

Exile, Homeland, and Milieu in the Oral Lore of Carpatho-Russian Jews

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Ilana Rosen,
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Abstract: In her article "Exile, Homeland, and Milieu in the Oral Lore of Carpatho-Russian Jews" Ilana Rosen analyzes oral narratives of Central and East European Jewish communities. The Jewish people have spent most of their lifetime outside their promised land. Accordingly, their ethos, as reflected by holy teachings, expresses a yearning for a return to the holy land by divine agency once the nation is purified of its sins. In modern times, with the rise of nationalism, this creed changed into activist political Zionism, although traditional and conservative religious circles resisted this change. In the oral narratives of Central and East European Jewish communities, these dilemmas inevitably involve or touch upon those of living among other nations and communities. Therefore, in the oral lore of Jews of Carpatho-Russia in inter-war eastern Czechoslovakia (presently the western part of Ukraine), narratives about the life of Jews in exile present intricate and at times surprising notions about coping with the new political borders following World War I, the symbiotic yet stressful life with both Ruthenians and Hungarians, the abrupt ending of Jewish life in this area in World War II and the Holocaust, and its memory amongst contemporary Israelis coming from the region.

Ilana ROSEN

Exile, Homeland, and Milieu in the Oral Lore of Carpatho-Russian Jews

The oral or folk narrative of various Jewish-Israeli origin or ethnic groups depicts the life of Jews in exile over hundreds of years and through recurrent passages in place, as well as central themes or motifs that persisted in this narrative. In the paper at hand I present a literary-cultural reading of memories and narratives of Israeli Jews who used to be part of Hungarian Jewry. Surprisingly, Jewish exile narratives -- in general -- do not emphasize longing for the Promised Land to the extent we would expect, considering the religious dictates relating to the place of the Land in the life of the people (on this, see, e.g., Amaru; Davies; Mendels). Instead, the majority of these narratives, as reflected in the materials of The Dov Noy Israeli Folktale Archives (IFA) at Haifa University (see Noy and Ben Amos; Ben Amos), as well as in sporadic ethnic anthologies, deal with Jewish life in exile as a given situation (on this, see Safran; Stratton). In these mostly Hebrew collections, we find systematic pre-occupation with the following issues: relations between Jews and gentile rulers or ordinary non-Jews in host countries, the characteristics or talents of Jews and how these traits make them be either well-liked or envied and resented by locals, the religious piety of the Jews, their socio-cultural self-segregation, and many universal themes and motifs. Typically, Jewish legends have always functioned as a pseudo-realistic expressive response to the hardships of exile and a vehicle for preserving the hope for redemption. However, Jewish exile narratives paradoxically turned into a manner of accepting exile and postponing its termination. Indeed, when moving to *Eretz Israel* (the Jewish homeland, Israel) became possible or thinkable with the rise of the Zionist national movement in Central and East European Jewish communities as of the latter years of the nineteenth century, the local ultra-Orthodox leadership opposed this idea and viewed *aliyah* (i.e., emigration to Israel, literally "ascent") as more painful or dangerous than exile (see, e.g., Goldstein 115, 119; Ravitzky). Their theological explanation was that ending exile is the decision or role of God, not man, in the same way that causing it was also God's action, and in fact punishment, "due to our sins" (Daniel). In addition to theological reasoning, this stance also stemmed from the fact that in practice, this same leadership held sway over most if not all of the Orthodox Central and East European Jewish communities of the period, so it was bound to oppose change, and especially mass desertion of its flock (see Reinhartz; Spiegel). Jewish mass immigration to the United States in those years was less problematic in this regard as it did not necessarily entail religious-ideological change. In addition to traditional Orthodoxy and to Zionism, a third ideology of the period was socialism, which attracted the hearts and minds of many Jewish youths. However, in the so-called battle between socialism and Zionism, the non-Zionist socialists were defeated, as in the long run the combination of national as well as class awareness embodied in the Zionist ethos proved much stronger than socialism alone (see, e.g., Jelinek, *Exile* 159-69). The narratives presented and analyzed here express varying degrees of discontent of the then-existing interactions between Jews and gentiles, as well as between higher and lower social classes, with the two oppositions often intensifying each other.

