

The Non-Representation of Jews in Polish Cinema, 1947-1989:

Othering by Self-Victimization – a Continuity

By

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the continuity of Polish memory politics of Jewish representations within Polish film. The main focus is on three films within the state socialist period, with additional historical context covering the period prior to 1945, and a minor mention of post 1989 filmic representations, in order to demonstrate a continuity of anti-Semitism in Poland. The thesis aims to move away from the common association of state socialism as a reason why anti-Semitism is prevalent within Polish cinema. I apply the theories of Jan Lipski and Maria Janion as a way to demonstrate that Poland's memory of Jews needs to progress and move past the "traditional" concept of Polish identity as a heterogeneous "Catholic" or Polish "Slavic". Similarly, in order to understand Polish representations of Jews in film, the history of Polish film and also Poland's political situation needs to be acknowledged, but not taken as the sole reason for such patterns in film making. I do this in order to demonstrate a progressive outlook on Polish memory of Jews, as a country that associates more with the west but in fact is "east of the West and west of the East", as Janion has suggested. The notion of accepting Poland's own multiethnic and complex identity is the only way for Poland to fit into the canon of a European identity. With the Jews as Poland's largest minority population, it is crucial to discuss problems within historical cultural approaches to the memory of Jews, as similar issues arise in current cultural representations. Ultimately, the country appears to remain stagnant in its self-victimization identity; thus Poland continue to claim itself as a victim, while further victimizing the real victims.

Dla Dziadka

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Glossary

Key terms and their chosen definitions which will feature in this analysis:

State socialism: The ruling political system in Poland from 1947 to 1989. In order to avoid confusion, I have used this term in preference to the term “communism” which carries a number of associations I wish to avoid. Most particularly, I consider communism to be a system where workers own the means of production, which was never the case in Poland.

Nation: In using this term, I will follow Benedict Anderson in considering it to be “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹

Other: Current term to refer to a group, people, or person who are being marginalised. ²

De-Judaization: The process of falling out of Jewish cultural and religious beliefs and values.

Non-Jewish Jew: The dissociation of Jewish values and “identity” from the Jew (who is assimilated through the illusion of free “choice”)³

Silencing: Muting of minority voices

Stereotyping: A racist and preconceived vision of a person or people.

Omitting: Forgetting or deleting from memory and history

Orientalizing: Exotifying the Jew to their “stereotyped” preconceptions.

¹ Anderson, Benedict. “Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism” London: Verso. 2006. p. 6

² Jackson L. II Ronald and Michael Hogg “Encyclopaedia of Identity Volume 1” London: Sage Publications. 2010. p. 526

³ For more on “non-Jewish Jew” see Farber, Samuel. “Deutscher and the Jews: On the non-Jewish Jew – An analysis and Personal Reflection” *New Politics*. Vol. XIV – 4, Winter 2014.

1. Introduction

After welcoming me to the reading room with piles of published books, the director of the National Film Archives in Warsaw, a pleasantly unassuming man, immediately followed up by refusing me access to a number of documents. His justification for this decision was that these files were “for people that won’t take everything as solid fact once they read them - it is more for advanced researchers.” As offensive as this seems, it also reflects the increasingly troubling realities of conducting academic research in Poland,⁴ even a quarter of a century after the collapse of state socialism: seemingly, he found my work a threat to either his job or to “Poland” itself. It is not unfair to assume that recent political developments in Poland have a role in its seemingly unusual sensitivity to certain research, as the country continues regressing to a point where Catholicism is again taking the lead,⁵ and radical right wing authorities who invoke its ethics become increasingly dismissive of human rights. The director and I discussed the commotion on recent arguments regarding to Pawel Pawlikowski’s 2013 film *Ida*, with many Polish people assuming the picture exudes anti-Polish sentiments, and therefore continues the notion of Poland as victim, a theme that will be expanded on in this thesis. Nonetheless, the absence of those documents has allowed me to ponder on what he does not want me to see and to think of my research topic, on Jews in Polish Films, as something crucial, not only in a purely historical sense but also for current Polish memory politics when concerning the act of remembering Jews. He was afraid that “it could cause controversy within Poland if anyone reads [my] thesis.”

⁴ <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2016/02/poland-challenging-official-history-of-the-holocaust-could-see-you-branded-a-traitor/>

⁵ Guerra, Simona “The Polish Catholic Church Has Become Intertwined with Euroscepticism and the Promotion of Conservative ‘National Values’” *The Green European Journal*. 15.05.2016.
<http://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/the-polish-catholic-church-has-become-intertwined-with-euroscepticism-and-the-promotion-of-conservative-national-values/>

The subject of the representation of “Jews” within film is an extensive interdisciplinary topic with continuing relevance. The Polish Jewry has captured the attention of many film makers, especially those originating in countries where the Shoah took place, along with émigré directors who associate with one of the countries involved. This subject has additionally captured attention from numerous scholars,⁶ not only discussing film within its own representational context, but also how film affects broader issues such as national discourse. In this example, *Ida* once again comes to mind. Scholars such as Agnieszka Graff opposed much of what media had to say on the film; she does not claim the film to be anti-Polish, but rather claims that it is invisibilizing Jewish presence.⁷ By quickly glancing over Poland’s European geographical neighbours, the countries’ filmmakers are involved in using Jewish motifs in cinema. The issue is *how* Jews are represented and included within this cinema. Although there have been numerous films dedicated to this topic after 1989 in Poland, I am unaware of any comparative approaches to how pre 1989 cinema is similar or different. Therefore, the intention of my thesis is to demonstrate a continuity of pre 1989 into post 1989 cinematic representations. Similarly, my research will centre on the topic of film because films were more widely distributed, had a more prominent place in cultural discourse, and were often more accessible than literature. As will be discussed in my analytical chapter, film was an important part of Polish education and culture. Films were also more expensive to produce, and thus they had to be funded by the state. Literature had ways to be published without state knowledge or approval, using samizdat distribution methods, and taking a pen to hand is far less complex and fraught than gathering a team to make a film. Film, then,

⁶ Refer to the literature survey for certain scholars.

⁷ Graff, Agnieszka “Subtelność i Polityka” *Dziennik Opinii: Krytyka Polityczna*. 01.11.2013
<http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/artykuly/film/20131031/graff-ida-subtelosc-i-polityka>

has a larger group of people that participate in its production; in such ways film has a collective group of people who each make a contribution, however big or small, to the message that the picture will convey. The concept of film as will be discussed in my thesis, will use strategies such as de-Judaization and Othering. These terms will be explained and further elaborated on through the use of post-colonial feminist rubric with terms described in my glossary, such as silencing, omitting, orientalizing and stereotyping. In this way, I will try to prove that there is a continuity of Othering of Jews through cinematic representation, regardless of the political situation within Poland.

Polish participation in the Shoah has made the issue of remembering of the Jews problematic.⁸ As the historian and sociologist Jan Tomasz Gross has observed, the Poles, although “deservedly proud of their society’s anti-Nazi resistance, actually killed more Jews than Germans during the war.”⁹ This comment was highly controversial within Poland; the country’s current President, Andrzej Duda, was reportedly “considering stripping Gross of an order of merit he received in 1996,” suggesting discomfort throughout the Polish governmental hierarchy with Gross’ comment.¹⁰ As has been demonstrated then, “Poland’s Catholics were cruelly victimized during the Nazi occupation, [but] they could find little compassion for the fate of Nazism’s ultimate victims.”¹¹

⁸ Haltof, Marek. *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Memory and Politics*. New York; Berghahn Books, 2014. p. 2

⁹ Gross, Jan. “Eastern Europe’s Crisis of Shame” *Project Syndicate*. 8.13.2015. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eastern-europe-refugee-crisis-xenophobia-by-jan-gross-2015-09>

¹⁰ “Holocaust scholar questioned on claim Poles killed more Jews than Germans in war” *The Guardian*. 4.14.2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/14/holocaust-scholar-questioned-on-claim-poles-killed-more-jews-than-germans-in-war>

¹¹ Gross, Jan. “Eastern Europe’s Crisis of Shame” *Project Syndicate*. 8.13.2015. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/eastern-europe-refugee-crisis-xenophobia-by-jan-gross-2015-09>

Present politics of memory are also a topic of concern; as mentioned earlier, the controversy surrounding representations in *Ida* have a large part in cultural memory politics. In addition, research which focuses on films produced before 1989 has not discussed the topic in a broad perspective using different genres and directors, but merely focused on one director and one style – namely Andrzej Wajda’s infamous “Jewish” films (which will be discussed later in sources). Other approaches have perhaps fixated on individual productions, though the authors of these studies continue to ascribe blame for Othering solely to the state socialist system. The invocation of state socialist censorship and state socialist invisibility of Jews has been an approach for excusing poor memory politics – framing the nation as victim. “It became commonly accepted that the vast majority of Polish people never did anything violent against the Jews during the war.” The topic overall became tabooized after 1945, and the memory of “the Holocaust was manipulated in the process, given that the communists promoted the figure of six million of Polish victims of the war without mentioning that Polish Jews exterminated in the Nazi concentration camps constituted half of it.”¹² While the state socialist practices clearly had some influence on Polish memory politics, focusing solely on this is a simplistic approach. This strong focus on state socialism does not attempt to advance Poland’s memory politics of the Shoah or Jews in particular, and by extension, serves to stunt Poland’s own evolution. The issue of the “grey zone”¹³ in the Shoah also acts as an excuse to downplay Poland’s homegrown anti-Semitism. The casting of Poles as victims constitutes a historical, almost romantic notion of their identity, which remains prevalent today. Nevertheless, scholars of Polish origin such as Marek Haltof, Ewa Mazierska, Joanna Peizner and Elzbieta Ostrowska are some of the more prevalent

¹² Szeligowska, Dorota “There Dynamics of Polish Patriotism After 1989: concepts, debates, identities.” PhD Dissertation, Central European University. 2014. P. 73

¹³ Levi, Primo. “The Drowned and the Saved” New York: Summit Books, 1988. p. 42

researchers in this area of Polish Film and Jewish representations.¹⁴ International scholars have recognized an issue with Polish representations; however, within Poland, the majority of research is still pervaded with the memory and existence of state socialism – which is arguably just a barrier toward proper remembering. By gradually seeking out what academics have claimed about Polish film and the representation of Jews, both pre and post 1989, scholarly attempts that will be discussed in the literature review, such as those by Joanna Preizner, Ewa Mazierska and Omer Bartov, have problematized the representation of Jews in Polish film which is seen as a significant development.

Therefore, this thesis strives to follow these academics in discussing the non-remembrance of Jewish presence in Polish film. As my interactions with the Director at Film Archives have demonstrated, this is still a troubling issue. In contrast to the approach of Polish researchers, this thesis follows a similar argument to what émigré Pole Ewa Mazierska argues in much of her work pertaining to Jewish representations in Polish film. My intention is to elaborate on the approaches that exist through three case studies in a variety of genres to demonstrate how Jews are remembered and “included” in Polish cinema from 1945 to 1989. As a nation which experienced the trauma and aftermath of WWII, and the sometimes brutal rule of state socialism, I was concerned over the way Poland remembers and commemorates its lost generation via representation. A nation that continues in the 21st century within the European Union, a nation that portrays itself as a victim, should remember its real victims.

¹⁴ Refer to Survey of the Literature.

