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FOREWORD

Since 2006, when the interdisciplinary research group “The Borders of Europe” was founded at the University of Bergen, the members of the group have been investigating how boundary lines are drawn in Europe in the fields of art, literature and philosophy. Especially, we have been looking into how various kinds of borders have contributed towards establishing and redefining the power structures of hegemony and mental images of *Europeanness*. What does it mean to be European and to belong – or more important: to feel as *not* belonging – to a European historical and cultural tradition?

To discuss this kind of questions by focusing on cultural minorities in Europe, especially on artistic expressions from members of Jewish communities, “The Borders of Europe” arranged in October 2013 an international seminar in Odessa, which was followed up by an international workshop in Bergen in May 2014. To the members of our group, mostly Norwegians, coming to Odessa was of special interest, as one of the theoretical foundations of the group are the works of the great Russian philosopher, linguist and theorist of literature Michail M. Bakhtin, who studied for several years in this town. Today Odessa is an important centre of Bakhtinian studies, and it is also a town of special interest for the study of the role of Jewish cultural expressions, as it used to host one of the most important Jewish communities in Europe.

The members of “The Borders of Europe” are scholars from various fields of the humanities, mostly from literary or philosophical disciplines, but also from academic studies on art, architecture and theatre performances. We have been organizing international seminars in Russia, Greece, Turkey and Norway, which have resulted in two scientific anthologies.¹

The first of these volumes, *The Borders of Europe. Hegemony, Aesthetics and Border Poetics*, is divided into three sections. In

¹ Holm, H.V., Læg Reid, S., Skorgen, T.: *The Borders of Europe. Hegemony, Aesthetics and Border Poetics*, Aarhus University Press 2012 and Holm, H.V., Læg Reid, S., Skorgen, T.: *Europe and its Interior Other(s)*, Aarhus University Press 2014.

the first section, we discuss aesthetic hegemonies and divisions between centrality and periphery in Europe. The second section presents various constructions of national, regional and artistic identity in European literature and art, whereas the volume's third section is devoted to poetics and aesthetics of borders (and border crossing) in contemporary literature and art.

In our second volume, *Europe and its Interior Other(s)*, we are mainly focusing on the historical dimension of what we call the "European Other(s)", e.g. members of minority cultural groups in Europe throughout the ages. After an introduction on European notions of identity and otherness in times of crisis, we look into the history of some of the European Other(s), through various literary expressions from different historical moments, among others in medieval literature, in narratives from European pilgrims leaving the old continent, and in examples of nationalistic poetry. In a following section we analyze how the situation of European Jews are described in novels both by Jews and non-Jews, and we conclude by presenting some "variations on the interior Other(s)" in Russian, Nordic and Turkish literature and architecture.

To our group, coming to Odessa and having the opportunity to discuss important cultural and artistic European questions with local colleagues, represents not only a scientific event and a rewarding challenge. Taking into consideration the political earthquake that started in Ukraine just some month after our seminar and of which we still don't see the final outcome, we most sincerely hope that our academic collaboration with colleagues from the Odessa National University will continue and hopefully be expanding through new research projects linked to our common European past, present and future.

Helge Vidar Holm,
Professor at the University of Bergen, Norway.

**SHADOW OF TRAGEDY:
JEWISH LINE IN SPIRITUAL
LANDSCAPE OF XX CENTURY**



ON SARTRE'S *RÉFLEXIONS SUR LA QUESTION JUIVE* (1946) AND ITS POSTERITY

Helge Vidar HOLM (University of Bergen)

When Jean-Paul Sartre published his essay *Réflexions sur la question juive* in 1946, only a year after the ending of World War II, the essay was met with a large scale of different reactions, from Jews as well as from non-Jews. In this article, I shall be looking at some of these reactions. I will also take into account various reactions to the essay about 50 years later, when a seminar was held to celebrate the anniversary of its publication (under the title *Antisemite and Jew*) in the US in 1948.¹ Inspired by the Bakhtinian notion of polyphony, I shall discuss some controversial aspects of the essay and its reception, which I will analyze in relation to Sartre's hegemonic position at the time, as a famous, non-Jewish intellectual.

The greater part of Sartre's essay was probably written between October and December 1944. Its first and largest chapter was first published in December 1945, in Sartre's and Simone de Beauvoir's newly founded journal, *Les Temps modernes*, under the title "Portrait de l'antisémite". The American translation of the complete essay came in 1948 under the title *Antisemite and Jew*. Michel Rybalka has an interesting comment on the choice of title for the publication in the US:

(...) the French title was discarded in favour of *Anti-Semite and Jew*, a descriptive and concise wording that avoided the somewhat controversial 'question juive' (Rybalka 1999: 164-165).

Rybalka also tells that Sartre's first title proposition was "La situation des Juifs en France", but when and why the title was changed, we do not know. On the whole, we know little about the genesis of this essay, but the assumption is that most of it was

¹ Twelve articles based on papers from this seminar are published in the MIT journal *October* 1999, No 87, Season Winter.

written during two or three months just before the end of the year of 1944.

Thus a rough draft of complete essay might have been more or less finished about one year before the first part of it was published in *Les Temps modernes* in December 1945. As the original manuscript is lost, we are not able to tell which modifications Sartre made before he sent it to his editor in France in the autumn of 1946. However, in the letter which was enclosed in this manuscript parcel, Sartre notes: “Here is the text massively reworked (...). The printed pages (from *Les Temps modernes*) can be reused.” (Rybalka 1999: 168). And we know from other sources that Sartre removed about 50 pages from the part of the manuscript he published in 1945 in *Les Temps modernes* (Rybalka 1999: 171). These were pages treating what Sartre calls “the inauthentic Jew”, and he removed them after having let some Jewish friends read this manuscript.

Regarding the original French title, *Réflexions sur la question juive*, there is little doubt that talking about “the Jewish question” in 1945 implied a politically and ideologically ambiguous polyphony, in French as in English. In German, as in Norwegian, *die Judenfrage* or *Jødespørsmålet*, would at the time, just after the war, definitely be related to the Nazis’ use of the word, and thereby also to the Nazi «solution» to the question, the final solution – *die Endlösung*. I find difficult to believe Michel Rybalka’s presumption that Sartre must have been unaware of such connotations. I think Sartre knew, but most likely he was not really opposed to the idea that this title might create debate and provoke some of his readers be that as it may. The title given by Sartre in accordance with his French editor was certainly not innocent, neither in 1946, nor later, as we shall see. However, before entering that discussion, I would like to present the main ideas of the essay. I would also like to point out that the polyphony that I shall comment upon, is not exactly the kind of polyphony discussed by Mikhaïl Bakhtin in his famous study on the novels of Dostoyevsky (Bakhtine 1970). This is because an essay does not present characters in the same way as does a novel. An important aspect of the essay genre is, however, to vary – and sometimes weaken – the author’s position as the dominating voice, to let other points of view have a voice of their own, which in turn

the author comments upon. This is exactly what Sartre is doing in *Réflexions sur la question juive*.

He bases his analysis of the Jewish question on the four following paradigmatic models: The antisemite, the democrat, the inauthentic Jew and the authentic Jew. Through his discussion of the antisemite's characteristics and position, Sartre points at an attitude which in my view is quite typical and probably still dominating among Frenchmen, the tendency to look upon oneself as a typical representative of the Universal Human Being, and on the Others, be they Jews or, for instance, Arabs or other Africans, as representatives of different, less universal communities.

Paradoxically, as Sartre shows us, this attitude is quite typical of the tolerant democrat. For the Jew, the tolerant democrat is thus a dubious friend, as he refuses to accept the Jew as a Jew, but sees him or her as a representative of the universal human being, just like himself. I shall come back to this in my presentation of the four paradigmatic models in Sartre's essay.

Personal choice and freedom of choice are fundamental aspects of Sartrean existentialist philosophy. They are understood as a part of the human condition. As responsible humans, we are condemned to this kind of freedom. "L'homme est condamné à être libre", as Sartre says in his famous essay *l'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (Sartre 1946, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*). Seen from this philosophical platform, anti-semitism results from a person's fundamental choice, a choice which forms that person's relations to other people, to society and to history. It is a decisive choice that implies an emotional state where feelings such as hatred and anger stop rational thinking and lead to an attitude which is beyond argumentation: it is *imperméable*, in Sartre's words. Anti-semitism is completely irrational, and for that reason, it would be wrong to define it as an "opinion", like an idea or an attitude which may be rationally explained. If the Jew didn't exist, Sartre says, the antisemite would have invented him (or his equivalent), as an answer to his own need for a scapegoat. And if the antisemite refuses all rational arguments against his own attitude, it is not because he feels that his conviction is strong in itself, but because he has chosen an *esprit de synthèse*, a synthetic attitude against the Jews,

an attitude where a person's individual personality or characteristics are without any importance, because he/she is a Jew. The *synthèse* (or the dominating feature) is the Jewishness of the person, the rest is of minor, if any, importance.

When we come to the democrat, he is not exactly the friend the Jew needs, because the democrat refuses to understand the synthetic way in which the antisemite sees the Jew. The democrat sees the Jew as a member of a universal humanity, where we all are good and bad to various degrees. The democrat has an analytic attitude, an *esprit d'analyse*, and he is thus on a level of argumentation far beyond that of the antisemite. His ideal, however, is that of assimilation into the universal melting pot, an ideal which is not necessarily that of a Jew. The Jew may be inauthentic or authentic, according to Sartre, and the authentic Jew would most likely refuse the universalism of the tolerant democrat. But, as Sartre quite rightly points out, the choice of being an authentic Jew is a moral decision which may satisfy the Jew on the level of ethics, but which is in no way a solution on the social and political level.¹ The situation of the Jew is this: Whatever he does, it will be turned against him.

According to Sartre, it is the antisemite who has created the Jew, or rather, the idea of the Jew as a different species of humanity. This creation of a *personnage fantôme*, a phantom character, does not really concern the authentic Jew, because he has himself chosen to realize his Jewish condition, he has made the fundamental choice of being a Jew. He knows from the experience given to him by History that he is condemned to be a *paria*, a stranger to those who consider themselves to be universal. And he claims the right to have a Jewish identity, he is proud to be a Jew. In this way, he takes the power of definition away from the antisemite, who no longer can reach him in his right to be what he is.

The existential situation of the inauthentic Jew is different because he sees himself partly as the others see him, because he let the others, and among them the antisemite, have the power of definition. In fact this is how most of us understand ourselves, according to an existentialist (and phenomenological) comprehension of the gaze

¹ Remember the fact that most of the essay was written in 1944.

of the Other. Our self-understanding comes not only from within. The Jew, however, has a sort of a double bind here. Not only has he got to face the others' gaze, or say, the others' impression of his person and his personality, he has to comply with the "phantom character" that he knows is not his own, but which is bestowed upon him by the others. In his relation to other people, the Jew is overdetermined, in the sense that his fundamental relation to others is double, because he knows that he must relate to the "phantom character", no matter what he does in his own life or how he develops his own personality.

This fact puts the inauthentic Jew into an existential situation of permanent guilt. He will always have to prove that he is a better person than the phantom character to which he always has to relate. In addition, he knows that his Jewishness will be used against him, no matter how well he succeeds in life. He has to relate to the possibility that everything may be taken away from him overnight. Even in "normal times", that is when peace and democracy rule the country, the Jew will still be in another situation concerning human and civil rights than the "universal" Frenchman, Sartre points out. What any Frenchman sees as natural, evident rights as a citizen, will in fact be way beyond the reach of a Jew, especially of an inauthentic Jew, who permits these facts to dominate his existence. Sartre puts it this way:

I, who am not a Jew, I have nothing to deny or to prove.
But if a Jew has chosen to refuse the idea of a specific Jewish, non-universal specificity, thus implying that there is no such thing as a Jewish race, it is up to him to prove this (Sartre 1946: 109. *My translation*).

One may note the polyphonic dimension in Sartre's argumentation. He presents the Jewish situation from different points of view, sometimes from that of an antisemite, sometimes from that of a Jew, and again sometimes from what we may think is the speaker's own point of view. This rhetorical position has created a lot of different readings of Sartre's essay.

One of the readers in France at the time when the essay first was published, Robert Misrahi, tells in an article called "Sartre and

the Jews. A Felicitous Misunderstanding” (Misrahi 1999) about his own reaction, as a Jew himself, to the essay, a very positive reaction, as were those of many of his fellow Jews. According to Misrahi, these positive reactions were largely based on a misunderstanding caused by lacking knowledge of the philosophical idea behind Sartre’s discussion of the effect of the gaze of the Other. Misrahi and most of his Jewish friends quite agreed to Sartre’s idea about a “Jewish phantom character”, created by antisemites, but they did not realize that this phantom character had come into being in their own personality, through the effect of phenomenological personality constitution. They looked upon themselves as authentic Jews, or at least, as potential authentic Jews, when in fact they behaved and thought like inauthentic Jews. And the Jews, who disliked the essay at its first publication, were also wrong in their interpretation of it, according to Misrahi. They thought that Sartre did not accept Jewishness, because he was opposed to the *esprit de synthèse*, where Jewishness was the important, dominating factor, not the personality of each Jewish individual. Probably a main reason for these misunderstandings is to be found in the apparent position held by the speaker or the writer; he presents various positions on what he calls the Jewish question, he repeats arguments from antisemites as well as from tolerant democrats, and the various voices that are being heard in the essay are not always clearly defined as to their rhetorical status.

When Sartre repeats commonplace statements like the “phantom ideas” about the Jews, – is he then ironic and marking a distance to these allegations, or is he showing how these characteristics have become part of the personality of quite a few Jews, through their personality constitution, seen from a phenomenological standpoint? The polyphonic aspect of his way of discussing is present in *Réflexions sur la question juive* already in the title of the essay, as we have already seen, and as we shall see from the reaction from one of the essay’s Jewish readers, Susan Suleiman, in two articles, respectively from 1995 and 1999. In 1995, she claims that the French title chosen by Sartre “evoked tens and hundreds of anti-Semitic papers and articles and special issues of

newspapers published in France from the 1880s through the Second World War.” (Suleiman 1995: 204; quoted by Petrey 1999: 120).

Still, Susan Suleiman is quite aware of the positive impact made by the essay on the Jewish readers just after World War II. Commenting on the essay’s first reception, she underlines an important point:

Paradoxically, although his textual addressees were other non-Jews, it was almost exclusively Jewish readers (or, in the case of Fanon, readers who saw parallels between themselves and Jews as an oppressed group) who were transformed by the book (Suleiman 1999: 138).¹

If we go back to Robert Misrahi, his statements confirm the point stressed here by Suleiman:

”What excited me throughout the book was his (Sartre’s) evident good will, his manifest care to render justice, and his desire, in face of the Jew’s great suffering, to address himself to them, to tell them there was someone on their side. And that was not all. *Anti-Semite and Jew (Réflexions sur la question juive)* was a powerful affirmation of sympathy, but even more importantly, it was an effective weapon against anti-Semitism. For though Sartre’s critique was scathing, it was also extremely pertinent. So much so in fact, that after the book’s publication it became much more difficult for anti-Semitism to be publicly expressed. Sartre’s prestige, authority, talent, and philosophy had succeeded in making any anti-Semitic approach or thought an outrage” (Suleiman 1999: 64).

Here we can see that Sartre’s situation as a writing subject implies two dimensions both related to a position of hegemony. Basically he represents the hegemony of universality through his position as a non-Jewish citizen: (“there was someone on their side”). At the same time he incarnates a certain intellectual hegemony

¹ Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), French psychiatrist and author from Martinique, became famous as an anti-colonialist and a coloured, revolutionary leader.

due to his position as a famous writer, as both a philosopher and a politically engaged fictional writer.

However, to Susan Suleiman, Sartre's own position as the author of *Réflexions sur la question juive* is dubious:

Today, after decolonization and after the woman's movement, we know that *who is speaking* matters, and that the oppressed are most fully empowered when they speak for themselves (Suleiman 1999: 138. *Suleiman's own underlining*).

Suleiman states clearly that she does not regard Sartre as an antisemite outside of this particular textual relation. But to her, the use of *la question juive* in the title of the essay, and the fact that Sartre makes use of expressions like *la race juive, les traits de leur race, un des traits essentiels du Juif*, etc, in his text, made Suleiman furious in 1995. Even if she has calmed down by 1999, she still calls these expressions the essay's "flaws" (Suleiman 1999). She refuses to see such expressions as parts of a polyphonic argumentation, where Sartre is using stereotype anti-Semitic formulations to attack the way of thinking that has created the Jewish "phantom character", which in turn has its effect on Jews' self-image, especially the self-image of those Sartre classifies as "inauthentic Jews".

Suleiman is, however, fully aware of the ambiguity of her own reading, but this does not make her change her position:

Sartre's language and argumentation produce, at certain moments in his text, notably in the long third section where he discusses the 'inauthentic Jew' – a troubling 'anti-Semite effect', all the more troubling because it clashes with his declared meaning and intentions: to combat anti-Semitism and to 'wage a war against anti-Semites'(Suleiman 1999: 131).

Sandy Petrey, himself not a Jew, reacts like this to Suleiman's reading of the essay:

In Suleiman's representation, when Sartre used the language favoured by the Vichy regime and its Nazi overlords, he was producing an anti-Semitic effect and becoming 'in the space of his writing an anti-Semite' (Suleiman 1995: 208). When 'Jewish publications' used exactly the same language

at exactly the same time, their 'use was defensive; it was a matter of countering the Nazi or the Nazi-inspired use of the term' (Suleiman 1995: 204). The same words had an opposite impact according to whether they were uttered by Jews or non-Jews. In the former case, the intent was to counter the Nazis. In the latter, the effect was to reproduce Nazi ideology (Petrey 1999: 122).

The point here is that Petrey sees the "dubious" formulations as parts of the essay's rhetoric. In his opinion, there is polyphony in the French title as well as in many of the stereotype formulations about Jews in Sartre's essay. To him, it is important to understand this rhetoric in the light of a philosophical argumentation that describes how a Jew's self-image is being strongly influenced by the *situation* forming his/her surroundings:

Every statement about 'the Jew' in Sartre's pamphlet designates a situation rather than a condition, and I consider it a fundamental distortion of Sartre's arguments to take such statements as if they manifested a racist concept quite literally unthinkable within Sartrean philosophy (Petrey 1999: 127).

As I see it, Suleiman's negative reactions to Sartre's way of expressing himself in this essay may be linked both to the polyphonic and to the hegemonic aspects of the Sartrean discourse. As for the hegemonic aspects, Susan Suleiman clearly reacts to having her own situation as a Jew explained to her by someone *outside* her group, by somebody "universal" and thus "neutral".

It is of course impossible to measure exactly to what extent the reception of an essay like *Réflexions sur la question juive* is depending on non-textual criteria, such as the author's *situation* in relation to the readers' *situations*. There is, however, no doubt "that *who is speaking* matters", as Susan Suleiman puts it, both on the level of intellectual hegemonic position and concerning the relation to the readers' position. The reception of *Réflexions sur la question juive* over the years tells us clearly that non-textual criteria have been and still will be important to many readers, and for that reason alone such criteria should not be ignored in a discussion of the polyphonic aspects of "dubious" formulations in this essay and in its French title.

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**COLONIALISM AND THE 'JEWISH QUESTION':
HANNAH ARENDT AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN NS-LITERATURE**

Torgeir SKORGEN (University of Bergen)

In his notorious autobiography and political manifest *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler raged against the so called “Black disgrace” (“Schwarze Schande”), referring to the so called Rhineland Bastards. These were derogatory terms used to describe Afro-German children of mixed German and African parentage. Allegedly most of them were fathered by Africans serving as French colonial troops occupying the Rhineland after World War I. According to Hitler, they represented a contamination of the white race ‘*by Negro blood on the Rhine in the heart of Europe*’. In reality, most of these children were actually fathered by white German colonialists who had brought their African families back home from the colonies, which Germany had lost after World War I. But Hitler had another ready answer to this problem, claiming that the “*Jews had been responsible for bringing Negroes into the Rhineland, with the ultimate idea of bastardizing the white race which they hate and thus lowering its cultural and political level so that the Jew might dominate*”:

“Juden waren es und sind es, die den Neger an den Rhein bringen, immer mit dem gleichen Hintergedanken und klaren Ziele, durch die dadurch zwangslüfig eintretende Bastardisierung die ihnen verhaßte weiße Rasse zu zerstören, von ihrer kulturellen und politischen Höhe zu stürzen und selber zu ihren Herren aufzusteigen.” (Hitler 1940: 357).

Hitler’s conspiracy theory of Judaism and Afro-German race-crossing was twisting the true historical connection between colonialist racism and the German Jews and between the colonizers and the colonized. In her major work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt tried to explain the organization of the Holocaust as an import of practices which had already been tested and carried out in the colonies. Setting off from Hannah Arendt’s view of the

Holocaust as an import of already established colonialist practices to Europe in terms of a “bureaucratic mass-murder” (Arendt 1985: 186), I will focus on the transfer of racial science from the colonies and its impact on the so called “Judenforschung” (“Jew research”) in pre- and inter war Germany and, in turn, on the justification of genocide. In particular, I will discuss the contributions of the racial anthropologists Eugen Fischer and Hans Günther to this scientific and ideological transfer. Finally, I will discuss the literary and ideological justification of genocide and evocation of hatred in a colonialist novel of the German nationalist conservative writer Gustav Frenssen.

Both Frenssen and his friend and admirer Hans Günther may be considered representatives of the spiritually “homeless” generation of the Weimar Republic, as described by Hannah Arendt. In her analysis of the *Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt saw the mythological universe of anti-Semitism and nationalist socialism as a symptom of the lingual and cultural “homelessness” of a generation of right wing intellectuals during the Weimar Republic. The identity of these national conservative intellectuals was largely attached to the virtues of the prewar Wilhelmine authoritarian state (“Obrigkeitsstaat”), that is: duty, obedience, order, hygiene and self-discipline. Many of these nationalist conservatives regarded the French occupation of the Rhineland as a disgrace, referring to an even bigger disgrace, namely the humiliating conditions of the treaty of Versailles, where Germany was required to take the whole responsibility for the outbreak of the World War, to give up all its colonies and parts of its Eastern and Western main land.

To cover up their own failures, parts of the German army head quarter encouraged the distribution of the so called “stab in the back legend” (“Dolchstoßlegende”), claiming that the German army had not been military defeated but betrayed by Jews and communists from their own ranks. This legend soon after became the main tenor of the nationalist socialist propaganda, offering the Weimar generation of homeless intellectuals a fictional homeland of mythological Germanic heroes and Jewish betrayers. In the works of the nationalist conservative (“völkisch”) writer, and later on nationalist socialist professor and NS-ideologist, Hans

F. K. Günther (1891-1968), the Jews were conceived of as agents of modernization, urbanization, industrialism, liberalism, Marxism and modernist aesthetics (cf. Günther 1924: 11 ff.). According to his “Racial anthropology of the Jewish people” (*Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes*) (1929) the so called “Jewish question” was defined as a twofold question, namely as a both cultural and racial challenge to the Europeans (Günther 1930: 292 ff.). But what was the “Jewish question” originally really about?

According to Hannah Arendt, the literary friendship and cooperation between Moses Mendelssohn and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing initiated a temporary climate of Jewish-German cultural exchange. For the German Jews however, this educational humanist recognition turned out to be rather illusive, taking place only at an individual cultural level, and not at a political one (Schönherr-Mann 2006: 44 ff.). The human equality between Jews and Europeans in the educated private saloons was thereby restricted to an aesthetic of recognition, which could not be lasting without a public politics of recognition. Arendt’s critique could in fact also be applied on present multicultural practices: To which extent does the recognition in our time of cultural authenticity and survival on an aesthetic level also promote social inclusion and political freedom and equality?

The social position of the pariahs, recognizing their own social exclusion, was in most cases the only option for the majority of the Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews, living in poverty in their ghettos or on the country side. According to Hannah Arendt, the rich minority of the Jews were, however, given the opportunity to play the part of the social parvenu, thereby receiving a certain ambiguous social recognition at the cost of conversion or repressing one’s Jewish identity. In this sense, being Jewish or non-Jewish, was in principal a matter of choice: Conversion was always an option.

In several European countries, the Jewish-European assimilation strategy turned out so successfully that Friedrich Nietzsche declared that the “Fatherland of the Jews was really Europe” and that the Jews were the true Europeans (Schönherr-Mann 2006: 27). But this was just at the time when the assimilation process was back-clashing and a new kind of racist Anti-Judaism emerged. In the wake of social-Darwinist racism and imperialism,

the question of being Jewish or European was turned into a question of biology and of the fatal laws of history. Anti-Semite thinkers like Houston Stewart Chamberlain conceived of history as a battle between the creative Germanic and the destructive Jewish blood, where only the strongest “race” would prevail (Chamberlain 1922: 353 ff.). Hence a new kind of racist anti-Semitism, leaning on biological arguments, seemed to partly replace the older religiously motivated anti-Judaism. According to the modern anti-Semite world view, conciliation and dialogue was no longer an option, and the aesthetics of recognition and Jewish emancipation thus turned out to be insufficient. Even though the German Jews had received civil and political rights during the 19th century, it was only during the short cultural and political blooming of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) they were considered as citizens.