Jewish exile narratives paradoxically turned into a way of accepting exile and postponing its termination, thereby transforming means into goal. This is analogous to the dynamics of desire, longing, or expectation -- the means -- vis-à-vis the actual realization of longings -- the goal. Is a desire satisfied (and thereby extinguished) only when the goal is realized, or does it become a goal unto itself when it becomes a chronic state of affairs? In other words: do we enjoy our longed-for, once-a-lifetime trip around the world only while we experience it, or also while we anticipate and plan for it -- even if we never actually put our plans into practice? Slavoj Žižek, who in his book *Looking Awry* interprets phenomena of popular culture in light of psychoanalytical insights and especially the work of Jacques Lacan, endorses the second possibility unequivocally (6-8). This seems to be the state of mind in folk narrative and discourse about Jewish exile and longing for The Promised Land, too. Namely, that storytelling about exile on the one hand, and praying for redemption on the other, leave no

room for wanting real change. This is exemplified by the fact that in over 22,000 stories recorded in IFA, the Messiah is rarely mentioned. Out of thirty-five stories dealing with this legendary figure, only four mention him by name. And even then the character of Messiah is secondary to the plot. In one story, for example, the locals remind the Jews to pay their debts before they leave with their Messiah. On the other hand, this narrative corpus does not overtly advocate against returning to the Promised Land. Apparently, such debates are more often than not part of the theological and political discourse of leaders rather than of the nation's narrative(s).

Here, I discuss the oral lore of veteran Israelis of Carpatho-Russian origins. During the mid-1990s, I carried out a research project devoted to this community, past and present, at the Diaspora Research Institute at Tel Aviv University. The project included dozens of narrative events, in which fifty of the former members of this community told me about 500 narratives belonging to almost every possible sub-genre and relating to many aspects of their past lives in the inter-war period (after World War I and before World War II in this region, see Rosen, *There Once Was*, "Hasidism versus Zionism"). The region of Carpatho-Russia was shifted to several different governments several times over the course of the twentieth century. It used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the inter-war period the region belonged to Czechoslovakia. Then, during World War II, the region was temporarily returned to Hungary by Nazi Germany and at present, since the ending of World War II, the region is part of Western Ukraine (for an interesting memoir of Jewish life in the region, see, e.g., Julie Salamon's *The Net of Dreams*; on Salamon's book, see Tötösy de Zepetnek). The Jews of Carpatho-Russia numbered about 110,000 people and constituted about 15% of the region's population. The Jews, as well as other minorities, were permitted to express their cultural identities relatively freely and this tolerance enabled the growth of the Jewish national (Zionist) movement. Still, as we shall see in the following narratives and discourse units, the new winds of change -- Zionism -- did not easily seep into the lifelong belief and ideological infrastructure of the region's Jewry, and not only because of religious opposition. In fact, many of these narrative and discursive creations express doubts or misgivings regarding both options available to them: remaining in traditional Jewish life amongst the region's other ethnic groups or leaving it all behind for the sake of re-birth in the Jewish people's old-new country (see, e.g., Orla-Bukowska; Rothkirchen). To illustrate the narrative treatment of these issues among Israelis coming from the Carpatho-Russian Diaspora, I examine five narratives and discursive texts relating to the period of time from the inter-war period, through World War II and the Holocaust, to the present. In addition, the narratives and analyses shift from describing the general interaction amongst the peoples of this multi-cultural region to specifically Jewish-gentile encounters.

