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“If You Build it They Will Come”: Recreating an Historic Jewish District in Post-Communist Kraków

AS POLAND COMPLETES the privatization of its economy and attracts increasing foreign investment, a district such as the Kazimierz section of Krakow faces a new dilemma—how best to regulate new construction and renovations in order to preserve its historic character. The largest intact and unrestored former-Jewish quarter in Europe, the area has considerable international significance, and particularly now as foreign Jews visit Poland in increasing numbers searching for the remains of pre-war Jewish life while Christian and Jewish Poles seek some way to restore the past, to undo the ravages of Nazi occupation and forty years of communism. [Kraków, Jews, post-communism, identities, performance theory]

THE AMERICAN-JEWISH IMAGE of the anti-Semitic Polish peasant—someone who imbibed Jew hatred with his mother’s milk, to use the former Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir’s characterization—is a gross exaggeration: Even in the 1930s just under twenty-five percent of Polish Jews lived or worked in rural areas as innkeepers, smiths, tailors, shoemakers, and petty merchants or peddlers, and memoirs of the period note anti-Semitism as a developing problem rather than an essential aspect of Catholic/Jewish relations (Kugelmass and Boyarin 1998). Poland has its history of Jew hatred, albeit, not as long or as deeply ingrained as popular lore would have us believe. It also has a substantial history of intergroup cooperation, particularly where occupations were complementary rather than overlapping, that is in small

towns and rural areas (Orla-Bukowska 1994). It also needs to be remembered that the Left was a progressive force (though increasingly ineffective during the latter part of the interwar period) in Polish political life countering the xenophobia of the Right¹ when anti-Jewish sentiments were indeed rising, partly in the face of minority challenges to Polish political autonomy, a war with Soviet Russia in 1920 and in the wake of the Great Depression's devastating and lingering effects on this pre-eminently rural economy. Although Józef Piłsudski, Poland's president and for a short while its dictator, had many Jewish supporters and was able to contain anti-Semitic excesses, when he died in 1935, the ruling group, seeking the support of the increasingly strong *Endecja* and extremist right-wing factions such as *ONR-Falanga*, moved the country increasingly towards the Right with ever more vocal statements about limiting Jewish economic activity and encouraging Jewish emigration.²

While anti-Semitism did poison the social atmosphere of independent Poland, (a factor which undoubtedly inhibited aid to Jews during the Nazi occupation, and is probably the reason so many Jewish émigrés harbor such bitter memories of their land of birth), Poles were no more responsible for the Holocaust than were any other people within German-occupied Europe. Moreover, unlike some of the country's neighbors, no significant native fascist party emerged to emulate those of Germany and Italy (Mendelsohn 1983:16–17).³ This equivocal statement is hardly absolution nor does it attempt to explain away the lingering effects of constructing the Jew as the un-Pole (Kugelmass 1995), but Poland's guilt today (and this is certainly evident if we consider the striking lack of discord in Jewish/German relations⁴) rests substantially in the fact that anti-Semitism has not yet been completely discredited nor removed from public discourse. In that sense Poland lags far behind the West.⁵ The image of a homogenous Polish society was ingrained in the Polish psyche over the past half-century. Post-World War II Poland was, indeed, more ethnically pure than it had ever been in its history. But it was also an image fostered by a system less concerned with achieving equality than creating sameness. As George Weigel notes,

“tolerance” and “fraternity” were ubiquitous terms of Communist Newspeak; little wonder that, in the new climate of freedom, crude expressions of racial, ethnic, or ideological deprecation are not infrequently encountered among otherwise decent people. [1994:38]

Still, there is another dimension to Poland's relationship to its Jewish minority, namely philo-Semitism. Jews resided within Polish lands for nearly a thousand years, mostly without the kinds of expulsions and pogroms that would periodically erupt in many other European countries.

And at significant moments in Polish history, particularly during the bleak periods of foreign occupation throughout the nineteenth century when Poland had ceased to exist as an independent state, Polish thinkers sometimes empathized with and twinned their nation’s plight to that of Israel.⁶ Interestingly, government propaganda notwithstanding, the 1970s onwards was another period of growing philo-Semitism in Poland, particularly among many members of the growing opposition who believed, (after the Party had purged its Jewish members in 1968), that whatever the government maligned (including Jews) must be good.⁷ Others simply felt that things were better in Poland before 1939—that is, when one could shop in Jewish stores, buy on credit, trade at the market, eat in Jewish restaurants and drink in Jewish public houses. On this latter point, it may come as a surprise to learn that carp in aspic, better known in Poland as “carp Jewish style,” is a much loved Polish dish available in many fine restaurants and often served in homes on holidays, or that matzo is sold in supermarkets, bagels are hawked by street vendors in Kraków and other cities, and that some of the strangest names now appear on the labels of Polish vodkas and bottled waters—“Polniss-kosher,⁸ Dawid, Rebeka, Judyta, Cymes,” (Gruber 1994:215)—all designed to associate the product with Jewish cuisine.⁹

A Little History

Kazimierz, a mile or so from Kraków’s centrum, was established in 1335 by the Polish King Casimir the Great (Kazimierz Wielki). King Casimir figures prominently in Jewish history for promulgating laws of tolerance vis-a-vis Jews and for encouraging Jewish settlement in his dominion, contributing, no doubt to the etiological legend that the country’s name stems from the Hebrew words *po lin*, or “here we stay.” The reasons for Casimir’s tolerance are attributed by Jews as well as Catholics to his wife or paramour, a Jewish woman named Esterka. The remains of her castle can still be seen not far from another town bearing the king’s name—Kazimierz Dolny. That town, some 100 km or so south of Warsaw on the Wisła, is today a picturesque partly restored tourist attraction that had flourished during the Baroque period when Poland’s eastern territories supplied grain to southwest Europe. Even before World War II, it had been a popular summer retreat for Jewish and Catholic literati and was used as the site for the American-produced, classic Yiddish film, *Yidl mitn fidl* starring Molly Picon. In 1936, the year the film was made, it was one of the three top-grossing films in Poland (Hoberman 1991:242).

During the interwar period, the Kazimierz adjacent to Kraków was picturesque enough to figure in the photographs of Roman Vishniac, but its poverty was readily apparent. Still, the district's architectural history reveals considerable lustre. That some of the earliest buildings of the Jagiellonian University were situated there attests to the fact that the new town very early rose to significance in Polish history. Jews were already living there in the fourteenth century, but the town actually became important for Kraków Jewish life at the end of the fifteenth century when Jews were expelled from Kraków proper. Despite the expulsion, they continued to trade in Kraków's main square while residing in Kazimierz. In the first half of the sixteenth century, they were joined by Jews from Czech, Moravian, German, and Italian lands often fleeing persecutions.¹⁰ So successful were these merchants that for the next two centuries they formed one of the leading Jewish communities in Europe, and Kraków/Kazimierz became known for its wealth and learning. Baroque synagogues designed by Italian architects invited the envy of at least some of the local Catholic clergy. Here lived Rabbi Moses Isserles, known as Remuh, as well as the renowned Kabbalist, Nathan Spiro. By the mid-seventeenth century Kazimierz was the largest and wealthiest Jewish community in Poland (H. Matlak 1996:126).

Like much of Poland, Kraków never fully recovered from the Chmelnitsky rebellion in the mid-seventeenth century and the Swedish invasions that ravished the land afterwards. King Sigismund III (Zygmunt III Waza), a Swede, had shifted the capital northward to Warsaw at the end of the sixteenth century¹¹ thereby diminishing the city's stature well before the country's decline. Moreover, Poland itself had evolved from a strong monarchy into an unsteady democratic state whose kings were elected by the nobility (some ten percent of the country's total population). In addition to the "Golden Veto" which meant that any legislation could be defeated by but a single nay, the elections created an opportunity for considerable foreign meddling and influence peddling. By the end of the eighteenth century, what had once been one of the most powerful states in Europe was carved up and became the property of its three neighboring empires—Prussia, Austro-Hungary and Russia. Considering the options, it was Kraków's good fortune to become part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Throughout the nineteenth century, the city prospered and began to look much like any other Hapsburg city. Although the Hapsburgs were Roman Catholic, a fact that weighed on their treatment of Jews, the cultural, economic, and even political lives of Poles of all faiths flourished in autonomous Galicia. Moreover, the political culture of the region was characterized more by a sense of pragmatism and accommodation than by revolutionary fervor, and the suspicion of minorities which characterized the western and eastern regions of the partitioned country was largely absent here (Mendelsohn 1983:12–14). Ever since their emancipation in

1867, Galician Jews entered government school and universities and along with that the professions and bureaucracy. Public schooling moved Jewish acculturation forward and the region's Jews became “the most polonized of all the great Polish Jewries” (Mendelsohn 1983:18–19).

Poland regained its independence at the end of World War I, but lost its easy access to Russian markets for manufactured goods. This, combined with a political inability to institute necessary social and economic reforms in the agrarian sector, left the country in economic difficulties that were further compounded by the world crisis of the 1930s. While Kraków suffered the dire economic fate of the rest of Poland, daily life continued as before. Kazimierz's Szeroka Street and New Square (Plac Nowy) were crowded with traders and merchants, buyers and sellers of all manner of goods. The Polish-language Jewish-daily newspaper, *Nowy Dziennik* (*New Daily*), was widely read. Mordechai Gebertig was writing songs in his carpenter's workshop. The Makkabi team played at its home stadium below Wawel Castle, just across from Kazimierz. The politician and activist, Ozjasz Thon preached in the late-nineteenth century Tempel Synagogue to Reform Jews, while another politician and architect, Józef Sare served on the city council and was twice interim mayor.

