The Representation of Jewish Women in Czech Holocaust Prose: Otčenášek, Lustig and Fuks

MLitt Thesis

Kateřina Melecká MA

Supervisor: Dr. A. E. Schulte Nordholt

Second Reader: Prof.dr. Y. van Dijk

MA Literary Studies/Literature in Society: Europe and Beyond
June 2019

Universiteit Leiden
Humanities

Table of Contents

Introduction: Holocaust Prose, Women and the Czech Lands

In the post-Holocaust era, at the time when there is only a handful of survivors left, imaginative representation of the Second Word War in various forms of art became frequent practice in the Czech lands, recently especially in relation to cinema[1]. Indeed, considering the amount of Czech Holocaust fiction produced in the past century, it can be argued that there has always been an endeavor to imagine the events of the Holocaust through different media. A great portion of Czech literary canon deals with the Nazi rise to power, the German occupation of the Czechoslovakia - the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and the persecution of Jews. To name a few; Karel Čapek's *The White Disease* (1937), Jan Drda's *Silent Barricade and Other Stories* (1946), Jiří Weil's *Life with a Star* (1949), Josef Škvorecký's The Cowards (1948), Jan Otčenášek's *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* (1958), Bohumil Hrabal's *Closely Watched Trains* (1965), Ladislav Fuks's *The Cremator* (1967) and *My Black-haired Brethren* (1964), Arnošt Lustig's *A Prayer for Katerina Horovitzova* (1964) and *The Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S.* (1979), Jáchym Topol's *City Silver Sister* (1994).

Originating in the nation which has been the subject to many social changes during the twentieth century, Czech Holocaust fiction is additionally meaningful due to the implications stemming from the treatment of the topic as its form would often change in relation to the respective political situation. It is important to note that the effort to represent the Holocaust was often complicated, even entirely precluded by the policy of censorship of the Communist regime that governed Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1989. For that reason, it is possible to track the production of war prose in the course of three time periods. The first period occurred immediately after the Second World War as those who had lived through the war and could bear the witness to its horrors decided to translate their experience into the wri-

[1] Jan Hřebejk's *The Garden Store* trilogy premiered in 2017, Sean Ellis's *Anthropoid* and Filip Renč's *The Devil's Mistress* in 2016.

tings, establishing thus the basis for further formation of collective memory. The second wave of war prose took place in the 1950s and 1960s, in the period of 'socialism with a human face'. The political liberalisation was brought to an end by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, which was followed by the repressive process of Normalisation. The last phase which continues until nowadays can be traced from 1989, the year of the Velvet Revolution that marks the point of restoring the democracy and independency of Czechoslovakia.

With a mere look at the aforementioned list of works, it is safe to state that Czech literary canon is a heavily male-dominated area, a fact that from the 1990s onward has been challenged by the appearance of female authors such as Irena Dousková, Eva Kantůrková or Kateřina Tučková. To account for the lack of women in Czech literature, it would be necessary to review the corpus in terms of the relevant social and cultural context. Due to the limited space, this thesis will not delve into this issue, although for a better understanding it is necessary to at least briefly provide some basic socio-historical information. Although women's suffrage was granted in 1920 and higher education began to open to women in the 1920s, The First Czechoslovak Republic was still a highly patriarchal society. It is true that the outbreak of the Great War had shifted the established gender roles in multiple ways because, due to the absence and loss of men, women often had to step into their place. The same can be argued in terms of the Second World War, although we have to bear in mind that just as men, women were heavily persecuted and sent to work in German factories. Nonetheless, soon after the end of the war, this shift of gender roles was disrupted by the rise of the Communist regime. Communist ideology promoted equality among the proletariat, however, at the same time, it targeted the intelligentsia and celebrated the role of women as that of mothers, the bearers of the future socialist generation. Women's rights were heavily restricted at that time since contraception was a scarce commodity and abortion was mostly legal only with the approval of

an appointed committee. For these and many other reasons, at all points in the history of Czechoslovakia, it was especially difficult for women to operate outside the households; to express themselves, to participate in the artistic sphere or to be politically active.[2]

When I decided to conduct research on Czech Holocaust prose, I realised that, considering the lack of female authors, it would be interesting to see how the female experience of the Holocaust is being conveyed. I have narrowed down my focus particularly on Jewish women since, compared to other minorities that suffered from the Nazi policy, to claim that Jewish women are underrepresented in Czech Holocaust fiction would be a false statement. Indeed, it is the Jewish heroine who functions as one of the symbols of Czech Holocaust fiction.[3] In the fields of feminist and Holocaust studies, there has been an ongoing debate as to why a gender-specific approach to the Holocaust may or may not be relevant and important. Although female witnesses and authors will not be the subject of my analysis, I believe that this piece of information is crucial to explain my intentions and to properly understand the wider context of what will follow.

Within the debate, it is possible to detect an inclination to one of the two following sides. Firstly, as argued by Gabriel Schoenfeld (1998), the Nazis targeted Jewry first and foremost as a race and therefore any consideration of gender-specific experience would mean to undermine the primacy of racial discrimination that resulted in the 'Final Solution'. The opposition to this stance, consisting of pioneering scholars such as Joan Ringelheim (1995), Carol Rittner and John Roth (1993), Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (1998), argues that the Holocaust is being portrayed as a universal experience based on male narratives of authors such as Primo Levi or Elie Wiesel, which in effect silences those whose narrative does not

---

[2] For more information see Jusová, Iveta, Jiřina Siklová and Jiřina Šiklová. *Czech Feminism: Perspectives on Gender in East Central Europe*. Indiana University Press, 2016.

[3] For instance, Arnošt Lustig is well-known for his focus on female victims in his works, including *A Prayer For Katerina Horovitzova* (1964), *Dita Saxova* (1969), *Lovely Green Eyes* (2000).

correspond to that which has now become accepted as the norm. This being the case, to refer to the obstacles specific to the female bodies; such as sterilisation, abortion, sexual abuse, pregnancy or menstruation, is to enhance the understanding of the brutal practices which were carried out by the Nazis during the genocide.

While it is undeniably true that there were no exceptions made among the Jewish victims as they were all sentenced to death regardless of their age, class or gender, their experiences immensely differ from each other. As many of the survivors agree, we will never be entirely able to learn the truth of the Holocaust since the testimonies that we now possess come from those few who managed to survive, whereas the majority of the victims could not testify as Primo Levi remarks, 'We the survivors are not the true witnesses. The true witnesses, those in possession of the unspeakable truth are the drowned, the dead, the disappeared.' (1989: 83). Hence, in every attempt to describe the Holocaust, there will always be a blind spot signifying the incompleteness of the narrative, what Giorgio Agamben calls *a lacuna* (2002:13). Thus, instead of perpetuating a general idea of the Holocaust that in fact presents only a narrow view of the actual reality, to recognise that women experienced the Holocaust differently from men, allowing so numerous individual voices to be heard, would mean to form and pass to next generations a more concrete, substantiated picture of the callous events.

If we now return to Czech Holocaust prose and venture outside the world of life writing, it becomes almost impossible to find a more renowned novel than those listed above. Despite the fact that there is a wide spectrum of Czech imaginative fiction portraying the Holocaust, with the exception of Agáta Legatová's *Želary* (2001), it is almost non-existent when it comes to Holocaust narratives written by women. This realisation subsequently led me to several questions concerning the presence of Jewish women in Czech Holocaust prose. Mainly, whether the ways in which the characters are created do justice to the Jewish women who

experienced the Holocaust. For this reason, I have decided to explore three exemplary Czech Holocaust novels in relation to the authorial and narratorial treatment of the characters, the function of the characters in the textual space as well as their value within the historical and cultural context.

It is necessary to mention the debate concerning the ethics of writing about the Holocaust, which is frequently introduced by the often misinterpreted statement made by Theodor Adorno that, 'To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric' (1949: 34). In reference to the issue of who is entitled to write about the Holocaust, a certain anxiety undoubtedly arises. There is a general consensus that the survivors and their relatives are in possession of the indisputable mandate to take up the theme. However, there will never be a definitive set of rules that could determine this dilemma and inform us about how to treat the topic without crossing any ethical boundaries. The sense of uneasiness that surrounds the representation of the Holocaust then translates into fiction. Moreover, the authors have to adjust their artistry to the incomprehensibility of the horrors. Considering the inability to rationally conceptualise the Holocaust, the novel-form acquires a new dimension capturing an undertone of darkness which often grows into grotesqueness and horror. Narrative techniques have to be reshaped to accommodate the voices of those who cannot be heard anymore while simultaneously maintaining a sense of objectivity, transmitting the historicity. In case of Jewish females, their depiction is even more complicated since they had to face a double jeopardy; firstly, as being Jewish and, secondly, as women in a patriarchal society, a fact that can be easily neglected and overlooked. Accordingly, these two factors will be the main focus of the following chapters.

To appropriately analyse how Jewish women are represented in Czech Holocaust prose, I have chosen a sample of novels for a comparative analysis. This analysis will be carried out within each of the monographic chapters, drawing on the common elements of as

well was discrepancies between the novels. The novels that will be discussed are namely Jan Otčenášek's *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* (1958), Ladislav Fuks's *The Cremator* (1967) and Arnošt Lustig's *The Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S.* (1979). This choice has been made for several reasons. Firstly, all three novels form an indivisible part of Czech literary canon. As mentioned above, within Czech literary canon, there is unfortunately a lack of female authors in general and Holocaust fiction is not an exception. Hence, the works that will be discussed are all written by men. This fact should be considered as another aspect of the critical assessment that will follow and as a supporting argument that the dominating Holocaust narrative has been produced by men. Secondly, ranging from the 1950s to 1970s, these novels were written in the span of three decades of the twentieth century. This will allow for a more general idea in regard to political, social and cultural changes that might have affected the circumstances under which these works originated and which shaped the vision of the Holocaust in connection to women.

Thirdly, born in the 1920s, all three authors belong to the same generation and witnessed, although differently, the Second World War. On that account, each of these men of letters represents a different approach to the theme which is likewise mirrored in their texts. As a Jew, Lustig experienced Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald and spent the years following the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia in exile. Neither Otčenášek nor Fuks were Jewish, therefore, they were driven to the theme of the Holocaust relating to the Jewish minority not because of the urge to testify, which is often the impulse in the survivor-narratives, but for other, more artistic reasons; to employ the Holocaust in a metaphorical sense. Otčenášek is mainly known as an active member of the Communist party whose works; for instance, *Citizen Brych* (1955), were promoting and supporting communist ideology. On the other hand, despite the fact that he initially inclined towards communism, Fuks's life was accompanied by anxiety concerning his sexual identity since homosexuality was considered a crime

in the Protectorate as well as in communist Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it can be speculated that this fear of persecution and oppression caused Fuks to identify with the Jewish minority and led him to employ the Holocaust as the recurring theme of his works.

Finally, the Jewish-female characters of these novels are all portrayed and constructed in different manners. This enables an examination of various narratorial strategies in respect to the representation of the Other; the woman and the Jewess. The exact strategies and techniques will be discussed in more detail in the chapters below. Each of the female characters was designed with a particular propose that speaks to the audience. There is a sharp contrast between the individuality of the character and the universal message that she is supposed to convey to the reader. As a result, the women in these texts do not only act and speak for themselves, but their voices grow into collective ones precisely because of their cultural importance. In this way, the heroines embody a memento of the dark period of human history and suffering that had to be endured.

To briefly introduce the selected novels, Otčenášek's Esther refuses to get on the transport to the concentration camp and must hide in illegality, becoming completely dependent on Paul who provides her with a refuge. Fuks's Lakmé exemplifies a woman oppressed by her husband who succumbs to the Nazi ideology and becomes a perpetrator. In *The Unloved*, Lustig's Perla writes a diary from Theresienstadt where she struggles to survive as a prostitute. Interlocked within the narratives, these women are forever reliving the horrors of the Holocaust and thereby continuously remind the audience of the past, shaping thus collective memory. Therefore, I will inquire into the ways in which they are being portrayed to show how their symbolic purpose is carried out alongside the author's effort to depict the Jewess as a round character.

The first chapter of my thesis will discuss Otčenášek's *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* in three subchapters. 'Darkness and Paralysis' analyses the symbolic level of the novel, with a

particular focus on the theme of darkness and the motif of paralysis. 'The Narrative Structure and Its Purposes' provides an examination of the narrative's structure and its influence on the understanding of the text and the character of the Jewess. The final subchapter 'Power Dynamics and the Jewess as the Other' investigates Esther's role as the double Other in relation to her position in society as well as her relationship with Paul. In the second chapter, which consists of two sections, I will move onto Fuks's *The Cremator*. Firstly, in 'The Shaping and Distortion of Reality', attention will be drawn to the methods in which reality is being shaped and distorted through language and other literary devises in regard to Lakmé's situation. Secondly, following on the language utilisation, in 'Imagery and Symbolism', the symbolism and imagery of the narrative will be explored to present the means establishing the power dynamics of the relationship between the perpetrator and the female victim. The third part of my work, divided into two subchapters, 'The Diary Form as a Tool of Liberation and Memory' and 'Female Body as Both Vulnerable and Powerful', is dedicated to Lustig's *Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S*. Here, at first, the diary form in relation to the voice of the oppressed and to its role as a tool preserving and transmitting memory will be addressed. Next, linked to the diary form, the manner of writing the bodily and the physical within the context of Theresienstadt will be assessed to show whether and how the female body functions as a site of struggle and resistance. Lastly, a short conclusion will be provided to outline the findings of these analyses in order to demonstrate that when applied to the Holocaust narratives, the framework of gender enhances our understanding of the events, throwing light on the neglected areas within the field.