Baruch Tsachor, a sculptor living in a village north of Tel Aviv and originally from the village of Trebušan (Dilove) in the eastern part of Carpatho-Russia, proved to be a central narrator in my research project about his past community. Baruch felt it was his moral duty to tell future generations as much as possible about Jewish life in vanished communities, and preferably as accurately as possible. All told, he communicated to me about forty narratives in several storytelling sessions, and as such was unique in both the volume and richness of his narratives. His narrative reflects aptly the era and atmosphere of Central and East Europe closely after the dismembering of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (see Rosen, "Galutam" 140-41). Now the borders have been changed so that parcels of land in the region belong to either Czechoslovakia or Romania while their owners or workers who live across the border, Jews and gentiles alike, are forced to cross the border daily. This absurd situation entails recurrent or embedded exiles for entire populations, and with time, became part of their praxis and expressive creation. In this narrative, the Jewish farmer called Farkash is allowed to bring home from work the agricultural products of his field but not dairy products he may have acquired or purchased while at work (as farmers might), unless he pays tax on them. The customs officer does clarify that the issue here is the excessive size of the loaf of cheese, besides the fact that it is a dairy and not an agricultural product, suggesting that a smaller loaf might be allowed to pass. For Farkash, the real

issue is not the size or weight of the product in question but the situation of close scrutiny under which he has to function daily. This situation may bring to mind the analogous division of livelihood, and ensuing conflict, between the Biblical Cain, the "tiller of soil" and Abel, the "keeper of sheep" in Genesis 4. Here, Farkash decides to rebel against the bizarre circumstances of his daily life, and defies and subverts the rules by inventing and manifesting his own rules or divisions. Or, bearing in mind the meaning of his name, we might say that he (re)acts as part wolf, part fox (and, interestingly, reminiscent of Hašek's Švejek). To start with, not only does he not bother to hide the piece of cheese but he even has the *hutzpah* (Hebrew and Yiddish: arrogance, insolence) to carry it in his personal haversack, where its tell-tale odor will no doubt signal to the officer that this is no harvest. Thus, similar to a bathetic duel, he invites the Czechoslovak customs officer to an open confrontation, knowing full well that the officer and the authority he represents cannot close their eyes or approve of the breach.

The officer swallows the bait and offers the passenger three legal options to solve the problem: sell the cheese, leave it on the Romanian side, or pay tax on it. Farkash, who sticks to his cheese while resisting the options of paying a fee or losing his prize, offers a fourth option: to eat the loaf on the spot and thus make it disappear, to become part of himself. This mission is probably impossible, due to the large size of the cheese. The officer agrees, probably not because he believes that the Jew can do it, but because he is curious as to what this man will do to save face. In terms of the mock duel, the officer turns himself at least temporarily into a spectator rather than a participant, whereas the passenger's supposed rival is now the cheese, or rather, its enormous size. Had Farkash really eaten up his cheese, this story could have been considered a tall-tale and its focus would be on the physical challenge faced by its hero. In this case, however, the size -- or issue -- of the cheese is but the physical manifestation of the hardships endured by locals under the new regime, and Farkash's action is his way of coping as well as protesting against an untenable reality. Therefore, the status or definition of this story hovers somewhere between legend and personal narrative, if we take into account the narrator's own acquaintance with the hero. On the other hand, if we prefer to categorize this narrative by its central theme, this is a political protest cum personal legend.

Now it is Farkash's turn to carry out triadic sets of actions. First he thrusts his sack on the officer's desk, "push[es] aside all the official papers," and lays his personal handkerchief in their place. Thus he takes symbolically control of the officer's desk and metonymically of his authority and power, which go with his "uniform and medals" (on this, see, e.g., Goffman). Once he has made the place his own as it were he acts as if he really is the owner. Thus he again responds to the uncertainty of what or where his home is: where he lives or where he works, in Czechoslovakia or in Romania, and whether he is an insider or an outsider on either side. His actions appear to broadcast the message that he, too, has a say in this matter, and that home for him is wherever he feels at ease to prepare a simple meal and eat it. Farkash now performs the following three actions: he washes his hands in the nearby river, he shakes his wet hands over the officer's displaced papers, and he starts cutting vegetable for his make-believe cheese feast. All this, of course, is but a ruse, as the real goal of these actions is not preparing a meal, nor a rival-less gobbling competition. Rather, the aim of all this is to make the officer lose his patience and let him pass without paying any tax. Until now, this has been a psychological battle between two very differently disposed rivals: one side is needy and cunning, while the other is powerful and bemused. At this point, however, the officer loses his patience and curiosity about whether and how Farkash can consume the enormous loaf. This happens because although the officer has turned himself initially into a spectator, Farkash has in fact caused him to be a reluctant and miffed participant. The officer has by now become the victim of Farkash's ploy and the metonymic (uniformed and medaled) addressee of his protest against the new order that oppresses him. All this makes the officer wish to disconnect himself and his workplace from his malodorous interlocutor, so he drives Farkash out without even demanding the tax. This way the officer at least wins back some of his lost authority and dignity. For his part, Farkash celebrates his victory by an obscene gesture as well as by his so-called topographical superiority, on top of his loaded carriage, as he makes his way home -- not to