Yet there were also tensions amongst the Jewish writers and intellectuals regarding the so called “Jewish question”: Where should the Jews really belong? According to Arendt, the assimilationists were deceiving themselves, when believing that they were just as German as the Germans, or just as French as the French. But also the Europeanist strategy, believing that Europe was the true fatherland of the Jews, turned out to be deceitful. In fact it could be turned against the Jewish minorities, questioning their patriotism and throwing suspicion on them as potentially spies. A third position was advocated by the Jewish Zionists, claiming that Palestine was the only true and safe homeland of the Jews. According to Günther, however, the Jewish question ought to be solved by racial hygiene measures and enforced Jewish emigration.

Before I get more closely into Günther’s argumentation, it might be useful to interrogate what kind of colonial experiences the NS-ideologists could draw on with regard to their interpretation of “The Jewish question” as a racial and cultural matter. Until the end of World War I, Germany had conquered four African colonies: Togo, Kamerun, Kenya (German Southeast Africa) and Namibia (German Southwest Africa). The natives suffered from the brutal regime of the German colonizers, in many cases out-cast of the modern capitalist society and its ‘superfluity of men’. As perpetrators and mass-murderers ‘without a cause’, homeless in their own language

and world view, they became fore-runners of the kind of “Banality of Evil” which Arendt later on would ascribe to the bureaucratic mass-murderer Adolf Eichmann:

“But gifted or not, they were all ‘game for anything from pitch and toss to willful murder’ and to them their fellow-men were ‘no more one way or another than that fly there.’ Thus they brought with them, or they learned quickly, the code of manners which befitted the coming type of murderer to whom the only unforgivable sin is to lose his temper.” (Arendt 1985: 189).

Accordingly, excessive physical abuse and punishment nourished the discontent and rage among the native Namibian ethnic groups Hereros and Namas who eventually rebelled against the German colonizers (cf. Zimmerer 2004: 26 ff.). In her brief discussion of Joseph Conrad’s novel *The Heart of Darkness*, Arendt even suggests that the brutal German governor of German Southeast Africa, Carl Peters, could have been the model for the sinister character Mr. Kurtz:

“They were no individuals like the old adventurers, they were the shadows of events with which they had nothing to do. Like Mr. Kurtz in Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness”, they were ‘hollow to the core’, ‘reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity and cruel without courage’. [...] For the only talent that could possibly burgeon in their hollow souls was the gift of fascination which makes ‘a splendid leader of an extreme party’. The more gifted were walking incarnations of resentment like the German Carl Peters (possibly the model for Kurtz), who openly admitted that he ‘was fed up with being counted among the pariahs and wanted to belong to a master race.’” (Arendt, 1985: 189).

But also general von Trotha, the German administrator of German Southeast Afrika, was notorious due to his reckless conduct towards his subjects. The actions of these and other colonial administrators were not governed by the more or less public and democratic procedures of their European mainlands, but by bureaucratic decrees, as Arendt highlights in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. According to Arendt, these politics were in turn carried out by a strategic association between elite of officials and the mob:

“While race, whether as a home-grown ideology in Europe or an emergency explanation for shattering experiences, has always attracted the worst elements in Western civilization, bureaucracy was discovered by and first attracted the best, and sometimes even the most clear-sighted strata of the European intelligentsia. The administrator who ruled by reports and decrees in more hostile secrecy than any oriental despot grew out of a tradition of military discipline in the midst of ruthless and lawless men: [...]” (Arendt 1985: 186).

To this mixture of European adventurers and outcasts, the colonial world appeared almost like a “phantom world”, which they could rearrange according to their own desires without taking normal ethical or legal considerations: “*But what, after all, took decades to achieve in Europe, because of the delaying effect of social ethical values, exploded with the suddenness of a short circuit in the phantom world of colonial adventure*” (Arendt 1985: 190). Setting aside the procedures of pluralist democratic decision making and the ideals of an open public debate between free individuals, colonial administration also set the standards for the later totalitarian regimes in Europe herself. How does Hannah Arendt’s description of the colonialist origins of totalitarianism apply to German colonialist novels, such as Gustav Frenssen’s bestselling novel *Peter Moors Travel to the Southwest* (*Peter Moors Fahrt nach dem Südwest*)?

Today Gustav Frenssen (1863-1945) is an almost forgotten German novelist, whose name appears most frequently in foot notes on Knut Hamsun (cf. Krömmelbein 1997: 386 ff.) and the young Thomas Mann (cf. Stein 1997: 78 f.), who both inspired and were inspired by Frenssen. But in 1912, Frenssen was suggested as a candidate to the Nobel Prize in literature. When the Nobel committee, however, preferred to give the reward to Gerhart Hauptmann, Frenssen was convinced by his publisher that he had been back stabbed by a Jewish conspiracy (cf. Frenssen 1940: 270 ff.; Griese 2011: 107 f.). Frenssen, who was born as the somewhat fragile son of a poor Northern German craftsman, had first studied theology and served as a vicar, but found himself uncomfortable with his own gospel. During the epoch of the Weimar Republic (1918-33), Frenssen spent half a year in the USA, raising money to

help starving German children in the wake of the French occupation of the Rhineland.

Both with his first “Heimat” novel *Die Sandgräfin* (1896) and his first and only colonial novel *Peter Moor*, published in 1906, the nationalist conservative Frenssen experienced such a tremendous commercial success, that he eventually could give up preaching and live as a full time writer. And yet in his naturalist “Heimat” novels, Frenssen frequently combined his role as an author with that of a vicar and spiritual adviser (cf. Griese 2011: 8). As the nationalist socialist regime offered the fainting star writer Frenssen the status of a pagan NS-prophet and spiritual educator, Frenssen grasped his opportunity to become a preacher again, now advocating Nordic paganism, NS-eugenics and Darwinist philosophy of culture and history (cf. Frenssen 1940: 320 ff.) To Frenssen, being an autodidact in these fields, the particular mixture of pseudo-science and demagoguery signifying the NS-propaganda, turned out to be both seductive and persuading. Accordingly, in his 1940 published *Life story* (*Lebensbericht*), Frenssen advocated the “Nordic race” ideology of his admirers Hans Günther and Heinrich Himmler and defended both nationalist socialist anti-Semitism (Frenssen 1940: 249 ff.) and euthanasia. As I will try to demonstrate, some important aspect of modern racist anti-Semitism was transferred and transformed along this particular colonial axis of racist pseudo-science and ideological hate propaganda.

With regard to its genre, *Peter Moor* may be regarded as an educational colonialist novel (“Entwicklungsroman”) (Schneider 2011: 116), where the war experience during the Herero upheaval 1903-4 is depicted as an initiation of traditional Wilhelmine values, such as braveness and emotional self-control, sexual abstinence, order and hygiene, obedience and loyalty. In Frenssen’s novel, many historical details of the so called Herero and Nama upheaval (1904) appear authentic, such as the re-enforcement of the retreating German troops by the 2 Navy regiment, setting off from Kiel. In Frenssen’s novel, the main character Franz Moor, like Frenssen himself a son of a Northern German craftsman, joins the navy regiment and goes by ship from Kiel to Namibia to fight against the military successful Hereros, who had so far been underestimated:

“*They said that they had not expected such braveness from the enemy [...]*” (Frenssen 1906: 89). The turning point of this colonial war was the battle of Waterburg, where the native troops were defeated and 60.000 out of 80.000 Hereros were driven into the Omaheke desert in an attempt to escape the German troops (cf. Zimmerer 2004: 50 ff.). More than 7.000 surviving Hereros and Namas were now bureaucratically registered, forced to slave labor and left to die in German concentration camps like the Haifischinsel (Shark Island).

Both parallels and differences have been established between the Herero genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, for instance the extension of bureaucratic planning and the organization by non-democratic decrees. Like the Jewish and Roma prisoners, the Herero captives were also subjected to medical experiments, and the skulls of decapitated prisoners were sent to the anthropological institutes in Germany and examined by anatomists and racial anthropologists like Eugen Fischer (1874-1967). On the other hand, the Jewish Holocaust was planned and organized over a much longer period than the more improvised Herero genocide (Zimmerer 2004: 62 f.).

As Gustav Frenssen wrote his novel *Peter Moor* in 1906, the foundations of modern scientific racism had already been established by writers like Arthur Joseph Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Aspects of this racist pseudo-science are also reflected in Frenssen’s novel and ideologically extended by the novelistic rhetoric of ideological hatred, marked by dehumanization, racial alienation and the ethnocentric view of the African colony as an expansion of the German “Heimat”. In Frenssen’s novel *Peter Moor* the colonial world is depicted as a phantom world, which therefore seems replaceable with the norms and features of the German homeland. And, as described by Hannah Arendt in her analysis of race and bureaucracy, the natives are depicted as ghost-like creatures between humans and animals. “*Not far ahead I could see a black half naked shape, like a monkey, with hands and feet and the rifle between his jaws, climbing up a tree, and pointed at him and cheered out of joy as I saw him fall down.*” (Frenssen 1906: 85). Accordingly, the native Hereros in Frenssen’s novel are depicted partly as ghosts, partly as animals, without capacity for human caring and empathy.

The main character is also convinced that any communication between Germans and Hereros is bound to fail due to the mutual racial distance and alienation. He is therefore upset about some of his fellow Germans trying get in touch with the colonized Hereros:

“On the square in front of the fortress, there were also some enemy women, among whom some were young and not ugly. Most of them, however, were wizened and disgusting. They were fetching the laundry from the soldiers and hanging around, smoking their small pipes. I strongly disliked the fact, that some us were approaching them with a few facetious words in English or Plattdeutsch” (cf. Frenssen 1906: 46).

This anxiety of racial contact was later scientifically confirmed by the writings of the German anatomists and racial anthropologist Eugen Fischer (1874-1967), who later on became a nationalist socialist rector of the University of Berlin. Fischer experienced his international scientific breakthrough by his study of so called “Rehoboth bastards”, referring to German-African children in German Southwest Africa, who were fathered by white German colonialists and mothered by black Herero women, frequently as results of rapes. In his famous study *Die rehobother Bastards und das Bastardisierungsproblem beim Menschen*, Fischer asserted that the “racially mixed” children were less intelligent than their “racially pure” parents (cf. Fischer 1913). In the terminology of racial hygiene, this was an example of so called “dysgenesis”, in the sense of an evolutionary intellectual decline of the population. Preventing this kind of degeneration was one of the main tasks of the 20th century eugenics movement in Germany and Europe. In his Namibian case study, Fischer seemed to have established the fact, that so called race-crossing or miscegenation, would lead to mentally and morally defect offspring. And this was one of the main reasons why his study became so influential all over Europe until the 1960ies. In 1934 Fischer advocated discriminatory measures against the German Jews in order to prevent the contamination of the creative Nordic-Germanic race from alien races, which could damage its spiritual evolution. His students and colleagues at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute, Otmar van Verschuer, Karin Magnusson and Josef Mengele would later on commit crimes against humanity

with their medical experiments on Concentration Camp prisoners in Poland.

The presumed racial gap between Jews and Germans as a Jewish threat was the main tenor of Hans Günther's Jewish anthropology. Also he a colleague and former student of Eugen Fischer, Hans Günther applied Fischer's theory of the "Rehobot bastards" to the case of the German Jews. According to Günthers "Racial anthropology of the Jewish people", the Jews were representing two different races of their own, which in fact were a mixture of seven or eight other races (cf. Günther 1929: 68 ff.). But as a consequence of the Jewish marriage laws, the Jews had developed racial hall-marks on their own through genetic isolation. So what would be the problem with mixing human "races" which were already historically mixed up?

According to Günther, the Jews were signified by a particular racial and cultural alienation towards the "Nordic race" (cf. Günther 1929: 295 f; 305 f.). Jewish assimilation was hence representing a threat against both German culture and the "Nordic blood", which had to be prevented by means enforced sterilization or migration to Palestine. Günther also interprets racial alienation ("Artsfremdheit") between the Jews and the Germans in terms of a Darwinist philosophy of history, conceiving of history as a battle between "the two bloods", where the Jews already had the upper hand due to their purist "politics of the blood". Finally the Jews were representing a spiritual threat, taking control of German finance, press, theater, critics and German culture in general. And as scientific evidence to his manicheanist world view, Günther explicitly refers to Eugen Fischer's study on the *Rehoboth Bastards* (cf. Günther 1929: 198 ff.).

Like Frenssen, Günther was a best-selling author, and in his popularized "Racial anthropology of the German people" (*Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*), he expressed his concern about the so called "Black Shame", referring to the children of mixed parentage in the Rhineland. Since they were the offspring of marriages before the racial Nuremberg laws of September 1935, which prohibited miscegenation, the NS-authorities had no legal measures to use against them. Instead the so called "Commision

Number 3” was appointed to solve the problem. Both Günther and Fischer were appointed as experts of this committee, which eventually decided that the children should be sterilized under the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring. Eventually some 400 Afro-German children were arrested and sterilized in a “Nacht und Nebel” action by the secret German police (cf. Pommerin 1979: 49 ff).

In Frenssen’s novel the racial gap between the white colonizers and the black colonized is also demonstrated by the murdering Hereros’ disinterest in the books of their white victims. How could passages like these be interpreted as rhetoric of fanaticism and ideological hatred? Descriptions like these are serving the purpose of convincing the reader about the inevitability of the racial conflict and the massacre against the Hereros which is about to take place in the last part of the novel. To prepare the mental ground for this shocking event, emotions like anger and crave for revenge must be raised as a reader’s response to the novel.

According to Sternberg’s psychology, the complex emotion of hate is dependent on certain narratives about the hate object, depriving him or her of any individual or human feature. Most of all it is necessary to imagine the hate object as incapable of sharing human qualities and emotions like caring, compassion or respect (cf. Sternberg 2005). Asserting that hate is an emotional withdrawal from love and solidarity, ranging from cold to burning hate, Sternberg also tries to apply this model on hatred on a collective level. The kind of hate which the main character and his fellow soldiers share against the enemy in Frenssen’s novel, is, however, not identical with the kind of “burning hatred”, which Robert J. Sternberg has describes as a response to a violation on an individual level.

The collective forms of hatred must be distributed through different kinds of media and discourses. In the case of colonial hatred towards the colonized, Frenssen’s novel appears to be an example of such mass mediation, the more so as the novel sold more than 74.000 copies in the first year it was published. Its main address was the readers of mass literature in Germany, whose imaginaries of the colonized peoples were later on also confirmed by the authority of racial science. Together with numerous

newspaper articles and colonial publications, these discourses made a massive contribution to the colonial mind set and eventually to the justification of genocide. In this way the “imagined communities” of nationalism, that is a community of people who feel connected without knowing each other by face-to-face meetings (cf. Anderson 1991: 6 ff.), could be turned into an imagined community of hatred towards an imagined group of hate object, whom they had likewise never even met. The character of this kind of ideologically and medially distributed hatred could not be reduced to a single or complex emotion, but must be regarded as a set of dichotomies, stereotypes and narratives, that is as a particular mind set.

In Frenssen’s novel this mind set is expressed and justified in the speech of the field vicar, preparing the soldiers for the massacre on the Hereros by rhetorically turning mass-murder into a moral virtue: “*We have to remain tough and kill; but as individuals and people we still have to seek for high thoughts and noble deeds, so that we can contribute to our future brotherly humanity*” (Frenssen 1906: 201). Also in this novel, Frenssen’s own view is represented by a vicar, serving as a spiritual adviser. According to his twisted logic, killing the enemy means eliminating a negative factor and is therefore agreeable with ‘high thoughts and noble deeds’. Frenssen’s novel *Peter Moor* soon became compulsory reading at the high schools of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, and one of Frenssen’s most prominent admirers was the future commander of the SS, Heinrich Himmler. In his infamous Poznan speech in October 1942, Himmler appealed to a staff of higher SS-officers to keep themselves tough, and yet morally decent, facing the self-inflicted but necessary horrors of the Holocaust:

“Most of you here know what it means when 100 corpses lie next to each other, when there are 500 or when there are 1.000. To have endured this and at the same time have remained a decent person – with exceptions due to human weaknesses – has made us tough, and is a glorious chapter that has not and will not be spoken of.” (<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/h/himmler-heinrich/posen/oct-04-43/ausrottung-transl-nizkor.html>).

In this speech, Himmler imitates both the logic and the rhetorical style of Frenssen’s novel, be it unconsciously or not, turning his Black Death squads into white knights.

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**THE AESTHETIC SPHERE OF THE
JEWISH SPECTATOR AND THE GUILT'S
NEGATIVE DIALECTICS:
FROM ADORNO'S IMPOSSIBILITY TO WRITE
AFTER AUSCHWITZ TO CHAGALL'S EUROPEAN
"DEGENERATED ART"**

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Impossibility vs. Unauthenticity: The Abdicated Subject

In the first case, the experience of Auschwitz is devoted to a dialectic discourse that confirms the philosopheme of pure identity as death, in Adorno's hermeneutical key, opening the dimension of a moral normative mechanism of "looking back" at its cultural heritage:

"What is not wrong however is the less cultural question of whether it is even permissible for someone who accidentally escaped and by all right ought to have been murdered, to go on living after Auschwitz. Their continued existence already necessitates the coldness, of the basic principle of the capitalist subjectivity, without which Auschwitz would not have been possible: the drastic guilt of the spared" (Adorno 2001:213, transl. D.R).

I shall argue that this is the principle source of "the aesthetic sphere of the Jewish spectator", agreed by Kierkegaard's philosophy and introduced by Adorno in the *Negative Dialectic* scheme, that derives a different accent of this new paradigm: the aesthetic of weakness and the "animality" of desilusion. According to Adorno, "that which is inhuman in this, the capacity to distance oneself and rise above things by being a spectator, is in the end precisely what is human, whose ideologues react so vehemently against" (Adorno 2001:213, transl. D.R.), human and inhuman, being, in my opinion, under his discourse, the two faces for the Subject regarded as Self and as Otherness, as principal actor and as a survivor, as story-teller and as spectator.

The examination of Adorno's *Negative Dialectic* will end, at this level, by shifting cultural, aesthetical and political perspectives in order to explain why, inspired by this philosophical trend, the literature begin to be tolerant to the hermetical discourse, as Paul Celan's one, agreed by Adorno and defined as a typical and ideal manner to express the absolute horror through silence¹, arguing that by this model, the literature post-Auschwitz succeeded in procure negative roles to the veridical content, promoting the art as an antithesis to the given reality, the European culture as a sensitive reflex to any resistance in front of Bad, as Beckett's drama's pages pretend, and the "aesthetisation of the praxis", as method to model the social myths about culpability and genocide lines.

The main problem is represented by the contradictions that may occur by subjecting Adorno's different perspectives about the possibility to give Auschwitz a proper narrative context, to a hermeneutical approach. Three are his main tensioned statements:

1. *"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"* (Adorno 2003:34), the theses being exposed in a developed formula later, by claiming the fact that *"It has become impossible to write poetry today"* (Adorno 2003:34);
2. *"Art may be the only remaining medium of truth in an age of incomprehensible terror and suffering"* (Adorno 1984:27)
3. *"Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems"* (Adorno 2001:213)

¹ The fundamental criticism that Adorno addresses to any form of literary creation inserted in the post-Auschwitz era is based on a defence movement against the barbaric written historical testimonies, no matter the fictional degree it may adopt. Nevertheless, even if Adorno submitted the idea that any written creation conceived after Auschwitz is barbaric, he never directed his sentence to the philosophical condition of any knowledge that might take a similar form. The philosophical discourse was never mentioned, even if it represented the singular instrument for a critical treatment that he ever applied in such an analysis.

In my opinion, each of Adorno's three theses contributes to the formulation of a critique of violence¹, abusing, in this context, the traditional form of Benjamin. In the first instance, we can easily observe the manner in which the history of post-Auschwitz, that is postulated using the practices of *subjectivation*, is described in terms of authenticity through the conceptual couple: *possible-impossible*. A certain approach developed in the mentioned direction is not a complete one: nevertheless, it was the common manner used to describe Adorno's theoretical intentions. What we observe here, from my point of view, is the archaeology of a construction that claims the fact that the main postmodern narrative construction of the Subject is an illusion, at least because of the suffering experience that each person had to endure once that the autonomy value was suspended. And this is the key-concept.

I shall argue, starting from this point, that regarding the principal sense Adorno gave to the terms of Auschwitz and Holocaust, we shall see how each thesis described above gains coherence not only in placing the relation between art and society into an equation having its final result a production of narrative contents, but also in understanding why art, philosophy, literature and history are equal, once that they are all procuring, through the critique of violence that might be expressed using their instruments, an internal tension disputed by ethical and aesthetical perspectives, transforming the matter of the Subject into a problem of **representation**. We shall see that once the Subject is reduced at a *representation-as* problem content, than the fundamental relation between autonomy and authenticity will allow us to understand all the ethical and aesthetical implications for a potential answer given to Karl Richter question about *why and how it is possible to silence Auschwitz?* (Richter 1972:10).

First of all, let's proceed a deconstruction scheme. Adorno uses the Auschwitz term only as a general context to invoke the

¹ Somehow, Adorno seems to situate his critique in the proximity of Benjamin's one, considering the entire Holocaust an administrated crime. According to Benjamin, "All mythic, law-making violence, which may call 'executive' is pernicious. Pernicious, too, is the law-preserving, "administrative" violence that serves it". (Benjamin 1978: 252)

moral context of atrocities and the tragedy of a humanity based on inexplicable terror. The concept becomes a symbol for the concentrated death, but for many contemporary interprets, it became just a general term used to inaugurate `the commodification of the Holocaust'¹. But Holocaust involves, in an etymological line, the sense of `total destruction`. David Huebert, later, in order to postulate a difference, will state the fact that

I use the phrase —the Holocaust only because, in contemporary culture, it carries the connotations of the concept I mean to evoke with it. I use it not in the older sacrificial sense, but in the modern, secular, and historically specific sense`. (Huebert 2008: 2).

I consider that the distance between moral and aesthetical contrasts proposed by the main historical actors participating to the alternative Auschwitz-Holocaust is based on something more sensitive: when Adorno refers to the barbarism of *post-Auschwitz art*- that I shall understand as a main context for any kind of representation- graphical, pictorial, discursive one-, he is looking to express the failure of a remaining medium of truth in an age of incomprehensible terror and suffering, and by suffering we shall understand a historical consequence derived from all the conditions that cause unnecessary human pain.

The `pre` and `post` Auschwitz consciousness is the conflict between ethical and aesthetical representations for typical discourses- philosophical, artistic, poetical or dramaturgical ones- that might validate, only through a simple representation, the Holocaust's culture, and not its system of values, narrations and expressions for authenticity that survivors may give to humanity in order to understand how far may go the *subjectivation* practices, but

¹ This kind of process is determined by moral frames inspired from the collective memory, generated to discuss social implications of the Holocaust in terms of violence's public recognition, victims, abuse of memories or, much more delicate, in terms of `therapeutic culture for a nation of victims`. But in this discourse, the commodification is regarded as a process which defines popular representations of the Holocaust, involving all its ideological contents.

the ideology of the society that give a cause, a reason and a Final Solution for the Holocaust. This is why, I pretend that Richardson was right understanding that

'Clearly Adorno is not merely speaking about the act of writing poetry, but rather the tension between ethics and aesthetics inherent in an act of artistic production that reproduces the cultural values of the society that generated the Holocaust'. It is the singular path, at least at a first glimpse, to explain why Adorno rectified its thesis and, more than that, why he qualified the assessment that 'suffering [...] also demand she continued existence of the very art it forbids'. (Richardson 2005:2)

Taking into account the next statement- 'When even genocide becomes cultural property in committed literature, it becomes easier to continue complying with the culture that gave rise to the murder' (Adorno 1997: 252-253)- the representation of the Holocaust will be exposed not in terms of *possible-impossible*, but in terms of *speakable- unspeakable*¹. Nevertheless, the authenticity problem remains: representation, contextualized in literature, art or

¹ The speakable-unspeakable report might be concentrated by the Foucauldian perspective understood by Hirsch as a 'screaming silence' about Nazism (to be consulted Hirsch 1991:121). Conceived as an objectification of humans, the Holocaust might be a form of constructing the genealogy of the modern subject applying a bio-power in order to define a disciplinary world habited by docile bodies. The thanatopolitics (Foucault 1988: 160) of the Holocaust is precisely the result of an exercised regimes of practices crated to dissolve individual differentiations and 'impure communities' in a huge dispositive of power. In fact, this is what the Nazi's projects involves, in Foucauldian terms, because '... it is not just the destruction of other races which is the objective of the Nazi regime. The destruction of other races is one side of the Nazi projects. The other side is to expose one's own race to the absolute and the universal danger of death. The risk of death... is one of the principles inscribed among the fundamental obligations to which a Nazi is subject, and one of the essential objectives of Nazi policy' (Foucault 1991:535). Speakable and unspeakable are products of a dispositif, a sum of institutional and discursive practices that can create a socio-political reality, in this case, the Auschwitz's one.

philosophy, cannot pass an adequacy impasse to convey the reality of a lived experience, one that performs a different ethical and aesthetic subjectivation, from one Person to another. Just in order to take an example, look at Richardson example, constructed by using Lang's theory about the moral implications of the representation-as technique.