Chapter I. The Victim in Hiding in Jan Otčenášek's *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness*

To begin with, I will outline the plot of Otčenášek's novel to form the basis of following analyses. Against the setting of German-occupied Prague, Otčenášek presents the story of eighteen-year-old Paul, who finds his current life mundane and without any purpose. This however changes when he meets a young Jewish woman, Esther. Paul discovers that Esther was supposed to go on transport, which she refused to do. Hence, her situation seems hopeless until Paul decides to provide a refuge for her. In the following days, they develop feelings for each other which quickly escalate into passionate love. Nevertheless, for Esther, loving Paul also means that she does not want to expose him or his family to any danger. For this reason, Esther decides to escape and, in the end, is shot by Nazi officers in the street.

To elaborate on the Holocaust experience transmitted through the novel, this chapter will firstly focus on the symbolic devices complementing the realist narrative. In particular, I will explore the theme of darkness whose importance is directly implied in the novel's title and to that related motif of paralysis. Secondly, the novel's structure and narratorial strategies will be examined to introduce the manner in which Esther is being portrayed. Finally, I will analyse Esther's position in relation to power dynamics as the double Other; a Jewess and a woman. In comparison with the other two novels which will be discussed, *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* appears to possess the least potential to properly convey the female-Jewish experience of the Holocaust. In her study on Otčenášek's realism, Seehasová remarks that the text follows the form of Czech socialist ballad novel whose purpose is to illuminate the meaning of life (406). In this regard, I believe that this is the reason why Otčenášek's Holocaust portrayal seems rather one-dimensional as it is strongly defined by the Socialist regime. Accordingly, I will present arguments to support this thesis.

I. Darkness and Paralysis

Since the story is set in 1942 against the historical background of Operation Anthropoid, darkness pervading Prague signifies the omnipresence of death. The reader is reminded of the bloody aftermath that followed the attempt to assassinate Reinhard Heydrich on May 27th. This includes the Lidice massacre and the final capture of the assailants in the Orthodox Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius paralleling Esther's escape and subsequent death. Darkness thereby essentially stands for the dark times of humanity, opposing progress and the concept of civilisation of twentieth-century Europe. As Paul observes, 'There's something all mixed up and gone to the devil in this enlightened century of ours. The ghetto! Progress, technological progress and - the Middle Ages! […] That's what I imagined the last days of civilisation would be like - darkness everywhere!' (Otčenášek: 142). The comparison to the Middle Ages highlights the repetitive nature of history and the long-lasting oppression of the Jewish diaspora. There is a sense of apocalyptic tension that distorts the reality as if through a dark filter which also features in the other two novels. This distorting device then primarily ought to mimic the absurdity of the events and their unimaginable character.

Furthermore, the inability to make sense of the absurd world is also indicated by the implementation of paralysis. Esther's free will is restricted by the orders and prohibitions imposed on her by the Nazis. When she first encounters Paul, she defines herself through these restrictions, listing all that she is not allowed to do instead of what she can, 'I'm not supposed to go anywhere, actually. Not even to the pictures…[…]…maybe I'm not even supposed to come into the park here. […] So there you are, now you know all about me…' (Otčenášek: 24). Thus, Esther identifies herself in correspondence with Nazi rhetorics while completely ignoring any personal information that could characterise her as an individual. Due to the ideological shift, Esther gradually becomes paralysed as she first cannot continue with her education, consequently, loses touch with her acquaintances and then loses her parents in the

transport. When she is supposed to go on the transport herself, she refuses to do so and thus, ceases to legally exist, 'She was already beyond the law, suspended in air, officially no longer existed even as a Jewish girl. And every way back was blocked.' (Otčenášek: 72). In order to survive, she has to submit herself to Paul who 'was her only link with the world of living people. He was all she had now.'(Otčenášek: 103). This seemingly innocent remark contains undertones of limitation and unstable power dynamics on which I will elaborate later.

From this perspective, the refuge engenders Esther's dependence on Paul who embodies an alternative to the paralysing darkness while sustaining her immobility. He states, 'She doesn't belong anywhere or to anyone. Only to me. And to the darkness.' (Otčenášek: 76). Positioning himself next to the darkness through this possessive claim, Paul defines his role regarding Esther's condition as paralleling the darkness, not as a counterpoint introducing light. Darkness therefore accompanies the couple's encounters, from their first meeting in the park until their last one in which they affirm their feelings for each other. In order not to be discovered, Esther must hide in the darkness of Paul's room that at times becomes an isolating confinement linked to madness and compared to 'a cell' (Otčenášek: 99).

The shelter itself is a timeless space in which Esther feels as if 'all the clocks in the world have stopped' (Otčenášek: 55). During the time that she passes alone, the changeless present causes Esther to devote herself to memory, 'Only her memory was fully active, projecting jumbled, fading pictures like a fantastic magic lantern.' (Otčenášek: 106). Recollecting the moments of her former life, she endeavours to understand her current existence, which disrupts the narrative with prolepses and flashbacks. The flashbacks provide the reader with information about the events preceding the war and the call to the transport. They illustrate the gradual societal change generated by the Nazi ideology and its repressing influence. Since the German occupation of Czechoslovakia had begun when she was only fourteen years old, meaning that her freedom has been restricted since, Esther feels that she has not yet

fully experienced life as an adult. She was marked as the outcast at the transformative stage from girlhood to womanhood, on the verge of becoming independent.

Therefore, Esther has been forced to adjust her adulthood to the abnormal social circumstances preventing her identity from being shaped in a standard way. On this basis, 'There were times when she felt that what she had lived through before was not life at all. It was only an expectation of what was to come, only an illusion, a dream.' (Otčenášek: 106). Similarly to the young women in *The Unloved*, Esther is robbed of her future since her aims in life have been displaced by the Nazi invasion. This occurrence therefore compels Esther to remain in the unfinished process of becoming while the antisemitic discourse assigns its own narrative to her story.

In addition, the paralysis limiting Esther is strengthened further by the symbolic layer of darkness. Her psyche is portrayed as dark, reflecting on her current state that resembles a trap as she is balancing between life and death. She is caught up amidst her longing to escape from the room which would mean a certain death and the idea of a hopeful future with Paul. Consequently, Paul 'was afraid of her dark thoughts. They were part of her world.' (Otčenášek: 157). However, darkness is not associated only with Esther's interiority, but also with her appearance. Similarly to Fuks and Lustig, Otčenášek endows his heroine with stereotypical Jewish characteristics which are further reinforced by her 'typically' Jewish name. Otčenášek writes, 'Beneath the dark hair her face was almost unreal in its pallor. […] The darkness of night shone from her eyes under thick arched brows joined by a line of dark hairs over the bridge of the nose.' (32). In this manner, Esther's interior darkness is being mirrored in her appearance characterised by dark features. At the same time, being visibly marked as the Jewish stereotype, her mobility is restricted since she cannot move beyond the category of a Jewess.

II. The Narrative Structure and Its Purposes

Based on the previous findings, Otčenášek's text operates predominantly on the system of binary oppositions. So far, I have closely engaged with three of them; darkness versus light, paralysis versus flux and confinement versus freedom. It is nonetheless necessary to acknowledge the fact that these binaries do not co-exist in a perfect balance since one always exceeds the other. This gives rise to yet another binary opposition; absence and presence.

The novel is narrated by a third-person omniscient narrator while a great portion of the narrative is focalised through Paul. Esther functions as the focaliser only on a few occasions depicting her stay in the shelter. For example, 'For hours she would lie on her face, crying into her pillow. As darkness came she carefully did her hair and dried her eyes, to welcome him with her usual serene and happy face.' (Otčenášek: 101). The reader gains a broader access to her character only in the second half of the text. However, the space provided to her by the narrator still cannot be measured with that of Paul. When the narrative is focalised through Esther, the language as well as the form grow fragmentary and disrupted through ellipses and time lapses, particularly, due to her recollections. This technique mimics her difficulties to maintain a stable tie with reality as well as to identify herself with her past life and memories.

The narrative itself is framed with passages discussing the transmission and maintenance of memory. Otčenášek personifies the houses that constitute the novel's setting as the medium recording and storing the life-narratives of its inhabitants. The story opens with a phrase 'Old houses are like old people – full of memories.' (Otčenášek: 7, 181) that is likewise repeated at the end. Otčenášek thus introduces the sense of the present absence since the material objects represent that which is no longer tangible. Within the wider context, the final repetition gives the impression of circularity and emphasises the daily ordinariness, implying the insignificance of Esther's death. The narrator informs the reader, 'Old houses have

their morning voice.' and asks, 'Why does nobody speak? The people and the things are silent.' (Otčenášek: 183, 182). Comparably to the innumerable Holocaust victims, despite her tragic faith, Esther's death will not change anything and will remain unnoticed, absorbed in silence.

By constructing the houses in textual space, the metaphor of the old house is replicated through the text as the novel itself becomes the relic maintaining and transmitting memory. For a better understanding, Patterson's remark from his essay on the phenomenology of silence in the Holocaust novel might help. Patterson states, 'The text that seeks life is born from a subtext haunted by death, not the other way around; through the voice that addresses us, stifled voices cry out to eclipse the voice.' (409). By definition, the employment of the Holocaust theme endows Otčenášek's text with the echo of silent voices. Hence, the audience in the end reads that, 'these walls are alive with the drama of the people who had lived within them. Some are often remembered, others fall into oblivion. There are some that nobody mentions. They live without words […] They are part of the unwritten, moving history of old houses.' (Otčenášek:182). In this connection, Otčenášek, shifting the absence into the presence, draws attention to the lives which have been forgotten, but nevertheless form an equally important part of human history and deserve to be recognised.

The character of Esther serves a similar purpose. Besides her individual perspective, as the only Jewish character, Esther simultaneously becomes a representative of the Jewish community. Her story is thereby interrelated with the narratives of numerous Jewish families who were sentenced to death and 'live without words'. In comparison with Lustig's novel, by making Esther not to go on the transport, Otčenášek allows her to experience love before she dies. Being given the opportunity to learn love, Esther differs from Lustig's heroines. Lustig's Perla defines this lack of experience as the missing piece that could have provided a thoroughly different perspective on the purpose of human existence in the face of death.

However, unlike Lustig's complex philosophical narrative, Otčenášek's moral world is constructed on the binary principle. He establishes a firm, although considerably simplified, division between the notions of 'us' and 'them'. Still, as Lichtenstein points out, '*Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* explored important new territory in dealing with the memory of the war, such as its prodding questions about Czechs' fear, self-interest, and complicity in the persecution of Jews.' (133). Accordingly, it can be argued that rather than honouring the Jewish victims, the historical background centres around Czech national trauma while Otčenášek produces archetypal characters. The good side in the novel consists primarily of Paul, his selfless father and rebellious Čepek, whereas the evil side is embodied by the Nazi supporter Rejsek. Thus, the narrative omits the complexity of the Holocaust events. Due to this plain scheme, it fails to transmit the numerous challenges and obstacles which at that time prompted the redefinition of values, surpassing the binary oppositions of good and bad or just and unjust.

III. Power Dynamics and The Jewess as the Other

Despite being the kernel of the plot, Esther as the victim operates beyond the spectrum of good and evil. In fact, she operates beyond any moral judgment since she is designated to arouse compassion and sympathy in the reader. Thus, Esther's main function is to expose the true nature of the characters by the way of their reaction to her as to a Jewess. Esther's otherness is therefore highlighted in the text not only through its content, but also through its form. She is created in a manner that automatically places her in the position of an outsider who is shaping the rest of the characters. The reason behind this pattern is clarified by Novotná in her work on the construction of the past regarding the Holocaust. She explains, 'Within the Czech context, Czech Jews were paradoxically not considered Czech victims, but they constituted a strange category functioning separately from Czech society.' (158). Given

this framework and the novel's focus on Czech national trauma, it can be said that Otčenášek perpetuates the discriminatory approach through his text.

Additionally, Esther herself happens to be caught up within the Nazi rhetorics. She struggles to resist the ideology that is so violently imposed on her as she is not able to rationally explain and understand the cause of the systematic oppression. The question that is haunting Esther and indeed the whole narrative reappears in the dialogues, 'why..? What have we done?' (Otčenášek: 114, 116). The answer is provided by Esther's father, 'we haven't done anything. It's just that we are…' (Otčenášek: 116). Labelling their existence as undesirable instead of providing an explanation of the absurd situation further unsettles Esther's self-knowledge. Hence, when she first encounters Paul, instead of resisting the antisemitic discourse and establishing herself outside its realm, she tells him, 'Don't bother about me. I'm contaminated.' (Otčenášek: 24). Similarly, when Esther later contemplates her escape, she claims, 'I don't belong here any more…I don't belong among people at all…' (Otčenášek: 141). The awareness of her displacement causes Esther to undermine her own humanity as she acknowledges her estrangement from humankind. This submission is however interestingly juxtaposed with several moments of her resistance against dehumanisation in which she asserts her humanity. In one of these instances, she clarifies her decision not to go on the transport with words, 'I'm not an animal they can drive into a truck and send wherever they like…I've never done any harm' (Otčenášek: 28). In effect, this negotiation between humanity and non-humanity mimics Esther's existential conflict.

