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JEWISH POSTMODERN WRITERS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Abstract: The expression of the peculiarity in Jewish national identity has been a very actual detail for hundreds of years to this day. It has been a matter of controversy from the time of patriarchy, especially after the creation of Diaspora, not only among Jews but among all people in the world. Recent disputations in Jewish Knesset, about who can be called a Jew, summarize all the questions of Jewish origins and the question above all questions – what essentially determines the essence of Jewish identity in relation to other nations? We find two types of classification which relate to Jewish writers: 1. by the language; 2. by the topic.

Some of the significant authors, especially in America, who had written prose with Jewish subject matter, could be classified into two main groups by the language in which they had written: Hebrew and English. A strict classification by topic is not possible, but comparing the writers' attitudes towards different questions of life, Judaism and modern tendencies, the following topics have emerged as the unique themes being shared by the various numbers of authors: religious and mythological questions; historical questions; solitude and alienation; infiltration into another societies; Jewish sufferings; family in Jewish community.

In this paper we shall try to express the most frequent indicators of the Jewish construction in their literary works as the main characteristics of Jewish national figure and their identity. They have represented the indicators of their bad destiny, their sacrifice for the better world by the solitude and alienation of Jewish individual in America, turning back to the historical facts (since World War II) as the cause for anti-Jewish atrocity and suffering then and now. The writers put the Jews on the pedestal of a sublime nation and at the same time made them the victims of modern society.

Key words: National identity, Judaism, alienation, nation, community, family, Diaspora, suffering....

The unusual connection between a process of globalization and cultural conflict as its reflection in modern literature has the most powerful expression in Jewish prose writing. In this connection we could single out the extreme receptiveness and subjectivity which relate to Jewish national tradition, as the most important element of national survival. The Jewish art

of fiction is, actually, very far from the globalization which is reflected through their works as the complete illusion of the new age. The strong and permanent expression of love towards their own culture and tradition, in the works of Jewish writers (especially in Diaspora), put almost the whole Jewish nation on the pedestal of “the sublime race”.

The creation of Jewish Diaspora is a turning point in Jewish history. In the works of modern novelists who write about the Jewish community, permanently, there are the most inherent themes of solitude, finding the roots, assimilation, alienation, and also the respect for the community, family and religion. All the feelings mentioned above were derived out of the single cause: loss of motherland, home and hearth-stone. The creation of Diaspora seemed to have triggered the creation of the “second Jewish state”. One is Israel and the other one is the World itself. The relationships between the Jews left behind in the state of Israel and those in Diaspora were never shattered; quite the contrary – during the years, their connections with the motherland have been constantly growing. The Jewish Diaspora has enjoyed all the benefits given by the homeland, and in return Diaspora was to take care of maintaining the cultural patrimony.

Although, in Jewish history there is an internal multilingual tradition long before the Jewish Diaspora appeared to nowadays, the majority of Jewish writers primarily have written about the uniqueness and the sublime characteristics of their nation. At the beginning they made the difference between Hebrew and Arameic; and later with the Ladish and Yidish languages the differences started to appear especially between the Sephards and Ashkenazis (in customs, ceremonies...); so, the statement of Jewish writers about their nation as an unique and sublime nation could be a paradox.

In spite of the differences within their community, it seems that Jewish people belong to the unique body, with the same breath and thoughts. Jews have an inconceivable and indestructible sense for community and ministration, despite the diversities in a group, or their location (Diaspora or Jerusalem).

The expression of the peculiarity of Jewish national figure has existed as a very popular theme for hundreds of years to this day. It has been a matter of controversy from the time of patriarchate, especially after the creation of Diaspora, not only among Jews but among all peoples in the world. Recent disputations in Jewish Knesset about who can be called a Jew summarize all the questions of Jewish origins and the question of all questions – what essentially determines the essence of Jewish identity in relation to other nations? These questions relate to their birth, language, living in accordance with Torah. The answers, in accordance with the rabii imagination, lead from one conclusion towards the other. In spite of modern world with the global orientation and the numerous nations in it, or despite the complex philosophy of global survival, with the different problems of the human society in general or an individual representative any of it, the Jewish writers have used the universal, impeccable answer to any question, which always could be taken from one nation (Jewish), one Book (Torah) and one Town (Jerusalem). Therefore, the entire history of the Jewish nation could be understood as the history of propagation and exemplification of an alliance made between God and the chosen nation.

