

Volume 3 (June 2017) ***'Identity and Transition'***

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FROM THE EDITOR'S LAPTOP



Welcome to Volume 3 of *The Independent Scholar* (TIS), the peer-reviewed open-access online journal of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS). This issue focuses on identity, whether ethnic, religious, national, vocational or any other classificatory scheme or matrices of factors. How do people identify themselves? Under what circumstances? How do they juggle multiple identities? How does this kind of juggling interact with the negotiation or organization of roles? These papers take us on a journey round the world as Romanian author Monica Colt examines immigrant identity in (albeit highly autobiographical) fiction by a Canadian author; Efrat Sadras-Ron, looks through the keyhole of a secular Jewish educational institution in her native Israel; and Amanda Haste, a British musician and musicologist living

and working in France, examines professional identity among musicians working outside their home culture. This number also contains "Clichés Revisited: Poland's 1949 Łagów Composers' Conference," coincidentally by another musicologist, Cindy Bylander, which was placed for the Elizabeth Eisenstein Prize in 2016 and is here reprinted by kind permission of the author and her publisher.

As well as peer-reviewed papers TIS features book reviews, and a "Back in the Day" reprint from the archives of the non-peer-reviewed predecessor of TIS, *TIS Quarterly*. In order to ensure effective overseeing of the review process, the editorial board is currently being expanded to accommodate submissions in a wide range of disciplines, and we are delighted to welcome Tula Connell (labor history), Laurence Schiller (Africa & Middle East) and Tim Woolley (theology and spirituality) to the TIS team. In addition to the editors, Catherine Prowse is responsible for the formatting and proof reading, while Tula Connell and NCIS webmaster Ed Wall are responsible for getting – and keeping – TIS on line. The editors would like to extend their grateful thanks to our anonymous peer reviewers, whose diligent, perceptive and insightful work ensures the high quality of papers presented in TIS.

SHELBY SHAPIRO, General Editor

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CONTRIBUTORS

Valerie Abrahamsen holds the Doctor of Theology degree in New Testament and Early Christian Origins from Harvard Divinity School. She has conducted extensive research in New Testament archaeology, early church history and women's studies, both in the U.S. and Europe, and has published two books and over three dozen peer-reviewed articles in New Testament archaeology and women's studies. She is also engaged in activism around the root causes of poverty and draws on these interests with her weekly blog at <http://www.wisdomwordspfp.org>

Cindy Bylander is a musicologist whose primary interest is in Polish music and the Polish cultural scene in general since 1945. She has authored a book on Krzysztof Penderecki as well as articles in journals such as *Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny*, *Musical Quarterly*, *Polish Review*, *Musical Opinion*, *Polish Music Since 1945*, *Musicology Today*, *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde*, and *Polish Music Journal*. As adjunct faculty she has taught Music History at Columba, Ohio and at Ohio State University.

Monica Colt gained Masters degrees in Canadian Studies and in Educational Management and Institutional Communication (Bucharest) following which she took up a research internship in Germany at Ernst Moritz Arndt Universität in Greifswald. In 2011 she gained her PhD on the "Dynamics of Multiculturalism" from the University of Bucharest, and now teaches English in Bucharest while pursuing her research as an independent scholar.

Amanda J. Haste, a British independent scholar who holds a PhD in Musicology from Bristol University (GB) is now based in the south of France, where she is adjunct faculty at Aix-Marseille University, teaching courses in translation; English as a musicological language; and English as a research tool, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. She has published widely on music, language and identity. <http://ncis.academia.edu/AmandaHaste>

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IDENTITY REDEFINITION THROUGH THE OVERCOMING OF THE CULTURAL BOUNDARIES IN M.G. VASSANJI'S *THE MAGIC OF SAIDA*

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Abstract

*In this paper I examine some of the ways in which an immigrant's identity construction is achieved by the acceptance and overcoming of the challenges brought about by the process of adjustment to new socio-cultural contexts. To capture the relevant aspects of this process, I explore the work of a Canadian author, M.G.Vassanji, whose works of fiction explore the identity trajectory of his immigrant characters. In order to highlight the character's intense feelings that modify their attitudes and behavior, I have chosen M.G.Vassanji's 2012 novel *The Magic of Saida*, in which we follow the identity trajectory of the Indian-African Kamal Punja, now a successful doctor in Edmonton, Canada, as he returns to Kilwa, the African city of his childhood, where he hopes to find answers to harrowing questions and to be reunited with his childhood sweetheart, the eponymous Saida.*

Our sense of identity centers on self-knowledge, based not only the question "Who am I?" but also the process of self mirroring, a reference to what Charles Horton Cooley, the well-known American sociologist, named the "looking-glass self" in the process of symbolic interaction: whether I am what I think I am, what the others think I am or what I imagine the others think about me (136-173). Any discussion of identity also foregrounds the role of the "significant others," generally our immediate circle of family and friends, and "generalized others" or the common social view (Mead, 160-161; 90). In Vassanji's story, post-1950s African society, itself colored by strong post-colonial cultural influences, primarily British and German, but also Indian, Arabic and African, provides the context in which

Kamal's route to self-definition starts along the coordinates of a "space of questions" (Taylor 34). In this journey, as in Vassanji's other works, we can identify Canada as a point of mature reflection, and East Africa as a point of both departure and return to the familiar "webs of interlocution" (36) that give the character a unique opportunity to develop a deep understanding both of his own self and of the Other.

Keywords: *socio-cultural identity; post-colonial; Canadian literature.*

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I will try to show that the immigrant character's identity construction is achieved through accepting and overcoming the challenges which come from the process of adjustment to new socio-cultural contexts. I propose an original way of highlighting the depth of this process based on a literary text. The immigrants' quest for identity and their adaptation to a new culture is a recurrent theme in literature, also approached by other South-Asian writers, such as: V. S. Naipaul (the novels *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds*), Neil Bissoondath (*A Casual Brutality*, *The Worlds Within Her*), Bharati Mukherjee (the novel *Jasmine* and the short story "A Wife's Story" in *The Middleman, and Other Stories*), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (the novel *Queen of Dreams* and "Meeting Mrinal" the story in the collection *Arranged Marriage*) or Ruth Praver Jhabvala's (*In Search of Love and Beauty*, *Poet and Dancer*), to enumerate a few. In *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity,*

and the Languages of American Literature, editor Werner Sollors gathered together 28 essays by different scholars on various aspects of transnationalism, acculturation, and identity.

In my analysis I will explore M. G. Vassanji's 2012 novel *The Magic of Saida* which illustrates the depth of identity creation correlated with the topic of immigration. As in Vassanji's other fictional works, in this novel, the Canadian multicultural context with its "rise and fall" in the accommodation of diversity (Kymlicka 32) shows the role of the values underlying cultural groups following immigration. This occurs on a number of levels: ethnic, social, historical and political. All these layers are fundamentally necessary to portray Kamal Punja's experience, in order to understand the dynamics of his inner changes in the East-African and Canadian cultural contexts and to highlight how his quest for self definition and self knowledge is constructed through the references to a defining community (Taylor 36). The issue of immigration as an ever-present phenomenon in today's world connects the topic to the author of the book and brings along the question: who is the author?

WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

M. G. Vassanji is a prestigious Canadian author with a multicultural background whose personal story started in Kenya, where he was born. His personal imprint, correlated with his emotional experience, has certainly influenced his fiction. Thus, the source of the author's creativity connects in a unique way its cultural roots with the adoptive country and the transcultural experience of this author whose works are well received in Canada and beyond. His literary works have been widely translated from English, not only into Swahili and Hindi, but also into Japanese, French, Portuguese, Spanish and recently Romanian. Vassanji writes about Canadian East African Indians whose traditions and values he knows from the inside. In most of his novels and short stories, the readers can witness fascinating immigrant fictional stories of strong characters in vivid socio-cultural contexts which overlap the geography of Toronto, Don Mills, Dar es Salaam or Kilwa. Thus, the Canadian (*No New Land*), the American (*Amriika*) or even the Indian (*The Assassin's Song*¹) settings of his fictional works form a bridge between the North-American space and Tanzania, Kenya or India.

¹ *The Assassin's Song* was shortlisted for the Giller Prize, the Governor General's Prize, the Writers Trust Award and India's Crossword Prize.

The author's academic studies in the USA, followed by his decision to make Canada his home, enlarge the author's perspective with the experience of these societies in which the politics of multiculturalism shape the historical multiculturalism. Likewise, the tonality of his works, that of an author formed in the years of Kenya's and Tanzania's independence, is reflected by his attention to the historical detail without taking sides, to the characters' interdependencies and to their role in the reconstruction of the past. The author's closeness to Tanzania and India is illustrated by his non-fiction, evoking Vassanji's familiar cultural spaces and the subtle change of the people in the historical perspective. This is why his latest book, *And Home Was Kariakoo: a Memoir of East Africa* (Doubleday Canada, 2014) should be read correlated with Vassanji's other non-fictional book *A Place Within: Rediscovering India*, published in 2008, which chronologically marks a starting point in the author's return to the homeland of his ancestors. As Vassanji explains referring to India, the land of his ancestors, "I grew up in Dar es Salaam, on the coast of East Africa; the memory and the sight of that city, of that continent, evoke in me a deep nostalgia and love of place. India, on the other hand, seemed to do something to the soul; give it a certain ease, a sense of homecoming, quite another kind of nostalgia" (Vassanji, 2008: X). Vassanji's important contribution in highlighting the cultural differences and the adaptation effort can be found in almost all his literary work. *The Magic of Saida* is Vassanji's seventh novel in which the past and the present intermingle along the main character's complex path to self-knowledge.

THE MAGIC OF SAIDA – THE STORY LINE

The novel offers the mediated perspective of the third person narrative intermingling the past and the present through the voice of Martin Kigoma, "an African publisher" who is seeking stories "from Oyster Bay to Kariakoo" (Vassanji, 2013: 2) and who appears fascinated by the intriguing story of a man with African appearance, Indian name and Canadian dwelling place (4), Kamal Punja. Kigoma's narration unfolds Kamal Punja's life story as told from his hospital bed. Beginning a long time before, in the African city of Kilwa, the story is outlined against a magic space as the first question Kamal asks Martin in "his sickbed" (4) is: "Do you believe in magic?" (4) With a twinge of envy, the narrator also introduces the readers to what at first sight seems to be the model of success in Canada for an Indian East African: an emigrated doctor who is the co-owner of three successful clinics, a husband, and father of two talented children.

Kamal Punja returns to his childhood city of Kilwa (Tanzania) after 35 years of absence, and in doing so connects with his memories and rekindles his deep feelings for the eponymous Saida, his teenage love to whom he had promised to return. The analysis of Kamal's identity formation reveals the conflicting aspects of his ethnic belonging and his cultural heritage in different life stages: his childhood in Kilwa, his adolescent years in Dar es Salaam, his academic studies in Uganda and then his adult life in Canada. We learn of his still unanswered questions concerning his Indian father, whom he never knew, and about his Tanzanian mother, of whom he lost track after her decision to send him to his father's family, far from the people and the places in Kilwa, to which he felt attached; these have become strong incentives for Kamal's return to Africa.

The story unveils the inner turmoil and the tensions of an assertive man still bearing the traces of unconfirmed promises and painful wounds. Back in Africa, in the eyes of his peers he is both a winner and an Indian-African who had the chance of gaining success as a doctor in Canadian society. The character's complexity reveals that distinctive beauty of the human nature which is enriched by all experiences, whether good or bad. His attempts to acquire knowledge about his ancestry and about Saida are endowed with multiple meanings, which are gradually revealed. The reader learns about the cultural roots that ground Kamal in Africa, and comes to understand their values and meanings. Starting from the title and the very first chapters, the author's proposition is that by the end of the novel the reader will have seen magic from a totally different angle.

On a personal level, every reader can identify with the intensity of the feelings portrayed, but the literary text goes beyond this level. In order to position Kamal's identity struggle more accurately, Vassanji's literary strategy is to develop three intertwined plans. The central perspective is the story of the person who is born in Kilwa; the larger perspective accentuates the role of their ethnic group; and the third level is the Canadian multicultural perspective. In this way the author aims to answer most of the identity-related questions, thus closing the cycle of the character's identity as it becomes accessible to different categories of audience.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Self-knowledge brings to the fore not only the question "Who am I?" but also self-mirroring, a reference to what Charles Horton Cooley, the well-known American sociologist, named the "looking-glass" self in the process of symbolic interaction, whether I am what I think I am, what the others think I am or what I imagine

the others think about me (136-173). The interrogative dimension multiplied each time by the responses to the questions deepens the topic, mainly because it is situated in a horizon rather than a fixed position. The unfolding plans of the novel reveal Kamal's gradual construction of the self according to Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass," emphasizing the way Kamal perceives himself; the self reflected in the others' mirror in Martin Kigoma's retelling of the story; and the readers' interpretation of Africa, or what they imagine that others think of Africa. Vassanji's writing technique not only gives us fascinating insights into this process of self-definition, but also brings to life a fictional world that is full of color and shadows, in which the magic connects the people and the places; the traditions reflect a changing reality enriching the characters' choices, and the past and the present intermingle in a narrative that is strongly evocative.

The analytical framing of the character's identity formation brings into question the role of what George Herbert Mead, one of the founders of socio-psychology, refers to as "significant others" (160-161) and "generalized others."² (90). In Mead's terms, Kamal's family members and a few representative people from Kamal's neighborhood could be identified as "significant others" because they play an important role in the character's shaping of his sense of self in the early stages of his identity formation. The attitudes and opinions of Kamal's mother, his childhood friend Saida, and the poet Mzee Omari all feature as reflections in a mirror resulting in the molding of his self-awareness and self-image.

Kamal's social circle, his relations with the local community members and how he deals with the community's values, attitudes and expectations are indicative of Mead's "generalized others" in the process of identity formation. By applying Mead's concept of "generalized others," my analysis follows the character's socialization in the cultural groups of origin which contributes to attaining self-knowledge from the perspective of the "other,"³ i.e. what one is not, by

² Mead's definition of the "generalized other" emphasizes the role of the common social view: "The very universality and impersonality of thought and reason is from the behavioristic standpoint the result of the given individual taking the attitudes of others toward himself, and of his finally crystallizing all these particular attitudes into a single attitude or standpoint which may be called that of the "generalized other." (90)

³ Bill Ashcroft defines "the other" in his book *Post-Colonial Studies: the Key Concepts*. "In general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others

projecting the group's common expectations about his actions or even thoughts:

The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. (138)

This process of self formation and self integration has a dual dimension, according to which the "me" (the social dimension of the self) aims to counter the effects of the "I," where the "I" "is the response of the individual to the attitude of the community as this appears in his own experience. [...] The "I" appears in our experience in memory." (196)

At the same time, the author's references to the geography and history of Tanzania or Canada acquire relevance in the readers' understanding of the characters' development. This realistic streak of the novel becomes evident in the author's outlining of Tanzanian and Canadian socio-cultural contexts.

Therefore, I find it relevant to make a few references to the findings of the World Values Survey⁴ and Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions which offer an image of the tendencies in Canada and Tanzania based on the sociological interpretations. It is important to underline that their models apply to cultural groups, as they are meant to describe, and not necessarily to explain, a type of individual behavior. Thus, through a complex interdisciplinary analysis of peoples' values and beliefs in their dynamic at the global level, we can point out the differences between these two cultural contexts.

According to World Values Survey, this dynamic is seen along two dimensions: traditional values versus secular-rational values; and survival values versus self-expression values.⁵ Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel's cultural

is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world" (154-155). The definition (and the distinction) of the other/ Other in psychoanalytical, post-colonial and sociological theories cover a large range of aspects. In this paper the term is correlated with Mead's sociological use of the concept.

⁴ The World Values Survey (www.worldvaluessurvey.org) is a global network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life, led by an international team of scholars, with the WVS association and secretariat headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden.

⁵ Self expression values emphasize increasing tolerance towards foreigners. Traditional values emphasize the role of religion, family ties, and respect for authority. Survival values are correlated with safety and reduced tolerance.

maps⁶ show that Canada, among other countries, has a tendency towards self-expression values whereas Tanzania and other African countries are oriented towards traditional values and survival values. Likewise, in Hofstede's vision (and his collaborators) the cultural profile of a country can be described through six dimensions. Each cultural dimension has a score between 0 and 100 used for comparison between two or more countries or cultures. For Canada and Tanzania this cultural profile shows four important differences:

Individualism vs. collectivism (is expressed on a scale where 0 defines a collective society and 100 an individualistic society). There is a clear difference between the two countries along this cultural dimension. Canada has a score of 80 which indicates a tendency towards individualism, emphasizing individual rights. By comparison, Tanzania has a score of 25 which indicates a collectivist profile, showing that individual behavior is influenced by the position in the group and people's tendency to judge other people based on their belonging to the cultural groups (110). This difference is very important in terms of self-image related to the difference between "I" and "We."

Power Distance (expressed on a scale where 0 defines a society with a large distribution of power and 100 a society where power is very concentrated and not distributed). This dimension is indicative of how these two countries deal with inequality. Canada has a score of 39 on this dimension, indicating a high distribution of power marked by the interdependence between the members and focused on the value of egalitarianism. By comparison, Tanzania's score of 70 describes a society where hierarchy is accepted without justification, which is specific to societies where the power is highly concentrated (74).

Indulgence (This dimension analyzes how a society deals with free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun, where 0 defines a society with a repressive style and 100, a society with an indulgent style). On this dimension, Canadian culture with its score of 68 is oriented towards indulgence with a positive attitude regarding its members' desire of enjoying life. By comparison, Tanzania has a low score (38) showing a more controlled style, defining a more restraining way to educate children for socialization (297).

Masculinity (where a 0 score describes a feminine society in which the important values are caring for others and quality of life and 100 indicates a masculine

⁶ World Values Survey.

society driven by competition, achievement and success). Tanzania, with a score of 40, is described as a rather feminine society, which tends to value cooperation and modesty. By comparison, Canada has a score of 52 on this dimension, which describes a moderate masculine society (157).

The other two cultural dimensions show an almost similar positioning of Canadian and Tanzanian cultures:

Uncertainty Avoidance (where 0 means not avoiding and 100 represents a strong avoidance of uncertainty). This cultural dimension analyzes the way in which the members of a culture attempt to overcome the threat of the unknown by creating certain beliefs and institutions. The scores on this cultural dimension show that Canada (48) and Tanzania (50) tend to accept the uncertainty of the future and the unknown events (209).

Long-Term Orientation (a 0 score means short term orientation and a 100 score represents a long-term orientation). Comparing the result on this cultural dimension we can identify an almost similar positioning of Canada (36) and Tanzania (34), specific to normative societies which show a great respect for traditions (255).

KAMAL PUNJA'S ROOTS

The narrative line of Kamal's life and identity story starts in Kilwa, the African town "whose recorded history and culture go back a thousand year and more" (Vassanji, 2013: 6). In this meaningful space, the archetypal seeds shaping Kamal's identity are closely related to a mosaic of cultural factors deriving from the African and Indian tradition and the influence of the German and British colonists who are deftly presented by the narrator with reference to the local groups' reaction of resistance (164). Thus, Kamal's childhood and teenage formation have become entangled in a complex network of cultural influences. As a boy, Kamal was called a "half-breed" (6) or "an Asian African. A *chotara*" (22), "a mixed blood" (54) because he was not only the son of Hamida, an African woman, but also of Amin Punja, an Indian doctor who left his family when Kamal was four. The perception of the difference is suggestive of the ethnic groups' clear delineation within the community, whose texture itself was a blend of cultures and ethnic groups, the role of the phrase "half breed" being mainly of emphasizing the difference.

His mother, Bi Hamida, and the local community offer him the opportunity to know his roots through the stories and the references to his ancestry, which are often presented selectively or shrouded in mystery. Thus, Kamal's tendency to explore and test new directions of life has been nourished by his mother and their community's semi-transparency with regard to his

cultural roots and to his parentage. Every now and then Hamida's stories disclose certain family aspects which balance the interplay between young Kamal's sense of self and his image of the family and community of origin. His mother maintains a hesitant silence about her family which seems to be related to the yet persistent feeling of "pain and humiliation" (28) of being traded as slaves in the not too distant past. She feels more confident when she speaks of Kamal's father: "Your father came from seafaring merchants," Mama said proudly. *Masultani, mabalazi, waarabu!* They were sultans, ambassadors, and nobility, and he did not have the heart to call her exaggeration. Perhaps it was her eyes that betrayed her, that quick glance, that shot away." (26) Hamida wants her son to take pride of his paternal ancestry, telling him the story of his great-grandfather's success, the Gujarati Indian Punja Devraj who came to Zanzibar as a trader during Colonial times (129) and then married and came to Kilwa (26) where he had the reputation of "a lion of a man" (38) as Mzee Omari, the local poet called him.

In the child's imagination, the series of the local heroes is completed by the special image of the poet Mzee Omari, a spiritual leader who writes a "poetic history [...] in Arabic letters, in the Swahili language" on Syrian paper, bought from an Indian shop, with pen from Europe and the ink from India (10). Kamal's close relation to Mzee Omari becomes a point of reference in his identity development through the emotional connections that the child develops with Kilwa's oral culture, the heroes, the symbols and the rituals (Hofstede 10) revealing the fascinating history of the place through Omari's poems, recited in the open air (Vassanji, 2013: 9), at the old people's gatherings where even the tragic end of the spiritual leader acquires a symbolic power: he paid for betraying his community ideals when he collaborated with the German colonists. In Mzee Omari's epic verses, young Kamal finds certain answers to his questions about his family and about the surrounding world, and these answers offer him a new perspective on his social relations, which come to enrich his mother's stories with other stories of success, either Indian African or Arab African, and even the recent stories of the courage of the African slaves. Mzee Omari's symbolic value in the community confirms the values the child attributes to his great-grandfather's image, as seen from the community's different angles.

KAMAL PUNJA'S TRANSCULTURAL LIFE JOURNEY

In Vassanji's text, Kamal's life story is closely intertwined with other fascinating stories about Tanzania and its people. The narration brings to life fictional people and

events so that the readers understand and empathize with the characters whose experience may seem remote in terms of space, time and culture. Kamal's story is unique but it also speaks of universal feelings.

Young Kamal's movement from one cultural group to another enriches him with new experiences and perspectives on life based on the others' views of Kamal or his insights on the others. If the pressure of the cultural differences in Tanzania came from the society to the individual, with the family acting like a buffer, in Canada the society does not seem to put pressure on the cultural differences, but they can be still be found within the family which itself becomes a pressuring factor. This is a persistent element of Kamal's journey and the motivating factor of his return in Kilwa also correlate with the trajectory of his evolution: coming to terms with his past.

In Canada, ethnicity seems irrelevant for Kamal's social integration and his successful career as a doctor, through which he gains respect and recognition. However, his attempt to learn more about his descent from African slaves, and to share this knowledge with his family, is discouraged by his wife:

In spite of his evident African features, there was no way he could make his wife, Shamim, acknowledge his Matumbi origins. "Why do you want to bring this hypothetical connection into our lives?" she asked bitterly. The very thought caused her anguish, and he could well be guilty of mental cruelty. "The kids have enough handicaps as it is without your Matumbi complex." (49-50)

Thus, the increase of the cultural distance within Kamal's family leads to the deterioration of the relations between family members and Kamal's loneliness, as he needs to understand his ancestry and to continue his personal search.

In Kilwa, back in the years of Kamal's childhood, the perception of his double affiliation is reflected by the others' use of the label "half-breed" (27). At the social level, this racially biased perception is historically grounded as a marker of difference, and relates to the role of the various ethnic groups in the city's colonial and post-colonial history. In the collective mentality his parents' belonging to different ethnic groups was seen as a specific contribution to the local history and was reflected by different value judgments. Under the circumstances, Kamal's mother assumes the buffer role, protecting Kamal from the effects of discrimination. The narrator's references to Kamal's childhood balance the local angles of perception depending on the cultural

groups in which the child develops his social relations. Therefore, in Kamal's adolescence in Dar es Salaam, his school friends call him "*golo*, meaning servant or slave" (195), which has a stronger perception of discrimination and more significant effects on Kamal who, with his uncle's support, reacts against this labeling. Properly educated by his African mother, with the blessing of his forefathers resting in the African soil, this gifted descendant of an Indian doctor and an African single mother has gradually become clearly situated in the community structure whose main attribute of cohesion is respect.

It is important to underline the context which is the trigger of this emotional balance between Kamal's identity and his cultural heritage. Kamal Punja rediscovers all these challenges in a moment of mature reflection occasioned by his son's attitude of rejecting the African roots of his heritage. The character's overcoming of the constraints caused by the cultural differences in African society is contrasted with his Canadian status, as the narrator shows that the family's only connection to Africa is the money that Shamim, his wife, sends to the victims of AIDS and "utter rejection by his private-school son. And Kamal had not brought up the slave ancestors yet." (29) In this context, the correlation with his childhood becomes inevitable, reinforcing his emotional sacrifice: what he had to give up in order to become the successful Canadian doctor, the good husband and father.

The theme of Kamal's childhood and adolescence in Tanzania and his studies in Uganda complete the image of his identity creation with relevant moments which explain the path of his becoming. An important step in defining his identity correlates to the day when Kamal's mother sends him to live with his Uncle Jaffu Ali Punja in Dar es Salaam, to "become an Indian" (182) or "a *Shamsi*. A singing Indian" (193) as his father wanted for his son:

"You are now a *Mhindi*, an Indian, and will live like a *Mhindi*. You will go to a good school and you will learn. Your father wanted that. Forget about the past. It is over." *Yamekwisha*. The boy started to cry and was taken upstairs to the family flat. (186)

This decision shows Kamal that the absence of his father does not exclude his authority. Even if, at first, the "African" Kamal resists the changes, he seems to become integrated into the Indian community of Dar es Salaam As Kamal's life unfolds, he obtains the necessary confirmations of his becoming by overcoming the constraints imposed by the African socio-cultural context, which accentuates the rational side of his life

perspective before leaving for his medical studies in Kampala, Uganda. Later, his separation from Africa (in the context of an army coup led by General Idi Amin who ordered all Asians to leave Uganda) also means his separation from Saida, to whom he passionately promises to return.

From the inner frame of reference, in his childhood young Kamal perceives himself as an African who cannot speak Gujarati and does not eat Indian food. However, spending his teenage years in his father's family gives Kamal an awareness that "he could never get the African out of him" although he was sent to "claim his father's heritage" (28) which shows that the most difficult cultural limitation that he has to challenge is the attempt of his self-discovery. As one of his mother's "riddles" suggests: "That is because you are an Indian who is more African than all these Africans walking about. And a better Indian than all these *Banyan*⁷ shopkeepers. Remember that." (36) The way in which the adult Kamal interprets differences is suggested by a scene in which he is looking at the only family photo, which seems to give him an understanding of the reasons for his father's leaving: "There was that picture, the telltale snapshot that he left behind, evidence of his fall from Indian respectability – having gone local, fathered a half-breed, an outcaste whom he could never call his own back in Gujarat" (27). The narration highlights Kamal's inner contradictions which gradually develop into his decision to return for Saida.

The entire emotional charge of this space, in which history and politics, intertwined with poetry and the dark spectrum of the magic rituals, amplify the importance of the cultural elements, contributes to young Kamal's identity creation. The cultural space that puts in contact Tanzanian society, the still vivid legacy of the German and the British colonists, the African, the Arab and the Indian traditions, leave their indelible imprint on the adolescent who finds himself in love with his childhood companion Saida.

The intense role of tradition and its amplitude in community life is a means of preserving the cultural identity, of making the difference and is also the ethnic groups' defense reactions, rooted in the colonial history of the place. At the same time, the narrator seems to feel the need to explain the context, emphasizing that, in the collective mindset, tradition functions as a safety mechanism. Back in Kilwa, Kamal talks about his childhood and adolescence without taking sides; he asks questions but does not try to identify anybody's guilt. The narrator's tonality does not show rebellious accents.

The perspective is that of a character who has achieved peace with himself, because Kamal tells his story to Martin Kigoma after meeting Saida. At the same time, Kamal's achieving of self knowledge through narration underlines what Paul Ricoeur, the French philosopher, calls "this remarkable aspect about knowledge of the self as being an interpretation" (8) as "the self does not know itself immediately, but only indirectly through a detour of cultural signs of all sorts which, articulate the self in symbolic mediations" (80). Kamal has reached the moment when his inner balance and his potential of going further allow him to go beyond the emotional anchors that have influenced his rational perspective.

