struggled to be equal to men by being *like* them, Nevena's sought equality in conjunction with stressing sexual/gender difference and specificity. The generation gap manifested in the different ways mother and daughter approached the gender issue is a central theme of *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War*.

Research on women in the Holocaust has highlighted many new themes: the sexual vulnerability of women, sexual violence and rape, forced prostitution and sexual slavery, forced abortion and sterilization, medical experiments on women and children in the camps, the status of pregnant women, childbearing in camp conditions, and so on. In general terms, a central theme is the different impact of camp conditions on women and the different way women coped with camp reality. We have already mentioned the importance Magda attached to the *ženski kolektiv* in her own experience of prisons and camps. Magda's women's collective is analogous to what is known as "camp sisters," a gender-specific survival strategy relying on traditional women's skills (mothering, nurturing, homemaking, caretaking). *Ženski kolektiv* created a cross-generational bond among biologically unrelated women who behaved as members of a tight-knit family of surrogate mothers, daughters, and sisters. The "camp sister" mentality continued even under very different circumstances in the postwar period, which impressed Nevena. In her self-perception there is an echo of this mentality: the dominant figures in her own homage to the Holocaust/war victims in her family were her mother and her grandmother Paula.

The most egregious sex-based atrocities against women in the Holocaust were the most difficult to research. Male researchers neglected this aspect of the Holocaust, while scholars were confronted with difficulties on the part of victims to discuss such experiences openly. This is reflected in the titles of some articles such as Helene Sinnreich's "'And It Was Something We Didn't Talk About': Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust."[36] The title *Why They Said Nothing: Mother and Daughter on One and the Same War* is an allusion to this situation. However, in this case the muteness refers to a less drastic event—the disruption of menstruation. The conditions of incarceration—severe malnutrition, exhausting forced labor, psychological factors, and sometimes bromide added to

[36] Helene Sinnreich, "'And It Was Something We Didn't Talk About': Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust," *Holocaust Studies* 14 (2008), 2:1–22.

their food—caused either excessive bleeding or amenorrhea. The lack of basic hygiene was both unhealthy and humiliating, while amenorrhea led to fear of sterility. Magda and her friends from the prisons and camps discussed all details of their experiences, *except* this one. The realization of this shook Nevena "from head to toe." On one occasion in the late 1960s, when Magda's friends were visiting, they discussed how they put a lot of effort into cleaning the barracks and getting rid of lice. Nevena asked them how they coped with hygiene during their periods. "We were lucky," they answered, "we were spared that."[37] She asked her mother why she had never mentioned this before:

> The reason for this deliberate silence shocked me: she was ashamed of writing that "feminine" word. That courageous woman capable of enduring brutal beatings without betraying anyone, who had with several other courageous twenty-year-old women practically taken care of several hundred women living in unbearable conditions, who had figured out how to turn the collective into an organized survival machine—that same Magda was "ashamed" to utter the word "menstruation" in front of men.[38]

This was a generational issue. Magda's generation was making inroads into the male-dominated domain of public and social life, suffrage, political activism, and education. For her generation this was a part of the general issue of equality versus all kinds of discrimination. Her role model was her father, and Magda was showing, in contrast to her mother who was limited by the traditional gender roles assigned to her generation, that *she* could continue her father's work and in doing so assume a gender role different from that of her mother. In all of Magda's writing, it is obvious that despite her love for her mother, the latter had never been her role model. The courage expected of Magda was comparable to that of a man: she was expected to endure torture like a man, she was expected to fight for her ideals like a man. In other words, she was expected to act as a man in order to fight the discrimination of women.

This version of feminism, typical of that generation, is subtly elaborated in a traditional ballad known as "The Damsel Warrior": a family with only daughters is required to send a son to the king's army, so the youngest daughter volunteers to assume the role of the missing son, so she hides her female body traits (hair and breasts), exhibits exceptional courage as a warrior, intelligently passes all tests designed to uncover

[37] Simin, Simin, *Zašto su ćutale?*, 113.
[38] Ibid.

her sexual identity (including her period as *the* sign of the former), but ultimately her female body can no longer be hidden under a male mask. Her true identity is revealed, so she ends up marrying the king's son and living happily ever after. In Magda's generation, it was the body that reminded women of their sexual identity. Although in the 1920s and 1930s it was fashionable for women to wear trousers and dress like men, this was only a matter of dress code; it covered or masked the female body. As in the ballad, the *period* was the ultimate and most intimate sign of sexual identity. For Magda's generation, this was a topic to avoid in public discussion: they were ashamed because it seemed equivalent to showing their nude bodies in public. In addition, it is interesting how Magda's friends describe the disruption of menstruation in prison/camp conditions: they say they were *spared* it, because in these conditions their sexual identity *was* in fact a burden, an additional vulnerability. Having the period, being pregnant, delivering a child, or taking care of a baby in these conditions was undesirable because it radically lowered the chances of survival.

Conclusion

The issue of memory and memory mediation can and sometimes must be considered in various frameworks. In the case of Magda Bošan Simin, the first framework is connected to the diverse genres of her writing: documentary text, memoir, and autobiographical novel. In this instance, memory mediation is affected by the author's intentionality: her choice of genre. This, in turn, influences the relationship between factual/documentary discourse and autofictional narrative. The second framework is established by the connection between first- and second-generation survivors as co-authors of a narrative comprised of text, subtext, and meta-text. Memory mediation in this instance implies an interactive relationship between primary and secondary memory (meta-memory, postmemory). The distinction between primary and secondary memory of the Holocaust is discerned in the two-way process connecting experienced reality and image, which ultimately confronts two images and two realities, one the Holocaust and the other post-Holocaust, as well as two generations, one of Holocaust survivors and the other of second-generation "survivors." The historical perspective opens the question of how both experienced and imagined reality is contextualized in a narrative moving from autobiography and

memoir toward a hybrid genre combining autobiography, personal documentary, history, essay, and confession.

As shown, a specific and distinguishing aspect of the narrative co-authored by Magda Bošan Simin and her daughter Nevena Simin is related to gender. Ultimately, however, ethnicity and race, religion and ideology, gender and social status, ideology and politics all play a role in the self-perception of personal identity articulated in images changing with the age of the individual, the impact of real-life experience, and the interpretation of personal, family, social, and gender memory.

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A Symphony of Unique Voices: The Literary Testimony of Jewish Women Writers in Post-World War II Yugoslavia

Abstract: The first part of this article endeavors to give an idea about the scope and impact of dealing with Jews and Jewish issues in the literature of the former Yugoslavia, so as to provide a frame of reference for presenting in the second part the literary testimonies of several less-known Yugoslav Jewish women writers. In the second part, the writings of thirteen Jewish women writers will be presented. Their writings represent personal testimonies of literary heroines, while revealing some of the writers' literary strategies to preserve past-time memories, which in many ways characterize the specific feminine experience of a Yugoslav Jewish woman in the postwar period.[1]

Keywords: Jewish women writers, female outlook in literature, cultural legacy, dual belonging, strategies of preserving the memory, individual testimony and collective memory.

Foreword

As a translator and literary scholar who as a child came to Israel from the former Yugoslavia, I have for many years engaged in translating into Hebrew the best-known ex-Yugoslav writers, as well as researching Jewish themes that permeate a considerable part of the literature written in this

[1] In the Appendix, I have listed the names of 37 Jewish women writers in the former Yugoslavia. An extensive study dealing with the writings of four of them may be found in my Ph.D. thesis, followed by a book named *Nashim kotvot 'olam: sofrot yehudiyot be-Yugoslavia leshe-avar* (Jerusalem, 2013) as well as in the article "The Feminine Voyage in the Post-Holocaust Jewish Literature of Former Yugoslavia," published in *Interkulturalnost* 7 (2014), 186–191.

country by both Jewish and non-Jewish writers in the second half of the twentieth century.

I have been attracted to this theme partly out of personal curiosity: what is it that writers in Yugoslavia could tell me about the past, both recent and distant, about the Jews of Yugoslavia? How do memories of the past turn their work into an integral part of our contemporary reality? How do they conceive and express the experiences of their early years, given that as adults they still lived in their childhood towns, to write as adults free from the repression and de-legitimation of past times' traumas? Writing in their mother's tongue, they aimed to reach the public who were (as were the writers themselves) victims of the horrors of World War II in the same country, and who therefore could relate to the Holocaust merely as part of the huge calamity that befell their country and their nation. How did those writers relate to their Jewishness not as Israelis, as Israel was not their ultimate goal? Finally, my motivation in researching this topic has apparently also been my attempt to deepen and enrich my own Israeli identity, since as a child growing up in Israel I carried distant memories of the Serbo-Croatian language and of the former Yugoslavia as a country. Those memories were imprinted upon many experiences throughout my life.

This article deals with the work of thirteen Jewish women writers, mentioning some of their published work, selected mainly with regards to their contribution to cultural representations of memory, and focusing in this case on the feminine experience and outlook. Its first part endeavors to give an idea of the scope and impact of Jewish themes in the literature of the former Yugoslavia,[2] and thus provides a frame of reference for dealing with some of the literary testimonies of Yugoslav Jewish women writers. The second part presents some of the writings of several less-known Yugoslav Jewish women writers as they represent the personal testimonies of their female protagonists. Their writings reveal unique literary strategies intended to preserve memories of different times and circumstances. In many ways those memories illustrate the specific feminine experience of Yugoslav Jewish women in the post-World War II period.

[2] Further details see in the English translation of the Foreword and Afterword of my extensive study *Nohehut ve-healmut: Yehudim ve-yahadut be-Yugoslavia leshe-avar birei ha-sifrut* (Jerusalem, 2002). The English translation of the above parts was published in *Lamed-E* no. 3 (Summer 2009), selected and edited by Ivan Ninić.

Jews and Judaism in Former Yugoslavia in the Mirror of Literature

Given that out of the total population of twenty million in the former Yugoslavia only about seven thousand Jews remained in the country, the sheer quantity of books about Jews and Judaism there seems to be a unique phenomenon which has thus been described in three (published) academic studies.[3] Since some of the best-known and most appreciated Yugoslav writers in the second half of the twentieth century wrote about Jewish destiny and the problem of Jewish identity after the Holocaust,[4] those studies deal with an apparently extraordinary phenomenon, though each takes a different point of view.

After the Holocaust, Yugoslav Jewish writers found themselves in an orphaned community; about 80 per cent of its members had perished.[5] The new environment, fostered by the socialist ideology of the Yugoslav federation, was primarily secular while religious traditions were delegated to cultural heritage. The core of Jewish identity became characterized as "dual belonging." In the heterogenic multinational, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious postwar Yugoslavia, with a small Jewish community composed of both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Holocaust survivors, in a secular environment, the only common "Jewish" denominators consisted of (a) belonging to the Jewish community; (b) exhibiting a vague interest in Jewish heritage and Jewish age-old thought and wisdom; and (c) having a strong sense of a unique common destiny.

The quest for Jewish identity in the post-Holocaust era, along with questions about the relation of Jews to Judaism, as well as other topics about Jews and Judaism, became a central issue for an outstanding number of Yugoslav Jewish and non-Jewish writers. The abundance of their literary works represents a challenging phenomenon due to their quantity, diversity, and high literary standards.

Since issues related to Jewish identity in the former Yugoslavia in the post-Holocaust era inevitably involve trauma, writers of Jewish origin have dealt intensely with various aspects of the major distresses suffered by their generation. In fact, the Holocaust of Yugoslav Jews became the

[3] Predrag Palavestra, *Jevrejski pisci u srpskoj književnosti* (Beograd, 1998); Katan Ben-Zion, *Nohehut ve-healmut*; ead., *Nashim kotvot 'olam*.

[4] Danilo Kiš, Aleksandar Tišma, David Albahari, Filip David, Erih Koš, Oskar Davičo and many others.

[5] The pre-war Jewish population amounted to 78,000 Jews.

criterion for measuring both the memory of Jewish pre-war history and an evolving sense of a new identity that began to emerge in its aftermath. With great talent, those writers portrayed (a) the traumatic consequences of persecutions and exterminations on Holocaust survivors; (b) the implications of the extermination of Jews and the horrors of racial and/or political persecution in a worldwide context; and (c) the survivors' unique sense of loss and quest for identity in a changed environment, against the background of the turbulent socio-political world, where they were tossed between extremes in a relatively short period of about 60 years.

As a literary phenomenon, the abundance of Jewish themes in post-World War II Yugoslav literature is of interest spiritually, intellectually, and culturally. During that time there was a disproportionate relationship between the numerical impact of the tiny Jewish minority (about 7,000 listed members, after half of the survivors immigrated to Israel at the end of the 1940s), and the Yugoslav overall population (of about twenty million). Indeed, the mere fact that so many significant literary works in Serbo-Croatian deal with Jewish issues may, paradoxically, be attributed to *Netzah Israel* (Israel Eternity), as a perpetuation of Jewish thought even under extremely adverse conditions. All this took place of course before the dismemberment of the Yugoslav federation in the early 1990s.

Danilo Kiš, Aleksandar Tišma, David Albahari, and Filip David are notable writers even outside their own country. Each is unique in both subject matter and style, each an individual face mirroring the versatility of Jewish post-Holocaust existence as well as the diversity of forms that characterize secular Jewish thinking and discourse. They are perhaps best known for their involvement with Jews and their history, although other popular Yugoslav writers have taken up such issues as Jewish origin, identity, and destiny in their novels and short stories—among them Erih Koš, Oskar Davičo, Žak Konfino, Isak Samokovlija, Stanislav Vinaver, and others,[6] also some well-known non-Jewish writers such as Ivo Andrić and Milorad Pavić.

Jewish issues, as explored by those authors in their quests for identity, stood out against the general trend of Yugoslavism, which aimed to erase

[6] In addition to the above-mentioned authors, the following Jewish writers dealt with Jewish issues: Hinko Gottlieb, Oto Bihalji-Merin, Moni de Buli, Danilo Nahmijas, Đorđe Lebović, Nebojša Glišić, Ervin Šinko, Miroslav Feldman, Berta Bojetu-Boeta, Sonja Nahman Premeru. Those are a few names out of more than a hundred Jewish writers who were active throughout the twentieth century in the ex-Yugoslav countries. For further details see: Palavestra, *Jevrejski pisci*; Katan Ben-Zion, *Nohehut ve-healmut*; ead., *Nashim kotvot 'olam*.

all particularities and create a unified "all Yugoslav" culture, as described in Andrew Baruch Wachtel's illuminating study of the evolution of the idea of Yugoslav national unity and the ways of its implementation, presented as a critical factor in the long-term viability of the Yugoslav federation.[7] However, those writers who experienced World War II as children or youngsters endeavored in their adult lives to describe past horrors, remembering how Jews were suddenly excommunicated and outlawed.[8] Now Jews belonged to the new order that declared equality and brotherhood for all Yugoslav nations. It seems that in a rapidly changing world each experimented with original literary genres by creating a unique personal style as a tool to convey the Jewish post-Holocaust trauma embedded in their life experiences as citizens of the "brave new world."

The abundance of Jewish themes and issues in the post-Holocaust literature of the former Yugoslavia raises questions about the motivating force behind this phenomenon. Does canonical literature dealing with those questions indicate that a Jewish theme served perhaps as a kind of test case for the concept of Yugoslavism, or was it eventually only an ephemeral "trend"? Also, to what extent does the need to refer in literature to elements of Jewish life as well as to traditional Jewish symbols reflect profound existential anxiety, perpetuated by the state policy which aimed to erase all particularities and create a unified "all Yugoslav" culture? In the new post-Holocaust ambience, Jewish literature in this country manifested the need to redefine a connection to crucial heritage that was no longer taken for granted.

Finally, with the appearance of Jewish themes in Yugoslav postwar literature, the question has concerned how to present the specific experience of Jews—historical as well as recent—within the context of a new post-Holocaust reality. The literature created by each of the best-known writers became a vessel containing the author's individual experience and specific outlook in terms of both subject matter and literary form.

[7] Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, 1998). According to Wachtel it was implemented in four major areas: linguistic policies aiming at creating a shared national language; the promulgation of a Yugoslav literary and artistic canon; an educational policy with regard to teaching literature and history in schools; and production of new literary and artistic works incorporating a Yugoslav view.

[8] As for instance: David Albahari, *Gec i Majer* (Beograd, 1998) and *Mamac* (Beograd, 2005); Danilo Kiš, *Mansarda* (Beograd, 1962), *Psalam 44* (Beograd, 1962), *Bašta, pepeo* (Beograd, 1965), and *Peščanik* (Beograd, 1972); Aleksandar Tišma, *Upotreba čoveka* (Beograd, 1977), and *Knjiga o Blamu* (Beograd, 1980).

Since the old world had collapsed along with traditional literary norms and forms, each of these writers created a new literary style to voice the specific Jewish loss and quest for identity in terms of the new reality, in which Jews found themselves orphaned of their families and communities, in search of a spiritual home that could contain the memories, questions, fears, and hopes of a small and diminishing Jewish minority.[9]

Given this background, many of the writers cited above are considered innovators who sought and produced new literary forms. Almost every one of their books was groundbreaking in terms of new genres and novel literary forms.

The same issues are present in the works of Yugoslav Jewish women writers, who described the specific feminine life experience. It was only later in my life that as a literary translator and scholar I came to realize the impact of the "feminine voyage" in this specific literary corpus. However, with perhaps the exception of Judita Šalgo, who experimented with the literary form, and to some extent Ana Šomlo, most of the literature created by Jewish women writers is generally realistic, delivered as a life story of the heroine, written out of an evident urge to "let the world know," emerging from a basic drive to provide truthful testimony based on the insights of a woman reflecting on the impact of past events on herself and her generation.

The female perspective embedded in their work is unique as it conveys feminine status, position, and outlook in a changed world, while patriarchal conceptions and practices were still deeply rooted in society, along with a new recognition of feminine capacity and potential. In the women's writings, females are portrayed as basically independent, self-reliant, and confident individuals rather than as weak, frustrated, or merely victimized. Furthermore, this body of literature describes the feminine journey, written from the perspective of women's authentic experience, life philosophy, and capacity for sustaining relationships.

[9] See also: Dina Katan Ben-Zion, "Tangled Fragments of Identity in a Changing World: Judaism as an Open Question in the Literature of Former Yugoslavia," in Hillel Weiss, Roman Katsman, Ber Kotlerman (eds.), *Around the Point: Studies in Jewish Literature and Culture in Multiple Languages* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), 453–478.

Specific Contributions of Jewish Women Writers: Personal Testimonies as Building Blocks of a Collective Memory

The purpose of this section is to present aspects of Jewish consciousness in the writings of thirteen Jewish women writers in the former Yugoslavia, by briefly first presenting four—Frida Filipović, Gordana Kuić, Judita Šalgo, and Ana Šomlo—whose writings I have extensively discussed in my research.[10] I will then discuss other writers (all of whom lived and wrote in Yugoslavia in the second half of the twentieth century) whose Jewish topics and unique insights into the Jewish female lot are worth noting.

Frida Filipović (1913–2003)

Frida Filipović was the first writer in her country to deal with the sexual exploitation of Jewish women in the Nazi camps, as well as with the crimes of human experimentation carried out by German doctors on prisoners of Nazi concentration camps.

In 1967, a film based on Filipović's screen play, *Gorke trave* [Bitter Herbs], came out. In this film Leah Weiss, a Polish Jew, was shown forced into prostitution in Auschwitz. She later became a victim of medical experimentation. Twenty years later, German war crime prosecutors hoped she would be their star witness. The heroine is subjected to the unbearable stress of shame in having to relive those experiences.

In 2000, Filipović published *Bitter Herbs*, this time as a novel. Part of her strategy was to combine a short novella, published in 1973 in the collection *Razilaženja* [Going Apart], with the plot of the earlier film. The first part—based on the novella—deals with the significance of being a Jewish woman who acknowledges the authenticity of her Jewish origin as her true identity, despite the fact that as a young girl she had felt alienated. After the war, the heroine of *Bitter Herbs* suffers from both the traumatic results of sexual exploitation and from persecution by Neo-Nazis, who intended to prevent her from appearing as a witness at their trial. Though portrayed as having a strong personality and being self-reliant, her heroine is tragically defeated by the same political evil that brought about her calamity, as well as that of other women.

[10] For those four women writers, see also my article based on a lecture delivered at the Yad Vashem Conference held in 2013: Katan Ben-Zion, "The Feminine Voyage."

Gordana Kuić (b. 1942)

Gordana Kuić published eight novels and collections of short stories, constituting a unique literary cosmos which portrays Sephardic Jews, beginning with the expulsion from Spain and detailing their personal destinies as they wander the Balkans. Regardless of their personal stories, her protagonists always feel deeply involved in the life of their neighbors and fellow citizens; they lack any sense of alienation or estrangement.

Kuić's literary opus is based on recognizing the paradigm of true love and devotion to one's family as an essential component of the Sephardic sense of identity. Her worldview reflects the idea of "secular grace," of imbuing a secular humanist meaning to the religious notion of grace.[11] Specifically, she portrays family relations in terms of the sense of a profound belonging to both one's unique mother tongue and to a multi-faced social environment endowed by blessed diversity.

Judita Šalgo (1941–1996)

In Judita Šalgo's writings, the sense of Jewish identity displays an intricate combination of mythic, social, philosophical, and personal insights. These elements are interwoven with the consciousness of injustices toward the weak and outcasts, including women dominated by patriarchal conceptions and practices. Her last dystopian novel, *Put u Birobidžan* [The Way to Birobidjan] (Beograd, 1997), published posthumously, portrays a place reigned by justice, free from abuse, exploitation, and oppression, as a shelter providing defense and healing for all outcasts and victimized individuals, among them women as an oppressed group.

Ana Šomlo (b. 1934)

In all her novels, Ana Šomlo's protagonists reveal a profound sense of belonging to an age-old Jewish consciousness rooted in Jewish scripts and wisdom, as well as an awareness of living where her ancestors had dwelled for ages. Her heroine, a journalist, cleverly uses her bold spirit

[11] This idea is presented and discussed in the studies of Dana Freibach-Heifetz, *Ha-hesed ha-hiloni* (Tel Aviv, 2009), and of Tsippy Levin Byron, *Ro'a shel nemerim: Shkiei zehut yehudit bi-ytsirata shel Natalia Ginzsburg* (Tel Aviv, 2015).

and wit to point out the evils which women were subjected to by men in key positions. More specifically, along with her heroine's memories of the Jewish pre-war past and the loss suffered in consequence to the Holocaust, Šomlo exposes the political regime's stupidity and patriarchal practices, namely, of victimizing women while taking advantage of their services.

Šomlo published two of her novels twice, so as to make her voice fully heard. The first instance was the publication of her novel *Lea Štraser* (1980)—for which publication norms required partial deletions—in full, including her sharp critique, titled *Žuti prkos* [*The Yellow Defiance*],[12] which appeared in 2006 and in a sophisticated manner combined memories of the heroine's family who perished in the Holocaust, interwoven into the life circumstances of her protagonist and her emotional state as a young journalist, a single survivor of her family, living in postwar Yugoslavia. Similarly, in 2005 Šomlo produced her epistolary novel of Milena Jesenská's imaginary letters to Kafka, which had appeared in 1988 without arousing the interest it deserved as a brilliant literary accomplishment;[13] here she changed its title to *Bila sam tvoje more: Prepiska Franca Kafke i Milene Jesenske* [I Have Been Your Sea: The Correspondence of Milena Jesenská with Franz Kafka], and this time included Kafka's original letters.[14]

Jasminka Domaš (b. 1948)

Jasminka Domaš is a poet, novelist, lecturer, and journalist, well known in Croatia, whose works have been translated into several languages. She graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Zagreb, and has become an expert in biblical and modern Judaism; currently she is a lecturer in Jewish studies. Among the fifteen books she has published in Zagreb is the collection of short stories *Tjedne minijature slobode* [*Weekly Miniatures of Freedom*; 1997]; the collections of essays *Šabat Šalom*[15] (1999); *I Bog moli* [*God Also Prays*; 2013]; *Dan po dan* [*From Day to Day*; 2014]; reflections on biblical stories *Biblijske priče* [*Biblical Stories*; 2000]; studies of Jewish mysticism and trends of thought

[12] Ana Šomlo, *Žuti prkos* (Beograd, 2006).

[13] Ana Šomlo, *Milenina pisma Kafki* (Novi Sad, 1988).

[14] Ana Šomlo, *Bila sam tvoje more: Prepiska Franca Kafke i Milene Jesenske* (Beograd, 2005).

[15] The word "Shabbat" is the Hebrew word for Saturday; "shalom" in Hebrew is the word for *peace*, used as a common everyday greeting. *Šabat Šalom* as a greeting, used on Friday evening and Saturday, means wishing a peaceful *Shabbat*.

Židovska meditacija – istraživanje mističnih staza judaizma [*Jewish Meditation: Studies of Mystic Trends in Judaism*; 2003]; *72 imena Boga* [*72 Names of God*; 2008]; the recollections *Glasovi, sjećanja, život – prilog istraživanju povijesti židovskih obitelji* [Voices, Memories, Life: A Contribution to the Research of Jewish History; 2015]; a collection of poetry *Žena Sufi* [*A Sufi Woman*; 2014]; as well as the three novels *Rebeka u nutrini duše* [*Rebecca in the Interior of Her Soul*; 2001]; *Nebo na zemlji* [*Heaven on Earth*; 2010]; *Knjiga o ljubavi ili kako sam srela Anu Frank* [*The Book on Love or How I Met Anne Frank*; 2004]—a novel dealing with a contemporary woman's position.

Domaš's first book, *Obitelj – Mishpaha* [*The Mishpaha Family*; 1996], is a study of the Jewish community in Croatia and its deep roots in the spiritual life there and in European culture. The extensive body of her literary work focuses on representing the rich heritage of *Mahshevet* Israel, Jewish age-old wisdom, studied, comprehended, and presented to the reader via literature. Her work is therefore a valuable cultural asset, in many ways as relevant today as when it was written. In her novels Domaš explores her heroine's innermost feelings and thoughts, who was entrapped by the heavy impact of the recent past's calamities and the urge to transcend victimization in order to be able to live life fully. In *Heaven on Earth* she presents three generations of women, each striving to make the most of her lot in life. Domaš's novels deal with women's roles in modern society, mainly from a Jewish perspective. They focus in many ways on trends of thought and practices based on Judaism as a set of cultural assets and moral values preserved by tradition, that could be re-interpreted and applied to a different time and environment. In her recent novel *Izabrana: Život Edith Štein* [The Chosen One: The Life of Edith Stein; 2017], Domaš writes about the life and the spiritual realm of Edith Stein (1891–1942), known also as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Stein was a German Jewish philosopher who converted to Roman Catholicism and became a Carmelite nun. She died at the gas chamber in Auschwitz. Upon her death she was canonized as a martyr and saint of the Catholic Church. Reflecting on the unique destiny of Edith Stein, Domaš deals with aspects of identity in modern times.

Zora Dirnbah (b. 1929)

Born in Osijek, Zora Dirnbah is a playwright and novelist who published her first works in the 1950s. A film based on her script *Deveti krug* [*The Ninth Circle*; 1960] gained her wide recognition in her country. In addition to plays and films, she published several novels and short-story collections, all concerned with Jewish destiny before, during, and after World War II. In 1996 she published a collection of biblical stories titled *Kainovo naslijeđe* [*Cain's Legacy*]. By reconstructing biblical stories (e.g., recounting the narrative about Dinah's brothers' revenge upon Shechem and his people), Dirnbah provides a profound frame of reference to understanding the basically tragic human condition throughout the long history of bloodthirsty warfare. In her novel *Dnevnik jednog čudovišta* [*A Monster's Diary*; Zagreb, 1997] she describes with wit and an acute critical voice the life of a teenager during the communist period. Her novel *Kao mraz*: *Roman o nestajanju* [Like a Frost: A Novel on Disappearance; Zagreb, 2000] portrays the history of a wealthy Jewish family who prospered in the leather industry. Their story encompasses a hundred years, including three wars, starting with their arrival from Hungary to Slavonia at the end of the nineteenth century and ending with the dramatic events that befell their offspring during the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s.

Published toward the end of the twentieth century, *Like a Frost* portrays the difficulties the young generation faced because they grew up in a poisonous atmosphere perpetuated by the communist oppressive regime in the Yugoslav federation. Given the gap between them and their parents as Holocaust survivors, living in a society that killed the young generation's grandparents, her heroine suffers from disorientation and psychological disorders. The young generation's strong antagonism toward their parents and life as they knew it resulted in a compelling need to detach themselves from their parents' lives on the one hand, and the awareness of their specific "lot" as Jews who live in the unintelligible Balkans on the other hand. They feel that their complicated Balkanic environment is beyond what the outside world could understand. They experienced it as a state of mind that could not be shared even with their Jewish relatives living abroad. Consequently, despite the family stories about "a common grandmother," the young Jewish generation feels alienated from both their parents' generation and their relatives who live in other countries.

Ružica Galac-Popović (b. 1946)

In her heartfelt novel *Tircina slikovnica* [Tirza's Album],[16] Ružica Galac-Popović—a writer and journalist who lived in Belgrade—describes the life of her father, a partisan leader who lost his leg in the war (and consequently suffered terrible phantom pains all his life), and a Jewish girl who lost her whole family and did not reveal to her daughter the fact of her Jewishness. The truth about her mother's Jewish origin, revealed to the daughter on her mother's deathbed, had a profound impact on the rest of the daughter's life.

As a journalist, Galac-Popović was involved in cultural activities of the Confederation of Jewish Communities, including interviewing Jewish writers and writing a great deal about Jewish issues. She published several books as well as poetry and prose. "In my home I was living with a mother who was a sole survivor, who carried the unbelievable burden of her life. She lived with past memories since oblivion was forbidden, while at the same time she was compelled to anticipate a different future. It means to have to carry all your life the heavy burden of the past. The Holocaust candle must burn forever, never to be extinguished," she told the public who came to celebrate the publication of her book on the Novi Sad Raid.[17]

Nina Glišić-Aseo (1922–1993)

Extensive evidential texts, poems, and stories can be found in the literary supplements of the Jewish *Almanach*s published annually by the Confederation of Jewish Communities in the former Yugoslavia, as well as in many documentary novels.[18] *Hana Menehem*,[19] by the Macedonian writer Nina Glišić-Aseo, belongs to what could be defined as "testimonial literature," written in a blunt realistic style which describes the particularities

[16] Ružica Galac-Popović, *Tircina slikovnica* (Beograd, 2001).

[17] The "Novi Sad Raid," also known as the "Novi Sad massacre," the "Újvidék massacre," or simply "The Raid" (*Racija*), was a military operation carried out in January 1942 by the Honvédség, the armed forces of Hungary, during World War II. It resulted in the deaths of thousands of Jews and Serbs, all of them civilians, in the southern Bačka region of Hungarian-occupied Yugoslavia.

[18] As *Nema mjesta pod suncem* (1959) by Danilo Nahmijas; *Pod žutom trakom* (1953) by Andreja Deak; and later on *Razilaženja* (1973) by Frida Filipović; *Preskakanje senke* (1989) by Ivan Ivanji; and others.

[19] Nina Glišić-Aseo, *Hana Menehem* (Beograd, 1984).

of Holocaust events, their consequences as well as the victims' emotional state at the time and beyond.

Since under Tito's regime in the postwar multinational Yugoslav federation it was considered improper to openly discuss past atrocities committed by any Yugoslav individual—or a nation—toward another, there was at first a general tendency to repress that part of the past. The Jewish community was made up of a scarce number of survivors who found themselves in a peculiar position. Their major loss was considered part of the great general suffering and losses that the Germans inflicted on Yugoslavia. It was difficult to refer specifically to the disaster that happened to Jews and to their profound sense of betrayal (by local accomplices to the Germans) on the one hand. On the other hand, the part Jews played in the partisan movement's warfare against Germany was recognized and highly appreciated.

Hana Menehem provides clear testimony by describing how a well-to-do Jewish family of bankers was destroyed by close friends and acquaintances who collaborated with the Nazis. Glišić-Aseo succeeds in expressing both the unbearable feeling of betrayal and the impact of long-term trauma suffered by the survivors. While her protagonist does suffer from post-traumatic stress, he continues to believe that the world can and must be cured of hatred, and that repeated outbursts of blind hatred need not be permanent.

The growing long-term effect of the Holocaust became a central theme for writers occupied with questions concerning Jews and their post-Holocaust identity. The first works on those issues reflected the urge to provide pure testimony, such as *Hana Menehem*. Later, writers such as Danilo Kiš, Aleksandar Tišma, Filip David, David Albahari, Oskar Davičo, Erih Koš, Frida Filipović, Ana Šomlo, and Judita Šalgo provided additional testimonies which offered a broader as well as more sophisticated frame of reference to the issue. They all, however, avoided questions that bothered them as descendants of families and communities that were cruelly murdered on that same soil, frequently not only by the Germans but also by their local collaborators, especially in Croatia. However, in their writings, struggling with what happens to the literary hero as a Jew serves in many cases as a touchstone by which the society is evaluated or judged in a wide, universal context. This is characteristic of many literary works by Jewish writers.[20]

[20] To mention three of many examples: an allegory by Erih Koš, *Vrapci van Pea* (Beograd, 1962), the word "Pe" indicating an imaginary country, a phantasmagory by Oskar Davičo, *Gospodar zaborava* (Zagreb, 1980), or a novel by Judita Šalgo, *Put u Birobidžan* (Beograd, 1997).

Eva Grlić (1920–2008)

In 1977 the journalist Eva Grlić, who had married a Communist Party member and fought with the Partisans against the Germans, published the first edition of an autobiography describing both the abuse and humiliation that Jews suffered under the Croatian Ustasha rule and her own sufferings as a political prisoner, who after the war was dispatched to the penal island of Goli Otok.[21] She describes the killing of all her family members in Croatia and Bosnia, who during the war were sent to concentration camps (only she and her daughter survived), and how Jews, including the survivors, were robbed of their belongings.

A widow and mother of a daughter born in 1941, whose father, Eva's first husband Rudolf Domani, had been killed by the Ustasha, after the war she married Danko Grlić, a professor of philosophy. Because of his freethinking approach (regarding the Tito–Stalin split), Grlić was sent to Goli Otok, to be followed by his wife, who was imprisoned there for eight months. Their apartment was taken from them, her daughter sent to an orphanage, and upon her release Eva found herself homeless. Because she wrote a sentence in which she expressed disapproval, she was once again imprisoned in Goli Otok, this time for two years. In 1953 she was released, having lost sixteen teeth as well as her belief and trust in the system to which she had been devoted in her youth. Since she was forbidden to be a journalist, she worked as a secretary while editing and writing for the local factory paper, as well as publishing short stories.[22] In her memoirs she mentions how she had been struck by the disapproval of her second husband's family not just because she was a widow and mother of a child, but "in addition to that, she was a Jew."

Ženi Lebl (1927–2009)

The Israeli writer and historian Ženi Lebl came to Israel following two and half years of imprisonment in Goli Otok (she was sentenced for having told an innocent joke). In addition to a monograph about the Jews of Macedonia[23] and a catalogue of Jewish books published in Belgrade between 1837 and

[21] Eva Grlić, *Sjećanja: Autobiografska fikcija o životu prije i poslije rata* (Zagreb, 1998).
[22] Eva Grlić, *Putnik za Krakow i druge priče* (Zagreb, 2002).
[23] Ženi Lebl, *Ge'ut va-shever* / *Plima i slom* (Jerusalem, 1986/1990). It is a history of the Jews of Vardar, Macedonia, published first in Hebrew and later in Serbo-Croatian.

1905,[24] Lebl published a study on the Jerusalem Mufti, first in Serbian,[25] then in Hebrew,[26] and later translated into English.[27] In 2001 she published a comprehensive two-volume history of the Jews of Serbia and of Belgrade, both also published in Serbian, Hebrew, and English.[28] She also published two autobiographical books in both Hebrew and Serbian, as well as a brief history and biographical dictionary of Jews from the former Yugoslavia living in Israel, in a Hebrew and Serbian bilingual edition.[29]

In her novel *Dnevnik jedne Judite* [*Diary of a Judith*][30] Lebl describes the harsh times of the German occupation by writing an imaginary diary on behalf of her mother, sharing her observations, thoughts, and feelings in occupied Belgrade with her husband, who had been taken as prisoner to a German camp. In the Serbo-Croatian version of her autobiography Lebl wrote:

> We, Yugoslav Jews, truly believed in equality of rights and obligations in our homeland. But can we now regard it as our homeland? We were not in the least prepared for the blows, and consequently felt betrayed. We lost our belief in humanity. More than anything, my mother was hurt by the thundering silence of our non-Jewish neighbors and friends. The minimal protests—if at all—were lost in the silence of the majority that did not shun the new laws and thus eventually agreed with them. Suddenly the laws became more forceful, since they struck our home and environment. For me it was the first major disappointment, leaving a painful scar.[31]

In addition to the above works, Lebl published dozens of short studies and articles in both Hebrew and Serbian, winning over the years 26 first prizes in anonymous annual contests organized by the Confederation of Jewish Communities in Belgrade to encourage historical, literary, and scholarly works about the lives of Jews in Yugoslavia. She also translated a great deal of modern Hebrew poetry into Serbo-Croatian.

In the first of her two autobiographical books she depicted imprisonment at Goli Otok.[32] In the second book, published in 1997, she described

[24] Ženi Lebl, *Jevrejske knjige štampane u Beogradu 1837–1905* (Gornji Milanovac, 1990).
[25] Ženi Lebl, *Jerusalimski muftija* (Beograd, 1993).
[26] Ženi Lebl, *Haj Amin & Berlin* (Tel Aviv, 1996).
[27] Ženi Lebl, *The Mufti of Jerusalem Haj-Amin el-Husseini and National-Socialism* (Belgrade, 2007).
[28] Ženi Lebl, *Do konačnog rešenja* (Beograd, 2001, 2002).
[29] Ženi Lebl, *Juče, Danas: Doprinos Jevreja sa teritorije bivše Jugoslavije Izraelu* (Tel Aviv, 1999).
[30] Ženi Lebl, *Dnevnik jedne Judite: Beograd 1941* (Beograd, 1990).
[31] Ženi Lebl, *Odjednom drukčija, odjednom druga* (Beograd, 2008), 18. Unless otherwise noted, the quotations are translated by the author of the article.
[32] Ženi Lebl, *Ljubičica bela* (Beograd, 1990; 1993; 2009). It is an autobiography about Yugoslav Women's Gulag, published in Serbo-Croatian and in Hebrew.

the first chapter of her life, how as a young girl she fled from occupied Belgrade and finally arrived at the Gestapo prison in Berlin, at the last moment to be saved by the Russians from a death sentence imposed by the Germans (ordered by Heinrich Himmler, to celebrate Hitler's birthday).[33] Upon returning to Belgrade she learned that her mother and grandmother had been dispatched to the local Sajmište concentration camp and were gassed to death in the German vehicle designed for that purpose.

On her return to Belgrade from Berlin, Lebl began a new period full of promising opportunities, but was soon again a victim of a cruel, unexpected fate. In her own words (translated from Hebrew):

> Here ends another chapter of my 18-year old life and a new one begins. In two years I completed secondary school and passed the matriculation examination. I enlisted as a student at the High School of Law and Diplomacy and started working as a journalist for *Politika*. I succeeded in overcoming the past. Once again the sun was shining. I thought that I would never again be altered or different, that the question to be or not to be would never arise again. I had no idea that in a short while I was to become a victim of malicious slander. I did not know that other people wrote the screenplay and were to direct my life, whereas I became the star playing the main role. I had no idea that soon, very soon, I would know and feel the dark side of the sun. About that—in my book *Ha-sigalit ha-levana* [*The White Violet*].[34]

In Lebl's autobiographies as well as in her novel *Diary of a Judith* the personal testimony as a prosodic strategy—the attempt to provide personal evidence, a factual testimony—is based on meticulous historical research. Her obvious talent as a storyteller seems to be her ability to describe a chapter in history as a fascinating and moving life story, endowed with shrewd personal insights.

Julija Najman-Klopfer (1905–1989)

Among the women with careers in media and communications was the journalist and writer Julija Najman, who interviewed leading personalities of her time (Jean-Paul Sartre, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Cassou, Louis Aragon, Arthur Miller, and Nathalie Sarraute). As a writer she had great interest in women's issues, and wrote "short journalistic anecdotes with a keen

[33] Ženi Lebl, *Pitom shona, Pitom aheret* (Jerusalem, 1997), 190.
[34] Ibid., 241.

realistic ability to note human weaknesses and unusual circumstances."[35] Her literary opus includes short stories and novels as well as several dramas, always faithful in portraying "real life."

However, as we read her stories describing the trials and tribulations of a Jewish woman who with two small children fled to Italy and had to live there under a false identity, overwhelmed by the fear of being identified as a Jewish refugee, it appears that the technique of "reconstructing" life situations yields in her case more than just a mere realistic description of everyday difficulties. The life story of her heroine in these stories is in a way an image of a Jewish woman's position as a persecuted creature with a specific state of mind. This is obvious even in the titles of her novels *Šapat* [A Whisper] or *Nameštanje lica* [The Adjustment of Faces].[36] Such texts reflect the psychology of hiding when "adjustment of faces" becomes the only strategy to provide a chance of survival.

Najman describes various types of women whom she had to pretend to be occasionally, asking herself endlessly which one of them could have saved her at a given moment. Thus her writing deals basically with appearance as opposed to essence, false against genuine, pretence against truth, when both choices seem questionable for providing help, rescue, or safety. She shows how the self-consciousness of a refugee fleeing from death becomes an issue, as pretence produces manipulation along with paralyzing fear, while self-denial becomes the inevitable price that a persecuted creature must pay for the sake of survival.

Magda Bošan Simin (1922–2004)

Magda Bošan Simin was an editor in chief of Radio Novi Sad and a former member of the Federal Parliament in Vojvodina. As a member of the Communist Party she was imprisoned by the Germans first in Hungary and then in Bergen-Belsen. Her documentary writings describe the suffering of those times. After the war she completed her studies, was active in many organizations, and wrote short stories, plays, novels, and memoirs.[37]

[35] Predrag Palavestra, *Jewish Writers in Serbian Literature*, trans. George Nikolić (Belgrade, 2003), 113.