Lang goes on to qualify any form of representation as essentially a '*representation-as*' (Lang 2000: 51), in which case we can see that any representation is entirely subjective: 'whereas a survivor of Auschwitz might represent the Holocaust *as* a living hell, a surviving SS officer might represent the same experience *as* an excellent career opportunity. All representations-as, for Lang, imply the possibility of other representations-as. The question thus arises: if no form of representation is adequate to convey the extreme pain and suffering experienced by the Holocaust survivor, 'that experience itself being a mediation of the original object' (van Alphen 1999:27), *is it morally and/or ethically correct to attempt representation at all?*' (Richardson 2005:2).

Apparently, the collective memory needs the narrative representation of that kind of human atrocity at least to constitute an educational framework created to accomplish Adorno's advice:

The premier demand upon all education is that
Auschwitz not happens again. (Adorno 2003: 19)

But I will come back to this kind of statement during the second part of my analysis, I only use it here to indulge a specific context regarding the necessity character of the representation. Many critiques have argued that a survivor's discourse might denaturate and depersonalize tactics used in the Nazi concentration camps, the simple reproduction, through discourse, even if it is a memorial one, creating what Peter Haidu called '*narrative of desubjectification*'¹ (Haidu 1992). Of course, to any representation

¹ I shall argue in a different section of this paper the fact that desubjectification might be a therapeutic form of culture, serving the representation's nature to be a voice for the unspeakable's memory. Analysing Boltanski's works, Pedersen states that 'I will not read them as an all-embracing testimony to the traumatic and to most commentators unrepresentable historical event to which we refer by

we should be able to create an alternative or a totally different discourse, but the simple fact that we are discussing such a point of view gives us the proof that there is still a general concern for using appropriate methods of commemoration. At this level of my own research, I was surprised to observe the fact that partisans of both sides, those who admit the necessity of any testimony evidence for coherent, collective and individual memory representations, as well as those that attached the Holocaust discourse to an impossible and an immoral or inauthentic representation, lose from their sight that once a representation is experienced and recreated by his Author, than it is the representation of a Subject assumed as a Person. Or, the Representation must be the Person`s main possession.

In these circumstances it becomes apparent that the representation of the Holocaust is not only morally acceptable, it is also a matter of necessity: as Lang remarks, ‘the question confronting us is not whether the Holocaust is speakable but how to justify what *is* spoken’ (Lang 2000:19), or in the words of Thomas Trezise, ‘not *whether* but *how* it should be represented’ (Trezise 2001:43).

Stylisation of the Holocaust or Adorno`s Unspeakable Representation

It has been claimed that `the word Holocaust is already a *stylisation*`, but it seems that we have just been convinced of this perspective by trying to donate a proper sense to Adorno`s use of terms, starting with the three thesis mentioned above. Any representation is speculated as a discourse that reveals the inhuman conditions attached to the Auschwitz`s world. Moreover, moral judgments depend on the stylisation technique applied to a simple confession or to a reconstruction paradigm. *Subjectivation* means

the name of the Holocaust, but on the contrary focus on a certain aspect of the Holocaust: namely desubjectification – that is, the reduction of the human being to naked life, to wordless, almost inhuman Muselmann – and show how this desubjectification is transformed into a more general human experience in Boltanski (controversially Boltanski, who is half Jewish, has said: “The Holocaust is only an example of dying. Of common and impersonal dying.”).(Pedersen 2005:77)

creation of a fictional narrative foundation developed to recover an experience formulated from the point of view of the survivor, as a Jewish spectator, or from the point of view of the neutral part, from those who get to know the Holocaust only by books, revealing empathy and, in consequence, being at least because of a possible logic, put in front of the Jewish's Spectator's eyes. There is also the other part our story- ironically, it will matter not who is the story-teller, but how is represented its narration: the fictional literature attached to the Holocaust inheritance additionally reacts as a speculation, creating a specific experience, a consumable one, in terms of postmodernism, very similar with the authentic ones.

Richardson argues:

For one thing, a work of fiction is in many ways more accessible than a survivor memoir, and as such can be seen to have a certain pedagogical value. In this way, Holocaust fiction may provoke an interest in the wider genre that might otherwise have remained unrealised. (Richardson 2005:7)

Furthermore, a work of fiction has the power to take the narrative to places that survivor testimony cannot (Richardson 2005:7)

The representation matter becomes plausible in defining moral limits through aesthetical transgressions. Lang remarks the transgressions qualities distinguishing¹:

- 1. Unimaginable and impossible transgressions*
- 2. Imaginable but impossible transgressions*
- 3. Unimaginable yet possible transgressions*
- 4. Imaginable and possible transgressions*

Now, Richardson claims that in Spielberg's movie, for example,

To show prisoners being gassed would be both imaginable and possible, yet he appears to set a moral representational limit for his film, in that it never moves beyond what can be shown or described in survivor testimony. (Richardson 2005:7)

¹ According to Richardson, this is the correct taxonomy of representation's aesthetical transgression as Lang proposes.

Holocaust's legacy, in canons of representation, is a narration about what happened, not primarily why and how. It is a helpful perspective to give a reason to Adorno's retraction of the impossibility of post-Auschwitz writing, or, generally speaking, art; creating from Samuel Beckett an exemplary artist that succeeded in creating an aesthetic remembrance, quite appropriate, to the Holocaust, in an indirect manner, Adorno offers the ideal context to examine the possibility of veridical and authentic representations of the Holocaust, determining that 'the need for aestheticizations of the Shoah is less vital than the need for radical societal reconfiguration—the cultivation of conditions which would prevent the emergence of new Holocaust' (Huebert 2008:3).

Adorno admits that '—What philosophy Beckett provides, he himself reduces to cultural trash . . . For Beckett, culture swarms and crawls' (Adorno 2003:259).

Beckett is authentic for Adorno because of his refusal to name the catastrophe as such— obviously, his appetite for aesthetical occurrences is not an obstacle to claim us all as survivors, in Wiesel's style. It is a universal responsibility trial that art might solve by emerging instruments to prevent the recurrence of Auschwitz in augmented or restrained forms. Beckett is a resistance promoter and this is why, authentic post-Auschwitz art might be possible. Memories and dramatized confessions are pastoral worlds for Subjects that regard to post-Auschwitz art, looking for the deconstruction of the autonomous subject and for a critique of arbitrary power hierarchies, with ethical implications that cultivate lessons of decisions, like Beckett's *Endgame*.

Nevertheless, it is a step forward to demonstrate both the necessity and the possibility of post-Auschwitz art and representation. What could we have instead of it? Agamben has an answer, and I tend to find it appropriate:

To transform Auschwitz into a reality absolutely separated from language is to —unconsciously repeat the Nazis' gesture (Agamben 1999:157).

The unspeakable is capitalizing a moral prohibition depending by the risk to manipulate or dominate a certain production of

truth. It is not only educative, but also emancipatory to give to a representation the potential of the source of a genealogy of truth, one that is mediated by art in order to explain suffering and terror as forms of appearance. Even if Adorno thinks that art must be excused by any political utility, concentrating its materiality, avoiding ideology, taking into account the present, the aesthetical contents seem to create dialectic imagery for a humanity that needs to be normalized through and by art. Jay remarked, in the continuity of Adorno's project, that

The Frankfurt School always insisted, it was only by the refusal to celebrate the present that the possibility might be preserved of a future in which writing poet would no longer be an act of barbarism (Jay 1985:37)

The salvation through art is still pertinent, at least in my opinion. Beckett is a typical example for the manner in which a representation speaks out of the artefact rather than out of the subject. The critique of violence through art is a genealogy of truth, but it still remains the horizon of questioning whether or not, art may interfere and claim a reconciliation form. In light of this content, Adorno seemed to admit the necessity to review his three main theses, considering that

The statement that it is not possible to write poetry after Auschwitz does not hold absolutely, but it is certain that after Auschwitz, because Auschwitz was possible and remains possible for the foreseeable future, lighthearted art is no longer conceivable.

Objectively, it degenerates into – cynicism, no rather how much it relies on kindness and understanding. (Adorno 1992:251).

Absorbing empirical realities to autonomous dimensions of form, art could be the voice of the main failure of specific utopias and socio-historical tensions, not being propagandistic, as Adorno himself tended to believe in the first age of his these. For sure, art procures to the Jewish Spectator a negative dialectics, not only a negative critique: as in Beckett's *Endgame*, once that Auschwitz confirms the philosopheme of pure identity as death, the most

provocative indulgence of art is to procure to the Subject the ethical maximalism through a minimal ontology: there would no longer be anything to really be afraid of, the superlative of suffering was expressed in the annihilation program of the non-identical. Art remains problematic after Adorno's retraction only when it represents a domestic approach for those who apply for the Jewish Spectator's function.

In his *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno remarks:

What is not wrong however is the less cultural question of whether it is even permissible for someone who accidentally escaped and by all rights ought to have been murdered, to go on living after Auschwitz. (Adorno 2001:231).

The drastic guilt of the spared, as he understands what I have called the Spectator's condition, is based on a principle of capitalist subjectivity. The aesthetic sphere involved in here is developed through a critique of philosophical personalism, taking into account all the existential attitudes and builds, in the same time, the nullity of existence. Art's possibilities are related to the force of the cultural inheritance of Auschwitz to designate the philosopheme of pure identity as death, to create from the Self-Identity an artefact for disappearance. This is how self-preservation fight against the Subject's abolition – history is moving towards and art seems to be concerned of the guilty of the spared, regarded as a form of reflection.

Reflective people, and artists, not seldom have the feeling of not quite being there, of not playing along; as if they were not at all themselves, but a sort of spectator:

But the attitude of being a spectator expresses at the same time the doubt as to whether this could be all there is, while nonetheless the subject, so relevant in its delusion, has nothing other than that poverty and ephemerality, which is animalistic in its impulses. Under the bane living beings have the alternative between involuntary ataraxy – an aesthetic of weakness – and the animality of the involved. Both are false life. Something of each however belongs to a right désinvolture and sympathy. That guilt reproduces itself unceasingly, because it cannot be completely present to the

consciousness at any moment. This, nothing else, compels one to philosophy. (Adorno 2001: 213).

In consequence, I suspect that art can afford a negative dialectics for a cultural heritage that the Auschwitz moment let behind as a process¹. As speculation, it might give a common sense to any representation of that inhuman global treatment, the main task being to procure educational practices for civic policies in order to avoid the similarity and the reproduction of events dedicated to totally destruction. And yet, even after retracting the impossibility character of the authentic art in a post-Auschwitz era, Adorno claims that

All culture after Auschwitz, including its urgent critique, is garbage. (Adorno 2001: 215).

The problem is still the reconstruction's circumstances: how would Beckett's *Endgame* look like if he had been in Auschwitz, recreating his Spectator status through the Subject's experience avatar? In consequence, I shall clear up a few thing and discourse strategies about the quality of representation and the opportunities of art, before proceeding to the next level. It is sure that cultural critique and barbarism share common senses for Adorno, and that they often seem to develop a mediated practice through art². Therefore, the final tension is not the impossibility- nevertheless, retracted, of an authentic post-Auschwitz art or representation, but

¹ This sort of critical treatment is inspired by Adorno's tendency to discuss any dialectical approach to aesthetics as a dependent construct of art regarded as a socially, historically and politically consequential source of truth. But even when he admits civilisation as a result of barbarity and as a condition of force, we might treat Adorno's theory from a Foucauldian perspective, art being a pure note in a full era of Death's technologies.

² It must be highly appreciated the coexistence of Adorno's theory, as a fundament for any critique of the capitalist culture, with theories of Benjamin and Beckett. In a full background of violence, the Author's condition for authenticity in constructing any representation is a manner to discuss together the real past and the historical subject both in a social and imaginary context.

the synonymy, never recognised by Adorno, between *impossibility* and *unthinkable*. The resentful ethics that we take into account, in Nietzsche's style, when we talk about the aesthetical representation of a crime against humanity is based on the difference's importance between fact and fiction describing an experience that has to prevent the method of his exercise.

I recognise the fact that I voluntarily missed a potential development of my research approaching the critique of violence through art in a hermeneutical key of the substitution of religious contents assumed in order to temper social crises with civic representative discourses. Although, I shall remind the fact that Adorno himself granted that

Art as critique may assume the prophetic task which religion has so often abandoned, like a prophet, art in its various forms articulates the suffering and struggles of its context. (Nafziger-Leis 1997:9)

This is why I feel the necessity to analyse Adorno's idea of degenerated art, as an inauthentic discourse about post-Auschwitz reconstructions and narrative interpretations, both in visual and literary dimensions, from another perspective, and, to be more precisely, from the original point of view created to depict the Jewish Subject as a Spectator. If Adorno understood Auschwitz as an anticivilisation production, than, in order to complete the dialectics, we will need a third period for rehabilitation. For him, this one was represented by the retraction movement- giving a new sense to any post-Auschwitz art and representation, included into a fresh theological scheme- the educational one, supposed to the natural imperative to avoid a duplicate, a second disaster. But, it might be not enough to negotiate the European Identity, at least not for our contemporary context.

In consequence, in the second case, I will discuss the artistic pathology of the aesthetic sphere of the Jewish spectator, by analysing Marc Chagall's paintings, regarded in the European folklore as "the Jewish Picasso". I will explain the potential of this etiquette to be both a clear symptom of creating from the Jewish status a European Identity and a declared process meant to Europeanize a

Jewish specific representation, integrated in a cultural heritage, conciliated with its past and universalized by the only type of discourse with unanimously significance- the artistic one. I shall argue that the pieces of Chagall confiscated by the Nazi's resistance and qualified as "a Degenerated Art" were forms of individuation for a metaphysical way to interpret the Jewish Subject, and later became, under the oppression, blamed representations of those who used to be depicted as non-European "internal others". In the end, I will propose an authentic manner to see Chagall's post-Auschwitz creations as a responsible art for renegotiating the concepts of Europeanness, Self, Otherness and the pain's aesthetics, from the position of the spectators who paints from himself, Chagall being one of the Jews who gave colour, speculation and principles to the anxiety of the Subject and to its solitude.

Devoid of the attraction of colour and governed by the aesthetic sphere of the Jewish spectator, the Guilt's Negative Dialectics defines not only the roles of Jewish art after philosophy, but also its capacity to design a space of *rethinking the borders of Europe as a post-mortem representation*, discussed today in terms of events, from Walter Benjamin's death to Christian Boltanski's critical treatment applied to the Holocaust through mixed media/materials installations and photos. In the end, everything obliges us to be Subjects and Objects of the same question: *after Auschwitz, what?* In philosophy, inspired by literature and art, the question was restored nowadays: *after metaphysics, what?* We shall see if any equivalence is legitimate.

**The Jewish Picasso:
Chagall. Rethinking the Borders of Europe
as a Post-Mortem Representation**

Very few know the fact that one of the main arguments developed in order to sustain the degenerated art quality was represented by the perfect synonymy between degenerated art and modern art, that the Nazi's critique addressed to the Jewish representations. Declaring itself a partisan of idealistic and romantic form, the critique postulated the Jewish culture in degenerated terms of construction. Shocking, maybe for our actual

context, at a first glimpse, but not for the Spirit of the Nazi Society, the German perspective about art was directed to approve and promote traditional cultural representations, and not modern ones, specifically remarked as Expressionistic. Not restricted by forms, academic canons of representation or traditional structures of art, Expressionism militated for the authenticity of social exposure, and unfortunately, went to pay for its attitude during the Auschwitz's drama.

It was the moment of 1927 when the National Socialist Society for German Culture claimed the corruption of art organised in degenerate contents, attached to a culture that could refer to visual art or literature or music made by a Jew or a black person. The astonishing part is that it could refer also to any art that was Avant-Garde or Modern.

Condemning modern art started as a serious movement in 1933 when the destruction of galleries, museums and colleges of modern art and artist started, more than 16000 works of art being described as degenerated. 5000 pieces were burned. We are not looking to express the implications of quantitative indicators, rather than that, we are trying to see the quality of Chagall's art brought to profile the degenerated creation.

The romantic realism was loyal to idyllic landscapes featuring the common life of the Aryan Subjects. The exile begins with Max Beckmann, Paul Klee, Marcel Duchamp, Marc Chagall.

As a specific hint, I suggest to keep in mind the following contrast line that the Principal Catalogue of the Degenerated Art Exhibition include

As an act of confidence in their campaign to eradicate the art they described as Degenerate the Nazis organized a large exhibition of that work in 1937. They attempted to show the public that the art was corrupt and depraved. They gathered 650 paintings, sculptures, prints and books (...) The Exhibition started in Munich, toured to ten other cities in Germany and Austria and was seen by over three million people. As the war began and the Nazi threats were turned into the reality of the Holocaust, many artists were sent to the ghettos, concentration camps and death camps. Some of

these artists used the meagre resources they had around to keep working. The work they made is described as the Art of the Holocaust. (Morley; Nunn 2005:73).

Before Chagall, there was Art in Auschwitz. This is why I have collected a few proofs:

I asked myself why I was drawing, when I was fighting day and night. This is something similar to biological continuation. Every man, every people, is interested in continuing his people, his family, in bringing children into the world of the future, in leaving this one thing. Another motivation was to get information to the so-called free world about the cruel, cruel actions- so that there would be some documentation. To tell this to a world that was completely ignorant. To be creative in this situation of the Holocaust, this is also a protest. Each man when he came face to face with real danger, with death, reacts in his own way. The artists react through his medium. This is his protest. This is my medium. He reacts artistically. This is his weapon. (Alexander Bogen, in The Living Witness: Art in Concentration Camps and Ghettos)

Advancing with my research, I got more and more convinced by the Spectator's Paradigm. For example, the Czech Jewish artist Alfred Kantor wrote:

Sketching took a new urgency. Even though I knew there was no chance to take these sketches out of Auschwitz, I drew whenever possible.... My commitment to drawing came out of a deep instinct for self-preservation and undoubtedly helped me to deny the unimaginable horrors of life. At that time. By taking the role of observer, I could at least for a few moments detach myself from what was going on in Auschwitz and was therefore better able to hold together the threads of sanity". (Alfred Kantor, The Book of Alfred Kantor, An Artist's Journal of the Holocaust).

In time, the Jewish Picasso appeared: Chagall started to depict crucial moments of a human life with the categorical perspective of a Jew's eye. From *the Birth*, painted in 1910, including naïve

Christian motives, to any other painting, Chagall insisted on the mixture of Christianity and Jewish Symbolism. The tendency remained, describing the anthropological Jew's village perspective, under a Cubist impression, exploring the corporeality as an universal artefact. This is why, in his *Self-Portrait* from June 1914, Chagall surprised, at his return from Russia, the expression of concern: after *The Cemetery Gates*, Chagall started his own renewal, depicted for his people. When everybody died, the Spectator remained in Solitude: it is Chagall's confession through the painting with the same name. Moreover,

'In 1931 Chagall visited Palestine, The Promised Land of the Jewish people, being aware of different events around him. The Nazis had do come to power in Germany and Chagall recorded this feeling of unease in his paintings. In 1933, Solitude symbolizes the concern he has for the Jewish People. The cloaked man is interpreted from Judaism as Ahasverus, the eternal Wandering Jew, roaming the world uncertain if his future. In comparison, during the same period Picasso also painted in response to acts of war and political climate'. It is about the Guernica issue, Picasso claiming that 'painting was not invented to decorate houses. It is an instrument of war for attack and defence' (Horton 2008:10).

The White Crucifixion was Chagall's symbol given to the suffering expression: in the world of faith and uniforms, there is the Alterity, the Whole Spectator, watching the Final Solution. In consequence, there he need a Revolution, the 1937 painting's promotion being attached to the next quotation of Chagall:

Will God or someone give me the power to breathe my sight into my canvass, the sight of prayer of salvation, of rebirth? (Horton 2008:12).

I especially took Chagall's case as an analysis pretext in order to provoke us all to regard the problem of representation in terms of creating an European Identity: the Spectator's Paradigm is, because of nature's progress, the only status that we might afford. It is an exercise to see in a particular death, the death of all of us, as

Boltanski¹ provoked us many times through his work of art: Post-Holocaust Art is, from this point of view, the same interval with After-Auschwitz's Culture.

As I already mentioned, the capacity to design a space of *rethinking the borders of Europe as a post-mortem representation*, discussed today in terms of events, from Walter Benjamin's death to Christian Boltanski's critical treatment applied to the Holocaust through mixed media/materials installations and photos. It is easily to understand nowadays why through this kind of instrument we create discourses about the deprivation of individuality. He once answered that creating a project about the Holocaust is a utopia: we have all the means give a voice and to give a sense to the life of post-Auschwitz consciousness, and only as Spectators.

Conclusions

Thinking the individual in the post-mortem representations canons is not just a solidarity expression for a universal structure given to the European Identity: I strongly recommend, to the end of my arguments, to review certain context that, for our contemporary research fields might give a powerful support to rethink boundaries and practices of Education After Auschwitz, quoting Adorno's main article, the Western legacy of positivity, the role of art and

¹ Christian Boltanski's installation *Personnes* for Monumenta 2010 at the Grand Palais, Paris is one of the most expressive works of art dedicated to the reconstruction of the collective representations of the Auschwitz phenomena. Even he created a enormous postmodern reification of the historical event, yet, Boltanski declared in Odessa, during one of his exhibitions organized at the Jewish Museum: "My work is about the fact of dying, but it's not about the Holocaust itself." Manipulated photographs and reconstructions of different archetypes of the Auschwitz's memory are generating a postmodern form of narration, one dedicated to the impersonal death. In main terms, his work serves to the current analysis as a discussion frame for the postmodern value of a Person as a human being and the value of an impersonal, but collective, death. This is why the artist admits that "All my work is more or less about the Holocaust; The Holocaust is only an example of dying. Of common and impersonal dying." (Interview with Steinar Gjessing, November 1993, in *Terskel/Threshold* nr. 11 Oslo, January 1994, p. 43).

pure representations exercised in creating an authentic critique of violence or memory of suffering into an administrated world regarded in terms of finitude, the intimate differences between fact and fiction in developing normalization and subjective practices to normalize social conducts. Somehow, after all this investigation, more or less innovative, we know for sure that is part of our own *Minima Moralia* to be A Jewish Spectator, at least once, in our whole life.

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SOME REMARKS ON THE SPECIFICITY OF THE NOTION OF ‘JEWISH MYSTICISM’ FOR GERSHOM SCHOLEM

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Defining the aim of his illuminating *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Gershom Scholem stated that his attempt was “a critical appreciation involving a certain philosophical outlook, as applied to the life texture of Jewish history, which in its fundamentals I believe to be active and alive to this day” (Scholem 1995: 3)¹. The ‘texture’ here in question is for Scholem the continuous, organic life of Jewish mysticism. We must say from the beginning that for Scholem Jewish mysticism is not a phenomenon (that ‘happens’) in Jewish history, not even only a very ‘complex’ or ‘incredibly rich’ one, it is *the texture* of this history – it is somehow the ‘justification’, the ‘foundation’ of this history itself, at least in a period of it, corresponding, as we will see, to a certain “stage of the religious consciousness”.

To put it briefly, in the next pages our own intention is to dwell on the concept of ‘Jewish mysticism’ in Scholem’s view. We mention that we will try to reach the objectives of such an endeavor basing our research mainly on his remarkable book from which we have just quoted. Before effectively starting our brief analysis, it is worthwhile to observe a certain kind of tension contained in the above quotation, a tension between the ‘theoretical’ (objective, scientific, etc.) dimension of the surveyor’s approach of a tradition and the real life of the tradition itself in which he is almost completely emerged – somehow the tension of being spectator and actor (but not the director!) of the same play. Moreover, even if we do not want to develop here this point, someone should also expect that this kind of ‘theoretical’ analysis undertaken by Scholem would not be a usual or contingent one, but one that types also the

¹ When we give in brackets only a number, we will refer to the page number of the 1995 edition of *Major Trends...* from which we quote. In all other situations, the reference is standard.

letters of a personal ‘destiny’, developing in a particular way its main ‘moments’.