THE LINGUISTIC FACTOR

Throughout the narration the linguistic factor emerges as a means through which Kamal manages to familiarize, to know and to understand the realities and the cultural symbols: learning English in Kilwa; then Kutchi, the language of Gujarat which he spoke in Dar es Salaam; learning a little Arabic from Saida or teaching her a little Swahili. From all this linguistic activity he develops the intercultural connections necessary in this hybrid space, also catalysing the character's construction of identity beyond the essential categories to the "spaces in-between" (Bhabha 2). Thus, from an early age Kamal witnesses the power of the words in giving the reality a new perspective: "When a verse was recited, it had received birth. It was a bead to join a rosary of beads, its four lines artfully constructed in that unforgettable rhyme, *aaab*, to please the ear and the mind, and also to instruct" (Vassanji, 2013: 39). The language of these verses is living proof of the hybridity of the place: "They would all repeat the prayer with him in a chorus, then get up to go, the more knowledgeable among them ready to discuss the fine points of prosody: the subtlety of a rhyme, how the Arabic pronunciation lengthened a vowel, how a German word had saved the integrity of a line, and so on." (39)

Likewise, the character's familiarity with other languages is the mental instrumentation for his direct access to a plurality of cultures and the preparatory basis of his adjustment to Canadian society. At the same time, such openness repositions Kamal in the relations to his Tanzanian social group who perceive it as a distancing. For instance, Kamal's mother is unable to speak English and Bi Kultum, Saida's mother, fears Kamal may share too much knowledge to Saida and make her less prepared as a future Muslim wife. The trespass of cultural borders through access to knowledge is to be found later in the novel in Martin Kigoma's words:

⁷ *Indian trader*.

But this man before me demonstrated how complicated a real life could be in our times, how painful the idea of belonging. I myself am to send my youngest away for his education, and I worry, will he return? As what? (90)

THE DECISION TO RETURN TO KILWA

In retrospect, the mature Kamal Punja remembers the attraction exerted by this space which "He had left half a lifetime ago, more; he had made a life elsewhere, planted roots there; and still Kilwa haunted." (Vassanji, 2013: 13) He asks the type of who-am-I and what-I-might-have-been questions which motivate his return to Africa, not just to find Saida, but also to cover his inner unrest.

The return to Saida and his roots has taken thirty-five years in which, as the narrator points out, Kamal's secure and comfortable life in Canada, his career and fulfilled family life temporarily overshadow the feelings of guilt, his identity crisis, and ultimately his decision to go back to Kilwa. His state of inner turmoil is also related to the passing of time and to the fact that he cannot share it with his family members, creating a rift between Kamal and his wife and children.

Kamal's journey back to his roots is revealed through a complex architecture organized around the question "What if?" which also echoes in Martin Kigoma's words:

Would he have been better or worse off than what he became? A well-known and affluent doctor in Edmonton: the thought came to my mind just as he asked, "What do you think?" "I don't know, really. One of those hypothetical questions, isn't it?" The instinct was to say he would have been better off back home and rooted among his people, but on the other hand, more rationally, surely the opportunities he had had could not be so easily dismissed. (89-90)

Kamal's understanding of the cultural values, which he initially perceived as limiting his belonging to a cultural group, leaves a long-lasting trail in his memory, as shown by his behavior towards the people he meets during his return to Kilwa.

MEETING SAIDA

Kamal's reunion with Saida, his beloved, becomes a narrative turning point in the novel which bears complex meanings. The gravity of the event, which brings the character closer to his death, is depicted in a scene of magic realism in which the shock increases the perception of the cultural differences. Kamal's

confrontation of his past into the realms of magic means his complete surrender to overwhelming occult forces. If, in his African childhood, the magic played a role in the regulation of the social relations, the prevention of dangers, the explanation of the unknown, the inspiration or the healing, in the episode of meeting Saida it acquires a dark dimension with a deep symbolic meaning. Thus, in this magic space in which Kamal meets a transfigured Saida who "looked the same as he had last seen her, many years ago" (295), the character's inner journey brings to the surface feelings of a strong redemptive charge which are possible only through their common experiencing of the event, not a mere talk about the past: "'And I went mad,' Saida said to Kamal. And Kamal screamed. 'Don't tell me more, Saida, don't tell me that!'" (298)

The narration gives the reader the opportunity of witnessing a harsh representation of the distances that the cultural differences may impose. Although it does not exempt African society from guilt, this carefully created image reveals no repulsion, just the cultural depths underlying the perception of differences:

Now he knew he was dying. He was outside under the wide-open sky, sitting in the grass; his shirt had been removed. His hands were tied behind his back tightly with a rope, and his feet at the ankles in front of him. He sat by himself, awkwardly, pain shooting through his limbs, not far from three or four people who were behind him, discussing him. An old croaking voice that sounded familiar was saying, "My heart says I cannot agree to go through with this, *Bwana* Ngozi. I prepared him for the rite and brought him here, therefore I have fulfilled my responsibility. But to go further and do away with him – here I balk, *bwana*." (299)

Freed from this burden of his past, enriched with a transcultural understanding (Welsch 194-213) of life, rooted in a multiplicity of cultures, Kamal feels ready to embark on a new life stage in which he rationally seeks answers concerning his parents and his self which he now understands from a different angle.

I think that analyzing the consequences of the meeting between Kamal and Saida in Kamal's identity definition would definitely benefit from a detour about the feminine role in the novel. Vassanji's exploration of the masculine and feminine polarization favors the masculine dimension. Gradually, the feminine characters reveal themselves to the reader through the process of mediation. The mediation is achieved through Kamal's

or Kigoma's narration, remembrance or even through magic.

Going further in analyzing the masculine characters, we cannot but observe that the social representations about the feminine characters foreground them as the holders of tradition. Being aware of the social hierarchies, the feminine characters seem to accept them without overtly contesting the distribution of the roles in Tanzanian postcolonial society. Saida, Bi Kulthum and Bi Hamida express themselves mainly in family life. They also show loyalty to the community's tradition which attributes them certain roles and prevents them from freely developing their potential. There are several instances in the novel suggesting the social power of tradition in the feminine characters' development: Saida is married against her will to a local sorcerer Mzee Hamisi and Bi Hamida accepts the marriage proposal, which she has long postponed, going to live in her new husband's home. Likewise, Saida's tragedy, echoing the rigors of Tanzanian traditional society, amplifies the tension and the emotional gravity of the challenges that Kamal is faced with.

HOW DOES THE RETURN AFFECT HIS ATTITUDE?

The validation of his cultural roots is found in the way in which Kamal's return to Africa changes his attitude. In Canada, Kamal has gathered information about Kilwa and started a "treasure hunt" (29) that was not approved by his wife and children:

And so in the interest of peace in the household, he shelved his ambition to write a family history and restricted his hobby to the confines of his private study, far from everyone else, obsessing over bits of information like a stamp collector over postmarks and perforations. (29)

Kamal has bought a book of "the memoirs of a district commissioner who spent time in Kilwa and Kama", searched the internet or talked to the people about what showed that "Kilwa had an actual existence outside of his memory." (29)

However, his return engages him beyond knowledge to the depth of the heart. For him Africa is first and foremost about the strong emotional connections with his family life and his community ties, about his first love, but it is also about his perception of his mother's betrayal and the unsolved mystery of his father's leaving.

When Kamal chooses to immerse himself in Tanzanian society, the return to his ancestry and cultural heritage heighten the self-knowledge and understanding that enable him to go on with his life on Canadian land. Reactivating the strong emotional components through

the direct experience with the people he knew in childhood, Kamal goes back to what he holds dear, but in the end he is not tempted to stay and opts to return to Canada. His direct experiences with the people who have long haunted his daydreaming bring about a new perspective on life.

He has demonstrated to himself that he has not betrayed his roots. In his confrontation with the shadow of the past memories, he has confirmed that everything has a sense: a sense that can be understood only when you know your roots. The starting point for Kamal's inner journey was Africa, but the magic of Africa must be felt at the deepest cultural level in order to be understood, otherwise all the values fade like in a colorless sketch.

CONCLUSIONS

We can draw several conclusions about the way in which this Canadian Indian-African character experiences the process of identity redefinition in multiple multicultural contexts, which can themselves inform us about an immigrant's process of identity construction.

His overcoming of the linguistic boundaries, the access to and understanding of the values and the beliefs supporting the other's behavior, enable Kamal to create his own cultural lens. His values gradually become enriched with new meanings and strengthen the connections to the Indian cultural group which become more familiar, and explain Kamal's uncertain ethnic positioning of his identity, his oscillation between the African heritage which he wholeheartedly embraces and the Indian heritage he gradually discovers.

Knowledge seems to be Kamal's path in his attempt to overcome the challenges in becoming a successful Canadian doctor from a Tanzanian "half-breed." Vassanji allows us to explore the way in which, throughout the process of identity redefinition, the character experiences and understands the volatility of the African multicultural context as the context which Kamal accepts mainly because he knows the roots of every interpretation. In the pursuit of his happiness, Kamal does not become a rebel as long as he finds a stable ground in the scientific field of medicine. He follows a rational path of understanding the emotional pressure coming from society. This way, the cultural roots of African society, a society which cannot fulfill his expectations, become an important support which helps him to understand in order to adapt.

Reading from the perspective of identity construction, the answer is slowly revealed through the choices made by Kamal on several levels: between the African and Indian cultural influences, Kamal finds his own path to

becoming a Canadian who can truly understand and capitalize on both cultures; between the scientific accuracy and the shadow of mysticism, Kamal does not hesitate to confront himself with his biggest fears; between the model of betrayal (evidenced by the examples of his father or the poet Mzee Omari) and the promise made to Saida, he finds a way to return to his family.

Maybe there are no black or white decisions in this process, but there is a confirmation of the way in which identity construction is achieved through the acceptance and overcoming of the challenges brought about by the process of adjustment to new socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, the maturity of this novel does not come from the gravity of the events, but from Kamal's emotional sacrifices. Likewise, the dramatic streak highlights the intensity of his redefinition and inner reconstruction for becoming prepared to overcome the next challenge. At the end of his journey, Kamal has managed to bridge his present life with his buried past.

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[RE]CLAIMING SECULAR JEWISH SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH BINA

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Abstract

The clashing perspectives over Jewishness in Israel, on the one side with an Orthodox minority that is a major political player, and on the other with a secular majority that is politically fragmented, is a cause of constant tension in Israeli Jewish society. In Israel, Jewishness with its religious overtones overlaps with national sentiments. This overlap is one aspect of the Israeli secular story; the Orthodox monopoly over the state's Jewish character is another.

The Jewish renewal movement in Israel looks to bridge and re-establish a reciprocal relationship, between the national and religious aspects of Israeliness with Hebrew culture based on the Hebrew Bible as the common core. The movement calls upon secular Jewish individuals to challenge the Jewish Orthodoxy monopoly in Israel. Furthermore, it is a call for secular individuals to reclaim ownership, and with it authority, over Jewish culture, recreating Jewishness in their own secular image. What exactly is that secular image of Jewishness, is in fact the subject of this paper.

Looking at BINA and its secular yeshiva in the south of Tel-Aviv, I introduce ethnographic data showing how secular sensibilities inform secular interpretations of classic Jewish cultural narratives such as Passover, and the Jewish marriage ritual. Focusing on three secular modes of operation - literacy, personalization and cultural activism - I bring examples of secular Jewish practice. In Israel's socio-political atmosphere orthodoxy has become equated with religiosity, leading many to believe that secularity and Jewishness are mutually exclusive. However, BINA proudly claims its in-between status, representing both the secular and Jewishness, not as oppositions but simply as different cultural frameworks coming together to form BINA, and in turn these frameworks are being reimagined through BINA, embodying the processual nature of culture.

Keywords: Jewishness, secularity, secular Jews, Israel, Jewish renewal, secular yeshiva

INTRODUCTION

At the age of twenty-two, while traveling in South America, I engaged in a conversation with a British fellow traveler, initiating the journey that led to this research. The conversation started by my traveling companion, as Tom asked me for clarification regarding a Jewish custom. I answered to the best of my knowledge, which was not extensive, considering I was secular and was brought up in a secular home. Yet, it was obvious that I should know the answer; after all I was (and am) Israeli, and for both of us Israeliness was a Jewish membership card. As the conversation went on, I asked Tom about his religion; he simply looked at me and said "I have no religion." I could not grasp it and pressed Tom for an answer, saying "well I know you no longer go to church but still what is your religion." Tom insisted that he has no religion. It was only then, at the age of twenty-two, that I realized that religious affiliation is not inherent to all.

With this revelation resonating in my head, I started questioning the axiom equating Israeliness with Jewishness. I was sure about the components of my Israeliness, but had no idea about what constituted my Jewishness other than being an Israeli. I do not believe in god, I do not uphold any of the religious ordinances and never did; the holidays for me are about family traditions and vacations, they have no religious meaning. And yet it was clear both to me, the insider, and to Tom, the outsider, that I am a Jew. Ten years later, as I was writing my M.A. thesis on Jewishness as ethnicity, I was able to put these thoughts into an anthropological vocabulary. As an Israeli, my national identification was intertwined with my religious identification, and as a young adult I did not realize that

the two are not synonymous. The following ten years leading to the present, have been about figuring out what kind of secular a person is, when her religious membership is included in her national identification.

Israel constitutes a unique case in the Jewish social sphere. Israel was created as a secular Jewish democracy. The majority of its Jewish citizenship self-identify as secular (The Central Bureau of Statistics 2015). In Israel, Jewishness with its religious overtones overlaps with national sentiments. As a result, one's participation in Jewishness is a national activity, thus forming a religiously-infused social atmosphere in which secular individuals act (Liebman and Yadgar 2009). For some scholars who adhere to the religious-secular dichotomy, this fact amounts to the view that secularity is impossible in Israel (Beit-Hallahmi 2007). However, in Israel the framing of Jewishness as a national identification allows people to cultivate their secularity without perceived conflicts. A Jewish Israeli does not need to consciously work out her participation in the Jewish collective, usually involving membership in a synagogue, since this is incorporated into her nationality (Gitelman 1998). Secular Jewish thought has a rich history going back to the 17th Century. It developed concurrently in North America, Europe and Israel. However, as part of both the Jewish and the secular traditions, secular Jewishness has no unifying framework, or infrastructure. Thus, each instance of this phenomenon is best understood as a specific historical occurrence. This paper deals with one such specific instance of this phenomenon, secular Jewishness in the Israeli Jewish sphere, channeled through BINA and its secular yeshiva.

The overlap in secular Israeli society between national and religious identifications is but one aspect of this secular story. The other influence that shapes the secular discourse in Israel is the Orthodox monopoly over the state's Jewish character. The Orthodox Jewish stream solidified in reaction to the reformation movement that took place in the early 19th century. In contrast to world Jewry, and as a result of historical developments relating to the establishment of the state of Israel, Orthodox Jews in Israel are a political power house. In the period leading to, and right after, the establishment of the state of Israel, it was agreed among Zionist leaders headed by Ben Gurion, that unity among the Jewish people is crucial to the creation and survival of Israel as a Jewish state. In the decades that followed, the promotion of Israel as the center of the Jewish world by advocates of Jewish nationality, continued to claim Jewish unity as crucial element (Ben-Rafael 2002). The cost of this Jewish unity was concessions to the religious segments

of the Jewish population in Israel, both social and political, in return for their acknowledgment, and later on participation, in the national state which was a secular enterprise at its core.

The social implication of the political sway religious factions have in Israel, is that Jewish Orthodoxy has a monopoly over Jewishness. In practice that means that Orthodox forms of Jewish practice are considered authentic, while other forms, namely Reform and Conservative Jewish practices, can at best be described as marginal in Israel's public sphere. Furthermore, Israel's Jewish Orthodoxy, backed by its political sway, has the power to name that which is Jewish. The most potent example for this issue is the contested control of the rabbinate, a branch of the government controlled by Orthodoxy Jewry, which oversees all Jewish life cycle events. Thus, de facto, the rabbinate has the state's authority to name who is a Jew and who is not. The Jewish orthodox monopoly in Israeli society can be best understood through Bourdieu's (1977) notion of doxa (the perceived 'natural' order): orthodox forms of Jewish practice are 'naturalized' as authentic, right, or correct while the range of possible alternatives is obscured by the presumed authenticity of the orthodox form.

The clashing perspectives over Jewishness in Israel, on one side an Orthodox minority that is a major political player, and on the other a secular majority that is politically fragmented, is a cause of constant tension in Israeli Jewish society. Every now and again tensions rise in relation to marriage, burial, immigration, to name the most acute issues. These tensions have been more than once dubbed by Israeli media as a war over the character of the Jewish state and its people. As a result of this socio-political war the term secular in Israel came to be a divisive term with overtones of antagonism towards Jewishness the religion, as it is formulated by Jewish Orthodoxy in Israel. It is so much so that during my preliminary mapping of the field, I found secular individuals and institutions who dropped the use of the word secular in fear that using the term would alienate anyone who is not an avowed secular.

The Israeli secular Jewish variety is a manifestation of Jewish nationalism, and was epitomized in the kibbutz culture. The pioneers who created the kibbutzim, settled the land of Israel, and where de facto the infrastructure on which, later, the young state was to be built on. They rebelled against the stereotypical religious Eastern-European Jews of the shtetl represented by their parents, and aspired to create a new kind of Jew inspired by secular modernism, and far removed from what they saw as religious backwardness. Throughout the first decades of the state, the kibbutzim were the

emblem of this secular Jewishness. The kibbutzim have gone through a period of restructuring at the turn of the millennium, following an ideological, demographic, and economic crisis which almost brought about their demise. The secular Jewish movement in Israel emerged out of the kibbutz movement, partly as a reaction to this crisis. BINA, although not directly affiliated with any kibbutz, operates within the kibbutz sphere. Bina's headquarters are located in the Kibbutz Movement's educational center – Seminar Efal. It is also part of Merhavim, a non-profit organization established by the Kibbutz Movement. Finally, BINA was an initiative of intellectuals and educators from the kibbutz movement among others, following the identity crisis that engulfed Israel after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing religious extremist in 1995.

As noted above, the Jewish renewal movement in Israel is firmly grounded in the secular kibbutz culture. In fact, it is reclamation of Jewishness by the third and fourth generations of kibbutz pioneers. It is a movement that looks to bridge, and re-establish a reciprocal relationship, between the national and religious aspects of Israeliness with Hebrew culture based on the Hebrew Bible as the common core. Using again Bourdieu's (1977) scheme of doxa-orthodox-heterodox, the Jewish renewal movement in Israel is an effort to bring heterodoxy (a range of choices) to the Jewish social discourse in Israel, and in doing so, marking the Jewish Orthodox variety as the doxa in Israel, as the form of Jewishness that is regarded as the 'natural order'.

As a secular reclamation of Jewish heritage, the Jewish renewal movement in Israel has called secular Jewish individuals to get back to the rich Jewish heritage that was left at the hands of Jewish Orthodoxy in the early days of the state. Furthermore, it is a call for secular individuals to reclaim ownership, and with it authority, over Jewish culture, recreating Jewishness in their own secular image. What exactly is that secular image of Jewishness, is in fact the subject of this paper.

BINA AND ITS SECULAR YESHIVA

Reading more and more about secularity, and its Israeli vernacular, I came to realize that although Israel's secular variety is unique in its position versus religion, it is also problematic. Liebman and Yadgar discussing the use of the Hebrew term for secular (hiloni Heb. חילוני) in Israeli discourse, state that "[t]he problem is that the term ... tells you what somebody is not, rather than what somebody is." (2009 151). That means that looking into the meaning of secularity in Israel will either be met with a simplistic 'non-religious' type of response; or discarded as a term which only serves to inspire conflict.

In the energetic field of Jewish renewal in Israel where, as I noted, many do their best to avoid the secular label, I found the Secular Yeshiva of Tel-Aviv operated by BINA – Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture. BINA has since changed its name and today goes by several slightly different titles: a. BINA Movement for Social Jewishness b. BINA Center for Social Jewishness c. BINA Educational and Learning Center for Jewish Identity and Israeli Culture. This is an emblem of BINA's secular dynamic approach to cultural production and its culture of negotiation and change, all part of its commitment to the secular.

As mentioned earlier, BINA was established in 1996 by educators from the kibbutz movement and elsewhere. BINA's operations encamp a vast array of social segments in Israel. Its main areas of operation are: the Secular Yeshivas network, Public Schools, Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Diaspora Jewry, and Beth Midrash for the general public. In all of these arenas BINA's goal is to influence the character of the state of Israel by inspiring future leaders and activists in Israel, through social activism grounded in secular Jewish philosophy.

The field of Jewish renewal in Israel has seen a major resurgence following the identity crisis brought about by the murder of PM Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. In the analysis and mapping of the Jewish renewal field in Israel (Midot.org.il 2013) approximately 180 organizations took part in the survey. Four percent of those organizations were categorized as top-level organization under which other organizations and enterprises operate. BINA is one of these top-level organizations. Its officials are interviewed in popular media as well as expert pieces (such as Midot's mapping of the field of Jewish renewal referenced above) as representatives and leaders of this trend. Corporation between the different organizations within the Jewish renewal movement is the standard (Midot.org.il 2013).

Organizations on all levels (from independent communities to top-level organizations such as BINA) share resources and cooperate in activities whenever their activities coincide either in theme, geography, demography or any combination of the three. It is worth noting that Reform Judaism although not a classic part of the Jewish renewal movement in Israel works together with organizations such as BINA, against Jewish Orthodoxy's monopoly over state policies, budgets, and Jewishness at large. No actual numbers about membership in specific organizations, or identification with any ideological stream could be found, and even estimations run from several thousand to several hundred thousand participants in the field. This lack of official knowledge of the field partly results from the fact

that these organizations are not recognized by the government as Jewish organizations deserving of allocation of budgets. Ignorance as to the extent of the phenomenon help maintaining the discourse marginality prevalent in its context. In other words, it help maintain Jewish Orthodoxy as doxa, as the 'natural' order in Israel.

In BINA's Secular Yeshiva I found a place that not only embraced its secular heritage with no apologetic maneuvers, such as utilizing terms like plural or humanistic in place of secular; but which also dared to couple itself with the Jewish religious term for seminary or school: 'Yeshiva'. This polemic title chosen by the decision makers at BINA was a clear statement as to BINA's cultural milieu. It proudly waved two flags of affiliation: the secular and the Jewish. Furthermore, BINA as an organization did not want to apologize or hide its secular background from Jewish aficionados in fear of being stereotyped as anti-religious; and on the same token saw no need to apologize to secular die-hards for its love and appreciation for the Jewish religion. Furthermore, in claiming the Yeshiva in its title, BINA's decision-makers were making a clear statement about the kind of studies they wanted to offer: studies at their institution would be in-depth exploration of Jewish texts, employing yeshiva study methods such as Havruta. Notwithstanding, these studies would be in a secular spirit using reasoning and critical thinking. Indeed, BINA's secular yeshiva is a co-ed institution, in which Jewish texts go through a process of innovative interpretation, at times in contradiction, disagreement, and negation of authority and/or authenticity of the text. Sources outside the realm of Jewishness are used to illuminate classic Jewish texts. In short, in the secular yeshiva's critical approach, nothing is taken for granted, all aspects of the text are investigated including, but not limited to, authorship, syntax, intertextual references, vocabulary, and historical context. Finally, the right of the individual to change and innovate, both the text and its interpretations is assumed.

A direct line can be traced from BINA's secular approach to Jewishness to the forefathers and founders of modern Jewish secularity. Spinoza is seen by many in the field as an originator of modern secular Jewish thought (Biale 2011). From Spinoza, through Buber, Freud, Ahad Ha'am, Bialik, and Brener (to name just a few) to the Kibbutz movement and finally BINA as a product of that movement, one can trace the development of the secular Jewish principles present in this paper: literacy, pluralism, personalization and cultural activism (Biale 2011, Kogel and Katz 1995). Individualism played a major role in the European Enlightenment followed by the Jewish European emancipation in the nineteenth

century. The tension between individualism and collectivism was an important force in breaking the Jewish Ghetto walls at that time (Eisen 1994). The struggle between the two has continued into, and within, the Kibbutz movement. Starting as a social institution based in collectivism, but founded by individualists rebelling against religious Jewishness, the Kibbutz movement as a collective institution, almost dissolved at the end of the 20th century under the pressure of individualism, only to redefine the balance between the two (Gil 1996). At BINA, its members continue to negotiate the relationship between collectivism and individualism.

Pluralism is an additional thread connecting the secular Jewish forefathers, through the Kibbutz movement to BINA. Pluralism and individualism are highly intertwined. It is pluralism that helps elevate the inherent tensions between individualism and collectivism, by acknowledging differences and rejecting conformism. It is the personalization of Jewish cultural artifacts (in the broadest sense of the term) like the bible and the holidays, stemming from individualism, which brings about cultural activism and creation. Such personalization was central to secular Jewishness from its precursor Spinoza, through its founders and forefathers, such as Buber and Freud, all the way to Ahad Ha'am and Bialik (Biale 2011). In its early days, secular Jewishness was preoccupied with the creation of the nation, and thus overlapping in many aspects but not all with Zionism, the Kibbutz movement being one of the most notable expressions of this overlap. By the start of 21st century the ethos of nation building has morphed into cultural and social activism within the Jewish state, the two declared goals of BINA as a Jewish Israeli educational institution.

Although the nature of a narrative that have passed through history is to obscure pluralism in favors of cohesion and political agendas, literacy is a crucial tool in revealing the layers of pluralism constructing such narratives, which have been edited again and again through the eras. Literacy is no less important for the process of cultural activism and creation, than is pluralism. No creation can be made of nothing; any cultural creation is based on culture that preceded it. Thus, there is a general agreement that secular Jewishness derives inspiration and meaning for its innovations from past traditions, traditions that are typically religious (Ackerman 2010, Biale 2011, Cohen 2005, Jobani 2008, Malkin 2000). It is the idea that the secular derives inspiration from the past rather than authority, that leaves an open space for creativity and innovation (Brinker 1989). It is the Jewish secular stance

that religious sources should be reinterpreted by individuals – personalized – and be filtered through the sieve of critical thought. Such a process of critical reinterpretation requires the ability to choose out of a massive body of Jewish heritage those sources from the past that are relevant to the cultural project taking place in the present (Cohen 2005). Literacy, and more specifically Jewish literacy, i.e. a knowledge of, and familiarity with, what is known as ‘the Jewish bookcase’ is fundamental to this process. However, literacy in itself is not sufficient for the creation of secular Jewish culture; in order for cultural conceptions to be marked as secular they require literacy, but they also need to pass through the filter of critical thinking and finally to be open to individual interpretation and adaptation.

The coupling of the term secular and yeshiva at BINA is a socio-political claim against Jewish Orthodox monopoly in Israel; governmental budgets to yeshivas defined as such by Jewish Orthodoxy are a constant contention point in Israeli politics. In calling their educational institution a yeshiva, the founders of BINA make a claim to the same privileges accorded to the religious yeshiva, albeit without much success as of yet. With such a clear statement made in its title I knew BINA is a place that is as deeply committed to secularity as it was to Jewishness. I knew that in such a place I would find a real engagement with the term secularity and with the question ‘what does it mean to be secular?’ in the context of Jewishness. I had found my research site.

At BINA I conducted 26 interviews: ten interviews with the After-the-Army program participants, ages ranging from 22 to 30 years old, and the other 16 interviews with BINA’s staff members, ages ranging from 30 to 73 years old. As part of the interview, interviewees were asked to self-identify. Of the 26 interviewees 12 identified simply as secular; three interviewees self-described as secular traditionalists meaning secular persons that practice Judaism to some level; two claimed religiosity, while two others simply identified as Jews; two refused definitions altogether. The other five responses included: atheist, agnostic, not religious, humble human being, and searching for god. These varied self-definitions are indicators of the diversity in Jewishness hosted by BINA.

The After-the-Army program targets young adults who completed their army services. In 2011, there were between 10 and 12 participants at any given time. Their ages ranged from 22 to 30 with the mean being 24. Their social background was diverse: two were recent arrivals to Israel, and those raised in Israel hailed from all parts of the state. Three had experienced kibbutz living.

Most of the data presented stems from participant-observations sessions conducted during the academic

year of 2011-2012 with the After-the-Army program. The program took place at the Secular Yeshiva in Tel-Aviv on Thursdays and Fridays, full days and half days, respectively. It included instructions in prayer, Zionism, Hebrew culture, Talmud, holidays and the Jewish life cycle. Its purpose was to promote an intimate and honest investigation of one’s own Jewish identification alongside Jewish literacy.

The following is an ethnographic presentation of BINA’s teaching methods and content, as they showcase core secular principles applied to Jewishness. Based on my field work at BINA in 2011-12, I present the reasoning behind the teaching and methods of BINA’s yeshiva as a secular Jewish institution, thus delineating the ways in which BINA as a Jewish educational institution exercises its secularity. BINA’s teachings, teaching content and methods promote the institution’s end goal of Jewish cultural sovereignty and the legitimization of the secular-Jewish practice. In order to attain such a goal, one must be able to participate in the discourse as an equal – hence the importance of literacy: one must be able to show that what one knows is in itself a product of debate and historical selection – hence the interest in multiplicity of voices over time and space. Consequently, absolute authenticity cannot be assigned to any cultural artifact – hence critical thinking, a non-deterministic strategy for decision-making fitting for secular dynamic multiplicity. In removing the idea of absolute truth, a door is opened to innovation and cultural production – emanating from activism and individualism – and eventually leading to legitimization and cultural sovereignty.

My starting point is the pursuit of literacy as an aspect of critical thinking, a core secular principle. The main purpose of literacy is the creation of proficiency that accelerates participation in discourse, which in turn enables cultural activism and production. I then move on to examine the concept of multiplicity. It is through literacy and critical thinking that layers accumulated in narratives through their transition in time and space are exposed, with multiple voices, disputes, and changes in the narrative being retrieved from the shadows of history in the process. Traditions as brought to us through rites, ceremonies and scriptures carry no unique status of truth or authenticity beyond those accorded to them as artifacts that have survived the forces of history (Anderson 1991 [1983], Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), and literacy aids in countering any such claims.