Accordingly, Esther is subjected to an identity crisis while her self splits into multiple selves which cannot co-exist in a balanced unity. This is symbolised by the scene, resembling a reversal of Lacanian theory, in which she looks into the mirror and cannot recognise herself. Esther is unable to connect herself with the reflection as 'the gleaming mirror reflected back into the half-light an unknown face, crumpled with restless sleep. She shut her eyes in a mo-

ment of fright. That's not me!' (Otčenášek: 117). As a result, she is confronted with a moment of disassociation, struggling to identify with the face in the mirror. This occurrence is accompanied by a feeling of horror that follows as a reaction to the existential doubt. Esther's 'I' is challenged by this confrontation and the missing referent contributing towards her self-recognition. The face that formerly used to represent Esther's self no longer exists and is being reshaped due to the circumstances which likewise force her to conform to the idea that she is someone else.

In one of her recollections, Esther remembers, 'The girls called me Stella. […] Then I grew up a bit and all at once I was Esther the Jewish girl. As if I was any different.' (Otčenášek: 83). The meaning of both names can be translated as a star, which might be an indirect reference to the Jewish star. However, Stella originally comes from Latin, whereas Esther is a Hebrew name linked to The Old Testament. Esther finds herself being othered by her friends who, manipulating her name, establish a direct link to her Jewish origins and by doing so, uproot her cultural belonging. Being deprived of her former name, Esther has been excluded from the non-Jewish community.

Apart from that, Esther remembers their house being vandalised due to the antisemitism in their neighbourhood. She alludes to the image that has been hunting her as a consequence of trauma which stems from discrimination and humiliation, 'Can you see it? How could she wipe out from her memory the words chalked up on their fence? (Otčenášek:113). In 'The Psychological Sense of Community', Saranson maintains, 'The absence or dilution of the psychological sense of community is the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people' (96). Correspondingly, Esther has been deeply affected by this experience as yet another sign of exclusion. Furthermore, showing the consequences stimulated by the name-change and the racist slogan on the fence, Otčenášek exemplifies the power of language as an oppressive ideological tool. Comparably, *The Cremator* also emphasises the ways in which

language serves as a means of manipulation. Besides the ideological undertones distinguishing the characters' speech, Fuks's Kopfrkingl renames people, locations and things surrounding him and so devises an alternative reality.

Apart from the language manipulation, Otčenášek describes other ways in which one can be positioned as an outcast. For instance, 'people were trying to persuade her [Esther], somehow without words, that she was different from the rest. She was a Jewess.' (110). Here, non-verbal actions signified by silence operate as a means to delimitate the boundaries between the normal and the abnormal. Due to these boundaries, Esther becomes hypervisible while realising her difference:

'there were others who looked her up and down with grim superiority and stared at her with disgusting interest and open curiosity, as if she were a rarity, a strange beast. She hated these. The difference between them, which she had not realised before, had been brought out into the open' (Otčenášek: 113).

Prompted by people's gaze, Esther's hypervisibility isolates her and subverts her position. Portraying Esther as resisting the labels and seclusion from the non-Jewish population, Otčenášek examines the unequal power distribution. Accordingly, the text shows the struggle of a minority against the dominant ideological discourse and its consequences.

To expand on the power relations in more detail, I will now discuss the dynamics between Paul and Esther. Commenting on the experience of Jewish women in hiding, Waxman notes, 'Women in hiding—especially Jewish women in hiding—were doubly vulnerable. They were vulnerable, of course, because they were Jews. […] These women were also, however, especially vulnerable, precisely because they were women.' (53). Bearing that in mind, it should be firstly established that the world of *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* is a world

of strictly defined gender roles. The text's descriptive passages are repeatedly interrelated with expressions attributing certain qualities to a specific gender. Among these, it is possible to find, 'like all women', 'peculiar to women' or 'usually masculine' (Otčenášek: 21, 100, 108). In that sense, the novel represents women and men as generalised groupings lacking any individual qualities and, thus, it reinforces gender binary through stereotypes.

This practice is already apparent in the scene describing the first meeting of the couple. When Esther refuses Paul's help and asks him to leave her alone, he does not respect her wishes and instead, finds her refusal insulting. Subsequently, Paul mockingly identifies Esther with gender stereotypes. He imagines, 'her boyfriend's let her down and now she's sitting moaning in the park and thinking of suicide. […] Maybe she's trying to be the centre of attraction like all women. And what about me?' (Otčenášek: 21). In Paul's head, power relations are clearly distinguished as he is making his judgments and assumptions on the basis of gender, referring to stereotypical ideas about women. Afterwards, the narrator tells the reader, 'He wanted to laugh at her for her silly fear, and then go off with a feeling of superiority; he wanted to humiliate her a little.' (Otčenášek: 22). The narrator exposes Paul's intentions as consciously malicious, providing an example of power abuse as he aims to boost his ego while degrading someone else's. Instead of manifesting empathy, Paul reveals egocentrism that is tightly interconnected with masculinity, although, the narrator attributes that to Paul's youthful indiscretion.

Nevertheless, Paul's treatment of Esther immediately changes when he notices the yellow star sewn on her coat, 'He gasped, with a tight feeling in his throat, and swallowed hard. "You're a…?"' (Otčenášek: 23). From this moment, Esther ceases to be 'like all women' because the star makes Paul realise the gravity of her situation. It brings out her otherness and a number of connotations, which cause him to fail to articulate his observation in language as the ellipsis replaces the word Jewess. Paul cannot take a clear stance to Esther's

position since, 'He knew nothing about these things and had never ever thought about them properly.' (Otčenášek: 26). Subsequently, he partakes in a process of learning, gradually obtaining knowledge that he previously did not posses. Therefore, it is possible to trace Paul's development in a manner of movement forward that is propelled by his relationship with Esther. Although he is introduced as a self-centred boy sheltered from the horrible events, he slowly turns into a caring man who is well-aware of the reality and capable of compassion for the underprivileged. Accordingly, Paul admits, 'It never struck me before I met you. That opened my eyes all at once. This is a cage we're in, you see, this Protectorate of theirs.' (Otčenášek: 138-9). In this way, Esther illuminates Paul's journey from a blind ignorance to a compassionate understanding.

However, this shift does not mean that the hierarchical order between the characters grows into one of equality. As mentioned above, Paul remains in charge of the narrative as well as Esther's faith until the very end. Without providing Esther with any information or asking about her opinion, he decides to hide her in his room. Moreover, he purposefully dissassociates her from the outside world with a justification, 'What's going on outside is nothing to do with you' (Otčenášek: 140). In the shelter, Paul enjoys Esther's dependence on him as the narrator comments, 'He stood over her, enjoying his male superiority to the full. He felt on top of the world…' (Otčenášek: 33). This is a good illustration of uneven power dynamics in regard to gender, sketching a stereotypical pattern in which the man rescues the powerless woman. Furthermore, together with the partiality for Paul, the narrator appears to approve of this discriminatory unevenness which becomes one of the recurring motifs. Paul thus 'felt something of fear, and a strange joy, too, and curiosity, and pride at what he had done' and wonders, 'Maybe - maybe he really saved her life. Of course he had - where else could she have gone?' (Otčenášek: 30, 35). The use of direct and free indirect speech media-

ted through an extradiegetic narrator simultaneously creates a distance between the text and the author, providing Otčenášek with a form of alibi.

To further illustrate the narrative's gender stereotypes, I will contrast Paul's moments of pride discussed above with a questionable scene depicting Esther's hunger. Before she collapses, Esther claims, 'I'm going to pieces - and I'd like him to find me attractive, terribly attractive - every woman wants to be attractive to the man she loves, only I can't! It's better to be hungry, better to be hungry than to look like this!' (Otčenášek: 116-7). Recalling the testimonies of the Holocaust survivors referring to an unimaginable hunger, this statement certainly comes across as problematic, notwithstanding the fact that it also stereotypes and degrades women regarding the female mission to be attractive for men.

The narrative being centred on Paul's bravery overshadows and suppresses Esther's storyline into the background. Throughout the introductory segment, Esther is repeatedly referred to as 'the silent girl' (Otčenášek: 29, 30) while silence permeates their conversation as 'They sat on in uncomfortable silence' (Otčenášek: 20). Relating to the overshadowing of Esther, from the beginning, Otčenášek establishes a scheme that will characterise his narrative. Consequently, it can be argued that rather than to tell a story about a Jewish girl, the Holocaust is employed as a backdrop presenting a courageous Czech man who ought to inspire the young socialist generation. Considering the conditions of the novel's origin, the reason behind this decision is given by Eyerman who observes that in paying attention to cultural trauma, 'There is power involved here as well, the power of political elites for example, of mass media in selecting what will be represented, thus affecting what will be forgotten as well as remembered.' (163). Focusing on Paul as Esther's saviour during the Holocaust events, Otčenášek manifests his preference of a patriarchal, nationalistic narrative to a female-minority one.

To elaborate on this remark on patriarchy, I will now proceed to discuss the most problematic aspect of Otčenášek's novel. As the reader becomes acquainted with Esther, male gaze is omnipresent throughout the narrative while Paul's eyes regularly scrutinise her body. This circumstance subsequently interweaves the text with objectification and violent desire. For instance, when they first arrive to the shelter, 'His [Paul's] glance slipped downwards over the outline of little breasts under white blouse with its yellow star.' (Otčenášek: 32). Here, Otčenášek devises yet another binary opposition - that of danger and desire as Esther's chest contrasts with the star. Esther's body is thus portrayed as at once inviting and threatening.

It needs to be noted that the same technique is not employed the other way around, which means that there is no insight into how Esther perceives Paul in terms of his attractiveness. This causes his character to remain blank and free to be imagined, which does not apply to Esther whose outward image is significant in the story not only in regard to womanhood but also to Jewishness. At times, both these elements are simultaneously highlighted, reinforcing Esther's role as the Other. For Paul, she becomes an object that ought to be examined as she diverts from his idea of the norm. When Paul wants to compliment her, he draws onto stereotypes, '"You're really just like other girls…" […] "You mean - because I'm Jewish?" "No, of course not." He retreated in confusion. "I don't know…I've never really thought about it. People always said…"' (Otčenášek: 59). As exemplified, despite Paul's endeavour to overcome the pervading ideology, he still emphasises Esther's otherness. Although compared to the Nazi rhetorics, Paul's commentary is more subtle and non-violent, it is precisely through his observation of Esther's normalcy that he reinforces her otherness and thereby allows for a perpetuation of racial discrimination. In a broader perspective, this discriminatory approach counters Esther's potential to properly transmit the Holocaust memory. In 'Gender and Collective Memory', Jacobs correctly argues, 'When women's bodies are the "dramatic

vehicle" through which these catastrophes are conveyed, however, the effects of voyeurism and sexual objectification problematize the emotive and connective value of these norms of atrocity remembrance.' (223). Paul does not consider Esther as being equal to him since he is always aware of her difference and inferiority as a woman. This is shown in the scene in which they are playing cards and he gives up, saying, 'What's the use of trying to play cards with a woman?' (Otčenášek: 57).

Consequently, this inequality results in the conflict that is essentially played out in the realm of the physical. Esther repeatedly explains to Paul that she is not ready to have sex with him since she is going through a difficult time, but also she has suffered abuse in the past. Nevertheless, her request does not reach understanding in Paul who continues to pressure her. Discussing sex, Esther admits, 'I'm scared of it..' to which Paul replies, 'Don't be scared. I won't force you…if…' (Otčenášek: 82). Esther then confesses about the sexual abuse that she was subjected to on the hands of her cousin and the headmaster. Instead of helping Esther to work through her trauma as what Bal describes as 'the second person before or to whom the traumatized subject can bear witness' (xi), Paul refuses to hear about her experience. Because it makes him uncomfortable, he silences Esther with dismissive 'Don't talk about it!' (Otčenášek: 83).

This already questionable exchange is followed by Paul's violent attempt to take hold of Esther's body 'until he saw the tears in her eyes' (Otčenášek: 88). Unfortunately, instead of criticising Paul, Otčenášek uses Paul's youth as an excuse for his conduct. The narrator laughs at Paul's inexperience, 'A fool of a boy, a greenhorn!' (Otčenášek: 88). What follows is nonetheless even more controversial since Paul is wondering, 'Why had she eluded him? Did she want to humiliate him?' (Otčenášek: 89). The blame is ultimately put on Esther as being guilty of not submitting to Paul, which results in her apology, 'I didn't want you to feel like that. Really. I'm a fool…and an ungrateful fool, and now you know it.' (Otčenášek: 90). Ot-

čenášek thereby merges Esther's existential crisis with more irrelevant issues, focusing solely on her relationship with Paul. More importantly, he does that in a way that, given the circumstances, oftentimes borders the line of what is acceptable and appropriate. This lack of respect towards the female victim thus distinguishes Otčenášek from Lustig and Fuks.

