

# Introduction

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AMONG OUTSIDE OBSERVERS of Polish-Jewish relations, two divergent images of Poland coexist, each with its own set of powerful emotions. The first is more familiar to North American readers: Poland as an historically blighted land of pogroms, antisemitism, Jewish exclusion, persecution, and murder, and today a place of historical denial by Poles and lingering fear and hostility for Jews, set against a backdrop of silent Jewish ruins, debased and left to crumble. But another image of Poland is emerging among a new generation of close observers. This Poland opposes antisemitism, is embroiled in a process of earnest introspection regarding the involvement of Poles in the historical persecution of Jews, and, most saliently for the present volume, is dedicated to reenvisioning spaces of and for Jewishness, past and present, in the Polish landscape—physical, social, and discursive.

Claude Lanzmann's epic 1983 film *Shoah* seared the image of Poland as a landscape of Jewish death and denial into a generation of viewers, with images of Polish peasant eyewitnesses expressing unreconstructed antisemitic myths and nervously snickering as they talked about the murder of their former Jewish neighbors and the confiscation of those Jews' property. The film suggests that any habitable physical and social "Jewish space" in Poland was permanently obliterated along with the country's Jewish population.<sup>1</sup> But a pair of new films—Yael Bartana's *And Europe Will Be Stunned* and Władysław Pasikowski's *Pokłosie (Aftermath)*—powerfully evoke spaces of not only past and present but also future Jewishness, in ways that suggest the advent of a new historical moment. While not nearly as widely viewed—and employing a fictional approach as opposed to using the documentary genre—these films reflect significant present-day social realities: both the inchoate yearnings of and the actual grassroots efforts by non-Jewish Poles and Jews in and beyond Poland to reclaim and expand Poland's Jewish spaces.

Pasikowski's 2012 Polish-made film *Pokłosie* is an allegorical treatment of sociologist-historian Jan Gross's powerful book *Neighbors*, which laid bare the "public secret" that a community of Poles in 1941 had driven their Jewish neighbors into a barn and burned it down.<sup>2</sup> The filmic treatment follows the present-day moral awakening of a young Polish villager who feels an inexplicable pull to collect and reassemble the fragments of his local Jewish cemetery. In his scavenger hunt for the missing tombstones—an endeavor replicated in many Jew-

ish cemeteries across Poland in the last fifteen years—he both uncovers the terrifying truth of what happened to the village’s Jews during World War II and incurs the wrath of his fellow townsfolk for his audacity in restoring both the Jewish story and the cemetery’s physical space.

Israeli-Dutch artist Yael Bartana’s *And Europe Will Be Stunned* is a trilogy of short films developed in collaboration with progressive Polish intellectuals and shot in Warsaw from 2007 to 2011. They chronicle the “fictional” Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP), a vibrant, youth-based political campaign that has called on 3.3 million Jews to return to Poland. The first film, *Mary Koszmary (Nightmares, 2007)*, features the movement’s leader, performed by young Polish leftist-activist Sławomir Sierakowski, pleading for Jews to return to Poland. He longs for Jews and wants them back, unsettling the archetypal antisemitic Pole as construed by *Shoah* while underlining the ambivalent role of nostalgia in even such “progressive” Polish approaches to Jewishness. Bartana’s project dares to envision—however fantastically—Poland as a center of future Jewish life, building on a deep reservoir of largely repressed yearnings for the “vanished world” of the shtetl that exist on both the Polish and Jewish sides of the equation. Indeed, provocatively underscoring the generative intersections of vision and reality, Bartana broke the filmic frame to build a temporary kibbutz training camp in Muranów, the site of the Warsaw ghetto, and the JRMiP itself has a website and manifesto, and held its first congress in Berlin in May 2012.<sup>3</sup>

A range of such new visions of Jewish Poland, both pragmatic and utopian, appear throughout this volume. Shadowed by the earlier image offered by *Shoah*, they provide emotion-laden narratives and counternarratives that offer alternatives and responses to its bleak perspective. *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland* showcases research by an interdisciplinary group of scholars, illuminating lesser-known engagements with the Polish-Jewish past over the last twenty years. In this period, non-Jewish Poles and Jews (both Polish and foreign) have made Poland home to profound debate and reflection on the loss of its once large—and today minuscule—Jewish minority, representing perhaps the cutting edge of Holocaust memory work in Europe more generally.