When analysing character representations of “Jews” in Polish Film during state socialism, it is important to understand the history of Poland under this political system. Another aspect to consider is the impact of post-Shoah anti-Semitism, which on multiple occasions was encouraged by the state socialist regime.¹⁵ The Poles’ constant struggle to be one homogeneous nation during successive partitions was enough to have them embrace Catholicism as a core tenet of their identity. With Jews being present in Poland as a large minority group, Othering was prevalent much before the Shoah. Historically, assimilation was discussed as the most appropriate method to include Jews into Polish society for decades before the Shoah.¹⁶ Following a similar process of Russification under Imperial Russia, Polonization of Jews was accepted, turning the Jew into what Isaac Deutscher would later term a “non-Jewish Jew”.¹⁷

The notion of Poland as purely Polish comes from romantic conceptions of nation which Norman Davies has defined as “a doctrine [...] to create a nation by arousing people’s awareness of their nationality, and to mobilize their feelings into a vehicle for political action.”¹⁸ Thus Poland adheres to this notion of nationalism, especially in times of crisis. This notion, however, excludes all that do not belong under the homogeneous category.

This contextualization holds fundamental importance in understanding the topic of concern. After World War II and the Shoah, Poland’s newly established political system, ruled by socialist

¹⁵ Stola, Dariusz. “The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland 1967 – 1968”. 2002. *Jewish Studies At The Central European University*. p 2-3

¹⁶ Hertz, Aleksander. “Jews in Polish Culture” Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. Ed. Lucjan Dobroszycki, 1998. p. 118

¹⁷ Farber, Samuel. “Deutscher and the Jews: On the non-Jewish Jew – An analysis and Personal Reflection” *New Politics*. Vol. XIV – 4, Winter 2014.

¹⁸ Davies, Norman. “God’s Playground A History of Poland: Volume II: 1795 to the Present” Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 8

elites, triggered many institutional and ideological changes from the pre-war organization of the Polish film industry.¹⁹ Following the state socialist takeover, the film industry was nationalised through the foundation of *Film Polski* and, as in the rest of the European countries with state socialist governments, Socialist Realism became the officially promoted artistic style.²⁰ This lasted until 1956, three years after the death of Stalin, and the emergence of mild liberalisation throughout the state socialist bloc. At this point, changes brought into the cinematic representations within Polish Film were endeavouring to more accurately represent political and social dissatisfactions of the country, that had been put on pause through eleven years of strict censorship. The nascent Polish Film School Movement was at the forefront of these changes. The movement was one that was not afraid to depict issues of Polish concerns in a way which was previously discouraged. The movement largely came to an end in 1965, and political pressure continued to rise until the declaration of Martial Law in 1981; this fluctuating period of political tensions means it is important to remain mindful of the political situation during the state socialist era. However, any research cannot solely rely on consideration of the political climate because as numerous pre 1945 and post 1989 films demonstrate, a continuity of representation remains, even after a change of regime.

When discussing the representation of Polish-Jews as a memorialization practice, it is important to acknowledge the difficulty which Poles underwent with this task. The main concern of the thesis is to highlight the non-representation of the Jew using film techniques that further Other this marginalized minority. With this thesis, I hope to illuminate the problems with representing

¹⁹ For more on this reorganisation, see: Haltof, Marek, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, p. 13-25.

²⁰ Ford, Charles and Robert Hammond. "Polish Film; A Twentieth Century History" Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co. 2005. p. 4

Jews in Polish Film during state socialism, and emphasise a continuity into post 1989 contemporary film memorialization practices.

Less has changed in the representation of Jews than is usually suggested. The silencing of Jews has been observable throughout the 20th century and persisted into the 21st century. Moreover, film has been used as a tool to continue anti-Semitism in a variety of ways, which I shall discuss in this thesis. The three films I look at are *White Bear* (Bialy Niedzwiedz, 1954) *Hourglass Sanatorium* (Sanatorium Pod Klepsydra, 1973) and *March Almonds* (Marcowe Migdaly, 1989), a representative sample which encompasses film making in the state socialist era in Poland. 27 years after the collapse of state socialism in the country, Poland retains a self-victimizing process in their remembering of the Jewish past.

2. Material and Processes

2.1 A Survey of the Literature

My argument for this thesis is substantiated by three different clusters of scholarly literature. For Poland and the Holocaust, I use Jan Tomasz Gross' "Fear" and other opinions that he has expressed through media and opinion pages. Secondly, for Film Studies I use monographs by Marek Haltof, Ewa Mazierska, Omer Bartov and Joanna Preizner. For my historical and theoretical framework I use Jan Lipski, Maria Janion and Norman Davies. I use these scholars' works in order to demonstrate that Polish Film continues to misrepresent "Jews" and within the framework that Janion and Lipski provide, I continue their argument for the development of Polish national consciousness. My contribution to this field is to link some of the relevant arguments that are being made in order to prove how Polish memory and the representation of Jews in cinema has in fact shown little change over the years, and as such constitutes a continuity of representation, something not yet thoroughly touched upon in the literature. To this end, I will now proceed to summarise and evaluate the most relevant works by these scholars, on which my thesis is based.

Taking a fleeting glimpse at the accomplishments in the field of Polish Film Studies and the representation of Jews, the Israeli Historian and Galicia expert Omer Bartov, has described most eloquently his own approach to this topic. While his background is more focused on the Second World War and the Holocaust, he also began to look into representations of Jews in the cultural sphere. In his 2005 work "The Jew in Cinema: From the Golem to Don't Touch My

Holocaust,”²¹ he elaborates on the “manner in which the cinematic “Jew” reflects the popularization, transformation, resistance to, and reintroduction of anti-Semitic imagery.” In doing so, he discusses that the “Jew” has been a figure which film makers and viewers throughout the world identify with having stereotypically “Jewish” characteristics. He states that the notion of the “Jew” has encompassed many different stereotypes either as victim or perpetrator, and the “Jew” is a continuous symbol of Othering throughout filmic representations. In his monograph, Bartov discusses four different stereotypes of “Jews” in world cinema, writing an “essay” as he states, rather than a survey. His approach is defining how “Jews” appear to be the archetypal stereotype, which changes through political and social systems, but nevertheless remains as the definition of the Other throughout the last 100 years. This has some problems as most stereotypes of “Jews” in film after the Shoah are connected to the Shoah itself, thus pushing the Jew into this category of victim, and by extent only remembering Jews as part of this phenomenon. In this way, the “Jew” is orientalized as part of the continuum of anti-Semitic stereotypes – the “Jew” is rarely a neutral figure. Moreover, Bartov considers the representations of the stereotypical “Jew” to be further perpetuated by attaching this “Jew as victim” to a period which he or she cannot escape in cultural memory – especially in the Polish context. This stereotype pertains to one phenomenon, but it is important to include the Jews’ place in Polish society as a collective memory not only to a traumatic historical event. Jews were obviously prevalent in Polish society long before the Shoah, though this fact is not often reflected in Polish culture.

²¹ Bartov, Omer. 2005. *The "Jew" in cinema: from The golem to Don't touch my Holocaust*: Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2005.

In the more specific case of Polish Holocaust cinema, Marek Haltof has produced a thorough analysis in his monograph “Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory”. Unlike Bartov, Haltof has published a wide range of works relating to cinema and cinematic representation. Haltof’s approach involves considering a wide range of filmic examples situated within a historical and political framework, rather than the narrower style of critical analysis as preferred by Bartov.²² Haltof was undoubtedly justified in writing an entire book titled “Polish Film and the Holocaust”, as the majority of Polish films concerning “Jews” or Jewish representations are related to the Shoah. Scholars such as the Polish critical theorist Joanna Preizner consider the close filmic relationship between representations of Jews and the Holocaust as inherently problematic. Within the Polish context, an extremely high majority of films that include Jewish representations invoke remembrance of the Shoah. Preizner argues in a lecture for *Akademia Polskiego Filmu*²³ that she can only think of a few films in Poland featuring Jews which are not concerned with the Shoah. Preizner, as the current editor of *Gefilte Film*²⁴, a film series dedicated to Jewish representation in cinema, is evidently better placed than most to consider issues of historical representation. However, Preizner’s journal appears to regularly approach the subject through the traditional lens of Polish self-victimization. While the articles within *Gefilte* offer spirited discussion, many of the issues raised are ultimately considered as among the consequences of state socialism in the country. It is evident that both Preizner and Haltof want to create some agency for the image of the “Jew” within cinema, though they do not discuss film as a continuity process. They do not argue that this is an issue of remembering, but

²² Haltof, Marek, *Polish film and the Holocaust*, p. 6

²³ Preizner, Joanna. Lecture for Akademia Polskiego Filmu. <http://www.akademiapolskiegofilmu.pl/pl/akademia-polskiego-filmu/wykladowcy/dr-joanna-preizner/17>

²⁴ Preizner, Joanna. “Gefilte Film II: Watki Żydowskie w Kinie” (Jewish Themes in Cinema). Vol1. Krakow: Austeria. 2013.

they use historical trauma as an “excuse” for poor representations. Haltof discusses the issue that Poles see the Holocaust as part of their own martyrology, as Poles, not as a merely Jewish phenomenon. In this way, he appears to suggest that Poles consider themselves as “naturally” having no space in film for Jewish proper remembering.²⁵

Again, the issue of Poles as historical “victim” pervades Haltof’s argument. Thus, with this approach, he continues to claim that “this image of a martyr nation” was present since Poland’s partitions, during the Second World War, and later, under state socialism. He is content to draw parallels between competing historiographies, noting that “under both versions of history, the nationalist and the communist, the occupation of Poland had been seen as a heroic armed struggle with the occupier(s), a period marked by resistance and martyrdom.” He then continues to claim that “[t]here was no room for Jewish martyrology²⁶ in that version of Polish national history.”²⁷ While his approach is different from mine, it nevertheless provides some foundational considerations. Haltof also discusses Jewish representation in his book “Polish National Cinema” using a similar Film Studies methodology as his other book mentioned. In doing so, Haltof sets a solid foundation for my analysis of Polish cinema and Jewish presence in general. Preizner and Bartov, with more critical approaches, have provided an underpinning for my critical approach, which I plan to take further with my continuity argument.

Ewa Mazierska, scholar in Contemporary Cinema Studies with a background in Philosophy and Sociology, approaches this topic in an increasingly critical fashion. In her criticism of Andrzej

²⁵ Haltof, Marek. *Polish Film and the Holocaust...* p. 2

²⁶ Haltof continues to use the Christian term ‘martyrology’ in the context of Jews and the “Polish nation.”

²⁷ Haltof, Marek. *Polish Film and the Holocaust...* p. 2

Wajda's "Jewish" films in "Non-Jewish Jews, Good Poles and Historical Truth in the Films of Andrzej Wajda,"²⁸ she posits that these films are highly nationalist and do not include Jewish representations, but they rather include the concept of the "non-Jewish Jew." Her analysis critiques his repertoire's reputation as "Jewish" films and rather provides a counter argument, showing how he is in fact excluding Jews but instead including the "non-Jewish Jew". Mazierska's counter argument is in opposition to many scholars' interpretation of Wajda's films.²⁹ The political context is left out of her discussion; despite this, she successfully sets the stage for a new interpretation of how Poland remembers Jews within Polish national cinema. This concept is in fact prevalent in many Polish films that "include" "Jews" and are represented as potentially progressive, due to the presence of Jews or Jewish issues, but in many ways it is problematic. The issue with historical memory here is convoluted, as the Jew is simply masked by Polishness, through de-Judaization. Mazierska's interpretation of Wajda's films is influential in my analysis of the films that I have chosen. Furthermore, by building on the work of Mazierska, I will argue that the typical inclusion of "Jews" occurs in the context of colonization or de-Judaification, which undermines their presence altogether and facilitates anti-Semitism, through my continuity argument.