[36] Julija Najman, *Šapat* (Beograd, 1968). It is a short-story collection on Jewish themes. *Nameštanje lica* (Beograd, 1979) is a novel based on wartime experiences.

[37] Magda Simin, *Izdanci na vetru* (Novi Sad, 1958); *Pomračenja* (Novi Sad, 1972); *San mladosti* (Novi Sad, 1983); the novels *Kamen na ramenu* (Novi Sad, 1988) and the travellogue *Beleške iz Izraela* (Novi Sad, 1990).

Simin details the hardships of political prisoners in German camps. The Jewish aspect is less present in her writings; she does not reflect on issues of identity and destiny, and the Jewish angle is present rather as a mere "casual" fact. However, in describing the long convoys of Jewish Austrian refugees (before their deportation), she remembers that upon seeing them her father attached a *mezuzah* to the doorpost of their family home.

In most of her writings communism is presented as the solution to the Jewish problem. Nevertheless, she mentions that each time she "forgets that she is Jewish there is somebody to remind her of it,"[38] and in a way she is unaware of the implications of such a statement.

In Novi Sad, women who had been imprisoned during World War II for their active participation in warfare against the German occupation kept annual gatherings. One such meeting was dedicated to Magda Simin's book *Bačvanske političke osuđenice u ratu 1941–1945* [Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945].[39] What Galac-Popovič (whose mother was one of those women) had to say on that occasion seems to sum up the literary opus of Magda Simin as well as Simin's own strategy of retaining the memory of that specific passage of the "feminine voyage":

> If you donate a life to your son, it is too little; if another one goes to your husband—it is too little; if you give the third one to your work—it is too little; if you fight for ideals—it is too little . . . while all those women, still "too little," have been carrying all that on their hands throughout their prolonged lifeline—now joined by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whose youth was marked by the bloody sentence of history.
>
> As to their number and the various prisons in which they were held, Magda Simin, authoring *Women from Bačka: Political Prisoners in the War 1941–1945*, the publication which we are celebrating today, reminds us not only by providing the sheer document, but through the lyric story as well, as it is usually the case with a woman (men would say it is too pathetic).

Galac-Popović then says that although Magda Simin's family resented her re-experiencing the time of the war, the drive to write it all down was stronger, since it was important for her not only as a document, but also as a piece of "the feminine gentleness," which was not lost in those times of

[38] Magda Simin, *Dok višnje procvetaju* (Zagreb, 1980), 185.

[39] Further bibliographical information is unavailable. Galac-Popović delivered her speech on the occasion of celebrating Simin's book on women war prisoners. See "I sedam života je malo," Skup vojvođanskih logorašica nakon 58 godina, vojvodina.com (29 Oct. 2003), http://www.vojvodina.com/zanimljivosti/arhiva3/031029.html [retrieved: 24 Jan. 2018].

cruelty. It tells how "four of our fellow women gave birth in those prisons, and that in spite of feeding on the bromine-soup and losing our period, most of us have lived to experience the bliss of motherhood." Another aspect is the story of those women's lives, which does not end with their getting out of evil prisons and camps; it also reveals their postwar lives, as many became top professionals in fields such as medicine, pedagogy, journalism, and art.[40]

Mirjam Štajner-Aviezer (b. 1935)

Mirjam Štajner-Aviezer, born in Slovenia, came to Israel as a young woman after working with young Jews in Belgrade. Although she published several short stories and monographs about the Righteous Among the Nations, she is best known for her unique novel *Vojak z zlatimi gumbi* [*The Soldier with the Golden Buttons*], published in Serbo-Croatian (1964) and translated into Hebrew and other languages.[41]

The novel tells the story of a group of young Jewish children on their way to a German camp and their life in it. It reveals physical and mental horrors as contemplated by a young innocent girl, who feels rather than understands what is happening around her. The girl is endowed with a rich imagination and notions about the grown-up world which she acquired in her parental home, where culture and well-being predominated. The story marks her experiences as a young sensitive child torn from her parents, bewildered at the atrocities surrounding her.

The story of Štajner-Aviezer's small heroine is rich in visual as well as emotional content, brilliant in its powerful description of the clash that the young child experiences between innocence, the sense of beauty, the yearning for love, the longing for a "normal" life, while confronted with the cruelty of the Nazi soldier who hits and abuses the children and even burns one of them in front of the young inmates' eyes. Yet at the same time the girl responds to the German soldier's beautiful external appearance. His aesthetic appearance attracts the little girl's attention, misleading her to interpret beauty as promising some kind of redemption, as the attractive glittering buttons on the German soldier's uniform apparently represent

[40] Ibid.

[41] Mirjam Štajner-Aviezer, *Ha-hayal ba'al kaftorei ha-zahav*, trans. Yohanan Omri (Tel Aviv, 1977). For the English edition see Miriam Steiner-Aviezer, *The Soldier with the Golden Buttons*, trans. Miriam Arad (Jerusalem, 1987).

something that by the power of sheer beauty is in her young mind associated with an orderly world permeated with kindness. The strong impact of the sight of the German soldier's uniform on the child's senses relates to a sense of order, politeness, and security, associated with the aesthetic aspect of her surroundings. The soldier's beautiful uniform makes her associate his appearance with the orderly cultural world that she had known, and she expects the soldier in the handsome uniform to put an end to the unintelligible suffering that she actually experiences. Further on, by sticking to the inner mute words of a very young child, Štajner-Aviezer describes the unbearable pain of the growing misunderstanding between a young child and her mother in the hard circumstances of the German camp, due to the little girl's inability to understand what has happened to her and to her mother. The child seems to mutely blame the mother for "allowing it" to happen. On the other hand, in a moving way the young girl's innocent view manifests a child's moral victory amidst the surrounding arbitrary evil and unintelligible cruelty.

Conclusion

Literature from the former Yugoslavia frequently raises questions about Jewish existence while searching for new definitions of Jewish identity to fit the modern era with its secular atmosphere and unavoidable assimilation. Consequently, it both expresses the fear of disappearance of the community and recognizes the importance and validity of Jewish age-old wisdom, threatened as a spiritual resource. In this context the complex relation of one's Jewish origin almost never incorporates the religious patterns of belonging to Judaism; instead, it focuses in many ways on trends of thought, modes of behavior and moral values that could be re-interpreted and applied to different life circumstances.

Whoever survived the Holocaust, whether as a child or as a youth, expressed in various ways the break in continuity of their Jewish life and consciousness. The dominant feeling was that life was composed of fragments of authentic experiences, of particles of times and events, marked by a real sense of loss and overbearing chaos. Consequently, it was necessary to establish a new order of priorities, to attempt to reconstruct the lost continuity in terms of individual memory, family life, and a communal frame of reference. In these cases, each specific cultural heritage provided writers with a referential context and a sense of belonging to a cultural

legacy. Jewish writers preserved (even in altered circumstances) some of their original common codes from the Old Testament and the Talmud. The meaning of such codes might be open to different interpretations, but they definitely sprang from ancient common sources. This link is present in the writings of Ana Šomlo, Zora Dirnbah, Judita Šalgo, and Jasminka Domaš, and in many cases is implied in the other authors as well.

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On 23 October 1992 at an evening dedicated to "The Jewish Identity of Our Times," Judita Šalgo spoke about her childhood experience of being separated from her mother who was sent to a Nazi camp. Judita was brought up by a woman whom she had to call Mommy, and whom she loved although she knew that her "real one" was far away. Šalgo explained that it was very difficult for her to relate to her mother with love once "the real one" returned from the camp tortured, filthy, and miserable. Šalgo concluded that we are living in times when everything—including one's own mother—seems replaceable. This left her with a feeling of deep skepticism and insecurity. In her speech delivered that evening Šalgo commented on her Jewish identity:

> The Jewish identity is expressed, in life and in literature, by a certain repertoire of themes, symbols, general places, and prejudices: Zion, the Temple, holy scriptures, exclusion, migrations, the Diaspora, the Holocaust, deracination, separation, Jewish solidarity, Jewish self-hatred and racial shame, Jewish arrogance, Jewish skepticism and negativism, cosmopolitanism, revolutionary subversion, humor, humanist altruism, thriftiness, greed, petty bourgeois boastfulness, class tolerance, business, artistic and scholarly talents, neuroses. . . . My national identity manifests itself through an absence of unequivocal categories: I both am and am not that which is expected of me (and which I expect of myself), I both am and am not at home, both do and do not want to be what I am and where I am, and so on. If once in the future—to introduce a poetic projection—Jews would stop migrating, and then, in time, their memories and dreams would stop wandering, that fabulous "identity" would calm down as well, and the Jew would unite with himself (that would happen in literature). If my literary protagonists are wandering, that may be for just two reasons: either because they are Jews or because I am a poor writer.[42]

*

Jewish writers (men and women alike) recognized themselves as descendants of an age-old tradition encompassing turmoil and mixed marriages.

[42] Translated into English partly by George Nikolić and partly by myself from: Judita Šalgo, "Moj jevrejski identitet," in ead., *Jednokratni eseji* (Beograd, 2000), 129–135.

Despite that, they all found a way to maintain their faith, if only as carriers of some remnants of the broken Tables of Testimony. The literature written by these very few Jewish Holocaust survivors is permeated with feelings of disappointment and disillusion as well as a deep sense of betrayal. Yet each writer demonstrates a unique perspective on what it meant to be a Jew during the Holocaust and what it means to be a Holocaust survivor in the aftermath.

Women writers are evidently aware of the feminine "lot." Whether writing about their own or their female protagonists' experiences, Jewish women writers describe in so many ways a world dominated by strife, striving to formulate their view of Jewish destiny in past times while looking forward toward a horizon of hope for a better future.

Appendix: List of Jewish Women Writers in Former Yugoslavia

Alfandari Pardo, Reli (1929–)
Altaras, Gina (1896–?)
Bogičević-Švarcenberg, Nina (1944–)
Bojetu-Boeta, Berta (1946–1997)
Bojović, Zlata (1939–)
Bošković, Magda (1914–1942)
Braude-Kovačević, Mina (1920–)
Cvejin, Tatjana (1948–2011)
Demajo, Vesna (?)
Dirnbah, Zora (1929–)
Domaš, Jasminka (1948–)
Filipović, Frida (1913–2003)
Galac-Popović, Ružica (1946–)
Glišić-Aseo, Nina (1922–1993)
Grgelj, Boriska (1889–1944)
Grlić, Eva (1920–2008)
Ivanji, Ildi (1933–)
Jun-Broda, Ina (1899–1983)
Kabiljo-Šutić, Simha (1938–2008)
Kalderon-Petković, Slobodanka (1942–)
Kolonomos, Žamila (1922–2012)
Kuić, Gordana (1942–)
Lebl, Ženi (1927–2009)
Lebl-Albala, Paulina (1891–1967)
Lerinc, Ruza (1915–1941)
Nahman-Premeru, Sonja (1904–1986)
Najman-Klopfer, Julija (1905–1989)
Ovadija, Rikica (1913–?)
Papo Levi, Laura, Bohoreta (1891–1941)
Rajner-Vajner, Mirjam (1959–)
Šalgo, Judita (1942–1996)
Simin Bošan, Magda (1922–2004)
Šomlo-Ninić, Ana (1935–)
Srdanović-Barać, Olga (?)
Štajner-Aviezer, Mirjam (1935)
Tutunović, Drita (1944–)
Zrnić, Maja (1961–)

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A Border Biography: The Image of the Past in Eva Nahir Panić's Memories as Presented in Dane Ilić's *Eva*[*]

Abstract: The primary objective of this text is an analysis of Eva Nahir Panić's biography (she lived from 1918 to 2015) titled *Eva*, written by Dane Ilić. The protagonist of this story is a Jewish woman born in Čakovec, who married a Serbian officer, survived the Holocaust, went through the camp for the Cominformists, and finally immigrated to Israel. An interpretative category that creates a framework for reading the text is the term "borderline," which encompasses two meanings here. The first includes borderline situations (such as the Holocaust and the stay in the Sveti Grgur prison camp) which Nahir Panić had to face in her life and which left an indelible mark on her (the burden of her traumatic experience is passed on to the next generation, in Eva's daughter, Tijana—signifying a postmemory issue). The second pertains to how she functioned in the borders between cultures which directly influenced her fate. With reference to Ewa Domańska's concept of the rescue history project executed in Poland, I suggest that the life of Eva Nahir Panić, though undoubtedly filled with painful experiences, ought to be considered not in terms of victimization, but of rebirth and affirmation. Nahir Panić's life story is a highly personalized narrative, which presents her own identity project, and through it the reader discovers the potential of the community. This may also provide a starting point for reflecting on the history of Yugoslavia.

Keywords: Goli Otok, Holocaust, biography, Eva Nahir Panić, borderline, postmemory, identity.

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Introduction

The life story of Eva Nahir Panić (1918–2015), as well as those of other inmates in isolation centers for Cominformists,[1] for many years remained on the fringe of researchers' interest. Let us recall that the breakthrough text for the women's camp discourse was the documentary series from 1989, *Goli život* [Bare Life] by Danilo Kiš and Aleksandar Mandić.[2] This first documentary film dedicated to the issue of Goli Otok[3] confirmed that women, too, were inmates at prisons and camps for Cominformists (the numbers previously had been reported merely in dry figures); the documentary also demanded that their voice be taken into consideration in discussions about the camp experience.[4] The protagonists of the film were two prisoners—Ženi Lebl and Eva Nahir Panić—to whom Kiš, the narrator of the stories, their interlocutor, and active listener, "gave a voice."[5] It was the first public statement that both women made about the past. The Serbian writer and intellectual in his film became "a mediator between the past and the present,"[6] in which both prisoners

[1] The dispute within Yugoslavia followed the international conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR, as a result of which the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was excluded from the Cominform in 1948. Those Cominformists who supported the Kremlin's position believed that if Yugoslavia veered off the path charted by Moscow, it would make the realization of communist ideals impossible. The anti-Tito opposition which was formed at that time was recognized in Yugoslavia as a counter-revolution, and Tito's opponents as internal enemies who needed to be excluded from the society and re-educated. The correctional institutions had in fact become labor camps in which both actual and potential or alleged opponents were imprisoned. The history of the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR and the motives for setting up Goli Otok are discussed in detail in Katarzyna Taczyńska, *Dowcip trwający dwa i pół roku: Obraz Nagiej Wyspy w serbskim dyskursie literackim i historycznym końca XX i początku XXI wieku* (Warsaw–Bellerive-sur-Allier, 2016), 37–70.

[2] Ibid., 89–92, 219–226.

[3] The Goli Otok prison camp is only one of the places of isolation intended for Cominformists that were established in Yugoslavia after 1948. Because of its size and notoriety, it became a symbol of all the contemporary prisons and camps for Tito's opponents; see e.g. Ivan Kosić, *Goli otok: Najveći Titov konclogor* (Zagreb, 2009); Dragan Marković, *Josip Broz i Goli otok* (Beograd, 1990). The first group of political prisoners arrived at Goli Otok on 9 July 1949 and consisted of 1,200 people; see Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, vol. 3: *Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945–1988* (Beograd, 1988), 232.

[4] Katarzyna Taczyńska, "Diskurs o logoru Goli otok – ženska perspektiva," *Knjiženstvo* 4 (2014), http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/magazine.php?text=130 [retrieved: 10 Oct. 2017].

[5] The audibility of the voice in culture depends, as Grażyna Borkowska writes, on attentive, sensitive reading which shows new "styles" of reception; see Grażyna Borkowska, "Wstęp," in Grażyna Borkowska, Liliana Sikorska (eds.), *Krytyka feministyczna: Siostra teorii i historii literatury* (Warsaw, 2000), 8.

[6] Ewa Domańska, *Mikrohistorie: Spotkania w międzyświatach* (Poznań, 2005), 274–275.

saw an opportunity to publicize issues concerning women in camps. Kiš's premature death impeded the chance to further develop this project. However, the author managed to encourage the first of his interlocutors to write down her memoirs. The prose by Lebl titled *Ljubičica bela: Vic dug dve i po godine* [The White Violet: A Joke That Stretched for Two and a Half Years] appeared in 1990 and is the first testimony of those events published by a woman.[7]

Although in the next decade the development of social debate was halted due to the civil war in Yugoslavia, the publishing of testimonies of former prisoners continued. Today the issue of Goli Otok is finally being re-examined. An important direction in the development of research on camp literature includes feminist critical studies which, by setting the gender criterion as the starting point, read texts as a means to establish the history of women and the specificity of the female experience.[8] For instance, the interest in female testimonies has allowed scholars to reinterpret the output of Milka Žicina, who previously had been perceived and interpreted in literary studies with almost exclusive reference to two novels from the interwar period—*Kajin put* [Kaja's Road; 1934] and *Devojka za sve* [A Maid for All Work; 1940]—and had been viewed only within the narrow framework of social literature.[9] According to Slavica Garonja Radovanac, the manuscripts describing Žicina's stay in the Glavnjača prison in Belgrade (1951) and in the Stolac prison camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1952–1955), published only after the author's death—first in magazines, then in a book form—re-focused the attention of literary scholars. The book entitled *Sve, sve, sve . . .* [Everything, Everything, Everything. . .] was first published in Croatia in 2002; the Serbian edition appeared in 2011, and Žicina's memoirs *Sama* [Alone] in book version first reached readers in 2009. As Ljuba Vukmanović observes, Žicina is probably the only writer convicted for Cominform activity.[10] Her camp prose is significantly distinguishable among all the texts of the former

[7] See Ženi Lebl, *Ljubičica bela: Vic dug dve i po godine* (Gornji Milanovac, 1990).

[8] See Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, "Izdajice su uvijek ženskog roda: Političke zatvorenice u archipelagu Goli," *UP&UNDERGROUND* (Spring 2010), 232–242; Slavica Garonja Radovanac, "Goli otok i rezolucija Informbiroa (IB) u srpskoj književnosti koju pišu žene (Ženi Lebl, Vera Cenić, Milka Žicina)," in Jovan Delić (ed.), *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik* (Novi Sad, 2011), 661–678.

[9] Dunja Detoni Dujmić, *Ljepša polovica književnosti* (Zagreb, 1998), 48; Garonja Radovanac, "Goli otok i rezolucija," 229.

[10] Ljuba Vukmanović, "Samoće Milke Žicine," in Milka Žicina, *Sama* (Beograd, 2009), 15.

prisoners presenting this experience as well as among her own texts. Žicina is currently considered to be the first inmate to have recorded her prison experience, writing as early as the 1970s—although for the next decade the manuscript lay hidden in the double bottom of a kitchen cabinet.[11]

The history of women arrested as Cominformists was subjected to double stigmatization and exclusion. First, the topic was taboo until the 1980s. Second, the symbolic power over this memory had been dominated by a male-centered narrative, and had ignored the stories and experiences of women. A concept that perfectly captures the process of creating, recovering, and shaping a woman's narrative about the Goli Otok is called "rescue history." Created and executed by Ewa Domańska,[12] this project of "involved history" considers voices from the periphery as an accurate representation of an "important center for creating knowledge."[13] Rescue history promotes community and integration, includes within the scope of its interest individual and collective memory, goes beyond the academic sphere, and responds to the needs of local communities. This approach incorporates the postulates of affirmative humanities into scholarly analysis; it proposes that humanistic research should abandon postmodern "ideas of the end and disasters" and traumatocentric studies. However, in the world of real threats, the study of violence, terror, and conflicts clearly remains a key issue, which in turn leads researchers to reflect on the condition of humanity and the world around us. The proposal of the Polish researcher tends toward a potentiality in which the focus shifts from perceiving someone as a victim to considering him or her a subject with their own agency, an "actor of the past." Finally, it expresses an affirmative reflection which encourages the formulation of fresh research questions covering previously untrodden ground, and applies theories that will empower individual and collective subjects.

Using the approach proposed by Domańska, in this article I analyze the authorized biography of Eva Nahir Panić, written by Dane Ilić and published in 2016 under the title *Eva*. It is the first monograph published

[11] See Slavica Garonja Radovanac, "Rezolucija Informbiroa (IB) 1948. u srpskoj književnosti koju pišu žene (Iz rukopisne zaostavštine Milke Žicine)," *Književna istorija* 147 (2012), 367–397; Katarzyna Taczyńska, "Odzyskać przeszłość – obóz Goli otok w relacjach kobiet: Przypadek Milki Žiciny," in Agnieszka Matusiak (ed.), *Postkolonializm – tożsamość – gender: Europa Środkowa, Wschodnia i Południowo-Wschodnia* (Wrocław, 2014), 267–279; ead., "U potrazi za strategijama preživljavanja – logorska proza Milke Žicine," *Knjiženstvo* 5 (2015), http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/magazine.php?text=158 [retrieved: 10 Oct. 2017].

[12] Ewa Domańska, "Historia ratownicza," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2014), 12–26.

[13] Ibid., 12.

in Serbia devoted to Nahir Panić. Its author, a journalist and radio correspondent of RTS (Radio-Televizija Srbije) from Kragujevac, prepared the documentary *Eva: Goli život Golog otoka* [Eva: Bare Life on Bare Island] in 2013, using interviews with Nahir Panić conducted that same year in Israel. These interviews also became the basis of the biography which is the subject of this article. Ilić wrote a cognitively and socially interesting text depicting the story of a Jewish woman who survived the Holocaust, was sent to a camp for Cominformists, and finally immigrated to Israel. It should be added that earlier, apart from the television series *Goli život*, Nahir Panić had also been the protagonist of the documentary *Eva* directed in 2002 by Avner Faingulernt and of a biography *Dvije ljubavi i jedan rat Eve Panić Nahir* [Two Loves and One War of Eva Panić Nahir], written by the journalist and publicist Aleksandra Ličanin and released in 2015 in Čakovec.[14] As an interpreter[15] of the reality described in Ilić's prose, I will analyze a sequence of events chronologically depicted in it and trace the way in which Nahir Panić gives meanings to particular events. I treat a culturally embedded text as a literary representation of specific cultural issues.[16] Following Norman Denzin, in my reflections I accept that biographical materials are a type of conventionalized narrative, containing objective and subjective markers, turning points he calls epiphanies, which signify experiences leaving marks on human life.[17] However, the recorded testimony of Nahir Panić, despite presenting her traumatic experiences, can also be regarded as an expression of the struggle for remembrance of the past and as an attempt to save her own subjectivity. I interpret the

[14] Aleksandra Ličanin, *Dvije ljubavi i jedan rat Eve Panić Nahir* (Čakovec, 2015). This book is a bilingual Croatian-English publication, in which the main narrative is supplemented by direct quotations from Eva Nahir Panić and her daughter Tijana Wages. The interviews conducted with Nahir Panić in 2012 and 2014 constituted the basis of the monograph. The book was further enriched with photographs depicting the protagonist at various moments of her life. On the book see e.g. Andrej Pal, "Dvije ljubavi i jedan rat Eve Panić Nahir," *Hakol* 138 (2015), 19.

[15] In sociological research, the scholar is even placed in a triple role—that of a reader, an exegete of the text, and an interpreter of social reality; see Hanna Palska, "Badacz społeczny wobec tekstu: Niektóre problemy analizy jakościowej w socjologii i teoria literatury," in Henryk Domański, Krystyna Lutyńska, Andrzej W. Rostocki (eds.), *Spojrzenie na metodę: Studia z metodologii badań socjologicznych* (Warsaw, 1999), 162. See also Agnieszka Nikliborc, *Uwięzione w KL Auschwitz-Birkenau: Traumatyczne doświadczenia kobiet odzwierciedlone w dokumentach osobistych* (Kraków, 2010).

[16] Wolfgang Iser, "Czym jest antropologia literatury? Różnica między fikcjami wyjaśniającymi a odkrywającymi," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2006), 11–35.

[17] Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Biography* (Thousand Oaks, 1989), 70.

"border" to which the title refers as having a double meaning[18]: not only as borderline situations (i.e. the Holocaust or the stay in the Sveti Grgur prison camp)[19] which Nahir Panić had to face in her life and which left an indelible mark on her, but also as a term referring to functioning in the borderlands between different cultures which directly influenced her fate.

Borders of Biography

The analysis of the text must be accompanied by a brief, factual reconstruction of Nahir Panić's life. This will allow us to indicate the events and circumstances which played a decisive role in shaping her identity, had a direct influence on her decisions, and formed the historical framework for a literary representation. She was born in 1918 as Eva Kelemen, the youngest of three daughters of a wealthy Jewish family from Čakovec, a city in the Međimurje region, which was then a part of the Kingdom of Hungary.[20] Soon, however, due to geopolitical changes after World War I, Međimurje became a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Eva's parents, Bela and Ema Kelemen, owned a fashionable clothing store which, according to Eva, sold textiles imported from Paris and Prague.[21] At home they spoke Hungarian; Eva learned Croatian and German at school. From a very early age, she was familiar with the multi-lingual features of East European Jewish culture before World

[18] Agnieszka Czyżak writes about "border" lives in the context of Polish-Jewish and Jewish-Polish biographies, see Agnieszka Czyżak, *Świadectwo rozproszone: Literatura najnowsza wobec przemian* (Poznań, 2015), 55.

[19] See Karl Jaspers, "Sytuacje graniczne," in Roman Rudziński (ed.), *Jaspers*, trans. Mirosław Skwieciński (Warsaw, 1978), 186–242.

[20] In 2014 Eva Nahir Panić, as the first in the history of Čakovec, personally received the City Medal of Honour. See Ivica Beti, "Preživjela holokaust i robijala na Golom otoku, a sada je prva počasna građanka Čakovca," *Večernj list* (19 May 2014), https://www.vecernji.hr/regije/prezivjela-holokaust-i-robijala-na-golom-otoku-a-sada-je-prva-pocasna-gradanka-cakovca-939561 [retrieved: 10 Oct. 2017]. It should be mentioned that the first individually published testimony (there are obviously more recorded yet unpublished memories of other people) of a Jew from Međimurje is Branimir Bunjac's interview with Eva Schwarz (1927–2012); see Branimir Bunjac, *Iz pepela čakovečke sinagoge: Životopis Eve Schwarz* (Čakovec, 2014). The above-mentioned book of Ličanin is a continuation of this type of publications (Ivan Pranjić, "Pogovor: Progon," in Bunjac, *Iz pepela*, 71; Ličanin, *Dvije ljubavi*, 8). Although—as Bunjac writes in his introduction—Schwarz lived in Budapest after the war, for the rest of her life she played the role of an informal leader of the surviving Jews of Međimurje (Bunjac, *Iz pepela*, 7, 9).

[21] Dane Ilić, *Eva* (Kragujevac, 2016), 11.

War II[22] though her mother—as she remembers—“[d]idn’t know even a word in Croatian.”[23] Early in her life, Eva partook in the activities of a left-wing youth organization, and while travelling to visit her sister in Pest, she carried communist propaganda materials. These illegal activities stemmed from Nahir Panić’s idealism and naivety: “I was young and I saw in it a community of people who share ideals and a desire to change the world together;”[24] “I didn’t want anyone to ask me again whether I was Jewish or Gypsy.”[25] However, she consciously exploited the fact that she was a daughter of wealthy Jews, which gave her a privileged position in society: “I often didn’t know what was there. No one suspected that in the suitcase of a young Jewish woman with a ticket for the most expensive train compartment were publications intended for an illegal organization.”[26] In 1936, she met Radosav Panić, a young Serbian officer, and they married in Belgrade in 1940 despite their social differences (Panić came from a poor family in Mala Kruševica, a village in southern Serbia) and legal restrictions (to make the marriage possible, Radosav bought a false written proof of baptism for Eva, which formally made her an Orthodox Christian), and together they lived in the Serbian capital. When the war broke out in 1941 in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, her husband was mobilized and she went to Mala Kruševica. Lack of news from Radosav made her return to Belgrade: “There is no life for me without Rade.”[27] With documents presenting her as a Hungarian married to a Serb, she left her husband’s family home. By coincidence, she found him wounded in Belgrade (“I remember every moment, every street from the meeting with my Rade”)[28] and organized the transport to Mala Kruševica, where they moved together. Radosav joined the underground communist movement, for whom he gathered intelligence on the Chetniks.[29] When the

[22] Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, *Odcienie tożsamości: Literatura żydowska jako zjawisko wielojęzyczne* (Lublin, 2004), 12–13.

[23] “nije znala ni reč hrvatskog jezika.” Ilić, *Eva*, 21.

[24] “Bila sam mlada i na to gledala kao na zajednicu ljudi koje povezuju ideali i želja da zajedno menjaju svet.” Ibid., 15.

[25] “Nisam želela da me više iko pita da li sam Jevrejka ili Ciganka.” Ibid.

[26] “Često ni sama nisam znala šta se tu nalazi. Niko nije sumnjao da se u koferima mlade Jevrejke, sa kartom najskupljeg razreda u vozu, nalaze publikacije namenjene ilegalnoj organizacji.” Ibid., 14.

[27] “Bez Radeta mi nema života.” Ibid., 53.

[28] “[s]ećam se svakog momenta, svake ulice, mog i Radetovog susreta.” Ibid., 54.

[29] After the attack of the Axis countries, two main movements fighting for liberation and competing with each other for power were formed in Yugoslavia: the Chetniks, supported by the émigrés and the allied government, led by Col. Dragoljub Draža Mihailović,

danger that Eva would be recognized as a Jew became real, she moved to Užice. She met her husband again in Belgrade in May 1943. At that time she was thinking while travelling: "'Who am I?' she asked herself as she descended the steep street towards the city center. 'I am not allowed to be a Jew. Is it less scary to be Serbian or Hungarian?'"[30] All these thoughts led her, upon arrival, to introduce herself as a "refugee from Croatia."[31] The question about her origin, and the affiliation and non-transparency of the answer followed Eva throughout her life. The imperative to maintain a camouflage and change her identity, forced by circumstances of the war (which changes at the level of external functioning came to her relatively easily and did not raise suspicion, primarily because she knew languages and had the "right looks"), is a recurring motif of the story. Meanwhile, her parents along with other Jews from Čakovec, which was under Hungarian occupation, were deported and at the end of April or in early May 1944 died at Auschwitz.[32]

It should be noted that in Belgrade Eva and Radosav were also involved in illegal guerrilla activities. Radosav Panić—as his wife says—in June 1944 officially became a member of OZNA (Odeljenje za zaštitu naroda / Odeljenje zaštite naroda [the Department for People's Protection]).[33] As we read in the biography, on the instructions of OZNA he also cooperated with the NKVD. Although the couple managed to survive the war and even had a daughter named Tijana in 1945, the postwar period turned out to be truly dramatic for them. During his intelligence work,

and the communist guerilla under Josip Broz Tito, supported by the USSR, and later also by the United Kingdom and the USA. See Barbara Jelavich, *Historia Bałkanów: Wiek XX*, trans. Marek Chojnacki, Justyn Hunia (Kraków, 2005), 280–281.

[30] "'Ko sam ja?' – pitala se dok se spuštala strmom ulicom ka centru grada. 'Jevrejka ne smem da budem. Je li manje strašno biti Srpkinja ili Mađarica?'" Ilić, *Eva*, 63.

[31] "izbeglica iz Hrvatske." Ibid., 64.

[32] Međimurje, like Prekomurje, Baranje, and Bačka, was under the Hungarian occupation from December 1941. Compared to the rest of Hungary, the attitude toward the Jews in those areas was particularly hostile and this was exacerbated in April 1944. See Mladenka Ivanković, *Jevreji u Jugoslaviji (1944–1952): Kraj ili novi početak* (Beograd, 2009), 38. The only remembrance of parents and loved ones from Čakovec which survived the war turned out to be a box of photographs and letters buried by Eva in 1941 in Mala Kruševica in the Panić family courtyard. This motif brings to mind a metal box found many years after the war and containing documents, photographs, and a letter, which appears in the novel by Filip David, *Kuća sećanja i zaborava* (2014). Thanks to the contents of the box, buried by the parents of one of the main protagonists of the story, Miša Brankov/Volf, he learns that he is of Jewish descent. On the novel see Sabina Giergiel, Katarzyna Taczyńska, "'When Night Passes' and 'When Day Breaks' – Between the Past and the Present: Borderlines of Holocaust in Filip David's Works," *Colloquia Humanistica* 6 (2017), 75–96.

[33] Ilić, *Eva*, 69.

Radosav was arrested several times,[34] for the last time in October 1951, when Yugoslavia had already been excluded from the Cominform. He was then charged with spying for the NKVD and allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself on a bandage tied to his bed. Shortly after, Eva was arrested too. At first, the UDBA (Uprava državne bezbednosti [State Security Service]) tried to force her to renounce her husband as a Soviet spy and an enemy of the nation. When she refused to do so, she was accused of espionage. At some point, wrought by emotional tension, she attempted to commit suicide in her cell. Such situations when women were "encouraged" to break up with their husbands and renounce them are relatively often described in the memoirs of former women prisoners.[35] Eva refused to sign the agreement to cooperate; she was prepared to die rather than act against her own convictions. During interrogation, she even recited a fragment of a poem by the Czech proletarian poet Jiří Wolker, beginning with the words "I do not fear death." For her resistance, she was eventually sent to a re-education camp, as the labor camps for opponents of Tito's politics were then called. Eva was imprisoned in the camp on the island of Sveti Grgur[36] from April 1952 to November 1953.

Mothers, sisters, and wives of political prisoners as well as women with Russian family members constituted a significant segment of the arrested.[37] For their kinship or close contacts with the detained "enemies of the state" they were persecuted, deprived of rights, blackmailed, and forced to break all contacts with husbands, brothers, or lovers. Those who resisted were considered "political criminals" and were arrested on account of their relationships. Renata Jambrešić-Kirin estimates that the number of prisoners sentenced for having close relations with the "enemy of the state" was considerable. According to the Croatian researcher, family-related arrests are one proof that, politically speaking, women at that time were not considered as independent, self-governing subjects.[38]

[34] To obtain the release of her husband, Eva even appealed to Moša Pijade, who helped her. Ibid., 81–87.

[35] Taczyńska, *Dowcip*, 121–122.

[36] Other sources in which the Nahir Panić's memories were published report that she was also a prisoner of Goli Otok. See Dragoslav Mihailović, *Goli otok, knjiga 2* (Beograd, 1995), 250.

[37] Dragan Marković, *Istina o Golom otoku* (Beograd, 1987), 183; Eva Grlić, *Sjećanja* (Zagreb, 2001), 194.

[38] Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, "'Šalje Tito svoje na ljetovanje!': Ženska trauma i arhipelag Goli," *Treća* 1 (2007), 30. See also Taczyńska, *Dowcip*, 117–123.

Eva Nahir Panić devotes much space in her recollections to her period in isolation, all the more so because the weight of the experiences increased and the consequences of the arrest became integral to her subsequent life. After her release, she first went to Lendava in Slovenia, to her daughter Tijana who remained in the care of Eva's sister. However, as the city was located close to the Hungarian border and thus presented a risk that Eva might try to escape, and perhaps because her family was afraid to shelter the former political prisoner, she was forced to leave Slovenia. She moved to Belgrade, but the stigma of having been a prisoner made it difficult for her to start a new life. It took her no less than two years to find an apartment,[39] which finally allowed her to bring her daughter to Serbia. Life burdened by belonging to a family of political opponents turned out to be too difficult for Tijana, who was persecuted because of her parents' past,[40] so after graduation she decided to move to Israel and live at Kibbutz Sha'ar ha-amakim. The relationship of these two women—mother and daughter—is an important, but not dominant, topic recurring in Eva's testimony, which I will analyze later in this article. Here it should be added that Tijana's mother joined her daughter only in 1966, after she was finally able to read her husband's files and confirm that he had died innocent. Upon reaching Israel, she opened a new chapter in her life. Although the burden of the camp tragedy and Radosav's death were forever to be an integral part of her life, the need for a new beginning turned out to be stronger. In Israel, she married a man named Moše Nahir, but decided to keep the names of both husbands. For the rest of her life she lived at the kibbutz, and died in 2015.

"My story was not important to me at all, I was not important"[41]

Eva Nahir Panić's life story as presented by Dane Ilić unfolds on two levels. On the first, the reader encounters the situation of a journalist's arrival in Israel in 2013 and follows a conversation the journalist holds with the

[39] Because problems were piling up, it was then that Nahir Panić first considered emigration to Israel. Help in finding a home came again from Moša Pijade. See Ilić, *Eva*, 140.

[40] Eva mentions a situation when in the classroom one of the students wrote on the blackboard: "Tijana Panić is a child of the enemy of the nation" ("Tijana Panić je dete narodnog neprijatelja"). See ibid., 143.

[41] "Moja priča nije meni uopšte bila važna, ja nisam bila važna." Cf. "Politika: drugi dan okruglog stola pisaca," in Mirjana Miočinović (ed.), *Danilo Kiš (1935–2005): Između poetike i politike* (Beograd, 2011), 136.

subject of the biography. On the second level, we read the linear retrospective history of Nahir Panić. The two parts are fused in Ilić's narrative, which reveals the details of the meeting in Israel, but above all, has an informational character. Its purpose is to build a terse historical-political context, partially based on academic sources, for the events the text describes. The biographer thus creates a picture of the life of a certain individual and directs the reader's attention so as to highlight past experiences. Ilić, like Danilo Kiš before, becomes a mediator of the story of Nahir Panić, the weaver[42] who interweaves fragments of the heroine's story. Referring to James Young's findings on the content of testimonies in video format, we could look at Nahir Panić's memories—both in Kiš's documentary and in *Eva*—as "a narrative in a narrative" consisting of three elements: the story of the protagonist, the telling of the story, and its record.[43] Using the words of Ewa Domańska, it can be said that Ilić, symbolized by the written word, by the mediation mechanism, makes Eva the speaker so that the testimony becomes an act of empowerment.[44] Describing the story is an act intended to show that the heroine has managed to save her future and re-establish herself in "the civilization of life" and at the same time save her own experiences through articulating them—the experiences of both a Jewish survivor of Holocaust and a former prisoner of the camps for Cominformists.

We could ask why Nahir Panić never wrote down her own memories. In one conversation about the camp experience, she emphatically states that "My story was not important to me at all, I was not important."[45] It is clear from her recollections that she does not perceive her own experiences as valuable enough to record. In the same utterance she also stresses that the past was of major importance to her in individual and private terms: she wanted to preserve her husband's memory and demonstrate that he

[42] It is worth reminding that the work of weaving is often interpreted in culture as feminine speech and language; see Kazimiera Szczuka, "Prządki, tkaczki i pająki: Uwagi o twórczości kobiet," in Borkowska, Sikorska (eds.), *Krytyka feministyczna*, 71. Thus, the term "arachnology" of Nancy K. Miller was born, referring to the mythical Arachne, which metaphorically described the creativity of women and was a kind of response to Roland Barthes' "hyphology" idea; see Anna Burzyńska, Michał Paweł Markowski, *Teorie literatury XX wieku: Podręcznik* (Kraków, 2007), 409–411.

[43] As cited in Piotr Filipkowski, "Historia mówiona i wojna," in Sławomir Buryła, Paweł Rodak (eds.), *Wojna. Doświadczenie i zapis: Nowe źródła, problemy, metody badawcze* (Kraków, 2006), 18.

[44] Domańska, "Historia ratownicza," 30.

[45] "Politika: drugi dan," 136.

was innocent.[46] For this purpose she agreed to cooperate with Kiš, whom she valued very highly. First, together with the Israeli journalist Raul Tajtelbaum, she recorded her memories on tapes that were given to Kiš. She later appeared with Ženi Lebl in the above-mentioned series *Goli život*. It is also possible that her internal compulsion to tell her story was a kind of a narrative therapy, "a way to understand the reality that is an inherent element of subjective being in the world."[47] Nahir Panić draws a clear distinction between the turbulent past that deeply influenced the current shape of her life under new conditions and the present that was passing in relative calm. She divides her life into two parts. The first marks her time in Yugoslavia when her mental state before leaving for Israel was close to depression. Full of anxiety, Nahir Panić was living then in the shadow of the camp experience. In the second part, in Israel, she was forced to focus on situations around her at the moment, even if the memory of the past was still vivid and she continued to return in her memories to the people and places she had lost. The meeting with Kiš pushed her out of the rut of everyday life and presented an opportunity to pull her experiences from deep layers of memory and recreate her own biography. Ilić largely repeats Kiš's role as a mediator, but in his writing he tries to preserve his interlocutor's utterances. He styles the text as a dialogue, so a large part of what Nahir Panić says is represented in independent speech. The main purpose is to give testimony; thus, the language of the memories expressed by the protagonist preserves what is called reduced record, characteristic of camp memories, devoid of figurative language and approaching the style of so-called factual literature.[48] It is the text that performs functions other than aesthetic.[49]

Undoubtedly the experience of loss, concrete and personal, first that of her parents during the Holocaust, then after the war that of her husband as a result of political cleansing, accompanied Nahir Panić throughout her life and remained an indelible part of it. In Eva's case, we can also

[46] Ibid.

[47] Barbara Józefik, "Terapia jako proces współtworzenia nowych znaczeń i opowieści: Idee i praktyki narracyjne," in Lech Górniak, Barbara Józefik (eds.), *Ewolucja myślenia systemowego w terapii rodzin: Od metafory cybernetycznej do dialogu i narracji* (Kraków, 2003), 2; http://psychoterapia-certyfikat.pl/wp-content/uploads/Barbara-Jozefik-Terapia-narracyjna.pdf [retrieved: 10 Oct. 2017].

[48] Bożena Karwowska, *Ciało. Seksualność. Obozy Zagłady* (Kraków, 2009), 40.

[49] Przemysław Czapliński, "Zagłada jako wyzwanie dla refleksji o literaturze," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2004), 19.

talk about the loss of place.[50] She had to break ties with geographical locations several times in her life, as she was forced to resettle and leave home, and finally, her homeland, Yugoslavia. Interestingly, even in the 2013 interview with Ilić, Nahir Panić describes modern Serbia by the term "Yugoslavia," emphasizing her deep relationship with the country and her attitude toward its loss. Because she uses that name of the country, it is also appropriate to talk about the relationship with a certain remembered reality, based on multi-culturalism and realizing the premises of communist ideology: "After all this I am still a socialist, a communist, even if I was never a member of the Party."[51] Eva plainly declares that the idealistic vision of life based on shared property and equal division still appealed to her in Israel, and that is why she decided to live at the strongly left-wing Kibbutz Sha'ar ha-amakim. It is worth stressing that even many years after leaving the prison camp, the protagonist does not renounce her sympathy for communism, a movement she perceived primarily as a victory over fascism. Even if she herself became a victim of Tito and the policies of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, she does not blame them for the harm she suffered: "Tito was a capable statesman; he was the first to stand against fascism, against Hitler's evil."[52] In her opinion, the state of affairs should be blamed on the USSR, which pressured Yugoslavia and posed a real threat to the country.