World War II was much kinder to Kraków than to Warsaw. The Germans used the city as the capital of the General-Gouvernement—that area not directly annexed to Germany or Russia following the Hitler-Stalin pact—and its Governor, Hans Frank resided in a palace just outside the city. Aside from the dismantling of monuments to its heroes and poets, (the Germans were determined to eliminate the Polish intelligentsia and along with it any sign of cultural life), the city managed to escape wholesale destruction. This was probably due to Frank's protective presence and certainly due to the fact that the city did not experience two armed uprisings as did Warsaw. Furthermore, Frank considered Kazimierz an integral part of the historical city of Kraków which is why he did not create the ghetto on that site, but moved the Jews across the river to Podgórze, a district which had only been incorporated into the city as of the turn of the century. But even without the physical destruction of the city, prewar Kazimierz was, as one observer commented, “a completely different world. Different from the one that came afterward, and different from everything that remained outside it” (A. Sabor, R. Kawęski, 1998:13).

After World War II, neither Kazimierz nor Kraków fared too well. With its ancient university, museums, publishing houses, and ensconced bourgeois traditions, Kraków has long been a center of Catholic, i.e., non-Communist intellectual life.¹² Determined to counter these traditions, the central government built a working-class, industrial satellite city, Nowa Huta (New Foundry) brilliantly portrayed in the Andrzej Wajda fictional documentary film *Man of Marble*. Along with it they built a massive steel works complex that polluted the air and ultimately played havoc with

Kraków's architectural treasures. None of this managed to disturb the intelligentsia's dominance of the city. Indeed, during the 1980s Nowa Huta became one of Solidarity's strongholds and the site of many strikes and protests.



Street leading to central square, Kraków. (Jack Kugelmass)

Kazimierz, already much abandoned, continued to deteriorate. So Kazimierz sat there, a little like Soho in the early 1960s, disheveled, grimy but charming. Now, as Kraków shows increasing signs of prosperity with new villas sprouting on the city's outskirts and the renovation of properties in the city's center to house trendy bars and restaurants, hair salons and designer-clothes boutiques, Kazimierz lags behind.¹³ One reason for this is that until recently the area had a rather forbidding reputation. When the Germans herded Kraków's Jews into the ghetto in the adjacent Podgórze district, the Jewish-owned houses of the district were appropriated by the city's underclass. Their right to remain there even after the war, was affirmed by communist, pro-tenant housing laws.¹⁴ Such registration (*zameldowanie*) endowed a person with primary rights to that residence which could be passed on to children and grandchildren. Also, the City of Kraków assigned its troublesome tenants to Kazimierz where there were the most vacancies. So Kazimierz "found itself a dumping ground for the destitute of Kraków. It was a rough neighborhood, unsafe at

night” (Rabagliati and Simpson 1998:13). Not surprisingly, a plan in the 1970s to settle artists there and create a Kraków Montmartre failed (Sabor and Kawęski 1998:14). If the local population diminished the area’s appeal, city policy, at least until recently, was not entirely benign in its neglect, even granting a well-connected Polish film director permission to use a small section as the site for shooting a war series, *Noce i dni*, who then demolished homes for the simulation of a fire (ibid).

Still, neglect or vandalism could not erase all vestiges of its former Jewish inhabitants. There remain countless grooves in door posts for mezuzahs, various faded Yiddish commercial signs hand-painted on building facades indicating where a cafe or butcher shop once existed, numerous small prayer houses and seven synagogues, some of outstanding architectural quality (Gruber 1994:186). Not only is Kazimierz/Kraków unique by Polish standards in regard to the degree of its architectural intactness, but today, the district is probably Europe’s most significant unrestored Jewish quarter. Unlike Prague’s, Kazimierz’s nineteenth-century wealthy Jews never sought to rebuild or remodel their quarter; instead they moved to Kraków proper. Consequently Kazimierz has a much larger stock of late Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque buildings than Central Europe’s most famous Jewish ghetto.

Although the recent revolutions in East and Central Europe began as political ones, they are now even more so economic. A decade after the fall of communism, Poland’s economy has been radically transformed through privatization, foreign investments, and increased trade with Germany and the West. In 1993, Poland had the highest rate of growth in gross national product in all of Europe, despite the fact that Polish goods did not enjoy unrestricted access to European Community markets (Weigel 1994:37). After years of triple- and then double-digit inflation, Poland is heading toward single-digit inflation and lower unemployment and it continues to boast the highest growth rate in Central Europe. Poland is ready for significant commercial and residential investment. And, whereas financial, political, and social anarchy were rampant during the initial stages of economic transformation, now as more and more areas of decision making are handed over to local government offices, it is possible to plan for the future. What will become of Kazimierz? Will it be preserved and if so in what way? How will its Jewish character be maintained? Already private investors are putting their stamp on this historic area, sometimes in violation of municipal codes and without much regard to the nature of the property they now own.

Returning Jews

Long before the fall of communism, two groups of Jewish visitors became rather common in Kraków: Hasidim, eager to visit the graves of prominent Galician rebbes; and because of its proximity to Auschwitz, Kraków has long figured in the itineraries of Jewish visitors largely in need of a place to sleep but often curious, if not eager, to see some of the remaining traces of Polish-Jewish life. Both city and national officials have long sought to expand Kraków's tourist economy, and more recently the city has begun to consider ways in which Kazimierz could be restored and turned into Kraków's second center. One plan, described by the director of the Center for Jewish Culture in Kraków, a semi-autonomous offshoot of the Jagiellonian University's Research Center on Jewish History and Culture, is to treat the area as an arts and museum district, and to turn its synagogues into a large museum along the lines of the Ashkenazic synagogues that form the core of Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum.¹⁵ Doing so would provide Poland with a unique pedagogical tool to instruct non-Jews in the history and culture of a group that constituted ten percent of the total population before the war, and one-third or more of the population of the major urban centers. This would also enhance Poland's standing among Western Jews who until now had good reason to complain about the country's erasure of Jews from its public culture (Sabor and Kawę 1998:14),¹⁶ and like any major museum, it would add to Kraków's attractiveness as a tourist venue.

The idea to put Kraków's past not its present on display is hardly something one can blame the Poles for. Some 56,000 Jews resided in Kraków prior to World War II (about twenty-five percent of the city's total population) and perhaps two hundred live there today.¹⁷ Even a cursory visit to the Remuh Synagogue on Szeroka Street is a quick and unpleasant reminder of just how frail Jewish life is in these parts of the world.¹⁸ Today, however, there is much talk of a Jewish revival in Poland. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to support it, including the birth of Jewish day schools, summer camps and prayer houses. But the idea that a community will ever arise to fill the spaces once occupied by pre-war Jews, or that the buildings themselves are sacred relics that must be reserved for their original use or simply be left to crumble, may hinder rather than buttress that revival. Moreover, a leading Polish journalist and a key figure in the Jewish revival, Konstanty Gebert is doubtful about the southern city's recovery altogether. A resident of Warsaw, a city almost totally destroyed by the Germans, Gebert encounters relatively little in his own city that reminds him of pre-war Jewish life:¹⁹ "In Kraków it's particularly unfortunate because, here especially, the difference between

what is and what was is striking. So it is particularly painful."²⁰ In recent years, Poland has been restoring official community ownership of pre-war Jewish communal property.²¹ The Jewish community in Bielsko-Biała and in Wrocław, for instance, have already filed for much of their pre-1939 property. Kraków's community has regained four buildings through the Polish-Jewish Regulation Commission, including one which continues to house a dormitory for hearing-disabled children (Sabor and Kawęski 1998:14). Yet many cases will not be resolved easily. A former Beit Midrash (religious study house) on Szpitalna Street in Kraków has been a Russian Orthodox church since the 1950s, and other Jewish communal property, nationalized after the war, now house various charitable or social-welfare institutions. Compromises have to be reached. Just recently, the Jewish community of Wrocław agreed to accept only part of the pre-war Jewish hospital complex rather than engage in a possible legal dispute with the institution's management and staff. The hospital will continue to be owned and operated by the Polish National Railways.

All this raises more questions about Kraków's remaining synagogues: Would it be a lesson in futility to advocate anything so reasonable as a museum plan? Who would authorize the release of Jewish buildings for such a purpose and who would run it, the state or the Jewish community? From what sources would budgets and funding come? In lieu of German reparations, and with the declining value of their pensions, for some elderly Jews communal property is potential capital, while the few who are religious among them hold onto the dream that these buildings will one day resume their pre-war use as prayer and study halls. For many, ownership is a matter of pride. Among them is Gebert who feels that recovery of the buildings—regardless whether the community would rent to current tenants or use the property for its own purposes—would allow the Polish Jewish community to become economically self-sufficient, and, less dependent on Western Jewish money.

There are other impediments to the museum idea. The history of Kraków puts it somewhat at odds with the primary center of contemporary Jewish life in Poland, Warsaw, which has its own plan for a Jewish museum. The building would be adjacent to the Ghetto Heroes Monument, a space donated for that purpose by the municipality and vacant except for semi-clad summer sun bathers. Warsaw also has more of the resources, both intellectual and material, to create that museum.²² Still, the impoverished state of Kazimierz—and the need to do something with its deteriorating buildings gives it a substantial edge over the more dynamic city to the north.²³

Although there is much talk about improvements, planners have a difficult time breaking down old ideas about the best use of this historic district. On the one hand, some amount of gentrification is clearly underway, as evidenced by the new galleries, bookshops, and consulates (Hungarian, Ukrainian, and Brazilian) that have recently located in Kazimierz, and the

flashy new apartment buildings, such as the one at Warszauer and Kupa streets whose flats were initially priced at about \$500-600 per square meter, and a week after completion were reselling at about \$700 per square meter. On the other hand, as if to spite such trends, the city recently planted five new welfare institutions in Kazimierz—soup kitchens, used-clothing distribution, homeless shelters, etc.