In addition, Mazierska's approach in "The Politics of Recognition: Jews in Czech and Polish Post Communist Cinema"³⁰ follows an argument which I adopt in this thesis. She discusses the "invisibility of Jewish presence"³¹ in post-communist Polish and Czech cinema. This argument

²⁸ Mazierska, Ewa. 2000. "Non-Jewish Jews, good Poles and historical truth in the films of Andrzej Wajda." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio And Television* no. 2: 213

²⁹ Such as Marek Haltof himself, who explicitly opposes Mazierska's interpretation; see Haltof, Marek, *Polish film and the Holocaust*, p. 87.

³⁰ Mazierska, Ewa. "The Politics of Recognition: Jews in Czech and Polish Post-Communist Cinema." *East European Film Bulletin*. 4.15.2013. <https://eefb.org/essays/the-politics-of-recognition/>

³¹ Ibid.

helps to illuminate my theory of “continuity” with the ways in which the “Jew” is represented in state socialist cinema; however, even following the collapse of state socialism in Poland, these types of filmic representations persist. In her article, Mazierska also points out how Jewish film directors acculturated to Polish norms of Jewish representation as the “absent Jew”. Mazierska’s article works from the framework set out in Amy Gutmann’s introduction to the anthology “Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition”.³² Here, Gutmann introduces the ways in which a nation or a person defines oneself in opposition to the Other. The main argument, then, is how one’s own identity defines whether we “recognize or mis-recognize” the minority within a nation. It is not a way to apologize for or excuse their mis-recognition, but rather a way to define the difference between the Pole and the Jewish-Pole within a historically multicultural setting such as Poland. Furthermore, it helps to define the nation’s own identity through recognition or non-recognition of the Other. In this way, the chapter illuminates Poland’s identity crisis in relation to their perception of the “Jew”.

As a more theoretical background for my thesis, the critics Jan Jozef Lipski and Maria Janion offer a framework which will require careful consideration. Lipski discusses how Poland consistently places itself in the category of “victim”, and assumes itself to be an entirely homogeneous state. In this way, his argument is focused on how the Polish nation prominently considers its homogeneity. Lipski’s essay “Two Fatherlands; Two Patriotisms”³³ argues for a dual understanding of Polish patriotism, as Dorota Szeligowska describes in her PhD thesis “The Dynamics of Polish Patriotism After 1989: concepts, debates, identities”:

³²Gutmann, Amy, et al. *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. 1994. Intro.

³³Lipski, Jan. “Two Fatherlands; Two Patriotisms” *Between East and West: Writings from Kultura*. Ed. Robert Kostrzewa. New York: Hill and Wang, 1990. p. 52-72

His essay opposed two visions of the country and of the allegiance towards it. Lipski contrasted a closed, nationalist version of patriotism, based on national megalomania, to a 'true,' civic and liberal patriotism that for him was not only defined by the relationship towards one's fellows, but also towards 'others'.³⁴

She continues to consider the importance of this dual nationalism through Polish history:

He believed that silencing shameful elements of the past contributed to national megalomania and destroyed the national ethos. This brought him to discussing the importance of acknowledging Polish guilt for past wrongdoings, even if it were lesser than the guilt of the others.³⁵

This article by Lipski, originally circulated in Poland through samizdat methods of distribution, is an important work renowned in Polish scholarship across multiple disciplines.³⁶ The essay leads into a brief discussion of anti-Semitism which would later be taken up by Jan Tomasz Gross. He similarly expands on the use of Catholicism as a way to *explain* Poland's identity and state of being, as this excludes all non-Catholic Poles further. He does this by placing romanticism into the discussion; however, he also discusses how Poles tend to "forget" the Jewish origins of creative and great thinkers that Poland has had, something that Janion similarly mirrors in her *Uncanny Slavdom*. It is successful in deconstructing Polish mentality by criticizing Poland's "excuses" and behaviour,³⁷ thereby including minorities such as Jews into Poland's own construction of identity.

Janion, much like Lipski, argues against Poland's traditionally romantic notion of nationhood, instead situating it within a more modern European context. Nevertheless, she presents a picture

³⁴ Szeligowska, Dorota. "There Dynamics of Polish Patriotism After 1989: concepts, debates, identities." PhD Dissertation, Central European University. 2014. p 193

³⁵ Ibid. p. 193

³⁶ Ibid. p. 193

³⁷ Janion, Maria. *Niesamowita Słowianszczyzna: fantazmaty literatury*. (Uncanny Slavdom) Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2007.

of a nation which still considers itself “[t]o the west from the east and to the east from the west,”³⁸ occupying a pivotal place in the modern Europe. She argues against the continuing influence of Slavic mythology, and especially Catholicism, in the Polish context. Additionally, she claims that the more problematic aspects of Poland’s past have yet to be successfully overcome.

2.2 Archival Documents

In addition to the notable secondary sources which I have outlined above, I am also using a variety of primary sources that will help illuminate my argument further. The three films I have chosen to work with have been selected for various reasons. Firstly, they are being used as text to read how anti-Semitism was reflected in art and culture. Film is used as a tool to reflect events and attitudes in society, and so these films operate as sources which help to explain how anti-Semitism was mirrored in the film industry. The films’ release dates are spread across the time frame of state socialism in Poland, beginning after the period of Polish socialist realism, which ran from 1949 to 1956.³⁹ The films are *White Bear* (Biały Niedzwiedz, 1959) by Jerzy Zarzycki, *Hourglass Sanatorium* (Sanatorium Pod Klepsydra, 1973) by Jerzy Has, and *March Almonds* (Marcowe Migdaly, 1989) by Radosław Piwowarski. The reason for choosing films spanning this time period is to demonstrate that the underlying representation of the “Jew” remains similar despite the various political and social changes prior to and during, state socialism. The films will be useful in demonstrating continuities of convoluted remembrance of Jews. I attempt to reveal that, in fact, there were not many changes throughout the period, and that anti-Semitism was not only prevalent through representations of characters, but also through the film industry

³⁸ Janion, Maria. “Poland Between the West and East” *Centrum Humanistyki Cyfrowej*. 2014.1, p. 2

³⁹ Haltof, Marek, *Polish Film and the Holocaust...*, p. 7

itself. Various state socialist press sources related to film discussions, the directors and their interviews, and the transcripts of the committee meeting for final distribution of feature films, will serve to illuminate the cultural climate in Poland from a governmental standpoint. On the other hand, the Radio Free Europe documents I will use have an explicit anti-governmental and anti-socialist perspective, providing a useful contrast which attempts to help neutralize the bias inherent in the state socialist sources.

The press I have gathered for my research pertains to all three films concerned and originates from a variety of different newspapers. Some of the newspapers I use include the national Weekly Democracy (*Tygodnik Demokratyczny*), the weekly official organ of the Alliance of Democrats, a satellite party to the ruling socialists. I am also using local city newspapers such as Odra Wroclaw, Kurier Szczecinski, Tygodnik Morski and Glos Szczecinski which retained a commitment to the state socialist governmental policy. However, through the analytical chapter of this thesis, their use will be evident in the way I apply them to illuminate my argument. I will use their reporting as a way to express either how the Jewish aspect of the Other was raised, or completely ignored. Some films have a larger reception or a more “problematic” reception than others, and this will also be evident within the analysis and create a more nuanced argument. As all of these newspapers were produced during an era of state socialist censorship, it is important not to consider them as entirely authoritative sources, but instead as tools which aid in presenting and describing the way in which Polish society was receptive to such films. Each of the press articles I will use discusses the reception of the domestic audience, any controversies (if any happened to emerge), whether the films were positively or negatively reviewed, and any other

specifics that were brought to the reader's attention through the articles in order to prove that there in fact was a sense of anti-Semitism regarding filmic representations of Jews.

In addition to newspaper articles, I will also use extracts from a Polish youth magazine, first printed in 1957, named "Filipinka", featuring an interview with Piwowarski regarding his film "March Almonds". I will also use the magazine *Kultura*, which was run by Polish émigrés in Paris; due to its place of publication, it was not censored in the way publications were in Poland. However, there does not appear to be a difference between this émigré publication and domestically published magazines. Additionally, under press and media I will use the Polish film journal "Film", which originated in 1946 and continues publication to this day. From this magazine, I have collected articles that discuss both the reception and representation of the films, and fragments from interviews which also illuminate my argument. Through these sources it is evident that directors and press were not as concerned about discussing Jewish representation, as much as they were about how "positive" the reception was in Poland.

In addition, I also use minutes from the censorship meeting considering Jerzy Has's film *Hourglass Sanatorium*, where the final decision was to be made on whether or not his film required edits, or could be passed for general distribution. Present at the meeting were eighteen people, of whom only four are recorded as partaking in making any vocal claims and decisions. These four were "Citizen Kosinski", "Citizen Jesionowski", "Citizen Scibor-Rylski" and "Director Wajda", along with a "Minister Wisniewski". It is hard to interpret who each of these people were, because no first names are included in the documents. From what I gather,

Jiesonowski is likely to be Jerzy Jiesionowski, an author of stage arts and prose writer⁴⁰. Andrzej Wajda is also included within the censorship committee, as one of Poland's most praised directors. I can make the assumption that Scibor-Rylski was in fact Aleksander Scibor Rylski, a director and screen writer. Similarly, I am forced to guess that Wisniewski is Czeslaw Wisniewski, Deputy Minister of Culture and Art.⁴¹ Kosinski is the hardest name to guess, but I assume him to be Bohdan Kosinski, a documentary film director, a Member of the Polish Film Makers Association and independent culture committee, an educator and a writer.⁴² The interpretation and use of their meeting minutes are discussed in the analytical chapter.

2.3 The Intertextual Approach

My thesis will be based on an intertextual approach incorporating Film Studies, Polish Studies, Memory Studies and Jewish Studies within a historical context. Of these disciplines, Film Studies will be used as the main base for my argument. Furthermore, the history of Polish film is crucial in understanding its importance in Polish culture, and I will focus closely on this in my analysis. When looking at both my written primary sources and the films themselves, I intend to conduct a discourse analysis.

In the case of Polish Studies, I will use this method of approach because it concerns the specifics of a distinctive country and culture. The use of Polish Studies and memory studies will be

⁴⁰ Kepinski, Andrzej and Zbigniew Kilar "*Kto jest kim w Polsce*". Wyd. 1. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1984, p. 346

⁴¹ Coates, Paul. n.d. *The red and the white: the cinema of people's Poland*. London & New York : Wallflower, 2005, p. 79

⁴² Kepinski, Andrzej and Zbigniew Kilar "*Kto jest kim w Polsce*". p. 431

intertwined and complement each other. Current memory politics in Poland aim for memorialization as a “coming to terms with the past,”⁴³ or, more bluntly, concern themselves with silencing and forgetting. This particular concept of “coming to terms with the past” is highly problematized, as Theodor Adorno has famously stated that this “suggests, rather, wishing to turn the page, and, if possible, wiping it from memory”.⁴⁴ If Polish cinema is Othering Jewish representation, this is in fact, a part of Poland’s undeniable problematic memory work regarding Polish-Jewish history. Films function as a tool to display that Polish culture is focused on invoking national memory, of which the issue of *non-remembrance* is exposed. This is exemplified in the films, through key concepts such as Othering, silencing, orientalizing, stereotyping and omitting which constitute a significant part; however, Polish culture was still engrossed with a self-victimization of the nation-state, thus non-remembrance is evident.