In the final analysis, the author employs the Holocaust theme as a stimulus for the male hero's development. The aim of the novel is therefore not to recover the voice of the oppressed female, but rather to present an inspiring character. This is demonstrated by the narrator's preference of Paul which accordingly suppresses Esther's narrative into the background. Hence, Esther's function is to stimulate action and anticipation of the plot as well as Paul's movement forward. Regarding Otčenášek's involvement in the Communist regime, *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* is principally a nationalistic text showing the bravery of a young Czech man. Otčenášek's effort to disguise the toxic nature of the couple's relationship and Paul's possessiveness undoubtedly fails since the text clearly contains numerous instances of gender stereotypes, misogyny and discrimination. Ultimately, positioning Paul as the main actor of the narrative, Otčenášek's portrayal of Esther is lacking roundness and independence that would allow her character to adequately honour the Jewish victims.

Chapter II. The Silent Wife of the Perpetrator in Ladislav Fuks's *The Cremator*

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss Fuks's novel *The Cremator*. Firstly, an overview of Fuks's literary career will be provided to explain the impulses behind his creations. Fuks's most significant works were published in the 1960s, each of them offering a different perspective on life under German occupation, mostly concerning the Jewish minority. Besides *The Cremator* (1969), among these belong *Mr. Theodore Mundstock* (1963), *My Dark-Haired Brethren* (1964), and *Variation for a Dark String* (1966). It can be speculated that Fuks's literary interest in the Jewish victims might have been induced by his own experience, facing the danger of persecution as a homosexual.[4] Nevertheless, I support Holy's explanation that, as a literary tool, in Fuks's fiction, 'the Shoah is a metaphor for man caught in the machinery of the totalitarian regime and for the functioning of evil at large' (40).

I will now proceed to introduce the novel more closely. *The Cremator* is set in the years preceding the Second War World as the plot concludes in 1939 with a final paragraph set after the end of the war, in 1945. The narrative is centred on Karel Kopfrkingl; a petit bourgeois man working in a crematory. Apart from Kopfrkingl's morbid obsession with death and strange speech, initially, everything about the Kopfrkingl family seems rather ordinary. As the plot unfolds, the reader follows the development of Kopfrkling's mind at this critical time and the impact that it has on his family. Subsequently, the reader begins to realise that in fact, Kopfrkingl is not a victim, but the opposite. He is the perpetrator who in his inability to recognise the evil of his deeds can be compared to Adolf Eichmann (Bubeníček: 131). Succumbing to the influence of the Nazi propaganda, Kopfrkingl gradually turns into a fanatical Nazi supporter. The climax occurs when he decides to murder his half-Jewish wife and their

[4] Fuks's Biography in Jan, Poláček. *Příběh spalovače mrtvol: Dvojportrét Ladislava Fukse*. Plus, 2013.

children. Thus, Fuks's writing essentially offers a psychological study of the perpetrator's mind, exposing manipulative strategies hidden beneath Kopfrkingl's flowery rhetorics.

As an author of Holocaust fiction, Fuks shares several characteristics with Otčenášek; such as his non-Jewish origin as well as the permission to write during the Normalisation period. In the eyes of many, the later might associate Fuks with the communist regime rather than with a dissident culture. However, I agree with Chitnis's argument that Fuks's 'fiction may be read as an attempt to articulate a way of being a writer utterly at odds with the view of the official and dissident establishments' (50). Accordingly, Fuks occupies a peculiar middle-ground position defying any labels. This notion of in-betweenness indeed characterises his work most fittingly. Fuks utilises elaborate narrative strategies and approaches, blurring not only the distinctions between literary genres, but also between reality and illusion. Given the facts presented in the previous chapter, this is a major contrast from Otčenášek's text which is written rather unskillfully and as such, following a simple scheme, does not pose any particular challenges to the reader.

Accordingly, to prove this claim, the first half of this chapter will examine the narratological techniques and Fuks's use of language. The analysis of formal aspects will simultaneously establish the manner in which Kopfrkingl's Jewish wife is being portrayed since her character is mainly defined by silence and passivity. In the second part, I will analyse the narrative's symbolism and imagery to expand on the implied, encoded meaning in connection with the voice and position of the oppressed. On that basis, the main objective of this chapter is to provide an interpretation of the female victim's silence and inactivity as opposed to the protagonist's powerful presence.

I. The Shaping and Distortion of Reality

As already stated in the previous chapter, Fuks draws attention to the ways in which language can be manipulated, especially, regarding Kopfrkingl's delight in renaming the world surrounding him. He calls his wife Lakmé instead of Marie and asks to be called Roman. Considering Kopfrkingl's passion for classical music and opera, Lakmé most probably alludes to Léo Delibes's opera of the same name (1883). *Lakmé* is set in colonial India, presenting a tale of an intercultural love which tragically ends with Lakmé's suicide (Hutcheon: 267). Through this reference, Fuks therefore already hints on the tragic ending of his novel.

The same method of renaming is applied to objects and locations as exemplified by The Boa restaurant that Kopfrkingl calls the Silver Casket with an explanation, 'Everyone knows what to expect from a boa. Why, its very name indicates it […] But a silver casket is a mystery. Nobody knows until the last moment what such a casket might contain until it's completely opened and examined…' (Fuks: 10). This statement does not only illuminate Kopfrkingl's way of thinking, but also the strategy that Fuks uses in constructing the structure of his text since the novel operates precisely as a casket whose content is not entirely revealed until the very end.

Kopfrkingl's word-play can be initially perceived as innocent. However, as the story proceeds, the language's main function is exposed as a tool to confuse and to camouflage since the reader discovers the contrast between Kopfrkingl's words and the truth. Clarifying that he manipulates the language 'because I'm a romantic and I love beauty' (Fuks: 16), Kopfrkingl dislocates the signifier from the sign. In this way, he creates an alternative reality that he imposes on his relatives and acquaintances, stimulating an opposing force to or even suppressing their own sense of reality. The loving kindness and care that characterise Kopfrkingl's verbal expressions as he addresses his family members with ceremonious epithets such as *my heavenly one*, *my gentle one* or *my beautiful one* does not correspond with his personality,

nor with his acts. Through this juxtaposition, Kopfrkingl's peculiar choice of vocabulary highlights the inconsistencies between his words and deeds. As a result, the narrative structure is one of paradoxes, encouraging the readers' anticipation. Fuks's language presents beauty through various signs failing to reach the referents, causing a disruption within the narrative and a disconnection among the characters and the readers. Therefore, I agree with Gilk's argument that Kopfrkingl's fondness of renaming can be interpreted as the evidence of the protagonist's violent and expansive character since, by assigning new names to people and things, he becomes their creator and so elevates himself into the role of the demiurge (85).

The explanation of Koprfkingl's language utilisation now allows for an analysis of Lakmé's position since she is being portrayed as seen through his eyes and in relation to his character. The aforementioned epithets play a significant role in defining Lakmé and the children as they change in correspondence with Kopfrkingl's psychological development. The opening sentence of the first chapter already suggests a possible struggle of the characters, reading, '"*My gentle one*," Mr. Karel Kopfrkingl said to his beautiful, blackhaired wife on the threshold of the Predators' House…' (Fuks: 7). Although this remark might not seem particularly relevant at the beginning, the more Kopfrkingl succumbs to the antisemitic ideology, the more important the darkness becomes as a decisive factor in the future of Kopfrkingl's children and their mother. As noted in the previous chapter, the stereotypical dark features and black hair mark the characters' Jewish origins and their destiny. In Fuks's novel, this distinction stands out especially as a flexible motif that, throughout the text, acquires several connotations. At first, it produces and then maintains an alienating barrier between Kopfrkingl, Lakmé and their offsprings. Because of his 'drop of German blood' that eventually transforms into a 'pure Germanic soul', Karel differs from 'his darkhaired Lakmé, Zina and Mili' (Fuks: 127, 43, 113).

The alienation can be most strongly felt in the scene at the observation point, following Kopfrkingl's discovery that his wife is Jewish. He positions Lakmé as the threatening Other by reducing her personality to her physicality epitomised by her dark hair. This reduction is symbolised through multiple allusions to Lakmé's hair that subsequently cover her character in a veil. Kopfrkingl cannot see his wife for who she is and substitutes her existence with a fetishised focus on her body. Hence, as Kopfrkingl 'smiled at her black hair' (Fuks: 146), the referent for Lakmé in the narrative is no longer her name, but her hair that as a metonymy suddenly overshadows her complex being. The scholars [Chalmers 2015, Ephgrave 2016, Banwell 2016] analysing violence against women during the Holocaust note the importance of hair to women as a signifier contributing towards female identity in contrast to the dehumanising and humiliating practices of shaving of bodily hair in the concentration camps. Within this context, the trope of Lakmé's hair can be interpreted as an indirect, ominous reference to the concentration camps. Therefore, it obtains a more profound meaning, exposing Kopfrkingl's fixation on the dark-hairiness as a manifestation of his discriminatory philosophy prompting him to degrade his wife.

Nonetheless, besides the epithets concerning Lakmé's appearance, Fuks invents other ones indicating Lakmé's current state of mind. Lakmé's mood is otherwise rather difficult to determine since she is rarely allowed to articulate her thoughts and opinions, and if so, the reader is presented only with snippets isolated from the whole. In the second half of the novel, the shift in her character is therefore denoted with the epithets anxious, dejected and uneasy (Fuks: 118, 120, 128, 140, 142, 149). However, Fuks does not provide any further explanations as to why Lakmé is being described in such a manner which, in effect, intensifies the reader's awareness of the change that is absorbed in the vacuum of Lakmé's silence. According to Bakhtin, 'in silence there is a voice that does not speak' (qtd. in Patterson: 409). It is certainly true that the presence of the voice that does not speak nor is heard resonates

throughout Fuks's narrative and demands attention. The employment of the external narrator focusing solely on Koprfkingl's subjective perspective results in a compromise between a first-person and a third-person narrative. The narrator can only access Kopfrkingl's mind, although without exposing the entire truth, whereas the remaining characters are portrayed as seen from the outside, acting in response to Kopfrkingl. Hence, the narrator's third-person point of view can be defined as limited. This technique consequently reinforces the suspense and uncertainty as to what might happen next since the important information is being concealed from the reader until the very last moment. Subsequently, the reader is required to actively participate by deciphering the meaning of these narratorial shifts.

With the exception of Willy's seductive rhetoric which later complements Kopfrkingl's dialogues, as suggested in the above paragraph, Kopfrkingl dominates the narrative, suppressing and overpowering other voices. Indeed, as Gilk observers, Kopfrkingl does not require any responses or communication partners to conduct a conversation, but an audience that will pay attention to him as to the only speaker (86). That being the case, for most of the narration, Lakmé functions as a passive listener while remaining silent or answering with negligible non-verbal expressions. This results in a one-dimensional representation of Lakmé as an opaque character lacking an inside, which is arguably the main difference between her and the heroines of Lustig and Otčenášek. In *The Cremator*, the reader cannot access the mind or the personality of the female protagonist who is wholly controlled by her male counterpart. Lakmé cannot move beyond the labels which Kopfrkingl imposes on her; namely, those of a mother, a housewife and later a Jewess, and she is thereby deprived of her agency.

For this reason, Lakmé is being shown as losing her autonomy by degrees and becoming her husband's puppet. Her character consequently moves from a position of a restricted activity to the one of an utter passivity. In the beginning, Kopfrkingl's behaviour towards his family still suggests a certain level of respect as his actions are intertwined with tenderness

that later disappears. For instance, he 'tenderly led Lakmé over to the threshold' or 'tenderly asked her to go into the tent' (Fuks: 9, 18). But even in the opening chapters, his tendency towards manipulation and power-abuse can be already detected. Fuks provides an insight into Kopfrkingl's mind, who perceives his family as passive objects dependent on him, instead of independent subjects. One of his thought-chains therefore presents the following image, 'I'd like to refresh them a bit, divert their thoughts, so I'm taking my dear ones to Madame Tussaud's' (Fuks: 15).

What happens then in the final chapters is that Kopfrkingl's oppressive tendencies which are at first manifested by his inward thinking are being released outwardly. They fuse with his acts, supported by his belief that some people, especially those of Jewish descent, deserve to be treated as objects in order to improve the world and prevent the humankind from further suffering. Accordingly, the chapter that describes Kopfrkingl murdering Lakmé is constructed precisely in the way that illustrates the unequal power dynamics. As Kořínková remarks, by not allowing Lakmé to actively engage in a dialogue with her husband or to say a word of her own, Fuks stages an atmosphere that already recognises her absence (536). Throughout the chapter, Lakmé is only present through her body, acting as Kopfrkingl's puppet as he 'took Lakmé by her arm and led her to the kitchen to get the food ready' and then 'took her into the dining-room and seated her at the table' (Fuks: 156).