Perhaps the most critical factor now hindering Kazimierz's rehabilitation is that its erstwhile Orthodox Jewish residents had fairly large families, one or more of whom may have escaped annihilation. If there are any living heirs to these properties then legal ownership is contestable particularly after Poland's Sejm or Parliament enacts laws permitting the reclamation of nationalized property.²⁴ Given the high cost of rehabilitating ancient structures such as those in Kazimierz—a quarter of a million U.S. dollars is a commonly cited figure—the possibility of someone laying claim to a newly restored house is a significant hindrance to wide-scale rehabilitation. Indeed, one complicated case involves an apartment building whose Jewish investor unfortuitously began construction in 1939, reaching the first-floor windows before the war broke out. The five-story building was completed by the Germans for officer housing, and after the war was taken over by the city of Kraków. Even should heirs now appear, the legal division of the property value would be extremely convoluted.

As a result, Kazimierz has become a kind of field of dreams, with diverse interests and competing ideas about restoration co-existing, and not always harmoniously so, among a growing number of carpet-baggers, entrepreneurs, artists, guides, charlatans, townspeople, tourists and pilgrims. There may never be a unified plan for the area.²⁵ That very lack may prove to be its saving grace, for rather than becoming an upscale Jewish theme park under the strict supervision of a master planner, it is a richly textured and continually evolving urban fabric, gradually becoming, the kind of city space it ought to be, that is, a living museum of its past in dialogue with the ever changing needs and desires of those who now occupy its spaces. That dialogue is the subject of the remainder of this essay. For reasons that will be clear shortly, the material is divided into four sections each revealing a different facet of the impetus behind Kazimierz's re-creation: Re-enactments, critical memory, redemptive memory and performing Otherness.



Private renovations, Szeroka St. (Jack Kugelmass)

Re-enactments

Szeroka Street, or Broad Street, is Kazimierz's central square and the location of two of the area's major historical and religious landmarks—the sixteenth-century Remuh Synagogue which is still in use, and the fifteenth-century Old Synagogue now restored and used as a small Jewish museum. Elsewhere on the square is the Jordan Cafe and book store selling postcard reproductions of Polish-Jewish photographs, cassettes of Jewish music Polish books and magazines on Holocaust and Jewish subjects and tourist brochures geared specifically to Jewish visitors. At the bookstore one can sign up for walking tours of the city and the sites used during the 1993 filming of *Schindler's List*—Spielberg used Szeroka Street as the setting for the film rather than the actual site of the ghetto, just across the river from Kazimierz, and there are those who witnessed the shooting who act as if they have been touched by God. Indeed, photos of Spielberg with wife and children are prominently displayed in the local café that became the filmmaker's unofficial headquarters, along with signed and duly framed letters from Spielberg and various cast members.



Cafe Noah's Ark. (Jack Kugelmass)

The vast majority of the visitors do not know that Kazimierz was not the site of the World War II ghetto and they seem not to care, as Rabagliati points out, that “the picturesque courtyard at ul. Józefa 12 had attracted painters and photographers long before Steven Spielberg” (1998:15). Nonetheless, only tour groups with transportation or the very ambitious travel beyond the limits of Kazimierz. Nearly every group that hears of it wants to see Schindler’s factory, located in nearby Podgórze, the actual ghetto area. Now a functioning electronics enterprise, the former factory can only be viewed from the outside; tour group members take turns photographing each other in front of it as their bus driver curses the narrow dead-end street when he tries to back out. Visitors rarely know about or visit the ghetto museum located in the Christian-owned, former pharmacy which served as an underground railway of information and passage for the ghetto’s doomed inhabitants. More likely will they be taken to see the remaining portions of the ghetto wall. And just as likely are they to visit Birkenau, where they will photograph the barracks their tour guide tells them were rebuilt for Spielberg’s film. Almost no groups show any interest in visiting Płaszów, the slave-labor camp where thousands of Kraków Jews were deported to, although by bus it is only five minutes away. Even the chance to see and photograph Commandant Amon Goeth’s villa does not draw many people. The problem isn’t so much historical amnesia as it is a lack of signs interpreting these sites. By contrast, local cafés all of which are *bona fide* simulacra are hyper-interpreted (albeit falsely).



The two Cafe Ariels. (Jack Kugelmass)

There is a good Cafe Ariel, and there is also a bad Cafe Ariel. The two sit shoulder to shoulder on Szeroka Street. The bad one is the site of the original Cafe Ariel established as an art gallery and cafe by a young couple, Wojciech and Malgorzata Ornat. The two were eventually displaced by the building's owner who appropriated the cafe and its name. Undaunted, they secured the adjacent property and reestablished a cafe and gallery, expanding it with a small hotel, then acquiring a building whose basement housed a fourteenth-century *mikve* (ritual bath) up the street and setting up a second cafe/restaurant there. Henryk Halkowski, widely regarded as a living historical treasure with encyclopedic knowledge of the area's history and architecture (constantly expanding through survivor visitors) tells the history of the building's renovations, a story almost byzantine in complexity and intrigue. Bankruptcy figures prominently in the narrative and Henryk concludes by comparing it to the story of two Jews who go into business and decide to seal their agreement in front of a rebbe. When all is said and done, one of the parties remarks: "We forgot the most important thing! How to share the profits when we go bankrupt." Henryk, like other locals, has such disdain for the bad Cafe Ariel that when a visitor unknowingly sits there, he will converse with the person only from a distance as if some invisible barrier stood between them. Poles are a people for whom honor and loyalty count a great deal—a chivalric legacy, that goes along with a penchant for kissing women's hands. In America such chicanery would lead to nothing beyond gossip. Here it acts as a template for action, dividing cafe goers if not quite into warring camps, then at least into those who know and those (such as tour groups members) who know nothing of local history and culture.

To the casual visitor the two cafes look like extensions of one another—similar menus, live music and sidewalk tables. But the bad Ariel is a tad on the gaudy side. Umbrellas sporting cigarette advertisements shade visitors at sidewalk tables seated on rattan chairs—a sort of oriental theme—a white-painted facade, a fountain, and, two newly erected life-sized plaster lions flanking the previously ensconced giant Hanukkah

(candelabra) on the roof—lest anyone doubt the cafe's ethnic theme. For some reason, as if to muddle the identity, one of its halls has just been designated the Hunter's Room "where a variety of dead animals frolic in life-like poses on the walls" (*Krakow Insider* 1998:40). The bad Cafe Ariel has done little to establish itself as a fixture of Kraków's Jewish social world. It caters rather to tour buses—Japanese and more typically German—arrangements made contractually with the city's posh hotels. Just before the scheduled arrival of each group, the cafe's owner—a large middle-aged non-Jewish woman—struts outside with a large gold star of David dangling from her neck. When asked whether the ornament is fake Henryk answers: "It's not, but she is."



Henryk Halkowski at Café Ariel. (Jack Kugelmass)

By contrast, the good Cafe Ariel sees itself less as a tourist production than an integral part of the re-building of Jewish Kazimierz. Wojciech believes that with the fall of communism Jews will one day return to Poland—hence the need for a Jewish cafe (a sort of "if you build it, they will come") and Henryk once described a fight they had had when he suggested that this was unlikely to happen. Wojtek's (the diminutive by which Wojciech is more popularly known) primary concern now, however, is that as Kazimierz becomes gentrified that it not become commercialized like Prague, "I'd like to see it like Montmartre," he related to a journalist writing about the area's prospects, "but everything with a Jewish feel" (Gruber 1994:208). That commitment apparently causes certain tension between him and his two co-owners: Wojtek encourages the use of the cafe as a place for locals to sit and chat while slowly sipping a cup of tea. Henryk's tea is always served to him old-fashioned style, in a glass rather than a cup. And, his meals are given to him gratis, often with an explanation that the dinner was for a no-show from a group visit—an act of friendship and traditional Polish hospitality. But it is tinged, perhaps, by a feeling that he lends by his presence a degree of authenticity since he

is both an embodiment of Krakow Jewry and a living repository of its history. Indeed, such café denizens create the kind of ambience Wojtek wants Ariel to have. For many Krakovians both Jewish and non-Jewish that encouragement has fostered a certain revival of the city's café culture, giving residents a space for outdoor socializing especially during the height of tourist season when the more-established cafes in the city's main square are filled with foreigners.

Like any café, the good Cafe Ariel is also a rich ethnographic site—all the more so because it attracts some, if not many of the city's remaining Jewish population. Besides Henryk, other regulars include the cultural attaché of the Austrian consul. Though he himself is Catholic, his family is of Jewish origin. He not only busies himself organizing a Jewish music festival, but he regularly performs Yiddish folk songs at concerts at the mikve annex to the good Cafe Ariel. Another regular is Leopold Kozłowski, dubbed “Poland's last klezmer” since an American documentary film was made of him by that name. But he might just as well have been nicknamed Zelig, after the Woody Allen film. If “passing” characterizes the Jewish encounter with modernity, Kozłowski has turned it into a virtuoso series of performances. Born into a family of musicians he led Poland's military band until he was dismissed as a Jew in 1968 and then led a touring Gypsy band. When most of the ensemble's Gypsies defected while on tour in Scandinavia, only the Jews remained and Kozłowski donned an appropriate costume to fill in for the missing band members. Later he led a Greek band. Now, with the Jewish revival taking place in Poland and with the annual Jewish festival in Kraków, Kozłowski has become a celebrity.

