

Jewish Identities in Contemporary Europe

Conference

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ABSTRACTS

Nathan Abrams (Bangor): “‘Almost the same, but not quite’”: Jewishness in Contemporary UK Cinema’

What does being Jewish today mean in the United Kingdom today? I will seek to explore this question by taking British cinema as my case study. Jews have resided in England since their readmission in 1656 and although British Jewry has been explored from a variety of perspectives, beyond literature its cultural output has been virtually ignored. As a consequence, there is almost no scholarship on the subject of Jewish cinema in the United Kingdom. Despite the growth of Film Studies and Jewish Studies, to date, no extensive study with Jewish film as its primary focus has been published even in light of the increased visibility of Jews and Jewishness in public and mass cultures. In contrast to the story of the Jewish contribution to US cinema, both in front of and behind the camera, which is very well known, in terms of academic research, very little has been written on discussing the representation of Jews in British film. Indeed, it seems that Jews have been written out of the histories of cinema in the United Kingdom and its constituent nations. For example, when studies have looked at ‘Jewish film’ in the United Kingdom, they have tended to focus upon individual films, which are then treated in isolation, almost to the point of ahistoricity, divorced from the British-Jewish context from which they derive/d. The scholarship surrounding Sandra Goldbacher’s 1998 film *The Governess* is a case in point, as little of the scholarship about the film situates it in either a British industrial or Jewish community context (Felber 2001, Ascheid 2006, Lewin 2008). Conversely, when books have looked at British–Jewish history, they have overlooked film and cinema. It is striking yet illustrative that in his chapter on ‘Art and Intellect’ in his survey of British Jewish history, Stephen Brook (1989) completely ignores the film industry. Possibly the only piece to devote itself to this subject, in its entirety, is Kevin Gough-Yates’ 1992 article ‘Jews and Exiles in UK Cinema’. In this paper, I will build upon Gough-Yates’ work in order to produce a corrective and contextual study, which analyses film-making in the United Kingdom reflective of the Jewish experience.

In doing so, I will utilize Homi K. Bhabha’s analysis of the colonial subject, which is useful in considering the position of the British Jew, especially his concept of ‘almost the same, *but not quite*’ (1994: 123). At one level, it can be used to refer to the primary signifier of Jewish male difference – circumcision – but on another it (albeit unwittingly I would suggest) invokes a racialised schema in which Jews were never ‘whitened’ as they were in the United States during the 1950s (Brodkin 1998: 10). Where ‘Jews were, more or less, accepted as white’ in the United States, the ‘imperative to whiten the Jews’, owing to a lack of large-scale immigration and economic need, did not occur in the UK (Stratton 2008: 198). Consequently, Jews could be considered as ‘[a]lmost the same *but not white*’ (Bhabha 1994: 128) with the result that, in cultural terms, they have adopted what Bhabha calls mimicry. According to his formulation ‘mimicry is like camouflage not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance’ (1994: 128). Using notion of mimicry, I will explore how these ideas are played out in British cinema, in particular how the Jew/ess bears the brunt of ‘the difference between being English and being Anglicized’ (Bhabha 1994: 128), with specific reference how it seeks to disguise itself or perhaps to make it more interesting to the mainstream by miming ‘the forms of authority’ (Bhabha 1994: 130). Examples include *Sixty Six*, *Wondrous Oblivion*, *Suzie Gold*, *Borat*, *Ali G In Da House*, *The Infidel*, *The Governess*, and *Leon the Pig Farmer*.

Lihi Nagler (Tel Aviv): Images of Jews in Post-Reunification German Cinema and Television

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the resulting (re)birth of a united Germany, there has been an ever-increasing growth of interest within the German political and cultural sphere in what Jack Zipes calls “Things Jewish”, coinciding with a national identity crisis of a fragmented nation, trying to unite and come to terms with its past. Furthermore, the Jewish community in Germany today is the only one in Europe that continues to grow steadily. It is a fascinating blend of cultural identities, a community whose members are mainly immigrants from the former Eastern Bloc, struggling to define itself for and in a German culture, in relation to its pasts, as Eastern-European Jews, as heirs, perhaps only symbolically, to a German Jewish cultural heritage, but also in relation to other minorities in Germany today and to other Jewish communities around the world.

In 1986 the historian Dan Diner defined the relationship between Germans and Jews after 1945 as a “negative symbiosis,” claiming that any German or Jewish identity after the Holocaust could not be constructed without bearing Auschwitz in mind. This approach ties the German and the Jewish fate in a negative bind in which both roles, that of the perpetrator and that of the victim, are in many ways transmitted to the aftermath generations who carry what Artur Cohen defines a “scar without a wound.”