The recognition that traditions, as we know them, have not been entrusted to us in their present form from the beginning of time asserts these traditions as human products, subjective and grounded in social and

historical context. In turn, this human contingency serves as a precedent, first in challenging the accepted traditions of the present day, and ultimately for ushering in change. It is in this part of the secular process of social change and innovation that individualism and activism are brought to the fore. It is through individual creativity and its interaction with other individual creativities, that innovation comes about (Hill, et al. 2014). In the case of Israeli Jewish secularity, the guiding motivation for these innovations is cultural activism and ultimately its production in the here-and-now. That is, innovations are intended to reinforce the connection between the actors and their culture, as well as between the actors and their surroundings in the present. Thus, innovations are a form of individualization and personalization of collective traditions in the secular Jewish milieu.

I will now illustrate how these secular notions of *literacy, personalization, and cultural activism* are applied to BINA's teaching of the Passover dinner sacrament, the Jewish marriage ritual, and its celebration of Yom Kippur (the Jewish Day of Atonement).

LITERACY

"My personal process at BINA, that is highly significant...is that I speak secular Jewishness without confusion ... I can say on several different levels that I am Jewish without keeping the religious laws or encompassing the entire world [Jewish literary world]."

[Statement by Noa, of BINA's educational department.]

BINA puts Jewish cultural literacy as it is reflected from a secular Western background at the top of its priorities. BINA's officials have stated that they were concerned with providing their secular patrons the knowledge required for them to engage with their Jewish heritage in a meaningful way. Rami, a longtime educator at BINA, sees culture as based on practices, i.e. how people behave and what they do, which defines who they are much more than their beliefs or ideologies. For this reason Rami sees the knowledge of Jewish cultural sources, such as the canonical texts and the holidays, as extremely important for cultural activism, as they provide the necessary fountain of resources for participation in the culture. Indeed, Rami's courses, and other activities he heads in BINA, revolve around the holidays and life events – i.e. practices. His teachings are intended to give students maximum exposure to a single subject, i.e. to promote literacy and through it individualized cultural activism as an expression of sovereignty. In the context of the creation of cultural

meaning through literacy and intertextuality, Rami goes beyond the written text to explore the layers within the ceremonies, and demonstrates the ways in which meaning is derived through intertextuality and literacy. The following excerpts from Rami's teaching of Leyel Ha Seder (הסדר ליל), the ceremonial dinner celebrating Passover and the commemoration of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, provide a good illustration of this process.

Here is a discussion of the Matzah (the unleavened bread eaten during the week of Passover), its origins, its symbolism, and the traditions of which it forms a part. The first excerpt is Rami's discussion on the reasons for eating unleavened bread in Passover.

[Rami] – [...]his is not ... bread of haste [bread that did not have time to leaven], it is poverty bread. So we have another story [referring to Exodus 12:8] ... meaning we have three stories [explaining] why the matzah is eaten. ... one story is haste, second story is poverty bread which is told in *This is the Bread of Affliction* [passage from the Passover Haggadah] ... and the third reason is ... they were originally ordered to eat the matzah. Why do I note this? Because we now read in chapter 12 verses 1 to, (I do not remember what), that they were originally ordered to eat the [...] sacrifice [of Passover] over matzah and bitter herbs. [...]

[Or] – But where is [poverty] bread?

[Rami] – Poverty bread appears in the Haggadah, and it has another source ... but what I want to tell you is that first of all, all of this teaches us once again what we have seen several times: that a holiday always has more than one origin and that it is tradition upon tradition. It's a thing hanging down from a thing. What does the research say? The research presumes that the matzah is the ancient form of bread, meaning the matzah is the simplest form of bread.

The above is a discussion of the very origins of matzah and its association with the rites of Passover, through which students are able to gain access to the traditional knowledge alongside that knowledge which is part of the rational secular milieu.

The next excerpt is a discussion of the symbolism of the matzah as part of the Passover Seder. In this discussion we can see again the ways in which Rami relates the associations of the Seder ritual with general Jewish rites and their adaptation to Passover, exposing ceremonial intertextuality.

[Rami] – [T]here are three matzahs. Why three matzahs? [...] we know that in every holiday [dinner] two breads are served to the table. ... In each holiday and Sabbath a secondary bread is eaten, again in memory of the wandering of Egypt when it was forbidden to gather Manna [bread] and quail during Sabbath. And then they were given a double portion on Friday, and in commemoration of that we eat on Sabbath, [sic] serve to the table two loaves of bread. That is what is dictated to us regarding Passover only that in Passover there is an additional matter: a part of the matzah needs to be saved to the end [of dinner] and it would be called Afikoman [...] this is why three matzahs are served [to the table]...

We can see how a broader context, going beyond the Passover Seder, continues to inform the customs of the Seder, all of which bring meaning to an otherwise esoteric set of customs.

In the following, Rami recounts the transformations and reinterpretations a custom may go through – in this case the celebratory feast of Passover. In doing so Rami dispels the idea of a monolithic tradition, which by definition rejects change and adaptation.

[Rami] – Right, it seems this was the setup of eating at the family Passover [feast] or at the community Passover [feast] as it was, and of course, later in Passover [feast] at the Temple. But later when the temple was destroyed the sages regulated. When the Temple was destroyed the sages faced the question of what to do with the rituals that were customary at the Temple. [...] Then they went in two ways: some of the things they determined will no longer be done this way. [...] For example, sacrifices: no sacrifices. There is commemoration of sacrifice. There is exchange of sacrifice. By the way, our prayers are, for example, an exchange for sacrifice [...] we had Shaharit [morning] sacrifice – [now] there is Shaharit prayer. We had Minhah [afternoon] sacrifice – [now] there is Minhah prayer [...] That is, there is an exchange of the sacrifice, or an exchange of sacrament in a certain way. And there are things they said that even though it was customary to [do at] the Temple it will now be done everywhere, [...] meaning, some selections of fractions [of sacraments] they preserved as commemoration of the destruction of the Temple, [and some sacraments] were passed on to communities and

synagogues [...], and [to some] things they said no. [...] By the way, there were disputes around this. We know there were disputes; we know there were people that sacrificed on Passover after the destruction of the Temple. But at the end this method was not accepted

By showing the transformation of the sacrament as was required in the historical present, Rami relays to his students that making choices in their present is not breaking with tradition, as Orthodox elements would want them to believe; on the contrary, they are continuing tradition.

In my final excerpt from this study of Passover traditions I bring Rami's treatment of one specific rite involving the matzah at the Seder – the Afikoman. The word Afikoman has Greek roots and signifies 'after meal nosh' or dessert. It is the term used for the matzah that is hidden during the Seder. It is customary for the children to seek the Afikoman, and upon discovery, to be rewarded in a materialistic way, most commonly in the form of money. In the following excerpt Rami explains the development of this tradition and its meaning.

[Rami] – [T]he Afikoman needs to be saved to the end, which is why I break something from it. Now, what is the logic? [...] the goal of Passover is to tell to the kids, to tell them of tradition, so among other things, [the] sages thought how to keep the children interested in the story, and part of it is games. [...] [N]ow, we need to end the meal with eating this matzah because it concludes the Passover. Without it, so you understand [...] the meal is not over: meaning, if we went to Aunt Sarah [for Passover], we are there to this day if we did not eat the Afikoman. We are forbidden to leave the house. [T]he meal is not over. What do the kids do? [They] steal. Why [do they] steal? So we will redeem [the Afikoman], because we are willing to pay all the money in the world to be freed from Aunt Sarah. O.K.?

[Neharah laughs]

[Rami] – Why are you laughing?

[Neharah] – Because I lost the connection

[Rami] – The Aunt Sarah connection

[Neharah] – Why do they steal?

[Rami] – Because they want to extort us, because it is clear to them that we have to eat this.

[Neharah] – Ahh, okay.

[Rami] – Because without this the Seder cannot

end 'then we and our children's childrens... captives at Aunty Sarah until this day

[Neharah] – so, like, a game to entertain them

[Rami] – So they steal, sure...they steal it so we will redeem it, then we will pay any amount, right? Point is that we could escape. Okay? Nice. What are we doing so they do not steal?

[Students] – Hide

[Rami] – Hide. You see how the game developed. So a game developed.

[. . .]

[Rami] – The Afikoman, meaning a stub of matzah I leave to the end [of dinner]. What name this stub of matzah has received? Afikoman, in the sense of snacks...between us, it is not a snack, but [...] a final course: the dessert [...that] ends the meal. Meaning, there is [...] similitude of things. Instead of eating a piece of the meat [from the sacrifice] as the last course, I eat a piece of matzah. This matzah I name Afikoman for the after-meal nosh that was forbidden to me. It is very confusing...

These last few excerpts have demonstrated the evolution and development of rites and traditions, while also exposing the layers of transformation and change undergone by these cultural narratives over the course of time. These multiple interpretations are brought to the present through cultural literacy, while multiplicity is the background for dynamism and flexibility. The two are required in order to adapt and adjust to current circumstances, and a multiplicity of voices provides us with a scope of available alternatives for an individual to employ in the interpretation process. As I have already stated, multiple approaches to the interpretive process are accessible through literacy, and this is an overarching practice and a learning objective at BINA.

The teachers I had the privilege of observing focused their efforts on 'reinflating' their subject matter from the two-dimensional 'flatness' of a written historical text. Words were therefore investigated for their full range of significance; editing questions and motivations were addressed, and alternative versions brought to the fore; finally, multiple interpretations of texts and customs both official and personal have been included as part of the discourse and consequently part of the cultural production process. Below I illustrate the way in which multiplicity is engaged in non-textual narratives. I show how literacy and through it multiplicity, both secular modes of operations, inform the study of the marriage

ceremony. Furthermore, it is an illustration of how cultural literacy and multiplicity facilitates cultural production and activism anchored in individualization.

PERSONALIZATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM

"[I want young adults at BINA to] feel that they can develop a personal dialog with their culture, not arbitrated, but an independent dialog...the more people will take part in this discourse [the Jewish character of the state of Israel] and will decide what [to include] and what not [to include] and how, [they] will not give the mandate to a specific group to make the decisions."

[Tova, coordinator of the 2011-12 After-the-Army program at BINA's Secular Yeshiva]

In his last class for the 2011-12 cohort of the After-the-Army program at BINA's secular Yeshiva, Rami chose to go over the Jewish marriage ceremony, its costumes, and its narratives. The following is Rami's discussion of the חופה (Huppah – the traditional Jewish wedding canopy). At the beginning of the excerpt you will find Rami's reasoning for his interest and teaching of the historical evolution of the wedding ceremony, a point he repeats several times during this final lesson.

[Rami] – [...] what I am offering people, and this is the point of the study, is to say 'you chose [bride] or you chose [groom] where to get married'. I want for you to at least be familiar with the traditional ceremony as a foundation to what you would want to do later. Now, what is our ceremony? A – We stand under the Huppah. We begin under the Huppah. Now the question is: what is the Huppah? It is a symbol

[Or] – A symbol for a home

[Rami] – A symbol for a home, a sort of first home we make for ourselves. Do you remember we read the Book of Ruth? And what did Ruth asked from Boaz? 'Spread over me your skirt', right? [...] Rashi explains 'you shall spread your skirt over your handmaid'. Rashi says 'the skirt of your garments to cover me with your cloak, and this is a term connoting marriage'

[Efrat] – Is this all that is needed?

[Rami] – No. But he says it is an expression: 'to spread a skirt' means to gather. [...] By the way, some bridegrooms get married with their prayer shawls, and one of the performative acts of the ceremony is to spread the prayer shawl over the

bride [...] There are a lot of questions [regarding] what is the reason for this Huppah. So, 1 – a symbol for a home: a sort of a prayer shawl, spreading of the prayer shawl. There is another [explanation ...]: in the book of Joel it is written 'let a bridegroom come out of his chamber and a bride from her canopy'. So first of all, according to the paralleled structure of bridegroom/bride-chamber/canopy, it seems that canopy is like a room, or like a tent. And so either it is the women's tent; or there is someone that actually says [... the Huppah is] David's Citadel: [...] a hiding place for the bride and the groom. Now, we know that in ancient times they had to be virgins when married. [...] in fact right after the Huppah, after the marriage, they [officials] would lead [the couple] to a room called the Union Room. Afterwards [the couple] needed to prove that [the bride] was a virgin. In fact he needed to sleep with her there [...] It may be that the Huppah, in this sense, is a symbol with multiple meanings. It is not clear exactly what its origin is, but it could be that in some way it reflects the immediate place of communion [...] even though it is a public [place]. [...] it is the way of symbols that they cling to some form [...] but with some distance from their original meaning; even when the original intent is preserved in another institute – the communion room.

We see here how Rami exposes the different layers from which one aspect of the marriage ceremony – the Huppah – is built.

Rami then subjects the כתובה (Ketubah – the traditional Jewish marriage contract) to the same process. He presents students with the original idea and purpose behind the Ketubah at the time of its creation, and then continues with recent developments to this practice, such as prenuptial agreements which are used both by religious and non-religious couples. The lesson is structured in line with the marriage ceremony, with Rami going over each part of the ceremony starting with the wedding canopy itself, then the different blessings, and ending with the breaking of the glass. At each stage, he asks the students to share what they know of, or assume, is the meaning of the element at hand. He then goes on to share what is known to him, detailing both the circumstances and motivations for the originating of a custom, and then the circumstances and motivations for its development. Rami does not restrict himself to any specific knowledge base in doing so, but introduces any piece

of relevant information, be it academic, religious, popular, in the past or from the present. Rami's intention in this lesson is to give his students, all young adults some of whom will no doubt get married in the coming years, an understanding of the meaning held by each part of the ceremony. He aspires to give his students sufficient knowledge so that when the time comes, they can critically adapt the ceremony to reflect the meaning *they* assign to marriage, and more specifically Jewish marriage. He hopes they will exercise their cultural sovereignty and let their individuality be expressed. Here is this sentiment in his own words:

[Rami] – [...] so this is why I [feel] good and comfortable studying the development of things, because I find in there both the argument and the change. In fact, it reveals a culture's face as I wish to perform my own culture in a certain way. So this is what I have tried to do with you [the students] at the end. [I wanted] to show you the development of things: to present to you, here and there, the versions of things so that later [when] you do your own, you will have a more familiar scope to deal with. [...] I hope you will make use of it. I am telling you: you will meet me in 5 years, in 6 years. Here and there we will say 'hello-hello', 'how are you doing', 'where are you at [...] I will not always remember the names. That is alright. You will say 'do you remember teaching us about Hanukah? So I do Hanukah like this and like that'. Then I [will] have satisfaction, I [will] have satisfaction.

The advantages gained by allowing, through literacy, for multiple voices to be heard echoed in history and in the present are summarized by Rami in the beginning of his lesson on the wedding ceremony:

[Rami] – [...] my starting point is that you have to lay clear tiers, which in my opinion are tradition. Meaning, [tradition] that tells some of the texts that are the holiday, some of the behaviors of the holiday, and of course its development. Now, why is [the holiday's] development important to me? The truth is, you do not have to know the development of a holiday to celebrate it. [...] the point is that if I know it [the holiday] a bit from its developmental aspect, then it says to me something about my culture in general. Seeing a culture that develops, changes, and reacts means that that is a part of my language about our own [the actors in the culture] status. **That we are a specific stage that is also obligated to make changes and adaptations in its own way. And**

furthermore, when we want to check what is appropriate, we are likely to find more than once that things we see as appropriate have already existed before. [Emphasis added]

Rami's teachings resonate with the claims of past and present secular Jewish intellectuals (Biale 2011, Cohen 2005, Malkin 2000), that there is no new without the old. Furthermore, without knowing what already exists, i.e. the past, we cannot create and innovate in the present. Multiplicity in stances and voices highlighted through literacy, thus provide the building blocks for cultural production and innovation.

The clearest example of personalization and cultural activism in secular Jewish practice can be observed in BINA's celebration of Yom Kippur (the Jewish Day of Atonement). The 2011 Yom Kippur celebration took place on one of Tel Aviv's roof tops, during which cultural production was marked as a goal at the very beginning of the celebration. Tova, who in addition to being the coordinator of the After-the-Army program at the time, was also leading holiday celebrations, opened the day with the following remarks:

[Tova] - The ceremony has two legs, one [rooted] in tradition, traditional classical ceremonies through which [we] connect to the broad [sense of] Jewishness (to the chain of generations and communities of Israel). The second leg [is in] renewal: a want to create a ceremony that is ours, that talks about our values, and discusses our issues in the land of Israel 2011. Integration [in the ceremony] of texts by modern poets, students of the Yeshiva, and staff of the Yeshiva ...

Tova continued by asking the audience to allow emotion to be part of the deed. She noted that the Secular Yeshiva deals with the learning that leads to deed, the facilitation of the connection between learning (thought) and deed (action) through emotion. She asked the audience to allow for feelings and through them, to take the journey from the head to the heart. Tova further emphasized that feelings can and should be experienced in two ways: on an individual level, each person within themselves; and through the togetherness of the community.

Cultural activism and the innovations that come along with it provide a means of engaging actors with their culture in the here-and-now. Indeed, this idea of engaging actors with their culture in the here-and-now sets the tone for BINA's public celebration of Yom Kippur. Alongside the traditional blessing of the Shabbat

candles which refers to god's command 'to kindle the light of the Holy Shabbat' there is an innovative text written by Arye Budenheimer (known as Buda), member of the founding cohort of BINA. The text includes eleven lines, of which the last four clearly state this idea of the connection between actors and their culture as it is embodied in innovation. Here is the relevant portion of the text:

Let us make the Shabbat in our likeness and in our image

And let us make peace with ourselves and with our fellow men

Let us give light in the lights

And let us come to the Shabbat with blessing

In these lines we see how the writer, in a secular fashion, positions the actors in the center of the stage, reflecting the action in the actors and thus creating the connection between the actors and the deed.

As the ceremony continued, another innovative text written by Noam Meinart, one of the secular yeshiva's former students, reflected this connection between actors, innovation and culture. The text, given in Figure 1, echoes, in its form and use of words, the traditional text it is meant to innovate. The original prayer is part of the Ashkenazi tradition, and specific to the person serving as the emissary of the community before the lord. The traditional text is intended to distinguish between the flawed personality of the man and the burdensome duty of representing the public before god; the reader will note that the innovative text connects the actors to the here-and-now directly and to the action of cultural production.

The traditional text is directed to god and asks god specifically to put aside the individual infractions of the community's emissary when considering mercy for the community who have sent him to represent them in front of god. The adopted text keeps the very general tone of the original text in that it wishes for a successful fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. However, the adapted text relegates all responsibility to the actors. Furthermore, it points to the here-and-now as the point of action, and then positions the individualization of the atonement process – i.e. innovative production – as a condition of its success, in a way that suits the actors to the point that the innovation will not only be suitable but will actually embody the actors.

Figure 1.

<p><i>Traditional text from the Ashkenazy Jewish prayer book</i></p> <p>Here I am the impoverished of deeds unsettled and frightened of fear from the one enthroned upon the praises of Israel. I came to stand and beg before you for your people Israel who have sent me. Even though I am not worthy and decent for that. Therefore I ask of you God of Abraham God of Issac and God of Jacob; Lord O Lord merciful and compassionate God, God of Israel, terrible horrible God; Please flourish my way which I walk and about to ask mercy for me and those who have sent me. And please do not incriminate them in my sins, and do not hold them accountable for my offences for a sinner and an outlaw I am. May it be your will Lord God of Abraham God of Isaac and God of Jacob.</p>	<p><i>Adopted text written by Noam Meinart, former student in the Yeshiva</i></p> <p>We, the impoverished of deed, unsettled and aroused from the splendor of the tradition of Israel, gather here in the secular yeshiva, to build and shape our path in the field of Jewishness. We shall try to realize ourselves and hold a Day of Atonement of our own. May our way that we walk be successful; that we shall not sin to the charge left to us by generations who have passed; that we shall not leave a poisoned fruit to the generations to come; that we shall know to hold our Day of Atonement in a way that suits us, in a way that will be us. Blessed you who say a prayer.</p>
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THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SECULAR JEWISH CULTURE

The state of constant change brought about organically, induces anxieties regarding change beyond recognition – i.e. change that will challenge the defining core to which fidelity is held. In relation to the cultural viability of Jewishness, Zvi Gitelman (2009) raises the issue of thick versus thin culture. In this argument, religious Jewish culture is presented as the thick variety – i.e. richer and more likely to sustain group cohesion in future generations – while secular Jewish culture is formulated as thin culture, in danger of becoming ‘symbolic ethnicity’ and losing its viability. Amos Oz (2005), one of Israel’s most well-known literary figures, points to a similar argument specific to the Israeli society, noting that Halakhic Jews conceive of secular Jews as empty vessels, and secular Jewishness as an ‘empty wagon’, compared to the perception of Halakhic Jewishness as a full wagon. The question then arises of whether the supposedly thin secular Jewish culture is capable of sustaining Jewish identification in generations to come. These doomsday proclamations are expressions of the anxiety of living in constant change, but not necessarily rational observations. Indeed doubt, dynamism, and multiplicity accentuate the risk of survival; however they do not necessarily accelerate the process of demise. In any case, any changes within the secular milieu evolve organically and thus are much less likely to lead to rupture and crisis: assigning the term secular with positive values and principles, such as literacy, individualism and cultural activism helps distance the secular from its presumed nihilism.

CONCLUSIONS

BINA’s secularity is not in opposition to religiosity at large. On the contrary, BINA as a product of secular Jewish thought and kibbutz culture was conceived out of the realization that the complete abandonment of Jewishness is unsustainable and detrimental to secular society in Israel. I have noted at the beginning, that the secular is concerned with heterodoxy- i.e. alternative choices. Bourdieu defines orthodoxy in its opposition to heterodoxy. He writes “Orthodoxy, straight, or rather *straightened*, opinion ... exists only in the objective relationship which opposes it to heterodoxy, that is, by reference to the choice – hairesis, [*sic*] heresy – made possible by the existence of *competing possibles* [*sic*] ... (Bourdieu 1977, 169)” Thus, BINA’s secularity, and the secular in general, challenges orthodoxies at large by promoting heterodoxy (multiplicity) as a lifestyle and mind set. BINA as a secular Jewish institute exists as an in-between; it constantly negotiates its own structure, purpose, and paths to fulfill its goals. However in all of these negotiations, its fidelity, as an institution and as a community, to the continuity of Jewishness is never in doubt.

In Israel’s socio-political atmosphere, Jewish Orthodoxy has become equated with Jewish religiosity, leading many to believe that secularity and Jewishness are mutually exclusive. However, BINA’s engagement with Jewish texts and Jewish holidays clearly marks BINA as Jewish. BINA is also clearly secular. Thus, engaging narrative critically, using multiplicity of voices as standard of operation. BINA is dynamic and flexibly changing. It proudly claims its in-between status,

representing both the secular and Jewishness, not as oppositions but simply as different cultural frameworks coming together to form BINA, and in turn these frameworks are being reimagined through BINA, embodying the processual nature of culture.

How then this apparent paradox of secular religiosity is to be explained? A clear distinction between religiosity and orthodoxy at large, is in order. The secular challenges religiosity only insofar as it is represented and monopolized by orthodox doctrines. Understanding secularity in the context of orthodoxies rather than religiosity sheds light on the alliance between nationalism and religion in their opposition to liberalism, both in Israel and beyond. The two camps underlying commonality contain the idea that their own way of thinking is singular in that it is 'true or correct'. The two aspire for their discourse to be 'naturalized' and unquestionable – i.e. to be doxa: the same doxa that once exposed as such, transforms into orthodoxy as the 'conscious systematization and express rationalization' of doxa (Bourdieu 1977). Nationality, with its clear boundaries, both physical and social, and institutionalized religion with its claim to the truth, offer no flexibility, leave no room for dynamism, and stifle individualism with demands for collective conformism. All of these arrest organic change as it emerges out of necessity in the here-and-now.

In the field of Jewish studies, secular identification is a long overdue model of Jewishness that breaks away from the primary understanding of Jewishness as a religious identification defined by the three B's – Belonging, Belief, and Behavior. Furthermore, as the secular is realigned as challenging orthodoxies rather than religiosity, secular Jewishness becomes a viable alternative. The co-existence of secularity and religiosity offers a more holistic approach suited to modern free thinkers, allowing them to actively influence and take part in Jewish continuity.

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CROSSING BOUNDARIES: ESTABLISHING AND COMMUNICATING A CROSS-CULTURAL MUSICIAN IDENTITY

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Abstract

Identity itself is now widely understood to be a complex issue, in which the individual can self-identify on several levels (meta-identities); these can be described as 'layers' of identity which are constructed "in interaction with others" (Joseph 80). In this paper the author, who self-identifies as a musician, explores the processes involved when musicians cross geographical – and thus linguistic – boundaries, and find themselves, if not struck dumb, then at least limited in the ways in which they can express the technical and interpretative aspects of music and thus establish an identity as a musician in their adoptive country. This research is rooted in the field of identity studies, and particularly Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," which provides a framework within which to discuss the sociolinguistic challenges to the musician in identifying with their own "imagined community," centered on shared affinities negotiated across multiple cultures. The discussion touches on the concepts of self-concept, self-esteem and self-identity within the framework of *identities in music* (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald) and examines the ways in which musicians renegotiate their identities as musicians across cultural boundaries.

Keywords: *Musician identity; musicianhood; imagined community; cross-cultural communication*

INTRODUCTION⁸

It is often said that music is an international language, and once a musician is actually playing, that is certainly the case. But while technical terms can be learnt, differences in cultural expectations or social constructs can lead to a misunderstanding of the individual musician, a devaluation of their professional status and, ultimately, to an identity crisis in which they doubt their own "deeply personal" musical identity (Georgii-Hemming, 2008).

This paper concerns a musician's self-identity,⁹ and the negotiating of that identity in a new linguistic environment. As the impetus for this research was my own experience, I should explain that for over twenty-five years I was a professional musician in Great Britain, earning my living performing, teaching, running workshops and creating and publishing musical arrangements, before going on to do a PhD in musicology. At that point, I moved to France, a country in which I knew the arts were valued and well funded. If I told anyone "*Je suis musicienne*" [I'm a musician] the response was "*chapeau bas*" [I take my hat off to you] and in our first week there I was delighted to find that, on applying for a supermarket loyalty card, the menu of occupations included '*artiste*' (that would never happen in Britain). But even with this ready cultural acceptance

⁸ I should like to express my thanks to the three anonymous reviewers whose insights over two rounds of revisions have made this a far better paper than it would otherwise have been.

⁹ Self-identity, or personal identity, is the way we think about ourselves and our relationship with the world.

of my *métier*, I found it hard to break into the music scene, and it seemed that this was because my musical identity didn't seem to fit local expectations. So, as is often the way with ex-pats, I fell into language teaching, and then translation, and I am now teaching English as a research tool for musicians and musicologists at a French university. But in my heart I am primarily a musician, so in this paper I examine the ways in which language plays a part in establishing this type of meta-identity within the context of a new musical – and social – culture.

The linguistic pitfalls of establishing oneself as a musician became evident as soon as I started playing with other musicians: I confidently expected that, in France, I would be able to articulate musical concepts easily, because if any national language could be considered the 'official' language of music (just as English is the *lingua franca* of aviation) it would be Italian. British musicians use many Italian terms to describe tempi (e.g. *adagio*, *allegro*) or playing style (*staccato*, *legato*, *leggiero* etc.) and I rather assumed that this would be the case across Europe, if not worldwide. Sadly, I quickly found that French musicians are far more inclined to translate these terms into French, so *staccato* becomes *détaché* while *legato* becomes *lié*; such attitudes were to prove indicative of an insular – and proudly francophone – musical culture, the ramifications of which I will be exploring later in this article.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is rooted in the field of identity studies, and particularly Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," which he originally applied to the "imagined political community" of a nation: "it is *imagined* because the fellow members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members [...] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6). This has since been applied to other "imagined communities," and I use the term here as a framework within which to discuss the sociolinguistic challenges to the musician in identifying with their own "imagined community," centered on shared affinities negotiated across multiple cultures rather than geographically anchored.

Identity itself is now widely understood to be a complex issue, in which the individual can self-identify on several levels (meta-identities) which could be described as 'layers' of identity as described by social psychologist Michael Hecht (1993) who leads us "toward an understanding of how our various 'layers' of identity are constructed in interaction with others" (Joseph 80). Self-

identity involves the binary processes of 'projection' (the presentation of self to others) and 'introjection' (a presentation of self to self), which specifies the need to "mobilize and hold onto a coherent image of 'who one is'" (DeNora 62). One can simultaneously hold several self-identities, which can be related to a domain such as music, linguistics, or other professional fields. Self-identity as a musician, however, seems to transcend such boundaries, as making music can be undertaken on a professional, semi-professional or amateur basis which does not necessarily relate to the standard of music-making involved. What concerns me here is not the standard of musicianship but how musicians self-identify, and the effect of this self-image on their self-concept and self-esteem.