As a main thesis, we consider that, methodologically speaking, Scholem’s approach comprises a *double movement*: 1) an *outer delimitation* of Jewish mysticism from other religious forms and other mysticisms, especially the Christian one, and 2) an *inner demarcation* of its history, in a *sui generis* dialectic manner, as we shall see.

*

The first movement is accomplished by Scholem in the introductory chapter of *Major Trends...* and relies on a general methodological principle that asserts the irreducible character of all mysticism: “there is no such thing as mysticism in the abstract, (...) there is only the mysticism of a particular religious system, Christian, Islamic, Jewish mysticism, and so on.” (Scholem 1995: 6) The reason for that is the fact that, for Scholem, all mysticism has a particular relation with the other phenomena of the religion which it belongs to and with its ‘truths’.

Developing on our own Scholem’s point of view, important corollaries could be formulated here, as such: the most important signification for mysticism doesn’t involve the understanding of the position of the (‘universal’) man in the cosmos or of his purely out-of-time relationship to God. Moreover, and a little risky we agree, we could add: mysticism does not speak primarily about man as such, about his an-historical and abstract essence, and – paradoxically, if we meditate on the current meaning of ‘mysticism’ – not even about him strictly as an individual, but about his *destiny*, about the manner of being included in a *common history*, with all its avatars. Mystical experience, although very personal ‘technically’ speaking, reaches its utmost significance only in the historical-communitarian perspective. As Scholem remarks, “[m]ystical tendencies, in spite of their strictly personal character, have (...) frequently led to the formation of new social groupings and communities.” (Scholem 1995: 18)¹.

¹ ‘Frequently’ means obviously that for Scholem this is a historical-sociological ‘fact’ (i.e. that could be somehow ‘verified’), in a sense like

The ‘history of mysticism’ means therefore in our reading of Scholemian approach also the ‘mysticism of history’ – the way in which the history itself is captured as a vivid whole in which we are living, without even noticing it. The history in question here is the history of concrete men, but not at all in an immanent, secular, pure ‘humanly’ sense – we are speaking here about the ‘history’ of man’s trying to transcend / to escape from history. This is, of course, a peculiar kind of ‘history’ – for trying to escape from history, the man (i.e. the Jewish mystic) ‘carries’ with him, in the same movement, the sense itself of our ‘questioning’ of God.

We should notice on this occasion the intimate, organic relationship between the intrinsic messianic dimension of Jewish history and Scholem’s destiny itself. As Michael Löwy said once, “[o]ne must realize that themes and interests in the thought of Scholem on Messianism are astonishingly continuous from his early years to his last writings: they run through his work like a leitmotif. Yet his stance is not merely that of an erudite historian of Jewish Messianism: one need only read his work carefully in order to recognize the *sympathy* – in the etymological sense of the Greek word – of the researcher with his object.” (Löwy 2001: 191). We must see much more in his ‘theoretical’ act – we could speak here about a kind of ‘restoration’, with profound, even religious connotations, because, as we have seen, the ‘object’ of his investigations was “the life texture of Jewish history”, and putting the Jewish mysticism in the right place of it (i.e., for Scholem, in its real core) meant also a ‘fight’ with the dominant, even overwhelming stream of interpretation of that times¹.

an empirical hypothesis. But we should think also about the possibility of linking ‘necessarily’ mysticism and community.

We should stress also the presence of the adjective ‘new’ in the above quotation: inside a tradition, mysticism imposes himself an ‘escape from history’ – and also an escape from this tradition itself too! – that brings itself a new kind of tradition more or less inside the ‘older’ one.

¹ As the same Michael Löwy observed, “Gershom Scholem’s work is not only a singular monument of the modernist writing of history, it also opens a new perspective on the Jewish religious tradition, since it restores to it the messianic and apocalyptic dimension that was ignored

Turning back now to scrutinizing the notion of mysticism, we could conceive and develop, of course, a general *analysis* of it (though not a general mysticism), because it is possible theoretically to establish some ‘common’ experiences by means of a comparative approach¹. But such a procedure, even very ‘attentive’ and ‘well done’, could not play a significant role in understanding mysticism as such, and could not produce a ‘*coherent*’ *theory* or *doctrine* of mysticism, precisely because these experiences could have (very) different functions in every particular mysticism that includes them. The irreducible particularity of all mysticism involves specific ‘inner’ links and functions of all its parts – like in the case of organisms of a certain species, where we have the same parts and organs, but we can assert the irreducibility of all its specimens. Even in the case that some ‘techniques’ are – ‘materially’, ‘physically’ – really the same, they ‘speak’ about different realities; and, even more, about different ‘histories’ or, better yet, ‘destinies’.

An example is offered in this sense by Scholem in respect to cosmogonic and eschatological trends that characterize both Jewish mysticism and Neo-Platonism and are considered by him to be “in the last resort ways of escaping from history rather than instruments of historical understanding; that is to say, they do not help us to gauge the intrinsic meaning of history.” (Scholem 1995: 20) Of course, from the beginning we have to interpret attentively these words, in the light of what we have previously said about the link between mysticism and history for Judaism. In another work, Scholem clearly stated that the symbols used by mysticism “grow out of historical experience and are saturated with it” (Scholem 1969: 3).

In our opinion, this is somehow the consequence of the fact that the mystic does not speak for himself, but tries to express the link between the whole community and God – and the community ‘comes’ in his words, incantations, etc. with all its destiny.

by the rationalist-liberal view of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and German sociology” (Löwy 2001: 178).

¹ We should understand epistemologically this approach either as an essentialist one, or as one led with the intention of discovering only ‘family resemblances’.

Moreover, this is exactly an important point that differentiates Jewish mysticism from other forms of mysticism. Precisely, “[t]he key to the understanding of the Kabbalistic books” (for Jewish mysticism in general, we should add) consists in accepting that they “presented symbols of a very special kind, in which *the spiritual experience of the mystics was almost inextricably intertwined with the historical experience of the Jewish people* (our underlining)” (Scholem 1969: 2). So we do not find here the presence of reason with its pure Cartesian “clear and simple concepts”, as they are literally identified by Scholem. Using this time Moshe Idel’s words, “[t]he kabbalists under the impact of more collective forms of dramatic experiences, formulated their own experiences in more historical terms. Symbols cannot escape history” (Idel 2012: 92).

Escaping from history is thus a way to ‘produce’ or (better) to ‘give birth’ to history, to continue it and developing it, even in quite unexpected directions, as was the case of Isaac Luria. Unexpected but... accepted in Judaism, and this is the paradox of Jewish mysticism (and, we dare say, its force), since “[n]early all the important points and major theses in Luria’s system are novel, one might even say excitingly novel – and yet they were accepted throughout as true Kabbalah, i.e. traditional wisdom. There was nobody to see a contradiction in this” (Scholem 1995: 21-22).

As we have just seen, for Scholem “symbols grow out of historical experience and are saturated with it.” This means also that the approach of the exegete is a special one; it is not simply a ‘textual’ analysis. It implies “both a ‘phenomenological’ aptitude for seeing things as a whole and a gift of historical analysis. One complements and clarifies the other”; they have to be “taken together” (Scholem 1969: 3).

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We mentioned above two Scholemian movements for revealing the true meanings of Jewish mysticism. The first one presents also an attempt, concomitantly *‘topographical’* and *‘historical’*, for placing mysticism properly among other religious manifestations. *In the first sense*, Scholem takes as a real dominant trait of mysticism the constant re-assimilation of the religious truth,

because the signification of it remains always to be developed by the mystic: “With no thought of denying Revelation as a fact of history, the mystic still conceives the source of religious knowledge and experience which bursts forth from his own heart as being of equal importance for the conception of religious truth. In other words, instead of the one act of Revelation, there is a constant repetition of this act.” (Scholem 1995: 9). This means that the truth accepted by the mystic is never ‘ended’, given once and for all; it is somehow dynamic, in the manner that it could even receive new interpretations, through ‘free’ developments or through reactions to the vicissitudes of collective history – this is the case when we understand, for instance, Isaac Luria’s mysticism as a reaction to Spanish exodus or Sabbatianism as an ‘integration’ of Sabbatai Zevi’s apostasy.

We could synthesize, in our own words: *mysticism consists in a lived, vivid assimilation of religious truth in a determined historical context*. As for Scholem, the “mystical religion seeks to transform the God whom it encounters in the peculiar religious consciousness of its own social environment from an object of dogmatic knowledge into a novel and living experience and intuition.” (Scholem 1995: 10). However, in all these cases the mystic relies on the same sources: the Torah and the Talmud. As we have already underlined, for him the Torah is “a living organism animated by a secret life which streams and pulsates below the crust of its literal meaning”; he transforms the text in a reality, in a divine and infinitely rich in meanings – if not ‘proteic’ – organism: “[t]he Torah, in other words, does not consist merely of chapters, phrases and words; rather it is to be regarded as the living incarnation of the divine wisdom which eternally sends out new rays of light” (Scholem 1995: 14).

At the same time, mysticism is to be differentiated from the simple ecstasy – the first “comprises much more than this experience, which lies at its root” (6). So the assimilation we have spoken about is detached both from strict textual commentary or analysis of religious truth and from subjective, self-exaltation. What makes possible, in our opinion, this lived, continuous re-interpretation of the religious dogmas is the remarkable force of signification of the Hebraic language.

Another distinction useful here should be made between mysticism and Gnosticism. Although “the mystic does not even recoil before the inference that in a higher sense there is a root of evil even in God” (Scholem 1995: 13), the Kabbalist is not dualist, he does not accept the existence of two opposing principles, of the “the hidden God and the Creator”, as in Gnostics’ doctrine. “On the contrary, all the energy of ‘orthodox’ Kabbalistic speculation is bent to the task of escaping from dualistic consequences; otherwise they would not have been able to maintain themselves within the Jewish community” (Scholem 1995: 13). Here, we must notice again the strong link between mysticism as a lived doctrine and the life of Jewish community itself, affirmed by Scholem. It’s like the mystic could not reach by his ‘developments’ consequences that could threaten the community. We could also say that mysticism, ideationally speaking, occupies somehow the narrow and ‘difficult’ territory situated between “science” (the rationalistic theology and the philosophy of Judaism) and heresy. The second Scholemian movement will reveal the dialectics of this ‘impossible habitation’ of Jewish mysticism that, in its quest for the lived truth, frequently (but ‘involuntarily’) cross over the neighboring boundaries.

The two main traits that distinguish the Jewish mysticism from all other form of mysticism are *the impersonality of discourse*¹ and *the strong, intimate link with the language*. Regarding the first aspect, it is important to notice that, describing their experiences, the Jewish mystics are “as though they were hampered by a sense of shame” (Scholem 1995: 16); there is even a kind of voluntary censorship corresponding to the passages considered to have a too intimate nature. As Scholem underlines, “[i]t must be kept in mind that in the sense in which it is understood by the Kabbalist himself, mystical knowledge is not his private affair which has

¹ Reflecting on the impersonality of discourse of the mystic and remembering that we have here however a pure personal experience, we could formulate this paradoxical situation in Jewish mysticism in our own words as a personal attempt to reach the impersonality of God or as a subjective experience for somehow attaining the divine ‘non-subjectivity’.

been revealed to him, and to him only, in his personal experience” (Scholem 1995: 21).

One reason in Scholem’s view for this sentiment of shame is the fact that “the Jews retained a particularly vivid sense of the incongruity between mystical experience and that idea of God which stresses the aspects of Creator, King and Law-giver” (Scholem 1995: 16). To complete this ‘psychological’ or ‘existential’ dimension of Jewish mysticism, we should add that the Kabbalism is “a masculine doctrine, made for men and by men” (Scholem 1995: 37). The women have played almost no role in its history (and this is of course in opposition to the Christian mysticism); the consequence was that the Kabbalism “remained comparatively free from the dangers entailed by the tendency towards hysterical extravagance which followed in the wake of this influence” (Scholem 1995: 37).

As for the second aspect, the most significant point is that the Hebrew is not a simple *tool* for expressing certain thoughts and experiences. Much more than that, the Hebrew “reflects the fundamental spiritual nature of the world; in other words, it has a *mystical value*. *Speech reaches God because it comes from God*. Man’s common language, whose *prima facie* function, indeed, is only of an intellectual nature, reflects the creative language of God. (...) All that lives is an expression of God’s language (our underlining)” (Scholem 1995: 17). As Katz expressively formulated, “in this context, words have locomotive power. They transport the spiritual self from the world below to the world above” (Katz 1992: 20-21); and, significantly for our discussion, he considered that the clearest expression of such a doctrine is to be found in the *Hekhalot* and *Merkavah* texts of rabbinic era.

Of course, this is a hugely discussed topic in Jewish culture, with a complex history and structure, and we cannot exhaust it in a few lines of a study. We just point out here to another important figure of Judaism exegesis, Moshe Idel, for whom “Jewish mysticism offers a series of different conceptions of language that correspond to the mystical foci that dominated its various trends” (Idel 1992: 44). Summing up, Idel distinguishes in his analysis four basic views of language that are present in Jewish mysticism: 1) language “regarded as instrumental in the process of the creation

of the world and as a natural component of reality”; 2) language as reflecting “the divine structure by way of symbolism and by virtue of an organic link between the symbol and the object it symbolizes”; 3) language “considered to be a technique to attain a mystical experience”; 4) language as “a means by which one can attract or capture the divine in the lower world” (Idel 1992: 44). If the first one characterizes the whole Jewish mysticism, the other three are dominant respectively in some of the major trends of it.

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For *the second sense*, the historical dimension of what we have called the first methodological movement, the main reference is to Scholem’s idea that the mysticism is linked to a certain stage of religious consciousness – in fact, it is “the romantic period of religion”. More concrete, mysticism “strives to piece together the fragments broken by the religious cataclysm, to bring back the old unity which religion has destroyed, but on a new plane, where the world of mythology and that of revelation meet in the soul of man” (Scholem 1995: 8). Scholem’s dialectical vision of history becomes very clear when we take into account his conception about the interplay between myth and law (reason): “To a certain extent, therefore, mysticism signifies a revival of mythical thought, although the difference must not be overlooked between the unity which is there before there is duality, and the unity that has to be won back in a new upsurge of the religious consciousness.” (Scholem 1995: 8). We should note, there is not the case of a simple recurrence of mythical thinking, not even a ‘relapse’ or a ‘revival’ (even though they are the terms used by Scholem himself), but a *development* of it in history, an enrichment of it through religion – in other passage we even find that, against current opinion, “perhaps Monotheism contains room after all, on a deeper plane, for the development of mythical lore” (Scholem 1995: 22).

Before analyzing more attentively this (peculiar) kind of dialectic, we must stress the congruity stated by Scholem of myth and mysticism, Kabbalism in particular, as it can be seen in the passage above. So, he will also speak about “[t]he peculiar affinity

of Kabbalist thought to the world of myth [that] cannot well be doubted” (Scholem 1995: 22)

For Scholem, Hasidism restored to mysticism the sense of reality, through a process of both ‘democratization’ and ‘moralization’. Plunging in everyday realities, the mysticism becomes an ethics and *unio mystica* turns into a humble pantheistic identification with all things. We could even speak about Scholem’s nostalgia for the ‘true’ mysticism of the past, despite the admission by him of the fact that the ‘texture’ of Jewish mysticism is still living and that the future could offer us again a new enrichment of it. This nostalgia also hangs a question mark on the current processes of rationalization and secularization in Judaism. For Scholem, “[t]he secret of the success of the Kabbalah lies in the nature of its relation to the spiritual heritage of rabbinical Judaism. This relation differs from that of rationalist philosophy, in that it is more deeply and in a more vital sense connected with the main forces active in Judaism” (Scholem 1995: 23).

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Passing now to *the second methodological movement*, identified by us as an *inner demarcation* of the history of Jewish mysticism, we should underline again the intimate relation between this history and that of the Judaism itself. Within this latter history, both mysticism and rational philosophy have to be reported to the first stage of Judaism, identified with the classics of the rabbinic literature, and both represent, in their specific ways, a new qualitative stage, that of a self-reflected Judaism: “Classical Judaism expressed itself: it did not reflect upon itself. By contrast, to the mystics and the philosophers of a later stage of religious development Judaism itself has become problematical. Instead of simply speaking their minds, they tend to produce an ideology of Judaism, an ideology moreover which comes to the rescue of tradition by giving it a new interpretation.” (Scholem 1995: 23) This illustrates what we could call a kind of dialectic within the history of Judaism, in which mysticism plays a particular role.

It is important to notice in this context that, for Scholem, both Jewish mysticism and Jewish rationalistic philosophy are not

simply opposite and exclusive trends (or positions) in Judaism, but that they are trying to express, with different tools, the same profound ‘ideological’ task – they both speak about the destiny of Judaism. One does not (try to) ‘eliminate’ the other; we do not have to understand them in a ‘chronological’ way. Scholem is in this sense critical about the perspective of Heinrich Graetz – the essence of each of them could not be understood as a ‘reaction’ to the other. In fact, we have here somehow amalgamated two important ideas: 1) both mysticism and philosophical rationalism are ‘developments’ of the first stage of Judaism, so their opposition should be relativized, not to be understood as a mutual exclusion; as a historical fact, they did not see each other at their beginnings as opposite movements; and 2) one include often (and even more so in the beginning, when we do not find a real ‘consciousness’ of their own movement) certain ‘elements’ from the other:

“It is not as though the rise of Jewish philosophy and of Jewish mysticism took place in widely separated ages, or as though the Kabbalah, as Graetz saw it, was a reaction against a wave of rationalism. Rather *the two movements are inter-related and interdependent*. Neither were they from the start manifestly opposed to each other, a fact which is often overlooked. On the contrary, the rationalism of some of the philosophical *enlighteners* frequently betrays a mystical tendency; and conversely, the mystic who has not yet learnt to speak in his own language often uses and misuses the vocabulary of philosophy. Only very gradually did the Kabbalists, rather than the philosophers, begin to perceive the implications of their own ideas, the conflict between a purely philosophical interpretation of the world, and an attitude which progresses from rational thought to irrational meditation, and from there to the mystical interpretation of the universe. (our underlining)” (Scholem 1995: 23-24)

In order to highlight better Scholem’s own position, it could be interesting to sketchily present here a clarifying parallel between his dialectic and the one pertaining to Jung, from the perspective of David Biale’s analysis. In Biale’s own words,

“Jung’s dialectic between conscious and unconscious, repeated on the social level as myth, resembles Scholem’s dialectic between rationalism and irrationalism in Jewish history. Scholem believes that myth compensates for the excessive efforts of rationalism to preserve monotheism. Jung was attacked for favoring irrationalism; so, too, Scholem has been attacked for glorifying nihilistic forces in Jewish history. But Jung pointed out that an excess of one leads to exaggerated compensation by the other. Scholem also conceives of a healthy balance between the contradictory forces in history, and does not glorify the powers of destruction. Myth is necessary, but also dangerous.” (Biale 68).

We could name this dialectical figure of both thinkers a ‘dialectic of equilibrium’. Speaking only of Scholem this time, the ‘result’ of this dialectic is the real, ‘sapful’ life of Judaism itself.

But we may also encounter a dialectical process *within* the Jewish mysticism, like an internal continuous accommodation of itself. This is as well the dialectical expression of a process of ‘vivid’ evolution, that of the ‘body’ of Jewish mysticism itself. As for the phases of a life of an organism, the different stages of Jewish mysticism are concatenated, negating but continuing the precedents. This means that it is no privileged stage which could be seen as an absolute value, that all stages have a ‘partial truth’ of their own, ‘valid’ for a certain period of time. Despite the above mentioned Scholemian nostalgia, a strong methodological consequence springs out from this position: we should have no ‘privileged’ theoretical point of view, from which we could judge the rest of the Jewish mysticism. Even for Sabbatianism, judged constantly as a veritable heresy, as a departure from traditional Jewish religious values, Scholem finds here incredible thorough research arguments in favor of interpreting it as a profound and ‘positive’ mystical source.

What it is important, in the end, is the whole, the entire historical and concrete life of Jewish mysticism. This is the reason for Scholem’s process of ‘rehabilitation’ of some mystic Jewish schools, often denigrated and despised by rationalist scholars and minimized or banned as simple (and / or dangerous) heresies by significant religious figures of Judaism. The true historian of Jewish

mysticism (and, we should add, of the history of Judaism) has as a major duty the reintegration of all the elements that were let apart over the time due to various theoretical or practical reasons (not to call them *parti pris*).

But, of course, we shouldn't forget or veil Scholem's own sympathies and – as we have already seen – nostalgias, some of them very 'visible'. One of these expressions is his treatment of Hasidism, which is for him a “popularization of Kabbalistic thought” that relentlessly decreases its value. (However, Scholem himself accepts that the growing process of social function for Kabbalistic ideas had already started with Lurianic proselytism and Sabbatian missionaries.)

For Scholem, Hasidism “represents an attempt to preserve those elements of Kabbalism which were capable of evoking a popular response, but stripped of their Messianic flavor to which they owed their chief successes during the preceding period. That seems to me the main point. Hasidism tried to eliminate the element of Messianism – with its dazzling but highly dangerous amalgamation of mysticism and the apocalyptic mood – without renouncing the popular appeal of later Kabbalism.” (Scholem 1995: 329).

This position is in fact an extreme one, Scholem himself immediately amends it: we have in this case rather a “neutralization” of Messianism and, moreover, “there is no single positive element of Jewish religion which is altogether lacking in Hasidism” (Scholem 1995: 329-330).

A “burst of mystical energy”, but a ‘shy’ mystical movement, so to speak, from a strict theoretical point of view, Hasidism produced no new religious *ideas*, “to say nothing of new theories of mystical knowledge” (Scholem 1995: 338). Hasidism emphasized definitely the psychology at the expense of theosophy. We can say eventually that for Scholem “Hasidism represents throughout a curious mixture of conservatism and innovation. Its attitude towards tradition is somewhat *dialectical* (our underlining)” (Scholem 1995: 348). Apparently only a kind of historic curiosity for the author, Hasidism could (and should) be ‘recovered’ theoretically

in a Scholemian scheme through its very dialectical potential, as stated in the above passage.

Our short analysis of the dialectical dimension in Scholem's view on Jewish mysticism overlaps somehow with that of Pawel Maciejko, more accurate, with his distinction between "internal dialectic of Jewish history" and "the external dialectic of the Jewish religion's relationship to other religions". First one "refers to the historical relationship and mutual influences between Sabbatianism (and Judaism in a wider sense) and other religions, notably Christianity" (Maciejko 2004: 208). As for the second, "dialectic is understood as the internal structure of Jewish history, in which contradictions are resolved on a higher plane" (Maciejko 2004: 207). To these two forms of dialectic, the same author adds also a third one (a form which is not present in our analysis), defined on "a higher, non-historical plane", where the first two dialectics "points to the undialectical (unmediated) character of the notion of Redemption in Sabbatianism" (Maciejko 2004: 208). (Maciejko's approach is developed mainly in order to capture the role of Sabbatianism in Scholem's work, restraining it mainly to another seminal work of Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi and the Sabbatian Movement During His Lifetime*, which, of course, could be seen as a major example for the Scholemian use – or practice – of dialectics especially in the history of Jewish mysticism.)

We must say here that we also adhere to Maciejko's general view about Scholem's dialectical mechanism and its presence and functioning in his work. He synthesizes it accurately in this regard:

"Unfortunately, Scholem nowhere clearly defines his understanding of the notion of dialectic or the dialectical character of history. This does not mean that he uses the term inconsistently or unpremeditatedly way. He understands dialectic in a roughly Hegelian way: as interplay of opposites which are reconciled on a higher level. Opposites change into each other when they are intensified: a concept passes over into another concept through the development of its internal contradictions." (Maciejko 2004: 208)

Finally, we want to point out once more to the richness of the possibilities of interpreting the dialectical element in Gershom Scholem's work – a fair conclusion would assert that a much more thorough and applied analysis of it is necessary in the future.

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Harold Bloom once said about *Major Trends...*: “This book's influence has been enormous, and is likely to continue all but indefinitely”. This indefinite future of a book is not mere the ‘endless’ recognition of the value of a ‘scientific’ content (all these analysis are prone to a ‘demolishing’ critique), but the expression of completing an important spiritual task for the Jewish people. As Jody Myers observes, although the ‘Scholem-type’ scholarship¹ “was not meant to nurture people's religious lives”, nevertheless “academic studies of Kabbalah eventually were, and still are, used as a resource by people exploring ultimate issues or hunting for material to be used for self-expression” (Myers 2011: 179).

In the last lines of his *Major Trends...*, Scholem states nostalgically “that in the end all that remained of the mystery was the tale”. But this is of course an ‘unfinished’, only a ‘partial’ tale – “[t]he story is not ended, it has not yet become history, and the secret life it holds can break out tomorrow in you or in me. Under what aspects this invisible stream of Jewish mysticism will again come to the surface we cannot tell” (350). In another way of speaking, we cannot ‘deduce’ from this story the future of Jewish mysticism. But, through his constant fidelity for it, to which it must be added a remarkable scientific erudition, Scholem's work takes part creatively to this future and also to the renewal of the mystery itself.