Many genres of Jewish literary prose were present during various historical periods of Jewish state. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, due to the great influence of

“haskalah”¹, the novel and short stories became popular and accepted forms for Jewish writers to put forward their national thoughts and feelings through the literary texts. ” Fiction – the novel and the short story – has attracted the greatest amount of attention. Generalization about the American character and the American psyche often use fiction as their basic material”. (Cunliffe 1987, 369)

There are two types of classification which relate to Jewish writers:

1. by the language;
2. by the topic.

Some of the significant authors, who had written prose with Jewish thematic peculiarity, could be classified into two main groups by the language in which they had written. There are:

◆ **Yiddish-language writers:**

Sholem Aleichem (Hebrew, Russian); March 2nd, 1859-May 13th, 1916.

Isaac Leib Peretz (born May 18th, 1852. in Zamosc, died April 3rd, 1915. in Warsaw)

Shalom Asch (November 1st, 1880, Kutno – July 10th, 1957, London)

Isaac Bashevis Singer (Yiddish) (November 21st, 1902-July 24th, 1991)

Ephraim Kishon (Hebrew) August 23rd, 1924-January 29th, 2005)

◆ **English-language writers:**

Saul Bellow, born Solomon Bellows (June 10th, 1915-April 5th, 2005)

Bernard Malamud (April 26th, 1914-March 18th, 1986)

Norman Kingsley Mailer (January 31st, 1923-November 10th, 2007)

Philip Milton Roth (born March 19th, 1933, Newark, New Jersey)

A strict classification by topic is not possible, but comparing the writers’ attitudes towards different questions of life, Judaism and modern tendencies, the following topics have emerged as the ones being shared by the authors. Here are the most frequent themes which could be classified into following groups:

Religious and mythological questions: Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Leib Peretz, Isaac Bashevis Singer;

Historical questions: Sholem Asch, Isaac Bashevis Singer;

Solitude and alienation: Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow;

Infiltration in other societies: Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Ephraim Kishon;

Atrocity and Jewish suffering: Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Malamud;

Family in Jewish community: Philip Roth, Ephraim Kishon, Isaac Leib Peretz;

In this paper we shall try to express the most frequent indicators of the Jewish thematic construction in their literary works as the main characteristics of Jewish national figure and their identity. They have represented the indicators of their bad destiny, their sacrifice for the better world by the solitude and alienation of Jewish individual in America, turning back to

¹ **Haskalah** (Hebrew: “enlightenment,” “education” from *sekhel* “intellect”, “mind”), the **Jewish Enlightenment**, was a movement among European Jews in the late 18th century that advocated adopting enlightenment values, pressing for better integration into European society, and increasing education in secular studies.

the historical facts (since the Second World War) as the cause for the atrocity towards Jews and their suffering then and now. The writers put the Jews on the pedestal of a sublime nation and at the same time made them victims of modern society. The Jewish writers took the chance in American literature which had a didactic effect, using another common argument, not easily compatible with the theory of superior American morals but certainly applicable. "The writers might claim they had a duty to portray how people actually think and behave. But the writers also had a duty to implant moral lessons". (Cunliffe 1987, 371) Many people believed and perhaps still believe there is a gulf between two cultures in America. According to Marcus Cunliffe, in Lionel Trilling's terminology, it is a gulf between the "adversary culture" and the middle official culture. (Cunliffe 1987, 385) This sense of mutual antagonism, artistic and political, goes back at least sixty years.

Solitude and alienation represent not only a staple topic for the Jewish novel but for the whole period of 1950's. It is the period of advanced modernization in America. Seen in such a perspective, the Jewish adversarial culture is or was quite rightly alienated from middle America. The country rises from the period of depression, the traumatic period known as "the coming of age". But, America according to Jewish position is a sick society, increasingly given over to violence, aggression, greed, corruption and falsehood. Some material aspects are getting better, so a modern life seems radically different from traditional life in the past – status symbols like cars, TV sets, refrigerators, radios are visible in many homes; but the spiritual aspects of some entities are not being recovered easily. The long period of war trauma, depression and low spirit is hard to be erased from the minds of people. Such tendency is overt in the novels of the writers in that period. They use individual destinies to express latent national feelings. The national feelings of Jewish writers in Diaspora explicitly are based on loneliness and alienation as the thematic prototypes in their works. They write about social stereotype in which an entity loses its own "me". They write about society where snobbism and material things are prevailing models, but the spiritual and religious aspects are met only sporadically. That society has come under the harsh criticism by Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud and Saul Bellow.