But is there really one inevitable way to understand all such relations after 1945? What additional contexts could explain the fascination with Jewish figures and what uses do they have for Germans today? How should we segment the post-War history – which historical landmarks should we note? My article aims to describe and suggest contexts and explanations for filmic representations of Jewish figures and cultures in Germany after the *Wende* (reunification) and specifically in the light of this event.

Using terms such as *Heimat* and *Anti-Heimat films*, *Heritage films*, *Nostalgia*, *Postmemory*, *Anti Memory* and collective amnesia, I present textual analysis of films and television productions such as: Abraham’s Gold (Dir.: Jörg Graser, 1990), Rosenstrasse (Dir.: Margarethe von Trotta, 2003), Berlin 36 (Dir.: Kaspar Heidelberg, 2009), The Last Train (Der letzte Zug, Dir.: Joseph Vilsmaier, 2006), Babji Jar – The Forgotten Crime (Babji Jar – Das vergessene Verbrechen, Dir.: Jeff Kanew, 2003), Just an Ordinary Jew (Ein ganz gewöhnlicher Jude, Dir.: Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2005) and In Face of the Crime (Im angesicht des Verbrechens, Dir.: Dominik Graf, 2010).

Discussing film casting strategies, public debates on the role of Holocaust memory in Germany nowadays and on Jews in Germany among other minorities, I demonstrate how most of the representations of Jews in German fiction productions express different reactions to the widespread public discourse on collective victimhood.

Nathalie Ségeral (Los Angeles/Paris): ‘Frenchness, Jewishness and Identity in Karin Abou’s *La Petite Jérusalem*

In his article entitled “Founding Principle Called into Question”, dealing with the fall 2005 riots in the French suburbs (*The Guardian* Nov.8, 2005), Jon Henley writes: “The ‘modèle républicain d’intégration’ is based on perhaps the most sacred article of all France’s grand republican creed: that ‘everyone is equal and indistinguishable in the eyes of the state.’ No matter where they come from, all French citizens are identical in their Frenchness.” But what does “Frenchness” mean? What does the concept of French identity mean for somebody like Laura, the main character in Karin Abou’s movie, *La petite Jérusalem* (2005)? Laura is Jewish, and was born on the island of Djerba, Tunisia. While we do not know anything of the circumstances in which Laura and her family came to France, and what their immigration status is, they are considered to be “immigrants”, i.e. outsiders, by the French. Henley adds: “The people who live there [in the rundown estates going up in flames] live next door to France.” Namely, this statement both sums up and embodies Laura’s situation, as she finds herself at the periphery of several worlds: geographically, she lives at the periphery of Paris, since her neighborhood, Sarcelles, is located outside the city; born in Tunisia, she is at the very periphery of the concept of “Frenchness” because of her status

as an immigrant. As a consequence of her Jewishness, she is also at the periphery of French immigration, largely dominated by Muslim immigrants during the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, she embodies a minority within a minority.

Drawing a parallel with Albert Memmi's *La Statue de sel*, this paper aims at investigating how Laura, who, as a student of philosophy, develops an unconditional admiration for Immanuel Kant's universal law, finds herself gradually estranged from her own family, as she chooses the Kantian law over the law of the Tora, and, hence, the public sphere over the private one. Abou's movie stages the tensions between the contradictory demands of the French society's Republican law and the family's Jewish law, culminating in a crucial crisis in the young woman's life, and underlying the universal power of literature and philosophy, as well as the failure of the prevalent "French" culture to provide minorities with a valid model of identification.

Lea Wohl (Hamburg): 'Dani Levy's Film Narrations: a Map of the 'Minefield' of the Contemporary German-Jewish Relationship'

The films of Dani Levy are dominated by the issues of Jewish life in Germany after the Holocaust and of what it means to be Jewish in contemporary Germany. Most of his films deal with (his) German-Jewish identity, a connection which he does not evade, especially when talking about his personal relation to his films in interviews. On the one hand, he contributes various (counter) images of Jews and Jewishness to the German film landscape; on the other, he contributes a Jewish perspective on German society and its issues. Although his films are not autobiographical in an explicit way, they nonetheless can be read as autobiographical: Levy marks off the field of contemporary German-Jewish identity and its particularities and applies it to different settings, genres and topical contexts. His films pick up and reflect contemporary events within German society and comment on them from his specific German-Jewish perspective. In *Ohne Mich* (1993) and *Meschugge* (1997/98), Levy plays the roles of the Jewish protagonists Simon Rosenthal and David Fish, respectively. *Alles auf Zucker!* (2004/05) and *Mein Führer* (2006/07) fall out of this pattern insofar as their stories cannot be understood as autobiographical, but they can be interpreted as Levy's attempt to position himself in the discourse about the contemporary German-Jewish relationship. In *Joshua* (2009), he plays the – as he emphasizes – film character Dani Levy. Finally, in his latest film *Das Leben ist zu lang* (2010) he is not involved as an actor, but the film tells the story of a German-Jewish film director in contemporary Germany. Thus, it appears that the autobiographical content of his films is evolving. The (autobiographical) meaning accrues in considering every film in particular as well as in considering the coherence of the films in progression.