For Nahir Panić, the loss is closely related to cultural dependence and to historical and political events, but in her story, narrative optics deal with the public sphere only through context. Her story centers on private space, on facing the challenge of losing her loved ones and home and the need to build a new life in a foreign territory. However, the reality of the emigration life from which she speaks is limited to a side story continuing along the main tale and serving as a supplement or framework for the reconstructed past. This side story reveals that Nahir Panić's life in Israel focused on her role as a wife and on family matters. The professional sphere of the

[50] In an interview given to Dragoslav Simić, Eva Nahir Panić described Yugoslavia as her old homeland, to which she turns back in dreams. See Dragoslav Simić, Audio i Foto Arhiv, "Eva Nahir Panić" (2014), http://www.audioifotoarhiv.com/gosti%20sajta/EvaPanic.html [retrieved: 10 Oct. 2017].

[51] "Posle svega, ostala sam socijalista, komunista, a da nikada nisam bila član Partije." Ilić, *Eva*, 166.

[52] "Tito je bio sposoban državnik, prvi se podigao protiv fašizma, protiv Hitlerovog zla;" ibid. Eva Nahir Panić exchanged correspondence with Milovan Đilas on the idea of creating the Goli Otok prison camp and the responsibility for the events that took place there; ibid., 162–163.

protagonist is practically non-existent in this narrative. Perhaps, as Bożena Karwowska writes, "the identity" reaction of the heroine is narrowed to a private role as a sign of the situation in the peripheral countries from which émigré women escaped "into family roles, and above all in the role of wife."[53] The division into "private" and "public" is not present in Nahir Panić's life in a binary and obvious way; these categories are intertwined, "so there are no disjoint sets, no impassable zones."[54]

To understand the details of Eva Nahir Panić's experience, it is necessary to view it in a broader perspective of political influences. If we discuss her history against a socio-historical background, we receive an enriched narrative spectrum of the fate of Yugoslav Jews. Nahir Panić's voice, which is a part of war and camp discourse, can be interpreted as a community relation,[55] which for the societies of the countries of the former Yugoslavia seems to have built a connection to their Jewish past and has "both scientific-cognitive and social-integration functions."[56] A similar role is fulfilled by the autobiographical prose of Ženi Lebl.[57] Nahir Panić's biography can be interpreted as a border biography that confirms the existence of heterogeneous identity, in which culturally (Hungarian, Yugoslavian, Jewish) and socially (private/public) significant influences are clearly expressed. The conversations recorded by Ilić incorporate the relations of communities existing outside the borders of the traditional model of national history so that they become a part of this narrative.[58]

[53] Bożena Karwowska, "Kobieta – Historia – Tożsamość: Kilka uwag o powojennych emigrantkach polskich," in ead., *Kobieta – Historia – Literatura* (Warsaw, 2016), 40.

[54] Inga Iwasiów, "Wstęp," in ead. (ed.), *Prywatne/publiczne: Gatunki pisarstwa kobiecego* (Szczecin, 2008), 7.

[55] Domańska, "Historia ratownicza," 14.

[56] Ibid. It is worth remembering that one of never completed research projects of Ženi Lebl concerned Jewish experiences related to a stay in the Goli Otok camp; see Aca Singer, "Neostvarena želja," in Aleksandar Lebl, Ana Lebl, Dina Katan Ben-Cion (eds.), *Ženi* (Beograd–Tel Aviv, 2013), 45. Certainly, Eva Nahir Panić's testimony could be considered as one of the sources. The author notes in it that during her isolation when she was boycotted, other fellow prisoners tried to force her to march through the barrack with Nazi parade step; see Ilić, *Eva*, 126. About boycotts and other groups of prisoners see Taczyńska, *Dowcip*, 65–68.

[57] See Katarzyna Taczyńska, "'A Scattered Mosaic of Records and Reminiscences': Ženi Lebl's War Odyssey in Her Personal Writings," in Urszula Markowska-Manista, Justyna Pilarska (eds.), *An Introspective Approach to Women's Intercultural Fieldwork: Female Researchers' Narrations Based on Their Intercultural Experiences from the Field* (Warsaw, 2017), 68–102.

[58] Cf. Karwowska, "Kobieta – Historia – Tożsamość," 32.

Camp Experience in Intergenerational Relations

The multi-layered prose of *Eva* is valuable for at least one more reason, which in the text itself is located beyond the main narration and even the main text. It is the problem of the mother–daughter relationship and the issue of intergenerational trauma. Nahir Panić's camp experience, the context of her arrest (the death of Radosav), and the resulting consequences are the key elements of the protagonist's biographical experience, the specific turning point—as I have shown—shaping her later life. In Eva's biography, the camp past is a type of "borderline situation" as described by Karl Jaspers. The philosopher uses "borderline situation" to denote an existential event which cannot be avoided and which condemns man to choose. Decisions taken at that point completely change a life.[59] According to the literary representation in the analyzed text, the burden of traumatic experience turns out also to encumber the next generation, the children of former prisoners, or in this case Eva's daughter Tijana. This complicated relationship clearly shows hidden cracks in the mental state of the mother, rebuilt with so much difficulty.

The issue of postmemory[60] in the camp discourse on the Goli Otok is still a rare topic, although some cultural texts discuss the transgenerational trauma and give it fictional forms.[61] It is worth recalling here the novel *Oko otoka* [Around the Island] by Vanja Bulić, whose father was arrested as a Cominformist.[62] The author, utilizing authentic memories, creates a literary picture of the conflict between a father, the prisoner of Goli Otok, and a son, first a rebellious teenager, and then a security agent, who is looking for understanding in a father who is still silent about his absence and the past. The second important work, widely received, is *Goli* [Bare] from 2014, a documentary film by Tiha K. Gudac, debuting as a documentary artist. As the director and screenwriter, this granddaughter of a former prisoner shows from the perspective of personalized narrative

[59] Jaspers, "Sytuacje graniczne," 186–242. As Jacek Leociak writes: "[w]ith border experience we have to deal when a man can no longer endure, but he must endure—and he endures." Jacek Leociak, *Doświadczenia graniczne: Studia o dwudziestowiecznych formach reprezentacji* (Warsaw, 2009), 20.

[60] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, 1997).

[61] See Katarzyna Taczyńska, "Obóz Goli otok w relacji międzypokoleniowej: Przypadek filmu *Goli* Tihej K. Gudac," *Politeja* 47 (2017), 145–157.

[62] See Vanja Bulić, *Oko otoka* (Beograd, 2009).

how the camp experience influenced and still influences the generations following the victims of the camp, namely their children and grandchildren.

The bond between the mother and daughter appears on the pages of the memories discussed here quite inconspicuously and in most cases only in the margins, as a footnote. I have already mentioned that Tijana, as a child of former prisoners, became a victim of bullying and ostracism at school. Social exclusion was a key factor in mobilizing her to emigrate from Yugoslavia. The passages of Ilić's 2014 conversations with Tijana quoted in *Eva* reveal that the moments of disappearance (after the arrest) and return (from the camp) of the mother are deeply imprinted on the child's life. A specific tension between the daughter and her mother emerges from the daughter's confession. This family conflict is revealed in two ambivalent images. The first is the voice of a little girl who expresses a deep longing for her absent mother and hopes for her quick return. The moment when the officers of UDBA came for Eva has been preserved by Tijana as a very detailed memory:

> I will never forget this morning when they knocked on the door of Mira Carin, where we were both staying. We waited for Mom to return and come to dinner. I kept repeating to Mira: "Aunt Mira, we just can't eat the whole dinner! Mom will come back, so we have to leave something for her." Even today I remember in detail every piece of furniture from this dining room in Mira Carin's apartment on the first floor of Ivan Begova Street no. 6.[63]

Similarly vivid is the scene of Eva's arrival in Lendava, which Tijana recreates for the interview. In this memory, the meeting appears as a magical moment, a little unreal, as if it were a page of a film script:

> I was eight. I don't remember exactly what time of year it was, but I remember that there was no snow. I was sitting at the table and heard a knock at the door that opened straight to the main room where I was sitting. She was wearing wrinkled clothes. Her legs were very swollen. I remember that moment when I looked up at the doorway—like in a movie scene, without words. . . . It was Eva.[64]

[63] "Nikada neću zaboraviti to jutro kada su pokucali na vrata Mire Carin, u kom smo se nalazile samo nas dve. Čekali smo mamu da se vrati i stigne na ručak. Uporno sam ponavljala Miri: 'Teta Miro, samo da ne pojedemo ceo ručak! Mama će se vratiti, pa da i njoj nešto ostavimo'. I danas se tačno sećam svakog komada nameštaja u toj trpezariji u stanu Mire Carin u ulici Ivan Begovoj br. 6, na prvom spratu." Ilić, *Eva*, 108–109, footnote.

[64] "Imala sam osam godina. Ne sećam se tačno koje je doba godine bilo, ali sam upamtila da nije bilo snega. Sedela sam za stolom i čula kucanje na vratima koja su gledala pravo u glavnu prostoriju u kojoj sam sedela. Na sebi je nosila sivu zgužvanu odeću. Noge su joj bile jako otečene. Pamtim taj trenutak kada sam podigla pogled ka vratima – poput scene iz nekog filma, bez reči… To je bila Eva." Ibid., 137, footnote.

In the second instance, the daughter's voice are the words of an adolescent and adult woman who for many years resented her mother for at the time of Eva's arrest choosing love for her husband and fidelity to her ideals over returning to her daughter. For many years, Tijana was unable to feel compassion for her mother, accusing her of egoism and abandonment. The pain and anger between them lasted for a very long time, and was particularly acute when they lived together in Yugoslavia.[65] The reader may have guessed that the daughter had to fight so that her mother would recognize the daughter's story. Perhaps Tijana's urge to leave for Israel sprang from the need not only to cut off the past but also to become independent, which would allow her to discover her own identity. The tension and turbulent emotions can also be read in the words of the protagonist on the memories, as she indicates that the daughter is the only person who may have a legitimate claim on her. Eva was aware of the consequences of her conduct in prison: "By this act, I condemned not only myself, but also her [Tijana]. . . . She often accused me of loving her father more, but I couldn't deny my greatest love, my Rade."[66] She calls the decision she reached at that time "a great sacrifice" which—in her opinion—she had to make in order to go on living: "I sacrificed Tijana's childhood and my freedom to prove that Rade was killed innocent."[67] Another choice would mean betraying not only her husband but also herself, their daughter, and their love.[68] The protagonist admits simultaneously that the fight for the good name of her husband and family was dramatic and that often it was the thought of her daughter that allowed her to persevere. There is a striking scene in which Eva describes a moment when she was working at the camp on the island—and we must add that it was Sisyphean labor which literally consisted of carrying stones pointlessly up and down the mountain[69]—and during that time she created projections in her mind to give meaning to her actions. She imagined that Tijana was waiting for her upstairs and that Eva was carrying medicine for her.[70]

[65] Ibid., 165.

[66] "Tim činom nisam samo presudila sebi već i njoj [Tijani]. . . . Često mi je prebacivala da sam više volela njenog oca, a ja se nisam mogla odreći svoje najveće ljubavi, mog Radeta." Ibid., 143.

[67] "Žrtvovala sam i Tijanino detinjstvo i svoju slobodu, da bih dokazala da je Rade stradao nevin." Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Work played an important role in the re-education of the prisoners, but it was also used as a method of torture. See Taczyńska, *Dowcip*, 68.

[70] Ilić, *Eva*, 126.

From this perspective, the strategy for working through this difficult relationship which is mentioned at the end of the book seems interesting. The borderline moment for their relation was the trip of the mother, daughter, and granddaughter to Goli Otok in 2002. Faingulernt's film documents this journey. It was then that the question about the relationship between the mother and daughter was openly asked for the first time, so that the journey became a trope for the developments in the mother–daughter relationship. As a result, the trip proved to be a sort of therapy with a cleansing function, shedding accumulated regrets. It gave both mother and daughter a chance to revisit their experiences and the related trauma, and to make that painful heritage a shared one through recognition of the daughter's history. It became the nucleus for a new relationship and opened the space for understanding and forgiveness. The tension and asymmetry in the relationship gave way to an equal arrangement, in which both Eva and Tijana become the depositors of the burden of family recollections and the memory of them. And when we look at this event from the point of view of feminist criticism, the process of birth of a conscious bond can be interpreted as the retrieval of a female-based genealogy which maintains the family's "continuity and identity, not only in the biological but also in the socio-cultural aspect."[71]

Conclusion

Ewa Domańska's rescue project can be used as inspiration for recovering and shaping narratives about female experiences from camps for Cominformists. The biographical memories of Eva Nahir Panić collected by Dane Ilić fit into its scope well. The story of the main character represents a tale that evades uneqivocal classification. Her biography is permanently unified (not divided) by the concept of "border" defined in this case by the events of the war and postwar history of Yugoslavia, Jewish history, and the process of establishing one's own subjectivity in relation to the category of private versus public. Through this lens, the life of Eva Nahir Panić, though undoubtedly filled with painful experiences, can be perceived not as a story of victimization, but of rebirth and affirmation.

[71] Tatiana Czerska, *Między autobiografią a opowieścią rodzinną: Kobiece narracje osobiste w Polsce po 1944 roku w perspektywie historyczno-kulturowej* (Szczecin, 2011), 89.

Her life story is a highly personalized narrative, presenting her own identity project, which also discovers the potential of communities and may provide a starting point for reflection on the history of Yugoslavia, with universal application.

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The Saving Narratives of Daša Drndić

Abstract: The starting point for this paper is the assumption that by obsessive revisiting the events of World War II, the Croatian writer Daša Drndić attempts to influence indirectly the present. It parallels her narrators' declarations who—with a great dose of probability—can be simultaneously read as her alter egos. Hence, the article investigates and describes the strategy whose main aim is to retain memory about the past. In Drndić's texts this function is achieved through the acts of archiving, writing down, and grouping. These acts constitute non-standard ways to enhance the literary text with, for example, whole pages filled with the victims' names (integrated within the text or acting as a peculiar supplement to the volume).

Keywords: Croatian literature, Holocaust, memory, archives, children, ethics.

Daša Drndić (1946–2018) is a Croatian author who has become better known in her native land since the late 1990s. She owes her Croatian renown to two predominantly autobiographical perspective texts: *Marija Czestochowska još uvek roni suze ili umiranje u Torontu* [Maria Częstochowska Still Shedding Tears, or Dying in Toronto][1] and *Canzone di guerra: Nove davorije* [*Canzone di guerra*: New Japes].[2] Her virtual absence from Croatian literary discourse until the 1990s can be explained by the fact that from 1953 to 1992 she lived, studied, published, and worked in Belgrade, only occasionally contributing to Croatian newspapers. As a result of the events of the 1990s (the growth of nationalism and the outbreak of a fratricidal war), she decided to leave Serbia for Croatia,

[1] Daša Drndić, *Marija Czestochowska još uvek roni suze ili umiranje u Torontu* (Rijeka–Zagreb, 1997).

[2] Daša Drndić, *Canzone di guerra: Nove davorije* (Zagreb, 1998).

where she lived for the next three years. Having received a scholarship from the Canadian government in 1995, she went to Toronto and then settled in the Croatian town of Rijeka in 1997.

Since the 1990's, Drndić has published books in which she moves from a personal to a universal perspective, incorporating Holocaust-related topics in such works as *Totenwande: Zidovi smrti* [*Totenwande*: The Walls of Death],[3] *Leica format: Fuge* [*Leica Format: Fuges*],[4] *Sonnenschein: Dokumentarni roman* [*Sonnenschein*: A Documentary Novel],[5] and *April u Berlinu* [April in Berlin].[6] All the works of this Croatian prose writer—despite their multitude of plots and the mosaic-like structure of the texts—are intrinsically coherent, centering around several key topic areas, the most basic and general of which is the experience of exclusion. In her two latest books—I am referring here to *Belladonna,* published in 2012, and *EEG* in 2016—the theme of the Holocaust appears fleetingly, moving aside to provide space for ruminations on contemporary times, more precisely, on life in Croatia.

This practically obsessive return to events from the past that are both traumatic for individuals and for whole societies (she is primarily interested in the World War II period) is characteristic of Drndić's reflections, and there are, in my opinion, two underlying reasons for her change. The first is the conviction that people today are obliged to remember—in particular, to remember those unknown and "weak" victims,[7] with a sense of responsibility. Drndić consistently places the importance of microhistory over that of great historical syntheses.[8] This probably stems from her conviction that individuals who are of no importance for key civilizational changes are actually mere splinters of great narratives and are thus absent from

[3] Daša Drndić, *Totenwande: Zidovi smrti* (Zagreb, 2000).

[4] Daša Drndić, *Leica format: Fuge* (Zagreb, 2003).

[5] Daša Drndić, *Sonnenschein: Dokumentarni roman* (Zaprešić, 2007). Polish edition: *Sonnenschein: Powieść dokumentalna*, trans. Dorota Jovanka Ćirlić (Wołowiec, 2010).

[6] Daša Drndić, *April u Berlinu* (Zaprešić, 2009).

[7] The term "weak" individuals or heroes refers to characters who were not remembered by official historical discourse, do not exist in the collective memory, and whose lives and fates may seem unimportant from the community's point of view. The concept has been borrowed from Magdalena Dyras, *Re-inkarnacje narodu: Chorwackie narracje tożsamościowe w latach dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku* (Kraków, 2009), who in turn adopted it from the work of Julijana Matanović, *Krsto i Lucijan: Rasprave i eseji o povijesnom romanu* (Zagreb, 2003), 130.

[8] I use here the contrast between the two as mentioned by Ewa Domańska in the context of her work, see Ewa Domańska, *Mikrohistorie: Spotkania w międzyświatach* (Poznań, 2005).

our memory. Therefore, by asking indirectly how to save those who are already gone, Drndić suggests through her works that this can be achieved only by restoring the memory of a specific, singular person, someone who has a name, surname, and a unique story, thus bringing them out of the formless mass of humanity. People are forgotten only when their names are forgotten—or so maintains the narrator of the novel *Belladonna*, recalling a saying by Gunter Demnig[9]: "For every name carries a story and history predominantly remembers the names of criminals, forgetting the names of the victims."[10] Through her texts, Drndić prevents the reduction of a person (whether dead or alive) to a number because "murder became possible when an individual turned into a number, when people's uniqueness was taken from them."[11]

The second reason for her repeated return to dramatic events from the period of World War II (this reason is considered here separately, although it remains closely connected with the first reason described above) rises from the conviction that the present does not function in a vacuum and that reality consists of parallel histories that—despite being sometimes separated by decades—create a network of connections and mutual influences. The perspective that unifies both temporal planes is clearly visible in the following thought, which in actuality is a self-referencing intrusion: "While writing, something that seems confined to the past becomes present through writing about it. Often when writing about an apparent past event, it is the present which is being written about."[12] Therefore, the past constantly haunts the present, just as the specters of victims constantly haunt this Croatian writer.[13]

Particularly among artists, contemporary reflection over the Shoah involves authors searching for their own creative paths; it also means attempting to answer the question of how to speak about a past which they have not personally experienced, and which—of possibly greatest importance—carries such enormous potential for trauma. Drndić has developed

[9] Daša Drndić, *Belladonna* (Zaprešić, 2012), 235.

[10] Daša Drndić, *EEG* (Zaprešić, 2016), 235.

[11] Jasna Lukić, "Bol pamćenja i bol zaborava: (anti)povijesni romani Daše Drndić," *Treća* 12 (2010), 2:27, http://zenstud.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Treca_br2_2010.pdf [retrieved: 20 July 2017].

[12] Drndić, *EEG*, 213.

[13] The term "haunting" unequivocally refers to the thanatological lexicon or, to be more precise, to "spectro-ontology," which is an obvious association during reflections over the Shoah. Aleksandra Ubertowska, "Rysa, dukt, odcisk (nie)obecności: O spektrologiach Zagłady," *Teksty Drugie* 2 (2016), 102–121.

a way of writing about the Holocaust that is original and semantically rich and whose constitutive element mixes documentary and fiction—all of which will be discussed in detail later in this article. The author speaks in her own name, as an individual, relaying secondary testimony—she is indirectly marked by the Holocaust, which she knows from iconography and a broadly understood culture. Additionally, her personal experiences put her among people marked out as other, unwanted, and stigmatized. She also touches in her reflections upon the spheres of collective forgetfulness: the areas that are neglected, misrepresented, or excluded; the uncomfortable topics that become taboo. This context adds significance to a fragment of reflections from the author's visit to a famous villa on Lake Wannsee:

> Shame? In the name of the past, in the name of the present, in the name of those known and unknown, in the name of the country whose passport I hold, in whose language I dream. Nausea caused by crimes committed also in my name. Is it normal? Not normal?[14]

The Croatian perspective, underlined many times (likely present also in the above quotation) and extremely significant in the context of the Holocaust perpetrated on the territory of Yugoslavia,[15] results in an ethical obligation to remember. This obligation is doubled by specifying the conditions in which she writes and the place from which she speaks—a place clearly marked by the Shoah.

In discussing Drndić's works the attempt to create "a community of memory" can also be explored. "Community of memory," according to Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, is directed toward the future and rather than commemorating, it serves future transformations; its version of history offers criticism instead of putting up monuments. The community of memory proposed by scholars tends to problematize rather than sacralize the past.[16] When considering the works of this Croatian

[14] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 24.

[15] I mean here the infamous role played during the "Final Solution of the Jewish issue" by the puppet state of NDH (Independent State of Croatia), proclaimed after the capitulation of Yugoslavia in 1941 and subordinated to Hitler. The ill-famed Jasenovac camp was on the NDH territory.

[16] According to the authors, the concept of the "community of memory" was borrowed from Edith Wyschogrod. See Edith Wyschogrod, "Man-Made Mass Death: Shifting Concepts of Community," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58 (1990), 2, quoted in: Alan Milchman, Alan Rosenberg, *Eksperymenty w myśleniu o Holocauście: Auschwitz. Nowoczesność i filozofia*, trans. Leszek Krowicki, Jakub Szacki (Warsaw, 2003), 118.

author, it must be underlined that she stresses the falsity and—above all—the harmfulness of a monumental version of history which sacralizes the nation and to this end controls and limits the recollection of the past, by marginalizing all information that could undermine the constructed, unequivocally positive image of the past. In practically all of her texts, Drndić reviles attempts at affirming the NDH (Independent State of Croatia). In addition, she criticizes the erasure of all traces of the involvement of public figures during World War II and stresses the disgraceful activities of certain members of Croatian clergy at that time. She also argues that group identity should form and determine itself not only in relation to significant events from national history but also—significantly in Croatia—in relation to the Holocaust, which is a subject that has been marginalized, omitted, or displaced.

Drndić's two most recent books clearly depart from a formula dominated by the topic of the Shoah. In *Belladonna*, she focuses on Croatian contemporary life, on the condition of its society, and on the fate of an individual considered detritus by a consumerist society, from the point of view of the experiences of an old, ailing person. In *EEG*, it is difficult to determine a main theme. However, in both texts the Holocaust is evoked multiple times, and it still constitutes one of the major themes of Drndić's books. The events of World War II continuously reappear in her texts, and the Shoah exists on a "historicity-obliterating trajectory"[17] as if the passing of time (with its forward motion) were connected to the circular returning of what is fundamental. In accordance with philosophers' and scholars' expectations, the Holocaust is thought to be a particular injury, a never-healing, metaphorically understood wound in culture. For Drndić, it constitutes an event that she carries inside her, which haunts and does not allow her to forget. Particularly symptomatic here is a fragment from the text *April in Berlin*, in which the author recollects her stay in Germany and Austria:

> All the time, from the beginning to the end of my stay in Berlin, I was followed by history gone mad, screaming "Listen! Look!" It arose as a vapour from the Berlin lawns around Lake Wannsee, from tarmac boulevards, from monumental buildings, from elegant department stores; as a velvet ribbon from shop displays, it danced on my interlocutors' exhalations, injected its lethal aroma under my skin and . . . covered (my) Berlin sky.[18]

[17] Aleksandra Ubertowska, *Holokaust: Auto(tanato)grafie* (Warsaw, 2014), 49.
[18] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 109.

This is the history from which the author cannot free herself and which persecutes her, making any rest impossible in Vienna too:

> Even before I arrived in Vienna, where I was to spend two winter months, I planned that I would see the places which Bernhard had visited and would have casual small conversations with him . . . Then, on my way to meet Bernhard . . . as I was passing the Court Theatre and Heldenplatz, I heard this frightening chanting *Sieg heil!, Sieg heil!*[19]

What is predominantly visible in fragments of this kind is the elimination of distance in time, in which events from the past are superimposed on the present, thus indicating that temporal relations are of primary importance to her.

The Form

The works of Drndić often have a mosaic-like, polyphonic structure with some fragments even coming close to essayist discourse (according to Aleksandra Ubertowska, such discourse in Holocaust literature has the status of a rather marginal utterance, threatening the basics of the ethics of representation),[20] making it possible for the author to mix temporal planes in order to connect reflections on the past with a contemporary point of view and to include fragments of autobiographical narration interspersed with metatextual inclusions. The fragmentary character of this prose is evident both on the level of the whole text (as Drndić's novels often start at an arbitrarily chosen moment, from a certain microhistory, and end in an equally accidental way, often with a clear sign that this particular text is a fragment of a greater whole)[21] and on the level of structure (I mean

[19] Ibid., 114.

[20] Ubertowska, *Holokaust: Auto(tanato)grafie*, 19.

[21] The text *Canzone di guerra: Nove davorije* (a digital version of the book is available at https://elektronickeknjige.com/biblioteke/online/canzone-di-guerra/ [retrieved: 20 July 2017]) ending with the telltale words "It is not the end" ("nije kraj"). From the perspective of genre theory, openness is represented by a fragmentary structure, interrupted narration, and the mentioned open ending. This can be understood as a formal device hinting at resistance against the classical ways of storytelling, indirectly indicating that the problem of exclusion is eternal and the story just told does not exhaust this topic; it can be also considered an announcement of books to come in which the same motifs will reappear. This is the context that Andrea Zlatar uses to decode the ending of another Drndić's text; she maintains that the cycle which begins with the novel *Canzone di guerra* will be continued; more importantly, the ending "That's not all" ("ima još") of her next novel, *Totenwande: Zidovi smrti*, points out that according to the author the eponymous "walls of death" constantly

here creating narration by recalling seemingly unconnected episodes which, when perceived all together, form a kind of a unity, ideologically superordinate). It also appears that the fragmentation principle applied by the writer reaches beyond the framework of the poetics of an individual text. The connections between particular works, placing the existing books in new (con)texts, and the circulation of motifs and characters give the reader an impression that each text created by Drndić is a peculiar kind of fragment, and the deep meaning of her creative output can only be read by people confronting the individual texts, "individual cases" which allow us to piece together the diagnosis of the world that the author proposes.

In her last book, Drndić tries to describe the features of her writing through the words of the narrator. In *EEG* she includes a metaliterary comment: "[w]hat I am writing is neither a diary nor a travelogue nor a novel; it is something in between, this crippled, handicapped jumping through condensed time, through the particles of time that got detached from each other and swim in the tunnels of the present."[22] This fragment clearly indicates that the author's reflection concerns events and personal stories that exceed their timeframes and whose specificity makes them appear still active and able to influence the present by living and resonating within it. Drndić maintains that the Holocaust is one such event which abides in time and should not be subjected to any treatment aimed at removing it and confining it to the past.[23] In this context, the technique used in *EEG* is very symptomatic. Evoking the artistic technique of Shimon Attie, which involved superimposing photographs from the time of World War II onto the contemporary façades of Berlin buildings, Drndić evokes images from the past in which they are confronted with Zagreb's presence. This technique is based on describing today's view of a street or a single building (the author uses synesthesia in such fragments by evoking the smells and sounds of contemporary Zagreb) by confronting it with an image from its past; in the center of such an image is a Jewish family or a single person who used to live or work in the described building. In this way

rise around us. Andrea Zlatar, *Tekst, tijelo, trauma: Ogledi o suvremenoj ženskoj književnosti* (Zagreb, 2004), 148.

[22] Drndić, *EEG*, 221.

[23] It converges with the moral imperative of Frank Ankersmit, who thinks that the Holocaust is the one event in the history of humanity that should remain—marked by melancholy—in the eternal now. Frank R. Ankersmit, "Pamiętając Holokaust: Żałoba i melancholia," trans. Andrzej Ajschtet, Andrzej Kubis, Justyna Regulska, in id., *Narracja, reprezentacja, doświadczenie: Studia z teorii historiografii*, ed. Ewa Domańska (Kraków, 2004), 403–426.

the past breaks into the present; however, as the Croatian author states, "the past cannot return because it does not go anywhere; one just needs to find a proper link connecting it with what is now and what is to come."[24]

The prose texts of Drndić exist therefore as a kind of replacement testimony, and the author herself accepts the burden of testifying and rescuing from oblivion. She can be thus described as a "truth carrier" (the concept of a *Geheimnisträger*).[25] Yet in Drndić's case, the specifics of this attitude do not involve personification of historical truth (someone who has gone through hell and carries it within themselves, as for example Primo Levi) but instead is its transmitter and guardian. In the opinion of Aleksandra Ubertowska, the condition of a truth carrier is associated with a certain displacement, by meekly confessing to one's own insignificance in the face of the complexity of the story that is to be told (or, in Drndić's case, often just recalled) and which should remain and survive its bearer.[26] Such displacement or even removal of one's own person to the background, thereby subordinating oneself to the story being told, is particularly evident in texts where the main topic is the Holocaust. This autobiographical element is clearly present in Drndić's books, yet in individual texts it is either a dominant feature or it moves to one side to allow space for the tale of important Others. Her literary output is characterized by the varying tensions between autobiographical discourse and objective discourse (which in certain fragments is very dry and approaches historiography). However—and this must be stressed—the factual parts are usually complemented by emotional tones. The structure of these texts is unbalanced, as exemplified in *April in Berlin* and especially in *Totenwande: The Walls of Death* where the author's subject is removed to the background, and her (dramatic) experiences are overshadowed. Autobiographic motifs are present in these novels, yet they seem to give way to history, which should not be obscured by what is individual. The flow of the argument is jagged, fragmentary, as if it were reflecting the meandering of thoughts while microhistories that are the told, rewritten or evoked aspire to the fantasy of fullness and completion. I think it would not be inappropriate to conclude that the form chosen by the author is

[24] Drndić, *EEG*, 323.

[25] This term is used by Ubertowska to describe Primo Levi's attitude. The reflections of this Polish writer are for me very inspiring, although of course I realize the fundamental difference between Levi's and Drndić's situations. Ubertowska, *Holokaust: Auto(tanato)-grafie*, 47–48.

[26] Ibid., 48.

a kind of protest against the oppression of finiteness, questioning every rigid project—in this case a project is understood as a set of rules used to assign a category from genre theory to the text.

Drndić's style of writing can be described as the poetics of fragment, from which emerges a project of individual resistance against all forms evoking institutionalized wholeness. The dispersion of thoughts is, however, only apparent, as her books are written with a conviction about the value of individual resistance against evil, illustrated by multiple examples from different times and places. The anarchistic way of thinking involving the need to question and to stand outside prevents overlooking alarming signals (due to acclimatization or conformism) or failing to notice them in time. She seems to believe that the contemporary reader needs to be shaken or at least strongly stirred, for obviousness—identified with a fossilized, predictable form—is tantamount to reader comfort. In her opinion, such comfort is offered by the exhibition that can be seen in the villa at Lake Wannsee:

> [This exhibition] wants visitors to be educated and informed but by no means shaken; in no way does it want to awaken in them the merry fiendish company of the fallen angels of the world. The reader leaves this villa without remembering anything because the memory that the exhibition offers is raddled with a monotonous rhythm and faded colors. The exhibition in the villa at Lake Wannsee is a *total/finished* exhibition, and any project like it brings the story to an end or, if one likes, offers a *final solution*. The curators of the memorial exhibits are worried about their guests and do not want their visitors to get excited—well, perhaps just a little to speed up their circulation a tad, such as occurs during gentle exercises for the disabled and the old.[27]

Institutionalized forms of memory and collective commemorative practices are also subject to inevitable fossilization—which is why Drndić devotes so much space in her books to so-called counter-monuments. Such practices blind people to the vision of individuals, and the Croatian author thinks it is individuals who are worthy of being remembered.[28] This is why she constantly gathers other people's stories,[29] thereby collecting

[27] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 23.

[28] These thoughts are inspired by Aleksandra Ubertowska's reflections on the book *Minima moralia* by Theodore W. Adorno; see Aleksandra Ubertowska, *Świadectwo – trauma – głos: Literackie reprezentacje Holokaustu* (Kraków, 2007), 32–33.

[29] The notions such as "other people's stories" / "foreign" stories or "mediated experience" are unambiguously associated with the category of postmemory. It is worth noting that the issues connected to forwarding of the generation trauma also appear in Drndić's

the fates of others, which are then transformed into literary subject matter and—still in a quasi-documentary form—are placed in her works.

Dorota Krawczyńska aptly notes the following in reference to Holocaust literature:

> Communing with this literature requires the act of distancing oneself. The distance, or the constant consciousness of the separation between oneself and the suffering character is the basic element of the concept of empathy, underlined in the characteristics of this emotion by Martha Nussbaum.[30]

If the authors writing about such dramatic events are unable to transmit them adequately, they are forced to look for alternative ways of translating the tragic experiences into literary subject matter. This also can explain the formal means used by Drndić in her prose. If it is impossible to convey a suffering person's experience in the form of a traditional story without identifying with them unnecessarily (or maybe even without empathizing with them undesirably), an attempt must be made to create a different way of recording this experience. The author thus gives voice to the characters in her prose and objectively suspends the voice of the author/narrator. As a consequence, the tale of the "victim" is presented unadulterated and deprived of an (in)direct author's commentary. By so doing an autonomous, strongly expressive form of communication is made possible, free from attempts to charm the reader whether through tricks proving the writer's talent or through narrators who possess the knowledge of how to create an attractive narrative. The silencing of one's own voice and the author's stepping back seem to be in this situation a defense against

> [t]aming the otherness by grabbing it, by . . . imperial appropriating it or by . . . identifying with another person through fraudulent usurpation, encroaching on one's autonomy. This danger is particularly threatening when compassion is identified solely with the projection of one's own "I" and with applying the rules, the stereotypes of feeling or intellectual-emotional understanding of "the other," which still is done according to one's own rules.[31]

In her books, especially those concerning the Holocaust, Drndić gives voice to those who cannot speak (as they are most often dead). In addition,

works. In my opinion, however, they require a detailed analysis. Consequently, here I only signalize their presence.

[30] Dorota Krawczyńska, "Empatia? Substytucja? Identyfikacja? Jak czytać teksty o Zagładzie?," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2004), 182.

[31] Anna Łebkowska, "O pragnieniu empatii w prozie polskiej końca XX wieku," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2002), 160, quoted in: Krawczyńska, "Empatia?, Substytucja?", 184.

as she constructs both the characters' utterances, her own narration on the basis of authentic sources or the knowledge of facts, she creates a new quality that unites authentic testimony with fiction. Her books seem to be eloquent proof that history and literature are not antagonistic phenomena and that they can be unified in one text. What is more, when memory (which is the domain of subjectivity, uniqueness, and non-continuity) and historiography (connected with assumed unequivocal meaning, finiteness, and rationality) interpenetrate, a new invaluable intellectual and cognitive whole is thus created.[32]

Catalogues

The obsession of cataloguing and of recalling through formal discourse the forgotten (especially the forgotten victims) is a characteristic feature of Drndić's works. In *EEG* we read:

> I now fanatically, nearly obsessively—although this burdens literature, and is thus unnecessary—evoke the *names* of people because I see with growing clarity that maybe these names are the last bit of a spider's web that makes them stand out in the ubiquitous chaos of the world.[33]

If any individual represents a certain story, and such a story must be supported by proofs to be recognized as true, then Drndić continuously returns to numbers, names, dates, and biographical data. The fragments of her books where the cataloguing aspect becomes dominant create a sort of mini-archive: an archive that primarily preserves victims' names and their testimonies—mediated by the author—about the departed, but also factual notes about those who were on the opposing side (in *EEG* such a function is fulfilled by several pages filled by a list of Latvian Nazis, some of whom found safe haven after the war within the structures of the American CIA).[34] The archive itself reveals its ambivalent structure

[32] This fragment (the last paragraph of this part) appeared in my book: Sabina Giergiel, *Ocalić pamięcią: Praktyki pamięci i zapominania we współczesnej prozie postjugosłowiańskiej* (Opole, 2012), 208–209. An exhaustive description of juxtaposing literature and historiography, with presentation of the views of the two most renowned supporters of such opposition, can be found in the text by Katarzyna Chmielewska, "Literackość jako przeszkoda, literackość jako możliwość wypowiedzenia," in Michał Głowiński, Katarzyna Chmielewska, Katarzyna Makaruk, Alina Molisak, Tomasz Żukowski (eds.), *Stosowność i forma: Jak opowiadać o Zagładzie?* (Kraków, 2005), 21–32.

[33] Drndić, *EEG*, 28–29.

[34] Ibid., 167–180.

especially in the context of the Holocaust. It is a symbol of an extensive bureaucracy, characteristic of every totalitarian regime, in particular the German administrative system, documenting all the stages of the "Final Solution." The archives formerly created in order to count, document, catalogue, and ultimately remove what were viewed as unnecessary people now are used by Drndić to save and prolong the memory of not only the victims but also about the victimizers.[35] Such a dual function is served by, for example, the inclusion of a twenty-page-long detailed record of Jewish property seized by the Germans in Zagreb, contained in *EEG*.[36] The cataloguing obsession also emerges during a grant-supported stay episode in Vienna, which the author records in her book *April in Berlin*. She includes the results of an investigation she carried out during her stay in the Austrian capital. In her own words she recounts how she was researching other people's lives.[37] This involved photographing the house numbers where Jews used to live, which she then put in her book together with short, often incomplete biographies and photographs of these inhabitants. In the eye of the viewer, photography breathes life into what has been gone, what has left behind only an empty space. Thus these brief notes with accompanying photographs become the proof of existence of a life, filtered through what we know about the fates of these characters. The photographs in *April in Berlin* present pre-Shoah images and evoke the world of the Jewish middle class, a world extinguished by a disaster. These particular pieces of evidence of the existence of life are also a way of resurrecting individual people from oblivion. According to a well-known phrase of Roland Barthes, a photograph immobilizes time,[38] and it excavates from the past people whose traces are gone from the tissue of the city; thus again their existence is saved through the efforts of the writer. In her book, these sample pages are small pieces from a non-existent album, an effect of the passion for collecting, accompanied by bitter reflections. The author openly asks: "But who would publish such an album? Even now people tell me that I torture them with these names,

[35] I used here the reflections of Marianna Michałowska on the work of Christian Boltanski. Marianna Michałowska, "Sztuka dokumentu – fotografia i trauma," in Tomasz Majewski, Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska (eds.), *Pamięć Shoah: Kulturowe reprezentacje i praktyki upamiętniania*, 2nd edition (Łódź, 2011), 747–757.

[36] Drndić, *EEG*, 302–321.

[37] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 219.

[38] Roland Barthes, *Światło obrazu: Uwagi o fotografii*, trans. Jacek Trznadel (Warsaw, 1996).

with *enumerating*, with *cataloguing of those names*; why are you so hooked on doing that, they say."[39]

The imperative to give credibility to the narrated story is evoked *expressis verbis* in *EEG*, where one of the key motifs is an investigation of the death of a Latvian woman of Jewish origin, a youthful love of the narrator's mother's brother. On the basis of available documents and oral testimonies that he has managed to gather, he attempts to reconstruct the events. Yet the fate of the Jewish family remains unknown, and the information which he managed to obtain is fragmentary. This microhistory perfectly reflects the way the Croatian writer chooses to save her subjects from oblivion. Above all, in her concept of writing (which is synonymous with remembering) the imperative to document is of utmost importance. This peculiar type of investigation becomes a pretext to evoke dozens of names of Latvians involved in the Final Solution. As can be read in the book, the narrator has data about the number of trains from German-occupied territories which reached Latvian soil, about their schedule, the number of men and women transported as well as the ages of the children similarly transported and the general number of people who lost their lives in these transports.[40] Yet he refrains from quoting these figures. "If I start to list all this, someone may think that I'm obsessed, ask why I'm so fixated on this and conclude that this is not literature, but an ordinary . . . pamphlet. So, to avoid unsettling potential readers, I won't make lists."[41] Such wariness probably stems from the experiences of the Croatian author, who in her country faced unfavorable comments regarding the topics of her work. She was advised that instead of boring her readers with the Holocaust, she ought to take up writing about her homeland and love.[42] Alternatively, she was accused of ingratitude toward her own country.[43] It is impossible not to notice in these author's comments a tone of abandonment combined with a feeling of isolation. The quoted utterances also prove indirectly the courage of the author, who clearly leaves herself open to accusations of standing against her community and decides nonetheless to break a commonly held taboo.

[39] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 230.
[40] Drndić, *EEG*, 189–190.
[41] Ibid., 190.
[42] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 54.
[43] Drndić, *EEG*, 39.