In "What are musical identities, and why are they important?" Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald speak of the creation of *identities in music*, defined as "dealing with those aspects of musical identities that are socially defined within given cultural roles and musical categories" (2). Such identities may be defined on a general level ["I am a musician"] or, on a deeper level, as subjective sub-identities of this core 'musician' identity, by instrument, genre, discipline or activity – e.g. 'saxophonist,' 'opera singer,' 'jazz musician,' 'composer,' 'music teacher,' 'musicologist' etc., – but all would ultimately style themselves 'musician' as a core identity. A musician's self-image ("I am a musician") implies active involvement in music-making, and as such can be disrupted when that activity is interrupted, necessitating a "regaining of self-esteem" by redirecting "the focus of identity away from the group affiliation and toward the self as an individual" (Oakland 2011; 2013). However, even working musicians can suffer disruption of this self-image due to miscommunication in an intercultural environment (Sarangi 1994) and often resort to using discursive means (Brown 2017; Brown, Reveles & Kelly 2005) of reconstructing and renegotiating their musician identity, both in the moment and across the years.

This work also draws on the wide literature on language and identity, e.g. Edwards (2013) and Joseph (2004). Edwards sums up the crucial role of language as a means of cultural communication by highlighting the distinction between the communicative and symbolic functions of language, which lie "in a differentiation between language in its ordinarily understood sense as an instrumental tool, and language as an emblem of groupness, a symbol, a psychosocial rallying point" (Edwards 55). For the musician, a lack of cultural communication can define them as 'other', resulting in exclusion from this 'groupness' and contaminating their own sense of identity as a musician. In terms of musical

communication, one must consider the translation of meaning, and the translation loss encountered during the process by which a musician's identity is received and interpreted by others. As this is in large part due to the musicians' ability to communicate among themselves about the music – the very aspect of their shared experience – I refer to musicologist Albert Wellmer's concepts of the "speech background" and "speech relation" of music "in the wider sense of a connection between musical experience and possibilities, or indeed necessities of lingual articulation, of speaking about music" (Wellmer, 100). Wellmer's focus on "lingual articulation – namely, interpreting, analyzing, describing and speaking critically *about* music" (100) highlights the need for musicians to have a shared language, and this is the starting point for this paper.

METHODOLOGY

This research presents a very personal account of my own experience, but I have widened the focus by collecting qualitative and quantitative data from other musicians (n=56) by means of an on-line survey. Initial conversations with colleagues, and students past and present,¹⁰ followed by a Skype interview with another researcher working on musician identity, helped clarify the criteria for an on-line survey, which was then formulated on SurveyMonkey and run for a six-week period in April-May 2017. The survey was circulated by two means: firstly, a link to the survey was sent by email invitation to personal contacts in the field, and secondly, a link to the survey was posted on selected Facebook groups.¹¹ A professional body (Incorporated Society of Musicians) and a learned society (Royal Musical Association) were also asked to post the link on their own websites.

While some of these groups (e.g. the Incorporated Society of Musicians) involve predominantly classical musicians, most of the groups were chosen because their members/followers are musicians working in a more fluid environment. They comprise musicians of many nationalities and many musical genres, working at all levels from national orchestras to jazz ensembles to musical theatre to cruise ships and lounge bars. This target group tend to play with several ensembles

¹⁰ I have two distinct groups of students – those of all ages to whom I teach music, and those university music students to whom I teach English as a communicative or research tool – so I have qualified these throughout the text as 'music student' or 'English/music student' respectively.

¹¹ A list of these on-line groups is given in Appendix 1. Survey data are given in Appendix 2.

simultaneously, generally on short contracts and one-off performing engagements, and often with frequent changes of personnel; they also self-identify as either living in an adoptive country (expats) or seeking work abroad and thus crossing cultural boundaries, e.g. working on cruise ships or seeking residencies (longer contracts, usually of 3-6 months). This particular set of circumstances ensured a representative sample of those musicians most likely to have had experience of working with musicians from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds; because I argue that the question of musician identity transcends professional status, questions were phrased so as not to exclude those self-identifying as semi-professional or non-professional.

SURVEY DATA

The survey respondents self-reported as professional (42%), former professional (15%), semi-professional¹² (20%) and amateur (27%).¹³ Of the survey group as a whole, 51% [n=27] had lived/worked in another country for a period of 6 months or more, 19% [n=10] for a period of up to six months; 28% [n=15] had undertaken a brief overseas visit (concert or short tour), while 25% [n=13] had worked regularly with musicians of a different language/culture and 40% [n=21] occasionally. [It should be noted that multiple answers were possible on this question, hence the total of 86 responses for 56 respondents.]

There are of course limitations in using such self-reported responses as raw data, and the anonymity of the survey means it has not been possible to follow these up. Although the majority of respondents report finding creative ways of overcoming language barriers, the qualitative data in the form of comments support my thesis that musicians self-identify through language to a far greater extent than the argument for music being an international language would suggest, and reveal two areas in which this occurs: firstly in terms of the ways in which musicians describe and conceptualize the music itself, and secondly in terms of their own selfhood and personal musical identity.


In a reductive sense, this "speech-background" to the musical experience includes the basic musical elements such as pitch and duration, and also extends to the more sophisticated language required to discuss issues such as the form of a piece, and to the tone and timbre used in the interpretation of these basic elements.

¹² A semi-professional is paid for performing but music does not provide their main source of income.

¹³ Percentages rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES UNDERLYING MUSICAL TERMS

Figure 1. Fixed do sol-fa

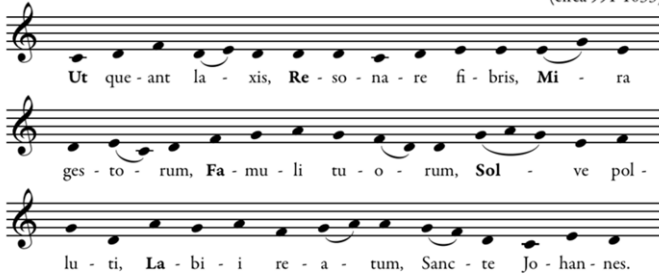


ENGLISH	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
[Letter names]								
FRENCH	do	re	mi	fa	sol	la	si	do
[Fixed sol-fa]								
GERMAN	C	D	E	F	G	A	H	C
	[ut]							

Figure 2. Ut queant laxis

Ut Queant Laxis (Hymn to St. John the Baptist)

Guido of Arezzo
(circa 991-1033)



Ut que - ant la - xis, Re - so - na - re fi - bris, Mi - ra
 ges - to - rum, Fa - mu - li tu - o - rum, Sol - ve pol -
 lu - ti, La - bi - i re - a - tum, Sanc - te Jo - han - nes.

Translation:

So that your servants may, with loosened voices, resound the wonders
of your deeds, clean the guilt from our stained lips, O Saint John.

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version by Matthew D. Thibault, October 31, 2008

Fig. 1 shows the ways in which musicians express even the simplest components of musical language, and these reveal some interesting issues, even between French and English, the two languages in which I work. Musicians trained in the French system use *solfège*, in which the syllables do-re-mi etc. are used to denote fixed pitches.¹⁴ In English each note is given a letter name, which has the great advantage of being sequential, because it uses a known alphabet.

Even so, this sequence is disrupted in German because the note B is known as H, whereas B denotes Bb.¹⁵ I have taught several German music students in France, and we have to make a conscious decision from the outset regarding which system to use, depending on where they expect to pursue their studies in the future.

In contrast with the sequential letter-name system, *solfège* assigns syllables to each pitch, and their apparently random nature can give problems to learners. In fact, the sol-fa system originated in the thirteenth century, when Italian music theorist Guido of Arezzo noticed that each phrase of the plainchant Hymn to St John the Baptist *Ut queant laxis* began on a different note (Fig. 2).

Of course, this musical lexicon can easily be learnt by all musicians, but no matter how fluent we may become in the second language, the way we conceptualize the note names is inextricably linked with the logic within which we originally learned them. A forum post on the site of the ABRSM, the national music assessment body in Britain, echoes this experience:

"I learnt English letter name notation and [...] I now live in France and [use] the fixed sol-fa. However, although I speak French fluently, my brain has never entirely come to terms with the "new" names and I often get them wrong. When I look at a piece of music I sing/hear it in my head using the letter names rather than sol-fa."¹⁶

¹⁴ The same sol-fa system is used in Italy and Spain.

¹⁵ The German nomenclature merely sought to give each pitch-class a unique name, and assumed an even semitone pattern. Later, when the letter b was employed to effect mutation into other, more distant tetrachords (or hexachords), the German nomenclature was never modified to accommodate it, and its use as a flat sign was simply extended to the other 6 letters while retaining the H/B distinction for what everyone else calls B/Bb. (Monzo, n.p.)

¹⁶ Online forum post by 'Roseau' 8 Jan 2010 on "Sol-fa, Letter Names, And Singing Both." Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Online forum topic. <<http://www.abrsm.org/forum/>> . Accessed March 1, 2017.

And another post on the same forum reveals a proto-linguistic solution which negotiates the distinction between the two systems:

"[One of my students] who has perfect pitch in fixed do, regularly has his brain fried by me asking him to call 'fa' 'do' etc. One way he gets round it is to sing fixed do solfa in a French accent and moveable do solfa in an English one!!"¹⁷

Figure 3. Duration

	American	British	French
W	double note	breve	note carrée
w	whole note	semibreve	ronde
h	half note	minim	blanche
q	quarter note	crotchet	noire
e	eighth note	quaver	croche
x	sixteenth note	semiquaver	double croche
y	thirty-second note	demisemiquaver	triple croche
y	sixty-fourth note	hemidemisemiquaver	quadruple croche

Another basic element of musical language is note duration and, as can be seen in Fig. 3, even in English there are two distinct systems of describing duration. The American system uses the "whole note" as its unit of reference, describing all other notes in terms of fractions of this. The logic of this is impeccable, and in fact makes it extremely easy to relate to the time signatures with which musicians describe the number and nature of beats in each bar at the beginning of a piece: thus 2/4 is easily read as a fraction (two quarter notes), while 4/2 is read as four half notes. The British system, on the other hand, uses the "breve" as its point of reference, and halves this for a semibreve. These, along with the minim, crotchet and quaver, defy any logic, unless they are related to their historical origins in the thirteenth century when music evolved from modal to mensural (measured rhythmic) forms and mensural notation was first being developed. This system was codified by Franco of Cologne in his *Ars cantus mensurabilis*, in which note values ranged from the longest note (*duplex*

¹⁷ Forum post by 'Cyrilla' 11 Jan 2010 on <http://www.abrsm.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=40407>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

lunga, or *maxima*) through the *lunga* (long), *brevis* (short), and then even shorter values known as *semibrevis* and *minima* (very small) (Hoppin 337)¹⁸ from which mensural values the modern breve down to the minim evolved. Beyond this, the crotchet is so called because, in its original form it resembled a hook, or *crochet* in Old French, and the quaver because of the quavering effect of a succession of small notes. At this point a discernible logic resumes, with subsequent notes described as ever-decreasing fractions of a quaver as it is repeatedly halved, hence the prefixes semi-, demi-semi- and hemi-demi-semi-quaver.

The French system takes a different approach, and describes the physical appearance of the notes by shape or color: the only concession to historical precedent is that the *note carrée* means a 'square note' because this is the way it was originally written. Confusingly, we also have a false association between French and British English: the *croche* does not equate to the British crotchet, but to the quaver, even though the name originated for the same reason – its resemblance to a hook. And the smaller notes are regarded as two, three or four times the value of the *croche*, rather than the successive halving in the British system.

So even between English and French we now have three lexicons, because we speak about the basic musical elements very differently in American and British English. And of course there is a different lexis for each genre: we use completely different terminology in jazz from that used when discussing classical music. For example, the chords in classical terminology become 'changes' in jazz, and the classical 'theme' becomes the jazz 'head'.

Between all these genres of Western music we are at least discussing the same intervals between notes, the same harmonic elements. But if a musician ventures into a completely different musical culture, even the basic elements of meter, harmony and indeed the whole concept of the way music is constructed will be utterly different. As one of my respondents told me, "Indian musicians have assaulted me with strange time signatures etc (their system is based on sequences rather than tempo/subdivision)". Also, training methods can mean the music is approached differently. As one respondent who has worked extensively in eighteen countries told me:

"Sometimes their training is vastly different, therefore expectations are sometimes different...Phrasing and treatment of rhythms can sometimes be noticeably different. So these are differences in musical language!"

Some musical traditions are written down, notated, and require a comprehensive knowledge to allow these symbols to be decoded; other musical traditions are learned and transmitted entirely aurally, but may have an equally sophisticated lexis known only to those immersed in the tradition. And of course there is an even greater divide between what we might call literate musicians – those who can read musical notation and have a sophisticated vocabulary with which to describe it – and those musicians who lack such skills. A former music theory student of mine, a pianist who graduated from the prestigious Royal Academy of Music and is currently working in musical theatre in London, told me of his frustration at having to work with 'singers' [he qualified this title with scare quotes] who "don't read a note on the page". In other words, even though they all share a spoken language, they have no common language in which to articulate their musical thoughts and processes. Even so, the need to work together on the musical product means other means of communicating the musical ideas in non-technical language are found, and my respondent outlined the techniques he uses in his work as *répétiteur* – the rehearsal pianist who works with the singers – thus:¹⁹

"I found myself starting to use more pictorial/emotional descriptions. E.g. not going flat (in pitch) – think brightness/happy sound; more *legato* – thread the notes/dots together with your voice; more diction – spicy/electrifying the tip of the tongue. Everyone is different and I try to find images they can relate to and experiment with it."

IMAGINED COMMUNITY

So where does this leave us in terms of the individual musician's personal identity? I find it interesting – if rather annoying – that when explaining the English terms to my francophone English/music students I will often find myself saying "WE say this, but YOU say that," instead of "in English we say this, and in French we say that". This, to me, is evidence of a subconscious awareness that, although I consider myself a member of what, in Anderson's terms, is an 'imagined community' of musicians I still feel the 'otherness' of my musical identity. This is no doubt contributed to by the fact that

¹⁸ Hoppin points out that "with fine disregard for linguistic logic, the theorists called all of these smaller notes *semibreves*, although from two to seven or eight might replace a single breve" (332).

¹⁹ Email to the author, April 1, 2017.

I am often perceived as 'other' even within this imagined community.

When I rehearse with my various musical ensembles, any misunderstanding is blamed on a perceived language barrier even though I am totally familiar with the lexis. And in a discussion of the finer details of our interpretation, such as a particular way of playing a phrase, or a change in the timbre of the sound we produce, I have even been told "Maybe that's how you do it (or not how you do it) in England." Other musicians have found that, with rehearsal time at a premium, musicians may simply decide to bypass the language barrier and hope the music will speak for itself. One anglophone professional musician who has worked in China and now Mexico, told me that "Because I was in THEIR country and I was the foreigner, they often skimmed over these issues with a Don't Worry About It attitude. To save time". However, the inability to communicate musical ideas is very close to being labeled a non-musician, whether on one's own account (lack of technical ability or musical understanding) or from a stereotypical understanding of one's origins. French musicians can be deeply suspicious of British musicians, and this is perhaps a reflection of the somewhat insular culture...maybe even a hangover from the view of England as *das Land ohne Musik*, expressed in 1914 by the German critic Oscar Schmitz. The 'analytic burden' (Hall 40) of this kind of "historically laden social identity" (34) has been summed up by Sarangi (414):

"If we define, prior to analysis, an intercultural context in terms of cultural attributes of the participants, then it is very likely that any miscommunication which takes place in the discourse is identified and subsequently explained on the basis of 'cultural differences'".

It would appear that the attitudes I have encountered do not apply – or apply far less - in more international environments. One of my interviewees is a British opera singer who spent twenty years with the National Opera Company in the Netherlands, a multicultural, multilingual company comprising German, English, French and Dutch singers. My interviewee was adamant that she was not aware of any miscommunication, or identity-related issues. However, I would argue that this environment differs from the freelance environment in several distinct ways: in an opera company, all the musicians are full-time salaried members of a discrete group whom those both inside and outside the group can clearly identify. They also focus on a small repertoire, so have a clearly defined musical identity which can be perceived by non-musicians in clearly

defined and understood terms: "What sort of musician?" Singer. "What sort of singer?" Opera.

The same goes for orchestral players, for whom conversations following self-identification as a musician will generally take a prescribed path: "What do you play?" [this can be interpreted as meaning either instrument or genre] and "Who do you play with?" The more definite the answers, the more confident the enquirer is about positioning the musician within a group or subgroup. When it comes to the freelance musician, however, the answers are not always so definitive. For instance, in my previous professional life the conversation following self-identification as a musician would most often be along the following lines:

"What do you play?" *"Classical and jazz"* [genres]; *"Flute and saxophones"* [instruments].

"Who do you play with?" *"Well, I have various ensembles, including a duo with a pianist, another duo with a guitarist, a saxophone quartet, and a chamber trio which can be expanded at will (flute, violin, 'cello and piano). I also freelance in orchestras and do a lot of big band work, studio session work and musical theatre. And I teach, and arrange music for ensembles which I publish. And I run music workshops, and I conduct"*

This is all completely normal fare for freelancers, but it does not necessarily equate with public perception. And depending on the host culture, such activities really do not appear to compute. As a musician colleague in France told me, "*en France on se specialise*" [in France we are specialists] so the fact that I straddle genres on more than one instrument marks me out as a 'jack of all trades, master of none'. In fact, in my heyday in England I was playing flute, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, and four saxophones, so doing session work was lucrative, because very often hiring one musician to play several instruments, each of which may be used for only a few bars, is more cost-effective than hiring several musicians to sit around during expensive studio time. The same applies to musical theatre, especially for shows from the 1940s and 1950s in which the prevalence of swing and Latin-based numbers means four musicians each doubling on several instruments can play the "reed parts," in which various combinations of flutes, clarinets and saxophones provide a wind section capable of providing a satisfying variety of tone colors. But this pool of uncertainty casts doubt on my legitimacy as a musician. If I play too many instruments to be taken seriously, then – in France at least – that makes me less of a musician rather than more of one.

A singer working in Germany told me of a similar problem, saying that the German Fach system “is so highly structured that performances outside of it seem to confuse,”²⁰ and that “as a singer trained in the US I was used to preparing a general audition of Italian, French and German selections. While auditioning in Europe I had better results with a more restricted repertoire.”

LEGITIMACY

Musical Training & Education

In order to ascertain the legitimacy of any claim to be a ‘real’ musician, the next question in the ‘I’m a musician’ conversation may well be “Where did you train/study?” And here we have yet another area in which the answer will not proffer enough information for the enquirer to ascertain the musician’s credentials and thus their legitimacy. Anyone who has attempted to translate a CV will know that educational qualifications and training are particularly hard to describe accurately and succinctly. In France, music is not part of the school curriculum, but there is a well-developed system of state conservatoires;²¹ these provide an obligatory training in *solfège* (music theory) before the student goes on to study an instrument at their local conservatoire, on which they progress through three ‘cycles’, the last of which equates to university entrance level (entry to a regional or national conservatoire is of a higher standard and requires an additional audition).²² In England, where I trained, there is no longer any state provision of instrumental tuition, even though general music education is provided as part of the school curriculum up to the age of thirteen; instrumental tuition is generally through private teachers, and this tuition will include music theory, taught alongside the student’s developing instrumental technical competence rather than as a separate subject. The examinations system consists of eight ‘grade exams’ which are generally completed by the age of eighteen, and fourteen or fifteen for the extremely able; the next stage is a performance or teaching diploma, examined by one of

the major national conservatoires,²³ but there is a big step change between the grade exams and a diploma.

The result of this non-parallel trajectory is that, as my own qualifications are not easily contextualized within the French system I have been listed as “*non-diplômée*”, or ‘unqualified’, despite having three music degrees, a performance diploma and a teaching diploma. And I am not alone: I can testify that anyone trained outside the extremely rigid French system (which is obsessed with *solfège*) is deemed not to be trained at all, as confirmed by these survey responses:

“When I took up a new instrument in France my teacher saw me as an amateur even though I explained I was musically trained and was surprised to see how quickly I learned. Some professionals can see the level without even asking but most make an assumption that you are amateur.”

This is echoed by a British musician working in Italy: “Lack of training in *solfeggio* was seen as an indicator of lack of ability to read music.” An American working in Europe says: “Because I first studied music at a liberal arts college rather than a conservatory, Europeans don’t always understand how rigorous that training can be.”

One highly trained British musician observed that this is a common problem, to which the only solution is supralinguistic: “show, don’t tell”:

“The equivalences of one’s music diplomas is [*sic*] nearly always misunderstood from one country to another!!! In my own country, my background is admired by ‘people in the know’; in foreign countries, there is very little crossover knowledge of that kind. One must resort to ‘name-dropping’! And playing or singing really really well!”

Unfamiliarity with the musician’s background can also lead to assumptions being made, and therefore respect being afforded whether or not it is merited. One professional musician, now “a conservatoire teacher, academic and composer” says “I think I tend to get elevated respect because there’s an assumption my background is top class, without them necessarily knowing it or me ever putting that forward. Because I’m from a rich country.”

²⁰ The Fach system classifies singers by vocal range, size, color, fullness of tone and character as well as physical appearance. After considering these variables, one is classified into a “Fach.” For more information go to <https://www.ipasource.com/the-fach-system>.

²¹ There are regional conservatoires in most towns, departmental conservatoires, and two national conservatoires in Paris and Lyon.

²² For a detailed examination of French national musical education see Terry, 2008.

²³ Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Trinity College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and London College of Music.

Employment status

In England one can be self-employed and earn ones living through any means, so long as one declares it and pays ones taxes. In France, however, this breadth of activity is not allowed: in order to be self-employed, ones 'professional activity' must be stated (one is allowed two: a principal activity and a secondary one). As I earn most of my living as a translator, and as I also teach music and English, the only relevant options open to me are '*autres enseignements*' [teaching outside the specified fields rather than either 'language teaching' or 'music teaching'] and '*traduction*' [translation]. Nowhere can I describe myself as 'musician', because to be a performing musician I need to be either employed (e.g. by an arts association or orchestra) or registered as an '*intermittent du spectacle*'.

This *intermittent* system protects those who work in the entertainment industries and who, by definition, work intermittently, to be protected against unemployment. It applies to technicians (electricians, etc.) and artists (comedians, dancers, musicians etc.) in the wider entertainment field (cinema, theater, television, circus). So long as they have worked about 500 hours in the previous ten months, they are entitled to a daily allocation which gives them a salary and the benefit of the national health program and a pension. Created in 1936 (under the government of *Front Populaire*) and extended in 1969, this very advantageous program is of course extremely costly for the taxpayer and was created to help and support artistic creation in France.²⁴

The result is that, in France, those very socially defined categories cast doubt on a musician's credentials, without this particular status one cannot even refer to oneself legally as a performing musician.²⁵ Other (French) musicians with whom I play regularly similarly refer to themselves as "not professional" because they are not "*intermittent*" even though they have spent their entire lives teaching and performing music at a high level. One advantage, though, is that they trained within the French system, so their compatriots have no trouble situating them within the musical landscape. For 'foreign' musicians, however, this situation questions our 'groupness' (Edwards 55), our right to situate ourselves

within the imagined community of musicians; fortunately, there are other ways of negotiating this meta-identity, and that is through discourse.

DISCURSIVE IDENTITY

Gee (99) characterizes identity as "the kind of person one is recognized as being, at a given time and place", and I find this a particularly useful way of describing my own struggle to establish my own musical identity. My language-based professional activities of translation and English language teaching currently carry more value in my adopted country than my musical activities, meaning that my musical identity has become devalued, I therefore find myself devising new means of discourse: for example, when teaching English to undergraduate and postgraduate students in music and musicology, I introduce myself as "a musician and musicologist," thus legitimizing my role in the music department. Although they are often shaken by this opening gambit in what they had assumed was a language course run by a language teacher, they quickly accept this premise, because clearly when they ask questions my answers display the knowledge that only an experienced musician would have. But I stand before them, not as a musician, but as a teacher of English, even though I am far less of a linguist than a musician.

Discursive identity offers a means of "examining how [...] identity frameworks are negotiated through discourse, including the antecedent histories, assumptions, and cultural knowledge embedded in any cultural exchange" (Brown et al., 782); in stating that "I am a musician" and that rather than learning English *per se* we will be listening to, talking about and reading about music, but in English, I am "communicating identity via discursive action" (Brown et al., 783) in a way which signals my group affiliation. I was recently amused when copied into some correspondence with a postgraduate English/music student who referred to me as "*le prof d'anglais*" [the English teacher] when he needed me to assess him for a course I was running in his Masters program. When I mailed him myself I told him that I was a flautist like him, and his whole demeanor immediately changed; he became animated and interested in my musical background (declaring himself to be a great fan of the English school of flute-playing; ironically I prefer the French school), evidently relating to me quite differently to the 'language teacher' he'd expected.

However I am no longer earning my living through music as a full-time professional so, to validate this new role, I find myself qualifying this statement of "I am a musician" with a mitigation of my musical identity, as in "I WAS a professional musician." So although I say "we

²⁴ Redacted from

http://www.understandfrance.org/French/Specificities.html#anc_reintermittents. Accessed April 26, 2017.

²⁵ A similar situation exists in highly regulated cultures: another British musician complained that "20 years' experience as a conductor rate as nothing in Switzerland if you don't have a certificate" to prove it.

are all musicians," it is through such discursive means that I am signaling that, although I self-identify as a member of the group, they should regard my present role as that of language teacher, albeit one with a thorough understanding of the life of the professional musician they aspire to be. And when playing with my sax quartet, I answer questions about my status by saying I *was* a professional musician, thereby confirming my credentials as a performing musician, even though they belong to a previous life. As Brown et al state, as people "cross cultural borders they learn to maintain dual membership in multiple cultural spaces, thus requiring them to bring unique ways of signaling their identity" (783).

Jane Oakland, who used to be a professional opera singer and is now a music psychologist and vocal consultant, has conducted research among professional musicians forced to make a career transition, for example through being made redundant following cuts in arts funding. She makes the following point: "what is unique to the music profession is the level of commitment made by musicians in order to serve the music" (Oakland 2011, 8) and that "an identity as a musician [...] will always remain in place unless a musician chooses to leave the profession" (8-9). While Oakland implies that a musician identity only applies to those still working in the profession, I argue that even when a musician's working life is disrupted, whether through injury, illness, redundancy or relocation, the need to continue to self-identify as a musician is very strong, and indeed Oakland herself acknowledges that musician identity needs to go beyond professional activity when she says that "it was not the loss of income that was of primary concern for the musicians but a loss of identity" (8). Oakland's research centered on musicians made redundant from full-time employment, but her own research subjects confirm that musician identity needs to go beyond professional activity. As one said, "...it was just music, music, music all week and I didn't know who I was apart from this opera singer" (8). The cessation of professional activity is, as I have already discussed, a bar to expressing musician identity. Can one still self-identify as a musician without making music at a particular level?

The comments of some of my survey respondents, when asked how strongly they identify as musicians,²⁶ illustrate the "deeply personal" (Georgii-Hemming 208) nature of identities in music and prove to be a variation on a theme: one former professional told me that "Because I am no longer performing or teaching I do not

identify as strongly as when I was active, but I still think and listen like a trained musician." Another former professional said "I teach/have taught professionally and play as an amateur and simply am a musician." Musician identity is not the preserve of professionals, but can be an important meta-identity for others: respondents to my own survey who self-identified as semi-professional or amateur musicians made comments such as "It's only one of my identities but it's the most important for me because it's who I am, not necessarily what I do".

CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that, although music is indeed an international language, the establishment of a musical identity can be challenged in the face of intercultural communication, and that this can be a deeply destabilizing experience. It is this core-identity, and the need to express this identity, which makes musician identity so important to ones self-concept and thus self-esteem. From my own point of view, this research has validated my claim to this meta-identity in relation to the wider musical community; even though I only play for pleasure now, I find I have felt utterly connected to my anonymous survey respondents, whom I will never meet, much less play with, but I see membership of this group as immutable. It is surely only through the challenges of communicating "what I am" and "what I do" (or at least used to do) that my musician identity is threatened. While my survey respondents did not, for the most part, find their musical identity to be challenged, this may be because they are mostly working musicians, and can thus have a demonstrable claim to legitimacy. That said, the comments they left have demonstrated a wider perspective and have supported my premise that miscommunication and cultural differences can challenge the individual's core musician identity. I regret that the anonymous nature of the survey does not allow me to follow up on these responses, but further, more focused work in this area, especially if this could be expanded to investigate the issues across a variety of musical genres or sub-disciplines, may well lead to fresh insights.

As it is, I feel I have only scratched the surface of the issues facing self-identification as a musician once out of one's home culture. My survey respondents were given several stand-alone options to describe the strength of their self-identification as musicians, of which they could choose as many as they liked, and no matter what their professional status, past or present, they overwhelmingly agreed with the statement "Once a musician, always a musician". This signifies that, even when faced with the frustration on not being able to communicate ones musical thoughts, or to convince

²⁶ Q5 in on-line survey – see Appendix 2.

someone of one's status as a trained musician, one's self-image remains intact. However, while the musician can, as DeNora says, "mobilize and hold onto a coherent image of 'who one is'" (62) the problem lies in the inability to fully project one's meta-identity to others. It is the need for others to accept this meta-identity which provides validation in the musician's own mind: if one's musician identity is not externally validated and acknowledged, it becomes threatened and disrupted. Ultimately, the *leitmotif* running through Oakland's research, and supported by my own, is that this core identity must transcend language and professional status if the musician is to maintain a healthy and stable self-image: to paraphrase Descartes, I think like a musician, therefore I am a musician.