This explosion of the past into the present is visible in a variety of media: print, film, photography, theater, music, and even food. But it has been expressed perhaps most strikingly in the built environment and the cultural meanings such physical heritage enables. Across the country, dilapidated synagogues and cemeteries are being restored, Jewish streets recreated, and Jewish museums built. Because Poland was the geographic epicenter of the Holocaust, few other European countries have attracted as much global interest or experienced such intense reflection on the Jewish genocide. But Poland’s new conjurings of Jewishness should not be read as simple gestures of reparation for past wrongs, nor as mere mercenary projects of development or instrumental national self-fashioning. Rather, a

“Jewish” presence in both urban and rural landscapes has reemerged in tension and synergy with other remembered minorities, and in complex negotiations with at times divergent local, regional, national, and international groups and interests. These involve primarily Poles and Jews, Americans and Israelis, but also Germans and, to a lesser extent, Roma, Ukrainians, Vietnamese, and even sexual minorities. New global actors have become increasingly interested in “sites of pluralism,” even as some spaces—such as Auschwitz and communal properties embroiled in restitution claims—remain contested, fractured grounds. This volume unearths the multiple factors, paradoxes, and possibilities represented by specific sites and memory initiatives.

We take *space* as a common analytical category, considering how the physical, social, and discursive interact to produce with emerging expressions of memory in post-Communist Poland. In the past several years, scholars in anthropology, history, cultural geography, museum and heritage studies, and architectural history have shown increased interest in vernacular spaces and the popular, everyday uses and experiences of monumental sites—including the ways that more ephemeral cultural products like texts, political debates, or new media may impact such physical spaces. Recent studies focus on the building of museums, the revitalization of former Jewish quarters, the return of confiscated property, and “Holocaust tourism.” Well-known writers such as Omer Bartov, Svetlana Boym, Ruth Ellen Gruber, Marianne Hirsch, and Michel Laguerre have brought wider attention to Jewish sites and districts in contemporary Europe, and major new Jewish cultural tourism initiatives are currently being launched.<sup>4</sup> Barbara Mann, Julia Brauch et al., and Jurgita Šiaučūnaitė-Verbickienė and Larisa Lempertienė have offered recent volumes that thematize and theorize Jewish space as an underappreciated analytical tool for plumbing the Jewish cultural and historical experience in its fuller dimensions.<sup>5</sup> Popular interest in the physicality, materiality, and geography of Jewish culture and memory is far from abating.

Despite this new attention to Jewish spaces, there is still a dearth of theoretically sophisticated treatments of the local meanings and lived experiences surrounding Poland’s (or larger Europe’s) Jewish sites. The “new Jewish Studies” is working to break out of predetermined, normative views of Jewishness to explore how history and identity inform each other, raise questions about difference and solidarity, and recognize that Jewish culture is shaped in a field of interactions with other cultures. Historian Diana Pinto in this volume has theorized about the potential of “the Jewish space” in Europe for new Jewish and European cultural self-conceptions, Jonathan Webber has raised key questions regarding the boundaries and significance of Jewish culture in Europe, Michael Rothberg has envisioned a new paradigm of “multidirectional memory” that considers unacknowledged multicultural and multitemporal interactions which have shaped Holocaust memory, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp have

called for analyzing Jewishness “as contingent and contextual rather than definitive and presumptive.”<sup>6</sup>

These important theoretical interventions must be brought more fully into conversation with emerging empirical research. If theoretical advances offer new optics that refocus how we might conceive of Jewish culture and memory, direct observation in archival and field research can reveal the cross-fertilizations among projects, interethnic collaborations, and blurred or shared subjectivities emerging around Jewish sites, and how such spaces are negotiated, understood, and sustained by the variously defined Jews and non-Jews who share this field of interest. Indeed, what is most fascinating about the “revival” of Poland’s Jewish spaces is the dialogic nature of these developments and the shifting meanings and boundaries of “Jewishness” emanating from them. There is still much work to be done, both in the scholarly and popular realms, to move beyond a vision of Europe as home only to a “vanishing diaspora” and to consider new or overlooked forms of Jewish vitality in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, this volume aims to intervene in contemporary discussions of pluralism, multiethnicity, and cosmopolitanism, contributing a unique perspective from a largely ethnically homogeneous country. Ethnic minorities comprise about 1.8 percent of the Polish population and most are “European,” from nearby countries such as Ukraine. Still, like most countries in the world, Poland is confronting questions of cultural, ethnic, religious, and sexual difference, and some Poles have begun to imagine new forms of identity beyond the traditional “Polish-Catholic.” Interest in the Jewish past in all its diversity has become a primary tool in pluralist redefinitions of Polishness.