¹ We have not to forget that the *Major Trends...* was in its initial form a series of lectures delivered at the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1938 and that Scholem was the first professor of Jewish mysticism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

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BEING IN BORDERLAND



LANGUAGE IS NOT HEIMAT ON THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN THE WORKS OF HERTA MÜLLER

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When *Heimat*¹ is lost and estranged, can language bring shelter? According to Herta Müller many German authors have claimed, “Sprache ist Heimat”² (language is *Heimat*). Thus, they believe language can compensate for the loss of *Heimat*, for the loss of their homeland and even substitute the latter. The Romanian-German author Herta Müller, however, is critical of this claim. In her view, it assumes that everyone can be at home in language, independent of the political situation in which they live (Müller 2009: 23-24). But can language, which is rooted in lived experience, be an apolitical haven?

In what follows, I will briefly introduce Herta Müller and outline the cultural background that has shaped her perspective. From this basis, I will offer an interpretation of her view on how language is politically entangled, with the aid of her essay *Heimat ist das was gesprochen wird* (Heimat Is What Is Spoken). The political dimension of language will be illustrated through examples from her literary works.

1. The Author: “Herta Who?”

When the Nobel Prize winner of 2009 was named, the public seemed baffled: “Herta Who?” (Sulzberger 2009) headlined the New York Times, alluding to the writer’s relative anonymity. Müller was previously on the radar of literary critics and scholars and not

¹ Heimat in this particular context can be understood as a synonym for ‘homeland’ but must not be restricted to this meaning generally. According to Boa and Palfreyman “[t]he core meaning of the word ‘Heimat’ [...] is ‘home’ in the sense of a place rather than a dwelling.” Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream*, 1.

² Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Herta Müller’s works are my own.

a household name for a broad audience. Her works pivot for the most part around the Banat region located in the West of Romania. This diverse region is the home of a number of religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities such as Jews, Roma, Hungarians, Serbs and Germans. Here Herta Müller was born to German parents in 1953 and grew up in a small, isolated German-cultural village. Her first works *Niederungen (Nadirs)* and *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt (The Passport)*, engage critically with village life and the mindset of Banat Swabians, as this specific German minority is called. She only spoke the dialect of her home village for most of her early years and did not learn Romanian until she was a teenager in school. As an undergraduate, she came increasingly into the firing line of the Securitate, the Romanian secret police force of the communist regime. This development is reflected most clearly in her novel *Herztier (The Land of Green Plums)*. Eventually she was declared a dissident and harassed for refusing to collaborate with the Securitate. In 1987, two years before the Ceaușescu's regime was overthrown, she finally received her exit permit and left for Germany, where she has lived ever since.

Herta Müller's life is a story of dispossession that shines through her autofictional prose.¹ In both her life and her writings, themes surrounding language and *Heimat* run through like a golden thread.

2. Müller's Criticism of the Idea that Language Is *Heimat*

In her essay *Heimat ist das was gesprochen wird*, Müller explains her criticism of the idea that language is *Heimat*. According to Müller, many German writers

wiegen sich in dem Glauben, daß die Muttersprache wenns darauf ankäme, alles andere ersetzen könnte. Obwohl es bei ihnen nie darauf angekommen ist, sagen sie: Sprache ist Heimat. Autoren, deren Heimat unwidersprochen parat steht,

¹ Cf. Prize motivation stated by the Nobel Committee for Literature at the Swedish Academy: Müller "who, with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed." Nobelprize.org. / Nobel Media AB. 2013, "Herta Müller – Prose."

denen zu Hause nichts Lebensbedrohliches zustößt, irritieren mich mit dieser Behauptung (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 23-24)

(lull themselves into the belief that, if it came down to it, their native language could compensate for everything else. Although it never came down to it for them, they say: language is *Heimat*. Authors whose *Heimat* stands there unchallenged, who have nothing life threatening happening to them at home, irritate me with this claim.)

In her opinion, these writers do not consider the initial situation that shapes their standpoint, the fact they have “sicheren Boden unter den Füßen” (Müller 2009, (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 24) (safe ground under their feet). For persecuted minority groups that are faced with a tragic political situation, however, the mother tongue acquires more of an existential meaning. It amounts to “einer bloßen Selbstvergewisserung. Es bedeutet lediglich: ‘Es gibt mich noch’” (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 24) (nothing but self-assurance; it means nothing but: ‘I am still here’). Consequently, the simple equation language is *Heimat* cannot hold true for them. It seems almost ignorant to believe that these victims who had to emigrate to save their lives could simply “vom Zusammenbruch der Existenz, von der Einsamkeit und dem für immer zerbrochenen Selbstverständnis absehen [...], da die Muttersprache im Schädel als tragbare Heimat alles wieder gutmacht” (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 25) (look over the ruin of their existence, over the loneliness and the forever broken self-conception [...], because the native language in their skulls, as a portable *Heimat*, will compensate for all that).

To illustrate her perspective, Müller points to the writers Paul Celan and Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt. Both Jewish writers suffered under the Nazi regime, which had instrumentalized their mother tongue and turned it against them. For Celan it became the language of his mother’s murderers, for Goldschmidt the reason to cease writing in German altogether. Until recently he wrote his works solely in French. In Müller’s opinion, this is clear evidence that Goldschmidt was deprived not only of his *Heimat* but also of his mother tongue for decades (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 22-23). As a

result, she believes that one should not rely on one's native language blindly but must examine it more closely. Language, according to Müller, "ist [...] kein unpolitisches Gehege" (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 42) (is [...] not an apolitical enclosure) it does not evolve in an apolitical vacuum but is located in the midst of a political situation.

3. Examples from Müller's Literary Works

Examples that illustrate Müller's standpoint can be detected throughout her literary works. I will use a few passages from the anthology of short stories *Niederungen*, the novella *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* and the novel *Herztier* to illustrate Müller's standpoint on the political entanglement of language.

Niederungen depicts the everyday life of a Banat Swabian village from a female child's point of view. The Danube Swabian dialect takes center stage, forming a bond between the members of the German community. As the opening paragraph of the eponymic short story "Niederungen" suggests, this bond is upheld through the oppression of the individual by means of prohibition, threat and dictate: "Der Großvater, der sagte, vom Ringelgras wird man dumm, das darf man nicht essen. Und du willst doch nicht dumm werden" (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 17) (The grandfather said, marigold makes you stupid. You're not allowed to eat it. And you don't want to be stupid, right?). Shortly afterwards, when a bug crawls into the protagonist's ear her grandfather suddenly pours alcohol into her ear without a word of explanation. Helpless and terrified by the situation the protagonist recalls: "Ich weinte. In meinem Kopf wurde es heiß. Der Hof drehte sich, und Großvater stand riesengroß vor mir und drehte ich mit" (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 17) (I cried. It got hot in my head. The farm spun and grandfather stood there like a giant in front of me, spinning with it). Instead of sharing words of comfort with his granddaughter, he rudely underlines the necessity of his actions. Moreover, he even threatens her with an old wives' tale: "Das muss man tun, [...] sonst wird dir der Käfer in den Kopf kriechen, und dann wirst du dumm. Und du willst doch nicht dumm werden" (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 17) (You have to do it [...] or else the bug will crawl into your head. And then you'll be dumb. And you don't want to be dumb, right?).

In the course of the short story these scenes reoccur in different variations that follow the same pattern of prohibition and justification through dictates coupled with threats. Any disobedience, any individual impulse, is met with immediate physical punishment. Hence, language is instrumentalized both to bring and keep the protagonist in line with the norms and mindset of the German community. This strategy is also exemplified in the drunken father's statement later in the text, when he insists: „verdammst noch mal, wir sind eine glückliche Familie” (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 93) (damn it, we are a happy family). His exaggeration “das Glück beißt uns die Köpfe ab, verdammst noch mal, das Glück frisst uns das Leben” (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 93) (luck is biting our heads off, god damn it, luck is eating up our lives) marks a desperate attempt, not to keep the broken family together, but to maintain the image of a happy family. In order to keep up this false image he deploys language to dictate to his family the appropriate emotions. Compared with the examples cited above, language is not only employed to bring individuals action and behaviors in to line, but their emotional lives as well. As a consequence of this, all individual freedom and development is exterminated for the benefit of the collective.

This rough command language characterized by short orders with no opportunity for objections, used by male adult figures in *Niederungen*, reminds one of the military. Herein lies another dimension of the political entanglement of this German dialect that extends beyond the dictate of the collective. From the first short story of *Niederungen*, “Die Grabrede” (“The Funeral Sermon”), where the father is pictured in a SS uniform making a Hitler salute (Müller 2011, *Die Grabrede*: 7), combined with his eager performance of old Heimat songs in “*Niederungen*,” (Müller 2011, *Niederungen*: 93) we learn that he is a former Nazi soldier. Taking this into consideration, we can infer that the style of his language originates from this time. In this context, it can be further argued that the rigid notion of the collective is another vestige of Nazi culture. Slogans such as ‘Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer’ (one people, one empire, one leader) contain the same ideological message that the

Banat Swabians promote with every utterance: the collective is all. Therefore the individual is reduced to subordination and obedience.

Ironically, the ideology of the Banat Swabians, who seek to distance themselves from Romanians, aligns also with the ideology of the Ceaușescu regime, as a passage in *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* reveals. Amalie Windisch, who prostitutes herself later in the text to acquire an exit permit for herself and her family, works as a kindergarten teacher. In her class, children learn the importance of the collective and the worthlessness of the individual from an early age. This is evidenced when Amalie explains the idea of the Communist state as an extended family:

Alle Kinder wohnen in Wohnblocks oder in Häusern. [...] Jedes Haus hat Zimmer. Alle Häuser bilden zusammen ein großes Haus. Dieses große Haus ist unser Land. Unser Vaterland. [...] Jedes Kind hat seine Eltern. So wie unser Vater im Haus, in dem wir wohnen, der Vater ist, ist Genosse Nicolae Ceaușescu der Vater unseres Landes. Und wie unsere Mutter im Haus, indem wir wohnen, unsere Mutter ist, ist Genossin Elena Ceaușescu die Mutter unseres Landes (Müller 2009, *Der Mensch*: 61-62). (All children live in apartments or houses. [...] Every house has rooms. All of the houses together make a big house. This big house is our country. Our fatherland. [...] Every child has parents. Just as our father is the father in our house, Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu is the father of our country. And like our mother is the mother in our house, Comrade Elena Ceaușescu is the mother of our country.)

Although it is unclear in this context if she communicates this communist idea of the greater fatherland family in German or Romanian, the gist of the ideology outlined parallels the idea of the Banat Swabian collective. In both cases language is employed to persuade the individual to submit to the will of the collective. As a result, the Romanian language and the Danube Swabian are metonyms for similar political views. In this regard, Müller's criticism seems valid. When the mother tongue not only functions repressively on its own but moreover allies with the likewise oppressive state language, it cannot be simply accepted as *Heimat*.

No language that serves to uphold totalitarian power mechanisms can bring shelter from them.

An attempt to escape and outsmart the Romanian totalitarian system with its own means, in this case language, is illustrated in *Hertzier*. The friends Edgar, Kurt, Georg and the protagonist – all of them of German descent – invent a coded language. As they part ways after the end of their studies, they want to keep each other updated through letters on the degree of their daily repression by the Securitate, which had classified them as dissidents. In doing so, they give new meanings to words: “Ein Satz mit Nagelschere für Verhör, sagte Kurt, für Durchsuchung einen Satz mit Schuhe, für Beschattung einen mit erkältet. Hinter die Anrede immer ein Ausrufezeichen, bei Todesdrohungen nur ein Komma” (Müller 2007: 90) (A sentence with nail scissors for interrogation, said Kurt, a sentence with shoes for them looking through your apartment, for tailing one with illness. After the salutation, always an exclamation point, but if there are death threats only a comma).

In comparison to the previous examples, the friends’ secret language might seem like a positive model for the use of language. On the surface, it serves as common denominator that creates a close proximity over the topographical distance between the friends and strengthens their friendship. However, behind this façade the opposite is the case: the common language leads to an increasingly restrictive mechanism of interdependence. It creates an assimilation pressure that corresponds to that of the fascist Banat Swabian and the communist fatherland collectives. In the course of this gradual development, the individuals not only suffer from the restraints of the fatherland family, but also from the self-imposed restraints of their dissident group. When the protagonist, for example, starts to become friends with a Romanian woman named Tereza, she is afraid of confessing her friendship to Edgar, Kurt and Georg (Müller 2007: 135). Her attempt to escape the isolation of the dissident collective could be regarded as a betrayal by the others. Any outsider is put under the general suspicion of being a spy against them. In this light, their letters resemble self-penned spy reports that serve as self-imposed espionage on themselves and against each other. As a consequence, their individualism ironically vanishes through their

own attempt to overcome it. For Kurt and Georg the attempt ends in suicide, while the protagonist and Edgar try to escape their past by leaving for Germany. In the end, as it becomes once again clear, no language can provide shelter in a political system that seeks to enforce conformity and subordinate language to fit its purpose. Language can only be *Heimat* to those who align with an oppressive system.

4. Müller's Conclusion: Heimat Is What Is Spoken

Herta Müller's point, that language cannot be simply accepted as *Heimat* because of its political entanglement, holds likewise true for democracies such as Germany, as an anecdote from her essay *Heimat ist das was gesprochen wird* illustrates: a friend of hers thought for years that a particular type of New Year's fireworks was called *Judofürze* (judo farts). Later he coincidentally learned that these fireworks were actually called *Judenfürze* (Jewish farts) (Müller 2009, *Heimat: 41-42*).¹ The fact that such an obviously offensive word is still in use, considering the German past, is surely outrageous. The behavior of the people around Müller's friend, moreover, seems no less condemnable. Neither the fireworks retailer nor his mother made his misunderstanding clear to him. Instead they reacted with a collective silence, which he also lacked the courage to break. He never dared to ask his mother how she was able to call these fireworks *Judenfürze* after Auschwitz (Müller 2009, *Heimat: 41-42*).

As this anecdote shows, even language in democracies is neither politically untangled nor free from vestiges of the past. They linger under the surface, maintained by those who remain silent to uphold the democratic façade – ironically, through language that subverts democracy. Therefore, Müller calls for a closer examination of the language we employ in order to conceive its intentions:

Man muß ihr [der Sprache] ablauschen, was sie mit den Menschen tut. In jedem Kontext trägt sie ihre Absichten vor

¹ Müller, *Heimat ist das was gesprochen wird*: 41-42.

The German words *Judofürze* and *Judenfürze* sound very alike as the phonetic transcription (IPA) shows: [ˈjuːdofʊʁtsə] vs. [ˈjuːdn̩fʊʁtsə].

sich her. Wenn man hinhört, kann sie nicht verbergen, was sie mit dem Menschen im Sinn hat. Und was sie mit dem Menschen tut, war und bleibt das einzige und für jeden von uns unabdingbare Kriterium, Sprache zu beurteilen (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 42). (One has to listen carefully to what it [language] does to people. In each context it carries its intentions along. If one listens in, it cannot hide what it has in mind for people. And what it does with people, was and remains the only absolute criteria for each of us to judge language.)

On that account she pleads that language is not *Heimat* but – as the title of her essay states – *Heimat* is what is spoken. (Müller 2009, *Heimat*: 42).

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TRAUMAS OF EXILE AND WAYS OF BECOMING A MINOR: POETIC MEMORIES OF “A SUNKEN LANDSCAPE”

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*For a man who no longer has a
homeland writing becomes a place to live.
(Adorno)*

As indicated in the title of my paper, it both sets out to investigate the Traumas of Exile and Ways of Becoming a Minor in the sense described by Deleuze and Guattari in their famous book on Kafka (Deleuze, Guattari 1986).

More specifically this means looking into ways in which two German speaking Jewish poets, Rose Ausländer (1901-1988) and Paul Celan (1920-1970) – both of them from Bucovina, the “sunken landscape” in the title of my paper – who, having had to leave their home and native country to escape and to survive the Holocaust, in the aftermath of the Jewish tragedy and from the perspective of exile, dealt poetically with their traumas of the loss of home and belonging, both to a landscape in a topographical and emotional sense and in a time-spatial sense of the word.

Relating their poems to the notion of “a minor literature” as described by Deleuze and Guattari by coining the concept of “becoming a minor” through deterritorialization, I will argue that the poetological strategies and manoeuvres of the poems are deeply rooted in a kind of aesthetics of resistance, where the only means of escaping the traumatic experience of loss, lies in becoming a nomad, stranger or gypsy, in other words “a minor” in their own language.

A key word here is metamorphosis indicating transformation, or the linguistic process of perpetual change, which semantically speaking means being constantly on the move and never in a fixed position: in the emotional, semantic, logical or geographical sense of the word.

Rose Ausländer and Paul Celan were both from the city of Chernovitsy, the old capital of Bucovina, a region, which throughout its history has been on the move on a kind of nomadic journey, back and forth across the borders of Rumania, Russia and Austria. It was once the heart of the Rumanian Principality of Moldavia, from 1775 to 1918 it was the easternmost Crown Land of the Austrian Empire, and is today divided between Rumania and the Ukraine.

In other words what once used to be one region, a so called crown land, marking the easternmost border area of the Habsburg monarchy, like many other countries and regions after the catastrophe of WW II suffered the destiny of division and fragmentation.

Without going into the current politics or for that matter ideological complexities of the historic development of the region in any way: to the people still living there at the time and to those having had to leave it, their home land as they knew it, was no longer there, it had gone under, only to be remembered as “the sunken landscape” of their dreams or as “the landscape where books and people used to live”, as Paul Celan from his position of exile in Paris, put it in one of his may attempts to deal with the extreme trauma of loss. In the poem “Black” (“Schwarz”) (Celan 1983: 57)¹ he looks back at his loss in the following way:

BLACK,
 like memory’s wound mark,
 eyes are digging for you
 in the crown land, –
 bitten bright by heart’s teeth –,
 which forever will be our bed: [...]

As we can see Celan, by evoking “memory’s wound marks”, both mourns the loss of his homeland, the crown land Bucovina “bitten bright by heart’s teeth” and insists that it is still there as the land, “which forever will be our bed”.

Celan’s traumatic-poetic memory of this lost or sunken landscape, as he saw it, may thus serve as an indication of the kind of poetic strategy, which is characteristic of the poems I have chosen for this paper.

¹ If nothing else is noted, all translations from German into English are mine. (SL).

In the sense once suggested by Adorno from his American exile, since they no longer have a homeland, in a metaphysical sense writing poems seems to have become “a place to live” (Adorno 1997: vol. 4, 152). In other words the earthly sense of belonging or home has to be substituted by a metaphysical one, in order for the hope of still belonging, in order to survive: In Celan’s case some of this can be seen in his reading of the German-Jewish poet and philosopher Margarete Susman, whom he met in Zürich in 1963, read and greatly admired.

He had read her book on Job and the destiny of the Jewish people (Susmann 1946/1992) which was written in 1946 one year after the Holocaust. In his private library in the German Literature Archive in Marbach traces and signs of his search for hope of belonging can be found in his personal underlinings in the margins of Susman’s essay on Spinoza “Spinoza und das jüdische Weltgefühl”, where he marks the following sentences: “Deeper than the earthly feeling of home is the metaphysical one” and Susman’s remark on Spinoza saying “that the metaphysical home of Judaism has not been lost together with the earthly one”.¹

Regardless of Celan’s own doubts and questions about God and Judaism, to a survivor of the Holocaust these sentences must have given both some hope and paved a way or strategy to deal with the loss and traumas following the catastrophe.

My point of departure is that the strategy of these poems may be described as a kind of poetic memory of what they see as a sunken landscape, or as Paul Celan called it U-topia, a no-place, with the intention of becoming original or recovering the land, territory and place of birth. In the sense of Deleuze and Guattari it may be read as a strategic manoeuver to reterritorialize the deterritorialized in and through language. And what we have is a kind of aesthetics of resistance where the poets try to overcome their loss by making the poem or text their home (Adorno 1997: vol. 4, 152), as Adorno, once put it.

¹ “Tiefer als das irdische Heimatgefühl ist das metaphysische” and “dass die metaphysische Heimat des Judentums nicht mit der irdischen verloren gegangen ist” in: Vom Judentum. Ein Sammelbuch. Verein jüdischer Hochschuliler Bar Kochba in Prague, Leipzig 1913, p.51-70.

An example of this strategy can be seen in this poem “Motherland” (“Mutterland”) (Ausländer 1985: vol. IV, 98) by Rose Ausländer:

Motherland
 My Fatherland is dead
 They have buried it
 in the Fire.
 I live in my Motherland
 Word.

I will get back to this poem by Rose Ausländer, who like Paul Celan and many other German speaking Jewish poet friends from Chernovitsy, had to leave her home town, and consequently – after the catastrophe with its dissolution of borders and communities – called it a “a sunken city”.

But before I go closer into to it I will briefly draw your attention to the notion of a minor literature and the process of “becoming minor” through deterritorialization as described by Deleuze and Guattari with reference to Kafka in their book *Kafka: Towards a minor literature* (1975/1986), where they both ask and answer the question: what is a minor literature?

To answer the question they outline three characterizing elements of a ‘minor literature’: the element of deterritorialization, its political nature and its collective, enunciative value.

Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a minor literature, like that of Kafka, in addition to its being political, collective, revolutionary, is spatial in the sense that it deterritorializes one terrain as it maps another. And in it “language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization”.

The focus on the element of deterritorialization of a major language through a minor literature written in the major language from a marginalized or minoritarian position, where it is possible “to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility”, as Deleuze and Guattari put it.

To explain the language aspect of a minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari, as you can see, distinguish four languages: the vernacular, vehicular, referential, and mythic: the vernacular language is

the maternal or territorial language, functioning within the rural realm, and as such is a language of territorialization. The vehicular language operates within the urban, governmental or commercial realms and as such it is the first sort of deterritorialization. The referential language is the language “of sense and of culture” and entails cultural reterritorialization. And finally the mythic language, also a language of reterritorialization, is involved in the spiritual and the religious.

An interesting point of this concept, is that Deleuze and Guattari explain that the four languages in this linguistic model differ according to spatiotemporal location: “vernacular is here; vehicular language is everywhere; referential language is over there; mythic language is beyond” (23). Minor literature, they say, escapes signification and representation: a ‘minor literature’ resists resemblance and mimetic representation, much in the way that abstract art resists figuration, representation or imitation of real life. Language then enters ‘becoming’ through a non-significatory, non-representational ‘line of flight’ in which words and things often are ‘intensities’ in which sounds vibrate.

In their investigation of Kafka’s writings Deleuze and Guattari conclude that his uses of the Czech language function as the rural or vernacular language, Hebrew as the mythic language, Yiddish, as “a nomadic movement of deterritorialization” (25), and finally Prague German, the language he chose to write in, functions as the vehicular or major language by which “he will make the German language take flight on a line of escape” (25).

The relevance of Kafka’s situation and use of language to my project, you can see indicated in the following poem by Rose Ausländer “Bukowina I” (Ausländer 1985):

Bucovina I
 Green Mother
 Bucovina
 Butterflies in her hair
 Drink
 says the sun
 white corn milk
 I made it sweet.

Violet cones
 Airwings Birds and leaf
 The Back of the Carpathian Range
 Fatherly
 Invites you in
 To carry you
 Four Languages
 Four language songs
 People who understand each other.

Like in the case of Kafka, who lived on a German speaking linguistic island in Prague surrounded by Chech and two more other languages, Rose Ausländer's Bucovina was a region, where four languages existed side by side. Both like the other poets in Bucovina and like Kafka she chose to write in German from her outsider position on the margins of the German speaking monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

Before we look more closely at this poem, I would like to refer again the above mentioned "line of escape", which Deleuze and Guattari see as essential to a minor literature. In this sense a 'minor literature', then, is both political and subversive: It creates "the opposite dream: knows how to create a becoming-minor" (27).

This process in language may be seen as a movement beyond boundaries which transcends the limits of a specific territory, at the same time generating a closeness in distance and a relative distancing from what is close (Hernández 2002). The dynamics of this observation indicate a time-spatial simultaneousness of the unsimultaneous as fundamental to the phenomenon of deterritorialization.

Deleuze and Guattari, as we saw, use it in connection with its opposite, reterritorialization, to develop a model for conceptualizing minor literature where deterritorialization constantly aims at the disruption of traditional structures of language and expression, whereas reterritorialization reinforces its traditional structures.