mention the exemption from paying the tax. Notwithstanding its tone of amusement and sympathy toward its hero, this narrative also bears evident signs of unease and criticism against the hero and the group of which he is part and which he represents. This group includes the narrator himself, who, incidentally, refers to Farkash as "the Jew" throughout. Self-criticism is expressed on the levels of both plot and characterization. Moreover, if we read the actions of the two parties as "utterances" in a socio-cultural sense, we might view this narrative as exemplifying Bakhtinian notions through both the actions of the two protagonists and the narrator's discourse. Viewed thus, Farkash's invasive and rude actions, as opposed to the officer's restraint, express or symbolize the nature and ethos of the two as representatives of their respective cultural groups.

A sympathetic reading of the farmer who has been expatriated from his source of livelihood, so that going back and forth to his field has become a daily journey abroad, would deem that his behavior is an understandable reaction to a harsh reality with arbitrary rules. In terms of the political power-structure in question on either the Czechoslovak side or the Romanian, this situation puts this man under daily superfluous scrutiny as if he were a traveler or a businessman, or -- worse -- a professional smuggler, when all he does is go to work and back home. In this sense, he is intruded upon in his daily, almost private, routine, to which he reacts by overly externalizing this routine: the hygienic procedure, the malodorous cheese and onion, the possible outcome (or out-come...) of really eating the entire loaf. Needless to say, this whole situation may entail physical hurt and/or financial loss for this traveling farmer, as hinted by the counter-characterization of the more rigid officers and system on the other side. Within this reality, in order to achieve or maintain simple gains of and for his everyday life, at times he has to "eat the cheese and leave it intact at one and the same time." On the other hand, a critical-to-stereotypical reading of this same narrative deems the Czechoslovaks, represented by a single customs officer, as decent, polite, and refined in ways that put them at a disadvantage when dealing with Jews. In this narrative, the Jews -- or, by extension all humiliated minority group members -- are cunning and rude in ways that repulse the authorities and make them want to extricate themselves as quickly as possible, even at the cost of failing to fulfill their own requirements. Moreover, in accordance with their widespread or stereotypical image, the Czechoslovaks possess a sportive spirit that enables them to handle compromise or cope with defeat. Likewise, the Czechoslovaks refrain from violent enforcement of their rules or norms, unlike their Romanian counterparts.

Baruch's reflexive wording "as if in exile" is of special interest here. To understand the different implications of this expression, it is recommended to view it as what William Labov and Joshua Waletzki call "evaluation," meaning, a narrative unit that is not part of the plot but is rather an exemplifying or expository digression from it (Labov 366, 370). Baruch's remark illuminates the extent to which the Jewish community in question feels relatively "at home" in that they are able to cope with inevitable hardship and successfully handle power relations from an ostensibly inferior position. In fact, "as if in exile" demonstrates two kinds of evaluation. One is comparative (or "embedded" according to Labov and Waletzki) and deals with elements of the actual story, meaning the sense of being disconnected from one's land (i.e., losing the physical proximity to the land, as Diaspora Jews did not regularly own land). According to this comparative or twofold view, Farkash feels at home in both countries on both sides of the border; that is, in the home in which he lives and at the field or farm on which he works. This is so due to Farkash's creativity and the daily efforts he invests in the balancing act involved in maintaining this abnormal situation. The other kind of evaluation reaches outside this specific story ("external" by Labov and Waletzki) and touches upon the essence of what it means to be both in "exile" and "at home" (in the sense of retaining control over one's life) at one and the same time. According to this criterion, too, Farkash belongs to both categories simultaneously, and the pronoun "we" that Baruch uses discloses that Farkash is not alone in this situation. In other words, this man is representative of a larger group -- Diaspora Jews -- who give ideological and theological lip service to their avowed desire to end exile, as many Jewish holy teachings and daily prayers urge. Yet,

on the level of praxis, the Jews of the time are no longer familiar with any other kind of life and have by now adjusted to life among gentiles and even done well at it, as the ending of this story proves.