This volume attempts to understand the construction of pluralism through new uses of Jewish space. Our authors differ in their assessments of such pursuits. Some see interest in Jewish spaces as a form of democratic renewal for both Poles and Jews; others view it as an attempt at reparation for or redemption from past wrongs; still others suggest that a largely imagined multiculturalism inhibits confronting contemporary injustice—dead Jews, in short, are easier to embrace than gay Poles or a growing immigrant population. Finally, we include voices that remind us of the significance of ongoing conflict over spaces such as Auschwitz and issues such as Jewish property restitution.<sup>8</sup> Our goal, then, is to shed light on the role of the material world in the complex, unfolding encounter with the Jewish past in contemporary Poland, in spaces that conjure up ambivalent, often conflicting memories and emotions. Below we outline in more depth the book’s key contributions to the study of space, memory, and pluralism before concluding with a gesture to the multiple layers of time that interact in Jewish spaces today, in recognition of the broader historical context that frames the contemporary moment.

## Space, Heritage, Memory, Nostalgia

Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire*—which he described as the externalized, symbolic, often physical scaffolding for our sense of continuity as collective selves that emerged in modern societies—was introduced to Anglophone academics in 1989, and helped to ignite a trend in which such spatial manifestations of memory have been subject to intense scrutiny.<sup>9</sup> The notion provided a lens through which to assess the reclaiming and recurating of memorial landscapes taking place in emerging postsocialist societies, which for decades a single party state had attempted to control and regulate. The way ideologies were inscribed in the built environment—and were being suddenly reinscribed in a flurry of early 1990s street renaming and monument toppling—became a core component of the new interest in “memory studies” in the academy.

But while drawing attention to space, Nora's depiction of these *lieux* as historical crutches cut off from the more “authentic” social fabric of day-to-day memory that ostensibly bound premodern communities led many scholars to read landscapes like texts, attending mainly to their discursive aspects. Similarly, the ways that nation-states shaped memory in space to their preferred political ends meant that scholars often granted priority to state actors, rather than to understanding “heritage” more intricately as a node in complex networks of memorial agents, both within and beyond the state.

This volume takes a wide-ranging empirical look at how memory intersects with space in ways that are culturally, socially, politically, and economically constructed. Our authors shed light on multiple local, national, and transnational vectors of meaning, and the dynamic processes by which these are formed and interact. Drawing on ethnographic, historical, literary, and sociological approaches, we pay close attention to the multiple ways that Jewish religious sites, museums, urban districts, provincial ruins, and places of Holocaust tragedy are made use of and experienced by a broad range of actors, including local residents, planners, tourists, and Jewish leaders, in Poland and abroad.

A focus on space has multiple benefits: methodologically, spaces turn memory into a thing one can visit, creating touchstones and social catchments that make visible the very process of memory as it is being “collected”—to use James Young's notion.<sup>10</sup> Attention to physical spaces reveals the local manifestations of large, often distant political, legal, and economic shifts, concretizing interpretive generalities and thinking through broad analytical categories on the scale of human experience.

Thinking with space also draws attention to the bodies that inhabit and traverse it, and the mnemonic force it exerts on them—just as bodies shape, in turn, the spaces around them. Much scholarship on memory privileges cognitive, dis-

cursive, or narrative processes over (or as separate from) more fully physical, embodied ways of experiencing the past. Especially given the sudden social ruptures that have scarred and often displaced massive populations in the last century, and the ways that landscapes have been both shattered and renovated in the process, it is crucially important to attend to the ways that “places possess a marked capacity for triggering acts of self-reflection, inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, or memories of who one used to be, or musings on who one might become.”<sup>11</sup> Places can draw people into evocative conversations about the presence and influence of otherwise silent pasts. A ground-level view reveals “heritage” to be not simply a set of objects that people possess. While Stanislaw Tyszka in this volume highlights the brute realities of disputes over the control of Poland’s Jewish properties, the scope and meanings of “heritage” are not defined only by possession of real estate. Rather, heritage emerges from behaviors, practices, and strategies that people *do*.<sup>12</sup> Our authors highlight such social aspects of heritage, how it is influenced and negotiated by the presence and power of a variety of actors—both local and external—that collaborate and conflict.