The Children[44]

Both Primo Levi and Giorgio Agamben devote much space in their reflections to the absolute witnesses who, according to them, are "the *Muselmänner*,"[45] those who did not survive. Thus we face the—impossible to mitigate and much evoked—aporia connected with the very presentation of the Holocaust. Its essence is that the only people who would be able to tell the truth of the story are dead and thus voiceless, while testimony of those awful events comes from the people who were not touched by absolute evil.[46] A character often evoked in this context is a three-year-old child described by Levi (Hurbinek), whose speech was limited to a single, incomprehensible word. Maria Janion describes him as a witness without words, one of a number of figures representing the "integral witness."[47] Not only do scholars studying the Holocaust but also those who survived the Holocaust point out the paradox inherent in the very act of giving testimony to these events. For absolute witnesses, those immersed—as Levi describes them—did not return, or if they did, they returned mute.[48] Pseudo-witnesses (Agamben's term for those who survived) assume their role, giving testimony to the missing testimony.[49] Drndić is not a survivor, yet considering the task she set for herself, she may be called such a witness. From the formal point of view, in Drndić's case it is justified by her extraordinary meticulousness and persistence in searching for traces left by the dead as well as her factual precision (which obviously is interwoven with fiction many times).

What seems to me extremely important in this context is the fact that in her texts about the Holocaust, Drndić devotes much space to children who were the victims of medical experiments. Children, those most

[44] This part of the article is a slightly modified section of my book: Giergiel, *Ocalić pamięcią*, 236–238.

[45] The *Muselmänner* (sing. *Muselmann*), i.e. "the Muslims," was a term in camp slang denoting prisoners emaciated by starvation who lost their will to live and became increasingly apathetic toward external stimuli; during selections in the camps they were usually sent to the gas chambers [translator's note].

[46] Pointing out the impossibility of the Holocaust, Giorgio Agamben writes that "the aporia of Auschwitz is, indeed, the very aporia of historical knowledge: a non-coincidence between facts and truth, between verification and comprehension." Giorgio Agamben, *Co zostaje z Auschwitz: Archiwum i świadek (Homo Sacer III)*, trans. Sławomir Królak (Warsaw, 2008), 9.

[47] Maria Janion, *Żyjąc tracimy życie: Niepokojące tematy egzystencji* (Warsaw, 2003), 397.

[48] Primo Levi, *Pogrążeni i ocaleni*, trans. Stanisław Kasprzysiak (Kraków, 2007), 100–101.

[49] Agamben, *Co zostaje z Auschwitz*, 33.

defenseless and vulnerable of beings, are for this Croatian writer integral witnesses, deprived of a voice. Their element is silence for several reasons: they experienced the ultimate evil and died (so they cannot speak and the writer to some extent takes the responsibility upon herself to speak about/for them), and even if just before death they were provided with the opportunity to speak, their communications vanished into the ether as the victims of the experiments in the Neuengamme camp were children of different nationalities; therefore, they were unable to communicate with each other, and words not understood are as close to silence as can be. In the book *Totenwande*, we read:

> From Auschwitz to Neuengamme the children travelled by train. It was not a cattle wagon. They were looking at each other in silence. At some point Marek, Eleonora Witonska and Mania started crying. They were still very young. The greatest number of children, fourteen, came from Poland. It was easier for them as they could talk to each other. Wanda Junglieb, she from Yugoslavia, aged twelve, and Sergio de Simone, he from Italy, aged seven, could only look at one another. Alexander had his brother Eduard to whom he could say in Flemish: I'm scared. Jacqueline Morgenstern and Georges-André Kohn were inseparable and were an example of sad camp love. None of them spoke about themselves. All of them called out for their mothers.[50]

The last reason for their silence was connected with the fact that children probably were not as aware of the peril they were in as their adult counterparts. In this context their silence can be associated with the impossibility of representing their experience adequately, as the experience itself defies logic. Here again the child figure from the camp must be evoked—the boy Hurbinek as described by Levi. The need to speak and simultaneously the inability to speak makes him a mute witness who nevertheless speaks. Thus both Levi and Drndić take the position of a medium of sorts and provide a way of communicating for those who cannot testify themselves.

In *Leica format* Drndić recounts fictional tales of both the dead children and their torturers. The utterances of the victims of medical experiments are written in dry, fact-based, informative language. Drndić allows the dead to speak, in a way withdrawing herself beyond the framework of testimonies and surrendering her superordinate status within the story. This is a form of ethical gesture, connected to abandoning the temptation to narrate, resulting from the privileges that the institution of narrator/ author provides. It is worth adding that the stylized utterances of the

[50] Drndić, *Totenwande: Zidovi smrti*, 44.

children through their fragmentary narrations together with the facts they recall (which include the names of the places in which the experiments were conducted, statistics, and biographical notes) create a kind of court transcript of a trial (which never happened). As Anera Ryznar aptly notes, the charge is brought in the names of the victims by the author. Yet her aim is not actually to point out the guilt of the Nazis and their collaborators (as commonly accepted) but rather to demonstrate that a part of scientific discoveries and the ensuing development of our civilization were built upon the foundations of crimes, on forgotten victims and upon evil that reaches far into the past, but which still is happening.[51] Therefore, she is pointing an accusatorial finger at the whole of human civilization. To lend credence to these statements, Drndić quotes at the end of the book a "little, incomplete list of medical experiments conducted on people in the name of peace, democracy and the development of the human race,"[52] in which she chronologically enumerates information about American, Japanese, and German studies that took place mostly in the twentieth century (the last of the experiments evoked by the author took place in the year 2000). The list ends with a particularly pertinent question, printed in bold: "Have you remembered their names?" It appears again several pages later under the names of the architects who lost their lives in the first year of the war in Bosnia. The last sentence of the text suggests that contemporary people/society are/is not interested in such topics, as the answer to the author's question is "No, it was Saturday."[53]

Memory

A testimony, a proof of existence, and a metaphorically understood salvation is a text (a story) where the data about a person and their history are written down. In this way Drndić provides her characters with eternal life. Writing about oneself and also about the nameless victims of Nazism such as, for example, Sergio de Simone[54] is an act of restoring memory and

[51] Anera Ryznar, "Interdiskurzivne fuge u romanu *Leica format* Daše Drndić," https://www.academia.edu/9800687/Interdiskurzivne_fuge_u_romanu_Leica_format_Da%C5%A1e_Drndi%C4%87 [retrieved: 21 July 2017].

[52] Drndić, *Leica format*, 307.

[53] Ibid., 315, 337.

[54] Sergio de Simone belongs to the group of children experimented on by German doctors. He appears in the book *Totenwande* and in the novel *Leica format*, where he is mentioned in passing.

proof of how important these existences omitted in official discourse are. In this context, the words of Renate Lachmann seem important: she connects the act of remembering with a second act of naming.[55] Such second naming can take the form of building a larger narrative from "weak" stories that contain not only the names and surnames of the heroes, but also fragments of their biographies, seemingly unimportant but bringing these characters closer to the audience, less abstract and equipped with features unique to each of them. The particular ethics of memory can be reduced to the duty of remembering, which approaches the imperative of justice and is a kind of reparation. The obligation to remember is juxtaposed here with the total Holocaust, completed by forgetting about its victims.[56] Remembering thus becomes a way of overcoming death, its particular negation, and at the same time is the repayment of a debt. For we are, as Paul Ricoeur maintains, "indebted to those who preceded us in what we are. The duty to remember is not limited to guarding the material traces . . . but upholds the sense of obligation towards others about who can be said to be no longer here, although they used to be."[57]

One of Drndić's features is a particular version of fatalism; the writer seems to be convinced that the past, often in its negative aspect, can emerge where and when it is least expected because human iniquities have been repeated for centuries, and man does not develop ethical predispositions in parallel with civilizational development. The fate of immigrants to America from the early twentieth century, the Jews during World War II, postwar medical experiments on prisoners and developmentally delayed people, or the attitude of the citizens of the Western countries to newcomers from less developed parts of the world can be pointed at as a proof. The criticism of contemporary civilization appears *expressis verbis* especially in the fragment inspired by Walter Benjamin's analysis of Paul Klee's painting

[55] Renate Lachmann, "Mnemotechnika i symulakrum," trans. Artur Pełka, in Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska (ed.), *Pamięć zbiorowa i kulturowa: Współczesna perspektywa niemiecka* (Kraków, 2009), 297. The act of recalling their existence from oblivion equates here to a symbolical overcoming of death. Here the next words of Lachmann are extremely significant: "*Imagines*, *simulacra* (tropes) reverse forgetting, and raise the dead. The unfinished past gains meaning only through a caesura, disaster or a threat of being forgotten. This *technē* creates the mechanism of doubling, of *re-praesentatio*, the return to the presence of the absent." Ibid.

[56] Michał Kaczmarek, *Proza pamięci: Stanisława Vincenza pamięć i narracja* (Toruń, 2009), 106–107.

[57] Paul Ricoeur, *Pamięć, historia, zapomnienie*, trans. Janusz Margański (Kraków, 2007), 118.

Angelus Novus (Angel of History). In Drndić's version, contemporary society obsessively follows new technological developments. As a result, the human mind, stretched to its limits with all the data, numbers, and codes which are necessary to live, has no chance of remembering what is really worth remembering. By juxtaposing the gigantic collection of numbers which we are forced to remember with a single number on the arm of a child victim of Nazi experiments, Drndić (in reference to a poem by Wisława Szymborska) maintains that to remember that particular row of digits is the duty of every human. This will be a proof of sorts of the existence of this poor boy, forgotten by history as are many other nameless victims.[58]

In *Sonnenschein*, the author included an extremely long list of names of Jews deported or killed in Italy between 1943 and 1945. Here enumeration is a technique that de-automates the reception as well as serving as an ethical gesture.[59] This list takes up almost eighty pages and can be understood as a particular measure dictated by the intention to protect them from oblivion. The list of names becomes a form of a prosthetic for experience and memory.[60] The pages in which in three columns the names and surnames of murdered people are placed by Drndić, disquiets and discommodes the reader. It appears to me that the cataloguing process, the figure of *enumeratio*, involving the dry listing of the victims of Nazism name after name without any commentary, speaks to the reader more strongly than an aesthetically shaped tale of the crime. Drndić fights

[58] Drndić, *Leica format*, 42. A fragment of Szymborska's poem connected with reflections on the duty to remember appears also in the next book by Drndić, published several years later (see *April u Berlinu*, 245). How relevant nowadays such reflections are can be confirmed by the fact that the comment from *Leica format* "and new numbers are still coming" is accompanied in *April u Berlinu* by the toponym "Srebrenica."

[59] A similar technique is used by Vladimir Todorović in his historiographical book *Poslednja stanica Aušvic*. From pages 26–226 he cites the names of Jewish victims from Vojvodina. This list was prepared by a joint committee of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The author selected from it the names of persons who declared themselves as Jewish. Beside the names, information (whenever there was any) was included regarding profession, age, place of residence, year of birth and death, and finally the place of death (which in this case was always Auschwitz). Explaining the meaning of this, Todorović remarks that scholars usually omit the names of the victims or place them at the end of their books. In his opinion, the victims deserve a more prominent place as they were the reason for the research. Vladimir Todorović, "Objašnjenje," in id., *Poslednja stanica Aušvic: Batschka 1944. Judenrein* (Novi Sad, 2015), 23–24.

[60] I am quoting these words after Dominick LaCapra, who describes the role of an archive in historical research. See Dominick LaCapra, *Historia w okresie przejściowym: Doświadczenie, tożsamość, teoria krytyczna*, trans. Katarzyna Bojarska (Kraków, 2009), 37.

for the remembrance of individual people; she opposes nameless sets of victims in which individual existence is lost. It is explicitly confirmed by the author's cry that accompanies her visit to the ill-reputed villa at Wannsee Lake, in which the Final Solution was sanctioned. Among the exhibits is a plan outlining the extermination of the Jews, prepared by the Nazis and consisting of the lists of European countries with the number of Jews who lived in them at that time. Drndić includes this ominous table in her book and adds her very significant comment right under it: "And where are the names, *where are the names*!"[61] In the novel *Belladonna*, the author focuses in turn on the fate of European Jews who, fearing for their lives, as early as 1939 began their journey to Palestine. As a result of a very harsh winter their escape from the Holocaust ended in the Serbian town of Šabac. In 1941 the majority of them died in mass executions, and the survivors were sent in 1942 to the Sajmište camp in Belgrade.[62] The list of their names (1,055 entries) was placed in a pocket on the inside of the cover of *Belladonna*.

The memory of the Shoah remains in the author's mind like a thorn[63] which does not stop irritating, forcing her to compile lists and catalogues and particular micro-scale encyclopedias of the dead. Drndić cannot free herself from this need and returns to the fragments of life she has already described, using again the crumbs of the same past. She does all this against the advice of her contemporaries who push away uncomfortable and unpleasant recollections. Unlike some of her compatriots, this Croatian author does not try to push away the splinter of memory "which opens . . . for the suffering of another person, in an almost literary way causes pain from which many . . . try to protect themselves."[64]

Analyzing the writings of Primo Levi, Ubertowska utilizes the deliberations of Jacques Derrida on the essence of testimony, which I find

[61] Drndić, *April u Berlinu*, 27.

[62] More on this topic: Gabriele Anderl, Walter Manoschek, *Neuspelo bekstvo: Jevrejski "Kladovo-transport" na putu za Palestinu 1939–42*, trans. Eva Timar (Beograd, 2004); Milica Mihailović, Branka Džidić, *Kladovo-transport. Beograd, Šabac, Kladovo, 14–20. oktobar 2002* (Beograd–Šabac–Kladovo, 2002); Milica Mihailović (ed.), *Kladovo transport: Zbornik radova sa okruglog stola* (Beograd, 2006).

[63] I refer here to a fragment of the book by Emmanuel Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być lub ponad istotą*, trans. Piotr Mrówczyński (Warsaw, 2000), 89. Dorota Głowacka comments its upon in the following way: "For the witness of the suffering of the Other, to use another metaphor by Lévinas, this is a thorn stuck in the flesh." Dorota Głowacka, "Znikające ślady: Emmanuel Lévinas, literackie świadectwo Idy Fink i sztuka Holokaustu," *Literatura na Świecie* 1–2 (2004), 115.

[64] Ibid.

extremely useful. According to this philosopher, a testimony must allow literariness, which is excluded from its boundaries, so as to feed on it as a parasite. A testimony is thus always "haunted" by the symptom of fiction, of perjury, and of a lie; it stays within a permeable, fluctuating border between fictionality and testimoniality in the court and documentary meanings.[65] It can be thus concluded that the discourse of memory, based both on facts and on fiction, on what is objective and what is idiosyncratic, and which occupies so much space in Drndić's works, is used to achieve justice, to raise what is hidden from the murky depths to the surface; thus it ultimately appears in the service of the future which—if it wants to remain healthy—should face the difficult and often traumatic past.

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[65] Ubertowska, *Holokaust: Auto(tanato)grafie*, 46.

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The Hidden Conflicts with an Unorthodox Translator: Dora Gabe's Contributions to the Jewish Press in Bulgaria

Abstract: The article presents the contributions of Dora Gabe to the Jewish newspaper *Maccabi*, published in Sofia from 1920 to 1940. She cooperated with the paper both as a translator and an original author. Gabe's texts in *Maccabi* have not been reprinted and are almost forgotten. This factor explains why they need to be revisited. First, I trace Edmond Fleg's influence on Gabe's ideas on Jewish identity, as the poet is a vivid promoter and a keen translator of Fleg's work. Then this topic is represented in light of a hidden conflict between other journalists from *Maccabi* circles and Dora Gabe. The main argument of the text is that Gabe was criticized not only for assimilating into Bulgarian society but mostly because of her feminist ideas and her original, paradoxically anti-national viewpoints on the Zionist movement.

Keywords: interwar period in Bulgarian literature, history of translation, Jewish press, Zionist movement in Bulgaria, Dora Gabe, Edmond Fleg.

In a paper, broad in scope and dedicated to the question of defining whether there is French-language Jewish literature or Jewish literature written in France, Clara Lévy discusses the process of breaking from the criteria based on which journalists, literary critics, and scholars try to identify and characterize this phenomenon.[1] Four primary characteristics are necessary for including an author or work within the framework of French-language Jewish literature: the author's ethnic/religious descent, the language employed, the topics touched upon, and the presence of specifically Jewish matters. Lévy, however, shows how none of these principles

[1] Clara Lévy, Cherry Schecker, "The Controversial Question of 'French Jewish Literature'," *Nationalities Papers* 40 (2012), 3:395–409.

is sufficient for defining a writer as a creator of Jewish literature. Even the very debates about the origin of the authors as a criterion for belonging to a group show the difficulties that lie ahead of any attempt at definition. An example is the statement of the editor of the literature section of the journal *L'Arche*, Vladimir Rabinovich:

> Imagine I were to compile a Jewish anthology. Which writers should be included? Those whose origins are established, as is the case in Edmond Fleg's anthology? In this case, Proust would be omitted. Why? He was only half Jewish. Pallière would also be excluded. Why? He was not circumcised. But Simone Weil, yes, she would unquestionably figure. In my opinion, this solution is unsatisfactory.[2]

The literary sociologist traces the process of rejecting the "hard" criteria for belonging to the Jewish literary community as well as considers the potential to replace these criteria by increasingly wide and blurred concepts—such as co-participation in the Jewish fate, a skill to recreate the imaginarium of the ethnic group, or to transfer the contemporary problems and ramblings of French Jews. Lévy's research streams down these issues to focus on processes of identification. She understands these in terms of a sociological phenomenon that defines the belonging of a given author to a "minority" literary field and the consequences for his or her social status. Moreover, the scholar shows the interdependence of different forms of self-identification with Jews and the impossibility of pointing out texts that can be defined as belonging to French-language Jewish literature.

In the body of research dedicated to the Jewishness of Dora Gabe, the question concerning the existence of Bulgarian-written Jewish literature or Jewish literature created in Bulgaria is not raised. It seems to me that if such an issue were to be explored at all, the related discussion would very much look like the debates in France. This resemblance would not be due to political and historical processes in Bulgaria that were similar to those conditioning the place of Jews in French society—they were essentially different. The similarity would be in Jewish self-identification at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, which was multi-faceted and multi-compounded in both France and Bulgaria.

Scholars rarely pay attention to the fact that Jewishness can be experienced as a religious, historical, cultural, or national belonging without

[2] Rabi, *Lettres juives, domaine français*. Quoted in Lévy, Schecker, "The Controversial Question of 'French Jewish Literature'," 396.

making it necessary for these aspects to overlap. On the contrary, these elements of belonging very often confront each other. In most studies in which Gabe's Jewishness is problematized, her identification is presented as an ethnic origin that comes to mean a biographical fact and a literary motif, seen as a rather insignificant feature for both the wider audience and the literary-historical narrative. "The Jewish descent of the poet—says Katia Kuzmanova-Zografova—is repressed in the consciousness of Bulgarian society . . . it is as if forgotten."[3] It is interesting to note the ways in which the category of ethnic descent is blurred when defining the poet as a Bulgarian writer:

> There is no doubt about the descent of the Bulgarian poet Dora Gabe. She is a daughter of Russian Jews who migrated to our lands after the 1884 persecutions of Jews in Russia. How does Gabe herself feel, though? In her creative work she has always belonged to Bulgarian literature, and her poems for children are favorite poems for young Bulgarians, forever anchored in their primers.[4]

Furthermore, the words of Radka Pencheva can be interpreted as exemplifying the concept that belonging to a given national body of literature is equivalent to defining the artist's national belonging. This conviction is complemented by the view that the ethnic descent and nationality of the poet do not define her ways of sensing the world and are rarely problematized in her rich creative work. For Katia Kuzmanova-Zografova, Dora Gabe's religious self-identification has much greater influence: "It feels to me that [her religious self-identification] is the prevailing defining side of Gabe's problematic identities, because the poet is not that much split in terms of her ethnic belonging and could comfortably fit into the definition of a Bulgarian Jew or a Jewish Bulgarian."[5] Her adoption of Christianity, on the eve of her marriage to Boyan Penev,[6] is considered a key factor

[3] Katia Kuzmanova-Zografova, "Mnogolikata Dora Gabe: Verskata, etnicheskata i natsionalnata identichnost na poetesata," in Kremena Miteva, Marinela Paskaleva (eds.), *120 godini ot rozhdenieto na Dora Gabe: Yubileen sbornik* (Sofia, 2010), 121.

[4] Radka Pencheva, "Dora Gabe i evreystvoto," in Miteva, Paskaleva (eds.), *120 godini ot rozhdenieto na Dora Gabe*, 109.

[5] Kuzmanova-Zografova, "Mnogolikata Dora Gabe," 129.

[6] In the Catalogue of Sources about Dora Gabe, in the section on biographical documents, there is information that the Dobrich State Archive stores Dora Gabe's Orthodox Baptism Certificate. It was issued by pastor Vasil Vulchev from the village of Vladimirovo on 29 December 1908. The document is archived in State Archive Dobrich, Fond 236 K, archival description 1, series 37, item 133. See Tonka Ivanova, *Katalog na izvori za Dora Gabe* (Shumen, 1999), 15. I note this fact because Katia Kuzmanova-Zografova writes in the already cited article that Gabe adopted Christianity on 5 January 1909. Maria Mihail

by Miglena Nikolchina too.[7] The act of baptism officially places the poet outside Orthodox Jewish circles and among the Jewish intelligentsia,[8] for she does not adhere strictly to religious observance but adopts Jewishness as a cultural and historical heritage and a cultural community. Gabe's decision to become a Christian thus had repercussions in Jewish circles.

Thus far, only Radka Pencheva has attempted to reconstruct Gabe's image through the eyes of the Bulgarian Jewish community, uncovering archived materials from Jewish printed sources.[9] Relatively little is known about the collaboration of the poet with organizations such as the Jewish People University and the publishing series *Probuda*,[10] or about her participation in prestigious Jewish cultural initiatives such as arranging the memorial exhibition of works by the sculptor Boris Shatz in Sofia.[11] Little

also refers to an inaccurate information, noting the baptism day down as 15 January 1908. See Kuzmanova-Zografova, "Mnogolikata Dora Gabe," 121; and Maria Mihail, *Tazhnite ochi na minaloto: Dora Gabe razkazva* (Sofia, 1994), 103.

[7] Miglena Nikolchina, *Rodena ot glavata: Fabuli i syuzheti v zhenskata literaturna istoria* (Sofia, 2002).

[8] The original definition used by Petar Gabe is "the intelligent part of the Jewish people," employed in his address to the Parliamentarians gathered to discuss the legitimacy of his election as a member of parliament at the end of November 1894. See author's note to the paper: Sami Mayer, "Dora Gabe: Etyud," *Maccabi* 7 (1932), 13.

[9] The materials in question are two valuable articles, published in *Maccabi*: Ben Avram, "Gorchivata chasha," *Maccabi* 4 (1931), 5–6; and Mayer, "Dora Gabe: Etyud," 10–13. See Pencheva, "Dora Gabe i evreystvoto," 109–119.

[10] The *Probuda* Library was a publishing series, launched in 1938. The purpose of the series was to counteract "a policy, which aims, at any price, at using both excusable and inexcusable means, to destroy the Jewishness, to demolish all that speaks favorably about the Jews as a whole, and to deprive the Jews themselves from the opportunity to start living anywhere a relatively calm and free life anew." Among the editions published under its aegis were the opinion poll by Georgi Valkov, *Balgarskata obshtestvenost za rasizma i antisemitizma* (1938), Ivan Kinkel's study *Evreyskata i hristiyanska etika v tyahnoto shodstvo i razlichie ot sotsialno gledishte* (1938), Leo Cohen's *Evreinat v balgarskata literatura* (1939), as well as a range of translated editions. The Library ceased its activity at the end of 1939.

[11] Boris Shatz memorial exhibition was launched in Sofia in "Preslav" Galery in February 1934. Dora Gabe was the only woman who participated in the committee arranging the exhibition. The committee members were also Josef Serper, a chair of the Jewish Ashkenazi community; Eli Basan, a chair of the Jewish Sephardic Municipality; Khaim Farhi, a chair of the Central Consistory of the Jews in Bulgaria; and, in line with them, also representatives of the Association of the Bulgarian Sculptors, the first Shatz's disciples in Bulgaria; representatives of the Academy of Arts and of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment; journalists and painters. See Tatyana Dimitrova, *Hudozhnitsi evrei v Bulgaria* (Sofia, 2002), 6. Regarding the acquaintance of Theodor Herzl and Boris Shatz see Nurit Shilo-Cohen (ed.), *Bezalel 1906–1929: Exhibition Catalogue* (Jerusalem, 1983). Tatyana Dimitrova traces the ways in which Boris Shatz applies his teaching experience, generated in the Sofia Arts Academy, in shaping the idea of the Betzalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem. She concludes that the so-called "Bulgarian style," inspired by Bulgarian folklore and Shatz'

or almost nothing is known about Gabe's literary contacts with other Jewish artists.[12] As of yet, attention has not been paid either to the political significance of Gabe's identification after World War II, despite the fact that archived documents showing the attitude of communist authorities to minority groups are, by now, easily accessible.[13] Without this context it is exceptionally difficult to understand the position of the poet in the literary scene after 9 September 1944.[14] Put otherwise, the theme of Dora

attempts to create "national Jewish art" have common roots. See Dimitrova, *Hudozhnitsi evrei v Bulgaria*, 8.

[12] This topic has not been studied systematically so far, although the poet's archives keep traces of her acquaintance with the following writers and artists of Jewish origin from Poland and Russia: Jan Śpiewak, Artur Sandauer, Raul Koczalski, Leonid Lewin and others. The poet's participation in an anthology of Bulgarian Jewish literature is also interesting—information concerning this issue are to be found in Gabe's letters from 1967. See Central State Archives, Fond 1771 K, archival description 1, series 959.

[13] Kostadin Grozev, Rumyana Marinova-Hristidi, *Darzhavna sigurnost i evreyskata obshtnost v Bulgaria 1944–1989 g.: Dokumentalen sbornik* (Sofia, 2012).

[14] It is important in this context to cite a note from Petar Dinekov's diary dated July 1969: "Lately, another case of literary narrow-mindedness was circulated in the literary circles: the murmur surrounding a poem by Dora Gabe due to two expressions [she uses]: she called herself 'a sister of Jesus' (religiousness!) and stated: 'I am a daughter of two people' (Zionism!). Some foretell that this is going to cost her The Georgi Dimitroff Prize. Last Sunday, Em. Stanev came to my place to read the poem (in issue 6 of *Septemvri Journal*)—he was called on the phone by the highest in rank to ask for his opinion. After the reading he was also impressed that the poem is nice. Disapproval [of the poem] is expressed by the base levels of our thinking only. The first time of hearing that this poem has awakened a murmur was at the sitting of the literary section of the Committee of The Georgi Dimitroff Prize. We were sitting at Dzhagarov's office. When Dora Gabe's turn came, D. Metodiev took the floor and stated that he is not going to vote in favor of her. He backed up this with the poem from the poetic cycle *The Letters to No One* [*Pisma do nikogo*]. And he did not vote indeed. Initially, Dzhagarov abstained, but then he raised his hand. At the sitting of the big Committee Metodiev remained silent, but with no doubt, he voted against. I took the floor and spoke in defence of Dora Gabe; the result was a majority. They say the first signal against this poem was issued by Lyubo Georgiev: [when] as an editor of 'Bulgarian Writer' he refused to include Dora Gabe's new book [in the plan of the publishing house]" (Bulgarian Historical Archive, Fond 904, series 65, item 12). The ethnic origins of Dora Gabe are thus one of the knotted problems in her complicated and ambiguous inter-relationships with the communist authorities. The poet remained a non-party member of the Union of the Writers but subjected her pen to political conjuncture. She expressed a position on some public issues, criticizing those in power—she signed, for example, the letter to Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre, in which the negative role of Bulgaria during the Prague Spring was described. At the same time, however, Gabe benefited from all the privileges and honors of a poet courted by the party. See Vladimir Migev, *Balgarskite pisateli i politicheskia zhivot v Bulgaria: 1944–1970* (Sofia, 2001). And in so far as the poem giving rise to murmur in 1969 (the reference is to "Pismo no. 10" from *Pisma do nikogo*; see Dora Gabe, *Prokoba: Stihotvorenia* (Sofia, 1994), 16–17) had not been published in volumes of poetry in 1970 (*Nevidimi ochi*), 1973 (*Sgastena tishina*), 1976 (*Glabini: Razgovori s moreto*), and 1982 (*Svetat e tayna*); the poem *Drugoverka* appeared in Volume 1 of *Izbrani stihove* by Dora Gabe, published in 1978 under the title *Osinovenata*. See Magdalena Shishkova, "Za

Gabe's Jewishness is not yet fully exhausted; additional systematic studies could surely occur in the future.

My purpose here, however, is not to sketch possible directions for further analysis of Gabe's ethnic origins; the themes outlined above are far from indicate the full spectrum of possible viewpoints on this complex issue. I would like to point, though, to a barely known essay by Gabe and to three forgotten translations that she completed from Russian and French. These texts cast new light on the questions raised thus far regarding how the Bulgarian Jewish community has perceived the poet's social and creative work and the embroiled issues that Dora Gabe herself had with her own ethnicity.

My studies were provoked by an evident contradiction. The poet leaned toward advocating Zionism in her writing and initiatives, and never renounced her Jewish origins, although she converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity and chose a lifestyle not in accordance with Jewish tradition. The Jewish community accepted Gabe, appreciating her as an author, translator, organizer, and spokeswoman. Without a doubt the place she earned on the Bulgarian literary scene and in Bulgarian cultural life inspired respect. Despite that, publicists from the very same Jewish newspapers in which the poet published did not approve of her assimilation in both her personal life and career, accusing her of treason. Tracing this conflict suggests that mutual lack of understanding, despite the stated readiness for collaboration, is born in a mismatch of the definitions of the aims and essence of the Zionist movement. The poet's views about this topic are original, formed in the first place under the influence of her upbringing and the views of her father Petar Gabe, and later on through her encounters with the French writer, poet, and playwright of Jewish descent Edmond Fleg.

tselta i haraktera na izdanieto," in Dora Gabe, *Svetat e tayna: Poezia i proza* (Sofia, 1994), 475–515. On the one hand, this fact shows the inconsistency of the censorship; on the other hand, it points out to a skillful handling of the mimicry of the titles. It is impossible to say whether the poet changed the title due to inner motives or whether the change was intended to mislead "the controllers." A few years earlier, in the volume *Izbrani stihotvorenia* (1966), the poem was published under the title *Bratislava 1933*.

A Manuscript in the Father's Archive: From Leo Tolstoy to Edmond Fleg

After the death of her father, Dora Gabe found a paper in his archive, the authorship of which is credited to Leo Tolstoy. The text is entitled "What Is a Jew?" and it was published in translation by the poet in Issue 3 of the *Maccabi* newspaper, dated 1930.[15] The editor of the newspaper provided the following background about the article:

> Now, however, we have the opportunity to publish an article thus far unknown by Leo Tolstoy, which, we believe, will contribute much not only to clear the disputes surrounding Tolstoy's antisemitism and philosemitism but even will cause their eventual settlement. This article was provided to us by Mrs. Dora Gabe, who found it in her late father's archive, the renowned public figure Mr. P. Gabe. The handwritten manuscript is an old, aged piece of paper, written not less than 30–40 years ago. The handwriting is unknown; it can be assumed it belonged to S. Frug, who was a close friend of Mr. P. Gabe. This we cannot claim with certainty. Perhaps, when it is possible to establish the origin of the handwriting on the paper, it will become clear how the article ended up in the papers of Mr. P. Gabe, as well as where it was taken from and written out. The very style of the article, however, can hardly supply grounds for doubting the authorship of the piece. As far as we are aware, this article has not been published anywhere in the press and anywhere in the disputes surrounding Tolstoy. It is even not included in the ninety-volume collection of his works, which the Soviet government issued on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Tolstoy's birth and which is so full that it contains even notes from his washerwoman. How this article remained unpublished and how it landed in Mr. P. Gabe's archive is yet to be established. We are just glad that we have the fortune to be the first to give it publicity while expressing our gratitude to Dora Gabe for the manuscript which she handed to us as well as for her translation.[16]

In response to its antisemitic content,[17] the manuscript lists Jews' contributions to the development of values such as equality, tolerance for other

[15] Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, "Kakvo e evreinat?", trans. Dora Gabe, *Maccabi* 3 (1930), 4–5.

[16] "Edna neizvestna statia na Tolstoia za evreite," *Maccabi* 3 (1930), 4. Tolstoy's essay dates back to 1891 and its first translation was printed in London in 1908 in *Jewish World*.

[17] Some of these ideas are well known to Bulgarian readers because they have been spread since the beginning of the twentieth century. The edge of the antisemitic propaganda brochures is directed against the so-called economic superiority of the Jews living in Bulgaria, who—in the words of Stefan Tsankov—"take the shirt off of the poor peasant's back." See Stefan Tsankov, *Predpazlivost ot evreyskata eksploatatsia* (Shumen, 1898), 14. A part of these antisemitic clichés are imprinted on the folk memory as proverbs and sayings: "When a Jew goes ploughing, then shall they pop off," "A Jew is delighted when he sends away his son in the black, to make first of all good bargains," "His heart a kike's charshia—full

faiths, and ethical relations regardless of people's ethnic and religious connections. The Jews are described as a God-chosen people guarding the Law of Moses—a source of faith for all monotheistic religions. A people who do not tolerate slavery, who protect equality, who treat education with deep respect, who abolished the death penalty; a people who do not seek revenge for the many humiliations to which they were subjected and who treat with great respect the representatives of other religious and ethnic identities. A people who follow the Mosaic command to "love the stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt."[18] The positive image of the Jews is summarized as follows:

> The Jew—this is Prometheus, who took fire from the heavens and put it at the world's disposal. . . . The Jew—this is an emblem of eternity—the one, whom neither sword, nor fire, nor stakes did push out of earth, who was not exterminated by millennial tortures, who first discovered the idea of God as One, kept [it] for a long period and then made it available to the whole world. The Jew—was and is, [and] will be an eternal champion and propagator of freedom, equality, civilization, and religious tolerance![19]

It is interesting that this item repeats some of Fleg's foundational conceptions, as found in his essay *Pourquoi je suis Juif* [*Why I Am a Jew*],[20] published in 1928 and translated into Bulgarian just one year later.[21] Gabe, in her paper "Rasovi cherti na evreite v literaturata: Moysey" [Racial Traits of Jews in Literature: Moses][22] (1933), returns to these ideas, not only recreating some of them but also reproducing the antithetic ideas in Tolstoy's essay. In addition—as can be seen from the subtitle to her text—the most important Old Testament prophet is at the center of her

with all sorts of inconvenient thoughts." See Nadia Velcheva, "Etno-kulturen identitet na evreite v Bulgaria: Istoriko-etnografski aspekti," *Jews and Slavs* 15 (2005), 9–38.

[18] Tolstoy, "Kakvo e evreinat?", 5. The original quotation reads in the English translation: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," Exodus 22:21, here and elsewhere in the text the translations of Bible verses are taken from the *King James Bible* available online at https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/ l.a.

[19] Tolstoy, "Kakvo e evreinat?", 4–5. This paragraph seems not to be included in the very few English translations of Tolstoy's article available online.

[20] Edmond Fleg, *Pourquoi je suis Juif* (Paris, 1928).

[21] Edmond Fleg, *Zashto sam evrein*, trans. Vasil Stefkov (Sofia, 1929).The publisher—the Jewish "Amishpar" Printhouse—took care to issue the paper with a forward by the author. The translator, at his end, added a brief literary profile of Fleg. It is interesting to note that Boyan Penev and Dora Gabe knew well the translations of Vasil Stefkov. In Penev's private library there is an edition of Camille Mockler's book *Za platskata lyubov*, translated by Stefkov and accompanied by a forward chapter by Ivan Andreychin.

[22] Dora Gabe, "Rasovi cherti na evreite v literaturata: Moysey," in *Evrei v istoriyata, literaturata, politikata* (Sofia, 1933), 47–50.

poetic imagery, suggesting that she was already working on translating the fictionalized biography of Moses, printed in Bulgarian in 1937.[23]

Additional evidence confirming the poet's interest in Fleg's work is her translation of fragments from *La vie de Moïse* [The Life of Moses], published just months after the printing of the original book.[24] Gabe's quick response in terms of a translation of the book as well as her readiness to bring the whole effort to a successful conclusion—that is, to publish the full translation—demonstrate that as a writer and a thinker Edmond Fleg had provoked and sustained the poet's attention. The fact that she dedicated an original interpretative essay to him is indicative of the meaning which Gabe assigns to his self-identification with the Jews.

These pieces of information demonstrate that in the 1930s Gabe remained in the circles of Edmond Fleg's intellectual influence. Most likely, without the impact of her upbringing and the discussions led by and with Petar Gabe, the poet would not have been so influenced by Fleg. I now draw the readers' attention to similarities in ideas presented in Gabe's article and the autobiographical essay by the French playwright—ideas which reflect and repeat arguments that also appear in Tolstoy's manuscript, which in turn allow us to establish parallels between the texts *Why I Am a Jew* (Fleg), *What Is a Jew?* (Tolstoy), and "Racial Traits of Jews in Literature" (Gabe).

Fleg and Gabe Recall Why They Are Jews

The problem, common for all three writers, relates to the conflict between the essence of Jewish ways of sensing the world and their historical existence. According to Fleg, the most characteristic traits of Judaism and Jewishness are inherited. Each member of the community is connected through kinship to these traits.[25] That is why Fleg's message is addressed to his unborn grandson. Simultaneously, however, Jewish tradition is

[23] Edmond Fleg, *Moysey*, trans. Dora Gabe (Sofia, 1937).

[24] Edmond Fleg, "Hanaanskiyat grozd: Otkas ot knigata 'Moysey'," trans. Dora Gabe, *Maccabi* 9 (1929), 2:11–13. See id., *La vie de Moïse* (Paris, 1928).

[25] "And I said to myself: from that far distant father to my very own father, all these fathers have transmitted a truth to me, which ran in their blood, which runs in my blood; and must I not transmit it with my blood to those of my blood? Will you accept it, my child? Will you transmit it?", Edmond Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew*, trans. Louise Waterman Wise (New York, 1933), in The Internet Archive, https://archive.org/stream/whyiamajew028020mbp/whyiamajew028020mbp_djvu.txt [retrieved: 16 July 2017].

subjected to continuous interaction with foreign cultural communities, to the degenerating influence of historical facts that threaten its consolidating functions. For example, the need for religious norms to adapt to the everyday demands of secular life has destructive meaning for the writer.[26] Another substantial factor, complicating Jewish identity, is the inaccessibility of Judaic tradition—transmitted in a language incomprehensible for most Jews, it transforms itself into an anti-intellectual declamation, which competes with the clear chronology of the historical narrative of other nations.[27]

According to Gabe, for Jews slavery is the force that undermines their identity and self-awareness. And while their inability to subdue their laws is presented in Fleg's work as a play-script of everyday life, in the poet's work the unachievable harmony with biblical commands becomes predestination. Gabe constructs the first part of her essay around the image of the Jew whose two types of inner essence are at odds—that of the man of wisdom and that of the slave:

> The Jew today maintains two profoundly contradictory characters: the old biblical one—which is immortal within him, who invisibly rules his soul and in whom his gifts are deposited, who leads him to the humane and keeps him always close to the *shekhinah* (the Divine Presence)—and the other character that was elaborated in him over 2000 years of slavery, in his struggle to win a place at least in the material world, [the only place] where there has been freedom. This other Jew is in a hurry to earn, and all his concerns are directed this way.[28]

A personification of the inner struggle of two opposites according to the poet is in the character of Samuel from Wyspiański's drama entitled

[26] Fleg gives an example of the moments in which those in his immediate surroundings break the religious vows that are compulsory for observing Jews. Precisely those episodes of his childhood make him increasingly critical of his ancestors' religion: "I did not write on Saturday at school. That was forbidden. But at college my elder brothers wrote on that day just as on other days; their studies made it necessary. My father went to his office on Saturday after synagogue services. He also wrote, his business made it necessary. Was, therefore, the rest on the Sabbath-day only important for very little boys?" Ibid.

[27] "Thus, like all children of all time, I began despising myself to scrutinize my parents and drawing conclusions from their inconsistencies [and] I very slowly began to break with their idols. Others unconsciously became my accomplices. The first of these was my teacher of religion, the cantor of the synagogue. He had a beautiful voice, a beautiful beard, a beautiful soul. But as a teacher he puzzled me, I was at this time attending college and was proud of my Latin. Now this man taught that Hebrew had no grammar, which caused me to feel dubious about that language and what it inculcated. Then too, his method alone would have discouraged the most inquisitive of minds. I mumbled prayers which he declared untranslatable." Ibid.

[28] Gabe, "Rasovi cherti na evreite v literaturata," 47.

Sędziowie [Judges], who has to fight two elements: one of pure inspiration and talent, which has possessed his little son; and the other, that of the pragmatic common sense that rules his firstborn heir, who is focused on satisfying material needs and aspirations. The poet thinks of Samuel's image as a warning against the dangers that Jewish tradition faces: "[w]hen the young son dies, the soul of his father dies—there is no longer a reason to live, there is no luminary in his soul, and without [this luminary], he is a dead man."[29] Despite the historical logic, though, the essence of Jewish tradition remains. According to both Fleg and Gabe, a source of this perseverance is the kinship memory preserved in the written word. The poet's imagery gives figurative relief to the phenomenon, which the playwright calls "recalling":

> Is there an ancestral memory? I can no longer doubt [such a memory] because that which I then learned seems to me not to have been learned at all but to have been remembered.[30]

> the one who looks in a humane way sees behind the small seller with dirty nails on his hands and untrimmed beard such an old man of wisdom who leans over a big old book and drinks from its wise sayings.[31]

Both authors believe that the Jewish people has preserved itself by virtue of its wisdom. Consciousness of being chosen by God is the main ingredient of this wisdom. Fleg and Gabe perceive the special role of Jews in the history of humankind not as a prize, but as self-sacrifice and a responsibility. A symbol of this responsibility, according to the poet, is Job, who "in his grief cleanses himself and ascends, instead of perishing shattered underneath the burden of his suffering."[32] The fate of the Old Testament hero repeats the destiny of the Jews who expiate through their own suffering the road of humankind toward justice and peace: "The ideal of the Jewish God is to choose a people who can help humankind to rise and become free. A religion that does not care only for itself, a people that does not live only for itself."[33] These words of Dora Gabe summarize the most meaningful response of Edmond Fleg to the questions, "How should I be a Jew? Why should I be a Jew?"