The next three narrators all come from the vicinity of the city of Munkács (today Mukachevo), a cultural center for Jews of both traditional Orthodox circles and Zionist pioneers. In these three narrative-discursive excerpts, life in exile is presented as symbiotic and almost harmonious, if it were not for rumblings of discontent on both sides. Note that we have to be especially cautious with regards to the gentile viewpoint because we are only privy to their alleged perspectives, as perceived through the eyes of their Jewish neighbors of the past. Moreover, the folkloristic study of inter-ethnic relations which focused on the views of the area's Gentiles (and more specifically Hungarians) *vis-à-vis* "their" Jews, has shown them to be just as one-sided or stereotypical (see Huseby-Darvas; Görög-Karády; Zenner). Returning to Jewish narratives and viewpoints, we can see that the last two of the present three excerpts view this symbiosis as verging on Jewish exploitation of gentiles and therefore almost justifying a vengeful gentile response. This may be a hind-sight attempt to explain the cooperation of these same gentiles in the persecution and murder of Jews in World War II and the Holocaust (as described in a short fourth excerpt by another narrator later on), which terminated all Jewish life in the region and in its neighboring areas. This means that the issue lurking behind the seeming symbiosis and its inherent tensions is fear of anti-Semitism and its physical expression, combined with popular Socialist awareness of the time regarding class distinctions and the exploitation of the lower classes by the higher classes.

The text of Yosef Ami describes an almost harmonious although entirely one-sided portrait of the shared life of well-to-do Jews and their Ruthenian employees (Rosen, "Galutam" 144-45). This lifestyle existed from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the termination of Jewish life in the region. The child-narrator's devoted governess is a gentile woman, or *shikse* in the in-group Jewish parlance. The gentile nanny speaks Yiddish and knows Jewish customs and prayers by rote. She teaches and initiates the child in her care from infancy until about the age of three when he begins his Jewish education, and her worst words of scolding are that he is "worse than a gentile." In the wider circle of the Jewish family, she may function as the one who tests prospective brides. As to her own wider circle, this woman and her family have lived, for generations, off the farm run by their Jewish employers and they are "an integral part of [the Jewish family's] life." This nanny figure greatly resembles her counter-part in many of the novellas of the Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld, who spent his early childhood just before the Holocaust in a neighboring community (see Rosen, "The Figure of the Governess"). In Appelfeld's novellas as well as here, this figure seems to have internalized the values of her Jewish employers, and in the novellas she even loses her original Christian identity in the process, which causes catastrophe (Appelfeld, *Katerina*, *Timyon*). In folk narrative and discourse, by contrast, she manages to preserve both sides of her identity. At any rate, the Jewish folk narrator is more cognizant of the nanny's familiarity with Jewish customs than of the nanny's religious orientation or her life in general.

In the more or less parallel description of everyday life by Meir Friedmann, this relatively harmonious picture is more complex or two-sided in terms of both the lifestyles depicted in it, and the narrator's view regarding them (see Rosen, "Galutam" 145). The Jew rents and manages the land, but the gentile performs the actual farming labor while the Jewish grandfather and grandsons immerse themselves in study and prayer in their home; the *Sabbos-goya* comes early in the freezing morning to light their heating stove, while the Jewish family members remain in bed until the house warms up. Meir's description distinguishes not only between two nationalities but also between two classes, of managers and workers, employers and employees, and -- from the socialist viewpoint as reflected in Meir's discourse -- also exploiters and exploited. This is so despite the fact that both texts state explicitly that the gentiles are paid regularly by the landlord or household employing them. Yet, the second narrative does suggest that this payment was apparently not sufficient in the eyes of the gentiles, which eventually bred protest and anti-Semitism.