Klezmer music, instrumental or sung in Yiddish, has become an integral part of Szeroka Street's ambience, including live local ensembles such as “Kroke” and “Kuzmir”—the respective Yiddish names for Kraków and Kazimierz. Kroke is managed by Wojtek and originally played at the good Cafe Ariel. Its three members, graduates of the Kraków Academy of Music, are not Jewish and none know much about Judaism. Young musicians in need of work, they learned to play klezmer music from tapes and cds supplied to them by Wojtek and began performing in 1992. They, too, fell under the Spielberg spell: Having heard them at Café Ariel, the film director invited them to perform their first concert abroad, before a gathering of Schindler survivors and their families in Jerusalem (Łuczyńska 1999:17). “Kroke” has achieved a dose of worldwide fame; having performed with Van Morrison, Ravi Shankar, and Shlomo Bar, they are now hardly ever in Kraków, very often performing in Germany and other parts of Europe. “Kuzmir,” “Kroke's” successor, does appear regularly. But the group is comprised of Russian musicians. In fact, at one point musicians from the former Soviet Union played almost interchangeably in a couple of bands that performed at both the good as well as the bad Ariel. Following on

the heels of these Szeroka Street bands, three more Academy of Music students formed a group in March 1998, "Di Galitzyaner Klezmerim" ("The Galician Hasidim") regularly play at Noah's Ark restaurant on Szeroka. The band has been judged one of the closest to traditional klezmer music and has won several awards (Bobbe 1999:10)



Klezmer concert at Noah's Café, Szeroka St. (Jack Kugelmass)

Among the solo artists featured on the street are Irena Urbanska, a gracefully aging Polish Yiddish singer, who plays the bad Ariel (to much smaller crowds), backed by her own band. Knowing the background of her audience, she introduces her songs in English, then, if necessary, in Polish. In contrast, an attractive, young, Swiss-Polish woman is the singer of choice at the good Ariel. Klezmer music, or anything connoting Jewish music, is now sold everywhere, not only on Szeroka Street but also in music shops throughout Kraków. In the late 1980s, only one cassette recorded by Gołda Tencer of Warsaw's Yiddish Theater was available; now music stores stock a broad selection. The fad is contagious. The 60s chanteuse, Sława Przybylska occasionally performs in the good Ariel and Russian-born and Russian Orthodox, Alosza Awdiejew, has been adding Jewish songs to his Russian and Gypsy repertoire.

From May through October, another Szeroka St. regular is Bernard Offen, a San Francisco Jew and apparent Holocaust survivor who has been returning to Kraków since the 1980s. His film, *The Work*, has been shown for the past few years at the annual summer Jewish Cultural Festival. Offen is about seventy years old, though he looks a good twenty years younger—a look he enhances through a lean physique, wearing blue denim jeans with a backpack and beret, and a mane of flowing-white hair tied into a pony tail. Despite his Old-World roots, and the recent reassertion of his Polish-Jewish identity, Offen is very much California. Indeed, he is the only person in Kraków who conducts Holocaust

"healing" tours. After a tour of the sites of his youth in Kraków's Podgórze district (where his family lived before and during the area's designation as Kraków's ghetto), followed by a trip to Auschwitz, he pronounces his clients as second-generation survivors since they have witnessed the Holocaust through the experiences of an actual survivor. Offen maintains an aura of historical authenticity to his tours: He will usually not take visitors through Auschwitz, but prefers Birkenau where he and his father were taken. Partway up the ramp, at the very spot where he disembarked from the train wagon, Bernard pulls out photographs of his family, points to where he last saw his father headed for the gas chamber, and begins to weep.



Offen with tour group. (Jack Kugelmass)

And one can go on and on—the president of the Israel-Poland Friendship Society whose wife's family is of Jewish origin, a leading anti-Communist intellectual, American Jewish tourists and an array of German film crews. One afternoon Henryk ventures into the good Cafe Ariel looking for a place to chat with an interviewer but cannot find any unoccupied tables since the official ceremony establishing the sister cities relationship of Kraków and Nuremberg then taking place has flooded the local cafés with German tourists. Heading elsewhere Henryk remarks, "Once again Jews are suffering from the Nuremberg laws!"



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Remuh Synagogue (right) and Nissenbaum restaurant (left). (Jack Kugelmass)

Diagonally across from the street and up the block from the good Cafe Ariel is the sixteenth-century Remuh Synagogue and built up on one side of it is a new post-modern construction of white stucco, blue metallic window frames and an arched entryway modeled after the adjacent synagogue. Regarded as kitsch by discerning locals, the building houses the area's only kosher restaurant. Built by a wealthy Polish Jewish survivor named Nissenbaum whose private foundation has its hands in, and its brass plaques on, much of the cemetery restorations taking place in Poland, the establishment caters to foreign visitors in search of kosher food. Locals avoid the restaurant, in part because of price. Henryk knows the place well since he lectures rather frequently on Polish Jewish subjects to busloads of Orthodox youth groups.²⁶ When asked what he thinks of it, he quips: "It's like the restaurant that was opened on the moon but had to close because of lack of atmosphere." The good Ariel has not only a Jewish, but a Kraków feel to it: cozy, homelike, with old wooden furniture, lace doily-topped tables; there are several smaller rooms rather than one large hall. Even the bad Ariel tries to replicate that feel, at least, on the inside. The Nissenbaum Restaurant, however, does not try to be Kraków at all. It is socialist-nouveau riche, with modern carpeting and chandeliers, thick, durable logoed plates, and weak American-style coffee. Although the food is good, the restaurant is empty except when tour groups arrive. Adjacent to the Remuh is an ancient Jewish cemetery once enclosed by two tenements which Nissenbaum purchased and demolished.

figuring that they somehow detracted from the cemetery, and had plans drawn up for another post-modern structure to house a Jewish cultural center. The building is no more than an empty lot and a painted sign, its construction stalled when complaints were raised about the appropriateness of the design.²⁷

Critical Memory

As a relatively intact Jewish neighborhood, Kazimierz's lure is compelling. Nearly all of the activity still centers around Szeroka Street, though in recent years some of it has begun to spread toward the seventeenth-century and recently-restored Izaak Synagogue and the Jewish Cultural Center on Meisels Street, itself a lavish reconstruction. Though the process of gentrification is evident throughout the district even on Szeroka there are numerous dilapidated buildings, including the local police station. The area has the look of a place that time forgot and is frequently used as a film or TV backdrop for discussions of the Holocaust and its impact upon Poles as well as contemporary Europeans, particularly Germans. Its iconic character is hardly new. Just before the outbreak of World War II, Roman Vishniac immortalized Szeroka St. and other parts of Kazimierz in his photographs.

Of course for many visitors, the local color has no deeper resonance than a typical Indian site of the southwest would have for the descendants of white settlers. Indeed, a local Polish carver of the ubiquitous Jewish figurines revealed that he makes them largely for German tourists! Such figurines are a fixture of Polish folk art typically appearing in nativity scenes. Since the upsurge in Jewish tourism, the manufacture of Jewish figurines has become a veritable industry with mass production of various Jewish types including praying Hasidim mounted on springs so they can sway back and forth, entire klezmer bands, Jewish peddlers and water carriers.



Souvenir stall in Kraków's sukiennica. (Jack Kugelmass)

The city's proximity to Auschwitz makes it a natural stop off point for anyone determined to reach the center of the unfathomable, a fact that colors even upscale plans for the city. As mentioned earlier, one such plan is to transform Kazimierz into Kraków's Rive Gauche. Several galleries have recently opened and exhibitions are part of the city's annual Jewish Culture Festival. At one (during the 1997 Festival), located in an upstairs large flat a young German artist displays an installation entitled "Postcards from the Front." The work consists of multiple postcard-size panels—facsimiles of photos and letters sent home by German soldiers on the eastern front including images of a visit by Hitler. The postcards are progressively obscured by black-and-white oil paint. The artist explains that they stand for the erasure of memory on the part of Germany's World War II generation.

A few blocks away, an American Jewish installation artist, Shimon Attie is completing his "Hollywood Boulevard" piece in the courtyard of the Old Synagogue. The installation consists of acrylic squares on the backside of which are facsimiles of Hollywood Stars. Each star contains the name of another person from Schindler's list (the actual names rather than the film actors). The piece is intended as a critical assessment of the commercialization of Holocaust memory. As we talk, two German men stand and listen to our conversation—it was actually taking place on camera for a German TV documentary about Attie's work. One complains bitterly about the commercialization of Auschwitz: "You can even buy post cards there that say 'Greetings from Oświęcim!'" They then point to the bad Cafe Ariel with its gaudy plaster lions and Hanukkah and pronounce, "Now, *this* is good. This is authentic."



Shimon Attie's "Hollywood Boulevard" in Kazimierz

A third example is an Austrian man in his early 50s, whose father was the head of the Nazi party of Linz. Not an insignificant station to say the least, the man was jailed by the Americans after the war. Ardent and unrepentant in his beliefs, he raised his children to be obedient civil servants and head-strong anti-Semites. His son became a school teacher and abandoned thoughts of pursuing a career in music. In his twenties, he dated a woman whom he incorrectly thought to be a Jew. When his father intervened, he abandoned the relationship. Later in life he rebelled, quit his job as a civil servant and became a professional musician playing, among other things, Jewish folk music. He discovered the songs of Mordechai Gebirtig, the ghetto poet from Kazimierz who died during the Holocaust and he came to Kraków to record a compact disc of Gebirtig's music inside the recently renovated seventeenth-century Isaac Synagogue. For him, Kraków represents the best of the old Hapsburg Empire with its multiethnic cities and rich cultural blendings—a far cry from the sterility of post-war Linz.