In “Hungary ‘70: Non-remembering the Holocaust in Hungary” by Andrea Pető, the author discusses the ways in which Hungarian memorialization is problematized. The article compares this problematic *non-remembering* to an example of Polish *remembering* through cinema. Pető discusses how Wladyslaw Pasikowski’s *Aftermath* (2012) brings to the open the murder of a Jewish population of a town in Poland. The uses of metaphors such as “moving the tombstones from the places they have lain for long decades” suggests an uncovering of the past, and similarly to *Ida* it is permeated with Catholic religiosity; however, it can be argued that this helps the Poles understand better what has happened and open their own space for remembering. In these ways,

⁴³ Adorno, Theodor. “What Does Coming to Terms With the Past Mean?” *Pitburg in Moral and Political perspective*. edit. Geoffrey H. Harman. Indiana University Press. 1986, p.115

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 115

Peto describes to us a form of memory work, that is in fact opening the discussion to Polish-Jewish history and not closing the discussion by excluding the Jews.⁴⁵

The use of Post-Colonial theory and Gender as a concept will also be applied to this thesis. From post-colonial theory I will use the key concepts of “orientalization” and “Othering” as a way to describe the anti-Semitism inherent in typical representations of Jews. In the course of my analysis I will be treating Poland within a post-colonial framework, due to its historical place. Following the lead of literary critic Maria Janion in *Uncanny Slavdom*, I also intend to characterise the Polish relationship towards Polish Jews as a relationship between colonizer and colonized, leading to a form of internal colonization.

Building on this theory, the use of gender in this paper will refer to the way that gender is used in order to further “other” the Jew. Most especially this will be prevalent in Has’s and Piwowarski’s films, when I analyse the pictures and how women are presented within them. When considering the use of gender as a concept in the discussion of memory of Jews in Poland, it is evident that not enough work has been included in the way Jewish women and men individually are presented. Both gender representations offer a greater insight into how this group has been “Othered”. Joan Ringelheim argues against dominant narratives of the Holocaust that “women are conceptually invisible” and that this too “happened to women and it is only a detail that the women were Jewish. It is not a detail. It is everything, the whole story”. Although my thesis is not predominantly concerned with the Holocaust, Ringelheim’s considerations are more generally applicable to my argument. What happened to women and how they are

⁴⁵ Pető, Andrea. “Hungary 70”: Non-remembering the Holocaust in Hungary” 2015/2016. p. 2-3

remembered today has uncovered another narrative to the traditional male-dominated metanarrative. Similarly, because Polish cinema is so focused on the remembrance of the Shoah and placing Jews into this category, gender is an important concept that can help illuminate more of a discussion.

By using the key concepts outlined above, I will focus on a number of aspects that will help illuminate my argument. Firstly, I will consider the directors of the films after 1945, how they changed within their film making, and how their films changed. I will analyse each of the three films using film studies analyses. Secondly, I will look at how the industry members approached their films, films in general and if Jewish representation was discussed. I will also look at what the state socialist press, transcripts of the committee meeting and interviews contribute to analysis of each of the films.

3. Continuity in Film Representations: Case Studies

3.1 A Brief History of Polish Film

After re-gaining independence in 1918, Poland's "social and cultural implications of cinema" were of prime importance. There was no strong film industry prior to the 1920s, the period when the industry suddenly began to flourish. Rather than focusing on cinematic representations, the concept of film's cultural and social roles was of greatest importance; the question of what function film has for the nation was on the tip of all film practitioners' tongues. Film was slowly brought up to the status of art.

Interwar Polish cinema was divided into two industries.⁴⁶ Patriotic films and Yiddish cinema were the most prominent interwar period tools of representation for the Polish nation.⁴⁷ Although the two industries were separated to some extent, there was significant overlap among directors; for instance, Seweryn Steinwurzle was a leading director in both Yiddish *and* Patriotic films. Patriotic films were most focused on classic literary adaptations written inside or outside Poland about Polish struggles against Tsarist Russia and later the Soviet State. "[P]olish-Jewish unity" was depicted in films such as *In Polish Woods (In Poylishe Velder, 1929)* "which employs well known Jewish and Polish actors to tell the story" against Tsardom.⁴⁸ The Yiddish industry was the largest in the Polish capital of Warsaw and had a following of all ethnic minorities that included Ukrainians, Germans, Belarusians and Lithuanians. Additionally, many Poles were

⁴⁶ Ford Charles, Robert Hammond. "Polish Film: A Twentieth Century History" Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2005. p. 71-73

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 71-73

⁴⁸ Haltof, Marek. "Polish National Cinema..." p. 5

also known to enjoy these pictures.⁴⁹ Similarly, before the interwar period, Poles had an interest in depicting a “Jewish atmosphere”⁵⁰; immediately following the First World War, however, this depiction began to dissipate.

It has been discussed during this period that unlike in other countries with a booming film industry, such as France and the Soviet Union, where film was only “associated with [people from the] film industry,” in Poland, film discussions particularly concerned professionals unrelated to the film industry.⁵¹ Instead, professionals interested in aesthetics, such as “writers, literary and art critics, art historians, and educators” were prevalent.⁵² The majority were amateur critics, unlike German educated film theorists.⁵³ However, Karol Irzykowski (1873-1944) became the most prominent Polish film theorist to leave influence on the “course of Polish cinema”. His main contributions to film theory were that film does not have to be an art in order to “filter [...] reality [...] its main task is to register the world around us.”⁵⁴ Similarly, he believes that “capturing reality that has not been processed artistically [...] allows the viewer to uncover the world free from misrepresentation of concepts and words.”⁵⁵ Slowly by the 1920s international influence pervaded Polish film critics’ and theorists’ ideas, also raising discussions over whether aesthetics or cultural implications are of greater importance. However, it was solidified that the origin of Poland’s film industry was specifically for “documentary, cultural

⁴⁹ Skaff, Sheila. *The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896-1939*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008. p. 102

⁵⁰ Ford, Charles and Robert Hammond. *Polish Film: A Twentieth Century History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005. p. 73

⁵¹ Haltof, Marek “Polish National Cinema” p. 16

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 16

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 19

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 18

and educational purposes.”⁵⁶ Irzykowski’s theory remained prominent in Poland, with his most renowned work *The Tenth Muse: Aesthetic Problems of Cinema* reprinted multiple times during the state socialist era.⁵⁷ Poland’s film industry then, was predominantly intended to be educational. As such, the most successful film company in effect from 1919 to 1939, *Sfinx*, utilised “national themes and mythologies”⁵⁸ directed at the citizens, as a way to raise issues of concern within the country.

At the break out of war, 1939, Poland was once again partitioned. The national feature film industry was paused and what was left of a film culture was governed by the German occupation forces. The film industry was mainly based on German propaganda films, both for “educational” purposes, but also for profit. The most prominent film of this genre was *Jews, Lice, Typhoid Fever* (*Menschenleben in Gefahr*, 1942).⁵⁹ The film was produced anonymously; while it was infamous, it also spurred the Polish underground to attempt a boycott of picture houses, as well as punishment of anyone in the film industry who collaborated with the Germans.⁶⁰

As explained earlier, in the aftermath of World War II, the film industry was entirely changed and thus far removed from its “pre-war bourgeois” character. The Polish borders were entirely changed, along with the demographics of the country and the political system; as such, it was crucial to find a new identity – which was attempted by rewriting history through a Marxist-Leninist lens. Prior to the war, Poland’s identity was constructed based on affiliations with its

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 16

⁵⁷ Ibid. P 19. The reprints were in 1957, 1960, 1977 and 1982.

⁵⁸ Haltof, Marek “Polish National Cinema” p. 6

⁵⁹ Haltof, Marek p. 44

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 44

neighbouring states, the existing Jewish population and other minorities such as Ukrainians; as Ilya Prizel notes, it was “extraordinarily heterogeneous”.⁶¹ As part of the post-war re-imagining of Polish history, in opposition to traditional conceptions of Marxism-Leninism which mandated atheism and internationalism as a constituent part, Poland leant on their significant Roman Catholicism as a defining feature to maintain the aforementioned “Polishness”. Polish nationalism was, by necessity, strongly premised on Roman Catholic identity. The Catholic hierarchy consistently faced allegations of anti-Semitism; as noted by Daniel Blatman, the Primate August Hlond “condemned anti-Jewish violence but had considered the Jews to be of questionable loyalty to the national character and spirit of the Christian nation.”⁶² State socialist leaders were unsuccessful in any changes to the nature of Poland’s nationalism; the country “failed to replace nationalism with internationalism, religion with ideology, and Polish romanticism with revolutionary spirit.”⁶³

In the immediate post-war years, the Yiddish film movement almost completely dissipated. However, two pictures, not feature films but films nevertheless, were created by a small Jewish film crew who returned after the war, in 1948. The titles that were attempted were *We Are Still Alive* (*Mir Lebn Geblibene*) and *Our Children* (*Unzere Kinder*); both films were denied distribution by the Polish state socialist authorities.⁶⁴ The majority of the post war films were, understandably, based around the war itself. In 1945 to 1946 no feature films were made based on the new ideology and censorships of the state and altogether, a minimal amount of films were

⁶¹ Prizel, Ilya. *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P.58

⁶² Blatman, Daniel. “Polish anti-Semitism and “Judeo-Communism”: Historiography and Memory”. *East European Jewish Affairs*. Vol. 27:1. 1997. p. 37

⁶³ Haltof, Marek. “Polish National Cinema” p. 47

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 48

produced up to the end of socialist realism in 1955. However, as Haltorf points out, “sensitive issues such as the theme of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and the role of the Underground Home Army,” in spite of their opposition to Nazism, were subjects that could not be touched, while excluding the representation of the Holocaust altogether.⁶⁵ An important film that paid tribute to the war years is *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni Etap*, 1948) directed by Wanda Jakubowska.⁶⁶ This film is crucial for the discussion as it is considered to be the first Holocaust film ever made.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, its depictions are not unproblematic. It is evident that the film was created under conditions of strict censorship with its praising of the Red Army.