Moreover, what distinguishes this scene is the clear connection between sexuality, love and Kopfrkingl's obsession with death that otherwise remains hidden under the surface and can only be found in the deeper levels and inconspicuous suggestions of the text. The link between love and death is particularly built upon Kopfrkingl's delight in morbidity and earlier comparison of his marriage to the crematory, 'For fifteen years, I've been coming here like this, and I'm seized by the same sacred feeling. It's something like my marriage. For seventeen years, I've been with Lakmé […] and she excites me in the same way as she did on

the first day we met…' (Fuks: 42). As a consequence, recalling their anniversary as he announces his plan for the evening, Kopfrkingl's preparation to kill Lakmé has a ceremonial form paralleling a celebration of love as it consists of a romantic dinner, formal clothes and a shared bath. Nevertheless, just as Lakmé's dark silk dress with a white collar resembles the attire of deceased Ms. Vomáčka, instead of consuming her body sexually, Kopfrkingl executes the ultimate consumption by depriving her body of its life with the phrase 'What if I hanged you, my dear?' (Fuks: 158). Kopfrkingl's question resonates with intimacy and courtesy that would be expected to appear between a couple partaking in a romantic evening. The word choice and the tone of the phrase delay the transmission of the words' meaning, again demonstrating the power of language.

The setting of the scene also needs to be discussed as the killing-act is performed in the bathroom. The significance of the bathroom is repeatedly highlighted through the cinematic descriptions of its peculiar details, especially the large yellow butterfly 'stuck on a pin under glass in a black frame' (Fuks: 33). The butterfly works as a metaphor for Lakmé's situation, while simultaneously resembling the yellow Jewish star. Within the context of the Holocaust, the bathroom predominantly operates as an indirect reference to the showers in the gas chambers. It is also the experiment with gas that Kopfrkingl is promised to be in charge of if he can eradicate the ties to his Jewish family. Consequently, what at first might seem to be seduction that presumably leads to lovemaking is in reality a plotted deceit, exposing the victim's weakness. At this point, the female vulnerability intersects with the Jewish vulnerability as they overlap in a manifestation of a complete surrender while a sense of intimacy mixes with horror. Similarly to other foreshadowing instances that are interwoven with the text, Kopfrkingl's earlier words move from the realm of the symbolic to the realm of the real, 'A wedding is a sacred ceremony […] This kind of sacred ceremony should take place only once in your life. It's almost akin to pronouncing somebody dead.' (Fuks: 77). As

the reader learns in the end, Lakmé's marriage to Karel indeed becomes analogous with a death sentence.

With respect to the use of language in *The Cremator*, one final observation needs to be made. The only opinion that Fuks allows Lakmé to properly articulate and that has an impact on the understanding of his narrative is that, 'names do not mean anything' (16). Lakmé notes this in relation to Kopfrkingl's assistant who has Jewish origins despite not having a Jewish name. The importance of names is discussed in the text within the wider social and ideological order that can be established and maintained through language. Fuks thereby shows that language might be employed as a manipulative ideological tool or, as in the case of the Nazi rhetorics, even as a weapon. When Willy persuades Karel that his wife is in fact an enemy who 'should understand that she doesn't deserve to live with you, that it's incompatible with your honour', he says, 'Your Lakmé always maintained that names don't matter…Of course not, considering that her maiden name was Stern.' (Fuks: 138, 136). This example introduces the conflict between the essentialist notion arguing for human existence as always being determined by one's origins and the idea that as individuals, we are born as a *tabula rasa*.

The Nazi belief in the former is further illustrated in the chapter depicting a view of Prague to demonstrate how language affects the perception of one's surroundings. By changing the names of the landmarks, the history is being manipulated and distorted to comfort to the ideological beliefs as Kopfrkingl remarks, 'I know it's no longer called Masaryk's stadium, it's been given a different name. […] There are names which aren't always suitable, even if they don't matter, as you say […] Perhaps it's called the Baldur von Schirach stadium now.' (Fuks: 143). The names represent a certain set of values that either corresponds to or contradicts the philosophy of the regime. Hence, to reinforce the political power and influence, some of them need to be adjusted. However, the same cannot be done with human beings. On the contrary, Lakmé, whose existence is within the antisemitic ideology defined as the

Other, cannot recognise the value of names as a form of oppression and argues against the power disparity that is being perpetuated through language.

II. Imagery and Symbolism

In the next part, I would like to move from the analysis of the novel's use of language to its symbolic level. *The Cremator* consists of multiple layers and motifs that are constantly twisted, repeated and distorted as the plot unfolds, causing the fusion of the real with the fantastic. This is further reinforced by the third-person narrative infused with Koprfkingl's subjectivity, undermining the narrator's reliability. The realist surface is being intermingled with dream-sequences, hallucinations and illusions, transforming the work into a carnivalesque horror. Here lies the main strength of Fuks's work; drawing on the opposition between the human and the inhuman, or potentially dehumanised, the seemingly ordinary is being exposed as the monstrous.

Fuks chooses an unusual strategy of foreshadowing by setting up a grotesque world that combines the Freudian uncanny with madness, obstructing the ability to distinguish between the reality and illusions. In *The Grotesque in Art and Literature,* Robert Penn Warren argues:

'the grotesque is one of the most obvious forms art may take to pierce the veil of familiarity, to stab us from the drowse of the accustomed, to make us aware of the perilous paradoxicality of life. The grotesque evokes dormant emotions, particularly the negative ones of fear, disgust, revulsion, guilt. But it is close to the comic, and in it laughter and horror meet.' (246).

Fuks's grotesque world consists of several ghost-like characters who randomly reappear and disappear without any wider context and whose acts, in their purely symbolic purpose, un-

dermine the realist plot. Both Holý and Kořínková thus agree that Fuks in this way establishes a funhouse atmosphere (2015: 45, 1977: 536).

In the second chapter, the funhouse however becomes real as Kopfrkingl suggests to visit the waxworks simulating the experience of the Black Death epidemic in seventeenth-century Prague. Recounting the historical events, Fuks at the same time refers to the future development of his own story. For this reason, as Lakmé will be hanged by Karel, the Ratcatcher hangs himself in despair and the Town Clerk beats a little girl to death with a rod, in the same way in which Kopfrkingl will murder Mili. The notions of theatricality and performance thereby intersect with reality, demonstrating their close relation.

While the Kopfrkingl family is watching the performance, the reader realises that it works in fact as a story within a story, commenting on the threat embodied by the Nazis with the disease as a symbol of the oppressive ideology. The guide of the waxworks declares, 'Nature moved and evildoers heard, forgetting they were human. Misfortune looms large over Prague - alas for the city.' (Fuks: 18). The relevance is further affirmed by the conversation between Karel and Lakmé after the performance. Comparably to Otčenášek's novel, the Middle Ages in this scene are meant to represent the times of darkness in contrast to the progressive twentieth century. However, Fuks underlines the differences among the numerous perspectives concerning the issue as depending on one's individual background and potential privilege. When Kopfrkingl maintains that, 'It's terrible indeed what people went through those days […] but those were the Middle Ages.', Lakmé unexpectedly interferes to correct her husband, reminding him, 'People suffer nowadays too. Once they suffered from the plague, today from something else.' (Fuks: 29). In doing so, Lakmé acknowledges and creates a space for the disadvantaged while breaking through and undermining her husband's authority that rests upon his privileged position. Unlike Otčenášek's protagonist, Kopfrkingl cannot achieve an epiphany with the assistance of his Jewish wife and remains unable to see through his pri-

vilege in order to comprehend the others' misery. Conversely, he becomes blinded by the Nazi policy and caught within the feeling of entitlement motivating him to actively participate in the oppression.

Furthermore, to establish the power dynamics, Fuks opens the novel with the family's visit to the Predator's House, where Karel and Lakmé met for the first time. Throughout the narrative, the allusions to the pavilion and the leopard residing there subsequently reappear as a symbolic linkage to Kopfrkingl who in his behaviour resembles 'a lurking predator' (Kořínková: 536). The image can be likewise read more generally, in the line with Darwinian theory, showing the existence of hierarchical structures in our world as natural and therefore unavoidable. However, Fuks expands this interpretation by also including a snake in the composition as Kopfrinkgl comments, 'it seems to me, Lakmé, that nothing has changed in those seventeen years. Look, even that snake in the corner over there is where is was then.' (7). Kopfrkingl's observation can be understood in terms of the couple's personal circumstances but, considering the significance assigned to the depiction through its repetition, it simultaneously becomes suggestive of a deeper meaning.

Particularly as a reference to the Old Testament and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, the serpent represents a deceptive and cunning creature. From this perspective, the snake embodies a form of danger that is difficult to recognise and, as such, it is more dangerous than the predators. This detail in addition ties in to the novel's epigraph by Giovanni Papini, 'The Devil's neatest trick is to persuade us that he does not exist.'. Within the historical context of the narrative, the serpent refers to the Nazi regime and people operating within it. Koprfkingl's mention of the permanence points to the fact that despite the progress, the nature of humankind does not change. In maintaining that, in their character, the present events do not radically differ from those of the past, Fuks again agrees with Otčenášek who also presents the idea of the modern, civilised Europe as rather illusory. In this respect, the

snake as a symbol can be likewise seen as an indivisible condition of human existence, a threat that is always stealthily sneaking in the corner among the predators.

The understanding of the animal imagery will be useful for the following analysis in which I will examine yet another way of Kopfrkingl's manipulative treatment of Lakmé. In his behaviour, Kopfrkingl adopts the serpentine symbolism as the lurking evil and the ultimate trickster, who constantly shifts his personal attitudes to exploit the circumstances to his advantage. The power of his character lies in his ability to seduce since, in the same way in which he deceives Lakmé, he also appeals to and deludes the reader who, bearing that in mind, needs to be attentive to each word of the narrative. The gap between Kopfrkingl's words and deeds resurfaces again in the scene describing his visit to Dr. Bettelheim. The illusion of their perfect marriage is shattered here by the implication that Kopfrkingl regularly visits brothels and prostitutes, not to mention his possible inclination towards necrophilia. Nonetheless, this does not prevent Kopfrkingl from depicting his marriage as the ideal, 'my good Lakmé has never been suspicious. Just like me she believes that our marriage is exemplary' (Fuks: 52). Similarly, he does not hesitate to criticise those who are not as fortunate, stating, 'I don't agree with it [divorce]. A husband should be faithful to his wife and woman should be faithful to her husband.' (77) or shaming his assistant for being divorced, 'there's one thing I don't like about Mr. Rubenstein, namely, that he's divorced […] Not every marriage can be as beautiful and happy as ours.' (Fuks: 101).

On this ground, a striking shift occurs when Kopfrkingl is offered an official position in the NSDAP under the condition that he will no longer associate with his Jewish wife. As the narrator dramatically closes the chapter, Kopfrkingl calmly announces, 'After all, I can get a divorce' (138), denying his previous beliefs and reinforcing the unreliability of the stated facts. Nevertheless, what follows significantly differs from the usual process of getting a divorce. Comparably to the serpent in the garden of Eden, in order to fulfil his desire and cast

Lakmé out of his life without having to carry the burden of guilt, Kopfrkingl begins to tempt his wife to kill herself. During the family's visit to the observation point that is depicted in the fashion of the horror genre, Kopfrkingl repeatedly encourages Lakmé to look out of the window while talking about suicide and death. For instance, 'He put his hand out into the lovely mild breeze and said: "It's just right for jumping".' (Fuks: 150).

After Kopfrkingl succeeds in murdering Lakmé, his evil side comes fully into the light as the issue of racial discrimination also moves into the foreground. Kopfrkingl focuses on his progeny next, obsessed with his German blood as opposed to Lakmé's Jewish origins. In the novel, following the manner of the Judaistic tradition, Jewishness is highlighted as hereditary through the female linage, as exemplified by Kopfrkingl saying, 'Indeed, our Zina is beautiful, like you, my heavenly one, and your late mother.' (Fuks: 73). This differs from Nazi racial policies defining a Jew as having either three or four Jewish grandparents, whereas one or two grandparents would classify a mixed descent (*Mischling*). According to Waxman, 'For both Aryan and non-Aryan women, the totalitarianism and violent misogyny of National Socialism meant that the state was to have total monopoly over their reproductive rights. Women were no longer in control of their own bodies.' (11). Jewish women were subjected to forced sterilisation, forced abortion and in the case of the child being already born, there was a minimal chance for the child to survive as the newborns were usually killed (Banwell: 211, Waxman: 11). In the emphasis on motherhood, a connection is being established throughout the narrative, stretching from the past to the present and to the potential future. Before it becomes entirely clear that Lakmé is half-Jewish, Kopfrkingl remembers Lakmé's aunt who 'had she been a Catholic, would certainly be canonized' and her deceased mother who used to prepare carp in 'a foreign style' (Fuks: 109, 105). Eventually, this particular detail concerning the preparation of carp serves as evidence for Lakmé's Jewishness that Willy presents to Karel.