[29] Ibid., 48.
[30] Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew.*
[31] Gabe, "Rasovi cherti na evreite v literaturata," 47.
[32] Ibid., 50.
[33] Ibid.

Toward Fleg's Definition of Jewish Identity

For Fleg, the most important commandments which the Jew should observe are from the Old Testament: "[l]ove the Lord, thy God, and love thy fellow man as much as thyself." These two commandments are, in effect, one and the same and consolidate monotheism and messianism. As Fleg argues, linking the two commandments leads to the idea that because man is the image and likeness of God, to love your fellow man means to love God. From here, according to the writer, the mission of the Jewish people is to unite all other people around the idea of a monotheistic deity and to arrive at a universal agreement, grounded in the belief that with the coming of the Messiah peace and calm will settle, because the division between human beings offends the divine unity. These convictions of Fleg, shared by Gabe, are supported by his ecumenism and his attempt to build a bridge between Judaism and Christianity.

Fleg's views were formed under the influence of several key historical events, which led to the cultural blossoming of the Jewish community in France in the 1920s. After Jews acquired full civil rights at the end of the eighteenth century, they also gained the opportunity to participate in French public, political, and cultural life on an equal footing with other ethnic groups. On the one hand, the time saw the beginning of the Jews' emancipation. On the other hand, a long-term process of expanding the meaning of the concept of "a Frenchman" began, a concept which gradually opened up new forms of identification. The marriage of acquired political, economic, and cultural equality to the ideals of the French Revolution led in certain Jewish circles during the nineteenth century to equating the basic principles of Judaism with the liberal values of tolerance, freedom, and equality.

On the religious plane the development of the Jewish community also changed significantly. Separation of church and state powers, sanctioned by law in 1905, which postulated that public institutions be neutral regarding faith, led to religious pluralism and to creating new Jewish religious public organizations. Under the influence of the accelerating trends of secularization the Jewish intellectuals formulated so-called *cultural Judaism*, in the framework of which Jewishness transformed into a cultural identity based on shared tradition and history.

At the same time, Fleg bore witness to the Dreyfus trial. The Dreyfus Affair became a catalyst for his ethnic and religious self-identifi-

cation.[34] The antisemitic moods, awoken during the court proceedings against Alfred Dreyfus, provoked the writer to turn to Zionist ideas. These concepts defined the transformation of the religious and ethnic consciousness into a national one, crucial to the future of the Jewish people.[35] This view was particularly strong during the 1899 Third Zionist Congress, which Fleg attended. Drawing on the experience acquired during his student years at elite French universities; being an established and central figure in the "Aesthetes" literary circle; harvesting success as a playwright—in short, embodying the Jewish cultural prosperity of the 1920s—Fleg vividly reacted to the antisemitism that grew at the time not only in France but in all of Europe.

Experiencing strong internal conflict, the writer dedicated himself to the study of Judaism. All of his later creative labor is connected to two of his ideas, formed under the influence of the conflicting tendencies that he attempted to reconcile. The first idea was his original view on universal human spirituality regardless of which religion one practiced.

[34] See Aron Rodrigue, "Rearticulations of French Jewish Identities after the Dreyfus Affair," *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (1996), 3:1–24.

[35] Edmond Fleg and Dora Gabe gave a testimony to the process of becoming aware of their ethnic identity in identical ways. For both writers a key moment was the explosion of antisemitic moods in French and Bulgarian society respectively. For Fleg the catalyst was the proceedings against officer Dreyfus; and for Gabe it was the court proceedings against her as an author of a teaching primer. As the poet says: "Until the legal case happened, the thought has never crossed my mind that I am of different descent;" see Ivan Sarandev, *Dora Gabe: Literaturni anketi* (Sofia, 1986), 85. The clash with these phenomena forced them both to give an account to themselves that there has always been, secretly hiding in their minds, a fear of massacres and persecutions—a fear, transferred from a generation to generation. The news about the Dreyfus Affair brought to Fleg's mind the stories told by his mother: "Greedy, sensual, a thief and forger, the Jew was a traitor by choice and by his very nature, and if Dreyfus needed a motive for his crime the one fact that he was a Jew explained his treason. . . . I did not recognize myself in this portrait of the Jew. I was quite sure I was not planning any sinister project by which the world might be overwhelmed. Without feeling myself affected, I was nevertheless unnerved. This antisemitism was a new experience to me. When very young I had heard tell of course of the massacres of Jews in Russia which followed the assassination of a Czar; of women disemboweled, of old men buried alive, nursing babies plunged into petroleum and then thrown to the flames. For a time these memories had haunted my nights" (Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew*). Dora Gabe, at her end, recalls the nightmare dream of her own mother, Ekaterina Samoylovna Duel: "A hungry little Jew kneels down in front of a blackened morsel of bread in the mud on the pavement. There is a boot rising above the little hand that reaches out [to the morsel]. [The boot is] shining, huge. A second passes and . . . [there is] a plaintive scream, a cynic giggle and guilty passers-by who loosely slide their gaze through the shop windows. And the child runs towards the hunger brothels. Fear, a mindless fear, runs after him" (Mihail, *Tazhnite ochi na minaloto*, 91). The antisemitism in Bulgarian and French society forced both artists to confront the reality which sub-consciously they had already been foreseeing.

This spirituality is evidence that representatives of different faiths not only have to collaborate with each other but that they also must comprehend the interrelatedness of their religious beliefs. The second idea is connected to trust in the possibilities for dialogue between Jews and Christians—a dialogue which has to be based on mutual tolerance.

That is why, when Sally Charnow explores Fleg's ecumenic sensitivity, a sensitivity developed during World War I and was embodied in the aims and values propagated in l'Union sacrée, she thinks that it is more appropriate not to consider Fleg's work as a labor of a Jewish writer:

> [i]t may be useful to see his work in the broader context of the traumatized French post-war society and its Catholic renewal. . . . Along with Charles Péguy and Jacques Maritain, Fleg aimed to offer the "rational" intellectual access to a new kind of mystic-realism in which the temporal and eternal dimensions of human existence were not positioned in opposition to one another but existed on a continuum. For Fleg, this continuity allowed him to envision a future in which Christians and Jews inhabited a "new Jerusalem" based on universal humanistic values.[36]

Yaniv Hagbi believes that Fleg was not a religious Jew in the traditional sense of this concept, but that he was definitely a religious intellectual because he consciously constructed a body of texts that corresponded to his beliefs and convictions and which formed a universal understanding of Judaism.[37] Summarizing these characteristics of the French writer—his unorthodox faith, his difficulty to define nationality, and his openness to dialogue—Lawrence Hoffman concludes that Fleg defined Jewish identity as a moral space.[38]

Gabe as an Interpreter of Fleg's Ideas

Fleg offers a synthesized image of his views in Moses' fictionalized biography. The Old Testament prophet entertained the writer's imagination for several decades. Moses is a key figure to Fleg's thinking because Moses brought together Fleg's ideas about the universalities of Judaism, about

[36] Sally Charnow, "Imagining a New Jerusalem: Edmond Fleg and Inter-War French Ecumenism," *French History* 27 (2013), 4:557–578.

[37] Yaniv Hagbi, "The Book of Edmond: Manifestations of Edmond Fleg's Worldview in His *L'Anthologie Juive*," in Hillel Weiss, Ber Kotlerman, Roman Katsman (eds.), *Around the Point: Studies in Jewish Literature and Culture in Multiple Languages* (Cambridge, 2014), 213–230.

[38] Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Principal, Story, and Myth in the Liturgical Search for Identity," *A Journal of Bible and Theology* 64 (2010), 3:231–244.

the messianic mission of the Jewish people, and about the interweaving qualities of Old Testament beliefs and the Gospel. In *The Life of Moses*, Fleg highlighted these moments from the Jews' exodus from Egypt and from the Sinai Covenant to assert his own convictions. Some of these narratives are spread through oral Jewish tradition and are included in the Talmud and the Midrash. Such is the episode in which before giving the Torah to Moses, God gives it to Esau, Moab, the sons of Ishmael, and only then to other peoples. With the vivid narration about their refusal to accept the Pentateuch, the writer emphasizes that before being the God of Israel, the Eternal One is the God of all people and that the mission adopted by the Israelites is an extremely burdensome one—which is why this mission is faced with a lack of understanding. According to Fleg's interpretation, when Moses convinces the Jews to adopt the Torah he suggests to them that this is not a privilege, but an adoption of a service:

> Difficult is the beginning of everything, but most difficult of all is being humble and the beginning of it; but you began to be meek and the one who is humble in the sorrow soon finds humility in joy too; and so to be meek before the Lord is the greatest joy. Your eyes saw what miracles he did for you when he set you free from Egypt, from hunger and from thirst. However, you have not yet received his Torah. And what miracles would he not do when you receive it and listen to it, and follow it. . . . But when the Torah belongs to you, you will belong to the Torah.[39]

In his autobiographical essay *Why I Am a Jew*, Fleg pays special attention to the consistency between the Law of Moses and the Divine Word announced by Jesus: "'Thou shalt love the Eternal thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' This utterance quoted by Jesus was first spoken by Moses."[40] This re-interpretation of verses from Deuteronomy (10:12, 11:13, 30:6: "to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live") and Leviticus (19:18: "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself") serves as a motto of the anthology entitled *L'Anthologie Juive*, edited and published by Fleg in 1923. For him, these two commandments synthesize the meaning of Judaism. These commandments are attributed to Moses but also play a particularly important role in the New Testament. In citing them, Fleg actually shows the proximity of the two religions. According to him, these

[39] Fleg, *Moysey*, 23.
[40] Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew.*

two imperatives, which are the essence of both Judaism and Christianity, are at the basis of all spirituality.[41]

Gabe interprets the image of Moses in a similar fashion, also perceiving the descendant of Leviticus as a key figure in the Old Testament. She regards him as a personification of Jews' best features:

> All peoples have created one archetype, be it carried in a man of wisdom or in a poet, in a hero or in a prophet. They have deposited [in this archetype] all elements of their race so as to keep them inside this treasury and so that [they] have in front of them a model from which they may not divert. Such is the image of Moses for the Jews.[42]

According to the poet, Fleg precisely presents the prophet accurately, emphasizing Moses' human qualities. The prophet, like all humans, experiences anger, doubt, and despair: "[h]e is not that naked abstraction, that deity which never descends from its heaven,"[43] Gabe summarizes. That is why the image, created by Fleg, according to her, is genuine.

Another feature in Fleg's narrative about Moses which made an impression on Gabe is his "love and grief" for his people. He was the good counselor, educator, and mentor who patiently led "his 600,000 children" out of slavery and out of their slave customs. Similarly, the Old Testament God is presented as follows: "The biblical God in Fleg's book—Gabe comments—is merciful and full of love towards Moses and through him—towards his people."[44] It is evident from the poet's comment that Fleg's notion of the closeness between Jewish and Christian traditions had an impact on her. The image of the merciful Lord who relates to his subjects with fatherly love prefigures the New Testament figure of the God-Father, who sends his son to expiate the sins of humans. According to Gabe, Moses, as seen through Fleg's eyes, is a prototype of the theanthropic god, a prototype of Christ:

> In [Fleg's work] Moses and God sometimes blend in one image. Moses becomes divine and God [becomes] human. God gives birth to the idea of the salvation of all the people—Moses [gives birth to] the idea of the spiritual and moral salvation of the Israelite people. This idea about the reincarnation and purification of the people through sufferance and tempering in a struggle with the help of God, who leads with a steady hand and a merciful heart, is perhaps the most beautiful and

[41] See Hagbi, "The Book of Edmond," 222–223.
[42] Gabe, "Rasovi cherti na evreite v literaturata," 48.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 49.

> the greatest idea borne by the past of Jewishness. Because it is for all the times and all the people who have been through slavery.[45]

Further in her interpretation, which to this point corresponds to the views of the French writer and the ways in which he perceives the world, Gabe turns toward the future, expressing her own position. The composition of her text goes back to the founding—in her viewpoint—image of the Jew-slave and the Jew-wiseman, and the Old Testament prophet is positioned as a model for contemporary times:

> The leaders, who prepare the youth for the Promised Land, should not forget their prototypical image—Moses—[so that they] can penetrate, like him, into the character of their people, to discover and to trample on the slave's traits in this people, to peel off that bark, acquired in slavery, which has hidden his spirit. So that those flaws are brought out [into the open], become susceptible to awareness and are undermined. And when the grapes of the Promised Land ripen and [the Land] calls upon its people, let there be a generation that deserves to come back [to the Land]—let [this generation] be not a foreigner who came there, but as if it is [the Land's] own son, long known [to the Land] and long waited for.[46]

Thus, central to Gabe's text remain the image of slavery, which Jews have to overcome, and of Moses—as a highly ethical and moral exemplar—who is an embodiment of the qualities needed to reconstruct the slave, to transform each of them into a human, who is free, just, wise, full of compassion and love toward his fellows. The humanistic ideas of Fleg, synthesized in the fictionalized biography of the Old Testament prophet, are, according to Gabe, necessary for the Jewish people, especially in their present moment "because the longest [slavery], a 2,000-year-old one, is the present slavery of Israel."[47] The poet's interpretation subdues the work of the French writer to the goals of Zionism.

Feminist Entanglement of Gabe's Zionistic Inclinations

I shall now return to the contradiction mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Taking into account Gabe's engagement with Zionism as expressed in her work for the *Maccabi* newspaper,[48] in the popularization of the

[45] Ibid., 50.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] The *Maccabi* newspaper is an organ of the Maccabi Union of the Zionist Athletic Clubs in Bulgaria. The purpose of these clubs, which date back to 1897, is to popularize

work and ideas of Edmond Fleg, and in extracting contemporary political content from his readings of biblical texts, what drove those publishing in the journal to criticize her life choices? Particular disapproval was raised about Gabe's detachment from Jewish circles, a detachment connected to her baptism and her active creative work.[49] Her public activism, her success as chair of the Bulgarian PEN Club, her activism as a member of the "Dobrudzha" Union—all were perceived as signs of her full assimilation into the Bulgarian public and cultural scene and were assessed negatively because—as Ben Avram argued—"assimilation as a road to solving the Jewish question proves to be inefficient, even destructive for the Jewish people."[50] The author did not leave space for a multi-cultural belonging and for multiple national identifications. According to him, the main reason that drove Jews to assimilate was mercenary. Thus, the poet was indirectly accused of "avarice" and "vanity," of neglecting the struggles of her own people so that she could lead a happier, meaningful, and—more important—free life.

These convictions synchronized with ideas about the Jewish woman propagated in the pages of the journal. According to Leon Farhi, the

gymnastics and sports among young Jews. This is the only Jewish organization which propagates sports and bodily education among Jewish youth. Alongside the organization of competitions, tournaments, and training, the Maccabi clubs organize excursions, talks, and dancing-parties. In parallel with bodily education the clubs aim at seeding a national spirit and a sense of solidarity among young Jews. The Union's chronicle, which describes in detail Maccabi's relations with the Zionist Organization, to which its members move after turning 18 years old, explains that the role of the Maccabees for the national movement of the Jews was particularly important: "It [the organization] has served, throughout approximately three decades, as a school to the nurturing of Jewish youth in a strong national spirit. It created a constellation of dedicated champions, who made and continue to give dear sacrifices for the celebration of the Zionist ideal." See *Belezhki za istoriyata na sayuza "Maccabi" v Bulgaria* (Sofia, 1930), 57. Cf. the broad-scope pieces of information about the Jewish organizations in Bulgaria until the end of World War II, in: David Koen, "Balgarskite evrei – sotsialen zhivot (1878–1947)," in id., *Evreite v Bulgaria 1878–1949* (Sofia, 2008), 105–174. For more information about the newspaper *Maccabi* see Katia Baklova, "Maccabi (1920–1940)," in Elka Traykova, Vihren Chelnokozhev (eds.), *Periodika i literatura: Literaturni spisania i vestnitsi, smeseni spisania, humoristichni izdania (1918–1920)* (Sofia, 1999), 5:383–392.

[49] "This suffering soul wanted to tear down all the chains—the chains of kinship, of maternity and of earthly pleasures. But no peace it is finding and more and more torn painfully it is. Following her graduation from the gymnasium in Varna, Dora Gabe goes abroad. She spends her student years away from her parents. She also starts her departure from the people to which she belonged up until this moment and to which her old mother belongs until the present day. Perhaps under the influence of the environment or may be in order to break down the 'chains' that stay on her way to improvement and popularization." See Mayer, "Dora Gabe: Etyud," 11, 13.

[50] Avram, "Gorchivata chasha," 5.

contemporary Jewish woman should uphold canonic Jewish traditions and values because "the woman is an inborn representative and a keeper of the national heritage." In the talk, published in *Maccabi* under the title "Drevnata i moderna evreyka" [The Ancient and Modern Jewish Woman],[51] he pays special attention to the difficult situation in which every woman who has to choose between the assimilationist leanings coming from the external environment and the centripetal forces of traditional cultural values finds herself. According to Farhi, the inclusion of Jewish women in the culture of the nation in which they live does not lead them to self-improvement and self-assertion:

> [The modern Jewish woman] follows the instructions and ways of non-Jewish women—in the good and the bad, forgetting the high virtues of her great-grand-mothers. Today she feels flattered, if Christian women think that she behaves, thinks, and looks like a Christian. As if each difference existing between a Jewish and a non-Jewish woman should be destroyed in the interest of the misunderstood cultivation.[52]

According to Farhi, Christian culture, into which Jewish women blend, does not give them the opportunity to develop their natural abilities but encourages them to pay more attention to their appearance, to those arts that present them best in society (such as singing, dancing, playing piano) and to material goods. Jewish women who allow themselves to assimilate forget the true wisdom hidden in the holy books:

> As the centuries flowed, the mind of the Jew had sharpened thanks to study of the Talmud. Studying the Talmud, like no other tension of the mind, sharpens abruptly the mental abilities for speculation and philosophy in particular. The father leaves as a heritage to his children these abilities of his too. In such a way, as the centuries flow, the mind of the Jewish woman and especially her ability for philosophical reasoning developed sharply. Despite such a legacy of richness of the soul, the Jewish woman today leans not towards deep philosophical thought, but towards life's superficialities.[53]

The idea that the woman has to develop her skills and to self-improve does not displace her traditional roles of a wife and a mother. As Farhi argues, "the Jewish woman's striving toward marriage is much stronger than it is in the non-Jewish woman" and "Jews consider childlessness

[51] Leon Farhi, "Drevnata i moderna evreyka," *Maccabi* 7–10 (1931), 6–13, 9–13, 8–12, 8–16, respectively.

[52] Farhi, "Drevnata i moderna evreyka," *Maccabi* 10 (1931), 9–10.

[53] Ibid., 10.

a curse and a divine punishment. Infertile women are expelled and despised by their husbands."[54]

Against the background of these convictions it is obvious that the emancipated social and political behavior of Gabe provoked the objections of Sammy Mayer and Ben Avram. To that behavior, however, as an especially serious occasion for their dissatisfaction, the original perception of the poet regarding Zionism has to be added. Her view is untraditional and, to some extent, paradoxical because it excludes any form of nationalism. The exposé to "Racial Traits of Jews in the Literature: Moses" shows that, for the poet, the leaders of the Zionist movement have to serve as a moral corrector to the people, and the national state established in the Promised Land should represent the moral emanation of this people. Gabe identifies the Zionist movement, first of all, with adherence to certain Jewish ethical and cultural values. For her, the national belonging of the Zionists comes second. Moreover, according to the poet—and Fleg's influence here is obvious—participation in Zionist initiatives does not limit the national self-identification of Jews from the Diaspora who have the right to more than one fatherland. In the words of Fleg: "[t]he Zionist program in no way implied the return of all Jews to Palestine—a thing numerically impossible, for the Jewish country only offers itself to those Jews who feel that they have no other country."[55]

This original interpretation of Zionist ideas allows us to understand the parallels between the contributions of Edmond Fleg on one hand, and Dora Gabe on the other. The writer identifies himself as a Jew and a Frenchman: "I felt that I was a Jew, essentially a Jew, but I also felt myself French, a Frenchman of Geneva, but French." The poet—as a Jewish woman and a Bulgarian woman: "I have never thought that it is disgraceful, the way others thought, that one is of a different descent, especially Jewish. I knew how many great people Jewishness has given [to the world] and what martyrdom is this persecution, but I was too much of a Bulgarian woman."[56]

The poet's multi-level and multi-cultural identification, open to religious ecumenism and to ideas of women's emancipation, encounters misunderstanding and misreadings. Because it is hard to define, it is problematic for all those—whether of Bulgarian or Jewish origin—who

[54] Ibid., 12, 13.
[55] Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew.*
[56] Sarandev, *Dora Gabe*, 85.

look for firm criteria of national or ethnic belonging. In Dora Gabe's case, taking into account her original ideas on Zionism and her controversial relations with Jewish circles in Sofia before World War II, stating that she is a Bulgarian Jew or a Jewish Bulgarian is never enough. When interested in the complex problem of her identity, one needs to pay attention to the interrelatedness, tensions, and dynamics between these categories. In fact, the most important topic—as I tried to argue here—concerns the intersections between the poet's multiple identifications.

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Rachel (Rae) Dalven: An Accomplished Female Romaniote Historian, Translator, and Playwright

Abstract: Rachel Dalven was a Romaniote Jew, translator of modern Greek poetry, playwright, and historian of the Jews of Ioannina, Greece. She was an educated and well-traveled independent woman, who brought to the English-speaking audiences in the West the poets Cavafy, Ritsos, and Yosef Eliya as well as many female Greek poets. She visited the Jewish community of Ioannina several times in the 1930s, and wrote about the deportation and annihilation of the Jews from Ioannina in Auschwitz-Birkenau. She was a cross between a Greek-speaking Romaniote Jew and a Sephardic Jew, both little-known subgroups within the Jewish minority. Residing in New York City, she benefited from being in a rich cultural hub with its connections and benefits in encouraging and enabling translation, poetry, theater, academic research, publishing, and travel grants.

Keywords: Rachel Dalven, Yosef Eliya, Cavafy, Ritsos, Ioannina, Romaniote, Judeo-Greek, Holocaust.

Rachel Dalven, born in Preveza, Greece, on 25 April 1904, came from a Judeo-Greek speaking, Jewish Romaniote family from Ioannina, Greece, that migrated to the United States in 1910 when she was five. She grew up in the area of New York and was a part of the Jewish Ioanniote Greek-speaking community that was active in four neighborhoods: the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. She had many relatives in New York and Ioannina. She would become a pioneer in researching the history and culture of the Romaniote Jewish community of Ioannina as well as a translator of Greek poetry into English,

a playwright, and a professor of English literature and the department chairperson at Ladycliff College in Highland Falls, New York. She did her studies at Hunter College and received a doctorate in English from New York University. Toward the end of her life, she taught modern Greek literature at the Onassis Program in Hellenic Studies at New York University. She died in New York City on 30 July 1992.

Rachel Dalven as a Translator of Poetry from Greek to English

Rachel Dalven was an active and noted translator of modern Greek poetry into English. The descriptions below attempt to trace the vast numbers of her translations, which poets she translated, and, when possible, the past critiques of her works. Time and space limit a linguistic analysis of her translations so that we might also note her creations as a playwright and her monumental activities in annotating the history of the Jews of Ioannina, and their Romaniote culture. As a Jewish female twentieth-century scholar of Romaniote Jews in the Greek Peninsula and a translator, she is second to none as a Jewish female cultural icon of the southern part of the Balkans.

Cavafy's famous poem "Ithaka," first published in 1911, was only five stanzas long, but it is one of his most known poems and is considered to express his outlook on life. The poem is colloquial in its language. The narrator, probably well-traveled, addresses either Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic *Odyssey*, or an imaginary modern traveler or reader. The first English translation appeared in 1924, but due to the difficulties in translating Cavafy, very few pursued tackling his unorthodox style, and Dalven's translations, made decades later in the late 1950s, eventually brought the Greek-speaking Alexandrian Cavafy (d. 1933) posthumously to international notoriety outside the Greek-speaking centers of Greece and Cyprus—and for this she became known for her translations by scholars, literary critics, and publishers and editors of modern Greek poetry and poetry in general. The criticism of Dalven's translation in a critical edition for students was as follows:

> Jane Lagoudis Pinchin, in *Alexandria Still*, evaluates the different translations of the poem, including the first published translation by George Valassopoulo, and the translations by Rae Dalven and John Mavrogordato. Pinchin prefers Mavrogordato's version of the last line of the poem ("You will have understood the meaning of an Ithaka") to Dalven's version ("You must surely have under-

stood by then what Ithacas mean"). Pinchin comments, "Dalven *does* sound a bit impatient with her dim voyager."[1]

After Dalven published her first translations of modern Greek poetry in the book *Modern Greek Poetry* (Gaer, 1949), it was reviewed by W. H. Auden, who wrote, "We should be very grateful to Miss Dalven for introducing us to the world of poetry which has been closed to us" by the language barrier. Afterward he wrote the introductions to Dalven's *The Complete Poems of Cavafy* and *The Fourth Dimension*, discussed below.

In 1961 Dalven published a collection of poems by the little-known Alexandrian poet C. P. (Konstantinos Petros) Cavafy entitled *The Complete Poems of Cavafy*, which popularized Cavafy among the broader English-speaking public.[2] While Oxford scholar John Mavrokordatos completed his collection of translations of Cavafy in 1937, four years after the death of the poet, it was only published in 1951 and included the canon of 154 poems known at the time. Dalven published the same canon as well as an additional several dozen poems. Her translation was recommended for publication and contained a preface by W. H. Auden. She was criticized by D. J. Enright as a translator for using a misleading title since she did not translate all the known poems, and for being "less mannered in style than Mavrokordatos" and "lacking a clear guiding principle" in her translation, but she did popularize Cavafy,[3] and her translation was in the literary focus until modern Greek scholars Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard published a new scholarly translation in 1975.[4]

Dalven's second note of notoriety was achieved as a result of her translation of *The Fourth Dimension: Selected Poems of Yannis Ritsos* (David R. Godine, 1977).[5] The Greek poet Yannis Ritsos was a communist who fought in the underground in World War II and was sentenced to forced labor as a political prisoner first on the island of Limnos and then at the infamous camp on Makronisos for a combined total of four years during the Civil War (1944–1951).[6] His poems were banned until 1954 and again

[1] "Ithaka," *Poetry for Students* 19 (2004), 111–128.

[2] Rae Dalven, *The Complete Poems of Cavafy* (New York–London, 1961).

[3] Sarah Ekdawi, "C. P. Cavafy 1863–1933, Greek Poet," in *Encyclopedia of Literary English into English* (London, 2002), 240–241.

[4] Constantine P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, trans. Edmund Keeley, Philip Sherrard (Princeton, 1975).

[5] *The Fourth Dimension: Selected Poems of Yannis Ritsos*, trans. and introd. Rae Dalven (Boston, 1977).

[6] "A Note on Yannis Ritsos," *Poetry* 103 (1964), 5:334.

during the Greek Junta dictatorship (1967–1974). Dalven's translations were amongst the first after the dictatorship ended.

Dalven also translated the poems of the young prolific Jewish Greek poet Yosef Eliya[7] of Ioannina, a national Greek literary icon, who died in early 1931 aged only twenty-nine, after drinking polluted water. Her translations were published in 1944 by Anatolia Press in New York. Theodora Patrona coined her a "cultural ambassador" between the two countries, the United States and Greece, for this translation and for being the first translator of the complete poems of Cavafy into English.[8] Dalven's translations of Eliya were some of the earliest translations of Greek poetry published at a very early stage of English translations of Greek poetry in the United States and elsewhere outside Greece.[9]

[7] Joseph Eliya, *Poems*, trans. Rae Dalven (New York, 1944).

[8] Theodora D. Patrona, "The Forgotten Female Voices of the Greek Diaspora in the United States," *The Journal of Modern Hellenism* 31 (2015), 87–100.

[9] Eliya taught French at the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Ioannina, his native town, and then for a year in Kilkis, Macedonia (Greece), before his tragic death in 1931. Dan Cohn-Sherbok noted in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica* that Eliya wrote poetic love songs dedicated to Rebekah and also produced Greek translations of Isaiah, Job, the *Song of Songs*, Ruth, and Jonah, as well as the works of medieval and modern Jewish writers; see Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica* (Oxford, 1992). A street was named after Eliya in the new Jewish quarter of Ioannina outside the walls of the Old City. There is also a bust of Eliya in Alsos Park in Ioannina. Bracha Rivlin in the introduction to *Pinkas ha-kehilot Yavan*, published by Yad Vashem, wrote, "The greatest Jewish poet writing in Greek, Yosef Eliya of Ioannina, translated poems of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, Ibn Gabirol, as well as Bialik and Tchernichovsky from Hebrew into Greek;" see Bracha Rivlin, Yitzchak Kerem, Lea Matkovetski, *Pinkas ha-kehilot Yavan* (Jerusalem, 1999), 26. Giorgios Zografaki wrote a Greek anthology of his poetry entitled *Song of Songs – Psalms* that was published in Greek; see Giorgios Zografaki, *Song of Songs – Psalms* (Athens, 1981). Leon Narr amassed and edited an updated compendium of the entire known works of Yosef Eliya in a two-volume work published in Athens in 2009. In the second volume, Narr made comments illustrating the main identity issues which Greece encountered in the interwar period, such as Eliya's quest for social justice, his search for the essence of "Greekness," and the need to recreate a new Greek Jewish identity, especially in light of the transition from 450 years of Ottoman rule and traditional life to a new identity under the Greek Republic; see Leon A. Narr (ed. and introd.), *Gioséf Eligiá Ápanta*, vol. 2 (Athens, 2009). Yitzchak Kerem wrote on Eliya in the *New Encyclopedia Judaica*; see Yitzchak Kerem, "The Jew in Modern Greek Literature," *New Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 2007–2008), 8:63–65. In commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Ioannina to Auschwitz, a concert of Greek Jewish music based on the poems by Eliya, written and performed by Pighi Likoudi and her musicians, was held at the Centre Communautaire Laïque Juif David Susskind in Bruxelles, Belgium, in March 2014. See Efthymios Tsiliopoulos, "Ioannina Jews Remembered," *New Greek News about Greece & Greeks Around the World* (17 March 2014), http://www.newgreektv.com/english-news/item/4431-ioannina-jews-remembered [retrieved: 28 Aug. 2017]. At the Jewish Museum in Athens two temporary exhibitions on Ioannina's Jews were organized from 23 January to 25 September 2017. The exhibition "Joseph Eliya: Poet of the Lake" was dedicated to

Research by Eleni Kourmantzi notes that in addition to Eliya's lyrical poetry, his main work contains numerous examples of protest poetry against conservative political ideology which oppressed workers, communists and socialists, social outcasts, prostitutes, and others. She states that in his poems "Torah" and "The Pharisee," he protested against leaders of the Jewish community of Ioannina. A product of an Alliance Israélite Universelle modern Jewish education in Ioannina, he had protested the school's contempt for Zionist ideology, but also benefited from his modern French education by being exposed to the ideals of the French revolution. Inspired by the quest for liberty and equality, he sympathized with workers and sought to create a socialist egalitarian society. In Salonika (Thessaloniki)[10] numerous Alliance graduates were part of the socialist Salonikan Labor Federation and active members of the Socialist International. Eliya was

the life and work of the eminent philosopher and poet. See "What's On, 'Ioannina's Jews. Athens, 23 January – 25 September'," *Kathimerini* (21 Jan. 2017), http://www.ekathimerini.com/215487/article/ekathimerini/whats-on/ioanninas-jews--athens--january-23--september-25 [retrieved: 26 Sept. 2017]. Noteworthy are also recent analyzes of Eliya within modern Greek literature and poetry, his radical ideological positions, and the novelty of his work in integrating classical biblical scholarship, Hebrew philology, and Jewish thought and philosophy into modern Greek culture. He often used the pseudonym Ioulios Singulieros, writing critical poems against militarism, expressing syndicalist proletarian concerns, and protesting the fascist behavior of the governmental authorities against workers. He wrote poetry in demotic Greek so that a typical Greek-Orthodox person could understand his translations from the Old Testament, and for the benefit of most of the Jews of Ioannina who did not understand Hebrew. He translated medieval Hebrew poets, e.g. Yehuda Halevi and Ibn Gabirol, into Greek as well as modern Hebrew writers, such as Bialik, Tchernichovsky, Frishman, Peretz, and Shneur. In his poetry he voiced concern for syndicalism and the risk of evolving fascism during this time period. He also thought the Jewish community of Ioannina could not contend with the hostile extremism of the ultra-nationalist EEE (the National Union of Greece), and the Asia Minor refugees against the Jews. He added the study of Jesus to his literary activities in order to understand Christian society, but also boldly condemned Christian persecution of Jews; both phenomena being discussed publicly, embarrassed the conservative apologetic establishment of the Jewish community of Ioannina. In another controversial poem, entitled "Militarism and the Pharisees," he warned against those persecuting erudite theological and intellectual thinkers, and his remarks were aimed against the Jewish community leadership for fearing and repressing critical thought. After his death at the young age of twenty-nine, he was eulogized as a radical author. He also was lauded as a pioneer in setting the course as a conscious proletarian intellectual. See Panayiotis Noutsos, "Ta Giánnina, o Eligiá kai to dípolo 'fasismós' kai 'antifasismós' toy mesopolémoy," *Chroniká* 126 (1993), 21–27.

[10] The article will use the Jewish Ottoman terms and spellings, used by Jews, to call cities currently in Greece like Salonika instead of Thessaloniki, and Castoria instead of Kastoria. Since the Jews spoke Greek in Ioannina, the latter Greek spelling for the city will be used. In the United States the Jews from Ioannina used a more Americanized adaptation for the city, "Janina," but the latter name will only be used in the article to describe names of their synagogues.

feared by the authorities in Ioannina as a dangerous radical, and they influenced the local Jewish community there to release him from his teaching position at the Alliance Israélite Universelle school; he was forced to go into exile from his town Ioannina, and took a teaching position in a high school in a remote small Macedonian town, Kilkis, north-east of Salonika. In his last poem, written while he was teaching in Kilkis, entitled "Moses the Seducer," the reader can see the natural synthesis that Eliya found between Judaism and Hellenism. He wrote of "Moses the innocent and pure seducer with a beautiful exhilaration of yearning and ideas, with Greece with a mellifluent voice and with a flaming spirit of a Jew."[11]

Dalven wrote the following about Eliya as a translator and poet, and his message for religious tolerance:

> Eliya began translating the Old Testament into demotic Greek, officially in disrepute, hoping thereby both to acquaint the Romaniote community (many of whom did not know Hebrew) with their own Hebrew heritage and make the Old Testament available to his Christian compatriots in the language they could understand. He also published poems in local newspapers under the pseudonym Ioulios Singulieros. All of his poems exhibit a broad religious tolerance. The main burden of his struggle was to enlighten the timid, appeasing Jewish leaders so his coreligionists would never again be persecuted. He sought to open their eyes to the existence of other faiths, to accept them and have friendly relations with them, which, at the time he was writing, they could not or would not do.[12]

Dalven never intended to be a translator, but once on a trip to Paris, she met a cousin, Marcos, who told her about their talented relative Yosef Eliya, a struggling young Greek poet, a scholar of Hebrew studies, and a translator of the Old Testament and biblical Hebrew into demotic Greek.[13] She immediately sent him 50 dollars for financial assistance, and was in correspondence with him for three years until his untimely death in Greece. In 1935 Dalven and her husband went to Ioannina for Marcos's wedding, and Eliya's mother, Hanoula, requested or demanded that Dalven translate Eliya's poems into English as part of the latter's dying wish. She began to

[11] See Eleni Kourmantzi, "Gioséf Eligiá: Dianooýmenos kai poietés tes 'diamartyrías'," in Anna Mahera, Leda Papastefanaki (eds.), *Evraïkés koinótetes anámesa se Anatolé kai Dýse, 15os–20ós aiónas: oikonomía, koinonía, politiké, politismós* (Ioannina, 2016), 106–114. On Eliya see also: Dimitris Kargiotis, "Ásma Asmáton: E ypógeia parémvase toy Gioséf Eligiá sto neoellenikó logotechnikó kanóna," in Mahera, Papastefanaki (eds.), *Evraïkés koinótetes*, 115–126.

[12] Rae Dalven, *The Jews of Ioannina* (Philadelphia, 1990), 168.

[13] Rae Dalven, "An Unsought for Calling (My Life as a Translator from the Modern Greek)," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 8 (1990), 2:307–315.

translate the poems after her teaching hours in New York, and returned to Ioannina on her own during the summers of 1936 and 1937. She met Eliya's literary colleagues in Ioannina and Athens as well as the editors of *Nea Estia* and the *Large Greek Encyclopedia* where Eliya had published articles on Jewish life in Greece. On these trips she also saw the Jewish community of Ioannina before the deportation and annihilation of its members in Auschwitz-Birkenau in early April 1944. Her notes and impressions would become a part of future articles and her book on the Jews of Ioannina.

By 1938, Dalven finished her translation of ninety of Eliya's poems (out of his total of 250) and wrote a short biography. She had problems finding a publisher, was unsuccessful in getting commitments from 1,000 Ioanniote Jews to buy the book, and resolved to publish the translations weekly over the next two years in the English section of the Greek *National Herald*, but in the end received financial support from a cousin of Eliya in Manhattan.[14] Around 1944/45, the book finally appeared under the title *Poems*. After the collection was printed and Dalven began selling copies, Vladmir Constantinides, the editor of the Greek American newspaper *Atlantis*, was ecstatic about the edition and Dalven's translations. He reviewed *Poems* in his editorial column in three different Sunday issues, and this exposure snowballed. Dalven was invited to organizations and churches to promote the book. With its publication, Dalven attained a reputation as a recognized translator from modern Greek, a novel idea at the time.

In 1947 in Paris Dalven met the renowned Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis, and he offered her the opportunity to translate into English and publish in the United States his huge Greek edition of *The Odyssey* published in Athens. She translated twenty pages while in Paris, and was intent on continuing in New York, but friends convinced her that the project would take years and that she was taking on too much. She abandoned the idea, but included the twenty pages in her volume *Modern Greek Poetry*, published in 1949.[15]

Dalven's final published translation was *Daughters of Sappho*[16] which appeared after her death in 1994. This book is an anthology of translations from Greek representing twenty-five contemporary women poets, encompassing authors writing between the 1920s and the early 1990s. Each poet is

[14] Ibid., 308–310.

[15] Rae Dalven, *Modern Greek Poetry* (New York, 1949).

[16] Rae Dalven (ed. and trans.), *Daughters of Sappho: Contemporary Greek Women Poets* (Rutherford, 1994).

introduced in a short biography: Maria Polydhouri, Zoe Karelli, Rita Boumi Pappa, Dhialehti Zevgholi Ghlezou, Alexandra Plakotari, Melissanthi, Ioanna Tsatsou, Heleni Vakalo, Lina Kasdhaghli, Olga Votsi, Victoria Theodorou, Lydia Stephanou, Maria Servaki, Maria Kentrou-Agathopoulou, Kiki Dhimoula, Nana Issaia, Yolanda Penghli, Zephy Dharaki, Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, Pitsa Ghalazi, Ioanna Servou, Rea Ghalanaki, Pavlina Pampoudhi, Jenny Mastoraki, and Veronica Dhalakoura.

This anthology of close to two hundred poems was unique in that it was the first comprehensive collection in English to reveal contemporary Greek women's poetry in Greece. In the first decades of the twentieth century female poets in Greece faced discrimination by the patriarchal society. Maria Polydhouri (1902–1930) was the first contemporary Greek female poet to achieve prominence beyond the country's borders. She wrote romantic and erotic poetry since love was the only acceptable theme for women to pursue. However, in the 1930s, in a period of political chaos that saw the change from the Venizelos republic to the Metaxas dictatorship, women poets emerged in an attempt to fight the intellectual deterioration and poetic sterility of the era. In order to achieve their identity in the hegemonic male society, they lauded Sappho for her language, free expression of emotions, and devotion to the quest for individual freedom for women. In the 1930s, Greek female poets composed poetry in free verse and in demotic Greek. They also were inspired by Europe for poetic inspiration and growth. The poetry of the 1930s was diverse and non-conformist poetically, borrowing from both the East and West in nature and motifs. Karen Van Dyck, an authority on the translation of modern Greek poetry, wrote in the preface: "In this anthology we are very fortunate to have a space for these alternative visions of nationhood, gender, and genre. It is through such cross-cultural endeavors that we can avoid generalization and emphasize instead the specificity of cultural production."[17] In the introduction to the book it was noted that since the early 1930s, when Greek women began to free themselves from the male authority of fathers, brothers, and husbands, and were no longer solely homebound and isolated from public, economic, and social life, "the main focus of women's poets, in their long struggle for equality with men, has been to be able to function freely in terms of their own consciousness and their existence in a man's world."[18]

[17] Karen Van Dyck, "Preface," in Dalven (ed. and trans.), *Daughters of Sappho*, 1.
[18] Dalven (ed. and trans.), *Daughters of Sappho*, 20.

By the 1960s and 1970s, especially during the Junta dictatorship, Greek female poets used their lyrical voices as part of the resistance, and often were "daringly defiant."[19] In her book, Dalven also included the Jewish woman poet of Romaniote origin Nana Issaia (b. 1934), who was a painter and a seminal poet of the 1960s. In her first volume *Poems*, published in 1969, she was influenced by the confessional poetry of Sylvia Plath, and the work "represented the nihilistic mode of the existential imagination, which perceived nothingness as a terrifying realm with absolute self-destructive limits."[20] In 1974 Issaia translated Plath's poetry into Greek. According to Issaia, her poetry was based on a descent to level zero, which in her view was the symbol of a dialectical political state. Influenced by Martin Heidegger, she "believed that in the nothingness of a zero state, the essence of our being can be discerned. It was this essence, using an austere form, that she was trying to express. Because the unreal, and yet very real, does need a great precision of expression, rhythm, and synthesis."[21] Issaia did not recognize daily life. For her, death was the pinnacle of dreams and small thoughts, which in her view were the basic assumptions of every art.