Recording Gebirtig in Izaak Synagogue (Jack Kugelmass)

Redemptive Rhetoric

Each summer Kraków holds a Jewish cultural festival. It began as a film festival and now includes music, art and photography exhibits, indoor and outdoor theater and dance performances, classes in folk art, folk dance, Yiddish, Jewish cuisine, etc. The festival's handbook has become a thick printed volume—bilingual with glossy, color photos. Its repertoire and mission has expanded as well. In 1998, a special ceremony was incorporated into the festival: Michael Traison in cooperation with the Israeli Embassy and the Lauder Foundation established an award recognizing the efforts of Polish non-Jews who have preserved Jewish memory and presence in Poland.²⁸

Still, the music is primary. Kozłowski is also a regular on the festival bill and sees his purpose serving cultural preservation and re-creation:

A klezmer doesn't play. It seems like he's playing, but he's telling the history of his nation. [...] When the war ended, I told myself that Hitler killed people, but he hadn't killed the nation because he was unable to annihilate its music. And I do everything so that this music can live just like it did before. [Sabor and Kawęski 1998:15]

The festival organizers make sure that both New-World and Old-World musical ensembles are represented, and they have tried to find groups that mix Arab and Israeli, or Gentile and Jewish players—the subtext is clearly reconciliation.²⁹ The event climaxes with an open-air concert on Szeroka Street. When neighborhood complaints led to its removal from the official program several years ago, popular demand reinstated it. The fact that not everyone loves the festival is also evidenced by the 1997 defacing of festival posters with a printed sticker proclaiming *odwołany*, or cancelled. Local media denounced the defacement and festival events were sold out as usual.

The festival is organized by two young impresarios, Krzysztof Gierat and Janusz Makuch. Like many of those involved in staging the renaissance of Kazimierz, rumors abound about Makuch's ethnic background.³⁰ A non-Jew, Makuch grew up in Puławy, a town west of Lublin and he plays an ambiguous identity (at least until recently), not speaking of his background and only providing the location of his birth.³¹ Henryk admonishes, "If he doesn't, then one must not force him to."³² That statement speaks volumes about a lingering stigma of Jewishness—or a lingering perception that someone might be embarrassed by it, and that admitting one's background is analogous to "coming out." The ambiguity of identity may have contributed to Gierat's and Makuch's credibility and viability outside, as well as inside, Poland.³³ Interviews with Makuch reveal some interesting aspects of the festival's intent. To Ian Buruma, writing for the *New York Times Magazine*, he says, "I know that we are living on the world's largest cemetery. But when I see five- or six-thousand people dancing the hora on the last day of the festival, Kazimierz becomes a magical place—and I feel the presence of the people who died here" (1997:41). Makuch admits that the festival is also a form of saying kaddish, "The whole festival serves that purpose. It is, at least for me, like a sort of prayer" (Pawlisz 1997:7). Indeed, for some audience members the festival recreates a paradise they have lost.³⁴ But in a lengthy interview given as part of a research project sponsored by Oxford and the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom, Makuch explains that the festival is not just a re-creation. Instead, he sees it as both a healing of a cultural rupture, a restoration of the Jewish component to Polish culture, as well as an assertion that Poland is much more than just a land of anti-Semites.

The festival's success necessitates the use of amenities beyond Kazimierz's borders.³⁵ In 1997, people were still raving about the previous year's concert by "Brave Old World," a largely American-based virtuoso klezmer band whose recorded music is played like musical wall paper in local cafes. The following year two Israeli groups appeared—"The Jerusalem Jazz Band" and "Bustan Avraham" (the former lacking much connection to Jerusalem or to jazz; the latter a Jewish and Palestinian ensemble that plays world music). But the highlight of the festival was the Hungarian ensemble Muzsikás, a group that has collected Jewish music still remembered in southern Hungary where Jews and Gypsies played together in bands before the war. The group plays *Ani Maamin* or "I believe" the final prayer of many religious Jews before their extermination by the Germans. The song appears in the repertoire because it was carried back to Hungary by those who survived Auschwitz. The band's leader explains that the group's elderly member knows the song as "My Dear Mother" and that those who sing it are thinking of their mothers (a result of inter-linguistic homonymy since the Hebrew word "I believe" sounds like "mommy."³⁶ Half way through the concert the leader introduces an elderly Gypsy cymbalum player who performs the Yiddish song "*Mayn shteytele Belz* [My Small Town Belz]." The performance is haunting, in part because of the cymbalum—in this case an enormous instrument looking something like a field version of a baby grand. (In Poland the cymbalum is associated with Jews, particularly with the very sympathetic character Jankiel, the Jewish innkeeper and gun runner of Adam Mickiewicz's nineteenth-century epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz*).³⁷ And it is haunting, not only because the player is a Gypsy recalling a pre-war Yiddish song, but because he plays it as a tango. Still, the most striking aspect of the performance is the very history of the song and the peculiar ways in which cultural artifacts are re-circulated and as they are, new meanings are attached to them. Originating as part of an American Yiddish theater piece, this nostalgic reference to a small Polish town apparently found its way before the war into the song repertoire of Eastern Europe including mixed Jewish and Gypsy bands of southern Hungary. And now it's being played as a tango by a Gypsy to an audience of American, West European and some Polish Jews and Gentiles as a rescued Polish Jewish song. Bizarre, of course, but in its own way quite wonderful.³⁸

Conclusions: Performing Otherness

“**W**hat is Kazimierz?” ask the authors of a recent article in the Polish newspaper, *Rzeczpospolita*. A university philosopher and descendent of a famous Kazimierz family sighs:

It is the former Jewish quarter and all attempts to revive it are testimony to its maiming. The fact that there is so much kitsch there and pretending is tragic evidence of what is lacking. There is nothing here. When I come here, I see what I don't see. And perhaps every Jew sees it this way.

But Janusz Makuch mitigates the bitterness,

Jewish life in all its glory will not return to Kazimierz—let's not fool ourselves. Once I did try to fool myself, but today I know that there isn't the slightest chance of that. Authentic Jewish life is a yeshiva, rabbis, and all that is the essence of Jewry. And we have seven synagogues and a dying Jewish community. All we can do is, with deep faith in the sense of our actions, care for their traditions. This is simultaneously an image of the Jewish absence in Kazimierz, as well as a command to remember [Sabor and Kawęski 1998:16].

Henryk Halkowski, in a festival review for the new Warsaw Jewish magazine *Jidele*, concurs: “Kazimierz could become the place where the fleeting memory of Polish Jews—of their lives, of the values which guided their aims, and of their inner world and singular culture—is brought to a standstill and fixed in place” (1997:1).

But Kazimierz is no longer “Jewish” and the commercialization taking place across the whole district, or just on Szeroka Street clearly indicates that Jewish culture and memory will never be the sole focus here even as a cultural production. In addition to new luxury hotels catering to Jewish and other visitors such as the Ester Hotel (built by an Armenian family, its restaurant makes no pretenses at *kashrut* or even Jewish-style food) Szeroka has gained two more cafes that play on regional themes and a techno music discotheque whose business-card advertisements flaunts a fleshy, middle-aged woman wearing nothing but her violin.

Muzsikás, like Janusz Makuch, Wojciech Ornat and the two art installations mentioned earlier represent a critical problem in evaluating the response of an old city to new masters and even more to the point a problem in evaluating how any group or place responds to a past that returns to haunt, which is precisely what has been happening in recent

years as Jews return in increasing numbers to visit Kraków (see Kugelmass 1993) and as post-communist Poland seeks some way to accommodate its Jewish past. Doing so may be a way for a fledgling democracy to reconstruct and restore Poland's own pre-communist era past, as well as an entry ticket into the community of Western nations to which it always felt it belonged. Interestingly, the evaluation of this process has had two rather divergent tracks: One, consists of those who are enthralled by the Kraków festival and various other Jewish cultural activities in Poland, and are convinced that the country is undergoing a major Jewish revival; the other is basically cynical about Polish intentions and dismisses all such cultural productions as inauthentic. Neither is entirely correct. Jewish life is reviving in Poland to a degree and largely through the efforts of young Jewish intellectuals and through help provided by American Jewish foundations.³⁹ But numbering only in the thousands and emigration to Israel and elsewhere always an option for some, Polish Jewry struggles to survive.⁴⁰ So what we see in these various productions could not take place without a steady stream of foreign visitors eager to experience something Jewish. Given such reliance on visitors, it is easy enough to dismiss the restoration of Kazimierz as little more than the "Disneyfication of Jewish memory" or what Buruma (1997:41) refers to as "the Hollywood side of the Jewish revival" in Poland.