Being quarter-Jewish, the children are suddenly distanced from their father as Willy defines their mother's prevailing influence upon them as unhealthy and contagious. Mili, who in his effeminate nature challenges the toxic masculinity promoted by the Hitler Youth, is immediately labeled as the Other due to Lakmé's upbringing and killed by Kopfrkingl believing, 'How he would have suffered in his life otherwise. The things I have spared that good boy.' (Fuks: 166). On the other hand, Zina, acting as Lakmé's double, in the end escapes the destiny arranged for her by her father since at the last moment, Kopfrkingl is taken to a mental hospital where he will be prevented from any further perpetuation of evil. In this gesture, Fuks denounces Kopfrkingl's deeds as madness, reestablishing the world order and its former values against the absurdity caused by the Nazi ideology. Zina is therefore able to preserve her Jewish heritage and continue the family line. In this way, she carries a hopeful message for future generations whilst, as a bearer of the history and a witness of the atrocious events, preventing the destruction and termination of the Jewish lineage.

Finally, by portraying the Jewish-female victim as an inactive, silent and puppet-like character that is strongly repressed by the male-perpetrator, Fuks is able to authentically convey the experience of the oppressed minority. Therefore, the narrator's treatment of Lakmé mirrors the real treatment of minorities. Despite playing on the stereotypes and maintaining Lakmé in a restricted position, with Kopfrkingl as her counterpart, the narrative highlights the problematic power dynamics between them and directly exemplifies the issues concerning the discriminatory ideology. At the same time, providing a thorough psychological insight into Kopfrkingl's development, Fuks demonstrates the power of language and its danger as an ideological tool. Moreover, devising an elaborate, multilayered text, Fuks requires the readers to participate in the narrative and make their own judgements. As a result, depicting the happenings of the time authentically while mimicking their absurdity through the employment of

the grotesque, Fuks's text transmits compassion for the oppressed, enabling the readers to understand the situation and to sympathise with them.

CH III. The Writing Jewess in Arnošt Lustig's *The Unloved*

In order to establish the ground for the following analysis, I will shortly summarise my previous findings. Regarding Otčenášek's novel, I have examined a story of a young Jewish woman in hiding told by an external narrator who prefers the voice of the male protagonist, acting as a saviour, to that of the actual victim. Fuks's third-person narrative, on the other hand, shows the workings of the perpetrator's mind and the treatment of his Jewish wife. The female voice there is oftentimes replaced by silence and non-verbal expressions and the narrative is likewise dominated by her male counterpart. Within the framework of gender, it is therefore possible to detect several common features in Otčenášek's and Fuks's techniques, such as the overshadowing of the female voices, although for different purposes. Both authors employ the theme of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust as non-Jewish observers. Furthermore, in their texts, the portrayal of the war period is simultaneously symbolic and applicable to more general scenarios. Thus, in Otčenášek's case, the readers encounter an emphasis on morality and courage, whereas, in *The Cremator*, they witness human struggle under the oppressive totalitarian regime.

In contrast to Otčenášek and Fuks, as a Jewish author and a survivor, Lustig offers a completely different approach to the Holocaust fiction. Through the eyes of a seventeen-year-old Jewish prostitute Perla, Lustig describes life in Theresienstadt, a concentration camp functioning as a way station to death camps. Written in a diary form, *The Unloved* can be defined as what Foley in her study of mimesis in Holocaust narratives calls 'the pseudofactual novel', which she describes as 'an imitation of a mode of non-fictional discourse – memoir, diary, letter – that itself refers to the historical world.' (351). Accordingly, the main focus of this chapter will be, firstly, to determine how the diary form and the first-person narrative affect the portrayal of the heroine. Secondly, relating to the protagonist's struggle to survive as

a prostitute in Theresienstadt, I will examine the ways in which the female body is being devised as a site of this struggle.

I. The Diary Form as a Tool of Liberation and Memory

Comparably to Otčenášek, Lustig captures the experience of a young Jewess who, transitioning from girlhood, is learning about what it means to be a woman. Nonetheless, she is forced to learn that during the time that considerably redefines the meaning of womanhood and in a way that would be best described as unnatural. Adulthood is forced upon Perla as her age does not correspond with her rich life experience. She finds herself in a situation that is beyond normality, making her recognise that, 'I am seventeen, but I feel as old as the trees, the wind, the rivers.' (Lustig: 194). Nonetheless, the reasoning behind Lustig's peculiar decision to mediate the account of the Holocaust through a female character still strongly relates to his personal feelings as the premise of the novel was initially inspired by his daughter, who was born almost twenty years after the war (Trucks: 73). Imagining what would happen to Eva if she would have to experience the war herself, Lustig suggested to her, 'I will model a prostitute after you. It's only for play. You tell me everything you feel you can tell your father.' (Trucks: 73).

The outcome of their conversations and the author's personal investment in the story were later transmitted into the novel as Lustig admitted, 'I used several of her dreams in the book […] When I read it later, I saw that it was written with anger and anxiety about my daughter.' (Trucks: 73). *The Unloved* is therefore an imaginative fiction that is strongly rooted in history. It is endowed with a quality which could not have been conveyed by anyone else but Lustig, since it had grown in him throughout the years following the end of the war as a result particular to his individual background. By admitting his anxiety concerning his daughter, Lustig proves that dealing with the consequences developed by the exposure to the trau-

matic events of the Holocaust is a long-term matter. *The Unloved* can thus be seen as a way of coping with his trauma.

Besides the incorporation of the autobiographical element, the novel additionally differs in its primary focus on the character of a Jewess. It provides a first-person narrative that furnishes the reader with a deeper, subjective insight into the victim's experience, which is further reinforced by its confessional mode. Despite the novel's fictionality, Perla's story as a story of a prostitute in Theresienstadt presents an alternative narrative to the generally accepted and perpetuated notion of Holocaust history. It provides space for the silenced voices whose experience was similar to Perla's and whose existence remained unrecognised within the dominant historical narrative. It can be therefore argued that Lustig contributes to and participates in rewriting of history, not only allowing the story to be told from the perspective of a Jewess, but also from the perspective of a prostitute.

As Sinreich notes in her study on rape of Jewish women, within the genre of survivor testimonies, the accounts of female Holocaust experience in relation to sexual encounters appear very rarely due to the censorship or self-censorship of the victims caused by the stigma surrounding the topic and shame that the victims or their relatives felt or feared (4-7). *The Unloved* then attempts to fill this gap, introducing the concept of the unnoticed history, 'This is the unnoticed history. The forgotten history of ordinary people like old man O., Mr. L., Rabbi B., Ludmila, or Harychek Geduld. A history of girls like Milena repeated over and over a thousand times.' (Lustig: 166). The novel's premise thus can be compared to Otčenášek's writing who likewise, although not as successfully, endeavours to recover forgotten voices. On the other hand, it might be contrasted with *The Cremator*, which contrarily examines the methods of silencing the victims.

The diary entries which are meant to acquaint the reader with this unnoticed history are mapping five months of Perla's life in Theresienstadt, beginning on the first day of August

1943 and ending on December 22th. In that manner, *The Unloved* functions as a chronicle, focusing on a daily life as opposed to the other two fictions, which are constructed as selections of more significant moments. As Merry fittingly puts it in his essay on the literary diary, 'The precise date of the head of an entry becomes a kind of metronome to accelerate or slow down our reading habit' (6-7). The specific dating affects the way in which the readers process the text, evoking a sense of immediacy and reality effect that is being intertwined with the readers' knowledge of history.

Lustig opens his work with three entries which omit any actual sign of human presence and rather function as a catalogue. For instance, the second entry reads, '*August 6*. Three Times. A walking stick. A lady's umbrella. A fountain pen and a vail of blue ink.' (Lustig: 3). The items listed in the entry were given to Perla as a payment in kind for her sexual service, whereas the mention of three times implies the number of sexual acts performed during that day. The absence of the 'I' or any human referent signifies Perla's impersonal attitude to and detachment from her body as a means allowing her to survive. With the exception of Perla's last day in Theresienstadt, the lists continue to appear in each entry. At times, they are accompanied by a further account of the day's events or contemplations. Other times, they emerge on the page alone, as if isolated from the happenings of the outside world. While each list indicates Perla's survival, the lack of her further commentary suggests that she is possibly experiencing a crisis.

Providing thus a chronicle of Perla's life in Theresienstadt, the diary allows the reader to trace Perla's personal development as the unusual circumstances force her to disconnect from her former identity. With Perla maintaining that, 'I now know that I wrote what I wrote because I wanted to gain a sense of what had happened in my life' (Lustig: 114), the diary functions as a vehicle to make sense of one's self and the reality within the absurd context. According to Cixous, 'By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been

more than confiscated from her' (1964). The power of women's writing (theorised by Cixous as *écriture féminine*) is precisely what Lustig, albeit a man, demonstrates in his text as he enables Perla to write her diary. Through writing, Perla is able to maintain her voice as she writes herself and her body. As further elaborated below, she restores her dignity and reclaims bodily autonomy while articulating thoughts that would otherwise remain unspoken or repressed. Correspondingly, she admits, 'I know that my poor "writing voice" is the only thing that is really mine.' (Lustig: 138).

As a result, the diary also acquires a therapeutic function. It induces a dialogue between the 'I' that writes the diary and the 'I' that speaks in the diary. The written text presented in the diary is a product of self-exploration as well as self-censorship. In accordance with Perla's statement, 'this paper is like my Grandmama Hana, or like Lisa, who took care of me all that time, or like a hole in the soul that can be filled only by my telling it to someone' (Lustig: 118), the diary substitutes a co-witness and a listener who can help her to process and work through her trauma. Lustig himself stated that writing had helped him to vent his experience and translate it into a more graspable form. In a conversation with Rob Trucks, he explains, 'When I first started telling people what happened to me they looked at me as if I was a mental case. They were unable to grasp it so there was no other way to tell the story but to write it. I was exploding with experiences which I could never tell to anyone' (69).

As the narrative proceeds, Perla becomes increasingly aware of her position as a witness and of the value that the documentation of the life in Theresienstadt presents for the future. The 'I' on the page thus at once represents a multiplicity of voices that did not have the chance to be vocal and express themselves as Perla declares, 'Inside me, I can hear the echoes of voices that at times arrive as inaudibly as the light of those extinguished stars. […]

I feel inside me the presence of people who have gone away, are going, and are still to go. People I know, as well as those unknown, are with me.' (Lustig: 196).

Furthermore, Perla's awareness of the diary's testimonial function that is being manifested in her effort to convey the truth, albeit her version of truth, is projected into the text on a metafictional level. Hence, the narrative draws attention to its fictionality whilst Perla comments on her writing style and strategies. For instance, she contemplates the ways of capturing the truth and the impossibility to communicate it objectively:

'I have to keep on adding and crossing out words, feeling at times that a single contradiction contains more truth than if I piled all the words I know into one big heap. I wonder whether truth is contained in what happened, in what people feel about why it happened, and in what must happen because it has happened before. […] It's difficult, maybe even impossible to convey it through a spoken or written account, to make it even somewhat understandable to those who only get it secondhand.' (Lustig: 95)

First of all, Perla struggles to explain her experience as a prostitute since it is conditioned by her unusual circumstances, most importantly by her survival instinct. She faces moral dilemma since her position can prompt accusations of collaboration and betrayal. Hence, her account can be also seen as a form of justification. Moreover, considering her age and the negative attitude towards female sexuality at that time, she writes against the stereotypical image of a young innocent woman promoted within society. With all these factors contributing towards her perception of reality, she acknowledges that it might not be possible for others to understand her and vice versa. Therefore, as Bigsby clarifies in *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust*, there will always be a gap between the imagined and the actual due to the ways in which memory translates experience into language (12).

Additionally, by allowing Perla to articulate her doubts emerging in the writing process, Lustig hints on the question that every author of historical fiction needs to face. Namely, how to present a historical narrative without distorting the reality. Considering the countless perspectives, this task is ultimately unachievable as the truth cannot ever be entirely known and, thus, 'history is ultimately unknowable […] the hypotheses by which we structure our historical understanding cannot aspire to objectivity.' (Foley: 331). Correspondingly, Perla eventually writes, 'I realize that what I have written can be only my truth.' (Lustig: 113). Just as Fuks emphasises the danger of a single narrative and the power of language, Lustig highlights the inadequacy of language to convey one's subjective perception of reality to another person. Perla exemplifies the redefinition of meaning caused by the abnormal circumstances as she remarks on her position in Theresienstadt, 'I tell myself how lucky I am, that many people are much worse off. I've learned not to complain or feel sorry for myself; I don't even like it when others feel sorry for me. I think I'm really relatively happy.' (Lustig: 15). The words 'lucky' or 'happy' acquire a different meaning from the one commonly recognised as Perla describes her experience in relation to the standards established in Theresienstadt, surpassing the limits set by language.

Nevertheless, the task of writing her own truth imposes danger on Perla. Given the circumstances, the diary functions as evidence of the crimes committed by the Germans as well as a counterpoint to the dominant narrative fabricated by the Nazis. Perla is violating the rules established in Theresienstadt since she refuses to maintain the silence that is forced upon her and, as an act of resistance, allows her voice to speak. Her resistance is even more remarkable because of her awareness of the danger represented by her writing. This is clearly defined during one of the Luftwaffe officer's visits when he notices the notebook, 'All at once, without a word being spoken, I saw that writing a diary could be as dangerous as what

is referred to as high treason' (Lustig: 56). Despite the danger, Perla continues to record her observations, being encouraged by her role of the witness, as Waxman likewise mentions, 'the role of the witness has given survivors a sense of purpose' (6).