In 1948 the Polish United Workers’ Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*) was formed, and immediately assumed the leadership of the country. As with all sectors of society, the party was highly influential in the Polish Film Industry. Wanda Jakubowska, “the outstanding” director, made a speech after the production of her film which was received with loud applause from Party members, stating that the national “Polish Film Industry run by the workers” will be the leading revolutionary movement for the “masses of people”.⁶⁸ She continued to claim that Polish film, using artistic creativity, can represent the “everyday *narod*, with the struggle for a better tomorrow” and should be “national in form and internationalist in content”.⁶⁹ Hence her infamous Holocaust film, still deemed today as an exceptional piece of cinema, is highly influenced by the newly entrenched political system – Jews are present, but Soviets are the real

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 49

⁶⁶ The film was written by Jakubowska together with German communist, Gerda Schneider. Saryusz-Wolska, Magdalena. “Trwale obrazy, nietrwali bohaterowie *Ostatni etap* Wandy Jakubowskiej” (Permanent Images Un-lasting Heroes: Wanda Jakubowska’s *Last Stage*) *Gefilte Film II: Watki Żydowskie w kinie pod redakcją Joanny Preizner*” Krakow: Wydawnictwo Austeria. 2009 p. 52

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 52

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 52

⁶⁹ Żywulska, Krystyna. “Film Polski Na Kongresie PZPR” *Film.vol.1* [57] 1.15.1949. *Filmopedia.org/archiwum*. p. 2.

focus. Filmed in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the film is the re-telling of a horrific phenomenon whilst shedding light on the perpetrators as apologetic. Jakubowska, herself a Holocaust survivor, stated that “the camp reality was human skeletons, piles of corpses, lice, rats and disgusting diseases,” and that for the purposes of the film, people did not need to see this reality; hence, “bleaching it from its reality” was the preferred option.⁷⁰ The plot of the story then is strongly influenced by the political system; as Jakubowska describes, reality was too crude, and it was therefore necessary to paint the image of the treatment of Jews with colour.⁷¹ While embracing an American style of story-telling through cinema, it is also using pre-war Polish film techniques by melodramatizing the historical event. In the conclusion, the protagonist of secondary importance, a Jewish woman, is depicted dying and whispers: “You must not let Auschwitz be repeated”, while this image is then cut with the symbolically straightforward image of what appear to be Soviet planes flying over the death camp.⁷² Jakubowska herself did not denounce the political processes which the film had gone through, but judging from her speech,⁷³ she spoke of, and adhered to, Party expectations. Though her Holocaust film still remains highly praised, far beyond its strict state socialist influence, the film still retains a significant place in Polish national cinema. By allowing a representation of self-victimization of the perpetrator and highlighting the Soviet saviours, this film is avoiding issues of the Jew altogether, something that Jakubowska must have been aware of, as a Holocaust survivor herself.

⁷⁰ Jakubowska, Wanda. “Kilka wspomien o powstaniu scenariusza” (A Few Reminiscences Regarding the Script). *Film*. 1951. Nr. 1 p. 43

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Haltof, Marek, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, p. 50

⁷³ “Przemowienie W Jakubowskiej” (Wanda Jakubowska’s Speech) *Film*. 1.15.1949. p. 2

This example shows that it is evident why Polish cinema is important as a tool which is reflective of Polish culture; whether it is presenting historical truth is beside the point. The main concern is how film is used as a tool to perpetuate meanings, how it is used as text and in the context of this thesis, how it is used as a tool to perpetuate anti-Semitism – as one of Poland’s strongest sources of culture, film acquires a position of great importance which requires discussion.

3.2 “Jews” and Representation

It has been discussed that before 1914, the main way for Jews to fit into Polish society, was by way of assimilation.⁷⁴ The majority of this was to force Jewishness out by way of Polonising the Jew to become a “non-Jewish Jew”.⁷⁵ This type of pattern of “acceptance” of the complex category of Jews after the Shoah became more prevalent, as technology like that used to create film, was merely an outlet that provided space for such depictions and by extent Othering. Although representations of Jews changed, the Jew continued to be Othered through the silencing of their voices in the cultural sphere. Directors and film makers of the early post war period, such as Wanda Jakubowska and Aleksander Ford, either underwent the process of de-Judaization or colonialization through assimilation. The majority of film directors and producers were historically Jewish,⁷⁶ although the post war period moved towards a significantly altered, non-Jewish film industry, in spite of their presence. Many surviving film directors had left Poland to begin a career in America, where Hollywood had space for Jewish émigrés from central and eastern European countries, and most particularly from Poland. The directors and film crew who

⁷⁴ Alexander Hertz “The Jews in Polish Culture”. p. 113-116

⁷⁵ For more on this see Samuel Farber, “Deutscher and the Jews,” *New Politics*. Vol. 14. Issue 4. 2014. Online at <http://newpol.org/content/deutscher-and-jews>

⁷⁶ Ford, Charles and Robert Hammond. *Polish Film: A Twentieth Century History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005. p. 73

remained in Poland had adapted to new ways of working within a system and society that was both exclusionary and discriminatory. In order to professionally thrive, Jewish directors would assimilate as Poles, which was also reflected within their cinematic and stylistic choices. Jewish directors such as Roman Polanski and Aleksander Ford, among some of the more familiar names, had acquired ways to work with film as assimilated Poles. Roman Polanski did not appear to show any interest in depicting Jewish issues until much later in his career, once he had left Poland.⁷⁷ His most famous Polish made film is *Knife in the Water* (*Noz w Wodzie*, 1962) which was completely absent of any Jewish motifs, though it was made for a Polish audience which was, at the time, highly receptive towards the Polish Film School style, which was active in depicting questions of morality. Aleksander Ford, a “controversial organizer of Polish post-war cinema,”⁷⁸ worked on *Border Street* (*Ulica Graniczna*, 1949). Although he was said to deal with the “predicament of Polish Jews” he was known to neutralise his scenes from the anti-Semitism that Poles displayed towards Jews. The screenplay for *Border Street* exemplified the hostile attitude that Poles had towards Jews at the time, as evidenced by Aleksander Smolar’s statement that in the post war years “Poles began to feel that the fate of the [Jewish] victim may not have been wholly undeserved.”⁷⁹ This script was said at the time to be “anti-Polish propaganda” by a well known Polish author, Maria Dabrowska.⁸⁰ The film was then modified to fit a more “Polish” vision, and she no longer thought this to be anti-Polish, but rather a compelling “Jewish Film”. The Commission for Film Approval had problems with its “social usefulness” and its

⁷⁷ For more on Polanski’s emigration from Poland see Ewa Mazierska, “Roman Polanski the Cinema of a Cultural Traveller,” London: I.B. Tauris, 2007. p. 15

⁷⁸ Haltof, Marek, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, p. 53

⁷⁹ Smolar, Aleksander. “Jews as a Polish Problem”. *Daedalus*. Vol.116:2.1987. p. 44

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 36

applications for a socialist society.⁸¹ Following the same criticism as Jakubowska's *Last Stage*⁸², the film was said to be "anti-Polish" as it was depicting "simple truthful images," according to critic Leon Bukowiecki.⁸³ The film had undergone many changes before its final release; however, Ford was able to still portray what he wanted, though with much dilution to his original vision. He attempted to depict "truthfulness" but instead it was mitigated. These type of enforced changes may have contributed to the exodus of directors from Poland in 1968 and prior. Jews who remained, including those working within the now nationalized Polish film industry, underwent assimilation in order to remain in the film industry.

In order to understand the Jewish People within the Polish film industry after 1945, it is important to consider these processes which Jews had gone through in order to maintain a "life" within the nation, working as creators and producers of Polish culture. Film was a tool used to reflect culture, and because Polish cinema most often focused on domestic issues, especially with regard to historical phenomena, it is important to look at how citizens were portrayed within the films. The minority of Jews are the archetypal Other in Poland. The discussion below will broaden this perspective of de-Judaization regarding Jewish characters in order to build and maintain an overarching sense of "Polishness".

As such, the Polish Film industry constituted both a tool to perpetuate anti-Semitism, and a way of assimilating Jews who remained within Poland, further pushing them out by presenting "non-

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 36

⁸² As mentioned earlier, Jakubowska was the first Polish director to make a film about the Holocaust.

⁸³ Haltof, Marek, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, p. 60. On page 65 Haltof later quotes Bukowiecki as discussing "an anti-Semitic complex that weigh[s] down on Polish Society."

Jewish Jews” or exotifying their character through stereotypical representations. The process of de-Judaization and colonization of Jews becomes evident in the example of the three films I have chosen. Analysis of the three films will discuss the representation of Jews within film, how industry represents the “Jew” in media such as interviews, and how the state socialist Polish press discusses these films and their inherent relationship with Judaism.

After World War I, the process of Othering gained traction, along with associated anti-minority movements. For instance, many existing German cinemas within Poland were to close down. Those that remained open, such as the “Union Theatre” in the city of Bydgoszcz, had to conform to restrictive new government policies. Intertitles, for instance, had to be either in Polish or Polish and German together, according to these stipulations. After the showing of one film, the “Union Theatre” owner Kazimierz Marczewski, had written that the German intertitles were “Jewish” and in this respect, are obscuring the Polish intertitles. Sheila Skaff in “The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896-1939”, states that this was to exclude anyone who is not a Catholic-Pole, any and all of Poland’s minority groups, and most particularly to offend the Germans.⁸⁴ She suggests that the majority of picture house owners were probably Jewish, and furthermore that there is “no evidence that specifically anti-Jewish discrimination would have drawn more attention [...] than anti-German discrimination.”⁸⁵ In this way, the use of “Jewish” was becoming prevalent as a discriminatory term against minorities⁸⁶ who were Othered. Thus, although moving pictures did not depict anti-Semitic sentiment – as the Jewish film critic, producer and director Natan Gross states, “no anti-Semitic films [were] produced in Poland

⁸⁴ Skaff, Sheila. “The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896-1939” p. 74

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 74

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 74

during the twenty years of the interwar period” – the Polish film industry, through its exclusion of national minorities and pressure from intellectuals, was slowly becoming nationalist, and used as a tool to depict Polish nationalism, by growing anti-Semitism.⁸⁷

After World War II anti-Semitism remained prevalent.⁸⁸ This did not manifest solely within Poland’s cultural sphere, but also throughout neighbouring countries affected by the war. For instance, in neighbouring Czechoslovakia anti-Semitism was said to run “through the entire history of the Communist Party and cultural vandalism is one of its worst forms.”⁸⁹ Equally notable was the Stalinist attitude towards the intelligentsia and cultural Jews of the USSR as evidenced in the Night of the Murdered Poets.⁹⁰ In line with this broader cultural-historical trend, anti-Semitic sentiments were also prevalent as topics of representation in Polish state socialist cinema. It has been stated by Jan Lipski that Poles tend to look into the past, and in this way:

the burden of guilt for making fallacious judgments about the past, for perpetuating morally false national myths which serve national megalomania, for remaining blind to the blemishes in our national history, is from the moral point of view, not as great as a sin as committing evil against our fellow men but is the premise of evil and the path to future evil. ⁹¹

⁸⁷ Haltof, Marek “Polish National Cinema” p. 24

⁸⁸ Gross, Jan. “Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation” New York: Random House. 2006.

⁸⁹ “The Cultural Scene in Czechoslovakia”, 11 September 1967. HU OSA 300-8-3-1901; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. p. 11

⁹⁰ For more on this see Benjamin Pinkus “The Jews of the Soviet Union, the History of a National Minority”. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989. p. 139-208

⁹¹ Lipski, Jan. “Two Fatherlands; Two Patriotisms” p. 54

He claims here that the Polish *narod* (the nation or people)⁹² would romanticize the past and “obscure the facts with omissions and half truths.”⁹³ As such, he is suggesting that Poland is forgetting what they *choose* to forget in order to further self-victimise themselves, to justify such patriotism and nationalist tendencies which have the potential to worsen in the future, unless the past is acknowledged appropriately. In a complimentary way to Lipski, Maria Janion discusses this issue of self-victimization in connection to Poland’s national myth. The perception of the Polish nation is based on nineteenth century romanticism which, in turn, creates “a drastic gap between what is imagined and what is historical fact and concrete.”⁹⁴ Further, in considering Poland as a postcolonial country previously colonized by Russia, it can also be said that Poland took a colonizing approach towards segments of its own internal population, specifically Jews and minority populations.⁹⁵ Thus as a nation, it cannot be entirely European, but it also can not differentiate itself entirely from Russia; as Janion suggests, “To this day, we feel superiority over [Russia], but also a certain kinship with its ‘inferiority’.”⁹⁶ Lipski would further discuss that Poland is no different to its neighbours, and that this omission of the past is creating an amnesia, which was advanced towards the Jewish population within Poland, resulting in an internal colonization of the Other. Consequently, many Polish Jews took on the role of assimilated or “non-Jewish Jews”.