My lecture will raise three central questions: First, why and in what way can Levy's films be understood as autobiographical? Do they have discontinuities, irritations and breaches within their autobiographical parts? Second, to what extent do his films depict his "dance" through the "minefield" of the complicated German-Jewish relationship after the Holocaust, i.e., do the films show Levy's positioning within and comments on the discourse about the contemporary German-Jewish relationship? Also, can they be understood as attempts to contribute to this discourse through counter-images to contrast the hegemonic images of Jews and Jewishness in German society and media and to pluralize the existing representations? Third, what kind of picture of the German-Jewish relationship, Jewish life in contemporary Germany and Jewish identity emerges if one follows Levy's filmic narrations?

Sue Vice (Sheffield): 'Becoming English: Assimilation and its Discontents in Contemporary British-Jewish Literature'

Jews in twenty-first century Britain are on the receiving end of polarized and contradictory responses. Although there are no less than two Jewish candidates for the Labour Party leadership, the largely unremarked nature of their membership of a religious minority has been taken by some commentators simply to reflect the 'ongoing prejudice and ignorance' faced by British Jews. It was, after all, the very same Labour Party that portrayed a Jewish Conservative leader and shadow chancellor as flying pigs. As

Sander Gilman argues, in an era of multiculturalism Jews are often taken as a 'litmus test', as they are always already multicultural. Yet, because multicultural logic tends to transform religion into ethnicity, and because of contemporary suspicion in Britain about visible religious practice, Jewish ritual is presented as something from which its adherents long to flee. In this paper, I will explore how these contradictions are represented in contemporary literary texts about British Jews. Some recent fiction shows an apparent reversion to earlier narratives of comic or failed assimilation. This is the case in Natasha Solomons's 2010 novel *Mr Rosenblum's List: Friendly Guidance for the Aspiring Englishman*, Jake Wallis Simons's forthcoming novel about the Kindertransport, *An English German Girl* (2011), as well as Eva Tucker's fictionalized autobiography *Becoming English* (2009) about life as a refugee in Britain during the war, the title of which I have borrowed for this paper. Yet assimilation and transformation is not a one-way process. Englishness in these texts is in turn played in a Jewish key, to modify the critic David Ruderman's phrase. On the other hand, Naomi Alderman's award-winning short stories include narratives, such as 'Other People's Gods' and 'Jewfish', whose comedy relies on the notion of Jews who are weighed down by their own religion; while in Mike Leigh's play *Two Thousand Years*, a newly observant son's religious practice is dramatic shorthand for the alien and irrational. Such works represent, and appear to warn against, the dangers of not fully 'becoming English'.

Devorah Baum (Southampton): 'Circumcision Anxiety'

My paper will consider controversies surrounding the figure of the "Jew" as a rhetorical feature of various discourses in postwar France. In particular I will be reflecting on Derrida's vexed relationship to the Jewish questions that have arisen in connection with his work. Looking at a range of Derrida's texts (including *Shibboleth*, *Circumfession*, *Archive Fever*, *Faith and Knowledge*, and others), I will show how Derrida was engaged in a complex form of commitment to and responsibility for the question of his own Jewishness in ways that can be distinguished from the responses of most other French philosophers, from Sartre onwards. I will go on to suggest that the mark of Derrida's "faithfulness" as a Jew lies precisely in his frequent refusals, rejections and denials of any obvious form of Jewish identity, attachment or belonging.

Maxime Decout (Lyon): 'Standing Apart/Being a Part: Cixous's Fictional Jewish Identities'

Hélène Cixous was born in Algeria. Her father was an Algerian Sephardi Jew, her mother a German Ashkenazi Jew. She had to go into exile in France. Such conflicting identities sealed her destiny as a wanderer, for which she coined the term "destinerrance"¹. She defines her Jewish identity in relation to her French and Algerian identities as well as to her German affiliation and to the history that precedes for which she feels she has to account. Such accumulation operates both as connection and disjunction – what Derrida called « une conjonction disjonctive² ». Having to deal with so many different origins, Cixous fears, however, to lose all sense of identity, all the more so as her Jewish identity is both same and other, it situates itself here and now as well as there and then. You can only apprehend its inner core via the periphery. Thus the key question Cixous's work seeks to answer is how to appropriate an identity which is defined as outside itself. Indeed the Jewish identity can be considered as standing apart from the constraints of identity and roots as well as providing a necessary sense of belonging. As both necessary and intolerable, the sense of belonging must be re-evaluated just as the groups to which one belongs. To analyze this contradiction, I propose to look closely at Cixous's fictional writing which displays a sense of belonging tainted with otherness and difference. Using lexical distortions or syntagmatic accumulations, Cixous generates a linguistic disorder designed to write something for which there are no words, as fiction is the means by which she appropriates her Jewish identity.