It is perhaps banal, but it bears repeating that the memory of the “same” events changes depending on where (and when) it manifests and who is doing the remembering. Our volume thus looks at Jewish memory in Polish spaces from a variety of transnational perspectives, all of which have bearing on these simultaneously local and national spaces, and our authors themselves embody a variety of insider and outsider subject positions. Such openness to nontraditional sites and agents of Jewish memory is consistent with shifts in the discipline of Jewish Studies, yet implementing such a perspective in the emotionally freighted landscape of post-Holocaust Poland is particularly tricky, and goes against the grain of much recent writing touching on this area.

A popular perspective holds that European non-Jewish interest in Jews has produced a “virtual” Jewish world devoid of “real” Jews. Tourism and preservation have created kitschy Jewish Disneyland embellished with klezmer music, kosher-style food, and clichéd souvenirs, incorporating alien cultural materials and marketing them as “Jewish.”<sup>13</sup> Yet this argument presupposes the existence of “real” Jewishness in a definable, stable, authentic form—a position not only untenable in contemporary humanities scholarship but one that erases local perspectives by reducing Jewish Europe to American or Israeli Jewish concerns.

Thus we are particularly sensitive to the frames of reference that pertain as Holocaust memory is enshrined in new national contexts. If the Holocaust has been put forth as a cornerstone of a newly integrating Europe’s shared heritage, Germany has for obvious reasons drawn disproportionate attention. We shift our gaze eastwards toward the perspectives of those for whom the Holocaust is an entirely new frame of reference, and one that may sit uneasily alongside more familiar national narratives of martyrology. In Poland, where over 2 million gentile

Poles were murdered alongside about 3 million Polish-Jewish citizens, followed by forty years of Communist repression—not to mention the longstanding tensions in Polish-Jewish relations in the years leading up to the war—the “Jewish experience” is embedded in frames of understanding that give the work of remembering them today different vectors of meaning.<sup>14</sup> We thus offer a window onto the unevenness of the Europeanization of Holocaust memory, and particularly some unique aspects of its Eastern variant.

But narrating Jewish experience from a Polish perspective is not defined by loss or lack or a need for “catching up” to the West with its established modes of Holocaust memory.<sup>15</sup> Poland is working through and contributing to this memory anew, shining a particular light on the excruciatingly intimate relations of victims, perpetrators, and witnesses that was the reality in these “Bloodlands” of face-to-face and neighborly, as well as industrialized, killing.<sup>16</sup> Poland’s grappling with Jewish memory, we argue, is thus particularly painful and trenchant, as well as potentially illuminating and transformative, opening a range of new questions just when Western countries risk self-congratulatory memorial complacency or guilt fatigue.<sup>17</sup>

Of particular interest are the ways that memory projects have implications for identity categories. We suggest how transnational dialogues are bringing “Jewish” memory to bear on debates about Polishness, forcing deep introspection and public discussion about the meaning of “nation” and “citizen” as well as “Pole” and “Jew.” These conversations open provocative new questions about cultural ownership and authenticity. The chapters in this volume address questions that common presumptions around clean, stable identity categories obscure: Who has the rights and resources to propagate their perspectives regarding what is “really” Jewish and what is not? How are ethnic groups and cultures formed and sustained, and how are they reestablished in the wake of decimation? What kinds of heritage preservation perpetuate hegemonic/dominant cultural and political agendas, and what modes of tourism pursue memorial counterprojects—or vice-versa? Poland presents an excellent case for considering the role “outsiders” and foreign places may play in the maintenance or reconstruction of “in-group” culture and memory, with important implications for understanding diaspora identity-building practices as well as intercultural relations, reconciliation, and enduring intergroup incommensurabilities.

