

Nevertheless, this study both enriches and challenges existing scholarship on queer history in state socialist countries, especially the perception of monolithic attitudes in the Eastern Bloc towards non-heterosexual people. The focus on oral history allows S. to examine individual experience which would otherwise be impossible to extract from institutional documents. By providing this space for non-heterosexual women, the book majorly contributes to visibility of queer experiences, beyond the dominant practice of studying the history of gay men. It shows the complexities of queerness during state socialism, manoeuvring between “normality” and “abnormality,” private and public, submission and confrontation with the regime. By recognizing what this queer history offers, S.’s book greatly contributes to a deeper understanding of the history of the state socialist societies.

Marburg

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Slawomir Jacek Żurek: Polish Jewish Re-Remembering. Studies – Sketches – Interpretations, Aus dem Poln. von Thomas Anessi. Academic Studies Press. Boston 2023. 426 S., ISBN 979-8-88719-280-2. (€ 123,40.)

In his monograph,¹ Slawomir Jacek Żurek, professor of Polish Jewish Literature Studies at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, presents a series of case studies examining dynamics of connectivity and exchange between Polish and Jewish literary cultures. He situates them within the context of the “post-1989, thirty-year-long process of steadily growing interest” in Polish Jewish relations (p. 1). Consisting of four sections comprising a total of nineteen chapters, *Polish Jewish Re-Remembering* offers avenues for further scholarly inquiry in memory studies and comparative literature.

Tying together all four sections is Ż.’s framework of ‘re-remembering,’ the process of building a post-memory narrative of Polish Jewish relations. After periods of silence about the Polish Jewish past both in Poland and in Israel, Ż. shows, more work remains to be done to excavate shared literary cultural practices with the goal of “attaining a common Polish-Jewish re-remembering” (p. 8). In particular, *Polish Jewish Re-Remembering* emphasizes the need to craft comparative narratives of the Holocaust “in both the Polish and Hebrew languages (and in other so-called Jewish languages)” to better understand the history and impact of the Holocaust on Polish, Israeli, and Jewish cultures and cultural connections (p. 382).

The author begins with an argument about the essential contribution of Jews to Polish literary culture. The first section, “Between Aria and Golus: Polish, Jewish, and Polish Jewish Literature,” deals broadly with Polish Jewish literature before World War II. In the first chapter, Ż. examines Jewish and Christian literary perspectives on pre-war Lublin in the poetry of Franciszka Arnsztajnowa and Józef Czechowicz. The second chapter looks at how Jewish and non-Jewish poets grappled with the ghosts of prewar Jewish Lublin in postwar poetry. The third chapter examines the positionality of Jewish soldiers during the Second Polish Republic as depicted in Adolf Rudnicki’s novel *Profile i drobiazgi żołnierzy* (Soldiers’ Profiles and Details), focusing on their experiences of antisemitism within the army and their responses to anti-Jewish stereotypes and discrimination. The fourth chapter focuses on Christian Jewish relations in Sholem Asch’s *Di kishefmacherin fun Kastilyen* (The Witch from Castile), a Yiddish-language short story about religious antisemitism and anti-Jewish violence in medieval Rome. The fifth chapter considers dilemmas of identity and the use of Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew through a close reading of three poems from the 1930s, and the sixth chapter focuses on depictions of the *kresy*, or eastern borderlands, in interwar Polish Jewish literature. The last chapter of the first section looks at the figure of the child in interwar Poland as both participant in Jewish literary culture and as a symbol of modern Jewish values.

1 Original edition: *Odpamiętywanie polsko-żydowskie: Szkice—studia—interpretacje*, Lublin 2021.

With the more tightly-focused second section “Four Sides of Time: The Literary Travels of Arnold Ślucki,” Ż. presents a study of this Polish Jewish poet. The eighth chapter, the first of this section, traces Ślucki’s depictions of the city of Warsaw from prewar memory to postwar enthusiasm, disillusionment, and later nostalgia following his exile after the 1967/68 antisemitic campaign. The ninth chapter looks at the place of Russia and the Soviet Union in Ślucki’s poetry, and chapter ten presents a close reading of two poems Ślucki wrote during his time living in Israel. The last chapter of this section is an overview of literary, linguistic, and socio-political themes in Ślucki’s journalism for the Polish-language paper *Nowiny Kurier* in Israel. As a whole, this section traces Ślucki’s lifelong affinity for Poland and the Polish language, presenting a picture of a man caught between worlds who sought to construct his own space of belonging through his writing.

Arguing that Polish language literature originating in Israel has long been overlooked, the collection then transitions to a focus on Polish Israeli literature in its third section, “Two Lands and Two Skies: Polish Israeli Literary Images.” Ż. uncovers complicated dynamics of nostalgia, connection, and resentment experienced by authors working in the Polish language in Israel. The section begins with a focus on the image of Poland itself in postwar Polish Israeli literature. The thirteenth chapter presents a hermeneutic study of messianism, duality, and truth in Leo Lipski’s 1960 novella *Piotruś*, and the fourteenth chapter takes as its subject Polish and Judaic themes in Anna Frajlich’s 1991 work *Wiersze izraelskie* (Israel Poems). The closing chapter of this section is a survey of literary criticism in *Nowiny Kurier* after 1968 with a focus on articles published by Henryk Dankowicz, Arnold Ślucki, Filip Istner, and Natan Gross.