Jewish writers managed to interlace the theme of alienation and sick society with the theme of Jewish family. Family is a beacon of hope in Judaism. It represents the sanctity and the foundation of proper upbringing, normal behavior and social-cultural acceptance of a Jewish entity. Numerous writers mentioned above tend to represent the ecumenical significance of family. They define a family as Mitzvah does: "Family is a foundation of a society."² Having in mind that the stories of atrocity toward Jewish community and about their suffering have survived during centuries, it is absolutely clear why this concept of "family" is so important for Jews.

Philip Roth has managed to interlace the motive of solitude and the loss of faith in his novel *Letting go*. This novel is the story about a few years in the lives of four persons. Part of it is told in the first person singular by Gabe Wallach, a wealthy, intelligent, well-intentioned, indecisive college teacher of English. The rest in alternating chapters is told by the author in the conventional third person narrative technique. Gabe was sorry for other people's troubles and sincerely tried to be helpful. But he couldn't see why he should become deeply involved,

² *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Yhitomir, Jerusalem, 1865–1866.

why he should become responsible for the others in his surroundings. He couldn't see why he ought to be burdened by someone's health, happiness or economic security. But life and people sometimes demand complete participation. Gabe's understandable reluctance haunted his conscience. Not having serious troubles of his own, he felt guilty. Probably he felt guiltier than he had any cause to feel, but that is a point which is sure to be broadly debated.

There are three persons into whose lives Gabe felt himself sinking: Paul Hertz, fellow English teacher, desperately poor, taut, earnest, apprehensive, good and kind; Libby Hertz, Paul's wife, born as a Catholic but converted to Judaism in a useless effort to appease Paul's affronted parents, neurotic, hysterical, unreasonable, teetering on the brink of mental collapse; and Martha Raganhart, divorced, mother of two, Gabe's mistress, hearty, healthy, sloppy, vulgar, generous and bitter.

Letting go is a novel in which Roth expands his themes from Jewry to universal topics: love, family, betrayal, marriage and sex. He talks about Gabe's dilemma: can one find his personal freedom and identity alienated or associated with the rest of society? Losing one's own personality and contact with family and friends is a severe and harsh price a human being has to pay in order to find his personality. By separating himself from the society and the family, Gabe Wallach not only could find his unknown, newfound personality but has lost entirely all of his personal stamina.

Bernard Malamud's novels are full of solitary characters. They are symbolic presentations of goodness and humanity, so through the pain, suffering and tears they somehow manage to cleanse themselves of sins in order to assert themselves as full and complete characters.

The Natural is an unusual novel in Malamud's poetics. There are virtually no Jewish characters – at least, none that are obviously or overtly Jewish – and it certainly does not deal with Jewish issues. As a matter of fact, *The Natural* is a complex blend of myth, legend, and the American obsession with professional sports and celebrity. It is a novel of a man trying to be capricious despite the numerous pressures and assignments he has to cope with. Roy Hobbs, very talented but tragic baseball player, becomes tied up with the hopes and dreams of New York. Malamud modeled Hobbs's brief career on the myth of the Fisher King, focusing on the core idea that the health of the king or coach, in this case of Fisher, is related to the health of the land, or, in this case, the city. The overlap of personal and collective is Malamud's main focus. Will Hobbs be able to carry the burden of the society on his weak shoulders? Will he be able to save his integrity and persona or will he lose himself in the sphere of popular collective consciousness in order to bring success to the group? These would be the main questions.

Henderson the Rain King is the most popular novel by Saul Bellow. It is an example of a hero quest seeking not a particular point of arrival, but pure motion. It shows a directionless journey for the purpose of existence rather than for a radical state of completed being, thus epitomizing the American search for radical forms of freedom, independence and possibility. This is confirmed not only by Henderson's actual journey, but by the open ending which mitigates to the certainty and probability. Henderson remains compelling evidence of durability and vitality of the basic American values embodied in the picaresque tradition. Though free, Henderson experienced the journey as a purposeful and positive action, not simply as a "sick and hasty" ride to oblivion.