¹ *Si près*.

² Jacques Derrida, *Psyché. Invention de l'autre II*.

Keith Reader (Glasgow): ‘ “Two bald men fighting over a comb?” The Quarrel between Alain Badiou and Eric Marty’

The quotation is from the great Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges – an acerbic and lapidary judgement on the 1982 Falklands War. I have chosen it by way of introduction to an otherwise rather pedestrian presentation, firstly because Borges – obsessed with Judaism in its mystical guises – often writes in an almost rabbinical style, preferring succinct and paradoxical concreteness to the abstract formulations which nevertheless insistently shadow his writing, and secondly because its evocation of a dispute between two individuals over something neither of them (presumably) possesses seems ironically apt to the recent debate between the non-Jews Alain Badiou and Éric Marty over what ‘Jewishness’ is and its pertinence to the Middle East in particular. Badiou along with Cécile Winter in *Portées du mot ‘juif’* argues from the universalist perspective that is a constant in his work against a separate Jewish state and for a unified Palestine, while Marty, a strong enough supporter of Israel to use the term ‘Judea and Samaria,’ sees the ‘Jewish universal’ as perhaps uniquely grounded in the experience of dispersal and thus of difference. Behind this debate – or ‘quarrel,’ since Marty’s riposte to Badiou is entitled *Une querelle avec Alain Badiou, philosophe* – thus lie divergent critiques of the French republican ideal nowadays increasingly called into question. The road from Jerusalem, unsurprisingly in a French intellectual context, turns out to lead back to, or at least bifurcate towards, Paris.

Matteo Di Figlia (Palermo): ‘Italian Jews and the Extra-Parliamentary Politics. The Assembling of an Identity’

The aim of this paper is to show how some Italian Jews were involved in a complex process of public and self identity. On one hand, it was caused by the affiliation to some left-wing groups, particularly evident after the youth movements started in 1968, and on the other hand, by their internal and family relationships with the Jewish world over time. Their identity was founded on that balance, which changed according to different political stages.

The paper is made up of three parts: the first one analyses the political experience of two Italian Jews, Clara Sereni and Luca Zevi, who took part in “Lotta continua”, a Communist extra-parliamentary group founded in 1969. Clara Sereni is the daughter of Emilio Sereni (a high-ranking member of the Communist party) and also the niece of Enzo Sereni (considered one of the founding fathers of Israel). Luca Zevi is the son of Bruno Zevi (an important member of the Radical party) and of Tullia Zevi (the president of the Italian Jewish community since 1983). The second part describes their attempt to get back to their roots, as the Italian Communist identity was beginning to fade both for national reasons (an ideological crisis among the Italian parties) and international dynamics (the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the USSR). Their relationship with the Israeli State, rediscovered during the late ’80’s, is of particular interest. The last part focuses the identities currently claimed by Sereni (nowadays a famous writer) and Zevi (a successful architect).

Many different sources have been used: the newspapers «Ha-Tikvâ»; «Shalom»; «Lotta Continua»; «Il Manifesto»; «La Repubblica» and «Rinascita»; political speeches and books, as well as two interviews with Zevi and Sereni.

Bettina Codrai (Southampton): ‘Lost in Third Space? Narrating German-Jewish Identity in Maxim Biller’s ‘Autobiography’ *Der gebrauchte Jude*’

My paper is based on my dissertation on the German-Jewish writer and intellectual Maxim Biller and his most recent contributions to the discourse on contemporary Jewish identity in his novels as well as in his media representation. Despite the striking reestablishment, especially since 1989, of Jewish life and culture in Germany it is still regarded as an inexplicable phenomenon by both Jews from elsewhere and by Germans. The many Jews, who immigrated to Germany from the former Soviet Union, have impacted on the profile of the Jewish communities as much as the change of generation of its members did. What used to consider itself to be a homogenous and reclusive minority has now become a vivid and diverse

group. As a result, young German Jews such as Maxim Biller are challenged by the discrepancy between the stereotypical views of 'the' German Jew and the complexity of their own experience.

Having critically commented on German life and discourse for the last 20 years, the Prague-born author and journalist Maxim Biller has recently published what he calls his autobiography *Der gebrauchte Jude* (The needed/used Jew). The text is structured as a literary quest for continuity of what seems to be a post-national, Diasporic identity, that is fragmented and conflicting and that seems incomprehensible as a whole to those Germans and Jews who are looking for simplistic answers to complex questions on Jewish identity and in consequence to Biller himself.

In my paper I will ask how Maxim Biller makes sense of his own Jewish identity in this text. I will analyze how he participates in various personal, public and professional discourses and how by comparing himself with fellow Jews and Germans he strives to shape his own autobiographical discourse. I will show how Maxim Biller creates a literary space for himself, a space that lies beyond the national and beyond the stereotypical. His is a diasporic home within what Homi Bhabha calls the third space.