Significant for Greek society was the inclusion of Ioanna Tsatsou (1909–2000), who wrote on the German occupation and was the sister of the Nobel Prize-winning Greek poet George Seferis, and the wife of Constantine Tsatsos, an academic and a former President of Greece. In 1965 Ioanna Tsatsou published works about her experiences in the resistance—as an aide and under the patronage of Archbishop Damaskinos who protested the deportation of Salonikan Jewry to Auschwitz—in a book entitled *The Sword's Fierce Edge: A Journal of the Occupation of Greece, 1941–1944*. Her first book of poetry, *Words of Silence*, published in 1968, was universally acclaimed and was followed by fourteen volumes of poetry; they were all bound in one book called *Poems*, published in 1986. Her poetry is very lyrical and profoundly religious and metaphysical. She also dwelled on the inevitable—death.[22]

Dalven included female poetic voices who also endured the painful Civil War, stimulated national conscience, protested oppression, and fought for women's rights. Victoria Theodorou (b. 1926) wrote *Women's Concentration Camps*, a chronicle of the Civil War in Greece, first published in 1975

[19] Ibid., 26.
[20] Ibid., 162.
[21] Ibid., 163.
[22] Ibid., 91–98.

after the dictatorship. She was one of the incarcerated and the book was based on nine buried notebooks recollecting the narrations of women in the concentration camps of Chios, Trekeri, and Makronisos from 1947 to 1952. As a poet, she emulated Sappho in the political struggles of her contemporary world. From 1941 to 1945 she served as a messenger in the Greek resistance. In her poems one sees the progression of her experiences: resistance, exile, and post-trauma; rage, memory, and feelings. Dalven included the poems "How Was I Trapped," "Life Sentences," "When," "I Seek Harmony," "Bring Back Feeling," and "I Will Remain Here with My Rage."[23] In the last poem, the poet did not seek revenge, but felt blessed by being given fruit to live, and wanted to play the lute again. She noted how the collaborator endured like a vine, but she hoped that that hubris, menace, and decomposition would be expunged.

Two translations of Dalven still remain unpublished: *To Become "Great"* by Elly Alexiou and *The Ancestor*, a play by Angelos Terzakis, which was produced in 1970. Born in Nauplion in the Peloponnese, the southern peninsula of Greece, Terzakis was an author and a playwright of the 1930s, the generation of the depression and of the transition between The Democratic People's Republic of Greece and the Metaxas dictatorship.

In the greater historical perspective Dalven has been noted as a pioneer for bringing translations of modern Greek poetry to the United States, and hence to popularity in the Greek diaspora and globally. Orestes Varvitsiotes, in a review of *Modern Greek Poetry in Translation* by Nanos Valaoritis and Thanasis Maskaleris, wrote:

> This may sound like a paradox today. But that's how the situation was then, before American and English academics established the significance of modern Greece in poetry; before Ritsos and Kazantzakis became known and appreciated. Even Cavafy was hardly known then. In this connection, it must be mentioned here that two American academics played a pioneering role in the discovery in this country of Modern Greek poetry: Kimon Friar, by his translation of Kazantzakis' *Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*, and Rae Dalven's first translation of the poetry of Cavafy and Ritsos. In fact, it was in the introduction to her book that the English poet, W. H. Auden, underscored the great significance of Cavafy's work in the literature of the Twentieth Century and his influence on the work of other poets.[24]

[23] Ibid., 117–122.

[24] Orestes Varvitsiotes, "Book Review: Modern Greek Poetry in Translation," *Greek News* (5 June 2005), http://www.greeknewsonline.com/book-review-modern-greek-poetry-in-translation/ [retrieved: 30 Sept. 2017].

Dalven was often lauded for her translations, for exposing unknown Greek poets to the West, and was sometimes critiqued for not having enough sophistication in translating or finding parallels between modern Greek and English. Cavafy was difficult to translate since he had an unorthodox sense of expression, introduced local colloquialisms, and often was overly tangential. His clichés and metaphoric phrases were difficult to translate and were often convoluted, deeply emotional, and sometimes even bordered on trite. Neither Dalven, Sheppard, and Keeley nor others could fully translate Cavafy's diasporic Greek means of expression, but they captured his grandeur and novelty. The *London Review of Books* critic Charles Simic noted that as great a poet as Cavafy was, his poetry, full of clichés, provided a hopeless challenge for translators.[25]

A scholar specializing in the translation of modern Greek poetry, Karen Van Dyck of Columbia University, wrote that "Like flags and *foustanellas*, and other more patriotic fetishes, Greek poetry inscribes notions of national, linguistic, and generic piety. It is the measure of what is most Greek."[26] She noted that Greek poetry haunted Greek Americans as well as Greek cultural production. This provided the drive for Dalven to propagate Greek culture and poetry as well as depict the experience of the Greek Jewish immigrant to the United States and the history and the culture of the Jews of Ioannina, back in their community of origin in the Ottoman Empire and in the modern Greek state. Dalven was proud of her Greek and Jewish heritages and blended both of them in her literary and scholarly activities. Van Dyck gave credit to Dalven for her translations of Cavafy's poetry, as well as her recognition of Greek female poets, and included her in modern Greek studies courses, bibliographies, scholarship, and public literary and poetry events. In 2008 in an edition by Van Dyck of the poems of Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, the translations of the poems of the latter by Dalven, Edmund Keeley, Jane Assimakopoulos, and Kimon Friar were included.[27] Dalven was lauded as one of the notable translators of this passionate poet.

[25] Charles Simic, "Some Sort of a Solution: *The Collected Poems* by C. P. Cavafy, translated by Evangelos Sachperoglou," *London Review of Books* 30 (2008), 6:32–34.

[26] Karen Van Dyck, "Greek Poetry Elsewhere," *Gramma* 8 (2000), 81–98.

[27] Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, *The Scattered Papers of Penelope*, ed. Karen Van Dyck (Manchester, 2008).

Rachel Dalven as a Playwright

Dalven wrote seven plays. The first, entitled *A Season in Hell*, was about the French poets Rimbaud and Verlaine and was produced at Off Broadway in 1950.[28] She wrote a radio drama, *Hercules*, aired in Nashville in 1952, and its script was published the following year.[29] The play *Judas* was an English version of the three-act play of Spyros Melas; the original was first shown in Athens in 1934 and Dalven had previously translated it.[30] Her one-act play *Toula* was produced at Fisk University in 1953 and later developed into a full-length play retitled *A Matter of Survival*, presented at the Twelfth Night Club, New York. In 1980 in New York, Dalven wrote the play *Above All, Greek*, and *Esther*, produced in New York in 1986. Her last play, finished in 1991, was entitled *Our Kind of People*; it was an autobiographical play about Greek Jewish immigrants in the United States. Before her death in 1992 it was performed at a synagogue in Manhattan, and shortly after, in the fall of 1992, it was staged at a Brooklyn theater, and at a Greek Orthodox cathedral in Manhattan.

Rachel Dalven as a Historian of the Romaniote Community of Ioannina

In 1992 Dalven wrote a biography of Anna Comnena, the noted female Byzantine historian and author.[31] The work stemmed from Dalven's passion for the literature and culture of Greek Byzantine society.

In *The Jews of Ioannina*,[32] Dalven presented a detailed history of the Jews of the town since the tenth century, showing their particular traditions, liturgy, culture, customs, folk beliefs, relations with the local Greek Orthodox community, their demise in the Holocaust, and the Judeo-Greek dialect (also known as Yevanic), which was more than phraseology but

[28] Bruce Lambert, "Rae Dalven, 87, Professor and a Historian of Jews in Greece," *The New York Times* (3 Aug. 1992), http://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/03/nyregion/rae-dalven-87-former-professor-and-a-historian-of-jews-in-greece.html [retrieved: 28 Sept. 2017].

[29] *Encore* (Spring 1953), 23–36.

[30] Israel J. Katz, "Rachel Dalven: A Bibliography," *Bulletin of Judeo-Greek Studies* 11 (1992), 35–38.

[31] Rae Dalven, *Anna Comnena* (New York, 1972). Anna Comnena (1083–1148) was a historian and a princess of the Byzantine Empire. She was also a writer and a physician—she ran the hospital her father built in Constantinople. Comnena wrote a fifteen-volume work on the reign of her father, the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I, entitled *Alexiad*.

[32] Dalven, *The Jews of Ioannina*.

had a religious literary and spoken tradition dating back to Byzantium.[33] The Romaniote Jews were named after Romania, the second Rome, or the eastern Mediterranean part of the Roman Empire, which became the Byzantine Empire. The Romaniotes were the original Jewish population of the territories of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, the Balkans, and Asia Minor, and they spoke Greek and Judeo-Greek. The Jews of Byzantium and afterward those of the Greek-speaking communities of the Ottoman Empire were coined Romaniotes. Dalven claimed that the term derived from the Venetian name for Greece, "Romania," which entered into Hebrew,[34] but its origins were older than the Venetians, dating back to the late classical period and Byzantium. According to Sharf, in the seventh century Byzantine Jewry, like the Byzantine Empire, marked a continuation of the Roman period and numbered about 100,000 people in the areas left to Byzantium after the Arab conquests.[35] The term was used by Rabbi Natan Ben Yehiel mi-Romi (from Romania) in the eleventh century in his work the *Aruch*, a Talmudic dictionary dedicated to understanding foreign words in the Talmud in Greek, Persian, Aramaic, Latin, and other languages.[36] Dalven noted how prayer was conducted in accordance to *Mahzor Romania* until the Spanish exiles arrived into the city area in the early sixteenth century and dominated the Romaniote communities of the Greek Peninsula, introducing Sephardic prayers and halakhic regulation.

[33] See Rachel Dalven, "Judeo-Greek," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 10 (1971), 426–427.

[34] Dalven, *The Jews of Ioannina*, XI.

[35] Andrew Sharf, *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium* (Ramat Gan, 1995), 54.

[36] Abraham Tal, "The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language: A Presentation," in Eberhard Bons et al. (eds.), *Biblical Lexicology: Hebrew and Greek. Semantics – Exegesis – Translation* (Berlin, 2015), 309–326. This predates Starr's premise that the term "Romaniote" was based on Romania, the reconstruction of the Byzantine Empire after the Fourth Crusade in 1203–1204. See Joshua Starr, *Romania: The Jewries of the Levant after the Fourth Crusade* (Paris, 1949), 9. "Rum" was the Turkish word for the Greek-speaking Greek-Orthodox persons of the Byzantine Empire. Cemal Kafadar points to a definition parallel to its rabbinic use in the eleventh century: "The word 'Rum' or *diyar- ı Rum* for defining a cultural as well as a physical space (the lands of Rome, limited over time to the eastern Roman lands, i.e. Byzantium) was adopted from earlier Arabo-Persian usage but now stretched by Turkish speakers to refer to the zone that they inhabited and in large part also governed. Turks and others who moved westward during and after the eleventh century adopted and reworked many geographical names in the eastern Roman lands on the basis of what had already been 'Islamized' and used by Arabs, Persians, or Kurds." See Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," in Sibel Bozdogan, Gulru Necipoglu (eds.), *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World. History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the "Lands of Rum"* (Leiden–Boston, 2007), 7–25.

At this point Ottoman Turkish influences infiltrated into the Judeo-Greek dialect of the Romaniote Jews of the Greek Peninsula.

In her seminal book on the Jews of Ioannina, Dalven published the musical scores of many Jewish hymns from Ioannina, such as songs for Purim, the Sacrifice of Isaac, or Yarabi.[37] Amongst the many diverse finds, community characteristics and achievements, and historical accounts, Dalven depicted the yearly cycle, burial customs, and unusual traditions like Purim Saragosa, the *alef* birth certificate/amulet placed over the bed until the circumcision, and the silver *shaddai*[38] ornaments hung over the ark in the synagogue.

Ioannina was the largest Romaniote community in the world at the turn of the twentieth century (1890–1910), numbering some 7,000 Jews before most of its community members migrated to New York at the beginning of the century. Later most of the 1,700 or more[39] Jews who remained were annihilated at Auschwitz-Birkenau at the hands of the Nazis.

Dalven revealed how most of the Jewish community were under the religious and communal authority of the elder Shabetai Cabilli, vice-president of the Jewish community, who parlayed with the Nazi occupation commanders and believed that as long as Jews met the German demands for money and supplies, they would not be touched. He influenced parents to demand that their sons return from the partisan groups in the mountains. Yet in the end, not only was Cabilli duped, but the Jews were deported and annihilated.[40] Dalven noted the resentment of the local Greek Orthodox nationalist revolutionaries in 1909 when six Jewish peddlers were murdered in the countryside and their ears were sent in an envelope to the Jewish community of Ioannina in response to the Jews not siding with the Greek national movement. However, in her analysis of the interwar period she did not analyze the continuing resentment toward Jews from the time of

[37] *Yarab*, “God,” was a hymn sung by the Romaniote Jews by the father in honor of the birth of his new born son, after the circumcision. Analyzed by Ióséph M. Matsas, *Gianniótika Evraïka tragoudia* (Ióannina, 1953), 45–47.

[38] Sadai or Shaddai was one of the ancient names for God. Dalven explained it was used in Ioannina “as a plea for God’s protection.” Dalven, *The Jews of Ioannina*, 109.

[39] See Aviva Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History* (New York–London, 2009), 105; and Judith Mizrahi, *703 Sephardim in America: Diversity within Cohesiveness* (New York, 1993), 7.

[40] Rachel Dalven, “Holocaust in Janina,” in Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon, Dr. M. Mitchell Serels (eds.), *Del Fuego, Sephardim and the Holocaust* (New York, 1995), 45–68. See also Yitzchak Kerem, “The Sephardim Resisted Too!” (Jerusalem, 2004), https://www.academia.edu/4595338/_The_Sephardim_Resisted_Too_Yad_Vashem_Jerusalem_2004 [retrieved: 28 Sept. 2017].

Greek sovereignty in 1912 until the deportation of the Jews to Auschwitz during the Holocaust.[41]

Leda Papastefanaki noted the stratification of the local Jewish community on the basis of economic class between the affluent, the merchant class, and the poorer peddlers, craftsmen, and unskilled laborers, and on the basis of gender, and the ensuing internal Jewish conflicts. In the 1920s, Jewish women began to take active roles in the work world, helping their husbands and relatives in their stores and workshops. She also noted the tensions between the newly educated and more secularized Alliance Israélite Universelle graduates in the free professions and the traditional religious community members and rabbis. She also noted the threats and violence in Ioannina against the Jews in 1934, incited by the local chapter of the ultra-nationalist Tria Epsilon youth movement, which had provoked the large-scale Campbell riots in Salonika that destroyed the eastern Campbell suburb of poor Jewish fisherman and port workers.[42]

Dalven, while secular and non-observant in her personal life, identified with the ethnicity and traditions of the Romaniote Jews. Her grandfather in Ioannina, though an affluent man, had many daughters to marry off and many dowries to finance, so he did not give the daughters gold chains, as he hoped that their husbands would eventually buy them for the wives. As a struggling immigrant, Dalven's mother could never boast or proudly wear such an expensive chain as a young single woman in Ioannina at the end of the nineteenth century (toward the end of the Ottoman period), and neither could she do this as an adult married woman living modestly in New York as an immigrant in the 1910s and 1920s, during the depression, or afterward. Dalven made research trips to Ioannina in the 1930s, but could never find such a chain to buy for her mother as a cherished gift. After the Holocaust, Ioannina jewelers had no such fancy and expensive chains. Only on a research trip to Istanbul in the early 1960s, undertaken as a part of Byzantine studies, could Rachel find and afford such a chain, which she purchased from a Jewish merchant at the Istanbul bazaar. Upon arriving home in New York, Rachel gave the chain to her aging widowed mother, who was hesitant to receive such an expensive gift, but wore it

[41] See Dalven, *The Jews of Ioannina*, 33; and Yitzchak Kerem, "The Jews of Ioanina Between Ottoman Loyalty and Greek Resurrection, 1900–1913," *Ha-mizraḥ he-ḥadash* 39 (1997–1998), 46–54.

[42] See Leda Papastefanaki, "'Ánthropoi tapeinoí, frónimoi, noikokyreménoi kai kaloí oikogeneiárches…': Pros mia koinonikḗ istoría tes Evraïkés Koinótetas ton Ioannínon ton 20ó aióna," in Mahera, Papastefanaki (eds.), *Evraïkés koinótetes*, 127–144.

gloomily since she had passed her prime and would have enthusiastically cherished it as a young married woman had she received it from her husband at the stage of life when she would have flaunted it socially in front of friends and relatives. The story was published under the title "The Golden Chain" as a memoir from the homeland in an anthology of Sephardic American literature by Diane Matza, which appeared in 1997, several years after Dalven's death.[43]

Dalven wrote numerous articles on Romaniote Jewry as a group and on individual personalities in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and *The Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture*. For example, in both publications she wrote about the author, artist, and film director Nestoras Matsas, and in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* about the well-known Jewish Greek authors Julius Caimi of Corfu and Athens, Joseph Matsas of Ioannina, Baruch Schiby of Athens, and Joseph Sciaki of Chalkis and later Athens.

Together with the noted musicologist Israel Katz, Dalven published three traditional Judeo-Greek hymns and their tunes.[44] In her *The Jews of Ioannina* she also published Romaniote liturgical poems as well as several pages on the Judeo-Greek language and its Epirus Ioanniote dialect.

Rachel Dalven as a Non-Ashkenazi Jew and the Identity of Romaniote-Sephardic Hybridity

Dalven was the president of the American Society of Sephardic Studies, and she edited *The Sephardic Scholar* under the auspices of the Sephardic Studies Program at Yeshiva University. As a Romaniote Jew she belonged to the New York City Jewish women's group The Daughters of Ioannina and served at one time as its president. She was also a board member of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens.

While Dalven was a part of the Greek-speaking Ioanniote Jewish enclave in New York, she was also Sephardic. By the early 1970s, "Sephardic0" became a generic term grouping all those not Ashkenazi: among them, Bukharans, Egyptians, Judeo-Spanish speaking Turks and Salonikans, Iraqis, Moroccans, early colonial Portuguese Jews and their descendants,

[43] Rae Dalven, "The Golden Chain," in Diane Matza (ed.), *Sephardic American Voices: Two Hundred Years of a Literary Legacy* (Hanover–London, 1997), 80–86.

[44] Rachel Dalven, Israel J. Katz, "Three Traditional Judeo-Greek Hymns and Their Tunes," *The Sephardic Scholar* 4 (1979–1982), 84–101.

Syrian Jews, and even Georgian Jews. They all included in the American Sephardic Federation.

Joseph Papo described the Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews in New York City as "the Greek Sephardim who maintained their individualism even within the framework of their own group."[45] On the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the Ioanniote Jews had three exclusive Ioanniote synagogues/prayer groups: *Ḥevrat ahavah ve-aḥvah* (Love and Brotherhood Society of Janina) on Allen Street was founded in 1907; Knesset Israel (The Israelite Community of Janina), which broke away in 1913; and finally in 1926,[46] the two merged into Agudath Ahim Janina (United Brotherhood of Janina) and acquired a building on 28 Broome Street, which exists today and houses a Romaniote Museum on its second floor. As Ioanniote Jews prospered economically, they moved to Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, where they founded the Kehillah Sepharadith, which in 1963 became the Sephardic Center of Mapleton. In Harlem, the Ioanniote Jews were dominant amongst the Sephardic minority in the neighborhood. In 1907 they founded the Tikvah Tovah (Good Hope Society). The Ioanniotes were a majority there with Sephardim from Smyrna, Salonika, the Dardanelles, and Castoria. Their synagogue, Shearith Israel Mitourkia (Remnants of Israel from Turkey), opened in 1911 and in 1958 it relocated to the Bronx and changed its name to Shearith Israel of Janina.[47]

Historically, in Ioannina, due to the major influx of Sephardim in the region after the 1492 Spanish expulsion, the *Mahzor Romania* prayer book fell by the wayside, and Romaniote Jews adopted Sephardic prayer and halakha religious law. The Ioanniote Romaniote Jews, however, preserved numerous Romaniote traditions, customs, religious poems, and ritual art.

Shmuel Refael depicted Dalven's contribution to onomastic research on Greek names, and her depictions of Greek Jewish as well as Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) nicknaming professions and characteristics:

> Dalven's research brings together a number of important topics in onomastic research on Greek Jews. She documents the continuing tendencies to nickname people after their physical characteristics, their personality traits, and their vocations. She also uses Ladino nicknaming as a gendered process, comparing names given to male and female children and examining attendant rationale or impulse. Dalven

[45] Joseph M. Papo, *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America: In Search of Unity* (San Jose–Berkeley, 1987), 26.

[46] Ibid., 311.

[47] Ibid., 312.

> notes the widespread use of nicknames in the Greek region of Epirus, and that the substitution of nicknames for officially given names varied.
>
> In her descriptions of nicknames derived from professions she explains how *Konduratzis*, "cobbler," went by this epithet because of his shoemaking. *Sakis* (Turkish for "one who limps") was conferred on a lame person. Some of the most amusing nicknames were those bestowed in recognition or blunt announcement of personal characteristics or legendary behavior. *Kaokas* was the baker who burned the fare he had prepared for a festival. The nickname has its origins in the word *Kaio*, which means burning or incineration in Greek. Even though Dalven's work is not accompanied by a range of etymological or linguistic data, its distinction lies in the multiplicity of stories about lifestyles and folkways which it brings to the fore. All of these have been, and continue to be, vital and indispensable in the creation of human nicknames overall, and Sephardic Ladino epithets in particular.[48]

In 1967 the American Society of Sephardic Studies (ASOSS) was founded with the support of Yeshiva University. Dalven edited its journal *The Sephardic Scholar*, funded by the University, which appeared only four times from 1979 to 1982. There has never been another English-language printed journal for Sephardic studies in North America. The ASOSS held meetings on campus and opened its membership to non-Jewish scholars in the United States and Canada. However, the arrangement of relying on others caused discontent, and became a significant issue which eventually led to the Sephardic, Romaniote, and Eastern Jewish communities mass assimilation, deterioration, and inability to train dynamic rabbis, educators, lay leaders, and scholars, along with their inability to stand on their own and thrive. Rachel Dalven's brother Joseph Dalven, director of the Sephardic Old Home in Brooklyn, explained this dilemma and the root of future tragedy:

> The more non-Sephardic (Yeshiva) aid, the more atrophy of the drive and incentive necessary for healthy organic development will be the consequence. A certain amount of infusion may be necessary at this juncture of our development but, in the final analysis, it must have the native relevant ingredients for normal organic growth . . . the more dependent you allow yourselves to become, because it is easier, the more you atrophy and the more dependent you become.[49]

After her death, Steven Bowman, a historian of Byzantine Jewry and Greek Jewry in the Holocaust, wrote the following about Dalven:

[48] Shmuel Refael, "Voices from the Past: Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) Nicknames among the Israeli-Sephardic Jews from Salonika," in Stacy N. Beckwith (ed.), *Charting Memory: Recalling Medieval Spain* (New York, 2000), 144–170.

[49] Papo, *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America*, 210.

> Rae was a tough independent lady who chose a life of intellectual stimulation rather than the traditional home life of her contemporaries. She dedicated her life to scholarship in general and to the fate of her people in particular. She was active in getting material published, in organizing cultural events, in her service to the Ioanniote, Greek, and Sephardi communities. She was a frequent participant in activities at the Onassis Centre and contributed many books to its collection.[50]

She married a Romaniote Ioanniote Jew Jack Negrin for a short time, but had no children. Her brother Joseph, quoted above, also was a researcher of sexuality and published numerous works on the subject. In 1973, Rachel Dalven received the Gold Key Award of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association of the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University.[51]

Conclusion

Rae (Rachel) Dalven was in the right place at the right time. In New York City, she had contact with prominent publishers, literary critics, authors, and affluent supporters of the arts. As an academic she received many grants that enabled her to travel numerous times to Greece, Turkey, and other European countries. Her royalties from poetry publications also assisted in her research and translations. Her exposure in the Greek American press helped her reach recognition and spread appreciation for modern Greek poetry in translation.

Dalven benefited from an early exposure to Greek poetry. This enabled her to become one of the first translators of Greek and propagators of leading modern Greek poets. She was a pioneer who brought to light female Greek poets under Greek democracy after the end of the Greek Junta (coup d'état) from 1974 onward. Likewise, she was the first researcher to take both a macro and a micro view of Ioanniote Romaniote Jewry in its entirety. She benefited from first-hand familiarity with Ioanniote Jewry during the 1930s, before the German occupation and their demise in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944.

Dalven was a very educated Romaniote Jewish woman, and she wrote about and included Romaniote Jewish women in her research and publications on social history. She noted their traditions, folk beliefs, cuisine,

[50] Steven Bowman, "Rachel Dalven: An Appreciation," *Bulletin of Judeo-Greek Studies* 11 (1992), 34.

[51] Yitzchak Kerem, "Dalven, Rachel," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 5 (2007), 184.

and life cycle, from birth to marriage to death. Her anecdotes and impressions were some of the last records of the community written before their annihilation in the Holocaust as well as depictions of the first generation of Ioanniote Jewish immigrants to the United States—a generation no longer to be found and heard.

Dalven was not a historian, linguist, or scholar of Jewish thought, but through her dedication to her Jewish Greek Romaniote heritage, identity, and religious group, she mastered facets of all these disciplines in her research and publications. In a similar fashion, she became a translator of modern Greek to spread awareness of Jewish and modern Greek poetry and its first-rate literary figures. Beyond a doubt, it was her efforts which brought Eliya, Cavafy, and Ritsos to a general audience in the original and in English translation.

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Tailoring Identities: Displacement in the Self-Portrayals of Jewish Women Escaping to Albania

Abstract: This article aims to analyze the works of Jewish women autobiographers who wrote about the Holocaust in the context of Albanian cultural tradition. My research appears in the framework of the wider Holocaust women's literature and its strong performance in collective memory studies. Another very important element of these narratives is the reflection on representations of war from a female perspective.

The article focuses on the notion of identity displacement of Jewish women escaping to Albania during World War II and acts of crypto-conversion into the Muslim or Catholic religions. Accordingly, I will concentrate on two autobiographies of Jewish women escaping to Albania: Jutta Neumann and Irene Grünbaum.

These autobiographies are introduced to the reader through an approach of self-portrayal, connecting the issues to the traumatic impact of war and its representations, which serve as a process to conceptualize memory and trauma. One aim here is to show how during World War II in Albania women writers explored the personal and historical impact of these events in autobiographical writings.

The two self-portrayals of Jewish women survivors escaping to Albania presented here emphasize a feminine aspect through proclamations of resistance. Despite the obstacles and difficulties caused by the traditional Albanian social structure and the (dis)placement of the Other, the analyzed narratives are infused with reflections of autobiographers concerning the world immersed in a crisis.

Keywords: Albania, Jewish women, identity, Holocaust autobiographies, resistance.

> I ruminated about how strange life was. As many reasons for escaping as there were, I smiled when I thought of the tragicomic situation. Essentially this was a religious struggle between Muslims and Catholics and Jews. Each felt hate and contempt for the other, and the results of these feelings were infamy, war, persecution, and death!
>
> Irene Grünbaum, 1949[1]

Introduction

Official discourses employ images as evidence but also for seduction, blurring fact and fiction to form a powerfully influential narrative and, in essence, to reconstruct reality. The history of the Balkans and more specifically the case of Albania challenge us to reconsider the meaning and importance of representations of war and important shifts in the visualized and semantic meanings of its image in contemporary culture.

In 1914, war still had a human face—the face of the generation of soldiers who fought and died on the battlefields. What can be observed with the development of twentieth-century art, or to put it in other words, what cultural patterns were able to be conveyed in that century, were central shifts in the targets of war, and hence in its killing power. The industrialization of violence—the bombing of civilian targets—became the centerpiece of armed conflict, and genocide became an integral part—a defining part of the war.

This article is dedicated to describing the autobiographical stories of Irene Grünbaum and Jutta Neumann, whose works contribute to the system of representing war and analyzing the mechanisms of their ideas in collective memory. Moreover, these personal stories are rare examples of Jewish women's self-portrayals within the Albanian discourse, transmitting to the reader very important issues connected with the displacement of national and religious identities at the time of the brink of World War II. In addition, this article aims to show the disparity between verified and reconstructed symbolic structures on the basis of personal stories and their functionalization in the collective memory.

The distinction between privileging the voice and privileging the face in representations of terror and its victims is a heuristic one, and as a matter

[1] Katherine Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans: The Autobiography of Irene Grünbaum* (Lincoln–London, 1999), 49.

of fact the history of terror needs to be traced not only through faces but also through the voices of those who knew it from within.

As noted by Victoria Stewart in her comprehensive study on women's autobiography during the war, "the debates about women's writing and the First World War have consisted of a process of retrieval which has not simply meant supplementing the existing 'male canon' but instead has led to a fuller understanding of what the war meant to particular individuals and social groups whose experiences had not previously been examined in detail."[2]

Frames: Jewish Existence in Albania in the Nazi Period

Jews in Albania fit into two categories, those who during World War II had been already living in Albania for numerous generations and those who had escaped to Albania because of discrimination and the antisemitic movements spreading throughout Europe. Due to the difficult situation of Jews in all the Balkan territories, a large number of Jews there escaped to Albania to wait through the toughest period, until the political situation allowed them to go further, in most cases to Israel.

According to Bernd Fischer, by the end of World War II approximately 1,800 Jews were living in Albania, numbering at least 1,000 more than in the 1930s.[3] However, this number is derived mostly from American and Jewish source-based data.[4] For a full overview on this issue, as suggested by Shaban Sinani, Albanian archive sources should be taken into consideration as well. The documents of the Albanian State Archives cite more than 2,200 Jewish names, mostly family names, proving that the Jewish population in Albania in 1944 must have been much higher than claimed by Fischer and other scholars, e.g. Harvey Sarner[5] or Michele Sarfatti.[6]

The years 1941–1942 experienced massive displacement and migration flows of Jews from south-eastern Europe, where discrimination was the

[2] Victoria Stewart, *Women's Autobiography: War and Trauma* (New York, 2003), 4.

[3] Bernd J. Fischer, "The Jews of Albania During the Zogist Period and the Second World War" in James Pettifer, Mentor Nazarko (eds.), *Strengthening Religious Tolerance for a Secure Civil Society in Albania and the Southern Balkans* (Amsterdam, 2007), 97–100.

[4] Shaban Sinani, *Hebrenjtë në Shqipëri: Prania dhe shpëtimi* (Tirana, 2009), 66.

[5] Harvey Sarner, *Rescue in Albania: One Hundred Percent of Jews in Albania Rescued from Holocaust* (Brunswick, 1997).

[6] Laura Brazzo, Michele Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei in Albania sotto il fascism: Una storia da ricostruire* (Florence, 2010).

main reason for escaping to Albania. According to Sinani,[7] one might distinguish three groups of Jewish arrivals to Albania (from Kotor, Dalmatia, and Kosovo) who were trying to avoid the consequences of the spreading Nazi ideology and the risk of the Shoah.

The first such group is referred to in the document collection and correspondence between *Luogotenenza* (Italian Lieutenancy) and the police departments of several Albanian cities, referring to receiving and the internment of 192 Jews who left Kotor (Yugoslavia) because of the war, and settled in Kavaja.

The second group were Jews who were accepted in Albania in 1941. The group consisted of 350 people staying temporarily in Dalmatia, who thereafter were resettled to Kavaja.

Holocaust studies refer to the massive disappearance of hundreds of Jews from Split who most probably migrated to Albania, according to correspondence between the Albanian government and a branch determining entrance permissions in Pristina for Jews possessing Serbian documents, accredited by Italian diplomatic institutions in Serbia.[8]

The third group mentioned by Sinani[9] were connected to the Jewish population that lived initially in Kosovo, where, as noted by Bernd Fischer,[10] about 60 per cent of the Jews were killed.

The high numbers of the Jewish population in Albania could be deduced as well—as stated in the testimony of Johanna (Jutta) Neumann, one of the survivors from Albania—from the fact that a large number of Jews passed through Albania during the war, in search of another place to live.[11] There were also many cases of Jews not having declared their religious or ethno-cultural status, but instead being registered/registering in official documents as "Aryans."

Albanian archive sources note that in 1943 a person named Proko Jorgo was of Turkish origin, while a certain Polikseni Zacharia was registered as an Aryan. As pointed out by Sinani,[12] all Jews entering Albania in the 1930s and later were baptized as Christians or were converted formally

[7] Sinani, *Hebrenjtë në Shqipëri*.

[8] Correspondence between Albanian Council of Ministers and Italian Lieutenancy, 1942, in Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit të Republikës së Shqipërisë [henceforth: AQSH] in Tirana, collection 161, call no. 430, pp. 1–2.

[9] Sinani, *Hebrenjtë në Shqipëri*, 70.

[10] Fischer, "The Jews of Albania."

[11] Sinani, *Hebrenjtë në Shqipëri*, 69.

[12] Ibid.

into Islam while taking on Albanian citizenship. This was also the case with one of the women survivors who escaped to Albania—Irene Grünbaum, who took on a Muslim identity as Fatima Nova: "I was happy to be Fatima Nova, born in Tetovo, the daughter of Sulejman Fekri and the wife of Ali Nova. I went by the name of Fatima Nova until 1945."[13]

Archival sources also noted some other examples of crypto-conversions into another religion in war-time Albania. In 1929, Albanian nationality was conferred on the family of Moshe Kohen and in 1934 on a Jew of German origin, Frantz Gunjuger, while in 1938 some conversions into the Orthodox Christian religion were registered as well. Concealing members of the Jewish population under another national and/or religious identity in Albania was as a matter of fact a very important part of their displacement—not only in a material (geographical) sense but also through the process of tailoring their identity construction to the new circumstances. The personal story of Jutta Neumann provides an interesting example of the notion of displacement and the clash of identity practices in the private and public spheres—between Judaism and Catholicism:

> Indeed the following school year I was one of the pupils of the Convent School, which was being run and taught by Catholic nuns. I had to wear the customary black frock, white collar and a big royal blue bow. We were also expected to salute our teachers whenever we would meet them in the street. During Morning Prayer I, along with all the Muslim children, was permitted to remain seated, but nevertheless I memorized all the prayers. I simply loved the school and felt so good that finally I was like other children, a pupil at school. I remember every day that passed, and felt sad that it would be one less day of school before summer vacation. I learned quickly and soon became the favorite pupil of the nuns. It was considered a big privilege to walk the nuns back to the hospital where they lived. I was asked many times to be my teacher's escort. On several occasions we would stop in church and she would go in and pray. Several times she had asked me to kneel down with her and I consistently refused. I remember her telling me that by just kneeling down nothing would happen . . . One time as we were walking together, my teacher said to me that it was very sad that Jews had to suffer so much. It would be much wiser if we all became Catholics and then suffering would stop for us.[14]

The new identity of Jews living in Albania was established not only through religious adherence, but was also reinforced through their official registration as Albanian citizens. A number of archival sources confirm

[13] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 47.

[14] Johanna J. Neumann, *Escape to Albania: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl from Hamburg* (London, 2015), 70–71.

the issuing of false documents to Jewish families in Kavaja, where in 1944 Salomon Saltiel received a document with the name of Sali Isa, or similar incidents which took place in Tirana and other Albanian cities. The new identity of Jews living in Albania existed on many levels and even influenced some every-day practices and included a new biography that served to authenticate their new self-definition patterns:

> Hungry for a scandal, the friends and acquaintances started to interrogate me. "What is your name?" asked a woman, and before I could answer, Hussein Effendi's wife interrupted. "Her name is Fatima, Fatima Nova. Her husband works in the ministry in Tirana. She doesn't speak a word of Albanian, but she is a good Muslim and comes from the Serbian-speaking region. My cousin, Ali Nova, fell in love with her when she was a teacher in the girls' school. He is a modern man. He wanted to see his fiancée even though his parents were against this modern custom. But as you can see, she even travels alone. Oh well, that's modern youth for you." She chatted and lied many times, and the neighbors delighted in hearing this scandal that had taken place in the very respectable Nova family.[15]

At the end of April 1940 an official order was announced for the territory of Albania, demanding that all Jews who had come for a temporary stay leave Albania by 15 May 1940[16] to return to their places of origin or official residence. A significant example of this political turnover is shown in a letter from a German Jewish couple, Leo and Elsa Thur, sent to Pope Pius XII to prevent their deportation to Germany.[17] As Edmond Malaj[18] observes, in the early 1940s as a consequence of the change of Albanian policy toward Jews and possible repressions, some Jews in Albania converted either to Catholicism or to Islam. As a result, this formal identity displacement covering the real national and religious self-identification was connected to the changing of names (into Catholic or Muslim names) and the concealing of Jewish identity through the adoption of a crypto-Muslim or crypto-Catholic one.

[15] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 45.

[16] *Luogotenza Generale di S. M. Il ReImperatore*, 1940, in AQSH in Tirana, collection 153, call no. 79.

[17] *Luogotenza Generale di S. M. Il ReImperatore*, 1940, in AQSH in Tirana, collection 253, call no. 79.

[18] Edmond Malaj, *Hebrenjtë në trojet shqiptare: Me njëpërqendrim në historinë dhe kulturën hebraike* (Shkodër, 2016), 209.

The Holocaust Autobiographical Tradition

When one refers to the traumatic impact of war and its representations, there are two important aspects to this kind of process—conceptualization of memory and conceptualization of trauma, which are present not only in all autobiographical portraits, but also in other war representations. In this article, we consider only female autobiographical portrayals as a part of the wider tradition of Holocaust literature. The image of memory will be treated as an artefact to be uncovered in a process of communication between the survivor and the reader/spectator, creating an overall structure that cannot exist beyond this relation. Memories are being recovered in the process of transmission and the presence of self-portraits of Jewish women during the war. As Janice Haaken claims, the storyteller approach situates memory "in the context of narratives and social relationships" and "tends to focus on constellations of preserved knowledge."[19]

With the personal stories of Grünbaum and Neumann I aim to show how during the war in Albania women writers explored the personal and historical impact of these events in their autobiographical writing. I analyze how the authors negotiated their positions in light of circumstances which were often either psychologically or physically threatening. The process of falsifying documents and taking crypto-Muslim identities by some Jews living in Albania resulted in an existence based on the permanent fear of being denounced:

> I'll send the police to this house so they can get a good look at this guest of the ladies, this teacher from Skopje, the wife of Ali Nova. And she screamed mockingly, "No, you can't fool me! This woman is no teacher and is not Frau Nova. She's one of these damn Jews who suck our blood! She's one of the beasts who has to be exterminated! The Germans will finish you off, finish off the subhumans who nailed our savior to the cross!" . . . I wasn't one of those damn Jews. The fact was that I was Fatima Nova. My husband, a high government official in Tirana, would sue her for slander. I advised her to choose her words and actions more prudently. Finally she left.[20]

The notion of reinterpreting or revisiting past events in the continually changing contexts of the present, re-evaluating and reassessing present subjectivity in light of what went before, will be shown as the notion of testimony and an essentially performative process.

[19] Janice Haaken, *Pillar of Salt: Gender, Memory, and the Perils of Looking Back* (New Brunswick–London, 1998), 47.

[20] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 48.

> Again I had shown little heroic bravery. Why did people have to scare other people? Hadn't this occurred since the dawn of time, and would it never end? The fact that I wasn't the only one who was afraid was not much consolation to me. Fear was everywhere in this country: in the cities and villages, in the mansions and huts. Fear had crept into farthest corners of the world. Fear was in every heart! And also in every heart was the victor, the oppressor, who today still held the power in his hands but tomorrow or the next hour would be nothing more than a creature who feared death.[21]

The texts I examine are autobiographical portrayals. I explore the elements that make their use of figurative or "literary" language, and their relationship to the "official" discourses of history not straightforward. The relation between the autobiographical portrait and professional history could be considered as a part of collective memory (remembrance)—a cultural act of remembering that not necessarily has to relay or depend on historical events. In analyzing biographies, which can serve also in history studies, the most important aspect is based in fact on the dissonance between history and memory:

> A horrible period of tension began after the registration, of course. The Germans had written "*Jude*" next to everyone's name. So, we all knew what would be awaiting us; we just did not know when. We still did not know at that time that there were death camps. All we knew was that there were forced labor camps.[22]

Thus the storytellers are actors existing in social frameworks of collective actions, which avoids them setting up history and memory in opposition to each other, but also distinguishes between such personally motivated acts of remembrance and those which may have ideological or political overtones: "Cities were bombed and railroads mined, munition depots exploded into the air, people were killed, and no one knew whether he would live through the next day."[23]

My focus is thus based on two examples of autobiographical writing which narrate the author's own sense of how her life has been changed by the traumatic events of war:

> Would there be no end to this madness? When would people live peacefully again? When would they go to work and spend the evenings with their loved ones? When would one person stop hunting down another? When would this game of hide-and-seek with death come to an end?[24]

[21] Ibid., 100–101.
[22] Neumann, *Escape to Albania*, 99.
[23] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 53.
[24] Ibid., 51.

I aim to place my discussion in the context of some recent debates about—and definitions of—autobiography, and specifically women's autobiography, by approaching a case study of displacement in the self-portrayals of Jewish women escaping to Albania.

Autobiography as a Self-Portrayal Representation of War

When examining autobiographical narratives in a particular context of representations of war, one must realize that the narrator and principal character of the story are identical in terms of retrospective. Autobiographical representations of traumatic events expose and present a portrayal of the autobiographer's life and the ways it had evolved before the act of narrating took place. With the act of exposure of a self-portrayal representation of war, both the author and the reader become part of the process. The autobiographer attempts to enter or re-enter the social, political, and cultural sphere of intersubjectivity, which aims at sharing her life story with the world. Rachel Feldhay Brenner in her study on Holocaust women writers[25] confirms that by referring to the autobiographer's mental space, the author's consciousness as the narrator of her story redirects attention from her reality to the reality of shaping her emerging story. In the presence of the double role of the autobiographer standing as victim and as writer, we have to refer to her on two levels of acting—communicating and following the creative process of re-entering narratives of remembrance and social bonding.