Like the older modern literature, the novel maintains a vision of the absurdities and life-denying tendencies that are part of modern civilization, but departs from modern literature in suggesting that alienation is, or should be, only a transitional condition for the more sensitive, living protagonist. Henderson is a counter-image – an affirmative one. He appears as an awakening giant, on the verge of a new consciousness, representing the hopes and determinations of those who still share the American dream and see the USA as the salvation which will bring freedom and love to the world.

Another Bellow's novel, *Dangling Man*, is written in the personal voice of the protagonist whose principal domain is his own sensibility, and whose principal audience is he himself. The text is striking in its exclusion of the female voice, its enactment of a homo-social male world, and the overt narcissism and misogyny of its protagonist, Joseph. It is the story of a young man caught in the trap of self-pity, who believes that intellectual or spiritual enlightenment is to be attained by personal isolation within the confines of a cheap New York boarding house room while he studies the writers of the Enlightenment. The months are passing by and Joseph quarrels with nearly all his friends and relatives, lives off the earnings of his faithful wife, succumbs to fits of paranoia and anger, engages in a desultory affair, learns to hate the physical decay of his elderly neighbors. He is haunted by death anxieties in danger of estranging his wife, Eva. Finally he admits his experiment has been a failure – that his perspectives have all ended strictly between himself and his search for 'enhanced being' which cannot be conducted in such a way. Reduced to the same common physical, social and historical denominator as everyone else, he is last seen standing in a line of naked military recruits being prodded and poked by an elderly military physician, prior to entering the Navy. His search for a special fate will have to be conducted through social and historical complicity and not apart from it, Bellow seems to be implying.

Herzog continues to be Bellow's "biggest book" and it used to be on the New York Times best-seller list for one entire year. At its heart is Bellow's profound shock at discovering, a year after his separation from Sondra, (Alexandra Tschacbasov, his second wife) her affair with their mutual friend, Jack Ludwig. Bellow lapsed into deep depression and produced an intensely self-justifying hero who was tearful, cuckolded, and utterly humiliated. Moses Herzog, a Jewish intellectual type is essentially precipitated into intellectual and spiritual crisis by the failure of his marriage. The plot of the novel is slender. Herzog leaves his home and marriage, fails in the classroom, abandons his academic project, and undertakes a massive spiritual and intellectual obligation to keep the letters for God. At the end of it, he seems to have regained his sense of Jewish identity, purged himself of violent anger, abandoned his latest mistresses, and repented for his dandy style. He has had a profound education in the realities of human nature, and rediscovered the value of nature and solitude on his Ludeyville estate.

Seen as a sick society, America in Jewish perspective looks like the new model of the conspirators' world which ought to be criticized and taught by Jewish moral philosophy, religious principles and humanity. This Jewish vision has involved some simple questions, understood like cause or effect of their monotonous national thoughts and literary themes. Why not try to talk sensibly about America's condition? Why refuse to consider that the nation possessed an alternative "responsible culture"? They believed there was such a thing as the public interest which needed to be identified and strengthened. The responsible culture

accused the adversary culture of operating with a hermetic tradition of Modernism or Post-Modernism. Adversary literature tended to imitate other adversary literature, generating its own models of futility and nightmare. "Recognitions of this Jewish extreme sort might, it is true, not commend themselves to the elegantly intellectual Nobelist Saul Bellow, whose disdain for vox pop was manifest in *The Dean's December*. Nevertheless, Bellow as a VIP was willy-nilly incorporated into the culture of the gossip-column. He was joined there by a miscellany of writer-celebrities, some of whom like Bernard Malamud had been grouped with Bellow as being in some sense fundamentally Jewish. They would undoubtedly include, whether or not that assignment was stipulated, Philip Roth of the *Zuckerman* trilogy and Joseph Heller whose *God Knows* featured the King David of the Old Testament as a garrulous streetwise old American; and of course Norman Mailer." (Cunliffe 1987, 398)

If latent and radical protest of Jewish writers cannot be "constructive", it finds an outlet in being "destructive". To say this is not to indict the adversary culture, but merely to explain how Jewish latency and radicalism tends to be driven into extreme fantasies of corruption, atrocity and suffering. In this sense they lose touch with reality. The tendency has been accentuated as the adversary culture has followed its own logic of developing provocation.