I want to show how Maxim Biller as a so-called second generation writer in Germany can serve as an example for a modern transnational and European identity. Identities like his are post-national and individual, although they are still bound up with the society Jews live in and the traditions they come from. I believe that understanding Biller's identity can help us shed light on the factors that determine the self-understanding of younger Jews in Germany today.

Andrea Reiter (Southampton): "Performing the Jew". Recent Novels by Jewish Writers in Austria'

While the generation of the Holocaust survivors in post-war Austria had kept their Jewish identity private, second-generation Jewish artists and intellectuals started to engage as Jews in the public sphere in the wake of the 1986 controversial presidential election campaign of Kurt Waldheim. My paper outlines this national context and demonstrates how this new Jewish self-confidence has become apparent in literature. I am doing so by presenting Robert Menasse, one of the best known Jewish writers and essayists in today's Austria. Analysing his novel *Die Vertreibung aus der Hölle* (*Expulsion from Hell*, 2001) and his opening speech for the 1995 Frankfurt Book Fair I show how in both cases he asserts himself as a Jew. In the novel he does so by (re)constructing the biography of Rabbi Menasse ben Israel, the teacher of Baruch Spinoza, while in the speech Menasse places himself in the genealogy of such Jewish philosophers as Rabbi Menasse and Theodor W. Adorno.

I propose to employ Judith Butler's concept of 'performativity', particularly in its application as counter speech (1997), to explain how Menasse's Jewishness is constructed in literary and cultural discourse.

Axel Stähler (Kent): 'The Psychosomatic Approach to History, Hypochondria, and Poetical Existence: Israel in British Jewish Fiction'

Recently Howard Jacobson's Booker Prize winning novel *The Finkler Question* (2010) and Peter Kosminsky's controversial TV mini series *The Promise* (2011) have forcefully re-introduced the issue of Israel to British Jewish cultural creativity. These two texts by an older generation of British Jewish writers/directors ran counter to a trend in the writing of mostly younger British Jewish authors in which Israel had largely vanished as a subject and in which, though avoiding narrow-minded parochialism, a focus on the British Jewish particular had been developed. At a time when Israel has become increasingly entrenched in the wake of global criticism of its policies, this trend appeared to signify a retreat from Diaspora-Israeli solidarity which suggested a momentous re-orientation of British Jewish fiction. While any predictions as to how the high visibility of Jacobson's novel and Kosminsky's TV series may affect

the future impact of Israel on British Jewish writing would be presumptuous, these, in turn, need to be understood not only in the context of contemporary British Jewish cultural creativity but also in the context of the earlier literary engagement with Israel in British Jewish fiction. Focusing in particular as ‘beacons’ on Clive Sinclair’s *Blood Libels* (1985) and Jacobson’s novel, published a quarter of a century later, I will trace in this article notions of Israel in British Jewish fiction since its establishment in 1948 to the present day. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it will emerge that the perception of Israel depends very much on differing historical and political production contexts and offers insights also in negotiations of Jewish identities in the UK between the shifting parameters of Diaspora and Israel.

Cathy Gelbin (Manchester): Poetics versus Genetics: German and Austrian Jewish Narratives of Contemporary Israel

My paper looks at two very recent novels, Doron Rabinovici’s *Andernorts* (Elsewhere, 2010) and Benjamin Stein’s *Die Leinwand* (The Screen, also 2010), which present stories of Jewish travels variously criss-crossing between Tel Aviv and Vienna in Rabinovici’s text, and between Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as Zürich, Baltimore, Munich, East Berlin, and L’Abbaye in Stein’s text. Following on from recent theoretical writings on the nature of the Jewish diaspora (the Boyarins 2002 and 2007; Gilman 2004; Aviv and Shneer 2005; Sznajder 2011), I examine the literary construction of models of Jewishness in Israel and Europe today. I argue that the Jewish figures in Rabinovici and Stein’s texts are, on the one hand, ‘global Jews’ in the vein of Aviv and Shneer. These protagonists constantly traverse national boundaries and convey the complex and contested nature of Jewish self-understandings in both Israel and the diaspora. On the other hand, both novels suggest that Jewish narratives are marked by an increasing trend towards essentialism in Israel, while allowing for more plurality and ambiguity outside of the Jewish nation state. I argue that in doing so, both writers reposition the German and Austrian Jewish subject as part of a global Jewish story that must move beyond the narrow biologist conceptions of the self.