However, it is not only her desire to bear a witness that motivates Perla in keeping the diary, but also the need to leave something behind. Facing death at such a young age, Perla knows that the diary represents the only form of her legacy since her existence might be soon reduced to a mere number. That being the case, she claims, 'First, what I'm writing is funny and insignificant, yet second, it is for me the only proof of my existence.' (Lustig: 106). The supposedly insignificant suddenly obtains a significant meaning as the manifestation of an attempt to hold onto one's life. Accordingly, the opposition between Perla's desire to survive and her almost-certain death is presented through her recollections of the past as well as her effort to define herself, in particular, as a woman who is robbed of her future.

II. The Female Body as Both Vulnerable and Powerful

Regarding the Holocaust experience, the narrative demonstrates that gender plays a significant role in the treatment of the victims and hardships they had to suffer. For a better understanding, it might be helpful to look at Lustig's explanation of why his protagonists are mostly female:

'They [women] were standing, because Nazis hated women. Women were nothing for them. They really treated women strangely, with disrespect, so try to imagine a thousand women, standing, sometimes naked. […] And I saw these women in the mud, menstruating, with blood running down their legs and they were beaten, so I learned to respect them very much because when two people suffer and one is male and one is a woman, the woman suffers ten times more.' (Trucks: 74).

On that basis, *The Unloved* illustrates the suffering of the victims as specific to each gender, with the emphasis on the female experience. The novel's title can be interpreted as referring to both the young Jewish women in the camps and the prostitutes who are, by definition, associated with the physical rather than the emotional while being mostly perceived negatively. It is important to realise that during the Second World War, there were numerous women in a similar position to Perla's. As Jolluck notes in her article on violence against women during the Second World War, in the spring of 1940, traveling brothels have been set up in which at least 34, 000 East European women were forced to serve as sex slaves (517). Nevertheless, unlike most of these women, as the character created by a male author, Perla has the privilege to tell her side of the story.

Given Perla's circumstances, sexuality is an indivisible part of the narrative, which is a major difference with both of the previously examined novels. *The Cremator* presents sexuality in a largely implicit form as the physical remains rather absent, whereas *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness* follows a patriarchal structure, repressing and overshadowing the female desire. On the contrary, Lustig constructs Perla as a strong character to break the stigma that surrounds prostitution and often results in the underrepresentation or depiction of prostitutes as ultimately faceless beings. Despite being forced to share her body with others, Perla is able to shift the power dynamics by perceiving her body as 'a weapon' (Lustig: 69), undermining the hierarchy between the exploited and the exploiter. To clarify her reasoning, she notes, 'The body is a tool in a game that at times stops being amusing' (Lustig: 16). Perla's position provides her with several benefits as she receives various items or food in exchange and makes acquaintance with Mr. L. who postpones her deportation to the East. She acknowledges her privilege, knowing well that within the Nazi system there exist multiple levels of suffering and that one's survival is always at the expense of someone else's life, 'It was no

longer a choice between good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust, but between surviving and not surviving.' (Lustig: 169).

Thus, disrupting the structure of binary oppositions between 'us' and 'them' or 'good' and 'evil' that is employed by Otčenášek, Lustig builds his moral world in line with Levi's concept of *grey zone* that emphasises the complexity of human relationships in the camps. This complexity is illustrated with the friendship of Perla and Lida who in many ways functions as Perla's double. Lida voices the heavy thoughts that Perla attempts to suppress or downplay. In doing so, she repeatedly underlines the absurdity of their current conditions as opposed to the habitual perception of the formerly unimaginable:

'"Someone took it into his head that gypsies would be done away with on Monday, Jews on Tuesdays, the Zulus from Africa on Wednesdays, and Americans on Thursdays. And neither you nor I are the least bit surprised," said Lida, "because it belongs to the normal course of things, just as much as the fact that the earth turns or that the sun rises and sets again."' (Lustig: 45).

The long-lasting exposure to the misery and cruelty causes the victims to adapt to the abnormal circumstances, losing sight of their former lives, which results in a shift of the absurd into the norm. This also applies to their identity as they confront the humiliating and dehumanising practices on a regular basis. Ludmila observes, 'We're like animals […] We eat like horses, standing on the run, sleep in stables like cows, are frightened even though nothing seems to threaten us at the moment, and mostly obey like slaves.' (Lustig: 19-20). There is a tension between the desire to survive which is accompanied by the animal instincts contradicting the formal moral and ethical code and the Nazi's treatment of the oppressed as being less than human. The victims find themselves in a constant existential struggle, redefining as well

as preserving humanity while resisting the dehumanising forces. Alluding to their near-death experience, Lida describes the victims' existence as similar to non-being, 'You are and you aren't. It's such a strange existence, separated by only the thinnest of lines from nonexistence' (Lustig: 21). Comparably to Otčenášek's recovery of mute voices and Fuks's employment of a puppet-like body, in Lustig's work, the previously mentioned notion of the present absence defines the existence of the oppressed.

In the novel, one of the means to resist the feeling of not being alive is the body, which brings us to a second point concerning Lida's role as Perla's double. As adolescent women, similarly to Esther, both Perla and Lida are prevented from living through this essential period of their lives in a natural order. Hence, Perla, whose approach to sex can be labeled as nonconventional, mentors Lida who in her lack of knowledge of the physical embodies a more traditional woman whose sexuality is somewhat repressed. They are both forced to face the possibility of missing out on the experiences defining womanhood at that time; such as romantic relationships, marriage, pregnancy or motherhood. However, since all these aspects are simultaneously intertwined with the female body as a site manifesting womanhood, the emphasis lies not only on the spiritual but also on the corporeal experience.

When Lida has to go on the transport to Auschwitz, Lustig makes a powerful gesture in making her last wish to lose her virginity. There is nothing vulgar or scandalous in the way that Perla assists Lida in fulfilling her request. Instead, in a Dionysian fashion, it is a final celebration of life. Sex thus becomes a meaningful act of empowerment, not something to disregard, as Perla writes, 'Ludmila went away as an adult' (102). Accordingly, presenting sex as equally significant for men and women, Lustig counters societal conventions which commonly ignore and repress female desire. The text so contributes towards the destigmatisation of female sexuality and prostitution, opposing the notions of shame and judgment habitually emerging within this area.

In the same vein, Lustig brings attention to the hardships which Jewish women had to suffer precisely because they were women. In the previous chapter, I have already noted the violent methods applied to Jewish women as being the bearers of the next generation. The female characters of *The Unloved* therefore have to reconsider the prospects of their future, especially, with respect to the diminishing possibility of becoming mothers one day. Perla remarks, 'Ludmila's worst fear had been that she would be sterilized in the east', while quoting Lida, 'there is certainly a difference between having it be up to me and having the decision made regardless of what I want or don't want' (Lustig: 159). Both Perla and Lida are put in an insecure position which presses them to redefine their identity, regardless of their bodies and its reproductive functions. In effect, restricting the victims' control over their mental, spiritual and physical being causes a total displacement of the oppressed who, being deprived of any signifiers contributing towards their identity, in turn become a possession of the oppressor.

Additionally, Lustig addresses women's vulnerability as targets of rape and sexual violence and its problematics regarding the law of *Rassenschande*. In 'Rassenschande, Genocide and the Reproductive Jewish Body', Banwell argues that prior to the 1990s, sexual violence against Jewish women has been omitted from any central investigation due to the laws that prohibited sexual relations between Germans and Jews, on basis of which it was assumed that rape and sexual violence occurred only rarely (208). To imply that rape was a real threat in the concentration camps despite the implemented law, Lustig presents a compelling image in one of the conversations between Perla and Lida. As Ludmila in a sentimental tone expresses her wish to have sex, 'I don't want to die before I live through everything a person is supposed to live through […] I'm still a virgin.', instead of reciprocating the emotion, Perla disrupts her romantic vision and abruptly replies, 'Be glad that no one had raped you yet.' (Lust-

ig: 47). By alluding to this neglected area, Lustig contradicts and suppresses the idea that the instances of sexual abuse and rape were rare in the camps.

This contradiction is most effectively carried out through the relationship of Perla and the Luftwaffe officer as she wonders, 'Why didn't he go into the German prison to choose his woman?' (Lustig: 178). Perla characterises her position in their relationships with words, 'in reality I am just another serf' and describes the officer as perceiving her as 'a Jewish whore' (Lustig: 55, 50). He regularly reminds her that he can kill her anytime; the veracity of which confirms her commentary, 'As soon as he's convinced that I'm a louse, a worm, or a criminal, because a different mother gave birth to me, he'll step on me, wipe me out, kill me.' (Lustig: 55). She notices the pleasure that her submissiveness arouses in him, 'He was looking at me as a pilot looks down on a destroyed city below, already without voice and shape, burnt beyond recognition like pieces of once-living body - as if I too was without a soul' (Lustig: 178). These instances demonstrate a twisted form of power-abuse combined with a sadist perversity as the oppressor derives pleasure from his absolute power over the powerless victim. Correspondingly, Chalmers in her study claims, 'Sexual violence, in addition to social and physical abuse, was clearly part of the process of dehumanizing and humiliating Jewish and other undesirable women.' (191). To provide an explanation as to why this could happen against the law of *Rassenschande*, Perla mentions an important detail, 'nothing was forbidden to him, as long as no German witnesses were around' (Lustig: 53).

Furthermore, the pressure on female bodies is also sustained in connection to the scientific racism that was based on a pseudoscientific belief in racial hierarchy and social Darwinism. Throughout the narrative, the theory is discussed among the characters as Perla comments on the hierarchical structure with the glorification of the Aryan race and the Jews as 'the representatives of the lowest race' (Lustig: 52). Perla is being manipulated by the Luftwaffe officer who teases her about the fact that her appearance might secure her access to

the Nordic retraining centre. This idea slightly undermines Perla's resistance and self-respect, entrapping her within the discriminatory framework as she admits, 'I can't help but be proud sometimes for having been born with such close approximation of those requirements' or doubts herself, 'Would I think similarly if I were German and not Jewish?' (Lustig: 52, 160). In this manner, Lustig exposes the ways of ideological manipulation and its appalling and fatal consequences.

Considering all these degrading aspects, in my final argument, I will focus on Perla's ability to reclaim her power through the act of writing and through her body. Here I would like to draw on Cixous again:

'To write. An act which will not only "realize" the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being, giving her access to her native strength; it will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal; it will tear her apart from the superegoized structure in which she has always occupied the place reserved for the guilty…' (1947).

Tracing her bodily awareness through her memories and translating them into language, Perla describes the process of learning about and exploring the functions of her body. She highlights how challenging it is for a woman to respect and acknowledge her body as being one with the mind, 'To touch myself meant to touch something that wasn't altogether mine. […] Then I gazed at my body as I would at something that would give me pleasure and that I would give pleasure to. […] It took a long time before we became friends, my body and my mind.' (Lustig: 89). The body needs to be explored first in order for the mind to identify with it. By achieving solitary pleasure that does not require assistance of a second person, Perla finds power in her body that influences her personality in achieving a certain level of inde-

pendence and self-confidence. Recollecting those moments in her writings alongside the acts that she is forced to perform in Theresienstadt, she restores her dignity. Subsequently, Lustig implies that the approach to the corporeal determines our personal development. The bodily awareness contributes towards one's grounding and self-knowledge as Perla explains:

'this was my deepest secret-to discover that my body and especially those parts less mentioned were able to bring so much pleasure to me. […] The most important part of the secret was not that I was doing something that I thought was forbidden but that I had discovered something wonderful about myself, that no one in the world would ever know because it was my very own body and I could bring about the pleasure alone' (Lustig: 143).

Therefore, besides being the counterpoint to the mistreatment that she receives in Theresienstadt, the text's emphasis on female self-gratification functions as an encouragement, implying that women ought not to be ashamed of their bodies and desires, but they should celebrate them.

Likewise, this is the message conveyed through the novel's focus on female sexuality. For Lustig, sex is primarily an act of pleasure, enabling one to escape the happenings of the world outside while simultaneously feeling most alive. For this reason, Perla characterises sex as, 'A celebration, for which we need ourselves only, no riches, no castles, not estates or islands. […] I feel the world most strongly between my legs. I have the feeling that I could really get to know the entire world with just that' (Lustig: 140). Being aware of the power provided by her body, she finds a form of resistance in her current position that could be otherwise destructive and humiliating. This awareness climaxes in her final act in which she, following the pattern of Hegelian master-slave dialectic, kills the Luftwaffe officer, refusing the inferiority that he assigns to her. Enabling Perla to execute her revenge, Lustig reestablishes

justice and order through this symbolic gesture as he allows the oppressed to reclaim their power.