Deterritorialization thus tries to upset the balance by way of using deterritorialized language which disrupts the logic of language by transgressing its semantic norms and limitations. In other words, as a strategy deterritorialization implies deterritorializing

mimetic representation, as Kafka did in *Metamorphosis* where he let words become blurred through animal noises.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, using deterritorialized language means stopping “being representative in order to [...] move towards [the] extremities or limits” of language. The skill and will of being inventive, the “intensive utilization of language” (Deleuze, Guattari 1986: 159) of a minor literature, is a way of resisting the lure of language hegemony and of becoming major by way of „opposing the oppressed quality of major language to its oppressive quality.“, as Deleuze and Guattari put it (Deleuze, Guattari 1986: 163).

Bearing this in mind let us now turn to the poems written in memory of a sunken landscape from the perspective of exile by Jewish German speaking poets, dealing with the catastrophe. First let us look again at the poem by Rose Ausländer “Motherland” (“Mutterland”) (Ausländer 1985: vol. IV, 98), which indicates what is the essence of my argument:

Motherland
 My Fatherland is dead
 They have buried it
 in the Fire.
 I live in my Motherland
 Word.

The poem, as I see it, is an example of an effective strategic way of coming to terms with the loss of home and native country by resorting to language or words by way of substituting one word for the other

Rose Ausländer uses the word “Motherland”, or as in the German original version of the poem “Mutterland” instead of “Vaterland”, meaning the land of the father: and by doing so she points to the significant opposition of the two, thus both indicating her loss of home in the sense of belonging to a territory and the fact that it is now “a sunken landscape”, no longer being “there” as the time-spatial place she remembers.

A similar transition from home land and native country as a geographical area and cradle of cultural identity to language as a substitute for the loss, can be seen in the following statement made

by her friend Paul Celan: “Obtainable, close and un-lost in the midst of all losses only this one thing stayed: language”¹ (Celan 1983: vol. III. 185).

This line of escape, where the only refuge lies in language by virtually transforming or slipping into it, is directly addressed by Rose Ausländer in the poem “Mutter Sprache” (Ausländer 1985: vol. IV):

Mother Language

I have
transformed myself
into myself
from moment to moment

Split into pieces
on the Wordway

Mother Language
reassembles me
Human Mosaic

In another poem, “Nobody” (Ausländer 1985: vol. III, 132), she states:

I am King Nobody
carrying
my No Man’s Land in my pocket

With my Foreigner’s Pass Port I travel
from Ocean to Ocean

Water your blue eyes
your black eyes
the colourless

My pseudonym

¹ “Erreichbar, nah und unverloren blieb inmitten der Verluste dies eine: die Sprache”.

Nobody
 is legitimate
 Nobody
 suspects
 that I am a king
 carrying in my pocket
 my homeless land

Despite the playful and seemingly optimistic mode of this poem, “home”, as we can see, is no longer there visible and in a fixed position, but is carried and hidden in transit by “King Nobody” in his pockets with a new or hidden identity as “No Man’s Land”. And consequently it is conceived of as “homeless land”, which means U-topia, a sunken landscape neither here nor there, but still potentially everywhere in a line of flight or escape, the place where the only hope lies in not being fixed.

In other words, the land has been deterritorialized in the sense that it has lost its expected significance as such. And even though the lyrical subject claims to be carrying it with her in her pocket, it can no longer be inhabited. Therefore it does not exist anymore as a home offering a permanent shelter to its inhabitants.

In this sense the only means of escaping and surviving the traumatic experience of loss, lies in becoming a nomad, stranger or gypsy, in other words “minor” in your own language, a language where you, strategically, can set your own terms.

Some of this can be seen in the next poem “Selbstporträt” (Ausländer 1985):

Self Portrait
 Jewish Gypsy
 German speaking
 Raised
 under a black yellow flag

Borders drove me
 To Latinos, Slavs
 Americans, Germans

Europe
 On your lap
 I dream
 my next birth

Both the destiny and the hope of this poem lie in the line of escape and flight into the dream of being reborn as someone else, in other words in being transformed through the kind of metamorphosis, which can only take place in a dream or mytho-poetic world.

Rose Ausländer wrote this poem towards the end of her life when she lived in the Nelly-Sachs-Haus in Düsseldorf. And the essence of what it is all about was addressed by Nelly Sachs, a German Jewish poet born in Berlin living in exile in Stockholm. In the poem “In Flight” (“In der Flucht”) from the collection fittingly called *Flight and Metamorphosis* (Holmquist 1986: 204), she describes the metamorphosis of the world from the perspective of a butterfly changing into an inscription on a stone which the poem’s lyrical subject ends up holding in her hand, stating that “Instead of Home / I hold the Metamorphoses of the World” (Holmquist 1986: 204).

I mention Nelly Sachs and her poem since it not only sums up the experience of exile and loss as a consequence of a never-ending process of flight and continual metamorphosis, but it also corresponds to the line of flight and escape, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is an important characteristic of a minor literature, in the sense of becoming a minor through deterritorialization. Which in essence may be seen as strategy of resistance to overcome the traumas of loss of home and belonging.

Paul Celan, friend to both Rose Ausländer and Nelly Sachs, chose a more distinct strategy of resistance to deal with his traumas by way of transgression, radically playing with the limitations of logic and language, where he situates himself in a linguistic play of neologisms constantly on the move between being both neither here nor there, but thus potentially everywhere, like in the following poem “In den Flüssen” (Celan 1983: vol. II, 14):

In the Rivers north of the Future
 I throw out the Net
 which you
 reluctantly burden
 with Shadows written
 by Stones.

As we can see, the poem both situates itself in a time-spatial territory of u-topia virtually in a homeless No- Man's- Land, and describes the line of flight and escape rooted in metamorphosis. Thus in fact it creates what Deleuze and Guattari described as a becoming minor through deterritorialization. Yet at the same time its strategic manoeuvre may be seen as the kind of aesthetics of resistance, which I referred to at the beginning of my paper.

In this respect the poem may be read as an expression of both the traumas of exile and loss and as ways and means of becoming a minor, in the sense of it being simultaneously imagined as potentially present and absent in a time-spatial territory beyond limitation, signifying nothing but mytho-poetic memories of “a sunken Landscape”, strategically deterritorialized as u-topia.

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ILYA KAMINSKY'S *DANCING IN ODESSA*: ON EXILE, AMNESIA AND POETIC ANAMNESIS

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This paper focuses on the Russian emigrant poet Ilya Kaminsky and his book of poems *Dancing in Odessa* (2004), which in my talk becomes a background for reflections on otherness, minority, exile, absence, silence and poetic recollection. But first I will have a brief look at the city, which occupies such a prominent place in Kaminsky's poetry, to put my presentation into a wider context.

In the Russian cultural imaginaries Odessa is connected to the concept of the kaleidoscope; it is a mechanism refracting history, culture and nationalities in pluralistic ever-changing settings (cf. Richardson 2008). In these imaginaries the city even comes close to the Foucaultian idea of certain spaces as *heterotopia* or otherness, an *anti-topos* to more hegemonistic, monolithic structures (Foucault 1984). Moreover, Odessa in a quintessential way is similar to the palimpsest, being a tight layer of different cultural and ethnic stories, a meeting place of diverse tendencies and divergent impulses.

Notions of Odessa as a meeting place are to a high degree reinforced by its geographical location. Odessa was founded in 1794 by the sea, and was from its beginning a passage to the world through its ports. It was a border town, situated like Saint Petersburg at the periphery of the nation, signalling openness towards the international community. As Saint Petersburg has been called the Palmyra of the North, Odessa has been called the Palmyra of the South, alluding to the image of the city as a beacon of culture and enlightened humanity in otherwise harsh and primitive surroundings.¹

Such notions were strengthened by the many creative people linked to Odessa, not least within Russian literature, a list so long I can refer only to a few of them. Already Alexander Pushkin,

¹ For a broad introduction to the historical development and the cultural image of Odessa in the period of the Russian Empire, see Herlihy (1987, 1991).

the iconic poet of the Russian Golden Age, documented its cosmopolitan nature. He lived here in internal exile from 1823-1824, commenting in letters *inter alia* to his brother (Pushkin 1962, IX: 70) on its international, vivid character, with French as a common language and European papers and magazines everywhere to read. In Odessa, as he famously wrote in his masterpiece *Evgenij Onegin* “all breathes Europe to the senses” (Pushkin 1998: 222). Rather ironically, his being expelled from “civilized” Saint Petersburg was thus a dislocation that relocated him in one of the most Europeanized societies in Russia. Incidentally, this situation says something about the paradoxical dynamics in the (Westernized) Empire between centre and periphery, between metropolis and provinces, between majority and minority and between colonizer and colonized.¹

Great writers connected to the Russian prose tradition in the 19th century, like Nikolay Gogol, can also be linked to the literary myth of Odessa. Gogol spent some time here in 1850, struggling, in vain as it were, to complete the second part of his *Dead Souls*. Furthermore, literary legends of the so-called Silver Age had an abundance of ties to Odessa; suffice it to mention Anna Akhmatova, who was born here and Boris Pasternak, who stayed here for longer periods during his young and formative years. In the writings of both can be found poetic echoes of the city by the sea.

A bit later, before and around 1920, Odessa became the home of the Odessan school of Russian literature. This was a group of people, many, if not all Jews, who contributed to the Odessa mythology by developing a specific poetics of Odessa. These poetics elaborated the life of the colourful Jewish communities and inscribed, in a nostalgic manner, the Jewish trickster-culture into Russian high culture.² For a while Odessa even supplanted Saint Petersburg as the capital of the Russian literary imagination and the Odessa-text (before this anti-authoritarian trend was repressed) became an intellectual and aesthetic force similar to the Petersburg-text in Russian cultural history. Foremost followers of this trend were Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov. The greatest of them all, though,

¹ For these intriguing dynamics, see f. ex. Helle (2014).

² On this culture, see f. ex. Tanny (2011).

was Isaak Babel who (before he eventually was killed by the NKVD in 1940) with his Odessa-stories mapped the Jewish urban landscape of Moldavanka through recreating its unique *kolorit*.¹

Another famous figure associated with Odessa is the border thinker Michael Bakhtin who spent part of his adolescence here and in 1913 joined the historical and philological faculty at the local university. It was then, in Odessa, that Bakhtin started to read Martin Buber's "philosophy of dialogue", which allegedly strongly influenced his own theories on dialogism and otherness/alterity.² One can also suppose that his time in Odessa, with its multilingual scene and its open playful atmosphere of many tongues, was essential in forming his thinking on polyphony, *heteroglossia* and carnival. The same sense of fun and irreverence that gave birth to Babel's Rabelaisian gangster left its mark on Bakhtin (see Clark/Holquist 1984: 27). And quite possible another of his main thoughts, the value of outsideness or exotopy (внеаходимость) is somehow related to Odessa. The importance of standing outside one's own core culture, always being on the boundaries, on the meeting point between different voices and consciences are all ideas that could have been inspired by the cross-cultural border city of Odessa.³

The city's idiosyncratic identity was not least a result of its varied demography, with people from all over the world coming together. Especially important was the Jewish element and the Odessan Jews constituted a highly characteristic ethnic and cultural minority, being construed in the Empire's cultural imagination as a

¹ See Sicher (2112), for an investigation into the complexities of Babel's identity situation, being a Jew, yet also a Russian writer with all its inherent contradictions.

² On this relationship, see Friedman (2001). See also Todorov (1984:117f.), who briefly comments on this connection.

³ As Bakhtin himself formulated the necessity of outsideness (1987: 7): "In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. A meaning only reveals its depth once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue which surmounts the closedness and onesided-ness of these particular meanings, these cultures".

very specific “inner other”.¹ Babel once described Odessa as a place made by the Jews, indicating their strong contribution to the many-faceted face of the city (2002:75). And although there were pogroms in pre-revolutionary Russia, the Jews thrived in Odessa, which was sometimes referred to as the gate to Zion or the star of exile, a port town offering possibilities to stay, as well as to leave. Also after the Bolshevik overturn the situation for the Jewish society was more or less stable, and about 1940 it has been estimated that more than 40 per cent of the population in Odessa was Jewish. The situation changed dramatically during the second world war, with the Romanian occupation and the Odessa Massacre, atrocities executed by the Nazis, resulting in the death of approximately 100.000 Jews (in and around the city). Stalin’s rule further demolished the Jewish segment, as did the waves of mass emigration in the 1970s and again in the 1990s. To day only about 3 per cent of the people here are Jewish.²

Naturally, these horrors and losses created dissonances in the cultural imagery of Odessa as a picturesque counter-community, a world of *joie de vivre* and *laissez faire*, a place of pluralism and openness.³ The image of Odessa now transforms into an even more complex semantic structure, in which the traditional picture of the city as a magical, joyful *anti-topos* is fused with reminiscences of tragedies and traumas.

The dense palimpsest of Odessa, its dramatic history and intriguing mythology, are all reflected in *Dancing in Odessa*. Its author, Kaminsky was born here and left with his Jewish family to the U.S. in 1993, when he was sixteen. Only 4 years old, while still living in the USSR, he became deaf due to improper treatment in the Soviet medical system. Despite this handicap, he learned English to a surprisingly degree of brilliance, and when his work

¹ On Europe’s various inner others, see f. ex Helle (2014).

² For information and statistics concerning the Jewish population in Odessa in the 20th and 21th century, see Richardson (2008).

³ For a recent work that brings forth the contradictions and complexities connected to the history of the city from its founding to our days, see King (2012).

was published in 2004, it became a huge success, among readers and critics alike.¹

The Russian Jew Kaminsky then, writes from his diaspora “in a language not mine” (2004: 1), about his hometown Odessa, seeing it through the cloudy lenses of an emigrant. In one perspective, his *Dancing* represents the poet’s attempt to renegotiate from his displacement his own identity, and come to terms with the conditions of exile and the haunting questions of abandonment and guilt. That his quest for reconciliation with the past is somehow connected to the Jewish dimension is made explicitly clear by his symbolic toast to (and citation from) Theodore Herzl, the visionary father of modern Zionism (2004: 25).

In his quest Kaminsky brings to life a lost universe, both geographically and chronologically. *Dancing in Odessa* is an associative journey back and forth between people, time and places, a technique that makes its construction seem both heterogeneous and fragmented. However, the wholeness of the text does not fall apart, but is powerfully held together by constant repetitions of recurring themes and images. The most important of these are silence and memory.

Dancing in Odessa is filled with a peculiar sense of silence, a condition often thematized by Kaminsky himself as a necessary precondition for the creation of poetry. Loosing his outer hearing has given him an extraordinary awareness of communication through muteness, a kind of inner hearing. He claims to be able to see words and sounds, and perhaps this capacity is what makes his poems so visible, so tangible, for us.² Silence is essential to Kaminsky because it is a precursor of memories, the place for memories to be born. So when he reworks the contradictory and complex implications of exile through topics of nostalgia, longing, displacement and grief, it is always with a focus on memory; or to be more precise, the recollection of the dead. The line “Memory, [...] stay awake” goes like an incantation through the text, emphasising the importance of

¹ For a short biography of Kaminsky, see: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/ilya-kaminsky> (accessed on 08 November 2013).

² This is explicitly thematized in *Dancing*: “My secret: at the age of four I became deaf. When I lost my hearing, I began to see voices “ (2004: 5).

talking about and with the dead, those who are no longer physically amongst us. Only through the act of writing can they be kept alive: “If I speak for the dead,» reads the introduction or the “Author’s Prayer”, “I must write the same poem over and over / for an empty page is the white flag of their surrender” (2004: 1).

Kaminsky’s inspirational drive is thus to force back from the state of amnesia through a process of poetic anamnesis a world gone and forgotten. This recovery of the past, though, is not a passive rendering or an “objective” recapitulation of something lost; it is rather an active reinvention, a creative reimagination of his biography through the power of poetry.¹ As such, *Dancing in Odessa* reinvents and resurrects from oblivion the fate of the poet’s family as Jews in Soviet Odessa, with heart-rending glimpses into horrific experiences. Consequently Kaminsky’s dancing through his pages sometimes takes the form of a *dance macabre*, recalling the tragic aspects of a period of brutal wars and political repressions. The serious and lofty tone is however commingled with the low and mundane. And the aspects of madness and suffering are interwoven with moments of gaiety and absurdity, even with a feeling of ecstasy and elevation: “[A]nd the darkest days I must praise” (2004: 1), Kaminsky sings out, in a celebratory voice not often heard in post-modernist poetics.

Not only the poet’s personal memories of a magic and tragic city are being revived through Kaminsky’s reinventing glance. *Dancing in Odessa* is text that functions as a meaning-generating mechanism – to borrow an expression from the Russian cultural thinker Yuri Lotman – on many levels.² By implication, it is a highly intertextual construction, playing itself out against a vast intellectual and literary tradition, both European and Russian. As readers we become part of a poetic dialogue that starts already with the dedication and with a citation – the only one in Russian – from one of Anna Akhmatova’s most programmatic poems: “Мне голос был” (Mne golos byl – I heard a voice). This (certainly for Russians) mythic phrase immediately plunges us deep into the dramas of

¹ On the complex dialectics of rememberence and reinvention, see Kontopodis (2009).

² On the text as a meaning-generating mechanism, see Lotman (2000).

emigration and the conflicting feelings of escape and leaving one's native land, one of the most disturbing underlying patterns in Kaminsky. In this paper, though, I will not present a detailed, text-oriented analysis of *Dancing*, but rather go into the poet's project of evoking the dead, and use this as a way to speak about a few of those coming to life through Kaminsky's incantations. □

The heart of the collection, its cornerstone and longest sequence, is the elegy for Osip Mandelstam, significantly called "Musica Humana". Mandelstam is often regarded as the greatest Russian poet of the 20th century. A most central figure of the Silver Age, belonging to the brilliant group of akmeists, he died after living years in internal exile, in a Gulag camp near Vladivostok in 1938.¹ His death was the last event in a chain of misfortunes that started with his writing a satirical epigram about Stalin, in which the "cockroach-moustached" Georgian is called, among other things, a "murderer and peasant-slayer" (2004: 69f.). This epigram was aesthetically one of Mandelstam's weakest works, but with a raw, instant power to secure his own destruction. As Mandelstam himself once said with foreshadowing insight into the connection between murder and poetry in (Soviet) Russia: "Poetry is respected only in this country, people are killed for it. There is no place where more people are killed for it" (cf. Nadezhda Mandelstam 1999: 161).

Mandelstam was born in Warsaw in 1891, into an upper-middle class family of almost assimilated Jews. He grew up in Saint Petersburg; the Europeanised Imperial capital, feeling divided between his Jewish and Russian identity, between a minority and a majority culture, always an outsider, always on the border, internalizing as it were, in his own writings the condition of exotopy. Typically he claimed to have no native country, considering himself a world citizen who's only home was within the classical cultural and humanist tradition. Even more than his akmeist colleagues he yearned for, even felt a "nostalgia for world culture" (Nadezhda Mandelstam 1999: 249), a sphere dominated

¹ On Mandelstam's life and work, see Freidin (1987); see also Cavanagh (1995).

by Antiquity, Dante, French classicism, Pushkin and so forth, and which for him constituted the universal memory. He was obsessed by the possibilities of the poetic word to recollect, once uttering in *The Word and Culture*: “Poetry is the plough that turns up time in such a way that the abyssal strata of time, its black earth, appear on the surface” (1991: 113). For Mandelstam it is through this well of universal memory that the poetic word emerges. In his conception of the past as a reservoir of cultural reminiscences the poetic language becomes not only a tool to connect the poet to the world history; through poetic language history is itself created and recreated. As Mandelstam expresses this notion in his essay *On the Nature of the Word*: “So highly organized, so organic a language is not merely a door into history, it is history itself” (1991: 122).

The poet’s strategy of turning back to understand the present could be seen as a counter strike against his epoch’s paradoxical ethos of disruptions, disinheritance and discontinuity. Moreover, his idea of poetry as remembrance and reinvention can be considered one of modernism’s most complex, ambitious and challenging visions of tradition (see Cavanagh 1995).¹ For Mandelstam then, the poetic text is a palimpsest, in which like in a kaleidoscope are refracted the utterances of former cultural periods, and every word appears (as may be Bakhtin would formulate it) through another word, reactivating its cultural dynamics. Every poetic word recollects so to say, its history and becomes a defender of human culture and memory. But for the words to sing, silence is a necessary condition. “Silentium” was for Mandelstam (as in the Romantic Wordsworthian aesthetics) not the opposite of creation; it was its other and necessary side, a primordial muteness lying behind every poetic utterance. In his *Dancing* Kaminsky explores these thoughts; a line of thinking no doubt familiar to him who in his deafness sees silence as the *locus* where poetic images are born.²

¹ For Mandelstam, then, the past is not a fixed and completed entity; it has to be reinvented through the remembrance of the poetic speech. As he himself formulates this idea: “[Y]esterday has yet to be born” (1991: 113).

² On the tradition of muteness in Romantic poetry, see Pack (1978). On this tradition in Russian poetry, see Khagi (2013).

Mandelstam was intensely drawn to border towns and places where the (European) culture was heterogeneous, dense and diverse, reflecting world civilization and humanity, like Athens, Istanbul and Saint Petersburg, a fascination we find reembodyed in numerous of his poems. Probably Odessa could also be linked to this fascination sphere, in Kaminsky's version certainly so. In his book he elaborates the myth of Odysseus (incidentally one of Mandelstam's poetic heroes) as being linked to Odessa: "I was born", he writes, "in the city named after Odysseus and I praise no nation" (2004: 54). By this linking Kaminsky makes his hometown into the quintessential traveller's city, a conglomerate of crossing influences, an Arcadia of ancient layers of culture. As such, the Black sea port could be moved into the circle of Mandelstam's cities of human civilization, albeit on a more metaphorical level. The main city of humanity, though, for Mandelstam was Saint Petersburg. His obsession with the Northern capital is reflected in *Dancing* where Kaminsky presents it as an antithesis to the dehumanized world of Stalinist Moscow or "The new State":

It is the 1930s: Petersburg is a frozen ship.
The cathedrals, cafés, down Nevski Prospect
they move, as the New State
sticks its pins into them" (2004: 15).

But notwithstanding the attacks from the new order, Saint Petersburg keeps its place as an incarnation of humanity and world culture. Kaminsky develops this theme by recreating Mandelstam's longing to return after being expelled into exile in the provinces: "He believed in the human being. Could not cure himself of Petersburg. He recited by heart phone numbers of the dead" (2004: 21).

Not only Mandelstam and his intimate surroundings, like his wife Nadezhda Nikolaevna, who later wrote gripping memoirs of her husband and his time, are resurrected through the imaginaries of Kaminsky's poetic plough.¹ In the section called "Travelling

¹ Cf. the two volumes, *Hope Against Hope* (1970) and *Hope Abandoned* (1974), both first published in the West in English, translated by Max Hayward from the Russian original, which circulated in a samizdat

Musicians” people close to Mandelstam like the haunted poet Marina Tsetaeva and the before mentioned Isaac Babel speak to us through the book’s many-layered fabric. Kaminsky also brings to life the words of the emigrant poet Joseph Brodsky, a Russian Jew with a history at the same time both similar and not similar to his own. And again the narrative of otherness, separation, marginalization, poetic muteness and poetic memory are told with consuming intensity, mapping a poetic landscape of exile, both external and internal, and the poet’s tragic fate in an oppressive society. For Brodsky, Mandelstam was the *Ur-Sänger*, a modern Orpheus, who for the sake of his poetic song was sent to hell, never to come back and forever lost to his Euridike (see Brodsky 1986: 144). The Orpheus theme of poetic sacrifice and loss runs like a *Leitmotif* through Kaminsky’s lines, constituting an important semantic dimension.

In *Dancing in Odessa* also non-Russians are also poetically recollected, not least Paul Celan. This preeminent German-speaking Romanian poet was born in 1920 into a Jewish family in Northern Bukovina, in the former kingdom of Romania, in Czernowitz, sometimes called “little Vienna” (now the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi – Чернівці). Both Brodsky and Celan (or Paul Antschel as was his real name) were deeply concerned with Mandelstam, an attraction that might explain their being invited into Kaminsky’s universe. In particular Celan felt a unique kinship with Mandelstam who for him was one of his “tutelary spirits” (Felstiner 2001: 7).¹ The Russian poet, Celan once wrote in a letter, “offered what is brotherly in the most reverential sense that I can give the word” (Felstiner 2001: 131). As such, Celan regarded Mandelstam as an *alter ego* (cf. Felstiner 2001: 131), seeing intimate bonds between them, both in their life and their work, bonds, which for us are actualized when Kaminsky brings them together on his pages.

version in the Soviet Union in the 1960s. In these memories her husband is transfigured into a sublime symbol of the artistic martyr under Stalin’s repressive regime.

¹ In Felstiner (2001) one can find a thorough examination of Celan’s life and work in English.