But one really ought to frame the so-called revival in more complex terms than either the cynics or the boosters would allow. The reasons are as follows: The rediscovery of Kazimierz emerges out of an extended national memory project initiated by the opposition and the liberal Catholic laity during the waning years of communism (see Irwin-Zarecka 1990). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s young Catholic Poles had begun to pay attention to Jewish culture through unofficial lectures and exhibitions, underground press publications, and then later through officially sanctioned translations of classic Yiddish literature and rabbinic texts, and scholarly works.⁴¹ In other words, these performances and installations have a significant intellectual and/or moral foundation to them. Moreover, they are frequently accompanied by a growing critical expertise on the part of audiences. Although there are many observers within Poland today who note that Jews are no longer quite the fashion that they had been just a decade or so ago, the fact is that events such as Kraków's Jewish festival play to sell-out audiences, are televised nationally and concert cds go like hot cakes.⁴² One reason for this is that it has become increasingly common—especially among younger people—to find some ethnic roots.⁴³ Youth subcultures have burst upon the Polish scene, but ethnicity is still a more acceptable way of being different. Many people of all ages are returning to or accenting their Byelorussian, Ukrainian, German or Jewish background or simply keeping their "real"

identity ambiguous or even sporting various identities. They do this now, in part, because they can, and in part out of revulsion for the recent past and the mandatory homogenous *homo sovieticus*.⁴⁴ Also, it should be noted that many of these performances do find very strong resonance within the local Jewish population many of whom are regulars at the good Cafe Ariel (Kozłowski insists that the establishment is the finest eatery in Krakow!)⁴⁵

Nor is it correct that the effect of such institutions is necessarily the burial of memory (as some would insist). Although for German and Japanese tour bus visitors, the Yiddish music and quasi-Jewish food at the bad Café Ariel may very well create the illusion that World War II's legacy may not be quite what Holocaust criers would have us believe, for others, a walk through the area becomes the necessary means for visiting the past and coming to terms with the meaning of its loss. There is a useful model here that comes from performance studies, in particular Michael Rogin's (1996) analysis of the use of blackface by American Jewish performers and it suggests (albeit unintentionally since Rogin's thrust is cultural and social critique) the liberating potential of masquerade as opposed to passing. In masquerade both audience and performer understand that there exists a substantial discrepancy between the face and the mask. In passing, the performer is constantly in danger of exposure as a fraud. The question one could pose is this: If Kazimierz's Jewish revival is in fact staged—which it must be as a cultural performance, then are its players engaging in acts of deception or make believe? In passing, according to Rogin (1996:123–124) the audience must never know the real identity of the actor. Those who engage in it are eternally in danger of being exposed. So if passing is indeed the strategy of the performers here, then we are dupes and they are frauds—recall Henryk's comment when the owner of the bad Cafe Ariel dons a star of David to greet tour groups. Moreover, in this ironic twist the whole scenario is an inversion of the modern Jewish experience in which the Jew is accepted either through the evacuation of his Jewishness, that is behaving as a non-Jew or through pretending that he actually is a non-Jew. But masquerade is different because the mask both hides and reveals, cueing audiences to the fact that the very notion of an innate or fixed identity is problematic. And if these reenactments are indeed acts of masquerade, then we are all players in a grand performance—they to fill in for the missing Jews and we to experience Kraków/Kazimierz as a "might have been" living Jewish city. The mood of these performances is subjunctive, as if they ask, "What would we be, what would this be, if there had not been a Holocaust?" For some this reenactment has a strong redemptive tinge to it, an attempt really to undo on a personal level what can never really be undone.

For many the very ability to imagine themselves as Jews, to play with the ambiguity of their own identities as Jews, quasi-Jews or might-be Jews

after generations of stigmatization and the public erasure of Jewishness is a strikingly new phenomenon, one indication of just how much this particular old city is indeed now governed by new masters. And who are those masters? To some degree, nothing other than global market forces catapulting Kraków away from the insularity of a Soviet satellite into the orbit of the West and its service economy of leisure and tourism. Jews are great travelers and Krakovians, whose own future hangs so much upon the city's emerging reputation as an undiscovered and still unspoiled jewel, are not so foolish as not to recognize that.

To some degree those new masters are also a changing European sensibility vis-a-vis the Jew. Ever since the Christianization of the continent, Jews have been Europe's Other within⁴⁶ and certainly so within the societies of central and eastern Europe where xenophobia has lingered long after its discrediting (at least in public culture) in the West. But the expanding economies and slowing birth rates of the post-1950s West, created a growing domestic population of Turkish and North African peoples permanently residing in Europe and this together with the influx of post-colonial peoples from Africa, India and elsewhere have significantly darkened the color complexion of western Europe. Interestingly, something similar is now happening in Poland as refugees—not just from the Ukraine and Russia, but also from Armenia, Vietnam, and elsewhere are seeking economic and/or political asylum within the country's borders. Renato Rosaldo writes about "imperialist nostalgia" in films such as *Out of Africa*, *The Gods Must Be Crazy* and *A Passage to India*, a concept that applies equally well to cultural productions such as *Banana Republic* and perhaps to tourism generally. He coined the term to describe the peculiar phenomenon that the agents of colonialism frequently express a high degree of nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was prior to its colonization. "Imperialist nostalgia," he writes, "revolves around a paradox: A person kills somebody, and then mourns the victim" (1989:69). But one wonders whether or not the connection is quite so direct and if there were not mediating factors that move from acting as agents of destruction to nostalgia. In regard to the Jew in Europe, we might want to consider the notion that there are collective nostalgias about "our Others" as opposed to "those Others" who are much newer, more present, and unfamiliar. Indeed, it is very striking how much Europeans now seek to remember their dead Jews.⁴⁷ Perhaps as another Other emerges in Europe, Jews no longer seem quite so strange. And then, too, increasingly intermarried with the majority population, they are no longer structurally Other either.⁴⁸

Jewishness as a Polish cultural performance is quintessentially post-modern. Much like contemporary notions of gender, it speaks to the malleability of identities. Moreover, the evocation of Jewishness as a component of Polish memory has a distinctly transgressive quality to it.

What better way to escape the growing stultification of ideology—whether old-style communism, or that of a former opposition now in power and itself the subject of growing criticism? Jewishness, here, is a retreat from the collective to the individual, from the heroic to the ironic, from the tragic to the comic. This, probably, is the underlying link between foreigners and natives at the good Cafe Ariel.

Notes

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¹ despite its own nationalist tendencies and rejection of Jewish claims on national and cultural autonomy.

² Despite the apparent break from the more liberal Piłsudski regime, the pattern of exclusion of Jews from government aid, higher education, and employment had begun well before and along with it, the increasing financial dependence on relief money from American Jews (Mendelsohn 1983:42).

³ Although the increasingly reactionary element of the Right did give rise to fringe groups that were clearly inspired by Hitler’s success (Mendelsohn 1983:70).

⁴ One should mention that West Germany’s booming postwar economy meant that it could afford to pay for such discordless relations. Even now the German government has promised Ronald Lauder over \$17 million for conservation work at the Auschwitz museum (unpublished materials from the International Auschwitz-Birkenau Preservation Project of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, 1996). And now, of course, in the wake of newly-revealed information on the extent of their Holocaust involvement, German banks and businesses are all too eager to dig into their pockets rather than face a potential loss of revenue through a Jewish boycott. (For an interesting discussion of post-war Germany and Jews see Ronald Webster 1993).

⁵ There is no sense in Poland of “political correctness.” Pejorative terms are used for other groups in everyday conversations, and also in the mass media: Sports commentators will nearly always identify black athletes as *czarnoskóry* (black-skinned), and even the Polish equivalent of *Time*, the prestigious weekly *Polityka* used the term *sólnoocy* (slanty-eyed) to describe Vietnamese immigrants settling in Poland. The latter example appeared in A. Gryczka, and J. Kostyła (1998). The word “*skólnoocy*” was even used in a bold subheading. Former Olympic medal-winner, Surya Bonaly’s name was always prefaced by “*czarnoskóra*,” and recently even *Gazeta Wyborcza*, below a half-page photograph of opera diva, Barbara Hendricks could not resist adding “*ciemnoskóra*” [“dark-skinned”] to a description in the article below. It should be noted that similar incidents have been noted in the Czech and Hungarian media. Still, Poles do not consider these terms pejorative, and seem to have accepted

what authorities maintained for nearly half a century—that racism and nationalism were evils which could only occur in imperialistic and capitalistic countries, never under socialism.

⁶ For a study of the panoply of images of Jews in Polish literature—many rather positive—see Mieczysław Inglot (1987). Poland saw itself as similar to Israel in the sense that the nation's leaders were often forced into varied “diasporas”—France or Siberia; like Israel, Poland's neighbors were more apt to conquer than coexist with it; and Poland was a long-persecuted nation. But Poland's Roman Catholicism put a strongly martyrological-messianic twist to this and in a certain sense this interpretation of collective selfhood veers away from the identification with the plight of Israel: Poland saw itself as the bastion, and therefore protector of Roman, Latin, Christian, Western, and enlightenment civilization—and it saw itself as heroically defending European culture, even at the price of its own life.

⁷ Due to some maneuvering by factions within the government in the latter part of the 1960s (and notably after the Israeli-Arab war in 1967 during which the Socialist Bloc had backed the latter), Jews, labeled “Zionists,” became the target of official slurs.

⁸ A compound of the words Poland, Nissenbaum and kosher. Nissenbaum (referred to later in the essay) produces kosher vodka ostensibly for sale to Orthodox Jewish visitors, but obviously intended to capitalize on the Jewish nostalgia fad among Polish consumers.

⁹ Aware of the strictness of *kashrut*, some Poles have always considered Jewish food and drink purer and, therefore, better than their own. During interviews conducted with ethnic Poles who had lived in communities heavily populated by Jews before World War II for Project Galicia (a 1988–1990 Oxford-Jagiellonian University research project), as well as in interviews for doctoral dissertation research, one of the authors repeatedly met with great praise for pre-war, real Jewish matzo with which the current version did not compare favorably. In various places people noted that the Jewish baker was generally better than the Christian one in town. Some of the respondents' praise and admiration extended to other areas, such as law and medicine. For instance, an educated woman from a southwestern city, as well as a peasant woman in a southeastern village both said that their families had always gone to Jewish doctors because they were the best in their field. The first of these women even went so far as to say that one particular Jewish doctor knew what was wrong “as soon as he crossed the threshold of the room” where the patient lay.