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APPENDIX 1. Survey data sources

FACEBOOK GROUPS	No. of members (May 30, 2017)
English for Musicians	331 followers
Expat Musicians in France	35 followers
Foreign Musicians in Bangkok	509 members
Incorporated Society of Musicians	4562 followers
Musicians Expats Eindhoven	238 members
Musicians for Cruise & Overseas Work	933 members
Musicians in Paris (1)	123 members
Musicians in Paris (2)	180 members
Musicians Interested in Overseas Work	22,151 members
Musicians Interested in Overseas Work, Middle East & Asia	5,249 members
Musicians Wanted/Available in Paris, France	18 followers
Overseas Working Musicians	9131 members
Romanian Musicians Abroad	4 followers
Royal Musical Association	816 followers
Wedding & Events Harpist & Musicians in Paris, France	168 followers
EMAIL INVITATIONS TO PERSONAL CONTACTS (provided link to survey – responses anonymous)	40 people

APPENDIX 2 - Survey data

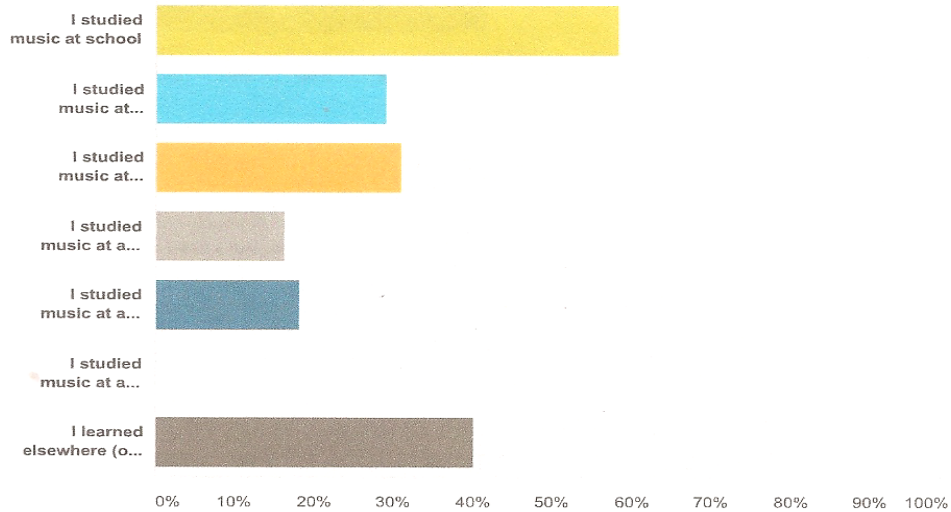
Q1 What languages do you speak? Please list them according to your skill level in each.

Answered: 56 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Mother tongue :	100.00%	56
Fluent :	58.93%	33
Good :	53.57%	30
Basic :	73.21%	41

Q2 What level of musical training do you have, and where did you receive it?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 1

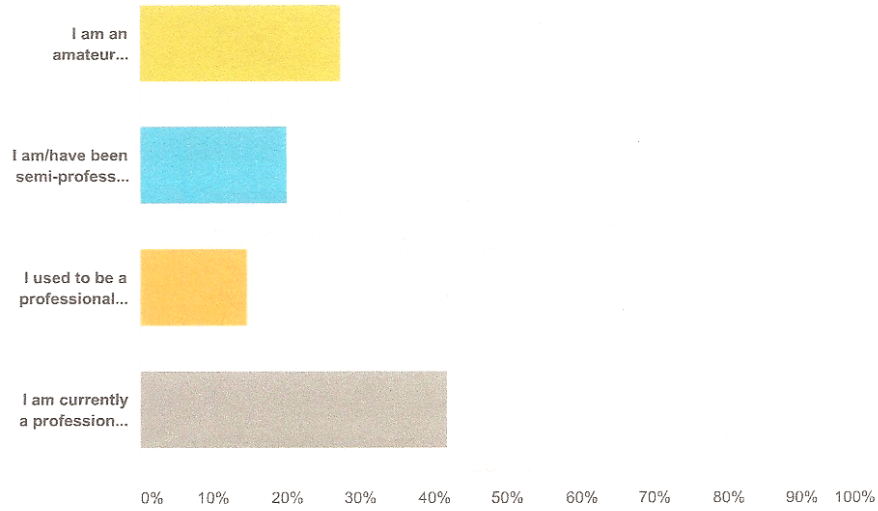


Answer Choices	Responses	
I studied music at school	58.18%	32
I studied music at university (first degree)	29.09%	16
I studied music at university (postgraduate level)	30.91%	17
I studied music at a conservatoire (first degree)	16.36%	9
I studied music at a conservatoire (postgraduate level)	18.18%	10
I studied music at a military school of music	0.00%	0
I learned elsewhere (on the job, jazz clubs, street bands etc.)	40.00%	22

Total Respondents: 55

Q3 Which best describes your current professional status?

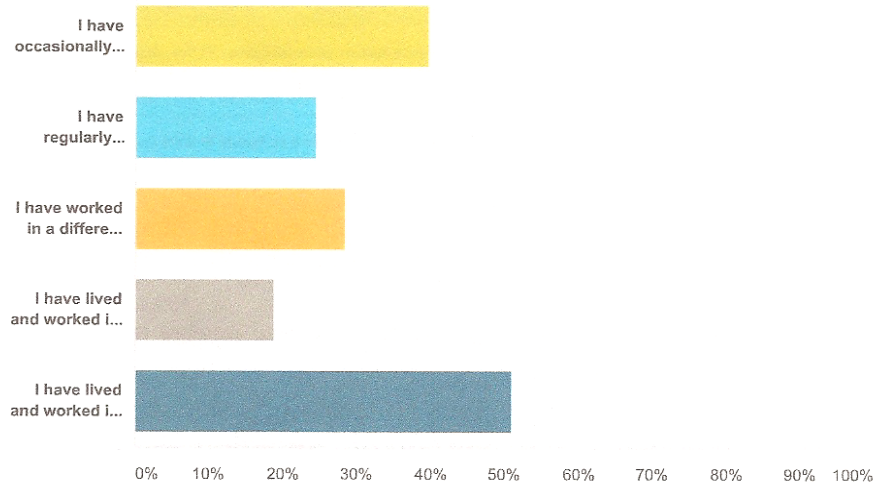
Answered: 55 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I am an amateur musician	27.27%	15
I am/have been semi-professional (I have/had a day job)	20.00%	11
I used to be a professional musician	14.55%	8
I am currently a professional musician	41.82%	23
Total Respondents: 55		

Q4 In what context have you worked with musicians of other language backgrounds?

Answered: 53 Skipped: 3

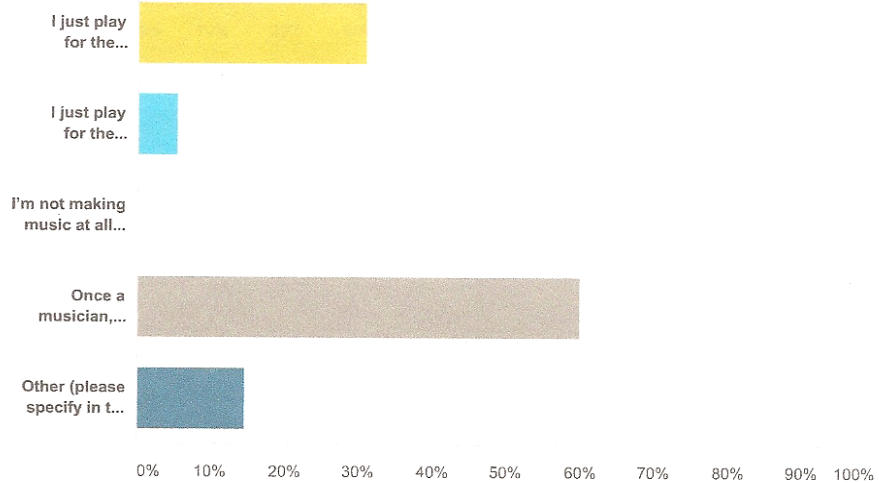


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I have occasionally worked with musicians of a different linguistic background in my own country	39.62%	21
I have regularly worked with musicians of a different linguistic background in my own country	24.53%	13
I have worked in a different country/culture on an occasional basis (a concert, a short tour...)	28.30%	15
I have lived and worked in a different country/culture for a period of up to six months	18.87%	10
I have lived and worked in a different country/culture for over six months	50.94%	27

Total Respondents: 53

Q5 How strongly do you identify as a musician? [Please rate the relevance of each of these statements to your own experience.]

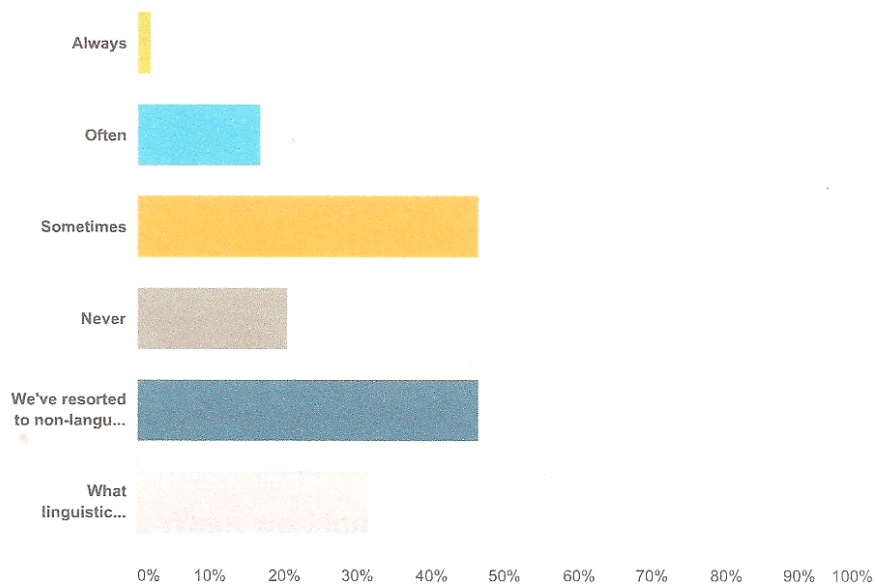
Answered: 55 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
I just play for the pleasure of making music, but I'll always consider myself a musician.	30.91% 17
I just play for the pleasure of making music, but I don't think of myself as a musician because I'm not being paid for it.	5.45% 3
I'm not making music at all now, so I don't think of myself as a musician any more.	0.00% 0
Once a musician, always a musician.	60.00% 33
Other (please specify in the box below)	14.55% 8
Total Respondents: 55	

Q6 When working with musicians of other language backgrounds, have you ever experienced problems making your musical needs/opinions understood, e.g. explaining touch, weight, phrasing, abstract terms?

Answered: 54 . Skipped: 2

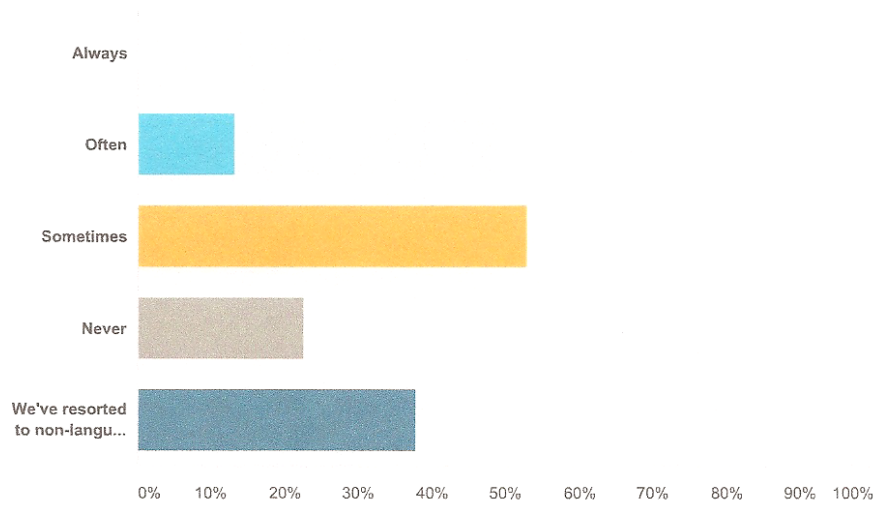


Answer Choices	Responses
Always	1.85% 1
Often	16.67% 9
Sometimes	46.30% 25
Never	20.37% 11
We've resorted to non-language solutions, e.g. demonstrating with our instruments	46.30% 25
What linguistic solutions have you found?	31.48% 17
Total Respondents: 54	

Q7 When working with musicians of other language backgrounds, have you ever

experienced problems understanding their musical needs/opinions? You may choose more than one option.

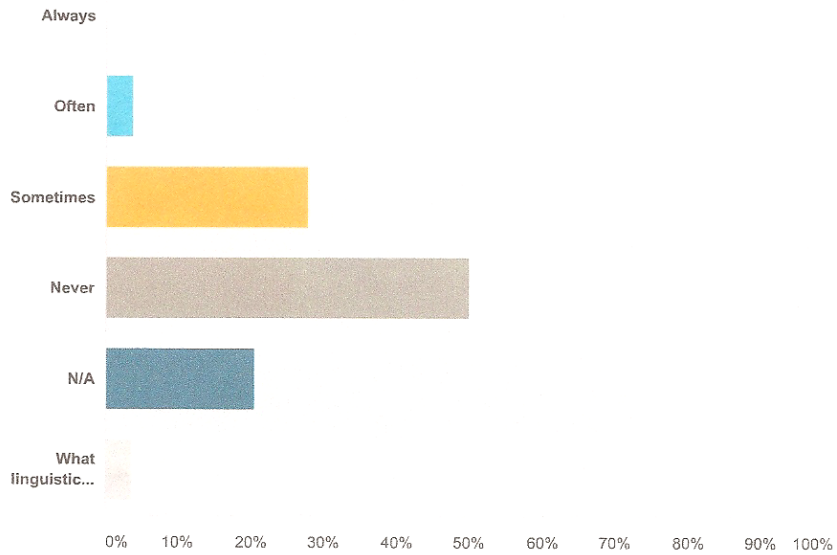
Answered: 53 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Always	0.00%	0
Often	13.21%	7
Sometimes	52.83%	28
Never	22.64%	12
We've resorted to non-language solutions, e.g. demonstrating with our instruments	37.74%	20
Total Respondents: 53		

Q8 When working with musicians of other language backgrounds, have you ever experienced problems explaining your own musical background? This might be in an interview/audition or on a CV.

Answered: 54 Skipped: 2

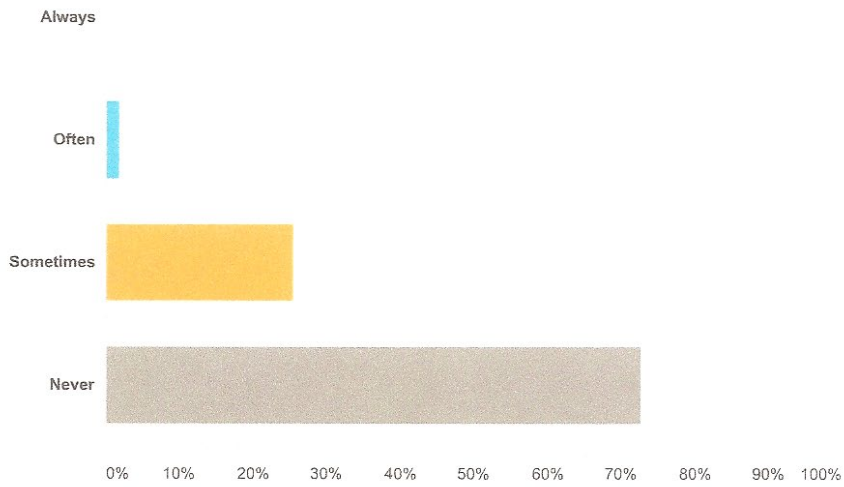


Answer Choices	Responses
Always	0.00% 0
Often	3.70% 2
Sometimes	27.78% 15
Never	50.00% 27
N/A	20.37% 11
What linguistic solutions have you found? [e.g. finding a useful comparison which resonates in your host musical culture]. Please specify in the box below.	3.70% 2

Total Respondents: 54

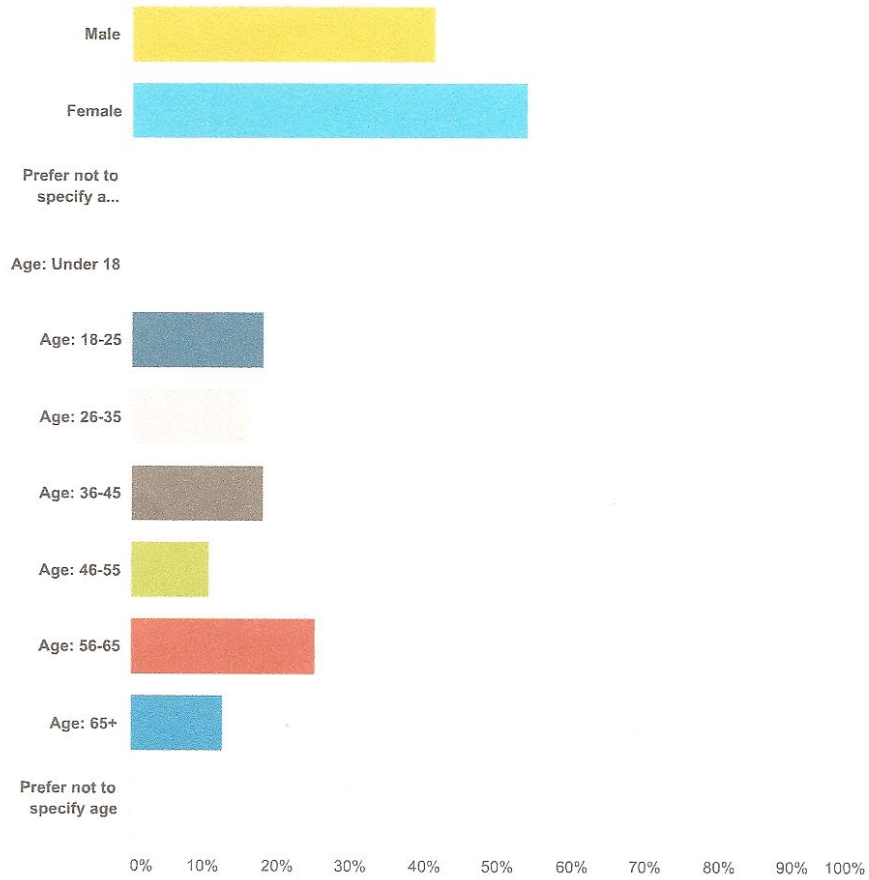
Q9 When working abroad, have you ever experienced a lack of acceptance of/respect for your status as a musician, because there is no linguistic equivalent to explain your own musical journey?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	
Always	0.00%	0
Often	1.96%	1
Sometimes	25.49%	13
Never	72.55%	37
Total		51

Q10 And finally....the boring but necessary demographic data. Please tick the TWO boxes which describe your gender and age range.



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Male	41.07%	23
Female	53.57%	30
Prefer not to specify a gender	0.00%	0
Age: Under 18	0.00%	0
Age: 18-25	17.86%	10
Age: 26-35	16.07%	9
Age: 36-45	17.86%	10
Age: 46-55	10.71%	6
Age: 56-65	25.00%	14
Age: 65+	12.50%	7
Prefer not to specify age	0.00%	0

Total Respondents: 56

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As reported in TIS Vol. 2 in September 2016, the winning essay of this prestigious Prize was "The Painted Page: Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art". However, as this was published in TIS Vol. 1 (2016) [http://www.ncis.org/sites/default/files/TIS%20Volume%201 ALL%20%286%29.pdf](http://www.ncis.org/sites/default/files/TIS%20Volume%201%20ALL%20%286%29.pdf) and easily available to TIS readers, we have chosen to reprint (by kind permission of author and her publisher) the essay which took the runner-up prize, "Clichés Revisited: Poland's 1949 Łagów Composers' Conference".

Clichés Revisited: Poland's 1949 Łagów Composers' Conference

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To nearly all who are acquainted with the events of Polish musical life in the twentieth-century, the word 'Łagów' is synonymous with a singular event, the four-day conference of composers, musicologists, and cultural officials held in the Łagów castle in early August 1949. As Włodzimierz Sokorski, vice-minister of the host organization, the Ministry of Culture and Art, remarked in his opening speech, the meeting's goals were two-fold: first, to „attempt to establish concepts and definitions concerning the entirety of today's musical issues and to attempt to use these definitions in practice,” and second, to take the „first steps in preparing the Festival of Polish Music,” which at that time was scheduled for the fall of 1950 but ultimately was not held until 1951. He concluded the conference by applauding its success: „The period of eclecticism in the views and compositions of our composers is closed. [This meeting] allowed us to behold the path leading to

our goal...Emotionally everyone agrees with the desires of our era.”²⁷

This conference has been cited numerous times as a turning point in Polish musical composition, when the principles of socialist realism were first imposed by the government and composers were thereafter expected to produce compositions that reflected these tenets and rejected so-called formalist traits. Although this

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²⁷ *Konferencja kompozytorów w Łagowie Lubuskim*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1949, no. 14, pp. 12, 29-30. This is a revised version of the original transcript: ZKP (Polish Composers Union), Akt 12/91, Konferencji kompozytorów w Łagowie Lubuskim w dniach od 5.iii do 8.viii.1949. Protokół. All citations come from *Ruch Muzyczny* unless otherwise indicated.

interpretation is still invoked by some writers,²⁸ in recent years others have begun to refine this admittedly flawed assessment. In acknowledging some of the subtleties of the proceedings, including the diversity of opinions presented, some scholars have reviewed the reasons for labeling two compositions as formalist, but have not referred to the rationale behind a similar condemnation of two additional works from among the more than twenty-five pieces presented during the conference. They have also noted the failure to adopt a usable definition of socialist realism in music, but have not directly linked that shortcoming to the events of the next few years in Polish music.²⁹

After reviewing the conference's transcript, details contained therein invite further reconsideration of the event's significance, particularly when considered within the context of the first decade of postwar Polish musical life. Not only did the colloquium fail to meet its organizers' goal of clarifying the creative path towards socialist realism in Polish music but composers, taking advantage of inconsistencies in the discussions and hence aware of the chasm exposed between socialist realist philosophy and its practical realization, managed to retain a sense of autonomy in their quest to preserve compositional freedom during the ensuing years, years typically seen as unremittingly restrictive and depressing.

First, a bit of background. The concepts of formalism and realism in Polish music did not emerge without warning in the late 1940s. As Lisa Vest has discussed, in interwar Poland one of the primary controversies among composers and critics concerned the question of what Polish music should look like, or sound like in the future. Should it be related to past national traditions, with composers connecting with audiences through the use of folk materials and existing musical forms, or should they strive to become a recognized part of the larger

international community, participating in the development of new musical trends?³⁰ Indeed, the titles of published articles from that era reflect the issues of the day: „Does music have a social function“, „The relation of composers to folk music“, „Snobbism and progress in contemporary music“, „Is there really a crisis in music?“³¹ These very concerns were among those addressed by the same people in the postwar debates, which today are often viewed as arguments about realism and formalism.

In the Soviet Union, of course, the terms formalism and realism had been in use since at least the 1920s. In 1933, composers there were directed to draw their attention „toward...all that is heroic, bright, and beautiful“.³² In 1936, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*, previously praised by critics, was denounced in an article published in *Pravda*. In December 1947, the Soviet Union's Central Committee received recommendations that composers be instructed to reject „the pernicious 'theory' according to which complex, untexted instrumental...music ought to occupy the leading...position in Soviet music“.³³ In January 1948, Zhdanov declared that composers should recognize „the traditions of the Russian musical school...the deep...connection with the people and their legacy of music and folk song“.³⁴ The following month, the Central Committee accused Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian and others of formalism. Khrennikov, president of the Composers Union, went even further by attacking foreign composers, including Hindemith, Berg, Britten, and Messiaen, for their compositional indiscretions.³⁵

²⁸ ELŻBIETA MARKOWSKA, *Jana Krenza pięćdziesiąt lat z batutą. Rozmowy o muzyce polskiej*, Kraków 1996, p. 45; KRZYSZTOF BACULEWSKI, *Polska twórczość kompozytorska 1945-1984*, Kraków 1987, p. 32; <http://panufnik.polmic.pl/index.php/en/biografia/socrealizm-i-ucieczka-z-polski>, retrieved 21.12.2015; DAGMAR DOPIERAŁA, *Refleksje wokół Symfonii polskiej Zygmunta Mycielskiego*, in: *Twórczość Zygmunta Mycielskiego jako dziedzictwo kultury polskiej i europejskiej*, ed. Grzegorz Oliwa, Rzeszów 2008, p. 88.

²⁹ Thomas does refer to the difficult choices faced by composers and some of the compositions produced during these years. ADRIAN THOMAS, *Polish Music since Szymanowski*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 42-50, 59-60; DAVID TOMPKINS, *Composing the Party Line*, West Lafayette, Indiana 2013, pp. 27-31; MAŁGORZATA GASIOROWSKA, *Bacewicz*, Kraków 1999, pp. 181-184.

³⁰ LISA COOPER VEST, *The Discursive Foundations of the Polish Musical Avant-garde at Midcentury: Aesthetics of Progress, Meaning, and National Identity*. Indiana University 2014, pp. 10-11.

³¹ STEFANIA ŁOBACZEWSKA, *Czy muzyka dzisiejsza ma funkcję społeczną?* „Muzyka Polska” 1934, pp. 184-189; MICHAŁ KONDRACKI, *Stosunek kompozytorów do muzyki ludowej*, „Muzyka Polska” 1936, pp. 106-112; KONSTANTY REGAMEY, *Snobizm a postęp w muzyce współczesnej*, „Muzyka Polska” 1937, pp. 56-62; IZYDOR MONAS, *Czyżby kryzys muzyki?* „Muzyka polska” 1938, pp. 60-64.

³² BORIS SCHWARZ, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, enlarged edition 1917-1981, Bloomington, Indiana 1983, pp. 55, 114; LAUREL FAY, *Shostakovich. A Life*, Oxford 2000, pp. 84-89.

³³ Quoted in FAY, op. cit. 155.

³⁴ Quoted in FAY, op. cit. 156.

³⁵ FAY, op. cit., pp. 157-158; SCHWARZ, op. cit., p. 225.

INTRODUCING THE DESIRED IDEOLOGY

In Poland, composers' conversations after the war were related both to the interwar debates and the Soviet-led push for socialist realism. The concepts of accessibility and social responsibility were clearly on their minds. In late August 1945, at the first postwar conference of Polish composers, discussion points included the ideological character of the future union, compositional freedom, and music for the masses.³⁶ In an article about the conference, Stanisław Wiechowicz offered a moderate viewpoint, stating his desire to maintain compositional freedom while providing „the best performance[s] of the finest music to the broad masses“.³⁷ In contrast, Witold Rudziński stated that „a contemporary composer...wants to sacrifice many of his own personal desires...to coordinate his work with the liveliest needs of reborn...Polish culture“.³⁸ Rudziński, who would become a proponent of socialist realism, worked for the Ministry of Culture and Art from 1947-1948 and was the Composers Union president from 1950-1951.

In 1946, compositional freedom was still officially accepted, but some composers and cultural officials spoke in terms related to socio-political aspirations. For example, Sokorski, a member of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR)—then the name of Poland's Communist-aligned party—spoke at that year's Composers Union convention about overcoming class prejudices in composition.³⁹

Anne Applebaum has argued in her book *Iron Curtain, The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956* that Soviet domination of Eastern Europe was a foregone conclusion following the end of World War II. Although an appearance of multi-party governing and freedom of activities initially existed, Soviets never intended this to be an ongoing state of affairs. Sokorski's 1946 speech to composers formed, I believe, one of the initial steps taken by Communist officials to convince musical artists to accept a Soviet-style system.

³⁶ ZKP, Akt 12/1, Z I Walnego Zjazdu Związku Kompozytorów Polskich w Krakowie 29 sierpień–1 wrzesień 1945 r.

³⁷ STANISŁAW WIECHOWICZ, *Kompozytor w dobie dzisiejszej (refleksje w związku ze zjazdem kompozytorów polskich)*, „Ruch Muzyczny“ 1945, no. 1, p. 7.

³⁸ WITOLD RUDZIŃSKI, *Nowe casy – nowe zadania*, „Ruch Muzyczny“ 1945, no. 1, p. 8.

³⁹ ZKP, Akt 12/2, I Walny Zjazd (1, 2, 3.x.1946 Warszawa), p. 3. Sokorski was present at the Composers Union convention as a member of the Central Commission of Professional Unions (Komisja Centralna Związków Zawodowych).