In conclusion, unlike the women of Otčenášek and Fuks, Perla is given enough space to use her voice and articulate her own reflections. The diary form, providing a first-person narrative, chronicles Perla's daily life in Theresienstadt while evoking a sense of immediacy and reality effect. Compared to the two previously discussed novels, Lustig conveys the Holocaust experience most vividly, allowing a little distance between the text and the reader. This quality might be of course attributed to Lustig's personal experience of and investment in the Holocaust events. That is why Lustig's decision to opt for a female protagonist, which is not the case with Fuks and Otčenášek, should be particularly recognised as praiseworthy. In *The Unloved*, the male voice is pushed into the background to offer an insight into female Holocaust experience and its challenges. Lustig demonstrates his awareness of female power and capabilities as he empowers the female voice and body through the act of writing. Consequently, he shows the authorial effort and responsibility that ought to encompass every historical narrative, especially, with regard to minorities.

Conclusion

In the last section of my thesis, I will discuss the outcome of the analyses presented in the text above. As a basis of my research, I selected three Holocaust novels from Czech literary canon. Each of them originate in the second half of the twentieth century, while representing an entirely different perspective on the theme of the Holocaust in respect to the treatment of Jewish women. The focus on Jewish women was primarily stimulated by the debate within the field of Holocaust studies, whether it is appropriate to include gender as the framework of scholarly investigation. In order to contribute to this debate, I have decided to apply the gender-specific framework to these novels and examine the portrayal of female-Jewish experience of the Holocaust. The main purpose of my thesis was to demonstrate that gender indeed plays a crucial role in defining Holocaust experience, expanding our knowledge of the Holocaust in opposition to the singular, normative vision of the Holocaust as chiefly formed by male narratives.

Romeo, Juliet and Darkness serves as a good material to demonstrate why it is necessary to argue that the current representation of the Holocaust is inadequate in respect of female victims. Despite presenting several positive aspects such as the attempt to revive the forgotten voices of victims, overall, Otčenášek's text fails to transmit the female-Jewish experience. This has a number of reasons. Most importantly, Esther is intentionally provided with considerably less space in the narrative in order to spotlight her male counterpart. Because the narrator's attention is mostly directed to Paul, it is his voice and his story that eventually dominate the novel instead of Esther's. Otčenášek thus primarily employs the Holocaust to tell the story of a young Czech man and his exemplary behaviour, rather than to communicate the events of the Holocaust from the perspective of a young Jewish woman. Esther's story as the Other is thereby suppressed into the background by Paul's bravery and courage.

Moreover, by transforming the relationship between Esther and Paul into a romantic one, Esther's temporary safety from the Nazis is threatened and undermined by her female vulnerability. Providing Esther with shelter, Paul acquires power over her life as she becomes dependent on him. In this manner, there is an unequal power dynamic as Paul pressures Esther to give herself to him completely. This results in violent attacks on Esther's body while Paul continues to position Esther as the double Other. Otčenášek's narrative thus allows for a perpetuation of discrimination, following a nationalist, patriarchal scheme while utilising the character of a Jewess and the setting of the Holocaust as literary devices whose importance is secondary to the novel.

Comparably to Otčenášek, in *The Cremator*, Fuks employs the Holocaust to symbolise a more general theme of totalitarian regime and likewise prioritises his male protagonist. Nonetheless, unlike Otčenášek, Fuks successfully portrays the oppressed minority. Through an exaggerated dominance of the narrative, Kopfrkingl overshadows the rest of the characters. The exaggerated scope of Kopfrkingl's agency is however devised purposefully. It enables the reader to recognise Kopfrkingl's oppressive and manipulative tendencies. In this way, the text exposes the techniques of perpetrators, exemplifying the power of language as an ideological tool.

By silencing and suppressing Lakmé into the background, Fuks directly demonstrates the unequal power distribution and the workings of the oppressive regime. Underlining toxic masculinity and power abuse, Lakmé's otherness becomes especially visible as conditioned by her femininity and Jewishness. As the wife of the perpetrator, being restricted by the roles that are tightly connected to womanhood, Lakmé performs a womanly obedience, a form of vulnerability that subverts her resistance and facilitates her final subjugation. Nevertheless, rather than learning about a female-Jewish experience through the eyes of the oppressed, the reader only encounters Lakmé from the outside, being denied access to her psyche and witne-

ssing the persecution from the perpetrator's point of view. Lakmé's subjective view therefore remains unknown as she is limited by Kopfrkingl's perspective. For this reason, despite the novel's potential and successful portrayal of oppression, *The Cremator* cannot fully redefine the masculine vision of the Holocaust. Nevertheless, by highlighting Lakmé's silence and passivity, Fuks stresses the underrepresentation of the female-Jewish voice.

In this respect, *The Unloved* offers an alternative to the generally accepted historical narrative of the Holocaust. Introducing the concept of the unnoticed history, it aims at rewriting or, at least, expanding the general image of the Holocaust. Drawing on his personal experience, Lustig projects his anxieties and knowledge into the text. Making Perla the narrator and the protagonist of the story, the novel aims to present an empowering portrayal of a Jewish prostitute. The empowerment is affected by the diary form of the text, allowing for a first-person narrative and an authentic perspective on the life in Theresienstadt. At the same time, the diary form is utilised as a testimony as well as a form of personal legacy. The narrative is thus at once collective, including the voices of the victims who cannot speak, and individual, telling a story that is within a larger societal context surrounded by stigma and shame, therefore, oftentimes repressed.

Providing Perla with space to voice her opinions and thoughts, Lustig counters the patriarchal effort to silence women, especially women in Perla's position. Highlighting numerous cruelties that female victims had to suffer precisely because they were women, Lustig's work demonstrates that the framework of gender applied to the Holocaust narratives can benefit our understanding of the Holocaust. Moreover, portraying the female body as powerful and capable of resistance, the novel acquires a function of empowerment. By placing importance on female desire and its articulation, it inspires women not to be ashamed of their bodies and sexuality, to demand bodily autonomy and accept their bodies as being one

with their minds. In this manner, besides reflecting on the Holocaust, the text also speaks to the audience on a more general level, transmitting a timeless message of encouragement.

That being said, in relation to Czech Holocaust fiction, these novels exemplify the complexity of the issue concerning the representation of Jewish women. Otčenášek's work shows the influence of prevailing patriarchal ideology while simultaneously focusing on a national trauma, causing the minority voice to become secondary. While succeeding in exposing the workings of the Nazi oppression and emphasising Lakmé's vulnerable position as Kopfrkingl's wife, Fuks fails in depicting the suffering particular to female victims precisely because of his focus on Kopfrkingl's perspective. Contrarily, casting the female victim as the sole protagonist of his novel, providing direct access to her psyche and setting the novel in Theresienstadt, Lustig illustrates the intersectionality that characterises the position of the Jewish women as the double Other. This being the case, with an exception of Lustig who himself was an eye-witness to the Nazi treatment of women in the camps, a lack of attention towards the particularities of Jewish women's hardships can be detected. While conducting my study, I realised that whereas nowadays, there is a considerably high number of historical sources covering women's experience of the Holocaust, there is still a lack of investigation of its representation in Holocaust literature. This is especially striking given the persistent popularity of Holocaust fiction and the influence it has on society's perception of history. In terms of future research, I would therefore suggest to focus on Holocaust literature within the gender-specific framework in order to expand our current knowledge of the Holocaust and reshape its predominant representation in our society.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Fuks, Ladislav. *The Cremator.* trans. Eva M. Kandler. Marion Boyars, 1984.

Lustig, Arnošt. *The Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S*. trans. Vera Kalina-Levine. William Morrow & Company, 1984.

Otčenášek, Jan. *Romeo, Juliet and Darkness*. trans. Iris Urwin. Artia Prague, 1960.

Secondary Sources

Adams, James Luther, Wilson Yates and Robert Penn Warren. *The Grotesque in Art and Literature: Theological Reflections*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.

Adorno, Theodor W. *Prisms*. trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber. The MIT Press, 1983.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Zone Books, 2002.

Bal, Mieke. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. University Press of New England, 1998.

Banwell, Stacy. 'Rassenschande, Genocide and the Reproductive Jewish Body: examining the use of rape and sexualized violence against Jewish
women during the Holocaust?', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2016, pp. 208-227.

Bigsby, Christopher. *Remembering and Imagining the Holocaust*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Bubeníček, Petr. 'Tematizace Bestiality ve Fuksově Spalovači Mrtvol'. *Sborník Prací Filozofické Fakulty Brněnské Univerzity*, Vol. 4, 2001, pp. 125-131.

Cixous, Hélène. 'The Laught of the Medusa' in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd edition, ed. Vincent B. Leitch. W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 2010, pp.1942-59.

Chalmers, Baverley. 'Jewish women's sexual behaviour and sexualized abuse during the Nazi era', *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2015, pp. 184-196.

Chitnis, Rajendra A., 'Remaining on the Threshold: The Cunning of Ladislav Fuks', *Central Europe*, Vol.2, No.1, 2004, pp. 47-59.

Demetz, Peter. *Prague in danger: the years of German occupation, 1939-1945: memories and history, terror and resistance, theater and jazz, film and poetry, politics and war*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Disch, Lisa and Leslie Morris. 'Departures: New Feminist Perpsectives on the Holocaust.' *Women in German Yearbook*. Vol. 19. 2003, pp. 9-19.

Ephgrave, Nicole. 'On Women's Bodies: Experiences of Dehumanization during the Holocaust', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2016, pp. 12-32.

Eyerman, Ron. 'The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2004), pp. 159-169.

Foley, Barbara. 'Fact, Fiction, Fascism: Testimony and Mimesis in Holocaust Narratives'. *Comparative Literature*, Vo. 34, 1982, pp. 330.

Freud, Sigmund. 'From The "Uncanny"' in *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*, ed. By Vincet B. Leitch, general editor, 2nd edn. (W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), pp. 824-41.

Gilk, Erik. 'Unreliable Narration in Fiction by Ladislav Fuks'. *World Literature Studies*, Vo. 1, 2013, pp.76-91.

Holý, Jiří. 'The Jews and the Shoah in Czech Literature After World War II'. Russian Literature, Vol. 77, No. 1, 2015, pp. 35-53.

Hutcheon, Linda and Michael Hutcheon. 'History, empire, opera'. *Arcadia,Vol. 38, No.*2, 2003, pp. 266-270.

Jacobs, Janet. 'Gender and collective memory:Women and representation at Auschwitz'. *Memory Studies*, Vol. 1. No. 2. (2008), pp. 211–225.

Jolluck, Katherine R. 'Women in the Crosshairs: Violence Against Women during the Second World War'. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. Vol. 62, No. 4, 2016, pp.514-528.

Jusová, Iveta, Jiřina Siklová and Jiřina Šiklová. *Czech Feminism: Perspectives on Gender in East Central Europe*. Indiana University Press, 2016.

Kořínková, Drahomíra. 'Motivická výstavba Fuksova Spalovače mrtvol', *Česká literatura*, Vol. 25, No. 6, 1977, pp. 531-538.

Lacan, Jacques, 'From The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*, ed. By Vincet B. Leitch, general editor, 2nd edn. (W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), pp. 1163-1169.

Levi, Primo, "The Grey Zone." *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal. Abacus, 1986, pp. 22–52.

Lichtenstein, Tatjana.'It Is Not My Fault That You Are Jewish!': Jews, Czechs, and the Memory of the Holocaust in Film, 1949-2009. ' *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaus*t. Vol. 30. No. 2. 2016,pp. 117-141.

Merry, Bruce. 'The Literary Diary as a Genre'. *The Maynooth Review / Revieú Mhá Nuad*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1979, pp. 3-19.

Novotná, Hedvika. ‘Kontexty Konstrukce Minulosti na Prikladu Interpretaci Hokolaustu v Ceskych Zemich’. Slovenský národopis. Vol. 2 (2012). pp.151-164.

Ofer, Dalia and Lenore J. Weitzman. *Women in the Holocaust*. Yale University Press, 1998.

Patterson, David. ‘The Word in Exile: A Phenomenology of Silence in the Holocaust Novel’, *Holocaust & Genocide Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 3, 1993, pp. 402-420.

Poláček, Jan. *Příběh spalovače mrtvol: Dvojportrét Ladislava Fukse*. Plus, 2013.

Ringelheim, Joan. *The Unethical and the Unspeakable: Women and the Holocaust*. Rossel Books, 1984.

—. ‘Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research.’*Signs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1995, pp. 741-61.

Rittner, Carol and John Roth. *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*. Paragon, 1993.

Sarason, Seymour. *The Psychological Sense of Community*. Jossey-Bass, 1974.

Schoenfeld, Gabriel. ‘Auschwitz and the Professors’. *Commentary*, Vol. 105, No. 6, 1998, pp. 42-6.

Seehasová, Ilse. ‘Realismus jako osvojování skutečnosti čili Příspěvek Jana Otčenáška k literatuře socialistické společnosti.’ *Česká literatura*,Vol. 28. No. 4, 1980, pp. 404-409. Sinnreich, Helene. ‘And it was something we didn’t talk about: Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust’. *Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2008, pp. 1-22.

Trucks, Rob. ‘A Conversation with Arnošt Lustig’. *New England Review*. Vol. 20, No. 4, 1999, pp. 68-76.

Waxman, Zoe Vania. *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

—. *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History*. Oxford University Press, 2017.