¹⁰ It was at this time that the Jewish *kehila* and the Kazimierz town council drew up the borders of “Jewish Kazimierz,” erecting a wall segregating it from the other, Christian part of the town. In 1564 the Jews of Kazimierz also won from King Sigismund August (Zygmunt August) the privilege “*de non tolerandis Christianis*” meaning that Christians could not lease or buy property within the Jewish quarter; on the other hand the King also enjoined the Jews from purchasing property in the Christian part of town (H. Matlak, 1996:126).

¹¹ By this time Warsaw, earlier an unimportant settlement, was beginning to wax in status, just as Kraków's role in the Polish state was beginning to wane. By the sixteenth century, as the Polish kingdom expanded from sea to sea and east to

west, Warsaw became more centrally located: It was a strategic point of communication on the Wisła River, situated between Gdańsk to the north and Kraków to the south, and it lay along the primary east-west route toward Lithuanian lands. The Jagiellonian kings were the first to begin investing in the city and by the time of Sigismund (Zygmunt) August's death, a medieval castle there had been transformed by an Italian architect into a glorious Renaissance palace. Jews were also settling in the city in greater numbers; here, however, inspiring several attempts between the 1480s and 1520s to institute the right of *non tolerandis Judaeis* and restrict Jews to their district (Davies 1981:308).

The ultimate blow to Kraków's position was the 1596 transfer of the royal capital to Warsaw by King Sigismund III (Zygmunt III Waza). The offspring of a Swedish prince of the Vasa family, John III, and a Polish princess, Katarzyna Jagiellonka, sister of Zygmunt August, and daughter of Bona Sforza and Zygmunt Stary (the Elder), though born in a dungeon in Sweden where his parents were held for four years, this Zygmunt was determined to be monarch of not one, but two kingdoms. The factor making him a more likely king in Poland and less so in Sweden was his Catholicism. Protestantism had anchored itself firmly in the northern Baltic country, but the Jesuit-educated prince, with the support of Rome which hoped to regain Scandinavia in its sphere of influence, thought that Poland would be a key to the re-Catholicization process. Zygmunt's father, unsuccessful in reinstating the Vasas in Sweden, did succeed in winning his son's election as King of Poland in 1587. But forced before his coronation to sign various privileges and protections by both the Protestant Swedish and the Catholic Polish nobility, he was, in effect, disarmed before he could even undertake his mission. Nevertheless, King Zygmunt III Waza of Poland continued to be “more concerned with his homeland than with the affairs of the Republic” (Davies 1981:435). Hence, after a fire at Wawel Castle in 1595, rather than remodel there, the following year the King commanded the government and courts to move to Warsaw. Zygmunt's fruitless preoccupation with Sweden led to ceaseless strife and constant pretext for war. Though he and his two sons were to rule Poland for over eighty years, the Waza Dynasty brought to the fore many factors that adversely affected Poland and led to the country's decline: civil wars within Poland and Sweden, wars between them (especially in the years 1655–1658), and wars with Moscow. It led to problems with, and the loss of support from, the Hapsburgs, to inflation, and the Chmielnitsky Rebellion (1648–51) which devastated the land and its Jewish population. In the words of Norman Davies,

The destructive effects of the Rebellion are undeniable. For the Republic as a whole, it precipitated a process of decline which was never successfully reversed. For all the Republic's citizens, it provoked an orgy of destruction of life and property commensurate to that of the Thirty Years War in Germany. For the Jews and Protestants it brought bloodshed and persecution on an unprecedented scale. The scattered and defenceless Jewish settlements attracted the wrath not only of Chmielnicki's Cossacks and of the peasant bands, but also of the Tsar's army.

The total number of Jewish casualties in the period 1648–56 has been put at 56,000; the over-all decrease in the Jewish

community through death, flight, and destitution approached 100,000. [Davies 1981:46]

¹² In postwar Poland the seat of the Catholic-led opposition was Kraków where the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the monthly *Znak* were published and where the Catholic Intelligentsia Club [KIK] was very active politically and socially. Under this atmosphere, even today, Kraków's younger Jews are called "Catholic Jews" in contrast with the much more secular intellectuals who form the nucleus of the young generation of Warsaw Jewry—almost all of whom are the children of formerly active communists.

¹³ Though it does attract establishments of a more ethnic or Bohemian nature. One of the more interesting of the recent additions is a bar named Propaganda that recreates the aesthetic of social realism including posters and souvenirs from the period.

¹⁴ Buildings and apartments changed hands legally and illegally, by purchasers or by squatters. In the chaos immediately after the war, persons would appear before a notary and realtor to sell "their" buildings while the real owners had been dead since 1942.

¹⁵ In fact, there is a functioning Judaica Museum at the end of Szeroka Street in what is known as the Old Synagogue. Opened in the 1980s, the exhibit has been greatly expanded and enriched, a bookshop has been included, and the number of visitors to this sedate venue each year has been rising rapidly. In 1990 there were 25,640 visitors; in 1995 there were 45,238 (Matlak 1996:138). Janusz Makuch does see an educational mission running through the Jewish cultural festival he organizes (Pawlisz 1997:7).

Actually, the arts area is very much part of the city's plan for Kazimierz as published in *Kazimierz Action Plan* (1994). The plan is careful to stress the Christian as well as the Jewish heritage of the area and is ambivalent about how Jewish a restored Kazimierz should be:

Jewish culture can never be revived as the natural manifestation of a long established community and has to be largely implanted. It could be argued that the conserved physical fabric of Kazimierz is sufficient memorial to a vanished culture and the implant of new cultural activities risk being seen only as visitor attractions which can distort our view of history. So far this anticipated problem has been avoided and the new Jewish Cultural Centre appears to serve well as a memorial, a place to learn about the traditions of the past and centre for scholarship. Respect for the Jewish past would be further strengthened by appropriate use for all synagogues and reverent policies for the preservation of Szeroka and more interpretation of the Jewish past [...] While the cultural character of the quarter's past is of outstanding interest, the cultural character of the existing community and how it can be developed should at least be given equal consideration. [1994:43]

¹⁶ There are some exceptions—Warsaw's Ghetto Heroes monument among them—a very peculiar institution in the People's Republic to say the least, given the fact that no similar monument was permitted for the general Warsaw

Uprising.

¹⁷ The head of the Jewish Community in Kraków, Tadeusz Jakubowicz is quoted as saying that in 1997 the community had 180 members, but has fallen to 150 in 1998. The majority are over 70 years old and are dying off. Konstanty Gebert, in an interview for an ESSRC of the UK project, declared,

No, no. In Kraków it is truly tragic. Kraków in general is an old city, demographically speaking. There is practically no Jewish youth. It has shifted a bit with the Lauder Foundation at the Isaac Synagogue, but it really is forced, done by force. Because it is a demographic end, because there are no Jews. In Wrocław there is a rather large group, a two-hundred-person Jewish youth. Jews under the age of 40. In Gdańsk they have mustered together and rebuilt the community themselves. It's true that in Warsaw the situation is the best and for many reasons.

¹⁸ As Rabbi Sacha Pecarić of the Lauder Foundation observes,

It's small, it's weak, it's mostly old people and then there is the group of younger people who also have interest. But also there is this empty place created by Communism, so you're not just dealing with the Holocaust, you're dealing with Communism. For forty or fifty years there was nothing. To say that you were a Jew meant that you would be condemned forever, burned in Hell. [Rabagliati 1998:21]

¹⁹ Indeed, one local observer compared the two cities in the following eloquent way,

There are no Jews in Warsaw, either, but then Warsaw has no Jewish houses and streets. Jewish Warsaw does not exist. In Cracow, the very buildings exist, the doorways, the streets, the synagogues, the schools—destroyed, derelict, gutted, with the jagged wounds showing where houses have been pulled down—but it is the same Jewish Cracow, the same city. Jewish tourists drive through Cracow on the way to Auschwitz, and what they see in Kazimierz provides them with a sort of prologue to their visit to the death camp. [Henryk Halkowski cited in Gruber 1994:185–186]

²⁰ From an interview conducted for an unpublished project report, “The Role of Polish Cultural Elites in Shaping Polish-Jewish Relations after 1989.” The project, *Ethnic Identity in Europe after Auschwitz: The Case of Polish-Jewish Relations*, was supported by a grant from the ESSRC of the UK in 1995.

²¹ This is an issue still in other Central European nations. The Czech Republic has just recently established a commission which is to either return property or repay the Jewish communities as well as private citizens, victims of the Holocaust. The matter is even more complicated there because some Jewish property was just legally transferred into private hands at the beginning of the 90s. Furthermore, in the Czech Republic, Christian churches (including the Roman Catholic) are also still attempting to recover their property (T. Maćkowiak, 1998:14).

²² Indeed, the once prestigious Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (Jewish

Historical Institute) is the only institution in Poland with enough documents to create such a museum. Interestingly, though also centered in Warsaw, a collecting project was recently undertaken to gather photographs of Jewish subjects but owned by Poles. The resulting collection formed a superb exhibition and book (Gołda Tencer 1996) and the curators are searching for an appropriate museum setting in Warsaw to house the material. And even Warsaw's synagogue attendees are a step up from those who frequent the Remuh Synagogue in Cracow. Helena Datner-Śpiewak—daughter of the Białystok Ghetto Uprising fighter, Szymon and the mother of Ruta Datner who was featured on the cover of Ian Baruma's article, and a well respected sociologist has just been elected head of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland (a first for a woman). But it is this continuity, and lack of a generation skip, that makes Warsaw's Jewish community more alive and creative than that of Kraków.