The main feelings connected to the history of the Jewish nation and incorporated into their literary works are pain and suffering. The world is, unfortunately, full of reminiscence of the past to remind the Jews of the bad moments they had experienced. The literature is a realm in which those feelings can appear as an absolute impressionistic expression. The novels about the atrocity toward Jews do not concentrate only on the Jewish pain and suffering. They are lifted into universal dimension to show the danger and possibility of such atrocities being committed once again; not only to the Jewish nation, but to any nation of the world.

The Jewish authors have deliberately chosen stories from entire history to describe the horrible moments Jews were confronted with. From the bad treatment they had in Russia in XVI century, in Poland and Germany in the period before the First World War up to the horrible tortures and killings in the period of Nazi Europe. The Jews have endured heavy atrocities during a long period of time and they have used that to the utmost to become an influential, powerful, rich and respected people. By enduring the atrocities they have managed to get themselves into the situation never to be threatened again. The pride, determination and resoluteness are the feelings present in modern Jewish way of life and literary works, of course, just to remind the world about their sacrifice from earlier periods.

The Jewish way to enforce their national characteristics is warning us and teaching us how to justify the fireworks in the Jewish or any other community. Nobody could notice that any person in Jewish community ever forgets the painful history of their own nation.

The Jewish nation has chosen a specific way forward in building up a developed, modern and strong society based on remembering the atrocities and honoring the victims and the painful history of their past. The immense feeling of belonging to a strong community enables Jews in Diaspora to get involved easily in a society without any loss of national identity.

I. B. Singer's novel *Lost in America* represents a mixture of two ideas, a mixture of two main themes. The first theme lies in the part where the process of integration in American society is explained. The second theme deals with atrocities and bad treatment toward Jews in pre-Nazi Europe. The action of the beginning of the novel is set in Poland during the rise of Nazi agitation. The hate and intolerance towards Jews and Jewish community get stronger

and stronger, so a lot of Jews decide to find their way out in escaping to the USA. Isaac, the main character of the novel, feels trapped and lost on board the ship sailing to America. The pictures of persecuted and killed Jews and Jewish families are constantly in his mind. He finds a little consolation in the presence of another voyager, Nehemiah. He grows more and more of a slave of his own melancholy which totally overpowers his spirit. His life was saved and lost at the same time. A life was saved from a Nazi bullet but it was lost into a sadness and despair. Isaac simply can not surpass the feeling of helplessness and injustice, although the Jewish community becomes much more honored and stronger in America. It is very possible that Isaac, as many other Jews, has unconsciously felt guilt for staying alive while millions found their deaths in the concentration camps. The pressure of such emotions left behind was strong, and as we can see, too strong for Isaac.

Bernard Malamud's novel *The Fixer* is the story with the author's specific vision of an atrocity towards the Jews: anti-Semitism. Through a case of a single Jew, Yakov Bok, Malamud tells a story not about a single molested Jew, but rather a story about the universal anti-Semitism. The story of Yakov Bok is Malamud's attempt to stress the problem and to show in what manner the hate provoked by nationalism can cause almost everlasting pain and suffering, not only of a single human being, but of an entire nation as well.

Bernard Malamud based *The Fixer* on the case of Mendel Beilis, a Jewish book keeper for a brick factory who was accused of a Christian child ritual murder. With very little evidence against him, the Russian government pushed for the conviction of Beilis in order to justify anti-Semitic policies that were being enacted at the time. The novel's protagonist, Yakov Bok, also works in a brick factory, and he is charged, for no particular reason except for being Jewish, with a crime just like the one with which Beilis was charged. As in Malamud's fictionalized version, the actual case occurred between 1911 and 1913 in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev. The Beilis' case is credited with being one of the main contributing factors in bringing about the Russian Revolution by raising the sense of distrust Russian citizens felt toward their government and the anger of people around the world. The political situation surrounding the case is hardly touched upon in *The Fixer*. Most of the book focuses on Yakov's life in solitary confinement, for years in prison waiting for the murder charge to be formally levied against him so that he could get on with the trial. Malamud deliberately focused his attention on the questions of nationalism and anti-Semitism, the survival of a single person in a hostile society full of racial differences, in order to make political impact of the story less important.