When analyzing autobiographies, one should first pose a question: what are or were the specific messages that these self-portrayals tried to communicate in a particular and general context? Another important issue connected with analyzing Holocaust autobiographies in their specific cultural and political context (here: the Albanian cultural landscape) is the approach of the storyteller and her means of communication for breaking up the silencing oppression between external violence and internal fear: "Life never returned to normal again! The fear, the terrible fear, which affected my childhood, probably never left me. If anything, it was steadily reinforced by events throughout the war years."[26]

[25] Rachel F. Brenner, *Writing as Resistance. Four Women Confronting the Holocaust: Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Anne Frank, Etty Hillesum* (Pennsylvania, 1997).

[26] Neumann, *Escape to Albania*, 41.

Distance from the atrocity determined by the form of autobiography (which is not the same in the case of a diary, as a diary is written in the real time of actions and life events) allows the authors to construct self-portraits as completed narratives. This kind of retrospect gives the writer a chance to select the most important circumstances and elements of autobiography and to build up the structure of the text, aiming to transfer specific messages to the reader, as in the final part of Irene Grünbaum's self-portrayal:

> Farewell, Albania. One day I will tell the world how brave, fearless, strong and faithful your sons are; how death and the devil can't frighten them. If necessary, I'll tell you how they protected a refugee and wouldn't allow her to be harmed even if it meant losing their lives. The gates of your small country remained open, Albania. Your authorities closed both eyes, when necessary, to give poor, persecuted people another chance to survive the most horrible of all wars. Albania, we survived the siege because of your humanity. We thank you.[27]

Displaced Identities – Two Case Studies

> Was I not happier than the many nameless ones who were rotting somewhere? Was it not my duty to live, to fight, to tell about what happened?[28]

Grünbaum's point of view—quite different from that of men—indicates the way she dealt with the problems a woman faces when traveling alone. Apart from its representations of war, the narrative also shows her courage and the colorful characters she encountered in the Balkans.[29] Grünbaum's and Neumann's Balkan chronicles are unique contributions to the field of Holocaust history. *Escape through the Balkans* and *Escape to Albania* are stories of how Jewish women escaped the Nazis. Survivors of terrible tragedies share certain characteristics, the most notable of which is the desire to bear witness to the ordeal, which arises, as shown in Holocaust studies, from the need to keep the memory of the victims alive. Here, silence is perceived mostly as surrender. What is important in Grünbaum's and Neumann's self-portrayals is the fact that they describe their own situation and view their experience as a part of the experience of all Jews.

Both of the autobiographies contain introductory remarks that proclaim objectives of each autobiographical portrait, explaining both the reason

[27] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 139.
[28] Ibid., XXI.
[29] Ibid., VI–VII.

for and the context of messaging the history of resistance and survival of the Holocaust. But is it possible to create at the same time within the framework of literature, as stated by Susan Sontag,[30] an objective record or personal testimony—a precise copy of the fragmented reality or its interpretation? Can we perceive the self-portrayals of Jewish women escaping to Albania as windows into the war? Or is it the other way round—through the fragmented images of war and factual narrative can one see the displacement of their identities and the struggle of resistance?

In the personal histories of two Jewish women escaping to Albania there appears a very important occurrence, which is the impossibility of the autobiographers' place, or to put it differently, their religious and national displacement. For most of the Jewish population the political situation induced by World War II meant living in danger because of their cultural and ethnic origins, which in turn forced them to exist as outcasts of their native states:

> Where shall I begin? Shall I describe how serenely and happily I lived in Belgrade with my husband Bobby? How nice my small home was, how good marriage was, how I believed that life would continue so forever? No it didn't continue forever, it couldn't go forever, because Hitler had decided the fate of millions of people, including mine, because I'm a Jew, a child of Jewish parents and married to a Jew. How well I remember 23 March 1941. Revolution in Yugoslavia! The people are beside themselves. They are screaming in the streets: *Bolje rat nego pakt*. They would have it soon. By the morning of 6 April the war had already begun. I couldn't sleep Saturday night. Fear and panic seized all of us. The brutal surprise attack that followed was worse than we had imagined, and its aftermath was more horrifying than we had imagined, and its aftermath was more horrifying than we had dreamed in our most hideous nightmares.[31]

The process of displacement in the analyzed case might be referred to on two levels. The first level is national placement/displacement and the adherence to a certain cultural tradition which the authors were forced to abandon: "Both my father and mother made tremendous efforts to observe tradition as much as possible and run a religious home. We never missed keeping Shabbat and I don't remember my mother ever failing to light Shabbat candles, even if by doing so she would expose our identity."[32]

[30] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, 2003), 35.
[31] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 3.
[32] Neumann, *Escape to Albania*, 82.

The second one was religious displacement, which by contrast was a simulation of displacement, existing only in the public sphere; nevertheless, it had had a very important impact on the process of tailoring identities of the Jewish women living in Albania. The new situation of living in Albania, in a Muslim environment, made Grünbaum confront her Jewish origins, which she had deliberately detached herself from, motivated by the predicament of religious identity displacement: "'Now put on your *feredža*! You'll have to walk a short way with me, and you'll be back here in half an hour,' he said politely. I forgot my aches and pains and went out with the young man, while the others waited, full of hope and curiosity."[33]

In the portrayals of Grünbaum and Neumann, as well as in many other autobiographical narratives, apart from direct messages there also appear unstated assumptions which create a horizon of the fragmented histories and are uncovered only in the process of interaction created in the borderland between the autobiographer, the object (in this particular case the written story), and the receiver of the message—the reader. However, the portrait needs to be discovered through an alternative reading of the text.

By establishing their intentions in the introductory note, the autobiographers transmit the explicit message to the receiver (reader), while leaving some traces unstated, which in the analyzed cases constitute the issues of religious displacement.

The question to pose here is connected to the uncommonness of self-portrayals analyzed first in the context of Albanian cultural tradition and second by grounding these stories inside the tradition of Jewish female autobiographers. Considering the Albanian tradition of autobiography, it would be difficult to find any kind of presence of Jewish literature in the overall literary tradition of Albanians.

The two works are structurally and semantically grounded in the tradition of Jewish female autobiographers. Structured in the chronological, factual rendition of a life story, both begin with the generation of parents/grandparents and the story of a youngster who is a member of a closely related family, which gives to the personal story an important element of the contextualization of shared experiences in a wider cultural context: "I, the Jew, knew how to save my skin and had it in my blood from many generations back: shrewdness, diplomacy, quick thinking and decision making were the weapons my ancestors had handed down to me."[34]

[33] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 47.
[34] Ibid., 48.

Characteristic not only of those two self-portrayals but also of the entire tradition of Jewish women autobiographers[35] is that their informative testimony is an important source to be further used in studies on oral history and biographical writing in general, and in the Albanian cultural context, the social relations and presence of the Other and functionalization in the Albanian discourse.

The most important parts of the two autobiographies cover the personal experiences of young Jewish women forced to live in a completely unfamiliar and uncanny reality marked by significant differences in relation to the homeland of the two refugees, most of all in terms of the religious and socio-political displacement which Grünbaum and Neumann experienced in their host country: "It was in these moments that I first fully realized how totally alone I was—alone with my thoughts, my decisions, and actions. I was all alone, without Bobby."[36]

Several themes might be referred to as constituting a new self-definition characterized in this paper as tailored identity, namely the identity components gathered around the main theme of these personal stories—the notion of displacement. In the process of spatial translocation, or the requisite journey to Albania, the authors reach across to the others—other survivors escaping from different parts of Europe, which is the first important part of the new identity construction of the displacement.

They face the very important question of re-entering subjectivity of social bounds—what are the new social structures that impact self-defining processes in the extraneous circumstances of wartime in Albania?

Another element of the tailored identity which is apparent mostly in the self-portrayal of Grünbaum are the issues of God, fear, and the anxiety of the awaiting exile, influencing the author's further steps and social relations created during the displacement:

> I was so tired. I was profoundly tired of everything. But it wasn't sleep that I needed. I needed peace, security, no more fleeing from enemies, I needed to be able to live with nice people near me, I needed a corner for myself alone. But was there still such a place in the world for a Jewish woman? I lay on the strange bed and tried to focus my attention on my situation and to think about it. But my thoughts always wandered. Why did people hunt each other down? Hadn't God created the

[35] See Brenner, *Writing as Resistance*; and Stewart, *Women's Autobiography.*

[36] Morris (ed.), *Escape through the Balkans*, 50.

> world for all creatures? Had he forgotten something? Why were there prosecutors and prosecuted? Where was God's justice, his love, his omnipotence? Where were miracles that we had learned about in school?[37]

The most important aspect of both autobiographies is perhaps the impossibility of the autobiographer's place as a Muslim or Christian and the reflection on to what extent she sought to reduce her fear of loneliness and degradation as an outcast. In this context the isolation (displacement) serves as a special means for reconnecting to the world while emphasizing a politically discredited identity of a Jew during the war, through which the authors convey their socio-religious message to the world of resistance practices.

Conclusions

Susan Sontag[38] when writing about retrospections of war poses several questions about the differences of perception of war and its affective power in male and female narratives. Is it possible, asks Sontag, to stimulate anyone to actively condemn and oppose the war through the power of image or a collection of images?[39]

Probably war narratives and storytelling in contrast to images will have a stronger impact on the perception of trauma, mostly due to the time one has to devote to reflect and sense all its components.

What is then the role of the spectator/receiver of such images and semantic codes which are disseminated by portrayals and self-portrayals influenced by the experience of war? In answering this question, Sontag affirms that every one of "us" who has not gone through this kind of situation that "they" experienced is not able to understand it.

Subjective images recognized by most people according to the memory of war are, with reference to Sontag,[40] a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about or declares that it has chosen to think about. As a result, ideologies and political discourses create sustaining archives of images, representative images, and narratives, which encapsulate common ideas of significance.[41]

[37] Ibid., 68–69.
[38] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others.*
[39] Ibid., 144.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 85–86.

The two self-portrayals of Jewish women survivors escaping to Albania presented and discussed here emphasize the feminine aspect by a proclamation of resistance. Despite the obstacles and difficulties caused by the traditional Albanian social structure and the (dis)placement of the Other, the narratives are infused with the reflections of autobiographers concerning the world immersed in a crisis.

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The Column *Para noče de šabat* as a Local Strategy of Memory of the Judeo-Spanish Tradition

Abstract: The article elaborates on the attempts of the editors of the Jewish weekly *Jevrejski glas* (published in Sarajevo in 1928–1941) to support fostering of the Sephardi tradition and Judeo-Spanish language during the period in which an inevitable process of language shift took place among the Sephardi citizens of Bosnia. The column *Para noče de šabat*, created with the help of the weekly's readers, was one of the means serving that purpose. In the majority of the texts the main characters were Sephardi women, especially of the older generation, the women called *tijas* (aunts). For that reason, the paper presents how the authors showed female characters in the context of memory of "the true Sephardi spirit and tradition." Additionally, we provide basic information on the gathered texts: linguistics and sociolinguistics of the language of the prose (its condition, lexis and local features), as well as the characteristics of narration.

Keywords: Sarajevo, the Jewish press, Judeo-Spanish, Ladino, short stories, sketches, amateurish prose, memory.

Jevrejski glas and the Jewish Press in Bosnia

Since the second half of the nineteenth century the modern Sephardic press printed in Judeo-Spanish in the Ottoman Empire had several crucial functions: apart from its informative role, its goal was to create a new kind of Jewish readers, of all ages and social status, and to offer them educational content promoting progress within Jewish communities as well as to integrate them. The press also aroused the interest of Sephardic

readership in new literary genres such as novels and short stories.[1] In the Sephardic centers, for instance Istanbul and Salonica, it was the long-lived periodicals *El Tyempo* and *La Epoka* that had led the field since the 1870s. They were also read in great many Sephardic communities in the Balkans. In the territory of later Yugoslavia first attempts to publish the modern local Sephardic press were made in Serbia at the end of the nineteenth century. This signalled the beginning of *El amigo del puevlo* (Belgrade) and *El luzero* (Zemun) which, however, did not last as long as their equivalents in Istanbul and Salonica. The Bosnian Sephardi community gained its first and only Judeo-Spanish periodical on the cusp of 1900 and 1901 when Abraham Cappon self-published *La Alborada*, which introduced the Bosnian Sephardi readers to their first samples of Judeo-Spanish prose, drama, and poetry. After some time, however, Cappon failed in his efforts for lack of funds. In Bosnia successful Jewish periodicals were printed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after World War I. They were run in a professional way, supported financially and published in different political, social, and cultural conditions of westernization and acculturation of the Bosnian Jews.

When the first issue of one of these periodicals, *Jevrejski glas* [The Jewish Voice], was published in 1928, it meant a symbolic end to a so-called "Sarajevian conflict (or dispute)."[2] A collision of Zionism and the Sephardic Movement is one of the most interesting phases of the pre-war Jewish history of Bosnia. We can observe the beginnings of the Sephardic Movement at the end of the nineteenth century, when this national ideology appeared together with the start of westernization of Sephardim. It assumed special significance in the 1920s under the influence of the Vienna and Zagreb association Esperansa. The Bosnian propagators of the movement were not against Zionism, but above all put effort into the emancipation of the Sephardim, to go along with the preservation of the Sephardic identity and tradition.

Jevrejski glas was supposed to be a tribune which would combine the profiles of both fractions—Zionist and pro-Sephardic. The role of the new magazine was strongly underlined in the first issue, in the manifest on the first page:

[1] Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington, 2004); Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture: Press, Belles Lettres, and Theatre in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Bloomington, 2012), 23–74.

[2] Cvi Loker, "Sarajevski spor i sefardski pokret u Jugoslaviji," *Zbornik Jevrejskog istorijskog muzeja* 7 (1997), 72–78.

"Jevrejski glas" nastojaće da svakom pravcu i svakoj struji u Jevrejstvu, koji idu za unapređivanjem **naše jevrejske zajednice**, iziđe u susret iskrenim shvatanjem za njihove težnje i najvećim gostoprimstvom primi u svoje stupe njihova izlaganja. Vodeći računa o tome, da je, uslovljeno stoljetnom istorijom i neizbrisivim tradicijama, **naša zajednica po svome sastavu prilično složena**, ići će novo glasilo za time da sve te raznolike elemente stavi u jedan aktivan odnos prema zajednici kao takvoj i da njihova nastojanja podredi jednom višem principu, a to je **jedinstvo jevrejskoga naroda** i zajednička sudbina sviju Jevreja.[3]
[*Jevrejski glas* will continue to meet any direction and movement in Jewry that keeps **our Jewish community** abreast of time with sincere appreciation of its pursuits and welcome them on our pages with the greatest hospitality. Bearing in mind that **our community** conditioned by centuries-old history and living traditions **has a very complex constitution**, the new body will advocate to combine all those different elements into a united active attitude toward community as it is, and to submit all its pursuits to a single, **paramount rule which is the unity of Jewish nation** and common fate of all Jews].[4]

Jevrejski glas presented the situation of the Jewish world on the local, Balkan, and international level. The magazine was mostly printed in Serbo-Croatian[5] and the linguistic policy of the magazine shows the sociolinguistic situation in the Bosnian Sephardic community: the years 1918–1941 are the period during which Bosnia was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and all Jews were its rightful citizens. It was a period of acculturation for most Sephardic Jews, opening up their participation in public life and, in linguistic terms, a period of bilingualism during which the Serbo-Croatian language was being acquired and an inevitable process of language shift took place among the Sephardi citizens of Bosnia.

The Column *Para noče de šabat* as a Strategy of Memory

Nevertheless, despite being a press institution of the united local Sephardi–Ashkenazi community, the magazine, according to the guidelines of its editorial board, did not neglect efforts to foster the Sephardi tradition and the Judeo-Spanish language. For that reason, in 1931 the editors of the weekly (printed mostly in Serbo-Croatian) started the column titled

[3] *Jevrejski glas* (1928), 1:1.
[4] All texts are translated by the authors of the paper. In the case of Judeo-Spanish fragments of the short stories quoted in the paper, philological translation is used.
[5] We use the term "Serbo-Croatian" as we mention the Slavic language in Bosnia between two world wars, long before the official recognition of the Bosnian language in 1995.

Para noče de šabat [For the Shabbat Night] and called on the readers to create its content:

> De oj adelantre, en kada numero de nuestra gazeta vamos trajer akontesimientos, anekdotas, dialogos, proverbios etc. de nuestra vida. Kon esto no keremos azer solo pasatiempo a muestros lektores i daldes okazion para reir, sino konservar en eskrita el esperitu de muestras maales, muestra lingua, muestros ekspresiones i modo de pensar, en kurto dičo muestro folklor. En esteso tiempo jamamos a todos muestros lektores de ajudarmos en esto ečo. I akel ke no save eskrivir nos puede ajudar dandomos en 2–3 palavras material para esta rubrika; solo la fabula, la konseža sin estilizarla i komponarla nos puede servir para esta rubrika porke la redaksion sola la va, antes de estamparla, korižir i redigar.[6]
> [Starting from today, in every issue of our weekly we will present events, anecdotes, dialogues, proverbs, etc., from our life. In this way we want to bring not only entertainment for our readers and make them laugh, but we also want to preserve in script the spirit of our *maales* (neighborhoods), our language, our expressions and way of thinking, in brief—our folklore. At the same time, we call upon our readers to help us out with this goal. Those who can't write can help us by providing content in 2 or 3 words; even a story, *la konseža*,[7] without stylizing or arranging can serve a purpose in this column, since the editorial team is going to correct and redact it before printing].

As a result of the call, until 1937 many pieces of Judeo-Spanish prose, mostly amateurish in character, appeared in the column together with proverbs and *kantikas.*[8] As Muhamed Nezirović wrote,[9] the cooperation of the magazine with local authors and readers willing to create the content of the column *Para noče de šabat* was a huge success—the texts were indeed widely read. Our collection of prose texts from the column includes 47 samples of longer stories, short anecdotes, and sketches.[10] Some of them were signed with their authors' names and surnames (Miko Altarac, Moni Finci), but most used pseudonyms, nicknames, or initials (M.M.P., p., Jakoviku, Josefiko, Uno di la Bilava, Cadik, Lević, Jehi, Jafi, Mi and, in one case, Bohoreta – Laura Papo). All the texts of the section which we used for this research are listed below[11]:

[6] *Jevrejski glas* (1931), 5:7. Let us observe that in this text, despite its brevity and importance (it was an opening text of the column), there appear different spelling variants of the same word (*nuestra/muestra*).

[7] (Jud.-Sp.) 'a short story,' genre of the Judeo-Spanish oral tradition.

[8] (Jud.-Sp.) 'a song,' the Judeo-Spanish oral tradition's genre of lyrical character.

[9] Muhamed Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost u Bosni* (Sarajevo, 1995), 566.

[10] Out of them three brief anecdotes were published in the same issue of the newspaper: *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 3:5.

[11] We mainly had access to the issues of *Jevrejski glas* (JG) archived in the Jewish community of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. Several issues are probably missing.

1. Anonymous texts: "Las katorze. Istoria verdadera" [Fourteen O'clock. A True Story] (JG 1928, 4), "No ti ulvidis, doktor…" [Don't Forget, a Doctor…] (JG 1932, 1), "Para ti komo amigo" [For You As a Friend] (JG 1932, 3), "Na i Mirjam" [And Mirjam] (JG 1932, 3), "Si, si…" [Yes, Yes…] (JG 1932, 3), "Tija Bijara no komi paža" [*Tija* Bijara Is Not Easy to Bribe] (JG 1932, 22), "Shakitu ainda no si sano" [Shakitu Still Is Not Recovering] (JG 1934, 5);

2. Bohoreta (Laura Papo): "Ajde a mirar peši!..." [Let's Go to Look at Fish!] (JG 1936, 18);

3. Cadik (an unknown author): "Tija Lunača" [*Tija* Lunača] (JG 1931, 50);

4. Jehi (an unknown author): "Kun il amargu" [Over a Cup of Coffee] (JG 1934, 7);

5. Jafi (an unknown author): "La oja di tija Strulača" [*Tija* Strulača's Pot] (JG 1936, 3), "Il pustu 'Jezero'" [The Damn "Lake"] (JG 1936, 4);

6. Jakoviku (an unknown author): "Tija Oru i la amiga al gjardin" [*Tija* Oru and Her Friend in the Garden] (JG 1936, 9), "Tiju Mušon onde el ižo" [*Tiju* Mušon Visiting His Son] (JG 1936, 20);

7. Josefiko/Josefikos (an unknown author): "Tardi di vjarnis" [Friday Afternoon] (JG 1931, 45), "Ni li ičo lebaio" [He Didn't Greet Him] (JG 1931, 52), "No li tukava ičar talet" [It Was Not Her Turn to Cover with Tallit] (JG 1932, 4), "Fazjendu il anjo di Liđa" [Taking a Bath in Ilidža] (JG 1932, 10), "Tiju Mušon i las hadras di Pesah" [*Tiju* Mušon and Arrangements for Pesach] (JG 1932, 17–18), "Turnandu di la Kisela…" [Returning from Kiseljak] (JG 1932, 42), "Tija Strulača jeva mal kun il jarnu" [*Tija* Strulača Doesn't Get along with Her Son-in-Law] (JG 1932, 52), "Tija Bulka no si hue esti anju a la Kisela!" [*Tija* Bulka Didn't Go to Kiseljak This Year!] (JG 1933, 40);

8. Lević (an unknown author): "Lu di Saraj non aj in sieti partis de el mundo" [There Is No One Like People from Sarajevo in Seven Parts of the World] (JG 1931, 51);

9. MI/Mi (an unknown author): "Tres čupadas de mjel en el skuro" [Three Sips of Honey in the Dark] (JG 1932, 9), "Tija Simhula" [*Tija* Simhula] (JG 1932, 12);

10. Miko Altarac: "Las enbonoras de tija Bonača" [Good-byes of *tija* Bonača] (JG 1931, 46), "Loke loz vježos kerijan intri shvenjo liz vinija" [What Old People Wanted in Their Dreams Came True] (JG 1931, 48), "Loke todo es oj odern" [Why Is Everything Modern Nowadays] (JG

1932, 2), "Loke es el, dr. o ez pr." [Who Is He, Dr. or Prof.?] (JG 1932, 6), "'En tu kaza santa iremos, in en luvia, i en njevi, i en todo tjempo'" ["To Your Holy Home We Will Go, in the Rain, in the Snow, in any Weather"] (JG 1932, 20);

11. M.M.P. (an unknown author): "Pur no ir tonta al otru mundu" [Not to Leave for the Otherworld Being Stupid] (JG 1932, 7), "Las di agora" [These (People) of Today] (JG 1932, 8), "Lu kerin atučar" [They Want to Marry Him to Someone] (JG 1932, 11), "Ki bjen ki mi lavi" [Let Him Wash Me Well] (JG 1932, 13), *Para noće de šabat* [For the Shabbat Night] (JG 1932, 19), "Ken es ombri, ken mužer?" [Who Is a Man, Who Is a Woman?] (JG 1937, 6), "Tija Strulača en el mar" [*Tija* Strulača at the Seaside] (JG 1938, 45), "Tija Strulača en la Makarska" [*Tija* Strulača in Makarska] (JG 1937, 50), "Sretna Nova Godina" [Happy New Year] (JG 1937, 3);

12. Moafi (Moise Finci): "Tonfilm" [Sound Film] (JG 1933, 18);

13. Moni Finci: "Lus livjanus di tija Hanuča" [The Treatments of *tija* Hanuča] (JG 1933, 51), "Un kamino a Banjaluka" [The Road to Banjaluka] (JG 1934, 10, 18);

14. p. (an unknown author): "Loke mos akapita en muestros dias..." [What Happens to Us in Our Times] (JG 1928, 3), "Aftaha ke no venran todos… (Una istoria vera)" [The Hope That Not Everybody Will Come… (A True Story)] (JG 1928, 5), "Kon ke estima se andan oj platos… (Una de las konvencionalidades)" [Nowadays Dishes Are Prepared With Such Respect (One of Conventionalities)] (JG 1928, 7);

15. Uno de la Bilava / Unu di la Bilava (an unknown author): "El primer paputo para luvia en el munturo" [The First Raincoat in the Bad Weather] (JG 1931, 42), "La štasjon de Jerušalajim" [The Station Jerusalem] (JG 1931, 47).

This list does not cover all the texts in the *Para noče de šabat*. In comparison to the inventory compiled by Nezirović, it lacks, for example, some texts by Moni Finci, Jakoviku, Josefiko, Uno de la Bilava, and M.M.P., but on the other hand Nezirović does not mention the anonymous items contained in our list.

It should be mentioned that the call for texts for the upcoming column did not appear before 1931. Nevertheless, we found three texts signed by an author who used the nickname p., which were published in the issues 1, 2,[12] 3, 5, and 7 of *Jevrejski glas* in 1928 at the very beginning of

[12] We did not have the texts of the first two issues in our collection while writing this article.

the existence of the magazine. Apart from their titles, they also had the same heading, *Para noče de šabat*. There was also one anonymous text, "Las katorze. Istoria verdadera." This might suggest that the editors had the idea of creating such a space in the newspaper long before it was officially brought into existence. We also agree with Nezirović that it is possible that Benjamin Pinto, the then chief editor, used the pen name p.[13] He used to sign other texts with Pinto, Pinto Benjamin, Bepo, or be. p.

Even though the stories, anecdotes, and other texts published in the column were to be taken from the readers' everyday lives, the editors' intention was not only to portray them as a part of the contemporary reality or to provide entertainment, but also "to preserve in script" Sephardic practices and customs which, at that time, could be still observed amongst Sephardim, and yet were subject to change at the time of modernization. This latter aspect turned out to be most valuable in light of the later fate of the Balkan Jews, when they experienced migrations which led to the dissolution of the Sephardic community in the Balkan states, the Holocaust, and the near extinction of Judeo-Spanish.

In the early 1930s the founders of the column were already aware that they were facing a gradual decline in the traditional Sephardic world; this was why they wanted to gather short narratives that included elements of the traditional lifestyle. One element, common to all the texts, was the vernacular language of the Sephardim that in this period still was naturally associated with the sphere of tradition, folklore, and familiarity. Changing attitudes toward it in the community and some kind of gap between the old and the young generation with respect to the language issue found its expression in several stories. The authors mainly portrayed the problem with humor and a sense of detachment, but did not seem to take sides in this confrontation, probably because the texts included in this section did not have a distinctly critical purpose. The reason was that the genres of anecdotes and short narratives were not the most appropriate for developing deep criticism. Focusing on a problem in an amusing and light-hearted way, however, made readers more inclined to ponder over it.

The editors' aims were also exposed in a commentary preceding three short sketches in issue 3 in 1932:

> Antes de enpesar a la rubrika, dišimos, ke no keremos solo kon eja azer reir a la đente, sino mustrar la muestra vida i su alma, el modo de pensar de las

[13] Nezirović, *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost*, 604.

> ženerasjones ke se estan deperdiendo, sus logika etc. Oj trajemos 2–3 estampas de esta vida, ondi se veje la primitividad de muestras maales en una manera muj avierta i klara.[14]
> [Before we started this column, we said that not only did we want to make people laugh, but also to show our life and its soul, the way of thinking of the generations which are disappearing, their mindset, etc. Today we bring 2 or 3 scenes illustrating this life in which the primitiveness of our quarters can be seen in an open and clear manner].

This fragment—especially the word "primitiveness" employed in this context—reveals consciousness of the rift between old times and modern thinking as well as a general approval of modernity. Nevertheless, it does not show any struggle against tradition and an old-fashioned lifestyle.

The idea of creating *Para noče de šabat* may be considered a strategy of memory because what had existed mainly in oral transmission and was prone to be abandoned and forgotten due to the intensive transformation of the Sephardic community could be later recorded in print and circulated among readers. This process portrays the strategy of memory which consists in writing. Magdalena Koch,[15] in a study devoted to survival strategies of Sephardic women in Bosnia, identifies the act of writing with the re-construction of history. The author analyzes the case of Laura Papo Bohoreta who wrote her essay *La mužer sefardi de Bosna* [The Sephardic Woman in Bosnia] in the years 1931–1932, more or less at the time when *Para noče de šabat* was founded. She described the everyday lives of Sephardic women according to oral accounts of two older generations of her relatives and acquaintances. Her work was in the form of a manuscript and was published only after she died. It was not until more than seventy years had passed that it appeared in print. Interestingly, this first edition contained two versions: the *facsimile* of handwritten Judeo-Spanish texts by Papo and its Bosnian printed translation by Muhamed Nezirović.[16] Koch draws attention to the fact that the act of writing down the past by Papo would have been insufficient as a survival strategy had it not been completed much later by Nezirović. Thus, she considers translating and printing Papo's work another survival strategy.

In the case of *Para noče de šabat* both survival strategies occurred at almost the same time or at least it should be assumed that the period

[14] *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 3:5.

[15] Magdalena Koch, "Lost–Regained–Revised: Laura Papo Bohoreta, Sephardic Women in Bosnia, and Transcultural Survival Strategies in Memory," this issue, 7–30.

[16] Laura Papo Bohoreta, *Sefardska žena u Bosni* (Sarajevo, 2005).

between the moment of putting down the story and publishing it was short. Nevertheless, the editors may also have played the role of intermediaries between the real authors' work and the readers. In the call for texts they announced they would make all the necessary adjustments or even write the whole stories based on brief sketches sent by the audience. That is why in the column not only do we find stories signed by some well-known authors (e.g. Bohoreta, Benjamin Pinto), but also anonymous ones or ones signed with nicknames which were difficult to identify. In fact, we have no information about whether there were really any stories written by the editors on the basis of someone's oral narration. If so, we do not know whether a name or a nickname appearing below such a text belongs to a reader or an editor.

Assuming that writing stories for *Para noče de šabat* was a strategy of memory, the question arises as to whether we deal with the memory of one particular gender or perhaps a gendered memory. As far as we know, only one text was explicitly signed by a woman (Bohoreta). Generally, considering the post-Ottoman region, few female authors were mentioned as having written texts in Judeo-Spanish before the 1940s.[17] Nevertheless, as the column was to be co-authored by the readers, we must highlight the fact that women were allowed to answer this call for stories too. As Joanna Lisek claims in the case of Yiddish authors, women's texts had easier access to sections devoted to readers' works than to other main columns of the newspaper which were strongly dominated by men.[18] Possibly this was also true for *Para noče de šabat*. Had it not been the case, we should not speak about women's strategy of memory or much less about women's gendered memory. Nevertheless, one can observe that in the collection of characters females predominate and, apart from a few exceptions, are sketched in a more vibrant fashion than men. The most numerous are *tijas*—elderly women and wives who have almost adult children. Moreover, there appear wives with small children, marriageable young girls, modern young girls, daughters, neighbors, and so on. Apart from Sephardic women, Ashkenazi

[17] See: Paloma Díaz-Mas, Elisa Martín Ortega, "Lecturas para mujeres y mujeres escritoras en la cultura sefardí," in eaed. (eds.), *Mujeres sefardíes lectoras y escritoras, siglos XIX–XXI* (Madrid–Frankfurt am Main, 2016), 31–33; Elisa Martín Ortega, "Las primeras escritoras sefardíes, entre tradición y modernidad: Dos textos de Reina Hakohén de Salónica," *MEAH. Sección Hebreo* 62 (2013), 145–175, http://www.meahhebreo.com/index.php/meahhebreo/article/view/116/272 [retrieved: 20 Jan. 2018]. See also about an author who used a female nickname: Elena Romero, "Mlle. Elisa: Una periodista sefardí," in Díaz-Mas, Martín Ortega (eds.), *Mujeres sefardíes lectoras y escritoras*, 197–206.

[18] Joanna Lisek, *Kol isze – głos kobiet w poezji jidysz (od XVI w. do 1939 r.)* (Sejny, 2018).

or Serbo-Croatian women are also occasionally portrayed. Sometimes the main characters are men. Other times there are texts in which only men appear. More often than not, they are described by women who talk about their husbands, sons, sons-in-law, or other people's relatives. These depictions are filtered through female narration. Interestingly, a double filter was used. We must remember that the image of women preserved in the majority of texts included in the column was filtered according to male perception. This is because we assume that the texts were written mostly by men. Reconstructing women's history and their cultural gender roles in the Bosnian Jewry of the first three decades of the twentieth century, we are left to take this image into account, since we have scarce number of texts revealing the proper voice of Sephardic women.

It is evident that in the strategy of memory carried out in *Para noče de šabat* the image of women turns out to be one of the central elements of the traditional way of life which the authors wanted to retain in their stories. This could be explained by the fact that females helped to maintain and pass to the next generations long-established values, traditional mentality, and lifestyles with practices and customs. In the early 1930s they were also widely associated with the Judeo-Spanish-speaking community, more often than men were.[19]

The General Linguistic Characteristics of the Texts

The texts included in the section vary in length, language, and subject. Some are short (shorter than one-third of a column on a multi-column page),[20] but most take up two or even three columns. There is also a story divided into chapters: "Un kamino a Banjaluka" by Moni Finci.

Para noče de šabat was written with Latin script that replaced the Rashi script in the Jewish press in Bosnia after the end of World War I. In the 1920s the editorial board of the weekly *Jevrejski život* [The Jewish Life] defined its own rules of Judeo-Spanish orthography based

[19] About processes of modernization of Sephardic communities in the Eastern Mediterranean region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries see: Paloma Díaz-Mas, María Sánchez Pérez, "Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo," in eaed. (eds.), *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo: Identidad y mentalidades* (Madrid, 2010), 11–29.

[20] E.g. "Loke nos akapita en muestros dias…," "Aftaha ke no venran todos…," both signed with "p.", or "Las katorze," an anonymous text.

on Serbo-Croatian Latin script[21] and a few years later *Jevrejski glas* retained it for its own purposes. Nevertheless, the editors of the newspaper did not fully standardize spelling, which differs not only for various authors but also for different texts by the same author or even within one text. Due to the lack of consistent standardization we find various spellings of the same phonemes, such as: ***gj**ente/**dj**enti/**đ**ente* [people], ***dj**udija/**dž**udija* (a Jewish woman), *mučos/mućos* [many]. To give an example, in "Tija Simhula" by the author signed with "Mi" there appear such variants as *fambr**e**/fambr**i***, *v**i**nder/v**e**nder*, and *bur**i**kona/bur**e**kona*. In several stories the spelling usually corresponds to a Bosnian variant in Judeo-Spanish, provided we consider only the tendency to pronounce (and thus write) the non-stressed vowels -e as -i, -o as -u, and in some contexts -e as -a, as in the following example: "I ven mi fižitj**u**, ven ond**i** tu madr**i** kada vjern**i**s la m**i**dj**u**dija, t**i** faz**i**re un past**i**likj**u** afružaldad**u**, miraras umpok**u** **i**l m**u**lin**u** . . . **I**n est**u** ja **i**ntro la nuera. M**i** b**i**zo lo man**u** i k**i** p**a**rd**u**nem**u**s **u**n punt**u** k**i** lueg**u** va t**u**rnar"[22] [Come, my little boy, come to your mother every Friday at noon, I will make fruit biscuits for you, you will look at the grinder for a while . . . At that moment the daughter-in-law entered. She kissed my hand and apologized as she was going to come back a little bit later].

In many fragments we might observe vacillation and lack of standardization in relation to this aspect. There are also stories which almost entirely diverge from this rule, e.g. "Aftaha ke no venran todos…" by the author signed with "p."

Regarding the lexical corpora of the texts, we should mention borrowings and influences of various origins. Of course, the Hebrew-Aramaic component mainly refers to the area of religion, cult, religious customs—that is, non-physical areas: *micva* (a good deed), *aftaha* (hope), *hamec* (leavened bread), *tanit* (fast), *kal* (a synagogue), *darsar* (to preach), *malah* (an angel), *mazal* (happiness), *zahut* (a good deed, charity), *hen* (grace), *baal afiaha* (an optimist), *binadam* (a man), *bizdradel* (with God's help),

[21] "Tomando en konsid[e]rasion las kondisiones ke governan onde mozotros, tokante la lingua i el modo de eskrivir mos dečizimos al modo fonetiko, ke es skrivir komo se melda i kon letras latinas. Savemos auna, ke esto no es muestra manera de skrivir, otro ke deviamos ke publikar los lavoros espanjoles en la letra raši, ma komo dičo, las pezgadias tehnikas no mos alisensian esto." [Taking into consideration the conditions in respect of the language and manner of writing, we decided on the phonetic manner, which follows the pronunciation of Latin letters. Although we know that this is not our manner of writing and that we should publish Spanish articles in the Rashi script, as we have already stated, technical obstacles did not allow us to do so]; "Muestras publikasjones en espanjol," *Jevrejski život* (1924), 28:2.

[22] "Tija Bijara no komi paža," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 22:5.

etc. By contrast, the lexis of Turkish origin is most often related to material culture, artefacts, trades, though it also denotes various aspects of social life: *minder* (a piece of furniture), *čakširis* (a pair of trousers), *tapet* (a carpet), *parlak* (cut diamond), *kujundži* (a goldsmith), *muštuluk* (a piece of news), *čarši* (a bazaar), *avli* (yard), *kira* (rent), *musafir* (a guest), *englena* (fun), *bulukis* (crowds), *haitir* (bow; respect).

The presented corpora do not seem to differ much from the Judeo-Spanish lexis in other Sephardic centers in the Balkans such as Salonika and Monastir (Bitola).[23] The most interesting aspects and what makes the gathered texts distinct are local linguistic and lexical features, such as German and Slavic influences on the language. The influences from German are rare, e.g. *entšuldign* (excuse me), *hercig* (lovely), *apiteki* (the chemist's), *banof* (a railway station). Undoubtedly, some were taken directly from the Serbo-Croatian language, which has been demonstrated in such forms as *šnajderica* (a female tailor).

Most of the Slavic (Serbo-Croatian) elements in the texts illustrate the sociolinguistic situation of the Sephardic minority in Sarajevo; the period of the language shift process involving the stage of bilingualism.[24] Therefore, in the resources we can find many Serbo-Croatian words which permeated the Judeo-Spanish texts, among them also the forms resulting from the Judeo-Spanish and Serbo-Croatian interference: *tramvajis* (trams), *zilinikja* (pita with spinach), *škola* (a school), *gazdarica* (a housekeeper), *guspodin* (a mister), *zaljubijar* (to fall in love), *blaha/blahu* (a non-Jew), "mi faleja la **društva**" [I missed some company], "stamos aki **na zeleno**" [here we are, in the bosom of nature], "la **šolja** in manu" [the cup in hand], "il kave un poku sjempri mas **plavitju**" [each time coffee is lighter], "antes sin i esta **ljubav** ja moz kazavamos" [earlier we used to get married without this love], "me dizi la Bukica ki si **zaljubio**" [Bukica told me that she had fallen in love], "**omladina** del čarši i **omladina** del Poale Cijon" [youth of the bazaar and youth of Poale Zion], "i lu **glavno**" [and what is the most important], and "Dišu ki kali **operacija**, ki tjeni **slepo crevo**" [He said that he needed an operation, that he had a blind gut].

[23] See, for instance, the classic research on Judeo-Spanish in the Balkans such as: Cynthia M. Crews, *Recherches sur le judéo-espagnol dans les pays balkaniques* (Paris, 1935); Max A. Luria, *A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo-Spanish Based on Oral Material Collected in Monastir, Yugo-Slavia* (New York–Paris, 1930).

[24] For more details about the studies on the sociolinguistic situation of the Bosnian Sephardim between two world wars, see Ivana Vučina Simović, *Jevrejsko-španski jezik na Balkanu* (Kargujevac, 2016).

In some cases the characters illustrated in the column *Para noče de šabat* use whole Serbo-Croatian phrases, sayings, or proverbs: "E, e **nisam ja bolesna**, ovaj je Shakitu" [I am not sick, it is Shakitu who is], "fala Bogu" [thank God], "jašta molim ti" [come on, of course!], "ni pet ni šes" [something incongruous], "Bože moj" [My God], "Neće grom u koprivo" [highly improbable that something will happen].

Occasionally, as in stories "No ti ulvidis, doctor" or "Lu de Saraj non aj en sjeti partis de el mundo" the Sephardi characters who are in contact with non-Jewish surroundings or with educated and assimilated Jews speak two languages: Judeo-Spanish and Serbo-Croatian, for example: "Ej, kočijaš. Ajdi da me nosiš do Dušanova ulica 14, i molim te da mi ne voziš brzo . . . Tražim moja kćerka. Kako ne znaš, malmazal, ona iz Sarajeva"[25] [Hey, driver. Take me to Dušanova Street 14, and, please, don't go fast . . . I'm looking for my daughter. How come you don't know, goddamn, she is from Sarajevo]. What we might find significant is that the Serbo-Croatian language of the Sephardim in the texts is poor and grammatically incorrect. This additionally illustrates a sociolinguistic situation found in the bilingual Sephardic community in Sarajevo.[26]

The Literary Characteristics of the Texts

Generally, the language in the section is colloquial and imitates the way the lower and middle class spoke. Sometimes we observe an endeavor to distinguish the characters on the basis of language, and thus the idiolects of elderly women differ from the ones of the young. As explained above, young people who represent the ideals of modernization and have a tendency toward integration use much more words or whole sentences in Serbo-Croatian. In some cases, the contrast between two different

[25] "Lu de Saraj non aj en sjeti partis de el mundo," *Jevrejski glas* (1931), 51:7.