²³ According to the area's master plan, in 1988 Kazimierz's population numbered some 17,800 persons or about 2.4% of the total population of Krakow. Unlike the city itself, however, Kazimierz's population has been in decline—the maximum of 31,900 dates to 1931. Population density in the area is very high despite the lack of high-rise buildings, and the economically active proportion of its residents is relatively low. Indeed, the district has a large concentration of people living on pensions. Employment is dominated by manufacturing and construction with the service sector growing at a much slower pace than elsewhere in Krakow. The housing stock is old with 70% of apartments built before World War I and 94% built prior to World War II. Fewer residences have private bathrooms compared to Krakow and the district has the lowest rate of central heating in the city with 15% (Kazimierz Action Plan 1994:23)

²⁴ One should not bypass the issue of Polish Christian-owned property which was also nationalized (particularly private businesses such as pharmacies), or which was perfidiously taken over by city or state governments. For instance, in Kraków especially, as part of its punishment for its anticommunist stance, private apartment building owners were divested of the right to choose their tenants or set rents (B. Sonik 1997:5).

²⁵ Both the politically and socially involved staff of The Local Office and the city planners lament that there is little coordination between official bodies and that there are few legal instruments which could serve to approve, regulate, and control new projects and also bring them to actual closure.

²⁶ Orthodox Jewish groups have in the past also avoided the restaurant because of doubts about the *mashgiakh* and certifying rabbi. Just recently a new *mashgiakh* has been hired and new certificates hung.

²⁷ Nissenbaum first began designing the building in the late 1980s, before the revolution. At the time, the attitude of local and state authorities was, "if someone wants to invest and has the money, don't create obstacles." Now, governmental and local offices examine projects more closely. Still, there are cases such as the empty lot behind the Old Synagogue which The Kazimierz Local Office (Biuro Lokalne Kazimierz) was hoping to develop, but which was "homesteaded" away to serve as a fenced parking lot. Local residents preferred to have parking (capitalism has brought more cars into the narrow streets of old Kraków), and the Local Office lost the battle in court.

²⁸ Among the thirty-odd persons recognized this year was Zbigniew Romaniuk from Brańsk who is the central figure in Marian Marzyński's controversial film, *Shtetl*.

²⁹ Each year the festival organizers make sure that both New World and Old World groups are represented. The program further unites Jews with other minorities—“Muzsikas”'s members learned klezmer music from Roma who had played with Jewish klezmer musicians before the war—Michael Alpert of “Brave Old World” played with a Polish highlander group during the open-air closing concert in 1996 (Halkowski 1997:1), various ensembles whose members include historical adversaries—Arabs and Israelis, Gentile and Jews, Germans and Russians, and, at the SRO opening concert, the American cantor, Joseph Malovany was accompanied by the local Sinfonietta Cracovia during the fifth, and by the Moscow Choir of Cantors during the sixth festival.

³⁰ Most of the Jewish-associated institutions, centers, and even the Festival are, above all, run by non-Jews. The Judaism Museum in the Old Synagogue and the Jewish Cultural Center are no exceptions. Robert Gądek, the Program Director there, notes how, “American tourists expect an ethnic institution,” and display various shocked reactions to find ethnic Polish Christians working at a Jewish center—sometimes they demand to speak to some Jew, sometimes they are shocked that a Pole “who imbibed anti-Semitism as an infant” is propagating Jewish culture (A. Sabor, R. Kawęski:1998:16). Situated beyond Kazimierz itself, the faculty and staff of the Jagiellonian University's Research Center on the History and Culture of Jews are also not-Jewish. One of the authors worked as a Research Assistant at the center and the prevailing assumption among not only Jews, but also Polish Christians, was that the faculty and staff were of Jewish descent.

³¹ In recent interviews he has made his non-Jewish origins more explicit.

³² Makuch's interest in Judaism and Jewish culture was an intellectual fascination at the start, resulting from coincidental contact with a renowned geologist in his hometown who also happened to be knowledgeable about Judaism—the rest, Makuch would say was a simple consequence of one thing leading to another.

³³ In fact, many Polish non-Jews involved in Jewish cultural activity in Kraków wear beards which, in pre-war Poland, was most often associated with Jews.

³⁴ More than one person has come up to Makuch to say, “This was my world. I was raised beside this music, this cuisine; these smells raised me, surrounded me at school, on the street, everywhere” (Sabor and Kawęski 1998:15).

³⁵ This year since the Tempel Synagogue is in renovation, the opening concert was held in the historic courtyard of the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Maius—the university's oldest building and located on what was the Medieval city's Ulica Żydowska, “Jewish Street”.

³⁶ See the liner notes to the CD, “Muzsikás: The Lost Jewish Music of Transylvania.” Hannibal Records, 1993.

³⁷ One of the most etched and embedded Jewish images in Polish literature is that of Jankiel. Interestingly, the Polish bard who penned it, Adam Mickiewicz, was matrilineally descended from a Frankist family; Jankiel in modern times

appears on the label of a kosher vodka.

³⁸ When the concert is over, Henryk offers a ride back to Szeroka Street where we'll try to catch the end of Kozłowski's klezmer concert in Cafe Ariel's annex. The driver is a young Polish photographer who recently published a book of photographs of Kazimierz. The man is doing rather well, and the car he owns is a comfortable Honda Accord. The cassette storage bin beneath the tape deck is filled with klezmer music. Henryk explains later that he first met him while photographing in Kazimierz. He apparently developed an interest in klezmer music, but aside from that he knows nothing about anything Jewish.

³⁹ Apart from the Lauder Foundation's summer camp in Rychwald in the southwestern mountains, classes and events at Lauder Foundation centers across Poland are fairly well attended by young self-identified Jews.

⁴⁰ And unless its economy takes off and becomes equivalent to those of the West, it will be without the influx of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, for example, that have revived German Jewry.

⁴¹ New ones, such as Alina Cała's (1995), and older ones, such as Alexander Hertz's (1988, English edition) on Judaism and Jews. The Jewish Historical Museum situated in the Old Synagogue at the end of Szeroka in Kazimierz, opened in the late 1970s, has seen the numbers of its visitors rise slowly and then escalate to over 50,000 people annually (half of them foreigners), making it the most profitable branch of the Historical Museum.

⁴² Since the mid 1980s the Polish non-Jewish population has displayed an increasing and broad interest in Judaica. This has been expressed not only by a growing list of publications and musical recordings, but, perhaps more importantly, in education. A Kraków high school teacher, Janina Górz, designed a Jewish Studies program at Lyceum VIII, leading a class which graduated in 1997; the Multiculturalism program class she is currently guiding includes Jewish studies. Since 1989, more elements of Jewish history in and outside of Poland have been appearing in textbooks, and special courses have been organized for teachers by ŻIH in Warsaw and the Auschwitz Museum in Oświęcim. In Kraków, a conference was held two years ago for teachers on "How to teach about the Holocaust" and the Jagiellonian University has just established the first Holocaust Studies program in Poland. And appropriately enough, in Kazimierz itself and on Szeroka Street next to the good Ariel, but set back and passed unnoticed, the Wolf Popper Synagogue now houses the Old Town Youth Cultural Center. Here historians and artists have been working with upper-level elementary and secondary-school pupils in a specially formed Youth Section on the Study of the History and Culture of Jews. Under its auspices, the youth Center organizes extensive (four-hour) educational tours of Kazimierz, lecture series on Jewish artists, and travelogues on Israel.

⁴³ Jakubowicz states that while he does not know any twenty-year old who wants to be a Jew, "on the other hand, it's starting to become a minor snobism" to be one (A. Sabor, R. Kawęski, 1998:14).

⁴⁴ Rabbi Sacha Pecarić works mostly with "people with Jewish roots," many of whom are not halakhic Jews and most of whom are young people. He sees his role as not only creating religious programs for them but also creating a bridge between the older members of the continuing religious community and these

younger, newer members coming into the fold (Rabagliati 1998:20). Henryk Halkowski feels the Jewish Cultural Festival is another bridge. Drawing in Polish Jews from all over the nation, it "contributes to the development and integration of the Jewish community in our country" (Halkowski 1997:1).

⁴⁵ The same is true for any group of people anywhere in the world. Commercial enterprises as well as the enduring physical traces of ethnic communal life are sources of considerable comfort and pleasure for ethnics and fellow citizens alike. Appearances aside, the constructed nature of these enterprises is an increasingly common aspect of the contemporary world: Fifteen years ago rue des Rosiers in Paris did not look nearly as Jewish as it does today. Nor did Orchard Street in New York have any Jewish theme cafes. So why not have them on Szeroka St in Kraków? Why assume that because this is taking place in Poland that it necessarily has some anti-Semitic undertones or that Catholic Poles are unable to appreciate the sensuality of difference just as we do entering any ethnic establishment?

⁴⁶ In contrast, perhaps, to the Roma who are the Other from without, living at the margins of society.

⁴⁷ Witness, for example, the recent revelations about Swiss bankers, the Swiss government during the Holocaust, or Austrian and Dutch art holdings, and French real estate, and, of course, the monuments that are currently being constructed to commemorate the Shoah (see Young 1993). One wonders where the voices of moral outrage have been these past fifty years.

⁴⁸ A phenomenon that plays itself out in a similar way in countless individual localities in Poland where Jews have married into the families that helped to rescue them during the Nazi occupation.

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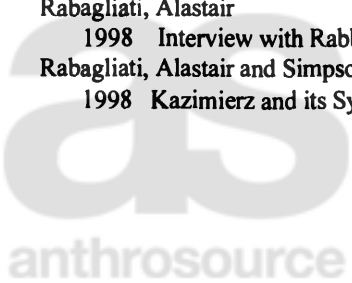
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