How is the Holocaust depicted, ‘remembered,’ and inscribed by those who did not directly experience it? To address this question, the fourth and final section, “The Textual World of The Holocaust: The Shoah in Recent Polish Literature,” considers the portrayal of the Holocaust and its traumas in contemporary literature. Chapter sixteen presents a methodology for interpreting Holocaust topoi, or common images, motifs, and metaphors, found in second- and third-generation literature. The next chapter employs this proposed methodology in analyzing post-2000 Polish literature about the Holocaust, showing how authors use these topoi to embody and reconstruct the lost spiritual and spatial Polish Jewish landscape. The eighteenth chapter examines the metonymization and transfiguration of the Holocaust, showing how contemporary Polish authors use the Holocaust and its topoi to reflect on present-day issues of psychology and modernity. The final chapter surveys literary use of subversive strategies—such as kitsch, pathos, taboo, and horror—to comment on the nature of the Holocaust and its legacies in Poland.

By design, *Polish Jewish Re-Remembering* raises more questions than it answers. Ż. presents a wide array of literary sources and methodologies that together overwhelmingly demonstrate the importance of comparative literary studies for understanding the broader history of Polish Jewish relations and the continued importance of these connections today. The reader cannot deny the impact of Jews on Polish literature, the importance of the Polish language in Jewish and Israeli literature, and the various entanglements of identity and exchange that define ‘Polish Jewish’ culture. This approach emphasizes the rich, hybrid nature of Polish Jewish literature and points to continuities and evolutions in literary motifs, themes, and symbols across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The negative consequence of this approach is that the overall collection suffers from incomplete argumentation and lack of engagement with relevant scholarship. The author frustratingly does not situate his work within the broader literature. Notably absent is engagement with foundational scholarship on Holocaust representation in art, including, among others, Berel Lang and Lawrence Langer. Many chapters would benefit significantly from greater historical and cultural context, including the section on Ślucki, which lacks a clarifying summary of the events of the antisemitic campaign of 1967/68 necessary for fully understanding both Ślucki’s personal Polish Jewish identity and his journalism in post-1967 Israel. The chapter on Asch’s *Di kishefmacherin fun Kastilyen* offers a convinc-

ing literary interpretation of Christian Jewish relations but ends without a direct, satisfying application of this commentary for understanding Polish-Jewish relations, leaving it to the reader to assume or deduce connections between Asch's examination of medieval antisemitism in Rome, Asch's own experiences of antisemitism, and modern Polish-Jewish relations more broadly. Such connections are broadly obvious to those well-versed in Polish Jewish studies, but the author does not lead the reader to it and the effect is that the chapter feels underdeveloped within the context of the broader collection. By not firmly grounding his literary analyses within such historical and scholarly contexts, Ż. unfortunately weakens the impact of individual chapters.

This series of nineteen short sketches is therefore best understood as a broad impression of the many threads of Polish Jewish 're-remembering' rather than a comprehensive one, and the most significant intervention of this collection lies in the paths it offers for future 're-remembering.' Ż. argues that transfiguration and subversion are necessary and useful developments in Polish language Holocaust literature, ones that shed light on the absence of Jews in Poland from non-historical perspectives and "bring the bitter truth of the Holocaust to the next generation of viewers, making them aware that is inscribed [...] in every day and comprises a component of their cultural identity" (p. 373). Rather than see these developments as derisive or empty, Ż. shows how the next generations of authors inscribe new meanings and relevance in the Polish Jewish past and present.

On the surface, *Polish Jewish Re-Remembering* is a study of Polish Jewish relations. On a deeper level, however, this collection presents a vision of how literature and literary studies can be harnessed to grasp at a painful and contested past and promote dialogue and cross-temporal and cross-cultural understanding. Though the collection is disjointed, it offers enough in its collage of sketches to be of interest to scholars working on Polish, Jewish, and Israeli literatures and post-memory studies.

Warszawa

Frankee Lyons

Josette Baer: *The Green Butterfly*. Hana Ponická (1922–2007), Slovak Writer, Poetess, and Dissident. Ibidem. Stuttgart 2022. XXIV, 244 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-8382-1426-9. (€ 24,90.)

In her book, Zurich-based political scientist and Slavonic studies scholar Josette Baer focuses on the Slovak writer Hana Ponická, who was persecuted by the communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s against the background of global politics. The fact the book focuses on Ponická is certainly worthy of appreciation. Unfortunately, however, it does so in a questionable way.

B. herself refers to the method she has chosen for the work as "Contextual Biography" (p. 6). However, she has not managed to keep the book's components in balance: the context as a whole has far outweighed the portrait of the writer. At the same time, the context is not presented as conceptually coherent analyses or comparisons with existing historical accounts, but rather with misleading generalizations which B. intersperses within the main interpretation: "Under the aristocracy, people were used to not having a voice, to obeying and conforming to whatever the ruling class deemed appropriate" (p. 36); "Hana was born a feminist, like all young women growing up in Masaryk's First Republic" (p. 196). Alternatively, historical context is replaced by the input of other researchers with reference to the "oral history" method.

The first section which uses this method, "Slovak and Czech Dissidents under the Normalization régime: Oral History Interview with Dirk Matthias Dahlberg," is one I find questionable. In fact, it is not an interview on the subject, but a carefully referenced study whose focus lies in Dahlberg's existing research work. B. does not further elaborate on the interview, does not comment on it, does not critically evaluate the information. With minor editing, this could be a chapter of its own. Similarly, the interview with Mary Šámal in-