Finally, while nostalgia is implicitly implicated in many of the chapters in this volume—and is explicitly thematized by Magdalena Waligórska—we are careful in our deployment of this term in relation to the memorial activities our authors analyze because of the simplistic, saccharine, sanitized images it often conjures. Nostalgia is often dismissed as a politically suspect form of memory. But nostalgia, we argue, has a multitude of unexamined textures and layers, which scholars are just now beginning to excavate.<sup>18</sup> A broken, unfulfilled longing for the past,

nostalgia may provoke mourning, melancholia, anxiety, and forgetting. Yet it also can motivate curiosity, critique, and action.<sup>19</sup> A similar caution applies to our treatment of “kitsch.” Both terms, when expressly theorized, may help to differentiate various qualities of or relationships to memory or aesthetic experience.<sup>20</sup> But they also risk a tacit privileging of culturally specific or class-based regimes of taste, overlooking other ways of relating to the difficult past.<sup>21</sup> At worst, they are labels that serve to judge and dismiss, rather than analyze and illuminate.

Instead of labeling, this volume attempts to describe and open for consideration how and to what effects and ends memory is framed and deployed, and how various discursive, social, and physical spaces enable and constrain what work memories and representations can do for those who experience or evoke them. We seek to recuperate culturally saturated spaces, and their common framing as “heritage,” in their full potentialities, not simply as inauthentic and suspicious props but as meeting grounds for interpersonal encounters, for the enactment of morality, for the development of empathy, and for the resignification of identity in more expansive, as well as narrower, terms.

### Constructing Pluralism?

Along with uncovering the multiple meanings and actors that inhabit Poland’s Jewish spaces, our volume also attempts to expand memory studies by considering the interrelationship between remembrance and pluralism. Julia Brauch et al. suggest that “the public debates on the (re-)localization of Jewish space are perceived as the litmus test for a critical historical consciousness and inclusive identity of European societies.”<sup>22</sup> We thus open the question of what the recent surge of Polish interest in physically marking the Jewish past entails for visions of the nation (and policies of the nation-state). Do longings for the prewar past engender more pluralist and cosmopolitan redefinitions of Polishness? Our authors differ in their assessments. Some see memory as a form of cosmopolitan renewal for both Poles and Jews; others view it as an attempt at redemption from past wrongs; still others suggest that celebration of past multiculturalism inhibits confronting pressing contemporary prejudices against other ethnic minorities.

The scholarly study of Holocaust memory—postwar Germany presenting the richest case—has generally focused on the question of *whether* Europeans have remembered the Nazi genocide of European Jews. The concern has been to trace and analyze the patterns of forgetting and recollection, with a now familiar narrative of general repression and silence (1945 to mid-1960s), gradual commemoration (late 1960s to late 1980s), and general, if still contested, acknowledgment of the Holocaust as a major civilizational break in modern European and Western history (1990s to the present).<sup>23</sup> Remembrance itself is the telos here: scholars observe the highly contorted, yet nevertheless still progressively unfolding, processes through which Poles, Germans, French, and so on—who are usually de-



fined ethnically and hermetically as non-Jewish and nonimmigrant—gradually reflect on the Holocaust and the loss of Europe’s Jewish population. The moment when the past surfaces as something to contest, discuss, and recognize tends to shape the scholarly agenda.

This volume takes a different approach to the study of memory by turning to the question of *how*, and more centrally, *why*: Why are people in Poland remembering the Holocaust and the history of Polish Jews? What is at stake in a backward gaze? Why do we invest energy in remembering past events that do not seem immediately connected to our everyday lives? Human societies remember the past for multiple reasons, and they often give meaning to the past, even if unwittingly.<sup>24</sup>

Many Poles may remember the past out of simple curiosity or spurred by an historian’s fascination with salvaging a forgotten page in the national chronicle.<sup>25</sup> Economic motives are often to some degree at play as brokering of the Jewish past is tangled up with regional development schemes and the still-emergent Polish tourist industry (see chapters by Winson Chu, Erica Lehrer, and Monika Murzyn-Kupisz in this volume). And Jewish memory projects may also be bound up in Poland’s emerging impulses at national image management, responding to more than a decade of historical revelations regarding Polish complicity in wartime and postwar crimes against Jews with sanguine representations of Polish-Jewish coexistence. But this book also suggests that in contemporary Poland, deeper searches for meaning are often attached to engagements with the Jewish past. Some Poles involved in Jewish “memory work” invest this activity with a sense of larger purpose. The meanings are polyvalent, but a number of our authors—Konstanty Gebert, Erica Lehrer, Michael Meng, Diana Pinto, and Magdalena Waligórska—touch on one in particular, either directly or tacitly: the possibilities and ambiguities of a liberal democratic philosophy of history centered on the idea of memory as a future-oriented project of enlightenment, that is, a self-critical memory of the nation-state that will help to build more tolerant, pluralist democratic societies.