In January 1947, parliamentary elections in Poland were won via fraudulent means by a bloc dominated by the same Polish Workers' Party. This was effectively the beginning of Communist control in Poland, long before the official creation of the Polish United Workers Party in December 1948.⁴⁰ The debate about acceptable compositional practices heated up. Stefan Kisielewski had asserted in December 1946 that „a composition isn't national...because it contains quotes from folklore.“⁴¹ He continued to promote the need for artistic excellence and an awareness of diverse musical styles in subsequent years. (Following the 1949 Łagów conference, Kisielewski was relieved of his position at Kraków's Higher School of Music due to his purportedly formalist views.)⁴² Promoting a different outlook later in 1947, in a *Ruch Muzyczny* issue devoted to Soviet music, was Zofia Lissa, a musicologist who served as the cultural attaché for the Polish embassy in Moscow from 1945 to 1947 and as a vice-director in the Polish Ministry of Culture and Art from 1947 to 1948. For her, composers in capitalist countries, who allegedly did not care about their nation's musical culture, wrote music that only educated listeners could appreciate. In contrast, Soviet composers refrained from „ultramodern, extremely innovative stylistic trends“ and drew inspiration from folk music.⁴³ Lissa's musical knowledge and her connections to high-level cultural officials gave her a leading role in the battle (to use a socialist realist term) to convince composers of the proper direction for Polish music.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ ANNE APPLEBAUM, *Iron Curtain, The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956*, New York 2012, pp. 205-206.

⁴¹ STEFAN KISIELEWSKI, *Muzyka narodowa i próby obrazoburstwa*, „Tygodnik powszechny“ 1946, no. 91, quoted in *Przegląd prasy „Ruch Muzyczny“* 1947, no. 1, p. 26; also in STEFAN KISIELEWSKI, *Pisma i felietony muzyczne* vol. 1, Warsaw 2012, p. 294. See LESZEK POLONY, *Polski kształt sporu o istotę muzyki*, Kraków 1991, for additional details on Kisielewski's polemics on topics related to compositional freedom.

⁴² DANUTA GWIZDALANKA AND KRZYSZTOF MEYER, *Witold Lutosławski. Droga do dojrzałości*, Kraków 2003, p. 275; <http://kisielewski.org.pl/index.php/stefan-kisielewski/kisiel-kompozytor>, retrieved 21.12.2015.

⁴³ ZOFIA LISSA, *Kształtowanie się stylu w muzyce radzieckiej*, „Ruch Muzyczny“ 1947, no. 23, pp. 4-7.

⁴⁴ The relationship of Lissa's prewar writings to her postwar views related to formalism and realism was discussed in SŁAWOMIR WIECZOREK, *Na froncie muzyki. Socrealistyczny dyskurs o muzyce w Polsce w latach 1948-1955*, Wrocław 2014, pp. 103-113. For a discussion of subtle shifts of opinion in Lissa's writings during the socialist realist period, see also POLONY, *Polski kształt sporu o istotę muzyki*, op. cit., pp. 277-311.

At the Composers Union's annual meeting in October 1947, ideological conversations turned more definitively to composers' social responsibilities, including the need to provide music for workers and the military. However, most members ignored these issues, preferring to discuss how to improve their daily musical life.⁴⁵ The same year, musicologists were invited to participate; they would be officially accepted into the union in 1948. Thus the membership in Poland's union would mirror that of the Soviet Composers Union. Musicologists were given the task of guiding composers in „acquiring new artistic forms...for new listeners [and] diagnosing the cause of the crisis in contemporary music.”⁴⁶

The public declaration of socialist realism in the Polish arts came a few weeks later, in a speech given by the country's president, Bolesław Bierut, at the opening of the Wrocław radio station. To quote, „The responsibility of a creator...is to feel the pulse of the working people, their desires and needs, to draw inspiration...from their emotions and experiences...[A creator's]...goal should be to...ennoble the mass's level of living. An artistic work separated from this goal, art for art's sake, comes from asocial motives.” Ominously, he also said „the nation must shape its creators' culture by recognizing or rejecting their products.”⁴⁷ The stage for a full-scale implementation of socialist realism in the arts was now set and, indeed, had been prepared in advance. It was still more than a year and a half before the Łagów conference began.

EDUCATION, OR HOW COMPOSITION SHOULD REFLECT SOCIALIST REALISM

The question now was how to put ideology into practice. At Prague's International Congress of Composers and Critics in 1948, composers were directed to link their work to their own country's culture, express the emotions of the masses, and write vocal music.⁴⁸ The Polish Composers Union's official statement from that year's annual conference affirmed that a composer's task was to produce works understandable by new listeners. Elitism in music was declared obsolete, although paradoxically, the newest achievements in compositional technique need not be avoided.⁴⁹ Institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Art,

working through their sympathizers in the union, which now included fifteen musicologists, had succeeded in inserting their ideology into its public declarations. The question of whether individual composers were similarly persuaded seems to have been partly answered by the decision of nearly half of them to avoid attending their own convention.⁵⁰ Moreover, composers were already experiencing pressure from cultural authorities. Lutosławski had complained in the summer of 1948 that Sokorski, by then the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Art, had reminded him that he did not write music for the masses and that his First Symphony could not be performed in Poland. Although it was heard again in October 1949, several members of the Soviet delegation to the International Chopin Piano Competition characterized it as formalist; it then disappeared from the Polish repertoire until 1959.⁵¹

The musical genre most favored by proponents of socialist realism was the mass song. Following two retreats held to discuss appropriate texts, in 1948 Polish Radio and the Ministry of Culture and Art organized a competition for such songs, which were to be simple and preferably based on Polish folk themes or written in the style of Polish patriotic or military songs.⁵² Of 408 songs reportedly submitted, only 68 passed the first round of elimination. The remaining were dismissed because they “were harmonically complicated, hinted of jazz or were sentimental waltzes, naive mazurkas, [or] primitive marches, [or had] no honest musical idea.”⁵³ The search for ideologically pure music was thus put into practice.

In 1949, prior to the start of the Łagów conference, Polish compositions were already being critiqued for their adherence to realist principles. For example,

⁵⁰ ZKP, Akt 12/4, IV Walny Zjazd ZKP (20, 21, 22.XI.1948), 24, Lista obecności członków Związku Kompozytorów Polskich na Walny Zjazd, Załącznik Nr. 5.

⁵¹ LEON MARKIEWICZ, ed., *Korespondencja Grzegorza Fitelberga z lat 1941-1953*, Katowice 2003, pp. 133-134; GWIZDALANKA AND MEYER, op. cit., pp. 183, 334; BN (National Library, Warsaw), WOSPR concert program, 2 October 1949.

⁵² The retreats, held in November 1947 and March 1948, were organized by the Composers and Writers Unions. ZYGMUNT MYCIELSKI, *O Departamencie Muzyki w Ministerstwie Kultury i Sztuki*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, no. 7, p. 13; *Kronika*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, no. 7, p. 22.

⁵³ *Sprawozdanie z konkursu na polską pieśń masową*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, no. 17, pp. 13-15. The Composers Union also held a separate competition in 1948 for works based on Polish themes that could be performed by amateur ensembles. Other organizations also organized mass song competitions. *Związek Kompozytorów Polskich ogłasza konkurs*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, no. 7, p. 24; GWIZDALANKA AND MEYER, op. cit., p. 248.

⁴⁵ ZKP, Akt 12/3, III Walny Zjazd ZKP (20, 21.X.47).

⁴⁶ *I Zjazd Muzykologów Polskich*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, nos. 22-24, p. 6.

⁴⁷ BOLESŁAW BIERUT, *O upowszechnieniu kultury*, Kraków 1948, pp. 12-13, 19.

⁴⁸ *Manifest*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1948, nos. 13-14, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁹ *Deklaracja. Walne Zgromadzenie Związku Kompozytorów Polskich*, „Ruch Muzyczny” 1949, no. 1, p. 13.

Roman Palester's *Little Serenade* was criticized for its virtuosic technical means, in part due to listeners' negative reactions.⁵⁴ In June, critic Jerzy Kuryluk lambasted Lutosławski's *Symphonic Variations*, which bear the influences of Szymanowski and Stravinsky, by describing the work as a "chaos of sounds" while hinting that the composer wrote formalist music. At the same time, he praised Grażyna Bacewicz's folk-tinged Third Violin Concerto (1948) as music for the masses.⁵⁵ Musicologist Józef Chomiński praised Bolesław Woytowicz's *Twelve Etudes* for piano as an example of how to avoid formalism.⁵⁶ (More than a year later, however, Rudziński claimed these same etudes were formalist.)⁵⁷

Although critics had begun to use the prescribed ideological terms, little concrete advice on appropriate musical style had been provided. The definitions of formalism and realism, especially the latter, were still murky. Clarifying these issues was to be among the tasks of the Łagów composers' conference. For writers, artists, and dramaturgists, similar events had already been held in Szczecin, Nieborów and Obory, respectively. Composers could not have been surprised to receive their invitations to Łagów.

This event was attended by approximately twenty-five composers, musicologists, and cultural officials, including representatives of all generations. Among the most prominent absentees was Andrzej Panufnik, who was arguably Poland's best composer. Kisielewski was also not in attendance, but neither were about a dozen other composers active at that time.⁵⁸ Included on the agenda was a single prepared speech, to be given by

Zygmunt Mycielski, the president of the Composers Union. However, the debates were dominated by Lissa and Sokorski, who apparently had speeches ready in their pockets.

According to Mycielski, music history was a series of constantly shifting compositional styles occurring in a natural progression of events. Such an historical viewpoint did not explain current events, however, for now art had to be created for an entire nation. Mycielski also stated, for the record, that the Composers Union now accepted realism and rejected formalism, with the caveat that a work could not be deemed formalist after only one hearing. This last wish was not always put into practice.⁵⁹

Sokorski signaled almost immediately that this event would be a continuation of previous discussions, for he referred to the lack of progress made towards "the specified creative path" since the 1948 Composers Union convention.⁶⁰ As he had said on other occasions, realism in music could not be precisely defined; his intent at Łagów was to approach but not formulate such definitions.⁶¹ He encouraged composers to find an acceptable means for emotional expression in their music, which should be universally understood. He also cautioned against „a mistaken crackdown on formalism," yet within a few minutes he characterized many of Palester's compositions as bearing „traits of insurmountable formalism."⁶²

Lissa disagreed with Sokorski's approach, saying his generally psychological discussion would not lead to an effective solution for composers.⁶³ She rejected as decadent all technical innovations developed from 1914 to 1939, including neo-classicism, atonality, and anything that lacked melody. Instrumental music

⁵⁴ BRONISŁAW RUTKOWSKI, *Życie muzyczne w kraju. Kraków*, „Ruch Muzyczny" 1949, no. 2, p. 17. See also ZOFIA HELMAN, *Roman Palester. Twórca i dzieło*, Kraków 1999, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Wieczorek also discussed responses to Kuryluk's criticism of Lutosławski's work. SŁAWOMIR WIECZOREK, *Od 'kakofonii dźwięków' do 'wielkiej muzyki'. Krytyka muzyczna socrealizmu o muzyce Witolda Lutosławskiego*, „Res Facta Nova" 2013, p. 219.

⁵⁶ JÓZEF MICHAŁ CHOMIŃSKI, *O społecznej wartości dzieła muzycznego*, „Ruch Muzyczny" 1949, no. 2, p. 7.

⁵⁷ ZKP, 12/116, Protokół z pierwszego przesłuchania Sekcji Muzyki Pedagogicznej Z. K.P. odbytego w dniu 31. października 1950 r. w auli Państw. Wyższej Szkoły Muzycznej w Katowicach, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Rudziński noted that Kisielewski, Rytel, Spisak, Szałowski and others were not invited to Łagów. AKP (Archiwum Kompozytorów Polskich), Rudziński personal papers, 7 August 1949. According to Gąsiorowska, Bacewicz did attend, although Thomas claims the opposite. MAŁGORZATA GAŚSIOROWSKA, op. cit., p. 184; Thomas, *Polish Music*, op. cit., p. 83. A list of attendees can be derived from the speakers at the conference and a photo of participants, „Ruch Muzyczny" 1949, no. 14, p. 2.

⁵⁹ ZKP, 12/91, Załącznik Nr. 2, Zygmunt Mycielski, Przemówienie na zjeździe muzycznym w Łagowie Lubuskim, dnia 5. Sierpnia 1949 r. O zadaniach związku kompozytorów polskich, pp. 3, 12, 14; ZKP, Akt 12/116, Protokół i przesłuchania sekcji muzyki estradowej. Kraków, 5.xii.1950.

⁶⁰ *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 12.

⁶¹ The original transcript has „nie ich sformułowanie, ale zbliżenie się do nich." ZKP, Akt 12/91, Konferencji kompozytorów w Łagowie Lubuskim, pp. 3-4. The *Ruch Muzyczny* version uses „nie ich sformułowanie, lecz analiza poszczególnych pojęć." *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 13. See also WŁODZIMIERZ SOKORSKI, *Rodzi się nowa muzyka*, in: *Sztuka w walce o socjalizm*, Warsaw 1950. The latter reprints a speech made in January 1949.

⁶² *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 13. Sokorski deemed Palester's 1937 ballet *Song of the Earth* and his 1948 film music to *Border Street* more acceptable than his other works.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

reflected a tendency toward formalism. New compositions should unite Poland's musical heritage with a new language that reflected the current social era. Appropriating folk music was desired, as were vocal works.⁶⁴

Although Lissa's comments seemed to provide a somewhat practical definition of realism in music, Sokorski's response indicated otherwise: „Lissa's thoughts [are] not ... a group of established theses but [form] discussion material.”⁶⁵ Those present must have realized at that point that there was opportunity for future disagreement or, at the very least, flexibility, if even avid members of the Polish United Workers Party, as both Sokorski and Lissa were, did not have a party line when it came to musical composition. Chomiński contributed to this lack of consensus by declaring later that “the content of purely instrumental music is almost an unresolved issue. We know that its themes should be linked to reality...but we cannot say on what that link should be based”.⁶⁶

Many of the composers present resisted the views expressed by Lissa, Sokorski and Chomiński, although the degree of their stated dissatisfaction varied. Some speakers were perhaps hedging their bets by not expressing unconditional support for either side of the ideological debate. Piotr Perkowski said that “the matter of formalism and realism is simply a political issue,”⁶⁷ but seemed to admit that formalists were indifferent to the new reality. According to Woytowicz and Kazimierz Sikorski, a musical composition was incapable of reflecting any viewpoint about current social problems.⁶⁸ Sikorski warned that applying the Soviet concept of formalism would require musicians to ignore the past fifty years of compositional development. Woytowicz, whose own music was often agreeable to advocates of socialist realism, noted that various musical styles were needed to satisfy the needs of all listeners. He defended a composer's right to experiment, but at the same time asserted that composers were obligated to search for a musical language that was comprehensible to audiences. He complicated the picture, however, by urging that the musical literacy of potential audiences be improved as well as by claiming that some works considered formalist could, in fact, be understood by

many. Both Sikorski and Woytowicz asked for, but did not receive a more precise elaboration of the acceptable attributes of a realist composition.⁶⁹

Despite a lack of agreement on the characteristics of formalism and, especially, realism in music, the conference agenda moved to performances and critiques of specific compositions, listed in Table 1. Surely, after that, composers would be able to appreciate the differences between realist and formalist compositions. All or part of each work was heard live or on tape. These performance-discussions were among the first so-called *przesłuchania* in Poland that vetted compositions for ideological purposes. The concept for these examinations, or auditions, came from the Soviet Union, where similar events had occurred since at least the late 1930s. At Łagów, the plan was to measure each piece for its adherence to socialist realism, with composers expected to participate in critiquing or praising their colleagues.⁷⁰

One of the most striking aspects of these auditions was the relative paucity of time spent discussing the songs presented at the second concert. Given the oft-stated desire for vocal music as an emblem of the socialist era, it is puzzling that neither Sokorski nor Lissa chose to showcase the advantages of such works, even if only those by Klonek and Gradstein fit neatly into the category of mass song.⁷¹ That most composers declined to critique these pieces likely reflected their disinterest in the government's call for socially useful songs.

Despite the supposed disdain for instrumental music among promoters of socialist realism, orchestral music dominated these concerts. Perhaps the organizers wished to emphasize the failings of such compositions. In fact, the Ministry of Culture and Art had purposely planned to include pieces that represented both formalist and realist approaches. Moreover, the presence in Łagów of the Poznań Philharmonic, which performed most of the works presented, may have been too advantageous to ignore.⁷² As seen in Table 1, four of

⁶⁴ Ibidem, pp. 13-16.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 16.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 17.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 14. Rudziński's unpublished diary notes that Woytowicz made this remark. AKP, Rudziński personal papers, 8 August 1949.

⁶⁸ *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 14.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, pp. 14-15, 17. The word “Soviet” is omitted in *Ruch Muzyczny*, but is present in the original transcript, ZKP, 12/91, Konferencji kompozytorów w Łagowie Lubuskim, p. 3.

⁷⁰ RICHARD TARUSKIN, *Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4, Oxford 2005, p. 778; *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 12.

⁷¹ I have not been able to examine scores to all of the vocal works presented on the second concert.

⁷² The Presidium of the Composers Union compiled a list of works for the conference, most of which were performed. AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych) 366/1-728, Sprawozdanie Departamentu Twórczości Artystycznej za III Kwartał 1949 rok, 5; ZKP, Akt 12/28, Protokół z posiedzenia Prezydium Zarządu Gł. ZKP w dnia 29 czerwca 1949 r.;

the nine orchestral works presented were characterized as formalist by Sokorski. Most composers disagreed with his depictions, however, not only declining to criticize their colleagues, but also choosing either to praise the work or merely to suggest improvements in specific details.

Sokorski's condemnation of Turski's *Olympic Symphony* and Panufnik's *Nocturne* as formalist has been mentioned frequently by other commentators and, indeed, Turski's work dominated the proceedings, for it was repeatedly brought up even during discussions of subsequent works. Recipient of first prize at the 1948 Olympic Arts Competition in London, the symphony had been broadcast previously on Polish Radio (most likely this was the premiere performance in London led by Grzegorz Fitelberg on 18 September 1948). In Łagów, Sokorski berated it as a work whose „content...does not agree with the spirit of our times...A work that scares and disorients the listener.”⁷³ Lissa claimed it did not mobilize man — in other words, it did not end on a victorious note. Most composers disagreed with these assessments and instead praised the work for its emotional weight and reflection of wartime experiences. Perkowski, for example, followed Sokorski's comments by stating that „we should remember past evil in order to be able to build a new better life. Therefore the performance of this symphony cannot be a mistake.”⁷⁴

Panufnik's *Nocturne*, which had won first prize at the 1947 Szymanowski Competition, had been performed at home and abroad. As the only stylistically adventurous composition presented in Łagów, its lack of emphasis on melody and its predominantly non-triadic harmonies undoubtedly aroused suspicion for advocates of socialist realism. Although Sokorski's comments on this work were brief but pointed, Panufnik's peers openly contradicted his rebuke, saying *Nocturne* was “understandable by everyone” and would enjoy future success.⁷⁵

Comparing the scores of the Łagów pieces to the critiques dispensed there only invites continued confusion about what formalism and realism really meant when applied to composition. Composers at the

time must have been similarly perplexed. The least complicated of the works were those by Sikorski and Tadeusz Baird. Written when he was only twenty-one, Baird's *Sinfonietta*, which boasts clear construction and uncomplicated melodies, appealed to proponents of socialist realism in music. In fact, the only people who commented on the work, albeit briefly, were Sokorski and Jan Maklakiewicz, both of whom supported that musical path.⁷⁶

No consensus was reached concerning the simplest piece, Sikorski's *Overture for Small Orchestra*. Although not considered a formalist work, it still resisted straightforward categorization within a socialist realist framework. According to the composer, the piece was intended for performance by amateur ensembles, but Lissa said it was too difficult for such groups. Sokorski, however, thought it was „useful for the dissemination of music.” Sikorski's fellow composers held varied opinions: the piece was easy and accessible (Perkowski), too easy (Klon), or less accessible due to its hackneyed themes (Woytowicz).⁷⁷ These differences of perception can be attributed in part to the innately individual experience that *is* listening to music. However, the reliance of socialist realist advocates on such non-specific terms as „accessible” hindered their attempts to impose pragmatic boundaries between formalism and realism.

The remaining orchestral compositions heard at Łagów can be described briefly as more thickly textured, with varying degrees of chromatic harmonies and classical-romantic formal constructions. The comments about Mycielski's *Silesian Overture*, which stylistically occupies a middle ground between the works of Baird and Turski, also yielded a variety of opinions. Sokorski claimed „he was lost in the melodic ideas of the second movement...[yet]...it was compact and suggestive emotionally.” Although Sokorski also said that in Perkowski's formalist (and rhapsodic) Violin Concerto, the melody disintegrated, the melodic issues in Mycielski's work did not merit a similar ideological censure. What was melody supposed to look like, one wonders. According to Woytowicz, Mycielski's piece was the most accessible work on the first concert. Andrzej Klon initially said it was „representative of good music,” but ultimately deemed it formalist only because it was too difficult for amateurs.⁷⁸ Fortunately, his pronouncement did not carry the same weight of official

http://www.jemiolow.net/wycieczka_nr8_do_lagowa_47.html, retrieved 21.12.2015; MARKIEWICZ, op. cit., 163.

⁷³

http://www.olimpijski.pl/Media/files/pdf/Symf_Olimp_ksiazeczka.pdf, retrieved 12.21.2015; *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 19; MARKIEWICZ, op. cit., p. 166;

⁷⁴ *Konferencja kompozytorów*, pp. 18-19, 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 24; BEATA BOLESŁAWSKA, *Panufnik*, Kraków 2001, p. 121.

⁷⁶ *Sinfonietta* received its unofficial premiere at Łagów. *Konferencja kompozytorów*, pp. 28, 30.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19, 22-23.

⁷⁸ I am not familiar with Ekier's unpublished Piano Concerto. *Ibidem*, pp. 18-19, 24.

censure as Sokorski's did. Panufnik's *Nocturne* disappeared from the repertoire until May 1954; Turski's *Olympic Symphony*, Perkowski's Violin Concerto, and Malawski's *Symphonic Variations* were apparently not programmed in Poland for at least the remainder of the first post-war decade. However, even Sikorski's less problematic *Overture for Small Orchestra* was performed infrequently, if at all, making the interpretation of concert programs for their political astuteness a questionable endeavor, and one that requires keen awareness of the ideological rigors of the moment.⁷⁹

Given the dismay and bewilderment that composers probably felt at the conclusion of this conference, was there anything positive that could be taken from it? No conclusions had been reached regarding an approved musical style or styles. While rhetoric about formalism and realism abounded, even after lengthy discussions about specific compositions, nothing translated coherently to the problem of actually composing a piece of music. Although Sokorski tended to label compositions he did not like or understand as formalist, he did not do so for all of the more complicated works. For example, Bacewicz's Third Violin Concerto was neither praised nor rebuked.⁸⁰ Folk music was barely mentioned in discussions about specific pieces, although it was supposed to be an important aspect of realist music. Even the simpler compositions were not enthusiastically praised by those in official positions.

COMPOSERS REACT TO THE NEW REALITY

The multiplicity of opinions voiced throughout the conference, expressed without redress from officials present, provided composers with an opening for future action.⁸¹ They could perhaps foresee that they would be

⁷⁹ Based on concert programs at BN, Panufnik's *Nocturne* was presented by the Warsaw Philharmonic on 21 May 1954. Mycielski's *Silesian Overture* was performed in Kraków on 30 September 1949. The same day, Ekier's Piano Concerto was played by the Poznań State Philharmonic. Baird's *Sinfonietta* and Bacewicz's Violin Concerto No. 3 were heard frequently during this time. I am not aware of extant programs for concerts presented in factories and other worker venues where, perhaps, Sikorski's work was presented.

⁸⁰ The folk tune-based third movement of Bacewicz's concerto was not performed. GAŚIOROWSKA, op. cit., p. 184.

⁸¹ The one exception was Sokorski's rebuke of Maklakiewicz for his labeling of Sikorski's comments as anti-Soviet, a reference to Sikorski's concerns about using the Soviet definition of formalism. Sokorski stated that Maklakiewicz was not speaking for the Party. This reproach was not printed in *Ruch Muzyczny*, but appears in the original transcript. ZKP, Akt 12/91, Konferencji kompozytorów w Łagowie Lubuskim, p. 30.

allowed to disagree with government officials, if not publicly, then behind closed doors. They could also expect continued inconsistencies of interpretation by those having the power or responsibility to review compositions for possible public performance. What then, could composers do, other than either write simple music, which might still be criticized, or continue carefully along their own path, staying wary of current trends and decisions made by cultural authorities.

Although space does not permit a thorough vetting of Polish music and musical life between 1949 and 1955, several events can be highlighted in order to demonstrate how and why various composers dealt with authorities' continued demands for a new musical language. The lessons learned from the Łagów conference likely helped some composers to cope with the shifting terrain of Polish musical life during those years, including its psychological and economic pressures.

Certainly official criticism continued, as did ideological discussions similar to those of previous years. At the 1950 Composers Union's conference, Rudziński falsely claimed that commissions were not being given for realist compositions.⁸² Sokorski remarked at the same meeting that „we have many talented composers...however...some strange atmosphere of opposition reigns. We see composers withdrawing from the position that they held in Łagów.”⁸³ By late 1951, following the months-long Festival of Polish Music, Sokorski still wondered why music had yet to reflect the expected vibrancy of socialist art.⁸⁴ As late as 1953, Zofia Lissa referred to impressionistic qualities in Bacewicz's Third Violin Concerto when she admitted that theorists had not adequately clarified which traditions of Polish music were “progressive” and which were false and unnecessary. She pointed out that composers should reach for musical traditions prior to the impressionist era.⁸⁵

Although all Polish composers wrote works identifiable as conforming to some perceived principles of socialist realism, they did not fall into line as much as cultural officials had hoped. Many were displeased with the state

⁸² Commissions were granted for mass songs, for example. ZKP, Akt 12/5, V Walny Zjazd (16, 17, 18, 19.VI.1950 Wwa), p. 49.

⁸³ ZKP, Akt 12/5, V Walny Zjazd (16, 17, 18, 19.VI.1950 W-wa), p. 30.

⁸⁴ Sokorski made these comments at the 1951 Composers Union annual meeting, 11-14 December 1951. WŁODZIMIERZ SOKORSKI, *Od Łagowa do Festiwalu Muzyki Polskiej*, „Muzyka” 1952, nos. 1-2, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁵ AKP, Korespondencja Z. Lissy (1945-1955), Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuka, Państwowy Instytut Sztuki, 20 February 1953.

of cultural affairs in Poland. To determine the extent of their cooperation or dissent, we should consider the personal circumstances of each composer, for contrary to what Tompkins has said, not everyone was willing to cooperate with the desires of the authorities.⁸⁶

For various reasons, some composers did feel compelled to compose works desired by authorities. For example, as Thomas has noted, financial and health concerns were cited by Mycielski and Gradstein in their request for grants connected with the 1951 Festival of Polish Music. For the same event, Apolinary Szeluto was willing to compose songs in praise of Stalin, hoping that his son would then be permitted to leave the Soviet Union.⁸⁷ According to Gwizdalanka, Tadeusz Szeligowski was "inspired" to compose his opera *The Scholar's Revolt* due to a threat of arrest by the security services (UB) for his interwar political views. As part of a deal to get his father released from prison, Baird was apparently pressured to write three compositions, including two cantatas (*Ballad of a Soldier's Cup* and *Song of Revolution*) and a mass song (*At a Warsaw Rally*). If true, Baird's interest in a simplified musical language, first expressed at Łagów, did not prevent authorities from manipulating his personal concerns to their advantage.⁸⁸

Other composers chose to leave Poland in search of less restrictive situations. Nearly all of Panufnik's compositions written between 1949 and 1954, the year of his escape to Great Britain, incorporated Polish folk songs or were arrangements of early music, which on the surface points to his fidelity to the socialist realist cause. He was, we know, forced to give speeches and travel abroad on behalf of the government. Most scholars agree that he left Poland so that he could compose more freely, without these extraneous duties.⁸⁹ Palester, wary of the changes that had been occurring in his native country since 1947, eventually declined offers

of employment and performances that were contingent on his return to Poland from France.⁹⁰

Bacewicz, on the other hand, continued her successful career as a violinist and composer. As she told her brother, Polish composers did not compose just mass songs, for she received commissions for quartets, symphonies, concertos, and pedagogical works.⁹¹ The latter had been a part of her oeuvre even before the Łagów conference, but they also satisfied the government's current expectation for realist works, as did the folk-inspired elements in some of her compositions. She wrote at least one mass song, set to Wygodzki's *Song of Unity* (*Pieśń jedności*), this in November 1948 (that is, before Łagów) for a competition celebrating the "United Workers Party".⁹²

Others also straddled the fence. For example, Tadeusz Machl continued to write organ concertos, but composed a cantata for youth (*Kantata młodzieżowa*). Kazimierz Serocki composed cantatas and songs, but flirted with the undesirable idioms of jazz and twelve-tone structures in his 1952 *Suite of Preludes*. Lutosławski wrote several mass songs, some of them after being warned of potential repercussions if he avoided the task. Nevertheless, at the 1950 Composers Union convention, when Sokorski placed Lutosławski's name on the list of speakers, the composer refused to cooperate. In 1952, he refused to compose music to a film about General Świerczewski, a Pole who fought with the Soviets during World War II. Both Serocki and Lutosławski were among composers who attempted to avoid overt references to socialist realist idolatry when selecting song texts.⁹³

Symphonies, quartets, and other instrumental genres were indeed commissioned and scheduled for concert performances and broadcasts on government-controlled Polish Radio, even if they lacked references to folk music. They were also important components of the

⁸⁶ TOMPKINS, op. cit., pp. 32, 36.