The presence and strength of Jewish community is not only perpetuated in their history; it has been shown in literature, art and film, elegantly and majestically but very often by the latent thematic structure and by the strong psychological portraits of their characters. Jewish authors, who are still writing about the destiny of the Jewish community, always have the equal picture of "tetrarchy" in their heads with the immense and sacred goal: glorifying the history, the roots and customs of the Jewish people, and specifically the permanent expressing of Jewish self-compassion.

The Jewish art has been extricated from the material practices, social relations and ideological meanings in which it is always caught up, and raised to the status of a solitary "fetish", more soul-stirring and the circulation of the blood. The word "imaginative", in the Jewish case, contains an ambiguity suggestive of this attitude: it has a resonance of the de-

scriptive term “imaginary”, meaning “literally untrue”, but is also of course an evaluative term, meaning “visionary” or “inventive”. Imaginative creation can be offered as an image of non-alienated labor; the intuitive, transcendental scope of the poetic mind can provide a living criticism of some rationalist or empiricist ideologies enslaved to “fact”.

Literary work of the Jewish writers comes to be seen as a mysterious organic unity, in contrast to the fragmented individualism of the Jewish representatives as the source of their national identity. The Jewish literary work is “spontaneous” rather than rationally calculated, originating from the heart rather than empirical. The Jewish novelists have the perfect artifice to hide the real intention of their reproductive themes and very similar characters in their works. According to that, the word “prose” then no longer refers simply to a technical mode of writing: it has deep social, political, national and philosophical implications.

The Jewish literary work has become a whole alternative ideology, and the “imagination” itself becomes a political force. However, if the transcendental nature of the imagination offered a challenge to an anemic rationalism, it could also offer the writer an absolute alternative to history, or to nationalism itself. Indeed, the art of fiction was becoming a commodity like anything else, and the Jewish writers became the great commodity producers; for all their rhetorical claim to be “representative” of humankind, to speak with the voice of the people and utter eternal verities, they existed more and more on the margins of a society which was not inclined to pay high wages to prophets. The finally passionate Jewish idealism makes of them famous writers who are increasingly driven back into the solitariness of their own creative mind. The vision of a just society is often enough inverted into an impotent nostalgia and an explicit, old, organic, but very dangerous, nationalism. In other words, some literary works of Jewish writers become an ideology. It has the most intimate relations to questions of social and national power.

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ДОЦ. ДР МИРЈАНА Н. ЛОНЧАР-ВУЈНОВИЋ

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ЈЕВРЕЈСКИ ПОСТМОДЕРНИ ПИСЦИ И НАЦИОНАЛНИ ИДЕНТИТЕТ

Резиме

Тумачење специфичности јеврејског националног идентитета је врло разнолико, али и веома актуелно, већ стотинама година. Постоје контраверзна мишљења у дужем историјском раздобљу до савременог доба, која се једногласно уобличавају у јединствену структуру јеврејске заједнице заоденуте плаштом жртве. Ова се јединствена и једнолична структура одсликава посебно у делима писаца из дијаспоре. Недавне расправе у јеврејском парламенту о томе ко се може звати Јеврејином сумирају сва питања о јеврејском пореклу и одговарају на питање које је изнад свих питања: Шта суштински одређује битисање јеврејског идентитета у односу на друге народе?

Примећујемо два типа класификације који се односе на јеврејске писце: по језику и по тематици. Неки значајни аутори, који пишу прозу с јеврејском тематиком, могу се сврстати у две групе по језику на коме пишу: хебрејски и енглески. Прецизна класификација писаца по тематици није могућа, али уколико упоређујемо ставове писаца о разним животним питањима, о јеврејству и о модерним стремљењима, следеће теме израњају као јединствене у стваралаштву великог броја аутора: религиозна и митолошка питања; историјска питања; усамљеност и отуђење; инфилтрирање у друго друштво; јеврејска патња; породица у јеврејској заједници. У овом раду протумачени су најупечатљивији показатељи јеврејског националног идентитета – усамљеност и отуђење у савременом друштву, уз незаобилазна сећања на страдања и патњу током Другог светског рата, која су, претпостављамо, узроци јеврејске тежбене и једноличне тематике у савременој књижевности.

Кључне речи: национални идентитет, Јудаизам, отуђење, нација, заједница, породица, дијаспора, патња.