In this vision, the past is taken as a guide that can instruct and orient Poles in the present and future. This philosophy of history may not be explicitly articulated by actors involved in local memory projects (nor even by some authors in this volume). But one could argue that it is a foundational assumption, a hopeful belief that underlies much memory work in contemporary Poland and beyond. Otherwise, why bother remembering painful events of human suffering that happened decades ago? Certainly there are other philosophical threads at play in the Polish-Jewish case: for example, ethical obligations to ensure harrowing events not be forgotten, or theological commands to absolve sin through reconciliation, the pursuit of emotional catharsis through historical truth-telling, or even superstitious, magical thinking about the qualities of “post-Jewish” sites and objects.<sup>26</sup> Yet we are convinced in today’s Poland that memory is frequently being invoked

for civic pedagogical ends, to produce the “enlightened knowledge” necessary for present and future national subjects, particularly to refute ethnocultural nationalism or other ideological forms of exclusion.

The idea of memory as a form of enlightened knowledge was theorized most thoroughly by Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas in the context of postwar West Germany.<sup>27</sup> In 1959, Adorno argued that a vigorous “working through” (*aufarbeiten*) of the past could serve the pedagogical function of strengthening German democracy and liberalization.<sup>28</sup> Habermas developed this idea further over the 1980s and 1990s. He claimed that a self-critical memory culture could play a central role in forming a postnational, cosmopolitan identity, or what he called “constitutional patriotism.” Memory could provide the motivational and ethical substance of such cosmopolitanism: we can learn from history and build a better society by remembering the disasters of ethnocultural nationalism. While Habermas’s arguments usually refer to the German context, his concept of constitutional patriotism applies to—and he has suggested it is emerging in—other liberal democratic nation-states.<sup>29</sup>

Poland, with its unique history and demographics, has been faced since 1989 once again with the question of who Poles are as a nation in a new global order. Remembering the Jewish past and the rupture of the Holocaust are tools for imagining a more plural Poland—and for some, an open, cosmopolitan Polish identity. These cultural reformers imbue memory with pedagogical and political meaning: Józef, the accidental village archeologist-historian in *Pokłosie* or the role played by political activist Sławomir Sierakowski in *Mary Koszmary* represent those for whom memory is linked to profound moral reckoning or more inclusive imaginations of Poland. These figures perform encounters with past and present pluralism, in often awkward but deeply felt attempts to reclaim those Jewish others amid the detritus of whose material heritage they, like many Poles, live.

A skeptic might wonder how representative these characters are; no doubt many Poles interested in the Jewish past and the Holocaust have other motivations for their memory work, not to mention those who have little interest in Poland’s Jewish memory and/or embrace an ethnocultural definition of the nation that seeks to protect the ethnic Polish national interest from such potentially self-critical reflections on the past. Or one might question, as Winson Chu does, the extent of critical consciousness—or even pluralistic aims—in recent memory projects in cities such as Łódź, where efforts to embrace German-Polish or Polish-Jewish memory often exclude each other. In his account, a serious, self-critical attempt to think about the complexities of the past seems almost entirely absent in the local political culture of the city.

Still others might critique the notion of “memory as enlightenment” on its own terms. As the authors in this volume show, three primary tensions can be identified within it:

1. For the benefit of what envisioned collective is a given memory project pursued? Cultural-historical or ethnic essentialism can underpin and thus limit self-critical memory projects. If aimed at enlightening a preconceived ethnonational body, memory can exclude citizens or other residents of the nation. Even if Polish Jews are incorporated into the Polish national vision, other “others,” such as immigrants or Roma, may be cast as external to the collective that memory is being employed to reform and educate, or, at minimum, such groups’ different histories and subjectivities may be denied.<sup>30</sup>
2. Memory of the Jewish past can rest on the essentialization of Jews, associating Jewishness with pluralistic democratic values like liberalism, humanism, cosmopolitanism, or individualism (or alternatively with other ideals such as piety, scholarliness, community cohesion, family values, or even financial acumen).<sup>31</sup>
3. While memories of the Polish Jewish past can flow in multiple directions, they may also remain focused on a narrow set of political issues, such as combatting antisemitism, to the exclusion of critiquing other forms of prejudice, bias, and racism directed against homosexuals, immigrants, and Muslims, among others.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, it is worth considering that the veritable explosion of Jewish memory projects in Poland exist *alongside* the ongoing presence of antisemitism and the persistence of competitive narratives of victimization, as many of our authors discuss in their individual contributions. Antisemitic graffiti and vandalism of Jewish cemeteries and stereotypes of Jews as cash-cows with whom restoration projects can curry favor or greedy schemers vis-à-vis the legal restitution of expropriated prewar property, are important parts of the present-day Polish landscape, existing alongside celebratory Jewish cultural projects. Indeed, while some memory work treats these problems directly, other projects have been accused of being political fig leaves to cover them up.<sup>33</sup>