⁸⁷ ADRIAN THOMAS, *File 750: Composers, Politics and the Festival of Polish Music (1951)*, http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issue/5.1.02/thomasfile.html retrieved 21.12.2015.

⁸⁸ *Konferencja kompozytorów*, p. 28; DANUTA GWIZDALANKA, *Trzy postawy wobec totalitaryzmu: Roman Palester – Andrzej Panufnik – Witold Lutosławski*, in *Muzyka i Totalitaryzm*, ed. Maciej Jabłoński and Janina Tatarska, Poznań 1996, p. 181; <http://baird.polmic.pl/index.php/pl/biografia/grupa-49-i-walka-o-ojca-1949-1954>, retrieved 12.21.2015; <http://baird.polmic.pl/index.php/pl/tworczosc/w-neoklasycznym-kregu>, retrieved 12.21.2015.

⁸⁹ BOLESŁAWSKA, op. cit., pp. 146-155, 163-165; THOMAS, *Polish Music*, op. cit., pp. 65--69.

⁹⁰ HELMAN, op. cit., pp. 162-170.

⁹¹ Gąsiorowska questioned whether other sections of the same letter, which described the senselessness of avant-garde music, were written solely to avoid censorship or if Bacewicz was convinced of their truth. Gąsiorowska, op. cit., p. 185.

⁹² The score to Bacewicz's song is not extant, to my knowledge. The Polish United Workers Party did not exist when she submitted the piece. AAN, MKIS 366/1-499, *Pieśni nadesłane na konkurs Pieśni Zjednoczonych Partii Robotniczych*. Also, the incorporation of folk music into other compositions is not necessarily a sign of acquiescence to socialist realist principles, but could be the result of a composer's natural interest in such activity.

⁹³ THOMAS, *Polish Music*, op. cit., p. 64. IRINA NIKOLSKA, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, Stockholm 1994, 41-42.

1951 and 1955 Festivals of Polish Music.⁹⁴ Moreover, although many composers composed at least a few mass songs, the vast majority were written by only a few composers, notably Alfred Gradstein, Edward Olearczyk, Tadeusz Sygietyński, and Władysław Szpilman, all of whom favored the socialist realist paradigm more so than Lutosławski, Bacewicz, and others. Bolesław Szabalski, Artur Malawski, and Mycielski wrote no mass songs, to my knowledge. The aforementioned reluctance of Łągów participants to critique songs was thus repeated through their unwillingness to revel in the very type of music preferred by cultural officials.

Composers' distaste for criticizing their colleagues also characterized the *przesłuchania* that took place somewhat regularly beginning in September 1950. Intended at least initially for all new works, these auditions were to allow composers to determine if their compositions could be „understood by the public and [formed] a bond with the people“. Attendees usually preferred to critique a work's musical details rather than assess its success as a reflection of contemporary reality. Many composers displayed their lack of interest or, perhaps, their refusal to support official ideology by simply not attending. Even the union's leadership often failed to appear at the auditions their own organization had scheduled.⁹⁵

Inside the Composers Union, unanimity did not reign. Mycielski, the union's president at the time of the Łągów conference, refused to accept a second term in office in 1950, saying that he could not follow the Party line. Rudziński took over, but was forced to resign in 1951 after complaints from the union's membership related to his aggressive criticism of composers' efforts.⁹⁶

Despite the government's attempt via competitions, commissions, and auditions to direct the compositional output of composers, its officials were never able to achieve their desired level of success. The Łągów

conference, part of a stream of ideological rhetoric and criticism of compositions that persisted for the better part of the first postwar decade, ultimately revealed a way in which to maneuver within a restrictive system that, by and large, was the product of a top-down approach to cultural policy.

Although the conference's organizers may have believed that their non-confrontational attitude would help persuade artists of the veracity of their philosophy, many composers instead recognized the loopholes they created. Since no one could agree on what socialist realism in music meant, composers could take advantage of the resulting atmosphere of ambiguity. While those who remained in Poland composed mass songs, cantatas and pedagogical works to satisfy authorities, some also pursued ideologically questionable initiatives in composition and their daily lives. Their endeavors to retain a sense of independence, even if some degree of accommodation also was necessary, proved to be an invaluable asset as they continued to operate within a Communist-led society.

⁹⁴ Poradowski's Violin Sonata, op. 5, and Machl's Organ Concerto are mentioned in *Audycje polskiego radia od 30.xii do 5.i.1952 r.*, „Radio i Świat“ 30 December 1951–5 January 1952, p. 14; Frieman's Clarinet Sonata No. 1 is listed in *Tydzień muzyczny w Polskim Radiu*, „Radio i Świat“ 6–12 January 1952, p. 2; Bacewicz's Overture for Strings and Krenz's Symphony were scheduled for broadcast in January 1950, *Audycje polskiego radia od 30.i do 5.ii.1950 r.*, „Radio i Świat“ 30 January–5 February 1950, p. 19.

⁹⁵ Protokół z pierwszego przesłuchania Sekcji Muzyki Pedagogicznej Z. K. P. odbytego w dniu 31 października 1950 5., ZKP, Akt 12/116. Akt 12/ 116 and Akt 12/126 include information on auditions organized by the Composers Union.

⁹⁶ ZYGMUNT MYCIELSKI, *Dziennik 1950-1959*, Warsaw 1999, pp. 15–20; GWIZDALANKA AND MEYER, op. cit., p. 226.

BACK IN THE DAY

This new feature extracts articles from *The Independent Scholar Quarterly* (TISQ) which was the predecessor of *The Independent Scholar* (TIS). Papers that appeared in TISQ did not undergo the same peer review process as those appearing in the main body of TIS; there is nevertheless much of value to be gleaned from TISQ. For this volume I have selected a short but interesting article by Valerie Abrahamsen, adapted from a talk first presented at the Sixth Gender and Archaeology Conference, Northern Arizona University, October 2000, in which she examines the legacy of the prehistoric goddess in Christian symbolism. The article originally appeared in TISQ Vol. 25, No. 1 (February 2012): 16-23.

SHELBY SHAPIRO

General Editor

SYMBOLS OF THE PREHISTORIC GODDESS IN OLD EUROPE: CONTINUITY AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

Valerie Abrahamsen, Th.D.

(Brattleboro, Vermont, USA)

In the beginning was the Goddess! In the beginning, when *homo sapiens* first emerged and began populating Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, a female deity reigned supreme. In the beginning, before civilization as we know it, for upwards of 200,000 years, ancestors of modern Westerners worshipped a powerful goddess.¹ The veneration of male deities, in contrast, began around the time of the Bronze Age (3200-1500 Before the Common Era [BCE]).² Who was this powerful, persistent goddess, and why did she seemingly disappear? Why did the culture that worshipped her last so long, and what kind was it? What can we learn from her that can inform our life in the 21st century?

THE SYMBOLS AND THE GODDESS

As a New Testament scholar and early church historian by training, I fell into the topic of the prehistoric goddess almost by accident. My doctoral research had focused on female cults in the city of Philippi in northern Greece, Philippi being one of the major cities visited by St. Paul. Designs on the mosaic floors of the city's early Byzantine basilicas included birds, plants and geometric shapes. The basilicas had been built in the fourth to sixth centuries of the Common Era (CE).³ As I read *The Civilization of the Goddess* by the late archaeologist and anthropologist Marija Gimbutas about her work at prehistoric sites in former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, I realized that the designs on the basilica's mosaics closely resembled those that Gimbutas had found on thousands of prehistoric artifacts. Was this just a coincidence?

¹ See, e.g., Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987) 49 and Marija Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, ed. Joan Marler. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers and San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) 222.

² Gimbutas, *Civilization*, 401.

³ Valerie A. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship at Philippi: Diana/ Artemis and Other Cults in the Early Christian Era* (Portland, ME: Astarte Shell Press, 1995) 151-77 and Abrahamsen, *Goddess and God*, 199-205.

Several facts about ancient Philippi suggested that adoration of a female deity in some form was far from dead as Christianity developed: two of Philippi's most prominent deities were Artemis, goddess of the hunt, and Isis, an Egyptian deity. Isis survived into the Byzantine era at Philippi despite the growth of the Christ-cult, and women had prominent roles there in both paganism and Christianity.⁴ My search was on for evidence of the goddess' survival at Philippi and beyond – and it started with interpretation of the symbols. The symbols, which appeared on paintings, jewelry, pottery, ritual and everyday vessels, and figurines, included birds and animals – ram, owl, vulture, duck, pig, stag, ox, peacock – as well as plants, trees, flowers and geometric symbols. The artifacts dated to about 7000-3500 BCE, roughly the Neolithic era in Europe, with the figurines uncovered by Gimbutas in her excavations being overwhelmingly female. This female figure is often pregnant or giving birth, yet in the guise of the White Lady, she represents inevitable death.⁵

As Gimbutas began to analyze what she found, she identified the goddess in her various manifestations – Bird Goddess, Snake Goddess, Goddess of Death and Regeneration. Some of Gimbutas' interpretations may seem like a stretch to us, yet in a pre-industrial society totally dependent upon Nature, they make perfect sense. The snake is a good example: contrary to the Jewish and Christian notion that the snake is the evil seducer, the snake of the goddess symbolized energy and, through the shedding of its skin, regeneration. Similarly, the bull is not a symbol of male ferocity but female power: its horns resemble both the crescent moon and Fallopian tubes.

The more abstract symbols on the artifacts are especially intriguing because lines and geometric shapes are often viewed as merely decorative. Gimbutas, however, postulated an entire symbolic language that Neolithic peoples used to communicate with their deity. The triangle, V and chevron were symbols of the goddess' pubic triangle, center of her vital life-producing power. Wavy lines and an M figure

meant water, milk, and breasts, fluids of life and their source.⁶

Through the symbols, Gimbutas could describe the kind of society that worshipped this deity: a true civilization where people lived in harmony with Nature and each other, where no weapons of war were found, where buildings could be several stories high – with plumbing – and where high artistic achievement was the norm, not the exception.⁷ By coercion, conversion, and violence, the female deity was subdued and eventually replaced by the male deity, at least at the official level. The goddess' ownership of life, resurrection, regeneration and rebirth were appropriated by the god; her strength became his strength; her wisdom became his wisdom.⁸ However, it is also apparent in examining some of these androcentric (male-centered) religious systems that the goddess did not entirely disappear. Athena, Artemis, Isis, Demeter, and Persephone still appear in the Graeco-Roman pantheon. Among Jews, God appears sometimes as Sophia/Wisdom and has maternal attributes. In Christianity, the Virgin Mary's cult was unsurpassed.

What is taking place? Are these female images only figments of male imagination, refashioned by male elites for their own misogynist purposes? What can women really take from Athena, the war goddess, or Mary, the impossible-to-emulate virgin-mother-saint? What, if anything, can we moderns learn from the knowledge that, millennia ago, the goddess reigned supreme?

The evidence strongly suggests that the prehistoric goddess survived in symbolism, myth, private ritual, liturgies, folklore, and magic into and through later ages and did so primarily among the common folk – "underground," as it were. The early Byzantine basilicas at Philippi contained symbols reminiscent of the goddess partly because they still resonated with the worshippers in those buildings. Although Christians reinterpreted the images, as we shall see, the Christian message could not have been successfully promulgated without some reference to images familiar to the people.

⁴ For an examination of women's roles in early Christianity at Philippi, see Valerie Abrahamsen, "Women at Philippi: The Pagan and Christian Evidence," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 3 (Fall 1987) 17-30.

⁵ Gimbutas extensively discusses goddess symbolism in *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989).

⁶ See especially Gimbutas, *Language*, 3-23 and 81-111, and Abrahamsen, *Goddess and God*, 237-44.

⁷ Gimbutas, *Civilization*, x-xi and 52.

⁸ See Sjöo and Mor, *Cosmic Mother*, passim.

TWO SYMBOLS: THE CROSS AND THE LABYRINTH

Many prehistoric symbols linked to the omnipotent goddess were ultimately appropriated in Judaism and Christianity. Here we will trace the development of two of those symbols in Christianity, the cross and the labyrinth. In Christian theology, the cross is the instrument of the ignominious death of Jesus: he was crucified on a cross of wood but then resurrected, with the cross becoming a symbol of victory over death. Prior to Christianity, however, the cross, especially in the form of a tree, symbolized life, vegetation, and fruitfulness – attributes of the goddess. Likewise, the earth out of which the tree grows is the body of the goddess.⁹ In human procreative terms, this earth, this body, is the goddess's "veil" or hymen. In the ancient imagination, the image is not obscene or vulgar but sacred: it was about Life – human, floral and faunal.¹⁰

By extension, the cross/tree also symbolized the phallus, an instrument of fertility. The tree/cross growing out of the earth is a powerful symbol of Life, directed by the goddess but played out androgynously. When the story started to circulate in the early years of the Common Era that Jesus died on a cross – on a tree – the ancient, pre-industrial mindset could easily see the connections: the phallus of Jesus (the cross) penetrates the body of the goddess (her "veil" or hymen). According to Barbara Walker, this imagery may be reflected in John 19:30: "It is consummated" or "It is accomplished." Jesus, the male god/phallus/cross/tree, has united with the earth/goddess/hymen, to give life to the world. This may further be reflected in Luke's version of Jesus' death: in 23:45, the veil of the temple is torn in half as Jesus dies.¹¹

These interpretations are now a long way from the tree as a symbol of life emerging naturally from the body of Mother Earth, the goddess. Early on, Christians believed that Jesus died unjustly, as a criminal, at the hands of a foreign power. When the goddess died, she was generally not murdered – she died because all of Nature dies and is then regenerated. In Jesus' case, however, his father, the supreme male God, *asks* that he die – grotesquely and violently. When the goddess dies, usually no blood is

shed; but when Jesus dies, his blood is shed, at the hands of human beings. State-sanctioned death is not natural, and such an image is indeed violent.

Christian interpreters, therefore, transformed a female symbol of *life* into a male symbol of *death*. The ensuing resurrection in Christian theology is not a natural phenomenon but a miracle attributed to the supreme male deity. In this interpretation, Christians are asked to believe that a gruesome death is salvific, beautiful, noble, life-affirming and holy. While Christ's victory over death has deep meaning to millions, it is important to realize that we have been asked to suspend our normal impulse to be disgusted and repelled by human beings killing each other – especially unjust death, and by the will of our sovereign, parental deity. We are asked to deny that a tree that grows, gives fruit, nourishes us and protects us from the sun, is unworthy of adoration. The natural world, our intuition and our intellect are turned upside down.

The labyrinth is another ancient symbol of the prehistoric goddess that has been appropriated by patriarchal religion. In recent years, labyrinths have been created in churches and church yards as an introspective form of meditation, centered on uniting with the male God, or as a symbolic pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where Jesus died.

To discuss the history of labyrinths is to discuss caves. People from the Paleolithic era communed with the deepest, most resonant and awesome powers in these dark spaces. The paintings in the caves, probably executed by religious leaders who were in touch with sublime truths, "could be reached only with great difficulty, along winding paths, narrow ledges, slippery and dangerous passages. . ." ¹² Creating the paintings and viewing them were not casual, everyday experiences but rather became ritualized as expressions of deep, vitally important experiences.

Because pre-industrial peoples viewed the very earth as "mother," a cave represented the womb of this mother – dark, mysterious, life-giving, and a repository of mystic influences.¹³ To be fully in touch and united with the goddess, indeed with oneself, one had to dance or walk the labyrinth – to travel through the mother goddess to one's real, ultimate self. This travel, or initiation, entailed ritualistically "dying" to one's past and then opening oneself to the mother's,

⁹ Sjöö and Mor, *Cosmic Mother*, 163-64.

¹⁰ Barbara G. Walker, "Jesus Christ," in Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983) 468.

¹¹ Walker, "Jesus Christ," 468.

¹² Sjöö and Mor, *Cosmic Mother*, 73.

¹³ Walker, *Encyclopedia*, 154.

the earth's, mysteries. The labyrinth, maze and spiral were associated with "the internal organs of the human anatomy as well as with the underworld, the one being the microcosm of the other." The tomb-cave is built to resemble the womb so that the initiate becomes reborn by following the spiral to the all-important center point.¹⁴

To prehistoric and other pre-industrial peoples, it would have been extremely important to be initiated in this manner once in a lifetime. Joseph Campbell illustrates this with a myth from the island of Malekula in the New Hebrides:

[w]hen the soul has been carried on a wind across the waters of death and is approaching the entrance of the underworld, it perceives a female guardian sitting before the entrance, drawing a labyrinth design across the path, of which she erases half as the soul approaches. The voyager must restore the design perfectly if he [sic] is to pass through it to the Land of the Dead. Those who fail, the threshold guardian eats. One may understand how very important it must have been, then, to learn the secret of the labyrinth before death.¹⁵

The "energy" of the labyrinth is crucial. The initiation rites in and around the labyrinth were very powerful and memorable but made even more so by energy and related natural phenomena in the caves themselves. A series of experiments conducted in Neolithic monuments in Great Britain a decade ago illustrate some of these phenomena. "Standing waves" of sound can be produced in passage graves by combining two sound waves of equal frequency and intensity traveling in opposite directions. When a group of people chanted in one of these spaces, the volume and intensity of the sound became so enhanced that it was difficult to determine its source. Even more disconcerting was "the disquieting feeling that some sounds were emerging from inside the head and body of the listener" and that the sound became "louder as the listener moved away from the source, or fluctuated as others moved around the chamber."¹⁶

At certain Neolithic monuments, these researchers also demonstrated a phenomenon called the Helmholtz Resonance. This is created when sound waves generated in the burial or other chamber make the air expand and contract repeatedly. In prehistory, such a sound was created by drumming, probably at two beats per second; the notes are *felt*, not heard. In the British experiments, "volunteers reported dizziness, sensations of ascent, and the feeling that their breathing and pulse were affected. In the research literature, there are accounts of vibration, balance disturbance, headaches, and even altered states of consciousness caused by similar sounds. For the people of prehistory, it is easy to imagine that such sensations seemed to originate in the supernatural realm,"¹⁷ making the entire cave experience memorable, if not life-altering.

Relatedly, the ancients saw the earth as alive, with a life-spirit of energy connected to the very core of the planet and to the stars, the moon and the sun. Scientists can now confirm their intuition: the earth force, like a magnetic current, is in fact emitted by underground waters. This force causes wave-motions perpendicular to the earth's surface, forming spiral patterns, mazes and labyrinths. Lines formed by this motion remain constant over time and are utilized by birds and animals. Ancient peoples knew about these phenomena and built their sacred monuments and pathways accordingly. Places in the earth that were particularly affected by or in tune with these energy forces were known to foster social and personal harmony, bring about healing, ease labor pains, and enable communication with the divine.¹⁸

The more modern usages of the labyrinth, originating in Medieval times, are very different from the goddess-centered journey inward to tap into the powers of the earth and one's own soul and psyche, for the purpose of living harmoniously with other people and all of Nature. While there is nothing wrong with a meditative walk through the labyrinth, and nothing wrong with attempting to connect with something higher than oneself, we should consider what has been lost. If what has been lost is something

¹⁴ Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982; first ed., Viking Press, 1959) 69.

¹⁵ Campbell, *Primitive*, 68-69.

¹⁶ Aaron Watson, "Sounds of the Spirit World," *Scientific American Discovering Archaeology* (January/February 2000) 88-89.

¹⁷ Watson, "Spirit World," 90-91.

¹⁸ Sjöö and Mor, *Cosmic Mother*, 124-28. They refer here to Guy Underwood, *The Pattern of the Past* (London: Museum, Press, 1969; London: Abacus, 1972) and John Mitchell, *The Earth Spirit* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975; New York: Avon Books, 1975).

that humanity could use at this point in its journey, then we must reclaim it.

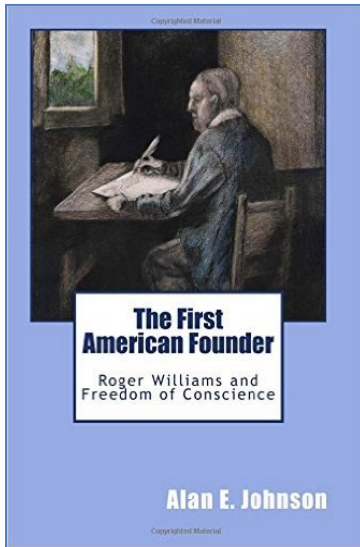
CONCLUSION

As we can see, current Christian symbols have a long history, originating in a time when human beings were closely connected to the earth and Nature. Early peoples viewed their world in female terms and venerated an all-powerful female deity. The goddess of prehistory, though eventually overshadowed by male deities, survived "underground" through time and into the Graeco-Roman era when Christianity took hold and developed. Early Christians, still agrarian and close to the earth, retained many of the symbols, beliefs and rites associated with an all-powerful female deity. A look under the surface of the male-centered aspects of Christianity can uncover perspectives and attitudes helpful to us today. The recapture of an awesome veneration for Life in all its forms is perhaps the greatest legacy of the prehistoric goddess.

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BOOK REVIEWS



The First American Founder: Roger Williams and Freedom of Conscience

Alan E Johnson

Philosophia Publications, Pittsburgh, PA, 2015.

Paperback: 662 pages. Kindle version also available

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ISBN-13: 978-1511823715

<http://www.amazon.com/The-First-American-Founder-Conscience/dp/1511823712>

"When they [the Church] have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God hath ever broke down the wall itself, removed the Candlestick, and made His Garden a wilderness..." Roger Williams, 1644.

In *The First American Founder: Roger Williams and Freedom of Conscience*, Alan Johnson takes a completely new look at the early beginnings of what we all accept today as a given in American history, the concept of "separation of church and state" in our governmental system. In this exploration of Williams' output Johnson brings the reader along on a journey that reveals that, long before Thomas Jefferson and James Madison argued for a "wall of separation between church and state" for a young America, the seventeenth-century New England minister Roger Williams' belief in "freedom of conscience" (89) for all men – believers in Christianity or not – had pre-dated their convictions by more than a century.

The First American Founder is both an informative and insightful exposé of an "idea" perhaps "before its time," but one that would nevertheless help shape the future of the American government. In delineating the many steps that Roger Williams went through in examining his faith, as well as his moral beliefs, and how those tied in with his concept of what was "just" and "right," Johnson brings the reader along on the journey, beginning with some necessary historical background into the religious ideology of those who first settled in Massachusetts Bay and in the Plymouth Colony. Both Puritans and Pilgrims brought a strict religious belief that was grounded in Calvinist

predestination theology which called for religious conformity in all things, and with severe consequences for any who dissented. The idea of "religious freedom" actually translated only to the freedom to practice *their* religion (238), free of persecution from England's "Established [Anglican] Church" (16-17, see also Appendix B).

Johnson's Preface provides a helpful road-map for the rest of the book, and the first eight chapters correspond to "successive periods" in Roger Williams' life, beginning with his early life in England and moving on to his arrival in the New World (xxvi, 22). Johnson also divides these chapters into sections corresponding with the topics discussed. One of the more consequential, Chapter 2, along with covering various developments in his life, brings the beginning of Williams' conflict with "New England theocracy" (51-60) – a conflict that ultimately led to his permanent banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and his founding of Providence Plantations (later to become Rhode Island) established on the basis of "full liberty of conscience" (61-73). Chapter 9 (250-295) deals with Roger Williams' influence on the "generation that obtained American independence and established the Constitution and Bill of Rights." Chapter 10 then introduces a contemporary perspective, relating the issues to the present day in which the question of separation of church and state is in some ways still a debatable issue (308-311).

In *The First American Founder*, Alan Johnson not only brings out the religious aspects of Roger Williams but also sheds light on Williams' acumen as a statesman and his "unusually enlightened approach" to Native Americans (112, 155). Johnson cites a letter authored by Williams to the Town of Providence – often called his "Ship of State" letter (221-224) – in answer to the reported unrest during his absence. In it Williams made clear the importance of civil government and the "common good" in matters not spiritual, putting an end to any idea of "anarchic views." Aside from his political and religious treatises, Williams also authored *A Key Into the Language of America*, a work based on the Native American tribes that he had encountered, and who had helped Williams to survive the winter of his banishment from Massachusetts Bay (110-117). His understanding and appreciation for the Native American people was demonstrated through both his writing and his firmly held belief that the only honest way to acquire new land in America was through

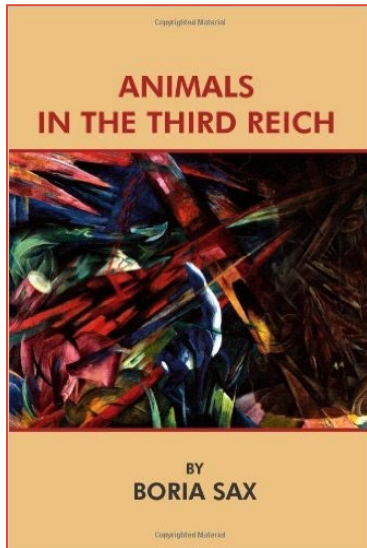
"voluntary transactions" of trade or purchase from the tribes involved (37, 64, 114) – a novel idea to the English Crown. Unfortunately, Williams' idea (expressed in the Preface) that "this *Key*, respects the Native language of it, and happily may unlooke some Rarities concerning the Natives themselves, not yet discovered..." (111) was never realized.

Johnson has given a well-rounded view of Roger Williams and his valuable contribution to American heritage. *The First American Founder* is accessible to both the general and the more specialized reader. He has carefully outlined Williams' meticulous thinking, and has examined the means by which he could be, and was, an influential force in American history (251). Johnson's careful research has found evidence that those establishing the new government for the United States – such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Adams – had been influenced by Williams' progressive ideas as they were expressed in his various books, treatises, and letters; these were read by others with whom these prime movers had contact both before and during the formative years of the American republic: Rhode Island governor Stephen Hopkins, Baptist preacher Isaac Backus, and Congregational minister Jeremy Belknap to name just a few (252-253, 285-286).

There could therefore be no better title than that which Johnson has chosen for *The First American Founder's* penultimate chapter (250): "Roger Williams and the Founding of the United States of America."

SERENA NEWMAN

Serena Newman holds an M.A. in History from the University of Massachusetts focusing primarily in Early American and Constitutional History; she has taught as Adjunct Faculty in History and Government and is currently a Reader with the College Board AP History Exams.



Animals in the Third Reich

Boria Sax

2nd edition

Providence, R.I.: Yogh & Thorn/The Poet's Press, 2000, 2013. ISBN 0-922558-70-1

<http://www.amazon.com/Animals-Third-Reich-Boria-Sax/dp/0922558701>

Scholars have approached the Third Reich, its history, ideology, and activities from any number of approaches: analyzing the "German character," the rise of modernity, psychologically and sociologically; from the viewpoints of institutions, gender, religious clashes, and economic developments and class struggle. Boria Sax takes an entirely novel approach. He examines the Nazi "relationship" to and with the animal world. This involved, among other things, Darwinism (especially Herbert Spencer's "survival of the fittest"), German Romanticism and *volkisch* beliefs.

In *Animals in the Third Reich*, Boria Sax grapples with an amazing contradiction: a country responsible for the systematic death, maiming, and torture of millions of human beings had, at the same time, the most stringent legislation in the world concerning (non-human) animals. Sax draws fascinating connections among several fields including mythology, anthropology, social Darwinism. His analysis starts with the Nazi concept of nature, animals and the relationship of people and animals. Nature is not harmonious, but rough and brutal; central to this view is the relationship of hunter and hunted, predator and prey. There is a hierarchy in the animal world, including humans: "inferior" humans necessarily rest on a lower rung, and may indeed not be conceived of as humans at all.

Sax discusses the Nazi view of particular animals in the hierarchy, including the honored deer, dogs and wolves. He also points out that the Nazis demonized Others by comparing, identifying, or referring to them as rodents, insects, parasites, etc. (p. 9). The Nazis, of course, did not monopolize this particular practice: consider how the Japanese were depicted in wartime American propaganda. (in a wartime movies John Wayne snarls "ya yella monkeys!"). Under Fidel Castro, Communist Cuba referred to counterrevolutionaries, reactionaries, or anyone else critical of the regime as *gusanos* (worms). Sax very deftly compares Jewish, Christian and pagan attitudes toward blood – and how the Nazis inverted these beliefs. Julius Streicher, editor of *Der Sturmer*, maintained ". . . that a single instance of sex with a Jewish man was enough to contaminate the progeny of an Aryan woman forever." (p. 52); the American "one drop rule" similarly defined whether a person was defined as white or African-American.