⁹² This term could be translated both as nation and people. Refer to table in Bilenky, Serhiy. *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imaginations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2012. p. xi

⁹³ Lipski, Jan. “Two Fatherlands; Two Patriotisms”, p. 54

⁹⁴ Janion, Maria. “Nisesamowita Slowianszczyzna” p. 171

⁹⁵ For more on this topic, consult the Methodology Chapter above.

⁹⁶ Janion, Maria, “Farewell to Poland? The Uprising of a Nation,” *Baltic Worlds* 4, 2011. Online at <http://balticworlds.com/the-uprising-of-a-nation/>

In order to address the relevant key concepts to expand on more closely, I will conduct a focused analysis on the three case studies individually, in chronological order, to exemplify the Othering of Jews through the key concepts that I had mentioned in the earlier part of my thesis.

3.3 White Bear (Biały Niedźwiedź, 1959)

After Stalin's death, leading up to Gomułka's Thaw in 1955,⁹⁷ Jews within the nation were marginalised to the point that they had almost no say in affairs. As a Radio Free Europe field report states, "the 40,000 to 45,000 Jews living in Poland are 'tolerated' by the communist government – the Jews are not interfered with but neither do they play a very large part in the affairs of the country."⁹⁸ This was then evident also within the cultural sphere, where Jews were denied the chance to produce any more moderately "Jewish" themed films, or ones relating to Yiddish language.⁹⁹ Instead films were beginning to evoke strong pro-Soviet images with Jewish issues used merely as background to demonstrate the superiority of the socialist state and its inevitable, impending political triumph. This was done by perpetuating the image of the "Jew" as victim, but also through emphasising the Germans as the enemy. Above all, the "Jew" here is used as a symbol against the enemy.

⁹⁷ The thaw, much like the Khrushchev thaw in the Soviet Union, had a somewhat liberalising effect on culture. For some contemporaneous examples see:

"The 'Thaw' Permeates the Cultural Front", 28 May 1956. HU OSA 300-1-2-71506; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: General Records: Information Items; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

⁹⁸ "The 'Cultural-Social Union of Jews in Poland' Is Worried", 3 November 1955. HU OSA 300-1-2-63614; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: General Records: Information Items; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. p. 1

⁹⁹ See Historical Context section above.

3.3.1 Reception

The 1959 film *White Bear* was not entirely praised in the Edinburgh Film Festival, as Polish news reports had claimed. However “the film overall is made to be watchable and the film crew is happy with the interests that the film had received,”¹⁰⁰ as was stated in a newspaper that reviewed the film after its international screening.¹⁰¹ In addition, the same newspaper article used an image from the film that is problematic. The main protagonist, a Jewish physicist, is standing with hands out open to the side, demonstrating he has nothing, with his bear mask off held in one hand, though with the remainder of the costume still on. He is gazed at by onlookers standing all behind him in official clothing, further Othering the “Jew” – in his animal costume – as someone who stands out as *different* from the crowd. The newspaper article itself describes the film as a “good” psychological war film,¹⁰² demonstrating that the official reception, after the initial approval of the film’s topics, remained predominantly positive. This image with the text dehumanizes the Jew further through repression of human traits. It is evident he is the “Jew”, as he has lost any rights both in the film, but also in the article as he is described. The newspaper *Weekly Democracy* mildly criticizes the film for its poor use of “realism,” asking the question, “how can a Jew dressed in a bear costume get away while everyone else in the scene is shot as they try to escape?”¹⁰³ Although the reviewer avoids any other negative criticism of the film and praises the acting of the protagonist by Gustaw Holoubek who plays the “White Bear,”¹⁰⁴ the emphasis on the term “Jew” is still notable in his critique. The main concern was, how does this

¹⁰⁰ “Biały Niedzwiedź” (White Bear). 6 December, 1959. Biały Niedzwiedź. Piotr Kajewski. Doc. 44; *Odra Wrocław*. National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Biały Niedzwiedź I Nie Konsekwencje. (A White Bear and No Consequences) 23. December, 1959. Biały Niedzwiedź. Andrzej Tylczyński; doc. 51-52. *Tygodnik Demokratyczny. Warszawa*. National Film Archive in Warsaw.

Jewish character stay alive, while everyone else dies. Polish media continues to Other the character as anti-hero, perpetuating the stereotypical Jewish character in Polish cinema. Elzbieta Ostrowska discusses this Other character in relation to post war Polish cinema, as non-existent per se: because of the “political transformations and the compulsory displacement of people representing different minorities, some of them decided to stay in Poland, even if life there was supposed to be hard and dominated by the mainstream Polish culture.”¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the minority who chose to remain in Poland,¹⁰⁶ their presence was often silenced “in public discourses because it was felt that the exposing national, ethnic and religious differences could undermine the desired unity of communist society.”¹⁰⁷ However, it is evident that when Jews are portrayed, the character is undermined within critical response, but also highly repressed through filmic representations. Similarly, when representing a minority in Polish cinema, it was most often the Jew and within a problematic historical context, excluding them from any representation from Polish community, as is demonstrated through the media of White Bear. They represent the “archetypal ‘Other’ in Polish national culture.”¹⁰⁸ As has been adroitly stated by Bozena Uminska that

It seems that almost always the figure of a Jewish man or woman in Polish literature bears the stamp of distinctiveness. The power of the stereotype was very strong and it is difficult to image an author who, in introducing a character of a Jew, would treat it in a neutral way, that it would not relate – in any way – to the common horizon of knowledge shared with the readers.¹⁰⁹

3.3.2 Film Reading

¹⁰⁵ Ostrowska, Elzbieta, “Between Fear and Attraction: Images of ‘Other’ Women,” in Mazierska, Ewa and Elzbieta Ostrowska, *Women in Polish Cinema*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006, p. 132

¹⁰⁶ The notable exception to this is the Sorbs, who were forcibly expelled in the post-war period. For more on this see: Stone, Gerald, *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Ostrowska, Elzbieta. “Between fear and Attraction: Images of “Other” Women” p. 132

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.132

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. P 132- 133

The film focuses on a Jewish physicist. His mere identity alone plays on stereotypes of the Polish Jew within pre-war society. The “Jew” is given a job title that pertains to the upper level of society, where Poles were assured that Jews took up most of the positions. In addition, the Jew is running away from the Germans within the film, framing the Germans as bad people and Poles as good; moreover, the person who tries to save the Jew is a Polish alcoholic who is apparently drunk or pities himself to the point where he doesn’t mind taking in the Jew. In this way the Poles are being put on a higher level by using the Jew as a scapegoat to make themselves appear like they are suffering, but also to illuminate their kindness towards the Jews. The way this man is running away from the Germans in a white bear costume dehumanizes him, silences his Jewishness, and all humanness. He is a mockery within the film, like a circus clown. The way this character and film plot Other the Jew are using methods that further the Othering of Jews in Polish memory. He is depicted as an outcast. The costume can symbolize many things; for instance, a bear costume represents a wild animal and all of its traits; the wild animal is apparently just as acceptable as a Jew. His hiding is perpetuating violence to Jews as they are in Polish memory, and the mockery that is used within the film is silencing, Othering and de-Judaizing a Jew in order for him to be able to be in society.

It is problematic also, that this film was created under Gomulka’s thaw, during a time where the Polish Film School Movement¹¹⁰ was at greater liberty to depict a more realistic take on society, following a similar style to Italian Neo-Realism, which made a crucial contribution to Italian self-reflection in the immediate post-war years. As Lubica Ucnik notes, “Italian Neo-Realism

¹¹⁰ Refer to Introduction for more on this movement.

revealed the corruption of the capitalist mode of production”¹¹¹ within Italy’s emerging capitalist society and was then appropriated by Poland’s emerging state socialist one, demonstrating the entangled influences on post-Stalin Polish Cinema. Poles would use film as a way to further exclude the Other by dehumanizing and emasculating the Jewish body, a denial of fundamental human characteristics which faced little resistance from society at large. It has been discussed in in government weekly newspaper *Argumenty*, that the film was aiming at being “a) philosophical, b) sensual, c) patriotic” and it did so, by Othering an already marginalised figure within Polish society.¹¹² At the beginning of the Film Movement that *White Bear* is a part of, there were many discussions about Jews wanting to emigrate. Scandals were being perpetuated blaming Jews for claiming “the distortion of socialism” was giving rise to anti-Semitism.¹¹³ In a Warsaw Yiddish language paper *People’s Voice (Folks-Sztyme)*, it was discussed that Jews were facing difficulties on decisions to emigrate or not. The newspaper claimed that the government had not opened up any new possibilities for Jews to emigrate. Twelve years after the Shoah, Jews were experiencing anti-Semitism and wondering what the Polish brand of state socialism can actually do for them. Anti-Semitism looked more and more like an “inescapable phenomenon which will exist no matter what social conditions are created.”¹¹⁴ As portrayed through *White Bear*, and the reception of viewers and media, there has been no criticism of Othering the Jew; instead, the focus is on the “poor [victimized] Polish alcoholic who accidentally due to his drunkenness or sensuality, took in the *White Bear* [who happens to be a human masked by a costume] into his

¹¹¹ Lubica Ucnik, “Italian Neo-realism and the Czechoslovak New Wave Cinema,” in Ruberto, Laura E. and Kristi M. Wilson, *Italian Neo-realism and Global Cinema*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2007. p. 59

¹¹² “Film” *Argumenty*, 13, December, 1959. Doc. 50; Media Collection; National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹¹³ “Jewish Cultural Union Official Blames “Distortion of Socialism” for Anti-Semitism”, 1 September 1956. HU OSA 300-1-2-74484; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: General Records: Information Items; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

¹¹⁴ “Jewish Cultural Union Official Blames “Distortion of Socialism” for Anti-Semitism”, 1 September 1956. HU OSA 300-1-2-74484; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: General Records: Information Items; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. P. 2

home.”¹¹⁵ In this way, the reception of the film from people outside the industry, perpetuates the Jew as a stereotyped Other evidently, not adhering to international reports on the problematic depiction of the film, as was mentioned earlier by the reception from Edinburgh Film Festival. Perhaps the state socialist government had an active impact on Jews, but the Polish society and script writers of *White Bear* could have taken a different approach in how they represented the Jewish character. Arguments began to arise over who actually wrote the script, as there were five people working on it. In addition, one critic and literary author claimed that this was his story which he wanted to use for a novel. The dispute was ultimately taken to court to discuss the issues.¹¹⁶ Judging by the commotion, the story was property that many wanted to claim as their own – no one was able to see the problems with the film, despite its mediocre reception internationally, and its “less known” status within Poland; they were still unable to see the representation issues within the filmic depiction.

3.4 Hourglass Sanatorium (Sanatorium Pod Klepsydrą, 1973)

Based on a novel by Bruno Schulz which was written in 1937, the production and adaptation of Jerzy Has’s *Hourglass Sanatorium* caused some controversy within the censorship committee over whether the adaptation was sufficiently faithful to the original work or not. With its surrealist filmic depictions and unorthodox approach, many domestic reviewers ridiculed the film for straying from Schulz’s story.