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The chapters that follow deal primarily with Poland since the collapse of Communism. But the issues of Jewish sites, spaces, and memories are hardly new. While the recent surge and intensity of memory work is distinctive, it is a widespread myth that a blanket of silence fell on Communist Poland until it was finally lifted by liberal democracy in 1989. The notion is underpinned by a linear, teleological conceptualization of Holocaust memory as a process of greater recognition and contestation as time moves forward from the putatively mute decades of the 1950s to the noisier ones of the 1960s onward. Jewish and non-Jewish Poles have thought about, talked about, reflected on, created, and animated Jew-

ish sites since the end of World War II in the most varied of ways, as the contributions by Michael Meng and Sławomir Kapralski illuminate. The physical remnants of prewar Jewish life—or the lack of these—have triggered memories of a suddenly absent population of neighbors in the everyday lives of Poles for nearly four decades. Many of these memories were communicated among small groups of people; the kind of nationwide discussions of the Jewish past taking place in the Polish public sphere today did not, for the most part, occur under Communism. The regime generally delimited public discussions about the Holocaust, although the party-state could never close off all spaces of public discourse, and even created restricted room for some public debate about Polish-Jewish relations in the 1980s.<sup>34</sup> Thus, as readers encounter the stories and arguments that follow, we invite them to keep in the back of their minds the crucial point that the contemporary period rests on a complex, multilayered past.

## Notes

1. Stuart Liebman, ed., *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

2. Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

3. Erica Lehrer and Magdalena Waligórska, "Cur(at)ing History: New Genre Art Interventions and the Polish-Jewish Past," *East European Politics and Society* 27, no. 3 (August 2013): 510–544.

4. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Upon the Doorposts of Thy House: Jewish Life in East-Central Europe, Yesterday and Today* (New York: Wiley, 1994), and *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Michel Laguerre, *Global Neighborhoods: Jewish Quarters in Paris, London, and Berlin* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); Omer Bartov, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Jackie Feldman, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Monika Murzyn, *Kazimierz środkowoeuropejskie doświadczenie rewitalizacji* (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2006).

5. Julia Brauch, Anna Lipphardt, and Alexandra Nocke, eds., *Jewish Topographies* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008); Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė and Larisa Lempertienė, *Jewish Space in Central and Eastern Europe: Day-to-Day History* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars' Publishing, 2007); Barbara Mann, *Space and Place in Jewish Studies* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012). Brauch et al. have pointed to the lack of attention to space in Jewish studies as stemming from a bias toward attending to diasporic wandering over territorial attachment, and focus on religion as an organizing principle transcending or standing in for worldly places. They emphasize the need to focus on how Jewish space is *produced*.

6. Jonathan Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp, eds., *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

7. Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe since 1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

8. The issue of the legality of Jewish ritual slaughter, or *shehitah*, emerged as a major controversy after the assembling of this volume, but as a barometer, it suggests the volatility and lack of unidirectionality in Poland's changing climate around Jewish issues.

9. The reintroduction of important work by Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory was also a catalyst in this trend. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

10. James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

11. Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

12. Lisa Breglia, *Monumental Ambivalence: The Politics of Heritage* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

13. For analyses of how some of these formations also form spaces of a serious involvement with the Jewish past in Poland, see Erica T. Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), and Magdalena Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), which compares Poland and Germany.