Anna Maria Droumpouki (Athens): ‘The Art of Holocaust Memory and the Emergence of Anti-Semitism in Greece’

At the beginning of 2006, the newspaper of the international Jewish human rights organization Simon Wiesenthal had the head title “Greece finally remembers”. This was referring to the belated erection of a centrally placed monument for Shoah (Holocaust) in Thessaloniki, Greece, which is considered to be the second capital of Greece. Thessaloniki before the Second World War far surpassed what today would be called a multicultural city as the Jewish community of the town included around 56.000 members. In this paper I explore the public history and the radical transformations of five major Shoah monuments in Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Larissa and Rhodes) as well as the reactions of vandals who often spray anti-Semitic graffiti on these Holocaust memorials (with slogans such as “Jews killed God), or even destroy part of them, especially after some major historical/political events in Israel. I mainly turn to the ways a post-Holocaust generation of descendents of Jewish Holocaust survivors in Greece reunites around the monuments of Holocaust and to the ways the Jewish communities in Greece “legitimize” their presence to the country in which they live through the certainty of monumental forms.

Eszter Gantner (Berlin): ‘European Jewry versus Hungarian Jewry? Jewish Identities in Contemporary Hungary’

With the events of 1989, Central European countries and the former member states of the Soviet Union experienced major changes. In tandem with the democratization of these countries, a thaw began to occur in the rigid structures of the still existing Jewish communities. This process is clearly visible in Hungary,

the only country in Central Europe that has a large and well-established, continuous Jewish community. Within the former Soviet block, the continuous, noticeable presence of this Jewish community and of Jewish culture represents a unique phenomenon. The political concept that defined Hungarian Jewry exclusively on the basis of religion and, as a result, homogenized its diversity, dominated Hungarian Jewish institutions as well, and those institutions were corroded by the processes of transition of the last two decades. It is hardly surprising that in response to these political changes previously unknown concepts of identity appeared within Hungarian Jewry after 1989.

But referring to the thesis of the well known scholar Diana Pinto – Jews in today's Europe increasingly see themselves as part of a European community – the following questions emerge. Which kind of self-understandings had been developed in the last decades in the third biggest community in Europe, especially if we take into the consideration that this community is living now in the frames of the newly emerged “neo-nationalistic concept of Hungary”, what is strictly against the European idea? Have the survived Jewish communities any chance in the post-socialist, strongly nationalistic countries of Europe to establish a post-national, “European Identity” at all?

In my lecture, I would like to touch upon the mentioned questions through introducing different identity - discourses of Jewish intellectuals in post-socialist Hungary.

Diana Popescu (Southampton): ‘Israeli Artists Imagine the ‘Return’ of the Jewish People to Europe’

Beyond doubt the birth of the state of Israel has indelibly marked the ways in which we address the question of Jewish identity. But has it completely answered the question of the Jewish homeland, or, at least, satisfied the Jewish longing to belong? In his "First Diasporist Manifesto" (1989), R.B. Kitaj writes pointedly: "what the Jews call *galut* (exile) had become a way of life and death, consonant with Jewishness itself, even though Israel is reborn."

This paper aims to retrace the significance of *galut* for a young generation of Jewish artists, including grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, who even though born in Israel have chosen to live in Europe. Artists Yael Bartana, Ronen Eidelman and Amit Epstein speak in their works of an inherited nostalgia for the European homeland, as they imagine a reverse aliyah, a Jewish "descent" to Europe. In her video piece *Mary Koszmary* ("Nightmares") (2007), Bartana portrays an empty stadium in Warsaw, where a Polish leader passionately beseeches three million absent Jews to return to their homeland in Poland, and thereby chase away the demons of the Holocaust. Artist and activist, Eidelman has caught the media's attention through his project *Medinat Weimar*, launched in 2008. It is a reverse Zionist manifesto, by means of which the artist proposes to "heal Jewish trauma" by establishing a Jewish state in the land of the perpetrators. In similar manner, Epstein's project *Bundesland Israel* (2008) speaks of "an Israel away from Israel," placed in Germany.

Drawing on Sidra D. Ezrahi's conceptualizations of "exile" and "homeland," and Daniel Boyarin's understanding of "Diaspora identity," I explore whether these artistic projects are primarily based on nostalgia and incomplete mourning, or whether they reflect a renewed Israeli perception of Europe, no longer as a site of destruction, but as a space for a new form of Jewish revival. I argue that these projects are suggestive of a tendency, among the young Israeli generation, to reconnect to the European Jewish identity of which they were robbed by the Holocaust, as they reclaim their symbolic status as heirs to a European tradition.

Matti Bunzl (Illinois): ‘Theodor Herzl’s Stepchildren: the Jews of Europe and the Israeli Question’

This paper rereads Theodor Herzl's writings, particularly his utopian novel "Altneuland," to reconstruct his vision of a viable diaspora Jewry in the wake of the creation of the Jewish state. This vision, I argue, largely came into being in the post-Holocaust period as Europe's Jewish communities essentially functioned as expatriate outposts of the Israeli polity. They still do, but with the escalation of the Middle

East conflict and Israel's compromised reputation in Europe, the situation has become far more complicated at best, and an outright liability at worst.