On the biographical level Celan considered Mandelstam's fate as a prefiguration of his own and he interpreted his own alienation in the world as a parallel to that of Mandelstam's (cf. Felstiner 2001: 131).¹ The older Russian poet lived in exile for five years and died *en route* to a labour camp in the Russian Far East, Celan spent two years of forced labour in southern Romania. Both were Jewish, but sought (albeit ambivalently) to fit into the dominant culture and language of the places they grew up in. Both struggled with their Jewish heritage and inclinations to abandoning Judaism altogether. Their experiences were those of a double inner exile, both encountered anti-Semitism, feeling more or less marginalized, as strangers in their countries, while simultaneously feeling like strangers also in relation to the Jewish communities. As Mandelstam, who always moved from location to location, never having a permanent home, Celan was a drifting person, always on the way on a "nomadic trajectory".² As Celan, Mandelstam was a rootless cosmopolitan – безродный космополит – who had no belongings except language (with all its inherent limitations and distancing).

Interestingly, it has been argued that «the true centre of modern Russian culture was not with those "most Christian", but their opposites – the antipodal Yids» (Freidin 1987: 9). Clearly Mandelstam was aware of this dual role. He was a social pariah and an outcast modernist while at the same time bearer of a high culture, which he sought to integrate into the context of a universal cultural memory. In this manner, Mandelstam, as later his younger colleague from Bukovina, was much more than a national poet or a Jewish poet since he contributed to the world's literary tradition far beyond the boundaries of the physical native land (cf. Glazova).

Also the poetic perspectives and practices of the two poets seem to converge. For instance, Celan's conception of silence as an other dimension of poetry connects him to Mandelstam

¹ The relationship between Celan and Mandelstam is an intriguing subject that has attracted broad scholarly attention, also quite recently. An introduction to these problematics can be found in Glazova (1996-2001).

² On this concept, see Verdicchio (1990).

(and to Kaminsky): For Celan “das geschwiegene Wort” (from his early poem “Argumentum e Silentio”) is a force, and as such “Verstummen”, the muteness, is not a negative condition, but rather, as for Mandelstam, silence and poetic speech are intertwined, phenomena at once mutually hostile and mutually attractive.¹

Moreover, the two poets both worked with complex metamorphoses, reflected in their highly sophisticated, distorted language. This poetic speech disorder or inarticulateness (косноязычие), an intended distortion or twisting of words as an aesthetic technique, can be related to what Mandelstam in *The Noise of Time* (2002: 78 ff.) called the “Jewish chaos” (“хаос иудейский”). The Jewish chaos is a reference to the distinctive *heteroglossia* that characterized the Jewish language situation, being a constant oscillation between different languages and alphabets, forms and styles, a creative linguistic practise which made Tsvetaeva claim that all “poets are Jews” (“все поэты – жида”).²

In his writings Mandelstam criticized the blind emphasis on the technological development of Stalin's industrialization; Celan in his poems opposed the Nazi obsession with machines. Both Celan and Mandelstam reacted against the indifferent, repetitive and merely quantitative progress with an entirely different concept of the human (cf. Glazova). Both coming from countries and epochs already lost or falling apart, like sunken landscapes and disappearing *Eutopias*, felt obliged to turn back rather than to look forward to the future. And arguably the most significant link between Celan and Mandelstam consists in their idea of a poem as a repository of memory, a unique way to preserve the cultural and ethical values inherent in the Humanist tradition (cf. Glazova). The literary work is thus a place where that which is current and personal comes alive while recurring to what is gone and forgotten, or as Celan in enigmatic, but beautiful sentences describes the poetry of Mandelstam:

¹ On the paradoxical poetics of silence, see Celan's text from 1960, “Der Meridian” (1986, III: 197). See also Olschner (1994).

² This expression can be found in a poem from 1924, “Poem of the End” (Поэма Кюнца); for an English translation, see Tsvetaeva (1971: 121).

Bei [...] Ossip Mandelstamm [ist] das Gedicht der Ort, wo das über die Sprache Wahrnehmbare und Erreichbare um jene Mitte versammelt wird, von der her es Gestalt und Wahrheit gewinnt: um das die Stunde, die eigene und die der Welt, den Herzschlag und den Äon befragende Dasein dieses Einzelnen. Damit ist gesagt, in welchem Maße das Mandelstamm'sche Gedicht, das aus seinem Untergang wieder zutage tretende Gedicht eines Untergegangenen, uns Heutige angeht (1986, V: 623).¹

This for me somewhat inscrutable but never the less meaningful description is connected to Mandelstam's understanding of poetry as a plough that turns up the black earth of our collective cultural history. The earth is a symbol of the meeting of present and past, and an image that is reflected in Celan's poem "Schwarzerde" from the collection *Die Niemandrose*.

And it is precisely in *Die Niemandrose* that Celan's poetic dialogue with Mandelstam is most strongly expressed. This collection (*The No-Man's Rose*) was written between 1959 and 1963 (after Celan had completed a number of translations of Mandelstam, translations that led to their poetic *Nebeneinandersetzung* in *Die Niemandrose*). The dedication in the first edition reads: "Dem Andenken Osip Mandelstamm's", and Celan shall have insisted upon spelling the name Mandelstamm (cf. Fisch 2000) which refers to Stamm, tribe or family, a germanization allegedly done to emphasize the Jewish kinship between them. By adding an extra m to Mandelstam, Celan also invoked the association to the almond tree as an image of the poet and the Jew generally speaking, since Mandelbaum is a Biblical term allegorically relating to this people (cf. Glenn 1973: 12; Ivanovic 1999: 60).

¹ "For Osip Mandelstam the poem is the place where that which can be perceived and attained through language is brought together around that central point from where it gains form and truth: around the existence of a singular being, who questions his own time and the world's, and the heartbeat and eternity/the aeon. This expresses the extent, to which extent Mandelstam's poem, the poem of a sunken one, emerging from its sinking again to light, matters to us to day".

Mandelstam pulsates through the *Die Niemandrose* in themes of Jewishness, persecution, loneliness, suicide attempts, rejections from publisher etc. and he has the role of an astral double, a second self and an embodiment of all Jewish victims. Mandelstam though, never had the opportunity to reembody his traumas from the years of repression and banishment since he perished before he could transform these events into (poeticised) recollections. Celan on the other hand survived the Holocaust and inscribed its horrors into his haunted writings. The dedication of *Die Niemandrose* to Mandelstam is therefore an act that is memory-keeping, not only for Celan's own experiences in his Nazi controlled homeland, but also for Mandelstam's personal Holocaust in the Soviet extermination system (cf. Glazova).

When Kaminsky through the pages of his *Dancing in Odessa* brings both Mandelstam and Celan back to live again, seeing them through the prism of his aesthetic reimagination, this is another act of memory-keeping, a method of reventive recollection, a way of speaking for the dead. However, in addition to the tragic dimension so often characterizing the dipping into a dark past, in Kaminsky we also glimpse an almost unconditional belief in humanity, in people's ability to overcome and survive. Despite the disintegration due to pain, loss and persecutions being evoked in the book, this aspect is counterbalanced by a celebration of life. The poetry walks on a tightrope between suffering and enlightening (almost Bakhtinian) laughter, moments of hope, humour and passion. Precisely these carnevalesque constellations seem to be incarnated also in the cultural imagery of the kaleidoscopic city on the Black Sea, which notwithstanding overtones of tragedy and sorrow even to day seems to have retained its powerful magnetism. This magnetism was felt and captured very intensely 100 years ago, by Babel, may be the greatest singer of Odessa. He wrote in 1916, in a short story called "Odessa" and long before the execution squad would silence his poetic voice, some evoking lines, with which I would like to end my presentation:

"Odessa is a horrible town. It's common knowledge.
[...]. And yet I feel that there are quite a few good things
one can say about this great town, the most charming city

of the Russian Empire [...]. In Odessa there are sweet and oppressive spring evenings, the spicy aroma of acacias, and a moon filled with an unwavering, irresistible light shining over the dark sea” (2002: 75f.).



*Leonid Pasternak (1896):
Alexander Pushkin at the Seashore (of The Black Sea)*

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**THEATRE IN THE UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND:
VERTEP, AVANT-GARDISM AND CABARET
DRAMATURGY – LES KURBAS, JURA SOYFER
AND THEATRE ARABESQUE**

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**A dialogic space between East and West in Ukraine
and Central Europe**

The Republic of Ukraine, as well as the earlier Soviet republic of Ukraine, has an ethnographically very diverse population, something that has left tracks in folkloristic theatre as well as in the artistic practices of the avant-garde and has had quite an impact on the interrelation between the two. In this context folklore means popular telling of tradition, and that again may merge into and inspire avant-gardist forms of expression.

After the dissolving of the Soviet Union it was an official aim to enforce the complex Ukrainian cultural heritage and make it the basis of a national identity. Another basis for this was finding back to the avant-gardist heritage, not the least in connection to the work of the theatre-pedagogue and director Les Kurbas (1887-1937). The avant-gardist heritage got more or less lost along with the eradication of the Ukrainian avant-garde in the middle of the 1930s, which was the period when Kurbas himself was deported. Both before and after 1945 the Soviet-Russian theatre has had great importance, especially after social realism was adopted into theatre from the early 1930s and became a psychological-realistic mainstream within theatre of the Soviet Union in general. This mainstream may be compared for instance to the Norwegian Ibsen-tradition and other traditions of realism within European theatre.

The Soviet Avant-garde had better surviving conditions in Russia than in Ukraine, but the avant-garde of both regions had a common source of inspiration in the folkloristic expressive forms of Ukraine as well as of Caucasus and Turkey (Picon-Vallin 2008: 123-135). The Ukrainian folklore was especially predominant in

the Vertep-tradition, and after 1990 the Vertep-tradition has been revived in Ukraine, while contemporarily the Ukrainian avant-garde of the Soviet-Republican era has been academically investigated and tried out as a basis for a new avant-gardist theatre (Kornienko 1969-2005). Hereby both traditions have become central in the creation of a new national Ukrainian majority culture while in the Soviet time it was a minority culture, in a time when the Russian mainstream-tradition within theatre was coloured by the fact that the Soviet-Russian theatre education of Moscow and Leningrad was the career way of both Russian and Ukrainian theatre.

In light of this I will focus on the dynamics of dialogic rooms of culture within a Ukrainian borderland between east and west, as well as in relation to Central Europe. I will show you Les Kurbas himself as an example of this dynamics, and also look at how the heritage from the Jewish-Ukrainian-Austrian cabaret artist and dramatist Jura Soyfer (1912-39) has been adopted into the productions of the Theater Arabesque, which was founded in Kharkiv in 1993. This theatre ensemble has attempted to combine the avant-gardist heritage from Les Kurbas with vertep, an old folkloristic tradition of pantomime that along with the Russian balagan inspired the avant-gardes of the 1920s and early 1930s in the Soviet Republics of both Russia and Ukraine. I will look at how this has contributed to the creation of a neo-avantgardist theatre form with features of recycling (Arntzen 2009) and postmodernism. Not the least thanks to the Teater Arabesque the neo-avant-gardist theatre has adopted into it strong elements of cabaret dramaturgy from Jura Soyfer's political cabaret enterprises during his emigration to Vienna as well as influence from the many plays that he wrote. The Theater Arabesque has worked with Jura Soyfer's texts and his form of political cabaret and has connected these elements with les Kurbas' physical and stylized theatre style.

My methodic perspective is seeing Ukraine as an example of exchange of the popular-venicular, the religious and the political within the dialogic room (Arntzen 2012). Ukraine is in many ways comparable to a cultural room in which the borders have moved throughout history and where you can trace important historical connections from different geographic directions in prehistoric

and elder historic time and, of course, in modern history. Ukraine, comprehended as a geographic region with a common language, Ukrainian, has historically been divided in west and east between Galitsia, which was a part of Poland-Lithuania and later Austria-hungary, and then again in 1945 along with East-Ukraine merged into the later Ukrainian Soviet republic with Kiev as its capital. The first Ukrainian Soviet Republic (East-Ukraine) had Kharkiv (Kharkov) as its capital. The Russian influence, especially linguistically, has been especially strong in eastern Ukraine, particularly so in the geographic triangle of Kiev-Poltava-Kharkiv (Kiev is Kyiv in Ukrainian, Kharkiv is Kharkov in Russian).

The Vertep-tradition, the balagan and the Sovietic avant-garde

Popular theatre has a long tradition in Ukraine and its borderlands, and may be traced back to the influence from the Byzantine era under the Kiev Rus-reign. In the Sofia-Cathedral in Kiev you can see a fresco from the 1000th century or older depicting dancers and musicians. In relation to the old contact with the Scandinavian countries well known in sources from the Viking era, there are some interesting tracks that we may take notice of. One is the story of Viking funeral rites from Ibn Fadlan's description of his journey (cf. Ibn Fadlan 1981), another is the Viking graffiti on Haga Sofia in Constantinople (Istanbul) and all the tales of fish traders from the time who took part in festivals such as is documented.

The popular Ukrainian vertep-tradition, also spoken of as "Christmas-pantomime", possibly originates in the popular ritual theatre forms that survived even the Byzantine Church that the Kiev Rus-empire joined in the early Medieval Ages. In the Santa Sofia Cathedral of Kiev there is a fresco depicting dancing jugglers and musicians. This fact touches even the question whether the theatre survived in the Byzantine Empire and its region of influence. It is not a central issue in my investigation but is an aspect that will be dealt with. This means that vertep may trace its origins back to the Byzantine era and survived the Stalinist eradications because popular folklore art was not struck down on in the same way as

avant-garde art. This was so in spite of the fact that folklore art of all kind was a source of inspiration to the avant-garde theatre. Vertep means “plank shed” or “Christmas manger”, and corresponding to the Ukrainian Vertep there existed a specific Russian variant of a folklore pantomime theatre or market place theatre; the so-called balagan.

Balagan is the name of a popular market place pantomime that may have come to Russia from Western Europe, where Theatre de la Foire or Jahrmarktstheater was known in France and Germany. This market place pantomime could also be used to show morally enforcing theatre, but it was most famous for its comical pantomimes. The Grotesque was an important dramaturgic form to the Soviet avant-garde theatre workers and it has its background directly in this combination of market place theatre, circus and chaplinism (Meyerhold).

The Russian and Soviet avant-garde artists were very preoccupied with such popular traditions as sources of inspiration to their working processes. It was a common thought that it was in these types of expressions the Russian soul was kept alive, and in this thought these artists came close to something authentic that even was open to political use. In painting this is particularly known from the paintings of Marc Chagall who combined folklore and surrealism, and before him in the paintings of Vassilij Kandinsky with his abstract-mystical pictures.

Les Kurbas and the Berezil-group: Soviet theatre avant-garde

The strong avant-garde movements within the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and before that at the end of the Tsar-regime, had great impact on international art- and theatre development. Its impact on theatre development expressed itself through the work of theatre directors who put their emphasis on physical stylising or a biomechanical acting style, in Russia represented by Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) and Jevgenij Vakhtangov (1883-1922) and in Ukraine by Les Kurbas. In many ways Kurbas represented a Ukrainian parallel to Meyerhold's biomechanical acting style with emphasis on the stylised and on external impulses.

The western theatre research that has preoccupied her self a lot with Les Kurbas' work is professor Beatrice Picon-Vallin (Picon-Vallin 2010), the French specialist on Sovietic theatre history who has written an article comparing Meyerhold and Kurbas. In her article Picon-Vallin is emphasising the fact that there was a kind of competitive relationship between them while contemporarily they respected each other sincerely. Both of them were strongly influenced by *commedia dell'arte*, the grotesque and by the Russian and Ukrainian folklore traditions *vertep* and *balagan*. Each in their own respective cities, Moscow and Kharkiv, they established theatre studios with corresponding schools, training facilities and stages. Kurbas' Teater Berezil was established in Kharkiv in 1922, with its own theatre building from 1924. Meyerhold as well as Kurbas took interest in contemporary European theatre, in German expressionism and in the work of directors such as Edward Gordon Craig and Georg Fuchs. More importantly they were preoccupied with Eastern European marketplace-theatre traditions and by Japanese kabuki-theatre. It was important to the two that theatre and acting regained the physical dimension and abstained from producing theatre regulated by text. In this directing was central and in fact determinant to both Meyerhold and Kurbas who were the very first to establish their own theatre education within their studios. During his childhood Kurbas lived in Galitsia, then a province of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy, so he was well acquainted to Germanic-lingual theatre and especially in Vienna.

Berezil became a centre of experiments with theatrical and physical forms of expression within Ukrainian theatre, and they developed a style that the Soviet government accused of being formalistic, anti-psychological and contrary to popular acting. Kurbas however insisted that theatre should not be illusionistic or have anything to do with empathy. The actor should rather objectively portray the character and never identify with it. This program is also known from Berthold Brecht's epical theatre even though there this is more modified. Les Kurbas' style and theatre method was by far more radical than that of Berthold Brecht.

Yosip Hirniak was one of the actors in Kurbas' Berezil-group and survived the 1930s' persecution of the formalists. Hirniak

immigrated to the US where he wrote about the rise and fall of Ukrainian theatre (Hirniak 1954, cf. Picon-Vallin 2010).

The avant-gardist movement in Ukraine was crushed in the 1930s because Stalin saw it as formalistic and unable to create what the Soviet government characterised as social realism. In Ukraine most of the avant-garde artists were deported to the Solovetski-islands in the White Sea, not far from the Norwegian border to the Arkhangelsk-region. There they either died or got killed after a varying length of time when they all suffered inhuman labouring conditions. The paradox is that this concentration camp within the Gulag system had been established in what was formerly a monastery. Les Kurbas himself still continued to produce theatre here until death put it to an end, using fellow concentration camp prisoners as actors.

The inheritance from Les Kurbas was more or less forgotten, but when the Soviet Union disintegrated and Ukraine became an independent state this inheritance was revived and his work documented and researched. The theatre group named Theater Arabesque in Kharkiv is trying to work with this inheritance in combination with making use of verstep, since in its time it inspired Les Kurbas, Meyerhold and many other Russian avant-garde artists. In Kiev Les Kurbas' work is documented at the Les Kurbas Centre which is working with documentation as well as being a location for productions of new theatre forms that are all inspired by him (Les Kurbas National Centrum for Theatre Art, Kiev, Ukraine).

Jura Soyfer: A Jewish-Ukrainian-Austrian cabaret artist in Vienna

During a stay in Kiev and Kharkiv in the autumn of 2012 I visited the Les Kurbas- Centre in Kiev, the Sancta Sofia cathedral in Kiev and the Theater Arabesque in Kharkiv, and I took part in an arrangement by the Literature Museum in Kharkiv in connection to the 100-year anniversary of the birth of Jura Soyfer. The Jewish-Ukrainian-Austrian cabaret artist and dramatic Jura Soyfer (1912-39) had been working with theatre throughout all of his time as an emigrant in Vienna. His cabaret-dramaturgical style is one of the sources for the Theater Arabesque and his work as a cabaret artist in

Vienna in the 1920s and -30s will be dealt with here as an example of cultural exchange in borderland regions.

It is difficult to say exactly what Jura Soyfer brought with him from Kharkiv during his escape with his parents from the Soviet Union via Istanbul to Vienna in 1921. His father had been the manager of Hotel Astoria in Kharkiv and the name Astoria is used repeatedly in one of his plays as an ironising synonym for Austria, the land that rose from the ashes of the First World War and the fall of the Austrian Empire. The Austrian folklore theatre-tradition from Johann Nestroy and the Germanic-lingual *Commedia dell'Arte*-tradition and *Fastnachtspiele* maybe, or the German comical and grotesquely folkloric theatre tradition (cf. Münz 1979), both of which could be both moralistic and simultaneously comical. This tradition has a slight resemblance to the *vertep* and *balagan*. In Vienna Soyfer got politically active on the left wing, something that destined his fate when during the Nazi regime he was deported to a concentration camp where he died of Typhoid fever in 1939. His plays were built up as cabarets accompanied by music, quite similar to the manner in which Berthold Brecht developed his epical theatre where the stages were cabaret acts accompanied by ballads and music. For Soyfer's part this theatre form was inspired by the cabaret style known as *kleinkunst*, which made use of comical effects and improvisation at basement locations (Jarka 1984: 7-21). To Soyfer as well as Brecht the political message becomes the predominant and adopts in it self the popular-vernacular and religious elements transformed to a political moralism. Cabaret dramaturgy involves the use of acts, episodes and situations loosely put together with musical acts and ballads, something that is found repeatedly in Soyfer's play *Der Lechner Edie, Astoria, Vineta and Broadway-Melodie* 1492. He also wrote some lyrical ballads that had a very poetical and existentialistic character.

Jura Soyfer's play *Astoria* (Soyfer 1934) has some features by it that are predicting surrealism, something which is indicated by the fact that Soyfer him self wrote an article in a newspaper where he stated that something new was going on in French cabaret- and folklore theatre, where playwrights connected the lyrical, the epical and the dramatic with emphasis on the eternal issues of art (Soyfer

1937, Arntzen 2000). A striking parallel to Beckett is when the two tramps in Astoria, Hupka and Pistoletti, resemble Estragon and Vladimir in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. In Astoria the two tramps are picked up by an American tourist, who is almost a Godot who is actually coming, she makes the two tramps ministers of the new Republic of Astoria, which is a symbol of the post-Habsburgian Austria that was divided into the two states of Austria and Hungary. It was the Nazis' communist hunt that ruined Jura Soyfer in the years succeeding the Anschluss, and he died from Typhoid fever in Buchenwald as political prisoner before the Holocaust gained its full force in Austria.

Teater Arabesque's Radio and the inheritance from Les Kurbas and Jura Soyfer

As I have mentioned earlier, Teater Arabesque was founded in Kharkiv in 1993 and has been licenced to work in the same industrial area in Kharkiv where Les Kurbas and the Berezil-group were working, right below the Jewish Synagogue. Through its productions the Teater Arabesque is processing something like a Ukrainian avant-gardist esthetical identity existing in the suspension area between verstep, avant-garde theatre and a recycling (cf. recycling, Arntzen 2009) of modernism but with postmodern features. In 2002-2003 Teater Arabesque presented a co-production in Poland that in English was titled *Critical Days* and engulfed a visual artistic project in Kharkiv, Kiev and Yerevan in Armenia. It released a series of sound recordings, debates and lectures.

Radio (*Eight Stories about Jura Soyfer*) is a political cabaret based on Jura Soyfer's stories on life in the urban jungle, on the struggle for survival in the shadows of the City world. The textual edition is by S. Zhadan and the directing by Svitlana Oleshko who is also the manager of Teater Arabesque. Radio was produced for the first time in 2007 and then for the second time in connection with the celebration of the 100-year anniversary of the birth of Jura Soyfer at Kharkiv in December 2012. The production is working with an acting technique that is making use of very stylised movements, and this resembles a recycling of Les Kurbas' and Meyerhold's physical acting technique. It takes the character of juggling acts where the

spectators are placed close to the stage area and are surprised by physical techniques and elements of neo-circus such as acrobatics and use of stelts. The spectators have to accompany the actors into a kind of City jungle and into the stories connected to it. "How do you find your way in alien cities" is one of the questions asked. The title Radio may seem a paradox, but goes back to the idea that broadcasts are really a kind of Babel's wireless telling of stories with reference to "Radio Babylon". Babylon is the symbol of the first ancient city where communication is disintegrating and people left to them selves and their own survival. The atmosphere of the production may resemble a Yiddish cabaret not the least due to its musical character. The scenography consists of a series of white-painted cubical box elements that are built up, torn down and used as dividing lines in the frontally arranged room.

Cabaret dramaturgy and folklore in border regions

Teater Arabesque, in the direction of Svitlana Oleshko, has been producing theatre between East and West, between the earlier Austrian-Hungarian province of Galitsia-Vienna-East Ukraine with its tartaric Khozak-traditions. Arabesque also has projects together with Poland, which Galitsia or West-Ukraine was part of in 1918-1945. Worth mentioning is especially the cooperation with the theatre group Gardzienice from the Lublin-region in today's South-eastern Poland, a group that also had projects in cooperation with Norway with Teater Beljash in the 1980s. These projects worked in a dialogical, ritual and popular-vernacular space.

By help of a method that focuses on exchange within dialogic spaces in geographical and cultural contexts, you will be able to analyse theatre productions as well as other forms of visual artistic expressions. Hereby it is also possible to create a panorama over folklore-inspired theatre and contemporarily investigate how they have affected mainstream theatre in the former Soviet Union, Russia or even Scandinavia, such as Sami theatre or Leif Stinnarbom's Vestanå Teater in Sweden. Making our historiographical basis borderland problems and historical theatre forms like balagan and vertep this has become possible.

Such a panorama will also indicate that such theatrical and artistic expressive forms especially cover the Finno-Ugrian, East-Slavic and South-Slavic culture area in the Balkans. In addition the Tartaric-Mongolian and Arabic dimension may indeed be added to it as we include countries such as Iraq and Syria. Along a North-South axis we may find examples from Barentsburg at Svalbard with its folklore-coloured tourist shows via Sami theatre to the Albanian theatre in Skopje, Macedonia. Along an East-West axis we may draw a line from the Central-Asiatic republics to Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey and to folklore-inspired theatre groups in Southern Europe and Northern Africa. The regional theatre festival in Istanbul was an example of a festival seeking to gather these converging points (Arntzen 2005: A and B).