In Peretz Litman's narrative about the recriminations of his childhood gentile maid and a contemporary conversation about the abrupt deportation of Jews from Munkács (Mukachevo), there is an escalation in the awareness of the gentiles to their inferior position *vis-à-vis* Jews and in their ensuing hostility toward them (see Rosen, "Galutam" 146). Likewise, in this passage all this comes to the surface in the form of direct speech, as opposed to reported or presumed speech between the two parties as in Meir Friedmann's excerpt. The maid's provocative words, which could have belonged to the genre of joke in a more peaceful context, present a reversed so-called diagram of the hopes and longings of Jews and gentiles concerning their mutual lives, and more specifically -- their feeling of being "at home." The Sabbath-gentile woman notes that although the Jews live in what they call exile, they are not marginal or subservient in this condition but rather superior, landlords though not land owners. Exile or no exile, this is just what the maid wishes for herself, and she even details the terms of this life for both sides. Her description of white as opposed to black bread expresses her perception of being second-rate and exploited financially, socially, and psychologically, without any hope for future improvement, or redemption.

Within this sensitive and touchy state of affairs, local gentiles who share this woman's feelings of discrimination rejoice at the deportation of the Jews from the city. Deborah Gross, who grew up in Munkács (Mukachevo), remembers: "When they deported us from the temporary city ghetto, all the locals stood on both sides of the street and applauded. Among them I saw our own past *Sabbos-goya*, who was also a beggar. She stood there yelling, The Jews are finally leaving us, now I'll have a place of my own. That hurt me very much, for she had been living off these Jews [who provided her with easy work]. Later on, when I returned home after liberation, I heard that she had simply died of starvation. I asked people, and they said she had died very quickly afterward" (Gross, "The Sabbath-Gentile Woman," IFA [in the process of archival]; Archives of the Research Project at Tel Aviv University, file Nemes, no. 31; Rosen, "The Figure of the Governess" 62-63). On the other hand, Peretz describes a local man he meets during his visit to his past hometown -- the same Munkács as in Deborah's narrative) -- who takes a more neutral stance and says he had no idea about Auschwitz or where the Jews were being taken to, in real time. To this, Peretz responds with partial agreement. The local man continues to claim that--contrary to the hopes of the local beggar woman in Deborah's narrative -- the disappearance of the Jews did not lead to any improvement in the lives of the remaining gentile townspeople. He lists a variety of reasons for this situation, which have nothing to do with Jews, to his guest, Peretz. Then, he ends up saying that even after over fifty years, the locals still lag behind "their" past Jews, who -- if not murdered in the Holocaust -- rehabilitated their lives, mostly in other parts of the world, including in their own old-new homeland of Israel.

Zipora Senderovich and David Senderovich, a married couple coming from the eastern part of Carpatho-Russia, were part of a group of ex-Carpethians whom I met and interviewed jointly (see Rosen, *There Once Was* 75-87). In her narrative, Zipora retraces the period of the Holocaust, in which she moved to Budapest, lost contact with her parents, and was left in charge of her three younger siblings (see Rosen, "Galutam" 148). All four of them were forced to roam the streets and bomb shelters of Budapest in search of protection and refuge. They survived the war and after liberation, they were re-united with their parents and came to Israel. In Zipora's past conversations with the head of the family of wealthy fugitive Jews, the issue is the future. The wealthy Jew asks Zipora about her plans for after the war and she answers that she is headed to Palestine-Israel. This makes him retort with the so-called punch line, which is sad and funny at one and the same time (Udi qtd. in Rosen, *There Once Was...* 85, 100), that to live just among Jews is "awful and terrible." This assertion has several echoes and ramifications in the story and its different past and present contexts. First, in terms of the immediate situational context of this narrated event, or its Jewish mini-cosmos, the shared life in the bomb shelter proves that Jews do not help each other -- or "never offer even a bite/mouthful to anyone" -- in the hard times forced on them. Considering, more specifically, the meeting between the rich and famous family and the four siblings torn away from their parents, their interaction is much like in