[26] In the same period Jewish writers who chose Serbo-Croatian as the language of their literary works, e.g. Isak Samokovlija, would introduce Judeo-Spanish words and expressions into them. For both speech communities this was an allusion to the reality which they knew and which did exist nearby. However, the environment where Ladino was already spoken started to be perceived as old-fashioned, and thus Ladino was replaced by Serbo-Croatian. It could also be observed that in the second half of the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, when the Sephardim ceased to speak Judeo-Spanish worldwide, authors of memoirs and novels connected with the Sephardic past also introduced expressions of this language into their works written in other languages (English, French, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Turkish, etc.). Nonetheless, in our times the function of this literary device seems to be different than before World War II—it provokes nostalgia or brings the reader closer to the remote and bygone realities of the first diaspora countries.

styles of speech turns out to reveal a crucial concept of the structure of the story. Either a third-person narrative or, very rarely, a first-person narrative is used, the latter being an interesting instrument for building closeness between the narrator and the audience (see "Tija Lunača" by Cadik or "No ti ulvidis, doctor"). This is often complemented by dialogues which make the stories more authentic and vivid. There are stories with no central narrator as well—then an anecdote is presented only from the point of view of the characters in a dialogue. Dialogue is the principal means of expressing ideas and of distinguishing characters. Another way of cutting the distance between the story-teller and the reader is to use the second-person plural (e.g. "Loke mos akapita en muestros dias...," "Kon ke estima se mandan oj platos…" by p., and "La štasjon de Jerušalajim" by Unu di la Bilava) as in the following examples: "Perdonadmi, seniores leedores, kon la mas mižor intension vos ago atento ke en dia de šabat no se visten tefilim ningun modo"[27] [Forgive me, dear readers, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that one should not wear tefillin on the Shabbat] or "Vos topaš en una fiesta i veš al deredor de vozotros, en la meza, en el armario, en una kamareta, en la otra kamareta, un mučedumbre de platos, prezentes: čikos, grandes, sin grande valor, de grande presio, ma todos lindos i ermozos"[28] [You are at a party and around you, on a table, in a sideboard, in one room and in another one, you see many plates with dishes: small, big, of no great value and of high price, but all of them are cute and beautiful]; "A tija . . . todos la konoseš; kada vjarnis vendi ruda i paulijas para el kandil de šabat i antes de Hanuka mečas para las hanukijas, i este feču aj ke tieni anjus i panjus"[29] [*Tija* . . . you all know her; every Friday she sells rue and wicks for Shabbat candles and before Hanukkah tapers for hanukkiahs. She has been doing this job for many, many years].

In the first quoted fragment the narrator seems to be an expert who clarifies the details necessary to understand the anecdote, and in the second and the third ones he appeals to the readers' experience and imagination to make the described situations more authentic and familiar. The third excerpt has an interesting device which consists in showing a character who is to impersonate a typical representative of some group: a nameless

[27] "Lo ke nos akapita en nuestros dias," *Jevrejski glas* (1928), 3:5.
[28] p.,"Kon ke estima se mandan oj platos…," *Jevrejski glas* (1928), 7:4.
[29] Unu di la Bilava,"La štasjon de Jerušalajim," *Jevrejski glas* (1931), 47:7.

tija who sells rue and wicks every Friday seems to be the person whom every reader can meet in his or her own town or neighborhood.[30]

From a literary perspective, the texts are unsophisticated and quite simple. However, they are characterized by some diversity. This is mainly manifested in the number of characters, the role of the narrator, and the place of dialogues. For instance, there are stories which begin with a description of circumstances—the weather, a season of the year, a festive day, or a place. Others open directly with a dialogue or *in medias res*. A few texts employ a kind of a frame: they begin and close with a similar scene—for example, a woman visits her neighbor, she greets her and they have a chat, and at the end this situation is mirrored in the scene of farewell, with the guest neighbor usually having to leave because she has much housework to do (e.g. "Lus livjanus di tija Hanuča" by Moni Finci, "Loke todo es oj moderno" by Miko Altarac). The motif of a visit paid to a neighbor is repeated in several stories and is a handy way of both portraying everyday routines of Sephardic women, usually representative of traditional part of society, and of showing their mentality, attitudes to different subjects, as well as topics which most matter to them.

The Image of Sephardi Women in the Texts of the Column

As mentioned, each of the short stories and sketches of the column had a limited number of characters and mainly focused on females who were very expressive and had particular attitudes. Based on the types of the main female characters in the column, the texts can be easily divided into three main groups. There are stories that present:

(1) elderly Sephardi women in their traditional surroundings leading their traditional lives. This group of texts introduces the everyday life of so-called *tijas*, a Judeo-Spanish word with a quite broad meaning. According to the dictionary of Joseph Nehama it is "1. an aunt, a sister of mother or father; 2. an elderly woman, a relative or an acquaintance; 3. a title given to a woman of older age, of humble origins."[31] In the texts

[30] Even if we take into consideration a different artistic level, the effect is similar to the one created in a famous and masterly phrase by Cervantes: "In a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to call to mind." Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, trans. John Ormsby, http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/996/pg996.html [retrieved: 1 Feb. 2018].

[31] Joseph Nehama, *Dictionnaire du judéo-espagnol* (Madrid 1977), 551.

tijas are elderly women of humble origins, having their own families or single, rather well known in the community;

(2) Sephardi *tijas* in clash with social progress, the attitudes and customs of younger generations, especially Jewish young women, Sephardic as well as Ashkenazic;

(3) young emancipated Jewish women, bringing the cultural and social progress within the local Sephardic community. It has to be mentioned that there are very few texts in the column in which young Jewish women are presented as the main characters. Usually they are just family members or are portrayed in opposition to the image and attitudes of the generation of *tijas*. The marginalization of young generations in the column *Para noče de šabat* is striking, as Sarajevo in the 1930s was definitely a period of emancipation and acculturation for Jewish women, which is also illustrated in other prose samples published in *Jevrejski život* or *Jevrejski glas* outside the column presented here, e.g. in the texts by Laura Papo, Avram Romano Buki, and Benjamin Pinto.[32]

Everyday life of Sephardi women (especially *tijas*) is the main motif of the texts in the column. It is almost always presented as simple, traditional life, confined to a few main circles: the hometown *Saraj* (Sarajevo), the local Sephardi community, *mahale* (a neighborhood), *kurtižo*[33] (a yard), and family. In that pattern one can easily find the cultural heritage of the patriarchal Sephardi life in the Ottoman Empire, when the female sphere and activity were in fact limited to the closest familiar surroundings, unlike the male, public sphere.

A typical *tija* does not work outside the home, but accepts being confined in the space customarily regarded as feminine. She spends time exercising her domestic responsibilities that in some periods are more numerous, especially before holidays on the liturgical calendar or life-cycle celebrations. Despite the burden which results from living in accordance with all gender roles imposed on women by a traditional society, she does not seem

[32] See: Vučina Simović, *Jevrejsko-španski jezik*, 214–216; Jelena Filipović, Ivana Vučina Simović, "La lengua como recurso social: El caso de las mujeres sefardíes de los Balcanes," in Díaz-Mas, Sánchez Pérez (eds.), *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo*, 259–269.

[33] On *kurtižo* as a women's space see: Agnieszka August-Zarębska, "The Representations of *kurtijo* and Their Function in Contemporary Judeo-Spanish Poetry," in Andrzej Kątny, Izabela Olszewska, Aleksandra Twardowska (eds.), *Ashkenazim and Sephardim: A European Perspective* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013), 245–268; Agnieszka August-Zarębska, Zuzanna Bułat Silva, "Recalling the Past: The Linguistic and Cultural Images of *Kurtijo*, Sephardic Courtyard," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 25 (2016), 1:96–117.

to support the idea of inverting this order. On the contrary, she is shown as a true guardian of tradition. So as to manage to do her work better, she seeks little strategies to avoid additional tasks or resorts to other women's solidarity within the established frames of performing mutual favors.

A character exemplifying this is Rinuča in a story without a title by M.M.P., describing preparations for Pesach (*las hadras*). She tries to carry out all the duties and fulfil the demands connected with the festivity, although their number seems to be beyond her strength. The author highlights that what makes the work more difficult is its combination with childcare:

> Enus sež dijas manka para Pesah i Rinuča no savi ondi va dar la kavesa inprimeru. No skapa un feču, vjeni il otru sin pinsar i, kvandu kirijamus kuntar todu luke fazi di la madrugada fin aja medja noći, no pudijamus in su suluk. In esta ribultina sta di dija in dija, finki no si vjeni al šefoh, kvandu no so la alma, sino i il kuerpu kunsjenti ki vinu muet. Todu estu li era a Rinuča preza di burmuti, si no tinija la tartagana di krijaturas las kvalas no kerin saver si si aserka Pesah o Tišabeav, kerin kumer komu kada dija.[34]
> [It is about six days before Pesach and Rinuča doesn't know what she should get down to doing first. She doesn't even end one task when another one appears and if we were to list everything she did from dawn to dusk, we wouldn't be able to do it in the same breath. This bustle continues day by day until *Shefokh*[35] comes, when not only the soul but also the body feels that *moed* has arrived. All this would be for Rinuča like a pinch of snuff, if she did not have a few children, who don't even want to know that Pesach or Tesh'a be-av is approaching and they want to eat as every day].

These days every extra chore causes her annoyance and to avoid a conflict with her husband she invents strategies to get rid of the children. She also asks favors of other women (such as taking care of her son for a few hours—the famous *tenemaka*)[36] which will be returned at another time.[37]

[34] "Para noče de šabat," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 19:6.

[35] *Shefokh ḥamatkha* means a prayer recited at the Seder.

[36] The habit of sending children to the neighbors' or family's house so that they can be looked after outside home while their mother is occupied with her duties. "Di aji vuz važ avagar, avagar onde nona manseva, li kontas komu sto skafisida di la kavesa, tengu mučus fečus. La saludas, aruganduli ki ti de komu god savi un poku di tenemaka" [From there walk slowly to your grandma, tell her that I am very busy and have many chores to do. Greet her and ask her to give you a bit of *tenemaka* (literally "keep me here")]; ibid.

[37] A very appreciated kind of aid was curing illnesses and indispositions using folk healer's methods, as in "Shakitu ainda no si sano": "ja bati ala puerta tija Hanuča kon una čanta de tinđires, kučarones, ruda, menta, in kurtu: kun la apoteki suja entera" [*Tija* Hanuča already knocked on the door, with her bag full of utilities, ladles, rue, mint, in short: with her entire pharmacy]; "Shakitu ainda no si sano," *Jevrejski glas* (1934), 5:5.

The simple life of Sephardic women has its own rules and rhythm, marked with repetitive accents of the day, week, or year, including resting after housework on a Friday afternoon or the visiting with neighbors for a cup of coffee, which obviously played a significant role in the lives of *mahale*, as we can read in the dialogues of *tijas*: "No puedi ser la vižita sin kave"[38] [There cannot be a visit without coffee]; "Tija Rifkule, ajdi ja abasto fazer fečus, luke es, Pesah no va ser, ajdi abaši, biviremus un pretu"[39] [*Tija* Rifkule, come on, let's stop working or Pesach won't come, come around, let's have a cup of black coffee]; "esti guezmu di kave fresku, mi sta ariturnando la alma. . . . Ja keru i jo biver un kave, ja mi si inšugo la boka"[40] [this scent of coffee restores my spirit. . . . – Yes, I want to have a cup of coffee, too, it makes my mouth water].

Those accents and rhythms of everyday problems and visits integrated the women from the neighborhood; as a result, they could rely on each other. They created strong, familiar relations with each other, as in the case of *tija* Rifkula and her neighbors:

> Buenus dijas i salud i vidas! Mi sejas bjenvinida . . . Ja savis komu ez. Vizina keda sjempri vizina. Las krijaturas si van a la škola, lus mansevus si van al lavoru, ansina ki kedu jo sola in kaza. La varda ki ti diga, la maz grandi dizgrasja ez ki non aj kun ken spartir una palavra. Il maz grandi gustu mi ez, kvandu mi vjeni a vižitar alguna vizina.[41]
> [Have a good day and health, and life! Welcome . . . You know how it is. A neighbor is always a neighbor. Children go to school, the youth go to work so I stay home alone. To tell the truth, the biggest worry is that there is nobody to talk to. And it is such a delight for me when a neighbor comes for a visit].

As Jelena Filipović and Ivana Vučina Simović write, Sephardi women: "Las mujeres, aunque culturalmente marginadas, desarrollaban sus propios métodos de influencia, encontrando unas vías para ejercer un poder social sin entrar en el terreno del poder público (reservado para los hombres)"[42] [Women, although culturally marginalized, developed their own methods of influence, finding ways to exercise a social power without entering the area of public power (reserved for men)]. Therefore, as both authors observe, in their private, familiar limited sphere Sephardi women created the supportive communities of practices (Sp. *comunidades*

[38] "Tija Strulača jeva mal kun il jarnu," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 52:5.
[39] Josefiko, "Tardi di vjarnis," *Jevrejski glas* (1931), 45:7.
[40] M.M.P., "Las di agora," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 8:7.
[41] Jafi, "Il pustu 'Jezero'," *Jevrejski glas* (1936), 4:3.
[42] Filipović, Vučina Simović, "La lengua como recurso social," 264.

de práctica)—a group in which every member is responsible for another and every member works at the well-being of the group,[43] as is illustrated in the texts of the column. The characters share problems, information, and news; they gossip, and support each other by asking and giving advice as well as by offering and receiving help. The texts in the column illustrate that the female sphere is extended to the women's section in a synagogue. All the generations meet there: young girls, newlyweds, mothers, and old ladies, all displaying a wide range of typical behaviors. It is a place where they chat, meet people, observe relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances, shown in a critical as well as humorous way. They admire their friends' new hats and even exchange recipes for nut cake and meatballs.[44]

In the community of the Sephardi women the opinions of neighbors are crucial and firm. Every member of the community has a particular role or function or is well known and recognized for her skill (e.g. being an acclaimed cook or an expert at folk medicine), an attribute or a quality (e.g. *tija* Lunača and her dementia). Those firm roles and functions also regulate social life, relations, hierarchy, and respect within the inner community: "Non aj balabaja la ke no konose a tija Strulača 'la ojandija.' Tambien no aj balabaja la ke no sentjo de maravijas por las ojas di tija Strulača. . . . Kali saver ke non es tan kulaj de ganar ansina un estimado 'nombre de mued'"[45] [There is no housekeeper who does not know *tija* Strulača, "the pot lady." Neither is there a housekeeper who has not heard about *tija* Strulača's dishes. . . . You should know that it is a "prestigious nickname," it is not easy to get]; "ja si savi ke Strulača ez una de las maz onoradas mužeris i ke azi mučo bondades i entritodo es vera đudja"[46] [it's well known that Strulača is one of the most respected women, she does many good deeds and, above all, she is a true Jew].

In several texts a character or a narrator claims that another character is a good or a true Jew. In old Sephardic *mahales* people were not anonymous; they knew each other quite well and had their own opinions about their neighbors. For example, in "Las enbonoras de tija Bonača" by Miko Altarac, an elderly widow is regarded by the narrator as a good Jew: "Eja es de las đudajkas grandis"[47] [She is one of these good Jews]. She has no family in

43 Ibid.

44 See: Miko Altarac, "En tu kaza santa iremos, in en luvia, i en njevi, i en todo tjempo," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 20:7.

45 Jafi, "La oja di tija Strulača," *Jevrejski glas* (1936), 3:3.

46 Ibid.

47 Miko Altarac, "Las enbonoras de tija Bonača," *Jevrejski glas* (1931), 46:6.

the town; thus, charitable neighbors support her in different ways. Every week *tija* Bonača has a Shabbat meal with another family, a young boy walks to the synagogue with her and aids her in crossing the street, a neighbor's daughter is asked by her mother to darn Bonača's clothes or to go with her to the railway station to buy a ticket for her. The elderly woman has never bought one by herself and is unfamiliar with prices. As she does not have enough money, a part of the fare is paid without her knowledge. The author suggests that this solidarity of members of the community, which guarantees safety, comes from the fact that they are good people and good Jews. He remarks: "La kaza de Strulača de Buhor era la mas đudajka, por esto tija Bonača lu maz kerija venir a sintir kiduš o ovdala onde Buhor"[48] [The home of Strulača, the Buhor's wife, was the most Jewish and that's why *tija* Bonača wanted to go there to listen to kiddush and Havdalah most often]. For the Sarajevian *tijas* presented in the column *Para noče de šabat* it is the allegiance to well-known surroundings which ensures the *status quo* in traditional cultural and social life. In many texts of the column, when a *tija* crosses the line of a safe, well-recognized territory, the simple Sephardi life is endangered or the characters face new phenomena that they do not understand, which provokes feelings of alienation. For some characters, it is the neighborhood of Bjelave (before World War II inhabited mostly by poor Sephardi families) situated in the hills, which is a safe territory. Getting married and raising families within the community of Bjelave enabled fostering of the Jewish tradition, while people from the town center and in mixed marriages could seriously shake the fundaments of the Sephardi heritage. That is why *tija* Bijara was unhappy when her son moved down to the town center to live with his wife, an Ashkenazi Jewish girl:

> avjendu en la bilava tantas mučačas, kuriladas, komu la kungja, tu abašatis a la sivdad a tumar šuaba. . . . no aj pastel, no aj čuftikjas, no aj šabat la minjana guevu kun raki, sino es kumer kave di leči komu kada dija[49]
> [having so many girls in Bjelave, ruddy as roses, and you came down to the town to get a German. . . . there is no pastry, there are no *čuftikjas*,[50] there is no egg with raki on Shabbat morning, but they have white coffee every day].

[48] Ibid.

[49] "Tija Bijara no komi paža."

[50] A Sephardic Passover dish consisting of fried, carved leek stems (looking like whistles), see: Elli Kohen, Dahlia Kohen-Gordon, *Ladino-English / English-Ladino Concise Encyclopedic Dictionary* (New York, 2000), 93.

If other neighborhoods could be confusing and abstruse for an elderly Sephardi woman, so were foreign cities, as in a story telling how a *tija* visits her daughter in Belgrade and feels like a total stranger outside her well-known community:

> No vejis vezindado, no tjenis kun ken spantir dos palabras. Jo sto anbizada asentar kun vizindado, bever kave, avlar. . . . Aji las karas diskunisidas . . . Belogrado no es para los viježos. Belogrado es para la manseverija kvalos no bilkejan nada nada[51] [You do not meet anybody from the neighborhood, there is nobody to talk to. I am used to sitting with neighbors, having coffee and talking. . . . There are only strange faces . . . Belgrade is not for old people. Belgrade is for the young who do not care about anything, anything].

There is thus no doubt that the characters of the traditional women in the stories feel comfortable in their natural, old-fashioned surroundings and experience unease when they encounter a different mode of living. Several texts develop the topic of confrontation of values traditionally appreciated in the community compared to a new, progressive lifestyle. *Tijas* are puzzled when they see people who choose modernization, have difficulty in understanding their choice and usually are highly critical of them. It is significant that the main target of their judgements are women, especially young ones. Sharing these critical opinions with other neighbors gives them strength and comfort.

Ideas on these matters are exchanged, for example, in "Las di agora": two women are unified by the smell and taste of coffee—a kind of *leitmotif* in the whole story stressing their common beliefs. First, Strulača blames a young woman for marrying a gentile (*blahu*) and the woman's mother for allowing it. She says: "No si naskan maz ansina fižitas, mižor li era ala madri si si li inšuvagan las tripas i no huera paridu"[52] [Such girls should not be born, it would have been better had her mother's womb withered and she hadn't given birth]. Her neighbor Beja is cautious about replying, as she still has a marriageable daughter. Other aspects of modern life criticized by both friends include such topics as a small number of children in modern marriages, the lateness of the first delivery, thinness of pregnant women, and the supposed general laziness of wives. Some, despite having few children, do not do household chores by themselves but employ servants. They do not even need to prepare hot dinner for their husbands when they return from the office. The symbol of contemporary

[51] "Lu de Saraj non aj en sjeti partis de el mundo."
[52] M.M.P., "Las di agora."

comfort is never having to soak one's hands in cold water. The visit ends because the neighbors need to return to their duties. Beja's husband wants to have his soup hot when he gets home, and if he is not satisfied with what he sees at home, he will reproach his wife for spending time with neighbors. The construction of the story is interesting since the life and way of speaking of the characters is juxtaposed to a different lifestyle, which they criticize. Their traditionalism is also emphasized by the fact that they use proverbs and herbs and amulets (e.g. garlic and rue) to protect themselves from disease. The same ideas are developed in "Loke todo es oj moderno" by Miko Altarac. Here the characters talk about the problem of not observing the rules of *kashrut*.[53]

As shown, marrying a person from outside the Sephardic and broadly Jewish community is one of the main troublesome situations which may happen to a family. This motif is repeated in several texts. Another aspect criticized by *tijas* is a new pattern of relationships in which love is the most significant factor and partners may have a long-term relationship before marriage. The character in "Tija Oru i la amiga al gjardin" tells the story of a beautiful young girl who dates a student who was studying to become a lawyer. Her parents were convinced their daughter would marry him, but he left her. Oru says: "ajajaj esta pusta 'sloboda' ke dešan a las mučačas solas kun lus mansevos"[54] [oh my, this "freedom" of letting girls be alone with boys].

We can observe general support for arranged marriages. In "Kun il amargu" a neighbor remarks:

> Vejis vizina, vejis komu es oj kun las fižas? Ulvidati, ulvidati, ja paso akel tjempu kunado kazavan a las fižas komu lus đinitores kirijan. Oj, kuandu aj kinos i eškolas es huarti, muy huarti es kun ejas[55]
> [Do you see, my neighbor, do you see how it is with daughters nowadays? Forget it, forget it—the times when daughters got married like parents wanted them to have already passed. Nowadays, when there are cinemas and schools, daughters are difficult, so difficult].

This fragment expresses disapproval not only about trends in choosing a partner, but also about the modern education system in which girls are included, as well as the fact that contemporary entertainment is open for both sexes.

[53] Miko Altarac, "Loke todo es oj moderno," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 2:6.
[54] Jakoviku, "Tija Oru i la amiga al gjardin," *Jevrejski glas* (1936), 9:7.
[55] Jehi, "Kun il amargu," *Jevrejski glas* (1934), 7:7.

In “Ken es ombri, ken mužer?”[56] by M.M.P., skiing is considered an inappropriate leisure activity for women, whereas in “Il pustu ‘Jezero’” an old lady states that swimming in a lake in a bathing suit causes a scandal. We can read: “Maasez di Sedom i Amora . . . Ni aj moral, ni aj riguensa. . . . I estu jaman ejus moda, moral!”[57] [Stories about Sodom and Gomorrah . . . There are no morals or shame . . . And they call their fashion moral!]. Sometimes a tone of nostalgia appears: “Ez ki no aj otruz pasatjempus? No ti akordas kuandu huemus muzotras mučačas i rizinkazadas”[58] [Aren’t there other pastimes? Don’t you remember when we were girls and newlywed?]. Every sign of blurring the limits of masculine and feminine irritates traditional women. They reject the newest women’s fashion for short hair, wearing trousers, and even the replacement of *tokado*[59] by new hats: “Ken la puede kuniser agora kun esta sjarta moda de čapejos kun una pluma . . . ken la puede ver la kara i konoser la”[60] [Who would recognize her now, wearing these fashionable hats with feathers . . . who would see her face and recognize her].

It should be emphasized that the elderly Sephardi women in the stories of *Para noče de šabat* complain but do not surrender to modern trends and habits. They do not give up their influence on those who are in some way dependent on them. They often head their families, are demanding and strict mothers and mothers-in-law. The total control over family members is to ensure protection, so even if *tijas* become quite abusive in their control, the narration does not deny them charm and a characteristic sense of humor. In one story it was *tija* Strulača, not the father of the family, who decisively refused to accept her daughter’s fiancé when the young man preferred a different kind of carpet from the one offered in the dowry, and she decided to find a new fiancé: “Mira Ruzitja, si tu madri, fin Sukot, no ti topa novju i no ti meti dibašu di talamu, ki no tenga jo al čarši akeja unor ki tengu”[61] [Look, Ruzitja, if your mother doesn’t find you a fiancé and place you under the wedding canopy until Sukkot, I will lose all the respect I have in the bazaar]. This act proves her courage and ability to oppose established customs and people’s opinions, because she broke off her engagement on a wedding day when the party was prepared and the

[56] M.M.P., “Ken es ombri, ken mužer?”, *Jevrejski glas* (1937), 6:7.
[57] Jafi, “Il pustu ‘Jezero’.”
[58] Jakoviku, “Tija Oru i la amiga al gjardin.”
[59] Traditional hat of the Sephardi women in the Balkans.
[60] Jakoviku, “Tija Oru i la amiga al gjardin.”
[61] “Tija Strulača jeva mal kun il jarnu.”

rabbi and guests invited. She did not yield to her neighbors' suggestions that it was a disgrace:

> Mi djarun umpoku di agua i impisarun las vizinas a dizir mi: ki sto in kaloris grandis, ki avra il ožu luke fagu, ki estu va ser vringuensa. Jo kuandu mi vini umpoku in si, no las iči tinu a ejas[62]
> [The neighbors gave me a bit of water and started to talk to me: said that I have a fever, that I should open my eyes and see what I am doing, that it is a shame].

Tija Strulača turns out to be a non-conformist who cares more about her daughter's happiness than about appearances.

The need for control does not diminish even when children leave home to raise their own families with someone from outside the Sephardi community, with whom they will lead a new, modern life. *Tija* Bijara tries to save her power while checking on her Ashkenazi daughter-in-law during her son's absence:

> Kunadu apriti il tilifon, pensati, mi avri la nuera sola. Eja ki mi vidu, ja truko sjen kuloris. No savi luke avlar. Kreji mi ki imprisar a timblar di spantu. . . . Solu kiži asuvir . . . ki veja, ki veja ki no komu paža[63]
> [When I rang the doorbell, imagine that, it was my daughter-in-law in person who opened the door. When she saw me, her face displayed hundreds of colors. She didn't know what to say. Believe me, she started to tremble, she was so scared . . . I just wanted to go upstairs . . . just to make her see that it is not easy to bribe or fool me].

The Sephardi *tijas* from the texts of the column seem to be more lenient with their sons than their daughters. As *tija* Hana and her neighbors admit, daughters are the first to be relied on, but at the same time they can be the greatest burden for the family: "todas mi son bravas: si la Reni, si la Blanki, si la Erna. Mućas vezis digu si no era las dotas i las ašugaris, mas kirija dijes fižas i no un fižu!"[64] [my all (daughters) are loyal: Reni, Blanki and Erna. I always repeat, if dowries did not exist, I would prefer ten daughters to one son!]. Generally, when it comes to the problem of marrying off children, the conversations present many traditional convictions connected with the subject. They prove the real anxiety of mothers, especially about marrying their daughters. According to a common belief—also reflected in proverbs and sayings—marrying off sons is easier than finding a husband

[62] Ibid.
[63] "Tija Bijara no komi paža."
[64] Jehi, "Kun il amargu."

for a girl. *Tija* Bonača from "Loke todo es oj moderno" by Miko Altarac confesses: "Ja, ja, ainda esta sinkena fiža kazalda i ja skapi la bila, a por luz fižos otra vez ez mas kulaj"[65] [I still have the fifth daughter to marry and then my misfortune will end, with sons it is easier].

Mothers' leniency about their boys is also shown by how the sons are allowed to take part in different forms of entertainment, not only typically Jewish, whereas girls are obliged to stay at home and help with household chores. Such a situation can be observed, for example, in "Sretna Nova Godina" by M.M.P. Although *tija* Merkada does not approve of celebrating non-Jewish festivities, she does not forbid her son Davičon to go out to cafés on the Christian New Year's Eve. Her daughter Blankita is also keen on joining her friends that evening; however, her mother does not let her go out. She explains that the young girl has just come back from work and that many domestic responsibilities await her. The unequal treatment of sons and daughters is best manifested in the following excerpt: "Si a Davičon no lu puedu branijar, a ti si. . . . Ti kazaras, il marido si keri ki ti jevi kada noči a la kavane"[66] [I can't forbid Davičon to do this, but surely I can forbid you. . . . You will get married, your husband, if he wants, will take you every night to a café]. The whole story illustrates Merkada's way of thinking and certain submission to her adult youngest son. By contrast, Blanki depends on her mother and in the future will be expected to obey her husband. The author highlights uneven social norms applied to both genders and shows that this pattern may be prolonged in the next generation as well, as the brother, accustomed to being treated in a better way, speaks to her with an air of superiority and nastiness:

> Davičon alegri ki ez fižu i no ez fiža i dragitu di sus vidas para salir, ja si vistjo di ver i no ver i kun una boz sigura, di balabajis, si saludava: – Adiju mama, la javi no premi ki mi deši a la vintana, amanjana di la kavane mi vo ir al fečo. A la sinjora Blankita li aguru buen pasatjempu, shuenju dulsi i sretna nova godina, adiju[67] [Davičon happy that he is a son and not a daughter and (?) to go out, he dressed up in the twinkling of an eye, and like a self-confident host said goodbye: – See you, mum, there is no need for you to leave the key by the window, as tomorrow I am going to work straight from the café. And I wish miss Blankita fun, sweet dreams and a Happy New Year, bye].

[65] Miko Altarac, "Loke todo es oj moderno."
[66] M.M.P., " Sretna Nova Godina," *Jevrejski glas* (1937), 3:7–8.
[67] Ibid.

The motif of the leading role of Sephardic women within the family and home zone also appears in some stories which present the image of married couples of older generations. In "Tiju Mušon i las hadras di Pesah," the main male character fulfils many tasks around the house when his wife orders him to do so. From his point of view obeying a woman disrupts the natural order: "Lunis i martis tiju Mušon ja no supu mas si es ombri o mužer. . . . i tju Mušon, muy abatidu hue sufrjendu estus komandus di tija Rahel"[68] [On Monday and Tuesday *tiju* Mušon did not already know if he was a man or a woman. . . . and *tiju* Mušon, totally defeated, was suffering because of the commands of *tija* Rahel . . .]. What is significant is that the subordination to his wife and the man's attempts to save the shreds of his control and male dignity are described with a dose of sympathy, but also in a very humoristic way.

More often than not, the story collection indicates the minor position of the Sephardi *tijas* in marriages, and the descriptions seem to lack sympathy for the female characters. One easily observes that even if the Sephardi wives grumble and complain, it is men who are to decide and explain the rules and phenomena of the life in the community, as in the conversation between Avram and his wife, *tija* Simhula:

> – Ma loke mi vas tu a mi ambezar loke vo jo azer, kajada ke te stes i ninguna de tu boka no kero sintir, ja sto farto de ti. Si tu solo un poko pensavas, tu a mi nada no me avlavas. No se komo no ez a ti avriguensa i avlar. Tu a mi dar konsežo? . . . kavesa di mulja . . . kavesa di bova. . . .
> – No si aravje, mi Avramači, jo nada no diši, solo sto pensando. Na la đente, la đente . . .
> – Ma kvala đente . . . luke ti ves a la đente . . . Đente ez đente, ke avli kado uno lo ke keri. Ken puede tapar la boka de la đente del mundo entero.[69]
> [– But how are you going to teach me, what should I do, shut your mouth, I don't want to hear it any more, I am sick and tired of you. If only you thought a little, you wouldn't say anything. I don't know why you aren't too embarrassed to talk. And you want to give me advice? . . . you bonehead.
> – Don't get mad, my Avramači, I didn't say anything, I was just thinking. But people, people . . .
> – But which people . . . do you care about them? People are people, let them say what they want. Who could silence people of the whole world?].

The Sephardi women's subordination is additionally portrayed through male characters in the story. Females are not very present in religious

[68] Josefiko, "Tiju Mušon i la hadras di Pesah," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 17–18:11.
[69] Mi, "Tija Simhula," *Jevrejski glas* (1932), 12:6.

life, which does not make them very useful within the community or even family:

> Vejis komo sož las mužeris? Pikaš, pikaš no savjendu! Il ombri es in kaza una đoja in kadiš, diremus, la mužer no ti puedi dizir. Una micva no puedi azer, keru dizir una micva en la keila[70]
> [Can you see what you are like, women? You can only open your big mouths, but you don't know anything! A man is a treasure at home, let's take kaddish, for example, a woman can say so. And she can't do mitzvah, I mean mitzvah in kehillah].

The justification is often underlined with a Sephardi proverb which the male characters repeat among themselves: "Feću di mužeris, kavejus longus i sehel kurtu"[71] [It is the female thing, long hair and short sense!]. The descriptions confirm the image of the Sephardi women (especially *tijas*) who are not very active in the official life of the community, are limited to the zone of the closest surroundings, and get easily confused beyond it. Furthermore, the male point of view shows them to be incapable of making independent decisions.

Conclusions

The strategy of keeping in script the memory of Sephardi culture and Judeo-Spanish tradition, which was fading away at that time, was proposed by the editors of the periodical *Jevrejski glas* in the column *Para noče de šabat* and carried out thanks to the contributions of readers. The approach was based on the image of Sephardi men and, above all, women of elderly generations. Their lives embodied a "true Sephardi spirit" in which we can see the crucial role of religion, related customs, and clear divisions of male and female spheres as well as Jewish and non-Jewish ones. The editors considered Judeo-Spanish to be the most appropriate means of describing it, first of all, because in that period in the region this language was still inseparably associated with the concept of the "Sephardi spirit," which was to be preserved in the stories. The analysis of the texts published in the column shows that in the early 1930s women were recognized as anchors for this traditional lifestyle, and their depictions prevailed when different aspects of old ways of living were illustrated. The characters appear in the circle of family and neighbors, within the Jewish neighborhood—in the

[70] Jehi, "Kun il amargu."
[71] Ibid.

space customarily perceived as feminine. At that time, it was irreparably decreasing and its limits were getting vague and frequently crossed into other spaces (e.g. the one earlier reserved for men or for other ethnic and religious groups). Apart from the representations of everyday, vernacular life and various manifestations of mentality founded on religion and traditional social and gender patterns—mostly in their female variants—the clash between the old order and the invading modernity was reflected too. That is why in the collected texts one can observe resentment toward social and cultural changes, toward extending living-space of the Sephardi community, contacts with non-Jews and even with Ashkenazi Jews. Nevertheless, all the aspects and motives in the gathered stories are presented with care, in a nostalgic or humorous way, with lively, picturesque, vernacular language—Judeo-Spanish in the local sub-dialect, which definitely deserves a separate, comprehensive description.

The basic account of the female image proposed in this article may serve as a point of departure for further analyzes aimed at making comparisons with less amateurish and non-anonymous texts in the Sarajevian weeklies *Jevrejski glas* and *Jevrejski život*. Moreover, a parallel might be drawn between the texts in *Para noče de šabat* and works that perceive the Sephardi tradition and women's roles from a decidedly female point of view—Laura Papo's short stories and theater plays and her ethnographic study *La mužer sefardi de Bosna*.

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REVIEWS

Luka Boršić, Ivana Skuhala Karasman, *Naše žene: Leksikon znamenitih žena Hrvatske od X. do XX. stoljeća*, Naklada Jurčić, Zagreb 2016, 189 pp.

A book *Naše žene: Leksikon znamenitih žena Hrvatske od X. do XX. stoljeća* [Our Women: Lexicon of Famous Women of Croatia from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century] presents a panorama of nearly eight hundred women's figures related to Croatia, spanning more than a thousand years, from the tenth to the twentieth century (with 31 December 1929 the latest birth date). This is the first attempt in Croatia to organize vast historical materials entirely devoted to females, who to just a small extent have a permanent place in the general consciousness. Some of these women still function only on the outskirts of historiographic or—more broadly—humanistic discourse and only occasionally appear in other studies. Probably due to this fact, the authors of the volume, Luka Boršić and Ivana Skuhala Karasman, decided to adopt the lexicon formula, focusing primarily on compiling an alphabetical list of names and providing a biographical note on each character.

Besides the name and surname, the structure of each entry contains—if possible to determine—dates of birth and death (the earliest noted figure is Queen Jelena [Helena], who died in 976), place of birth and burial, and then an epithet defining their dominant field of activity along with a concise description of the life of the given character. The authors of the lexicon do not forget that the names of many women active in the past, especially in distant centuries, are impossible to find due to a lack of historical sources, which is why in the Introduction they remind us of the existence of anonymous everyday heroines. The life story—the last, most extensive (though necessarily short) and central part of the entry—serves on the one hand as a comprehensive overview of the biography and on the other as a clear highlighting of these events and achievements—in various spheres of life, including science, art, politics, and society—which resulted in granting the characters the status of "znamenite žene" (famous

women). Among them are painters, architects, writers, thespians, and singers, as well as researchers, doctors, social activists, soldiers, economists, and politicians. Some of the names are also accompanied by a list of important works (scholarly studies, literary texts, paintings, theatrical roles, compositions) created by the entry subject. What is worth emphasizing is that each time, the describing/classifying noun has a feminine suffix, which serves not only to reinforce the forms that already function quite well in the contemporary Croatian language but also introduce and record new feminine professional names whose presence has not yet been recognized and validated by daily use, for instance "ornitološka" (female ornithologist), "časnica" (female officer).

Although in the Introduction the authors do not state to whom the lexicon is addressed, we can guess that the book is a publication prepared for a wider audience. The lexicon can be used by all interested in the participation of women in the history, culture, and social life of Croatia who want to expand their knowledge about this area, including those who are neither experts in this subject nor academic researchers. In reading, we learn about the first female officer in the hussar troops (Mária Lebstück); the first woman to earn a Ph.D. at the University of Zagreb (Milica Bogdanović who received this degree in 1907); and also the first woman in Croatia who was accused of witchcraft and as a witch was sentenced to be burned (Bara Kramarić in the seventeenth century). For readers with more serious cognitive ambitions, it may be helpful to find a bibliography at the end of the book that would allow them to undertake further individual research. The source literature includes encyclopedias and lexicons which register the names of some of the women as well as a number of supplementary sources (studies, monographs, scholarly and press articles), in which the figures and activities of these women are described. Aware of the difficulties and omissions associated with the preparation of a publication of this kind, the authors point out that some dates and facts were difficult to verify, so it is possible that subsequent editions may bring some material changes. As the authors are open to readers' comments and willingness to cooperate, this will certainly help improve the later supplemented editions which will not omit such figures as photographer Elvira Kohn (1914–2003) or a writer and journalist Eva Grlić (1920–2008). It seems valuable that Boršić and Skuhala Karasman emphasize the role of private documentation in the process of recreating the past. As Svetlana Tomić writes, often even among researchers of the

past in Serbian female literary culture, archival research is sometimes underestimated, overlooked, or plays too insignificant a role.[1] Yet, as it turns out, many memorable female source texts are still waiting to be discovered, and private archives can play a significant role in reclaiming the history and memory of women.

Certainly, navigating within the lexicon, analysis and comparative studies of the characters could be facilitated if there were an index of the names depicted, along with their birth and death dates at the end of the book. The reader's eye will not find a photo or a drawing, which, especially in the case of more distant historical characters, would surely have a greater impact because—as rightly stated by the authors of *Pisarki polskie od średniowiecza do współczesności: Przewodnik* [Polish Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present Day: A Guide]—"the memory holds dates and titles the shortest, and faces – the longest."[2] It also seems that an interesting solution that could enrich the reading of the lexicon would be to include a description of historical background that would contain the basic aspects in the context of subsequent epochs. A continuous narrative which would present the profiles of each character in chronological order, containing interpretative suggestions or general remarks, could become an exceptional item among historiographic books, a unique guide to the country's past.

The criteria for selecting the described women are not completely clear and therefore are partly incomprehensible. This concerns the "Croatian" component which is assumedly the point connecting all the women who were born in Croatia and were active there as well as outside its borders, or whose actions in the country or abroad contributed to the development and enrichment of, for example, political, cultural, and scientific life in Croatia. My goal here is not to accuse the authors of exaggerated ideological patriotism or even of nationalism hidden in the pages of the lexicon, but rather is an attempt to show how going beyond national Croatian sources could open the broader perspectives of reading about a given figure in history. On the one hand, it seems obvious that it is difficult (if at all possible) to create absolutely undisputed and perfect criteria that would unambiguously classify the characters. On the other

[1] Svetlana Tomić, "Neki arhivski primeri neiskorišćenog kulturnog kapitala," *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne* 11 (2016), 72.

[2] Grażyna Borkowska, Małgorzata Czermińska, Ursula Phillips, *Pisarki polskie od średniowiecza do współczesności: Przewodnik* (Gdańsk, 2000), 6.

hand, in the case of the Balkan region or more strictly speaking post-Yugoslav area, limiting the presentation to aspects directly related to Croatia's past can lead to incorrect conclusions and (at best) yield an incomplete representation of a given character to the detriment of her reception. The exemplification of this problem may be the person of Jelica Belović Bernadžikovska (Bernadzikowska), who was presented in the lexicon as an ethnologist, a writer, a journalist, and the author of works in the field of pedagogy and child psychology. The description of Belović Bernadžikovska's activities lacks the information that she was one of the chief editors of the almanac *Srpkinja: Njezin život i rad, njezin kulturni razvitak i njezina narodna umjetnost do danas* [Serbian Woman: Her Life and Work, Her Cultural Development and Her Folk Art until Today], published in 1913 in Sarajevo and intended solely to present the activities of women. This special publication was at that time a unique act on the part of women's societies and, as Magdalena Koch notes, it can be treated as "an attempt to break the organizational isolation of women and to create an intellectual forum for the exchange of ideas, views, and information."[3] As the note on the last page of the book emphasizes, Belović Bernadžikovska contributed the most to the preparation of the volume.[4] Taking into account the characters who worked/work on the border of cultures (a phenomenon characteristic of the Balkan region) is a clear signal that the authors perceive the notion of "Croatian heritage" also in its broader, less national and homogeneous sense. However, it would be reasonable, I think, to take a transcultural approach to bibliographic sources and subsequently to introduce a diversity of identity into the entries. The absence of such a classification, which seems particularly important in the context of the thematic issue "Balkan Jewish Women" of *Studia Judaica*, makes the reader feel lost and unable to discover, for example, the tragic history and fate of the Jews in Yugoslavia from the entries (the reader can only guess which of the women were of Jewish

[3] Magdalena Koch, *…kiedy dojrzejemy jako kultura… Twórczość pisarek serbskich na początku XX wieku (kanon – genre – gender)* (Wrocław, 2007; Serbian edition: Beograd, 2012), 56.

[4] Ibid. In 2016, a scholary session devoted to the achievements of Belović Bernadžikovska, entitled *Jelica Belović Bernadzikowska – Ethnographer, Pedagogue, Author…*, was organized in Serbia as part of the project "Knjiženstvo: Theory and History of Women's Writing in Serbian until 1915." The content of abstracts can be traced on: http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/Jelica%20BB_e-book_ISPRAVKE2_FIN.pdf [retrieved: 1 Feb. 2018]. See also a chapter about Belović Bernadžikovska in Ivana Pantelić, Jelena Milinković, Ljubinka Škodrić, *Dvadeset žena koje su obeležile XX vek u Srbiji. 1. deo* (Beograd, 2013), 27–31.

origin). This may lead to misleading conclusions, universalization and instrumentalization of the experience of Jews, as well as of other important minorities living in Croatia.

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