Karine Michel (IDEMEC/IECJ): 'Communist Jews in Former East Germany – Expressing one's Jewishness'

At the beginning of the 1980's in former East Berlin, a movement called "Wir für Uns" has been created. It was a sort of informal association of Jews living in former East Germany, in majority sons and daughters of communists Jews came back to Germany after the Second World War in order to build the new socialist country. In the 1980's, those Jews, all cut from their religious roofs, were searching a way in which to express their Jewishness.

Still in this movement, today called Kulturverein, or not, those Jews are, for most of them, some intellectuals. Overrepresented in the Jewish landscape of East Berlin comparing to their number, they all of them express something about their identity and about the way to be a Jew in Germany today through their writings and others intellectuals productions.

By the way, a study of the writings of those Jews constitutes a specific and really interesting way to understand the meaning of being a Jew today in former East Germany. Around some points of those writings, I purpose to approach this particular dimension of Jewish identity, in order to demonstrate which mechanisms of differentiation and identification operate in such and historical and political context.

Daniel Monterescu and Sara Zorandy (Budapest): "'Judapest': Improvising Community in Central Europe'

Against the background of communal destruction and the current "Jewish Renaissance," this paper seeks to historicize and theorize the emergence of a particular kind of Jewish civil society in Budapest and Berlin since 1989. The research problem investigates the patterns of community formation and identity discourses, which produce unique cultural institutions, religious claims and grassroots activities vastly different from traditional structures and assimilative ones alike. Focusing largely on the recent revival of Jewish cultural initiatives in Budapest led by second and third generation activists and geared towards young "Heebsters" (urban Jewish hipsters), Berlin will serve as a comparative case-study. While both cities have witnessed some of the fastest growth of Jewish demographics in Europe (from 50,000 in the 1970s to 80,000 in Budapest today, and from 20,000 to 100,000 in Berlin), the community in Berlin consists of mainly ex-Soviet immigrants while Budapest draws on native Hungarians who recast their Jewish identity. The connection is further strengthened by such projects as BBLU Salon (Budapestberlinsalon) bringing together Jewish activists in both cities in order to "display the multicoloured and diverse nature of the city as a concept."

The papers follows the different strategies and practices by which Jewish NGOs, informal groups and individuals took the liberty to create and improvise new communal frameworks, which define alternative ways of being Jewish: secularized but not assimilated, liberal but not adhering to "tradition" as they see it. Calling to "re-invent tradition" initiatives such as *Judapest*, *Kidma*, *Marom*, *Moishe House* and others are largely independent of Orthodox, Neologue or Reform movements, thus promoting a cultural project of life-style Judaism. While much of the current sociological research of European Judaism centers on contemporary forms of anti-Semitism, official Jewish establishments and the impact of Israel on local communities, this study proposes an anthropology of urban and informal projects of place-making in an effort to identify new spaces of agency and cultural creativity.

Helga Embacher (Salzburg): 'Solidarity with Israel and America: Jewish Reactions to the Intifada, 9/11 and the War in Iraq in France, Germany and the UK. A Comparison'

This paper analyzes the impact of the Intifada, 9/11 and the following wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq on Jewish communities and thus on Jewish identities in France, Germany and the UK. To show the diversity of Jewish communities, the paper not only concentrates on the reactions of the official Jewish representatives but also on debates about different views on Israel (Israel Diaspora) within the Jewish communities.

I also want to analyze Jewish identities in the context of the debates about Islam (“Islamofascism,” Muslim anti-Semitism) as well as of growing anti-Semitism within Muslim communities. Escalations in the Middle East, 9/11 and the following wars not only shaped Jewish but also Muslim identities in Europe. While thousands of Jews joined demonstrations to express their solidarity with Israel, European Muslims not only shouted “Victory to the Intifada” but also “Death to the Jews,” burning Israeli and American flags. Identifying with the persecuted Palestinians, Muslims wanted to express their situation in Europe as the real victims, challenging the Jewish memory of the Holocaust.

The comparison of the Jewish communities in France, Germany and the UK will demonstrate that Jewish identity is very much marked by transnational allegiances, but also still affected by the national context, such as the Shoah in Germany, Vichy in France, and debates about colonialism in France and the UK. The paper is based on the FWF-project “(New) Antisemitism and Anti-Americanism in France, Germany and Great Britain – A Comparative Study.”