Geographically Ukraine is a converging point for many such axes, while contemporarily Ukrainian theatre is a paradigmatic example of a borderland theatre. In force of its reference to the term “arabesque” the Teater Arabesque says something important about a theatre and a form of art that is drawing up lines that are constantly crossing each other in many directions. Truly this is a good metaphor for the complexity of borderland cultures.

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**THE THINKER OF BORDERLAND:
M. BAKHTIN IN THE HISTORY
OF IDEAS**



M. BAKHTIN'S BIOGRAPHY THEORY AND MODERN BIOGRAPHICAL STRATEGIES IN HUMANITIES

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In my presentation I am going to describe briefly three points.

1. “Biographical turn” or “Biographical turns” in Humanities.
2. Fundamentals of the M. Bakhtin’s theory of biography: “new biographism”.
3. Biography theory and methodology of Jewish studies in the modern Ukrainian philosophy.

1. “Biographical turn” or “Biographical turns” in Humanities

I support position of the American philosopher prof. Simon Critchley (New School, New York) and Ukrainian philosopher prof. Vadim Menzhulin (Kyiv Mohyla Academy) that have offered the title of “biographical turn” that has approximately the same meaning as “linguistic turn”, “narrative turn”, “anthropological turn”, etc. Philosophical background of a biographical/autobiographical tradition in the culture, nature and ontology of the biography/autobiography was studied by German thinkers Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and George Misch (1878-1965). Their key philosophical idea is co-dimensionality and co-equality of the Personality and the History. The History is understood as a face of the person. In its turn, the Personality is treated as a source of primary sociality and historicity. It postulates a principle of self-reflexivity of human life (Dilthey’s “*Lebenerfassthier Leben*”). The Man is a hermeneutical animal, the life has self-hermeneutical and therefore – autobiographical structure.

In my opinion, it was the first “biographical turn” in Humanities methodology. I would like to give some prominent examples of deep scientific researches related to the biography nature as a social and cultural phenomenon in Russian and Ukrainian tradition.

First of all, it is the book written by Grigori Vinokur “Biography and Culture” (Винокур 1927) where the author relied on ideas of

Lebens-philosophy and Phenomenology (W.Dilthey, E.Spranger, G.Shpet). The biography is represented as an “inner form” and “Lebensformen” of the culture, mainly a cellule of the history.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) offered the special biography theory: *Toward Philosophy of the Act* (1919–1921), *The Author and the Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (the 1920ies), *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism* (1936–1937), *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel* (1937–1938). Bakhtin considered the biography, autobiography, “self-report-confession” in the context of “sociological and historical poetics”, “philosophy of dialogue” and “philosophy of the act”. He described biographical and autobiographical acts as representations of “ontology of culture”, manifestations of “inner sociality” and “primary historicity”. I will discuss Bakhtin’s biography theory in details.

The 1960s and 70s were a turning point in the modern history of traditional genre. Since this time biography study has become a scientific method of research in many spheres of the Humanities. The biographical method was developed in sociology, psychology, and cultural anthropology. In addition, phenomenology, existentialism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, semiotics, linguistics, and other intellectual strategies were applied. Biographical studies became one of tinterdisciplinary strategies in the modern Humanities. Through this attention is focused on subjective, personal meanings that organize practices of life and self-presentation, self-performance, one of basic theoretical assumptions in modern biographical studies is a principle of homology between the real life and reality of an autobiographical narrative.

The biographical research is carried out within scopes of the tendencies: “biographical turn” and “death of the author” concept.

Thus, the “linguistic turn” and “narrative turn” have resulted in the second (probably third) post-Diltheynian “biographic turn” in the modern Humanities.

One of the brightest figures in the Russian Humanities of this period is Sergey Sergeevich Averintsev (1937–2004). In his work “Plutarch and Ancient Greek Biography” (Аверинцев1973) studied historical, cultural and literary sources of the genre. He

connected evolution of biography forms with transformation of an individualism phenomenon. Sergey Averintsev called Plutarch “a revolutionary of the biographical genre”. At the same time Plutarch and Ancient Greek Biography has really become a revolution for the Soviet Humanities. S. Averintsev was awarded by the Lenin Komsomol Prize for his book.

Yuri Lotman (1922–1993), a prominent literary scholar, semiotician and a philosopher of the culture studied biography and autobiography in the context of semiotics of the culture, semiosphere theory (Лотман 1985; Лотман 1987; Лотман 2001). He claimed that the culture is a poly-dimensional and complex-organized text. Two of the most representative cultural texts are biography and autobiography. These phenomena implement complementarity and transitivity of a “life-text” and “existential-narrative dimension”. Lotman offered a synthetic interdisciplinary model of biographic reconstruction (“novel is a biographic reconstruction genre” in the “Creation of Karamzin”) which combines literary, cultural, historical, and philosophical aspects. His Poetics of Culture project was close to “new historicism” (S. Greenblatt, A. Etkind). “New historicism” considers biographical analysis to be one of theoretical bases of this concept along with an inter-textual and discourse analysis.

I could continue listing names and ideas of scholars who developed the biography theories of and biographical studies in Humanities. However, I would like to return to M. Bakhtin. At the end of the first part I would like to stress that S. Averintsev and Y. Lotman kept a permanent dialogue with Bakhtin, argued with him, wrote about his ideas.

2. Fundamentals of the M. Bakhtin’s biography theory: “new biographism”

Within the brief presentation it is impossible to define all aspects of the M. Bakhtin’s biography theory. I have chosen the most important points. I’ll start with biographical details that explain the theory. The first detail is: as you know, in his memoirs Bakhtin said that he studied at History and Philology Department of Novorossiyskiy (Odessa) University (1911–1913?). He mentioned

that it was in Odessa where on an advice of his fellow student he firstly read Kierkegaard whose personalistic ideas had a great influence on young Bakhtin. It should be noted that M. Bakhtin was not registered in a list of students and irregular students of Novorossiyskiy University. The second detail is: two notebooks with detailed summaries of George Misch book History of Autobiography were found in Bakhtin`s archives.

Bakhtin offered the “biographical form” concept in (“Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”). Historical examples of the biographical form are happiness-unhappiness in antiquity, hagiography, confession in the Middle Ages, a family novel of the XVIII century. He defined features of the biographical form: a) a special type of biographical time (real time of life included in a longer process of historical time, age, generation); b) a specifically constructed image of a person passing the course of his life; c) a plot which correlates with the normal and usual course of life (birth, childhood, marriage, activity, death); d) a degree of “publicity” or “intimacy” of the biography/autobiography; e) relationship between inner and outer life chronotopes.

Bakhtin raises a problem of “biographical value”. This is the force that forms biography and autobiography from the outside. He distinguishes between two types of biographical consciousness (“biographical axiological consciousness”): adventurous-heroic and social-domestic. Principle of the second type is being with the world, observation and experience of the world again and again, love to simple things and ordinary people. The main figure of the social-domestic type is not a hero but a witness.

Very important problematic area for M. Bakhtin is an ethos of personal documents reading. He considered reading as a responsible act and a morally oriented strategy of cultural memory. These ideas formed a basis of an ethical code for biographical researchers and a policy of the cultural memory. You cannot force and prejudge recollection, Bakhtin writes. Memories of the whole life of another person hold a “golden key” of ethical and aesthetic completion of an individual.

Bakhtin`s “author and hero” architectonics is very important for the biography and autobiography theory, biographical and

autobiographical narration. A principle of author's and hero's asymmetry, "vnenakhodimost" ("finding oneself outside"), author exotopy (Todorov) is closely related to love, tenderness, compassion, mercy, gift, "amorous contemplation" ("contemplation with love"), "merciful consciousness". "Amorous contemplation", "merciful consciousness" are not just emotional characteristics ("emotional-volitional tones") but fundamentals of humanistic paradigm of the biographical discourse, methodological and ethical assumption of biographical studies. He thought about mutual activity of the hero and witness (contemplator) observing lives of other people. He notes that the contemplator of the others' life begins to be inclined to authorship, the hero becomes a subject of self-report-confession.

It is interesting that Bakhtin sharply criticized the biographical method which was developed in a positivism style under influence of Charles Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869) and Gustave Lanson (1857-1934). He placed the biographical approach in a par with vulgar sociological and causal explanation in a spirit of the natural science, with a "history without proper names". Bakhtin wrote about the biography: "it is an organic product of organic epochs".

However, we should not overstate the critical attitude of Mikhail Bakhtin to the biography and biographical method. In my opinion, Bakhtin's position – is not anti-biographism but rather "new biographism" which is more consistent with specific features of the Humanities, Geisteswissenschaften. I use the term "new biographism" coined by British writer and literary critic Christine Brooke-Rose (1923–2012) in her article *The dissolution of character in the novel* (1986). However, my understanding of this term does not coincide with a position of Brooke-Rose. Theoretical basis of the new biographism is also revealed in philosophic hermeneutics, phenomenology, existentialism, philosophy of dialogue.

3. Theory of biography and methodology of Jewish studies in the modern Ukrainian philosophy

Theoretical biography space is now mastered by Ukrainian philosophy which develops a tradition of "Kiev ontological and anthropological school" (G.Skovoroda's Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences – V. Shinkaruk, V.Tabachkovsky,

V.Ivanov, S.Proleev, V.Gorsky, S.Crimsky, V.Malakhov, and others). *Foundation of Biographica* by Alexey Valevsky (Валевский 1993) is the first special philosophical research of the biography nature and ontology. The scholar defines a biographical writing as a type of humanitarian knowledge and textual representation of a personal history formation in a language of a given culture. Ontology of the biographical knowledge is defined by Valevsky as a certain set of conditions providing a possibility of textual representation of a particular phenomena. The concept of biographical discourse makes it possible to explain basic epistemes of this representation and “particular rationality” of every stage in the biographical tradition (for example, “orderliness episteme of” for antiquity, medieval and Renaissance types of the biography or “mirror episteme” of the Modern European biography).

The author of *Biographical Approach within the Western Tradition of the History of Philosophy* (Менжулин 2010) Ukrainian philosopher V.Menzhulin studies development and establishment of the biographic approach (biographistics) within the philosophy historiography as a legitimate form of cognition in its own right, with its own strategies, principles and methods as well as its common pitfalls and restrictions. He outlines main tendencies and landmarks in formation of attitudes towards biographic components of the philosophy history from antiquity to our days. The scholar reconstructs and analyses particular models of mutual influence and interaction between biographies and philosophic views within such influential philosophical approaches as neo-Kantianism, neo-Hegelianism, philosophy of life, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism and post-structuralism, pragmatism, and neopragmatism, analytical philosophy (by the examples of lives and works of K. Fischer, W. Windelband, F. Nietzsche, S. Freud, W. Dilthey, K. Jaspers, J.-P. Sartre, H. Arendt, M. Foucault, L. Wittgenstein, and others). V.Menzhulin concludes that every philosophic tradition, no matter how scientific or anti-biographical it seems at first, eventually can give rise to processes that may be described as a “biographic turn”. He gives special attention for “new historicism” in a context of development of philosophic biographic pragmatics. Vadim

Menzhulin did not just write the theoretical work in the field of biography philosophy. I want to draw your attention to *Another Sikorsky: uncomfortable pages of psychiatry history* (2004). It is a biography of the psychiatrist well-known in pre-revolutionary Russia, Ivan Sikorsky. He is the father of the prominent aircraft designer Igor Sikorsky. Menzhulin convincingly shows an unseemly role of Ivan Sikorsky in an anti-Semitic trial of Mendel Bayliss in Kyiv (1912). A Jewish worker was accused of committing a ritual murder of a Russian boy on the basis of a psychiatric examination and pseudo-scientific arguments of Ivan Sikorsky about special nature of national Jewish psyche (“Morbus judaicus”).

My research and professional interest is connected with study of the biography as a cultural, social and anthropological phenomenon. With respect of the “social and cultural ontology” biography in a variety of its forms and types is a cultural invariant, essential expression of basic self-reflexivity and fundamental narrativity of the human life. At the same time the biography phenomenon exists in «double optics» of opposite-directed vectors: a) “personalization” of objective social and cultural meanings; b) “universalization” of unique personal senses.

For the first time in Ukraine I have offered the teaching course called “Fundamentals of Biography” at a Philosophy Department (Odessa National University). Students-philosophers participate in the research project “Oral History of Philosophers” and collect autobiographical interviews of their teachers. This project was offered by Tatyana Chayka (Senior Researcher of the Philosophy Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Tatyana Chayka participated in creation of an audio and visual archive of biographical interviews with victims and witnesses of the Holocaust in Ukraine. The Ukrainian collection becomes a part of Survivors of Shoah Visual History Foundation which was established by Steven Spielberg after his “Schindler’s List” (1994), now – USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.

M. Bakhtin theory, his philosophy of dialogue is the one of primary theoretical, ethical and emotion sources for us. Working on materials of Fundamentals of Biography course, students wrote essays about their experiences and impressions. I have no doubt

that they have experienced inspire of exotopy (внезаходимость), acts of compassion, love, “merciful consciousness” and “amorous contemplation”.

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PHENOMENON OF INTELLECTUAL CONTRABAND: BAKHTIN'S CASE

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In this article I would like to raise an issue so called “intellectual contraband” in a context of M. Bakhtin’s heritage. The intellectual contraband is an essential phenomenon in history of spaces under ideological control. The notion of intellectual contraband is not widely used, so I’ll outline it briefly.

In a totalitarian society a scientist is placed in very complicated circumstances. Reference to works of colleagues with an “ideologically wrong” position is prohibited. Imagine a researcher who understands that important for him idea was acknowledged as ideologically wrong, so the idea is prohibited. If he realizes importance of the prohibited idea or concept, there are three ways before him. The first is to proclaim his solidarity with the prohibited idea and to be punished by authorities. It is brave, but not very productive in scientific perspective. The second is to write “for the drawer”. Sometimes it is the only way in the situation of ideological control. But it is as painful as the first one in a scientific work perspective. The third way is to “hide” the prohibited theory under some permitted titles. We say “a reputable X said...” inserting the prohibited theory in interpretation of X’s words. In this way we define the “intellectual contraband”.

The “contraband” seems to be the easiest way. But in fact, a researcher who dares to choose this way appears to be very vulnerable. Authorities have an opportunity to unmask a “contrabandist” and to punish him. Colleagues can define his acts as plagiarism. Analyzing examples the intellectual contraband we prefer to call it a courageous deed. Due to these investigators who risked inserting prohibited knowledge into a space behind the iron curtain, the Soviet scientists could maintain a normal intellectual level.

We can analyze different examples of the intellectual contraband in a Soviet tradition. In contemporary Ukrainian science there are few investigations of the intellectual contraband taken place in the Soviet period. For example, we know that Soviet philosopher

Merab Mamardashvili declared ideas of prohibited phenomenology through a permitted investigation devoted to Descartes. This case was revealed by Ukrainian philosopher Vahtang Kebuladze (Кебуладзе 2009). The author of these lines has analyzed availability of *École des Annales* ideas in Soviet medieval studies (Довгополова 2012). Soviet historian Aron Gurevitch approved himself as a mediator between European historical anthropology and the Soviet historical science. He also transferred into the Soviet space ideas of Russian emigrant historian Petr Bitzilli prohibited in his native country due to his Anti-Marxist position. Every Soviet humanitarian remembers a type of the intellectual contraband in a form of “criticism of bourgeois concepts”: detailed description of a Western scientific direction with obligatory conclusion “all these concepts are wrong through their bourgeois nature” very often appeared to be the only way to know what’s happened in the world science. One can easily find a great number of contraband examples.

A very special case of the intellectual contraband appears in the context of M. Bakhtin. All of us know about texts published under the names of Bakhtin’s friends, P. Medvedev and V. Voloshinov. In a situation when publication of Bakhtin’s works was impossible they agreed to publish his texts under their names. The most famous books are “The Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” (published under the name of V. Voloshinov) and “Formal Method in Literary Studies” (published under the name of Medvedev). Few articles were published under the name of Kanaev. Here we see a remarkable form of the intellectual contraband – a book of not just a foreign prohibited author but the undesirable Soviet author was published under names of other writers.

We know about active involvement of people who shared Bakhtin’s ideas in his life. Only due to friends’ help the Bakhtin’s family received sustenance in a Petersburg’s period. So called “circle” (or Bakhtin’s circle as we name it now) was formed in a period of Bakhtin’s life in Nevel and especially Vitebsk. The main part of this circle later gathered in Petersburg supporting a spirit of creativity and pathos of intellectual world rebuilding. When Bakhtin was charged of a crime, participants of the “circle” helped to change his sentence: instead of imprisonment in a Solovky camp Bakhtin was “only” exiled to Kustanaj. This change of the sentence

saved Bakhtin's life – level of his health was not compatible with conditions of the Solovky camp. When Bakhtin was under examination his friend Pavel Medvedev used his best efforts to publish a Bakhtin's book devoted to Dostoevsky.

There were people who wished to risk for the sake of Bakhtin. And it seems normal that the only reaction to the noted participation in Bakhtin's life is adoration and gratefulness for the people who made publishing of Bakhtin's works possible.

The situation is well known to describe it. It is important to show not the situation itself, but its picture in the modern history of science. After ideological press has disappeared it was started intense intellectual "excavations" in the field of Bakhtin's heritage. Their aim was to put historical record straight by returning of Bakhtin's authorship to all the "contrabanded" works. A series of books under a common title "Under the mask of Bakhtin" was published.

A discussion which was launched after books had appeared reveals an additional side of "intellectual contraband" issue to us. Unfortunately, in pathos of putting the historical record straight some theorists didn't keep in mind the situation in which Bakhtin's went through the Soviet scientific era. In such researches Medvedev and Voloshinov sometimes show themselves as certain epigones, hence they have been a significant part of the so called "Bakhtin's circle". I'll try to illustrate my statement.

Bakhtin himself left his comrades for a few decades. Voloshinov passed away in 1936, Medvedev – in 1938. A authorship question was raised only in the 60^{ies}. During so called Thaw period few young philologists (Vadim Kozhinov, Sergej Bocharov, Georgy Gachev, Vladimir Turbin) reopened Bakhtin's name to the world and visited the old and sick researcher in Saransk. Some remarks of Bakhtin's wife in common conversations (such as "Do you remember, Masha, how did you dictate these lines?") revealed possible false authorship. When Bakhtin was asked about a desire to renew his authorship, he refused. He reminded of the common circle of thinkers existed in Vitebsk and Petersburg in the 20^{ies}. According to Bakhtin, that time there was a common space of thought, his friends are dead now, so he sees no reason to raise the authorship question.

In reply to the mentioned words of Bakhtin Sergej Averintsev offered to publish a of “Circle of Bakhtin collection” and to set the authorship problem aside. We know that this offer was ignored. The book series under the title “Under the mask of Bakhtin” was published, with the most high and clean inspirations, as I think.

These publications caused heated discussions. Sometimes these discussions did not support a tone of scientific debate. The strict statement of Bakhtin’s authorship caused indignation of authors who have not supported such rigorous position. The main opponent in this confrontation was a son of Pavel Medvedev – Jury Medvedev (Медведев 1995; Медведев 2000; Медведев, Медведева 2001; Медведев, Медведева 2006; Медведев, Медведева 2012). In the 90ies he entered into controversy with a chief editor of “Bakhtin under the mask” series Igor Peshkov (Пешков 1995). At the beginning of the 2000-ies the dialog between Medvedev and Peshkov appeared to be impossible due to acuity of their personal positions. Peshkov determined a position of Voloshinov-Medvedev’s authorship defenders as obscurantism (Пешков 2000). He ridicules assertion statement about mutual influence and common way of thinking of “Bakhtin’s circle”. “Kukriniksi” – he says mockingly, referring to a group of Soviet caricaturists who worked under the common name built from parts of their names.

Peshkov affirmed that his textological analysis clearly showed that Voloshinov and Medvedev had no relevance to the books “The Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” and “Formal Method in Literary Studies”. Proving Bakhtin’s authorship, he describes Medvedev as extremely narrow-minded and ignoble person. Wishing to prove his position Peshkov claims that in fact Medvedev had stolen Bakhtin’s texts. He reminds of a Pasternak’s positive remark of on *The Formal Method in Literary Studies*. Peshkov accused Medvedev in dishonesty – speaking with Pasternak the latter hadn’t acknowledged that the real author of the book is Bakhtin. Jury Medvedev carried out his own textological analysis proving authorship of Medvedev. We cannot verify results of these works but a common focus of author’s opinion excludes another decision.

Not all authors who write on the authorship problem in “Bakhtin’s circle” are so rigorous. So, V.M. Alpatov analyzes the problem very cautiously (Алпатов 1995; Алпатов 1997). Most part

of serious researches appears to be quite prudent in their researches. But a fact of such discussions caused a strange effect in Voloshinov-Medvedev's perception. Each following notion about the authorship problem became boring. And now in the common humanitarian space Bakhtin's close friends (who suffered for their close relation to Bakhtin) are represented as some puppets without their own will and thoughts. Specialists are able to analyze the situation. But the "Bakhtin under the mask" project was launched to reveal situation of the intellectual contraband for wide circles of humanitarians. It was very clear and noble idea with the aim to reveal the dramatic situation in the Soviet science. As a result all participants of the situation are humiliated.

One side of discussion tiredness is humiliation of Voloshinov and Medvedev. We mentioned narrow-mind seeing of Medvedev in works of Peshkov. The situation of Voloshinov I dare to illustrate by the glance for the page, devoted to Valentin Voloshinov in Wikipedia. The article is organized in a very strange manner. Brief and correct article is accompanied by a few lines from a book of memories of Olga Freidnberg. She told about Voloshinov in very hostile manner. "He was a subtle young man and esthete, author of a linguistics book which has been written for him by Blochin. This Voloshinov had cynically offered me to work for him too... I refused – and our relations became cold as an ice. Soon Voloshinov had fallen, as after this fall Jakovlev did, and then – Desnitsky... The people, who built the Soviet power, have been removed by this power. Predators devoured one another". It is remarkable that this quotation was posted in Wikipedia on the page of Voloshinov, the most popular source of information in the modern world. This is the only quotation! No more memoirs about him are available! After this biased and wrong (Bakhtin is confused with some Blochin) quotation accurate paragraphs on the authorship problem look absolutely redundant. The image of Voloshinov appears to be quite repulsive. Any other memoirs are absent here.

The role of Volosinov and Medvedev in Bakhtin's fate turned out to be perverted. If today we would like to say about their courage we'll listen something like "O, well-well, we know, they said that they supported Bakhtin, but they stole his books! And the only aim of their defenders is to gain copyright and money". This

is very sad and dramatic result of the noble objective of putting the historical record straight, and a good illustration of the dramatic effect caused by the intellectual contraband. A person who dared to be a contrabandist falls under attack in any case.

But the case of Bakhtin's text contraband shows us another side of the problem too. Not only Voloshinov and Medvedev appeared to be victims of the contraband but Bakhtin himself! Let me remind of a study conducted by Swiss researchers Jean-Paul Bronckart and Cristian Bota who accused Bakhtin in stealing works of his dead friends. The Genevan researches claim that Voloshinov and Medvedev were famous scientists in the 1920-ies when Bakhtin was an aspiring and eccentric author. Voloshinov and Medvedev were close friends of Bakhtin but they had other ideological positions. After Bakhtin's arrest in 1929 his friends gathered scattered fragments written by Bakhtin about Dostoevsky into a comprehensive study and published it. This fact raised Bakhtin's weight in the Soviet society and saved him from Solovki camp. In the 60ies when a new edition of the book about Dostoevsky was published Bakhtin has altered nothing in text. What does it mean? That the text wasn't written by him. Followers of Bakhtin saw similarity between the work about Dostoevsky and researches of Voloshinov and Medvedev – so they decided to refer them to Bakhtin too. The title of the Jean-Paul Bronckart's and Cristian Bota's book is representative – “Bakhtine Demasque. The History on Thief, Fraudulence and Collective Insane” (Bronckart, Bota 2011). The Swiss authors tried to unmask Bakhtin in another way. So the thinker, whose only aim was looking for the Verity, appeared to be a careerist and thief. The Swiss authors describe Bakhtin as a middling person who passively used a chance to appropriate his friends' works. Acknowledgement of this appropriation by the world humanitarian science indicates some collective insane, nothing more.

This case of the intellectual contraband reveals very important ethical aspect of the problem to us. We see how *all* the participants of the “contraband” process are vulnerable. And how useful could be researches of scientific traditions in a perspective of the “intellectual contraband” problem. Scientific development could be defined as an ethical process from this perspective. If we

remember the Bakhtin's concept of a "responsible being" and see the "intellectual contraband" problem such complicated knots of the scientific traditions could be analyzed more fruitfully.

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