¹¹⁵ “Film” *Argumenty*, 13 December, 1959. Doc. 50; Media Collection; National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹¹⁶ “Głosny Spor o Skóre Białego Niedzwiedza” (Loud Commotion Over White Bears Fur), 11, July, 1960. Doc. 162; Media Collection; *Kurier Szczeciński*. National Film Archive in Warsaw.

3.4.1 Reception

Like *White Bear*, the reception internationally was very different then it was with its domestic reception. However, the character of this reception was markedly different. In direct contrast with *White Bear*, *Hourglass Sanatorium* was received warmly on the international scene, particularly at the Cannes film Festival, whilst “in Poland, the film public received this less enthusiastically.”¹¹⁷ Within Poland, the film was said to adapt the book improperly, while Schulz’s world of Hasidic “Jews and patriarchy”¹¹⁸ was more critiqued internationally; the issues with the novel’s adaptation, however, meant that the praise for the film mainly came from abroad. One of the significant problems with the film adaptation is that Schulz’s book was written before the Shoah. In adopting a world that is distorted by the director, presenting a dystopic, surrealist, highly exaggerated picture of Jews in Galicia, a significant element of fantasy is brought into the picture. “Jews”, therefore, are stereotyped within a traditional Hasidic world, both in the film, and through the words of the reporter commenting on the patriarchy that *existed* – perpetuating the violence from the past into the criticism of the film.

French Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, in his 1920s definition of *memoire collective*, underlined what it is to have individual memory versus collective:

Although only individuals have a memory - it is shaped by the collective. Therefore the expression “collective memory” should not be considered a metaphor. The collective does not have a memory, but it is shaped by the memory of the community’s members.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ “Grzech Fascynacja” (Fascinating Lies) Marzena Wozniak. 28, April, 1974. Doc. 17; Media Collection; *Tygodnik Morski*; National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Doc. 17

¹¹⁹ Halbwachs, quoted in Preizner, Joanna. “Gefilte Film II: Watki Żydowskie w Kinie” (Jewish Themes in Cinema). Vol 1. Krakow: Austeria. 2013. p. 13

Thus the way the film is being depicted within Poland, as opposed to outside Poland, demonstrates a different type of collective memory, one which is Othering by orientalizing. Joanna Preizner discusses how films that deal with the Holocaust within Polish cinema, are all affected by the difficult political position.¹²⁰ *Hourglass Sanatorium* is a warped memory of the Jews who once lived in Galicia, and even this nostalgia of Jews is made to appear crude, perhaps not because of politics, but because of the way individual memories have framed collective memory – thus the film is merely a tool that represents a lost world of Jews constructed by Poles themselves. Preizner continues to discuss how “collective memory then is affected by censorship, and thus the importance of film in this ‘strange game’ is a special memory.”¹²¹ Perhaps because the lost world of Jews is represented as stereotypical of what Poles sought Jews to be – a fairytale grotesque version encompassing “erotica, travel and adventure” as stated a local newspaper *Voice of Szczecin (Glos Szczecinski)* under the title “A Lost World”.¹²² This is simply silencing Jews by evoking an imagined world of them via fiction.

Reflecting the post-thaw relaxation of cultural restrictions in the case of Has’s film, censorship was not strict towards his representations.¹²³ However, this is not to say that popular opinions of Jews had become more liberal at this time. Although allegations of anti-Semitism were refuted by some Party members, others, up to and including Gomulka himself, explicitly linked Zionism to nationalism, clericalism and even fascism.¹²⁴ Aside from the media commotion over Has’s

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 15

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 16

¹²² *Swiat Giniacy*. (Lost world) 3, March, 1974. Doc. 52. Media Collection; *Glos Szczecinski*. National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹²³ *Z Posiedzenia Komisji Kolaudacyjnej Filmow Fabularnych* (From the Meetings of the Final Approval Committee for Feature Films). A-344 POZ-41. 8, May, 1973. National Film Archives in Warsaw.

¹²⁴ "Polish Journalist Protesting Yugoslav Reporting about Anti-Semitism in Warsaw", 22 April 1968. HU OSA 300-8-3-10137; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. P. 2

interpretation of Schulz's novel and its poor reception in Poland, the film passed censorship committee without too much hesitation.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, J. Kosinski as a present member of the committee sounded a cautionary note. The stenogram states that Kosinski noted:

that cinematography from time to time should be a laboratory for the art of film. It should be that place used to find new ways to untangle situations and issues. Using these techniques is where a film maker should think about how to use film in order to proceed with issues at hand. Thus, in my opinion, this film does not have much impression on the [Polish] people – it needs [to be made] much further in the future in order to have any effect.¹²⁶

Similarly, Jerzy Jesionowski, was on a similar path as Kosinski. He assumed the artistic style only suits the current generation, and thus “will not be impactful on a future audience as the subject is very hard to understand within its artistic expression.”¹²⁷ He continued to state however that “there is nothing ...[he] would change in the film, let the film protect itself in the picture house.”¹²⁸ It has been stated that in 1968, censorship was more strict throughout the cultural sphere; however, the form of the film was the most critical, and purges within the film industry were conducted accordingly.¹²⁹ In Has's case, the form of his film was extremely exaggerated away from reality, thus depicting something abstract – it essentially was not a problem for the committee to portray this exoticized world of Jews. This film style coincided with the 1970s supposedly offering “more artistic freedom”, though it is questionable whether or not this referred to Jewish themes; moreover, it was still evident that any depictions of explicit anti-

¹²⁵ *Z Posiedzenia Komisji Kolaudacyjnej Filmow Fabularnych* (From the Meetings of the Final Approval Committee for Feature Films). A-344 POZ-41. 8, May, 1973. National Film Archives in Warsaw.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "The Purge in the Polish Film Industry, 1968", 25 February 1969. HU OSA 300-8-3-4751; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

Semitism “were used to construct a threat to Poland and to Polish honor.”¹³⁰ The undermining and exotification of the lost Jewish world through stereotypes, is simply a hollow glorification of Jewish culture, through the orientalization process. Andrzej Wajda, who was on the censorship committee, claimed that “the history of [this] is long and distant in time...” thus making it acceptable to be presented in such a manner.¹³¹ However, the anti-Semitic actions of the Polish government following the student protests of 1968, during which many Jews left the country, made the film especially sensitive during its historical time period. It was problematic in general, but even more so in 1973, with the memories of 1968 still fresh. The film has been said that it is not adaptable since it is a “dream like sequence” and no one can “dream anyone else’s dream”.¹³² The uncertainty and unsettling ambience in the film were said to suggest what is to come later; however the way it was done was further perpetuating anti-Semitic sentiments, and pushing the Jew into a specific category of the stereotype.¹³³

3.4.2 Film Reading

Has’ *Hourglass Sanatorium*, in contrast to *White Bear*, exotifies the Jewish character for their historical traditional Hasidic past. The Jewish world firstly is depicted as surreal, magical and awfully grotesque. The portrayals and depictions of Shtetl life are dark and absurd. Jews are exotified through yet another stereotypical Jewish image of the poor Shtetl Jew, as opposed to the educated Jew stereotype exhibited in *White Bear*. The film is depicted as a monotonous,

¹³⁰ Schatz, Jaff, quoted in Haltof, Marek, *Polish film and the Holocaust...*, p. 116

¹³¹ *Z Posiedzenia Komisji Kolaudacyjnej Filmow Fabularnych* (From the Meetings of the Final Approval Committee for Feature Films). A-344 POZ-41. 8, May, 1973. National Film Archives in Warsaw.

¹³² *Nie Mozna Snic Cudzego Snu* (We can not dream someone else’s dream) *Filipinka*. Doc. 1. 6 January, 1974. National Film Archive of Poland.

¹³³ Ibid.

glacially-paced dream sequence. Its surrealist depictions enhance the weirdness and absurdity of the images both in terms of character portrayals and the entirety of the *mise en scène*, exotifying the world of Jews within Poland. Similarly, the character portrayals of the men are all of observant Hasidic Jews, the common and most immediately recognizable depiction of Jews within cinema. The few women who exist within the film are also highly Othered using different methods. It has been noted by Elzbieta Ostrowska that:

Gender can not be regarded as the sole factor constructing women's identity, since such components as race, ethnicity, religion, class, nationality, etc also play an important role in this process. This shift in feminist theory by no means undermines the concept of woman as Other, but rather allows an analysis of its complexity and heterogeneity.¹³⁴

In this way we can see the depictions of women in a “Jewish” world differently from those of women in the “Polish” world. Ostrowska discusses that the imposition of state socialism in Poland gave space for a “double Othering” of all minority figures within Poland. As the socialist state was seen as “They”, in contrast to the Polish “us,” they were being Othered. She claims this meant a “‘double Othering’ for all remaining minorities who inhabited Poland at that time.” Polish cinema was focused on eliminating diversity within society, as a state socialist motto, creating “a homogeneous entity.” Thus when “contemporary reality was to be depicted” the images would be of everyday Poles; however, when minority figures would enter the picture it would most often be only of Jews as they were “an archetypal image of the Other in Polish national culture.”¹³⁵ In this way, the women in *Hourglass Sanatorium* are contrasted also against the Polish archetypal woman as “Matka Polka”. Jewish women in the film are in complete

¹³⁴ Ostrowska, Elzbieta, “Between Fear and Attraction: Images of ‘Other’ Women,” in Mazierska, Ewa and Elzbieta Ostrowska, *Women in Polish Cinema*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006, p.131

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.132

contrast to the “femininity created and developed in the Polish national discourse.”¹³⁶ In Has’s film, the women themselves behave sexually, with breasts exposed, backdrops to their scene that suggest hypersexuality. In contrast, when men surround these women, they are also sexualized, though not in a Polish nationalist way, but rather a historical image of the “Jew”, dressed in traditional black with spectacles, surrounding the woman in a crowd together – appearing threatening to her and as predators. Gender in Has’s film is used extensively to demonstrate the Otherness of Jews, both women and men, and how they differ from Polish society. These depictions are representative of memory politics of Jews within Polish culture.

3.5 March Almonds (Marcowe Migdały, 1989)

Approaching the fall of the Berlin Wall, *March Almonds* was produced in 1989, but only premiered in 1990. Interestingly, at a time when state socialism was ceasing to exist, the film was claimed to avoid all contemporaneous political discussions, instead concentrating on the issues concerning March 1968 when Jews were ordered to leave by the Polish state socialist government in what Viktor Karady called “a large scale, at times near-hysterical anti-Semitic smear campaign.”¹³⁷ Director Radosław Piwowski, in an interview for *Kultura* magazine, stated that “this will not be a political film; however, we cannot escape politics” suggesting that like the other films, this film also intertwines the Jewish Question with politics. He claims that he wanted to create a film about his friends and their regular life, stating that his intention was to depict “that everyone was living together happily and in unity and one day [...] the magazine

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.133

¹³⁷ Karady, Viktor. *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era*. Budapest:CEU Press. 2004. p. 426

stated that this person is not good, this one must leave the country and this one is a Jew”.¹³⁸ He continues to state that he wanted to depict this within a small town where the “situation was much worse because it was clearer”.¹³⁹ Further, he states that this situation was worse for him and the people he knew, possibly because he knew them closely and personally, and was able to see the effects of the government’s anti-Semitic policies at first hand. The interviewer states to Piwowarski that the topic “must have been hard”, though his reply only discusses the student uprising, with no mention of how hard it was with the Jewish situation. The student uprising is illuminated much more, while the Jewish situation is left as a backdrop to enhance the heroism of the Polish students. He claims that the film needed to be made, whether it is in a small town or big town, in order to portray this history that those people had gone through. He claims to use his film as a tool to represent what had happened for those who lived through it. Further, Piwowarski states that he used young actors who were unaware of the historical situation “and do not care for it,” and consequently he needs to use a romantic and poetic story in order to collect an audience. He continued “that there is a problem on how to make this film historical” and to portray images of “these things when some people had to move away, others were spat on and others had to suffer through watching it all”; the director’s main problem, it would appear, is how to present this historical event of the March 1968 student uprising, with the Jewish exile out of Poland as a back drop.¹⁴⁰

In the *Film* journal, Piwowarski was interviewed again. In this interview, he first explains that the film is not about the political situation of 1968, only about “love, friendship and patience”.