Eyal Lavi (London): “If there isn’t something about Israel I’m actually quite pleased”: News Reporting and the Ambivalence of Belonging among British Jews Today’

Recent data shows that British Jews remain committed to Israel and that the state is prominent in their daily lives (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2010 Israel Survey). Media, in particular news, is arguably the most ordinary link between Jews and Israel, sustaining everyday transnational belonging. But in recent years this belonging has been complicated by events in Israel and their coverage in the British press, on which -- as a well-established minority -- Jews rely. Using media as a starting point rather than the object of study, this paper presents findings from a qualitative study of the orientation to Israel of non-orthodox, London-based Jews. Enriching existing survey data, the in-depth interviews demonstrate the extent of ambivalence towards Israel in the year following Operation Cast Lead and the conflicts of affiliations that emerged in the face of news reports from the Middle East. News from Israel were associated with pain and anxiety over reported events, as well as anger over the reporting itself, leading to withdrawal from media and Israel in some cases, and action against media in others. Mirroring a trend observed in American Jewry, young interviewees were especially critical, sometimes resenting what they considered an imposed association with Israel, an identification made by others and supported by news reports. Based on these interviews, this paper argues that Jews' everyday relationship to Israel is best understood as imaginative and affective, and that the mediated realities of Israel strain this relationship. Ironically, as media put the relationship with Israel under pressure, they reaffirm a Jewish diasporic identity less focused on that country. Israel thus fulfils a double and contradictory role in Jewish identities today.

Yuval Moshkovitz (London): ‘The Jewish-Israeli Subject in the Diaspora – Negotiating Collective Identity between Zionist Ideology and Diasporic Reality’

The Jewish national movement – Zionism - gained its massive support by offering to alleviate the Jewish communities' inferior material, political and psychological conditions by forming a Jewish state, and creating The New Jew in a revolutionized new environment. Central to the Zionist narrative was the Negation of the Exile - depicting the Diaspora condition as politically, materially and spiritually inferior to the wholesome Jewish existence in Israel (Ram, 2006, Sand, 2008). Following the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel and the 1967 war, the western-oriented, secular, nationalist Zionist ideology came to monopolize the sphere of Jewish ideologies, wiping out any religious, Diasporic or universalistic ideological contestants (Magid, 2006). This ideology monopolized Israeli society until the middle of the

1980's when forces of globalization, socio-political transitions within Israeli society (promoted by religious, oriental, post-Zionist Jewish groups as well as Israeli-Palestinians) and new cultural trends began to erode its hegemony (Yona & Shenhav, 2005). To date, the classic Zionist narrative still *effectively* dominates the Israeli ideological arena although it has been modified considerably by the forces mentioned above.

Jewish Israelis who come to live in Britain, where perceptions of state, nationality, citizenship (Abell, Condor & Stevenson, 2006) and religion/ethnicity differ considerably, often have to revisit the ideological cornerstones which they were brought up with (Gold, 2004, Lahav and Arian, 1999). They renegotiate their collective identity vis a vis the local society, the local Jewish community and the Jewish-Israeli family members and friends living in Israel in an effort to regain psychological equilibrium and re-accommodate a personal and collective narrative. Their intermediate position accentuates the dialectics between narratives around the Old and New Jew, the local/national Zionist and the transnational Jew and Israeli and Diaspora conditions. It also enables us to look at the interpretation of Jewish religion as a construct of collective identity. More generally, the study of Diaspora identity provides a psychosocial platform for the analysis of identity and identity construction in the post-modern era (Frosh and Baraitser, 2009) where social discourses and narratives are appropriated by individual subjects to accommodate a personal narrative (Riessamn, 2008) in a global reality of constant change.

My research will be looking into the narratives, discourses and practices that emerge from Jewish-Israeli subjects living in Britain while addressing their collective national identity. It will be observing and analyzing these re-accommodating identificatory dynamics and looking into the politics of identity between the Jewish-Israeli, the Diaspora-Jew, the local British and the Diaspora-Israeli Jew as they are expressed discursively by the interviewees.

Diana Pinto (Paris): 'Who are Europe's Jews Today? Negotiating Jewish Identity in an Asemitic Age'

Jewish identities in early 21st century Europe are becoming ever more variegated, post-modern, eclectic, and endowed with a new 'lightness of being' that few could have foretold as little as a decade ago, when the Holocaust, antisemitism and Israel still defined the underpinnings of a European Jewish identity. Such multiple identities can flourish because they are protected by the wider democratic pluralist context in which they exist. As societies become increasingly 'asemitic', in that they consider the Jewish presence in their midst as a normal component of their pluralism and no longer as a 'special' Holocaust related responsibility, Jews and their communities must rethink their 'Jewish spaces' in function of four democratic characteristics: transparency, legitimacy, visibility and public financing. They must also adapt to a setting where Jewish voices will carry different weight depending on where they speak from: inner Jewish-Jewish community spaces, the new Jewish friendly neutral spaces of academia, memorials, and museums, or the more universal spaces where Jewish themes must compete with others, in an ever more open pluralist cacophony. In so doing they will be setting a useful precedent for secular Europe's future Muslim and increasingly minoritarian Christian Spaces.