Sax devotes considerable time and attention to the work, life and wartime activities of Nobel Prize winner and researcher into animal psychology, Konrad Lorenz (1973). Not only was Lorenz a member of the Nazi Party and the Office for Race Policy, his work – research into German-Polish intermarried families – led to him send many to their death because they

were of "asocial or inferior genetic value" (pp. 120-121). Lorenz maintained that animal behavior could be applied to human beings. Lorenz and his confreres ". . . expressed fear that the mixture of races would lead to the confusion or destruction of genetically programmed patterns of behavior that were the basis of harmonious life in society." (p. 115). He never deviated from the ideas animating his work before and during the Hitler era.

One of the more interesting short sections of Sax's book, "Esoteric Nazism," part of Appendix I ("Nazi Totemism"), concern Savatri Devi (born Maximiani Portas), who melded Nazism with Hinduism. "According to Savatri Devi, Nazism was a doctrine of universal love, exemplified above all in the concern of Hitler, whom she considered the greatest man in Western history, and his followers for the suffering of animals." (p. 174). Though hardly a major force in Nazi ideology, her work inspired both George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazi Party and Colin Jordan of the British Union of Fascists.

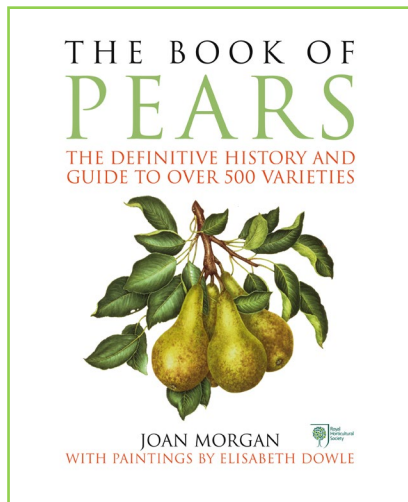
This reviewer does have one complaint: the constant use of the concept of "anticipation," in the sense of "x" anticipating "y," writing long before y's existence. Further, what has been "anticipated" is usually something not contemplated at the time of x, and voiced in terms unfamiliar to x. Historian Quentin Skinner refers to this as "the mythology of doctrines." While certainly x can influence y, influence cannot

take on a retroactive character; the future cannot influence the past.

Whether most people view the world around them in terms of the four ontologies discussed in Appendix I (animism, totemism, naturalism, analogism) is questionable. While interesting, this is not vital to the author's arguments. However, in the opinion of this reviewer Boria Sax has written an important book, one that goes beyond the Third Reich, and which challenges readers to think in many new dimensions. With that in mind, this is a "must read" volume.

SHELBY SHAPIRO

Shelby Shapiro is an Independent Scholar who obtained his Ph.D. in American Studies with a dissertation on the Yiddish press and how various publications of differing political and religious viewpoints sought to construct different identities for Jewish immigrant women. He has written about Jazz, Anarchism, and the labour movement, and presently is Associate Editor of Records of the State of Connecticut.



The Book of Pears: The Definitive History and Guide to Over 500 Varieties

Joan Morgan, with paintings by Elisabeth Dowle

Ebury Press (October 2015)

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In *The Book of Pears* Dr. Joan Morgan has provided a wonderfully detailed and scholarly account of the pear's rich history and its many varieties, with the help of funding provided by the David A. Karp Philanthropic Foundation and administered by NCIS. Joan Morgan is highly qualified to write such a book, being an eminent British pomologist and fruit historian whose honors include the prestigious Veitch Memorial Medal of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS); her extensive publications include *The Book of Apples*, *The New Book of Apples*, and *A Paradise Out of a Common Field: The Pleasures and Plenty of the Victoria Garden*. She is currently Chair of both the RHS Fruit Trials Forum and the RHS Fruit, Vegetable, and Herb Committee, and is also involved with the National Collection of Pears in Brogdale, Kent, England, part of an international program to protect plant genetic resources for the future.¹¹⁵

The Book of Pears is lavishly illustrated with forty beautiful watercolor paintings by internationally respected botanic artist Elisabeth Dowle, who has

¹¹⁵ The pear gene bank is an important piece of heritage, collecting heirloom varieties which might otherwise disappear. In the United States, the USDA National Clonal Germplasm Repository, located in Corvallis, Oregon, also has a substantial pear collection. This American repository hosts an extensive collection of fruit and nut varieties which vary in terms of their ability to withstand cold, disease, and sub-optimal soil conditions.

been awarded seven Royal Horticultural Society Gold Medals, one of which was given for a selection of paintings included in this book and another for those in *The Book of Apples*. Her paintings are exhibited and collected worldwide, held in many important institutions and selected for inclusion in the Florilegiums of Highgrove and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The book begins with a history of food, focusing on fruit and orchards. The reader is taken on a journey through time to discover the multitude of uses, flavors, influences, and types, as well as the role of pears in garden design and horticulture. Although sometimes considered to be a poor relation of the apple, this book reveals that pears are in fact its worthy equals.

During her research for this book, Dr. Morgan traveled to Iran (the modern name for ancient Persia) to delve into the Middle Eastern history of pears. Pears were significant in early Persian gardens, and we learn that Persian carpets often depict pear trees as the Tree of Life. In early Persia the vision of paradise was an enclosed garden that was fragrant and fruitful, and the paradise garden valued pear trees for both their beauty as well as their utility.

Dr Morgan explains that our domestic pears stemmed from *Pyrus communis*, thought to be native to the northern Zagros Mountains, and that, as traders and explorers traveled the world, pears traveled with them.

The trees themselves have been known to live up to 350 years, and since pears do not come true from seed and do not root easily from cuttings, they are often grafted to a rootstock as the best way to increase their numbers. As early as 424 BCE, ancient Greek writings contain descriptions of the grafting of fruit trees as a means of replicating a specific variety.

Varieties of pears, each with distinct qualities, have been grown in different regions and countries over the years: for example the bergamot pear "Bergamotte," which has a distinctive aromatic taste, is thought to have come from the Ottoman Turks, and was recorded in Italy in 1532. Likewise, the Asian pear, in contrast with the European or western pear, does not require softening, but is known for being more firm and does not "melt" when eaten. Its history goes back to the ancient Silk Road between China and the Mediterranean where, along with other trade items and cultural exchanges, fruit trees were much prized.

Dr Morgan also explores the role of pears in health, and tells us that pears are described in some of the early European herbals. However, although they were used as a poultice and as an antidote to mushroom poisoning, she says that the pear's role in medicine is not highly significant. That said, in many early cultures, as in our own times, fruit was viewed from the perspective of personal well-being and was considered part of a regime to ensure a healthy lifestyle. Dr Morgan also describes the many methods for cooking, serving and preserving pears, which could be sour, acid, or sweet; some varieties could be eaten off the tree, while others were better for cooking, and still others needed to be prepared before use. Often, the fruit was "bled", a process which reduces sharpness and lessens the pear's astringency; alternatively, fruit was either kept in a cool place or left on the tree to soften and become sweeter. Alternatively, the fruit was dried after cutting and then placed in the sun, and some were preserved in wine or cooked with wine, honey and warming spices. At great feasts, table centerpieces displayed the finest examples of fruit, and pears and other fruit were often depicted in ancient tile mosaics.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed history of the pear in England where fruit growing was considered a noble pursuit. Monasteries had productive gardens and monks were known to be skilful gardeners who played a role in developing new varieties. They often made

hard cider by blending apples and pears. Sometimes the pear was considered more wholesome when cooked or baked. Stewed pears were made by steeping them in syrup with honey, or cooked in red wine with mulberries. Other recipes included cooking the pears with ginger root. One of England's pears, the Warden, was well-known and had the benefit of excellent keeping qualities. Unfortunately it is thought to be one of the lost varieties.

The book then takes us on a journey through time and place, first describing an Italian fruit renaissance in the sixteenth century, a time of intense interest in fruit quality with a focus on selection and beauty. The number of varieties increased, and attractive selections were made with overall improvement; competition among growers increased, and gorgeous selections of fruit abounded in the markets. Fabulous fruit displays adorned banquet tables, as sweet meats and fruit cakes became part of Italian social life; clearly the sunny Italian climate made fruit sweeter and more colorful. Skill in fruit cultivation was considered prestigious and played a part in the pleasure gardens being created across Europe. Italian villas had formal gardens with large sections devoted to fruit production, where plants were trained into espaliers for ease of harvest and attractiveness as garden plants. The Italians expanded the selection of pears to include those with fruits that ripen in autumn and winter, while further developing preservation techniques, making crystallized fruit and delicious sherbets. Italian still life paintings provide some of the most beautiful images reflective of the grand estates and lavish entertaining, and this Italian love affair with fruit influenced and spread through many parts of Europe.

France became a fruit center during the seventeenth century, with a particular reverence for the pear: one French catalogue from 1628 described 260 pear varieties. French gardens began to separate the growing of utilitarian plants such as fruit trees from other garden areas that focused on beauty and magnificence. As a result, they developed the lovely French *potager*, or fruit and vegetable garden. Paris soon became a center for advanced fruit production and trade which made Paris renowned for its pears and luxury fruit, and the French developed a fondness for eating fresh pears, as well as making confections.

In England during the 1600s, the production of

orchard liqueurs such as perry and cider were of interest to the Puritans who were less interested in the extravagant uses of fruit and more interested in agricultural improvement. As pears and other plants were travelling throughout much of Europe, the British were actively seeking new varieties developed in France. In the 1730s, the English began to create the artificially landscaped park-like gardens of landscape architect Capability Brown. These naturalistic compositions incorporated undulating grasses and serpentine lakes replacing the formally patterned styles, the result being that the fruit trees were relegated to the fruit and vegetable garden.

Along with improvements in communications and transportation, the nineteenth century in Europe was considered the golden age of horticulture. Names became confused as there were many synonyms for pear identities, so they had to be checked and careful documentation for pear varieties became necessary to avoid confusion. Belgium became a center for pear improvement focusing on plant breeding and selection. At this point plants were moving easily through France, England, Scotland, and even arriving in America, so at this point the author takes the reader across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States.

American landowners became interested in fruit cultivation toward the end of the eighteenth century, when trees and scions of pears were being sent to Boston, which was becoming a center of 'pear fever'. In the 1900s, the import and export of pears was common, and in the 1930s, California became the center of pear production due to the climate of California's central valley; it had the ideal environment for fruit production, with its deep soils, mild winters, hot summers, and abundant water from nearby rivers for irrigation. The main pear grown was the "William" (also known as the "Bartlett") due to its being productive and easy to transport without injuring the fruit. With the development of mechanization, the canning of pears became common. As pests and diseases were building up in orchards, chemists and entomologists began developing a range of powders and sprays for the trees. 'Fire blight', a bacterial disease devastating to pear trees, spread and decimated many pear orchards. This resulted in production moving towards the West where conditions were drier and less favorable for the disease. Nowadays the cost for labor and harvesting the fruit is one of the greatest challenges to growers.

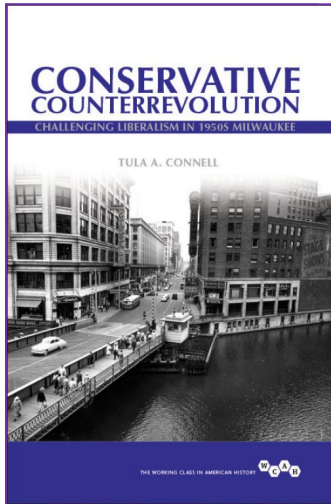
Today, there is renewed interest in pears for creating artisan beverages, such the Perry pear for making a beverage similar to cider, for creating dried fruit, relishes and preserves. National collections in Britain and in the US help to keep track of the many varieties and hopefully avoid losing some of the great pears. In keeping with this, the major section of this book is a superb directory of pear varieties, both ancient and modern. An in-depth history on each pear and its synonyms are provided, as well as the plant's tasting profiles, texture, and detailed descriptions and horticultural information. This directory is primarily based on the pear varieties growing in England's DEFRA¹¹⁶ collection.

This volume provides a thorough and in-depth look at pears in the western world from a European viewpoint, making *The Book of Pears* a highly valuable book in the field. In addition, it provides an interesting and reliable history of food, fruit, agriculture, gardens, horticulture and more. Well written and thoroughly researched, *The Book of Pears* stands as a sound resource and is a huge contribution to the world's knowledge of pears. I consider it an essential reference.

HOLLY H. SHIMIZU

Holly H. Shimizu is Executive Director Emeritus of the United States Botanic Garden (Washington DC, USA) and is a nationally recognized horticulturist, consultant, and educator. With a rich background in all aspects of public gardens, she consults public gardens and also lectures and writes on a variety of horticultural topics.

¹¹⁶ Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.



***Conservative Counterrevolution:
Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee***

Tula A. Connell

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016

ISBN 978-0-252-08142-2.

187 pp. + Notes, Bibliography and Index. Illus. \$23.98.

<http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/75wfg8we9780252039904.html>

Reading present-day political pundits gives the impression that the modern conservative political movement began with the rise of Ronald Reagan, first as Governor of California, and then as President of the United States. Those with a longer historical memory might push this date back to Senator Barry Goldwater becoming the Republic presidential candidate against Lyndon Baines Johnson. One of the great values in reading Tula A. Connell's *Conservative Counterrevolution* lies in her convincing demonstration that the modern conservative movement's birth started with opposition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

The story Connell tells is eerily relevant. Relevance is not a requirement for this reviewer; too often attempts are made to fit historical events into patterns which would be unrecognizable to those in the past. But the ascension to power of Scott Walker in Wisconsin, and his successful attempts to end state employee collective bargaining, underscore the importance of Connell's work. The activities of Walker and his confederates are the most recent manifestations of a long struggle. Of special importance in this book is Connell's tracing of opposition to labor unions to the rise of the conservative movement.

Milwaukee had a long tradition of electing Socialist mayors: the first, Emil Seidel, a protégé of Socialist Party Congressman Victor Berger, served from 1910 to 1912. In 1916, Daniel Webster Hoan started a remarkably long career as a Socialist mayor, staying in office until 1940. Hoan's reign lasted through the Great Depression. Zeidler served from 1948 to 1960. All three were members of the Socialist Party of America, a characteristic of Socialist electoral officials in all states but Vermont. Prior to becoming mayor, Zeidler was elected to other offices, including the school board, where he sat beside Victor Berger's wife, Meta.

Just as those people – such as Seth Low – who sought reform in New York City were derided by Tammany Hall regulars as “goo-goos” (short for “Good Government”), Morris Hillquit of the Socialist Party of America employed “sewer socialists” as his term of derision for Socialist politicians who emphasized efficient and honest government which would publicly control and develop utilities, sanitation and education, in short, would manage the effects of industrialism in America.

Both Tammany Hall (and other political machines) and the “sewer socialists” delivered. But where Tammany benefitted both from the perpetuation of conditions

as well as their eradication, the sewer socialists made it their business to eliminate blight, ill health, poor education, and so forth.

Connell takes a number of struggles as emblematic of Zeidler's governance and the opposition of the anti-New Deal forces arrayed against him: the fight for a public educational television station, affordable city housing, and attempts to expand the city through annexation. She places this within the context of the urban disintegration of Milwaukee; unlike other cities, Milwaukee politicians, whether of the left or right, opposed bond issues and other forms of municipal debt. The only answer lay in expanding the tax base through annexation of surrounding areas – areas opposed for reasons of race, class and general fiscal conservatism. Hence the activities of both allies and enemies are made integral parts of the story as she continually demonstrates the complexities of historical situations.

Throughout the book, Connell demonstrates a remarkable ability to keep multiple issues, themes and factors juggling simultaneously. While clearly sympathetic to Zeidler, she does not blindly worship at his altar; furthermore, she does not demonize his opponents.

Connell's research includes massive archival work, examining personal papers and records from the press, as well as personal interviews. She deftly interweaves important factors often treated separately (such as race and gender) into her narrative. The activities of people of color and women, for example, are not simply tacked onto the end of a chapter in their own separate ghettos. Zeidler, a strong supporter of civil rights, was both red-baited and race-baited. Originally having decided not to run in 1956, he changed his mind because of the racism exhibited by many city residents – including union members. His ally on the housing issue in the Common Council, Vel Phillips, is discussed at length. Phillips had two strikes against her: race and gender. She became the first African American and the first woman to serve on the Common Council, and later in other State offices.

Zeidler's tragedy was his relationship to municipal workers' unions. A strong supporter of the labor movement who relied on union support in elections,

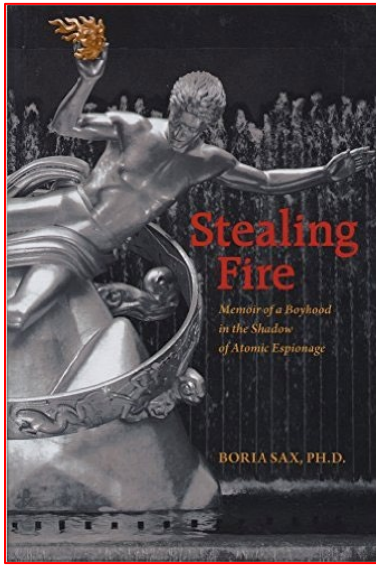
he drew a line in the sand over striking against the public. Although willing to engage with municipal workers unions ("meet and confer"), Zeidler opposed collective bargaining with municipal workers' unions. Though a Socialist, Zeidler veered more towards the ideal of a Cooperative Commonwealth than Marxian class struggle. The concept of the government providing for the public good and civic virtue animated and underscored Zeidler's career, whether as land surveyor, school board member or mayor. That Zeidler and his conservative enemies should have this labor issue in common, albeit for different reasons, constitutes a major irony.

This reviewer's only reservation has to do with the imputation of power to the media. Were the media as powerful and persuasive as represented, Zeidler could not have been re-elected multiple times during that very period of right-wing media growth and consolidation. The Yiddish right-wing, anti-labor daily paper *Morgen zhurnal* [Morning Journal] was read by thousands of Jewish labor union members, not for its ideology, but rather because, as a morning paper, readers could immediately find the day's job openings. If we look at how these readers voted, it is clear that reading the *Morgen zhurnal* did not translate into activity in the ballot box.

However, despite this reservation, Tula Connell has written an important work. This is an outstanding piece of historical research, and should serve as a model for those interested in municipal history in all its nuances.

SHELBY SHAPIRO

Shelby Shapiro is an independent scholar who obtained his Ph.D. in American Studies with a dissertation on the Yiddish press and how various publications of differing political and religious viewpoints sought to construct different identities for Jewish immigrant women. He has written variously about jazz, anarchism, and the labour movement, and is presently Associate Editor of Records of the State of Connecticut.



Stealing Fire: Memoir of a Boyhood in the Shadow of Atomic Espionage

Boria Sax

Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Decalogue Books, 2014

ISBN 978-0-915474-13-4

130 pp. + Notes and Index. Illustrated. \$19.95.

<https://www.amazon.com/Stealing-Fire-Memoir-Boyhood-Espionage/dp/0915474131>

Why would an American citizen betray his own country by passing on nuclear secrets to its sworn enemy? How does committing this kind of espionage prevent a person from living a full and authentic life? Just as importantly, what effect does this activity have on innocent members of the spy's immediate family? While Boria Sax does not attempt to fully answer these questions in his part autobiography/part history *Stealing Fire: Memoir of a Boyhood in the Shadow of Atom Espionage*, he provides important and sometimes disturbing insight into all of them. In this slim volume of eleven short chapters with multiple explanatory sidebars throughout, Sax narrates a personal journey through the reality of American espionage and its human as well national security costs, using the story of his own father, Saville "Savy" Sax, as a case study of why Americans gave away vital nuclear secrets to the then-Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. Making use of recently released FBI records (albeit limited and acquired with difficulty) on the Hall-Sax case, Sax interweaves history with a personal memoir of growing up the child of a pro-Soviet spy which expands this narrative beyond the more familiar story of the Rosenbergs.

The first chapter of *Stealing Fire* provides an introduction and frame to the story – explaining how the author of several books about the role of animals in literature and culture came to write this Cold War human narrative – no less than the confirmation of a truth about his father that he had long suspected, when a *Washington Post* reporter called him to

discuss his father's role in the espionage case of the better-known Theodore "Ted" Hall. (1-2, 128).

In the two chapters that follow, Sax takes the reader through his family history, describing his Russian Jewish paternal family background, his father's family's immigration to the United States, and most importantly, how his father became enamored of the Soviet Union and what it stood for. Chapters IV through VI narrate Savy Sax's college years as a marginal student at Harvard and increasing commitment as a Communist activist that led him to become a partner in crime with his charismatic roommate, Ted Hall. (54-56) In these chapters, Sax also digs more deeply into how large the Bomb loomed in the American imagination in the years immediately following World War II. He also probes into *why* an American would pass on atomic secrets to an enemy, using the metaphor of Prometheus' theft of fire to give to humanity to describe the mistaken idealism that motivated at least spies from this era. (44-45, 49) Finally, Sax points to the unique appeal of spying and war, both of which "offer people the opportunity to engage with impunity in such activities as killing and fraud that are otherwise socially unacceptable." (36).

The next several chapters shift the focus to the effect of Savy Sax's activity and subsequent tailing by the FBI on his subsequent (dysfunctional) marriage and family life, ranging from an increasingly abusive relationship with his wife to frequent moves, even while trying to maintain a veneer of normality. (69-710) For example,

in Chapter X, the author describes the ways in which Savy Sax, finally interrogated by the FBI but never charged with anything, had integrated dissembling and guardedness into his personality so thoroughly that it permanently impaired his ability to relate to people, poignantly noting that "since a spy must always conceal so much of his true character, he can never really open up about anything at all." (102). Sax's concluding chapter (notably titled "The Nineteen Sixties and After") plus his Afterward shifts the focus to the long-term effects of growing up the child of a spy. Here Sax pointedly makes clear that the difference between the experience of Sax and his siblings differing from that of the Rosenberg sons differs less in kind than in degree.

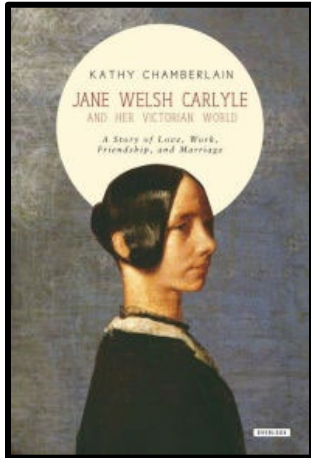
In evaluating *Stealing Fire*, Sax writes a fascinating and riveting memoir that seeks to push back against the recent valorization and romanticization of espionage against one's country. In telling the story of the often unacknowledged victims of espionage, Sax notably reaches the opposite conclusions of the orphaned Robert and Michael Meeropol regarding their parents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Overall, Sax succeeds in his goal of presenting his father's story in the context of the early Cold War, although, despite the author's best efforts, the book at times cannot decide whether

to be a memoir or history. In addition, the sidebars placed throughout the book can disrupt the flow of the narrative, even while providing important background information.

Rather, Sax is most successful in shaping this memoir as a poignant counter-revisionist take on recent historical revisionism that attempts to cast Soviet-era spies as heroes; even his compassion for his father shines through throughout. In conclusion, *Stealing Fire* is a tale very much worth telling.

SUSAN ROTH BREITZER

Susan Roth Breitzer completed her Ph.D. "Jewish Labor's Second City: The Formation of a Jewish Working Class in Chicago, 1886-1928," from the University of Iowa, and is currently working on a book proposal. She has taught United States and world history at Fayetteville State University, and Western Civilization and United States History for the Fort Bragg Extension Campus of Campbell University, and was appointed NCIS Archivist/Historian in 2015.



Jane Welsh Carlyle and her Victorian World: A Story of Love, Work, Friendship and Marriage

Kathy Chamberlain

London: Duckworth Overlook, 2017

400 pages.

ISBN-13: 9781468314205

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/jane-welsh-carlyle-and-her-victorian-world-kathy-chamberlain/1124110813?ean=9781468314205>

Jane Welsh Carlyle, the most accomplished letter writer of the Victorian era, has hitherto been depicted in the historiography as either the emotionally abused or the manipulating, hypochondriac wife of the eminent Victorian writer and thinker Thomas Carlyle. Kathy Chamberlain's reassessment concentrates on letters, written by Jane and her contemporaries between 1843 and 1849, to reveal a more complex woman. Her aim is to discover the real Jane Carlyle, rather than the 'stereotypical images of this remarkable woman.' The book charts her development as a letter writer who broke free from her own social conservatism and domestic constraints through the irony, wit and subversion of her letter writing.

Chamberlain, a Professor of English at City University, New York, uses a literary technique to draw us into the Carlyle world and hook the reader, from the opening lines of the first chapter. She places the reader, in the present tense, outside the Carlyle's Chelsea home. We are looking from the noisy street into the living room where Jane Welsh Carlyle who is sitting on her sofa darning a pair of stockings. This literary device is the one for which Thomas Carlyle is credited, in the Oxford English Dictionary, as defining as 'visuality.' Jane also used visuality in her letters and referred to it as 'drama in one scene.' Chamberlain brings alive the sights and sounds of London and elsewhere through this placing of the reader amid the action in the same way as Jane brought them to life in her letters.

These letters were for public consumption. They were not private missals but were written to be passed around between friends and family and commented on and enjoyed. Chamberlain, in echoing Jane's style, recreates the tone of the original letters so that the reader physically feels that they are undertaking the noisy cold railway journey which Jane made to Hampshire and the amateur dramatic soiree hosted by Charles Dickens.

Having anchored the reader firmly in early Victorian London, Chamberlain chronologically examines the Welsh Carlyle letters and those with whom Jane corresponded over a seven-year period. These years have been chosen as the time of her 'richest experience and development.' The letters begin in 1842 as Jane reaches forty-two years of age. Chamberlain reminds us that the average life expectancy at the time was only forty-five so we get a sense of the urgency of Jane's search for intellectual achievement. Jane called the sense of identity she found through her writing 'I-ity.' Domestic duties often meant that Jane had to choose between 'the needle or the pen,' a dilemma which resonates still for many women of today.

The letters are full of domestic drama, of drunken servants, of the pain of her husband's emotional affair with Lady Harriet Baring, of journeys and stays in various households of the country. They depict the daily domestic life of a Victorian woman whose domestic chores included de-worming a horse-hair chair and nailing carpet to the floor. The emotional abuse Jane endured throughout her marriage is a

thread throughout as Thomas refused to give up his emotional attachment to another woman. The Carlyle's contemplated separation at one point. Chamberlain evidences from the letters that we cannot, however, simply regard Jane as a victim. The Carlyle's were in a co-dependent marriage and both husband and wife fretted when separated if the other withheld contact and did not write. Jane also had a weapon she used when she felt emotionally hurt; she would give Thomas the silent treatment and withdraw from contact.

The letters reveal another Jane beyond the domestic. She is seen to be a woman who mixed with and was valued for her intellect by those most eminent in Victorian society. Literary figures, including Dickens, Thackeray and Tennyson, counted her as their friend, in her own right, not just as the wife of Thomas Carlyle. Dickens sought her opinion on his writing. Men of politics, including the Italian revolutionary Mazzini and the Young Irelander Charles Gavan Duffy, sought out her company and these meetings are all recorded in her correspondence. Thomas Carlyle patronisingly called her letters 'bits, but they are anything but. The events leading up to the revolutionary year of 1848, which saw widespread political rebellion against the status quo in Europe, are recounted with understanding and immediacy and her letters provide an important historical record.

This momentous year saw a large Chartist demonstration in London, unrest in Ireland led by the Young Irelanders, and revolution in France and Italy. The protagonists are depicted by Jane in all their humanity, as individuals. She enjoyed the company of the young Irelanders who visited the Carlyles and formed a strong emotional bond with the leader of the Young Italy movement Giuseppe Mazzini. Mazzini was a regular visitor to the Carlyle's house during his exile in London and he and Jane grew emotionally close. Jane's letters document the hundred days

during which Mazzini led the short-lived Italian Republic. Each day she eagerly awaited the newspaper to learn if he is alive or dead and each day she feared the worst.

This long overdue reassessment of Jane Welsh Carlyle rescues the finest letter writer in the English language from the saint or sinner stereotype. A particular strength is the thread running through Chamberlain's narrative of the complexity of the Carlyle marriage, which takes us beyond the emotional abused or emotionally abuser fixation. The book also cleverly uses literary technique, that of 'visuality' to echo in its own style that of the letters being examined, strengthening the reader's sense of Jane's prose style. This book successfully appeals both to Carlyle specialists and non-specialists alike. It is an entertaining read, deepening our understanding both of the subject and her Victorian world. It left this reviewer desperate to know what happened next to Jane Welsh Carlyle and to wish that the remaining years of this remarkable woman's life could be reassessed in like manner. I hope Chamberlain will continue the story through an examination of the later letters to give us a full assessment of the life of this extraordinary Victorian.

JANET SMITH

Janet Smith received a Ph.D. in women's and gender history from the London Metropolitan University, England in 2014. Her doctoral thesis was on "The Feminism and Political Radicalism of Helen Taylor in Victorian Britain and Ireland" and she has presented papers at conferences throughout Great Britain, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Women's History*, and contributed a chapter to a book on legal firsts for women.

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