many a Biblical prophecy that deplore the lack of compassion for those in stress or need, such as the poor, widows, and orphans (for at that time the siblings did not know if their parents were dead or alive). In this situation, it is all the more ironic that the rich man offers to adopt the siblings in the future, after the war, instead of offering them some food to save them in the present. This way, he confirms his own grim view and self-fulfilling prophecy that living among Jews is indeed "awful and terrible," all the more for the weak among them. Second, in the cultural context of this narrative event, meaning in Israel of the mid-1990s, the collective cohesion of a society of people from different ethnic, ideological, political, social, and financial backgrounds had also come to a point of crisis, reaching its peak with the murder of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin in November 1995. For this and other possible reasons, Zipora's remark -- that she is often reminded of the words of the Jewish man in the Budapest shelter -- means that she sees these words as coming true in ways that neither of them could have imagined back in late 1944 or very early 1945.

Beyond its immediate content, this story also deals with dialogue as a theme unto itself, or with the limits of speech to clarify different worldviews and function as a bridge between people of different backgrounds. Thus David's remark that "Ilana cannot understand it" is an illustration of the attempt at recognizing and bridging between our presumably different viewpoints. The couple assumes that as a younger generation Israeli, I might have difficulties in understanding the complexities of life in the diaspora among non-Jews. Therefore, David goes on to explain the situation of Jews in a multi-ethnic setting, as in Baruch Tsachor's narrative, and as David experienced and still conceives of it. Furthermore, his explication or "expository discourse" (Bennett) adopts willingly the negative folk stereotype of Jews as smart-cunning-manipulative, which was -- and at times still is -- a widely attributed characteristic to them by non-Jews. So much so, that this stereotype is shown to have persisted in later generations as well, including among Jews living as the majority in their own country for decades. In some ways, this situation resembles the persistence of anti-Semitism in countries that no longer have Jews in significant numbers, and even in those that basically never had any Jews at all.

To return to the situation or principle of "as if in exile" described in Baruch's story about the tax-free Brinza cheese, living in exile and living in one's own country or homeland are presented in all these narratives and discursive texts not as realistic possibilities or alternatives. Instead, they are viewed as psychological states related to or deriving from each of these real-life situations, and at times they are not necessarily contradictory. According to Baruch, Jews like Farkash live "as if in exile" and in fact "at home," thanks to their ability to resolve complex situations imposed on them by much greater forces. By contrast, the Israelis in the narrative of Zipora Senderovich and in her husband's explanation are at a loss for the lack of gentiles, whom they could "cheat" more easily than they can Jews like themselves. Between these two extremes represented by Baruch and the Senderovich couple are the narratives and descriptions of Ami, Friedmann, and Litman. In these, Jews and gentiles live in relative harmony and symbiosis, side by side with inherent tension and discontent (on the part of the gentiles). And finally, according to both the local man in Peretz's visit to Munkács (Mukachovo) and David's explanation, both Jews and gentiles have good -- although very different -- reasons to miss their former symbiotic relationship, to this day. I am not able to arrive at definite conclusions regarding the accuracy of these narratives and discursive texts as faithful representatives of a by-gone world. This is owing to many reasons, including the fifty-year time interval that elapsed between the events and their narration, the one-sidedness of their Jewish perspective (even if they try to reflect the views and sentiments of the other, gentile, side as well), the scarcity of these narratives dealing with Jew-gentile relationships within a much bigger corpus, and the inherent subjectivity of any narrative. Finally, we can only conjecture how the subsequent horrific Holocaust events probably colored the narrators' views of their pre-Holocaust past. By contrast, it is clear that these stories and descriptions do reflect the contemporary thinking and state of mind of their narrators, who before World War II were Carpatho-Hungarian Jews and now are veteran Israelis. As such, these narratives exemplify the force of memories of the past and of geographically remote birthplaces in shaping people's present ideology

and identity. No wonder, then, that such stories raise doubts concerning the possibility of their narrators ever releasing the psychological shackles of the diaspora exile, at least in their own generation. Last but not least, the material studied and the resulting paper add to the relatively small corpus of work specifically in the area of Central and East European Holocaust narrative studies.

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