¹³⁸ Marcowe Migdaly. *Kultura: Pegaz*. D 275. 03.09.1989. p. 1 National Film Archive in Warsaw.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

He then comments how the film had a number of potential alternate titles, one being *Prywatka dla Zyda* (Private Party for a Jew). He then asks if the film would have any publicity if this, or another alternate possibility “Na Zachod od Syjamu” (West from Zion), were to be the title. His final choice as he claims, is more poetic, as he also mentioned in the previous interview. Unlike other publications on the previous films, the discussion of Jews is much more explicit. In this same article, the discussion leads on with the interviewer asking if it was the political “climate of those days” that Piwowarski is looking for. He does not answer directly to the question but continues to undermine this “climate” and use it merely as a backdrop for the grander love triangle of two friends, one being a Jew, in love with the same girl. The same article discusses how it is “not worth discussing *March Almonds* in a cockily political tone (because now it is allowed)” or hypocritically with favour (because Jews are in fashion).¹⁴¹ Many journalists have asked Piwowarski if he is a Jew himself, in the making of the film. They were apparently interested in this knowledge because they found it “interesting that they are playing in a film about March 1968”.¹⁴² In fact the actors were not Jewish and nor is Piwowarski, and he claims once again that the film is about love and friendship. It is interesting then how Piwowarski discusses the film titles applying them to sensitive political Jewish topics. In the end he creates a love story within the historical context of March 1968 for a more dramatic appeal which no one openly objected to; the film instead received widespread praise. The issue of discussing “Jewish” issues openly in Poland was no longer a problem by this time; the problem was now *how* to discuss such issues. Jews remained silenced within Piwowarski’s interviews about the film, as undoubtedly the film is contextualized within a sensitive historical period, most

¹⁴¹ O Realizacji Filmu Radosława Piwowarskiego “Marcowe Migdały” (The realization of Radosław Piwowarski’s Film “March Almonds”) *Film. D.* 34. 09.03.1989. P. 1-2. National Film Archives in Warsaw.

¹⁴² Ibid.

especially for Jewish Poles. However, he undermines this within his discussion – even though the restrictive apparatus of state socialism was no longer censoring his ideas.

March Almonds provides yet another example through film methods of silenced Jewishness, this time through depicting a historical issue as a backdrop to a love story. The Jewish character within the film is integrated into Polish society as a Pole, not a Jew. No one knows he is Jewish until the authorities begin to agitate for the banishment of Jews from Poland. The main storyline that takes place of the two friends in love with the same girl is also problematic as the girl is evidently interested in the Pole, to whom she gives most of her attention, rather than the Jew. Seeing as he is the Other already, he is being further excluded through this method of storytelling. The story surrounding the students who are protesting the government is about the chivalry of the students, much as *White Bear* uses Jewish motifs within a film to create space for Polish heroes. In addition, when the Jewish boy finds out he is to be sent away, near the end of the film the scene tricks the audience into assuming he has committed suicide by cutting himself, with red liquid that looks like blood dripping into a photo development bin filled with liquid. The bin has photos of the Polish boy and girl together, as the Jewish boy stands above the images with blood dripping into the bins. He is then shown laying on the desk face down, as if he is dead. This scene is suggestive of perhaps what Jewish teenagers were going through within a society that was excluding them. The audience finds out later that he is alive and simply hiding from the authorities. Again, he is hiding in a basement, but further being marginalized by the Poles. He is made to appear weak and suffering but his Polish friend appears nonchalant about the situation his friend is going through. In the last scene where the Jewish boy is sent away, the

goodbye scene is presented as if the Polish students and friends of the Jewish boy are left largely unmoved by his departure. His father is on the train waiting for him to board, but the boy stands there upset not wanting to leave “home” as his friends happily wave goodbye. This scene is revealing, as it appears that the Jewish boy is the only person who is affected by this situation. He is completely made to look like a suffering fool throughout the entire story line and cinematography.

Instances occur throughout the film which also undermine the Jewish boy’s issues, such as the death of the Polish boy’s grandfather that takes precedence. The anti-Semitism is provocative but it is all portrayed to be state initiated. The Polish students fight against this with protests but their protest is merely used to illuminate the strength that Poles had as Polish heroes for a freer Poland, and not so much against anti-Semitism. The geographical location of the story line takes place near a Jewish cemetery, which is located near the students’ university. The cemetery is not problematized at all in the film; however, its inclusion serves to normalise the death of Jews. It is used as a space for the boys to flirt with the girls and exoticify the historical situation of Jews through teenage discussions of the cemetery itself. Nothing concrete, as the director mentions, is meant to be displayed. In these ways, the film is romanticizing and melodramatizing the Jewish situation in 1968, even in 1989 when freedom to speak about Jews was acceptable. The sensitive historical topic is undermined by Polish deaths and love affairs, and with the mere existence of the one Jewish friend who is portrayed as ashamed of his Jewishness and wishing he was Polish.

4. Conclusion

As demonstrated throughout this work, the continuity of anti-Semitism within state socialist Polish cinema into the post 1989 world of film is reflected through the examples I have provided. I have used an intertextual approach in order to connect anti-Semitism not only to the history of film, but also incorporating a more social approach which includes the use of Polish Studies, Memory Studies, and Jewish Studies. My framework was based on Poland as a post-colonial space, following on from Maria Janion's argument. Her argument notes that Poland as a post-colonial space still exudes a sense of superiority over their previous historical colonizers. It also exemplifies this by colonising minorities, excluding them from their romantic conception of the Polish nation, providing an innovative and helpful framework to analyse the issues in this thesis. By using such concepts as de-Judaization and Othering, I have intended to demonstrate how such colonialism was acted out through silencing, omitting, non-remembering, stereotyping and orientalizing.

Jan Lipski has also demonstrated that Poland has a long-standing attachment to the romantic idea of the Polish nation, as "purely", homogeneously Polish, regularly encompassing Catholic motifs, and excluding any other "identities" that do not fit this mould of the Polish nation. Both Janion and Lipski have provided a strong foundation for Poland's past and current behaviour towards Others, and as I have demonstrated, most especially they showed a strong sense of Othering through anti-Semitism to the Jews. The critics use Poland's history in order to place the country into its current mindset, and by deconstructing this history of Poland, it is clear that history plays a crucial part in national memory. However, it is the way this history is dealt with,

or alternatively, how Poland works on remembering the Jews as an integral part of the Polish collective.

Ewa Mazierska, along with other notable authors I have used such as Sheila Skaff, Joanna Preizner and Omer Bartov, allowed me to think of this topic as continually progressing, with the potential to be extremely wide in scope, though it is not yet developed enough to be considered as over-researched. The social approaches of these authors have created a foundation for my own approach, through deconstructing the notion of “Polish National Cinema” in Skaff’s case, who includes some consideration of films in her monograph. Mazierska has bravely deconstructed Wajda’s “Jewish” films, seeing their inherent problems, and set a path for further research into cinema that overlooks the repressive approaches of filmic character representations. Preizner is aware of the massive repertoire of Polish Holocaust films, and is also aware that not many other genres of films exist that include Jews in a non-problematic way. It is not for me to say what this non-problematic image of the “Jew” would be, or who can represent a Jew in their film; however, most approaches have been problematic in the case of Poland. In addition to the social approaches, Haltof has created a detailed and broad history of almost all Polish cinema and has managed to point out many “Jewish” characters. Although he does not discuss film representations critically, he is aware that Jewish characters were evidently stereotyped, as he is able to point them out generally. My approach has involved a comparatively small case study, but one which it is easy to generalise from; the same themes emerge throughout the state socialist era, demonstrating that the continuity in representations has not changed.

For the scope of this thesis, it would have been too large to discuss cases in more depth for post 1989 cinema; however, I mention Pawlikowski's *Ida*, just as I briefly discuss the interwar history of film and how Jews were involved. I have attempted to demonstrate this within a political, but also a personal context, with regard to how directors were dealing with this themselves. Jan Tomasz Gross discusses how anti-Semitism was still prevalent after the war, and in the framework of Lipski and Janion, Poland maintains this attachment to its past, through which anti-Semitic sentiments persist.

Film in Polish culture is highly important, as I had discussed in the introduction, but also in the analysis of my case studies. Contemporary Polish film culture remains significant, with Polish film being renowned internationally as a great European cinema. The problems of these films then need to be addressed in order not to continue praising repressive modes or representations of Jews. As I argue, these representations persist into post 1989 cinema, thus this continuity is actively affecting Polish remembering of Jews, as I also mention in the introduction with the case of *Ida*.

The primary sources I use in this thesis cover a wide range of perceptions, not all of which are from Poland, as Radio Free Europe documents have also been used to support an outsider's reporting of what was going on in the country. The issue of anti-Semitism in the sources is largely hidden. However, what is not there, and what is ignored entirely, is an issue in itself. Stereotypes, such as *White Bear's* hiding Jewish physicist dressed in a bear costume, cannot be any more repressive and are extremely problematic. The issues that do arise from this case study are clearly troubling, placing the "Jew" and the "Pole" in direct opposition to one another: how did the Jew

survive, while no other Poles did? In the case of Has's film, these representations are extremely pervasive, exploiting the traditional stereotypes of Hasidic Judaism, and also applying strong gender stereotypes to Jewish women – especially those which feature in contrast to the Polish traditional conception of “woman”. The censorship committee saw issues of this film being made too soon to have a significant impact, but they did not consider the extreme exotification of Jews to be an issue; the mere fact that it was *about* Jews was the issue. In *March Almonds*, the anti-Semitism of 1968 was used as a back drop to move away from these themes, and create a film primarily aimed at young viewers. The extent that this film had gone to with “Jewish” motifs, which were all extremely problematic, encompassed the entirety of the film. The anti-Semitic issues were secondary to the love story, where the Jewish character was merely used to enhance Polish superiority.

With this thesis, my intention was to prove that Polish remembering of Jews has been problematic within one of the largest cultural spheres, film. Considering the current political climate, the director of the National Film Archives was probably justified at being concerned about my topic, and his choice to withhold documents from me is understandable. It is interesting, however, as my intention with this thesis was not only to demonstrate the anti-Semitism that is being perpetuated through the use of film, but also how Polish memory is convoluted and fraught with difficulties; both my work and my experiences in the archives show that this needs to be addressed in a new space and time in the post 1989 era. Film is a powerful medium as has been demonstrated, and is vitally important in any attempt to understand Polish memory. Through the incorporation of the three case studies above, a lasting continuity of problematic Jewish

representation has been demonstrated. In order to overcome this self-victimization and Othering of Poland's minorities, an acknowledgement of Poland's problematic past is required.

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