14. For historical background on the war time experience that shapes current memories of the "Jewish experience," see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

15. Indeed, as several scholars are illustrating, German Holocaust memory is itself undergoing challenges and change, as demographic changes force new questions regarding the "lessons of the past" for grapplings with minorities, cultural difference, and "tolerance." See Andreas Huyssen, "Diaspora and Nation: Migration into Other Pasts," *New German Critique* 88 (Winter 2003): 147–164; A. Dirk Moses, "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany," *History and Memory* 19, no. 2 (2007): 140–142; Michael Meng, "Silences about Sarrazin's Racism in Contemporary Germany," *Journal of Modern History* (forthcoming 2015); Damani J. Partridge, "Holocaust Mahnmahl (Memorial): Monumental Memory amidst Contemporary Race," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 4 (2010): 820–850; Michael Rothberg and Yasemin Yildiz, "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 32–48.

16. Snyder, *Bloodlands*; Gross, *Neighbors*; Jan Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2006); Jan Gross and Irena Grudzinska-Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

17. Brauch et al., *Jewish Topographies*, note that scholarly trends in Central and Eastern European countries have been an important engine for greater attention to space in Jewish Studies (p. 6); the volume by Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė et al. is an example of this trend.

18. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Simon Bunke, *Heimweh: Studien zur Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte einer tödlichen Krankheit* (Freiburg: Rombach, 2009); Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

19. Sharon Macdonald gives a useful overview of anthropologists and other scholars of Europe who have attempted to tease apart and recuperate some of nostalgia's more critical layers and facets. Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London: Routledge, 2013), 92–108.

20. E.g., see Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

21. E.g., see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

22. Brauch et al., *Jewish Topographies*, 15.

23. Exceptions that analyze the narratives and meanings of memory include A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Geneviève Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006).

24. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Jacob Taubes, *Abendländische Eschatologie* (Bern: A. Francke, 1947).

25. Eva Hoffman's consideration of the motivations of local historian Zbyszek Romaniuk of the small city of Brańsk captures the nuances of the Polish climate for such work. Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 24–26.

26. On the superstitious, magical qualities of Jewish spaces, see Magdalena Waligórska, "The Jewish-Style Whodunit in Contemporary Poland and Germany," *East European Jewish Affairs* 43, no. 2 (2013): 143–161, and Erica Lehrer, ed., *Na szczęście to Żyd/Lucky Jews* (Kraków: Ha!art, 2014). The past decade has seen a surge of historical work on the Holocaust by Polish scholars. For example, see Barbara Engelking, "Szanowny panie Gestapo": *Donosy do władz niemieckich w Warszawie i okolicach w latach 1940–1941* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2003); Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja Noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2007); Barbara Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień . . . Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011); Jan Grabowski, "Ja tego Żyda znam!" *Szantażowanie Żydów w Warszawie, 1939–1943* (Warsaw: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2004); Jan Grabowski, *Judenjagd: Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945: Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011); Gross, *Neighbors*; Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, "The Participation of Poles in Crimes against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region," *Yad Vashem Studies* no. 2 (2007): 5–48; Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945: Studia i Materiały* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2006); Andrzej Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2006); and *Zarys krajobrazu: Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011). For English summations of this outpouring of research from the *Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów*, see the essays in *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 391–580.

27. The idea of enlightened knowledge comes from Michael Geyer, "The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany," in *Radical Evil*, ed. Joan Copjec (New York: Verso, 1996), 170.

28. Theodor Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean," trans. Timothy Bahti and Geoffrey Hartman, in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 114–129.

29. Jürgen Habermas developed these positions in a number of political writings, including most significantly the following: "Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity: The Federal Republic's Orientation to the West," in Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, ed. and trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cam-

bridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 249–267; “On the Public Use of History,” in Habermas, *New Conservatism*, 229–240; “The Finger of Blame: The Germans and Their Memorial,” in Jürgen Habermas, *Time of Transitions*, ed. and trans. Ciaran Cronin and Max Pensky (Malden, MA: Polity, 2006), 38–50.

30. On the dilemmas of holism and Holocaust memory, the literature is richest for the German case. See note 15, above.

31. Dan Michman, “A ‘Third Partner’ of World Jewry? The Role of the Memory of the Shoah in the Search for a New Present-Day European Jewish Identity,” in *Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust*, ed. Konrad Kwiet and Jürgen Matthäus (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 123–135.

32. On the multidirectional or cosmopolitan potentials of memory, see Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, and Max Pensky, “Cosmopolitan Memory,” in *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*, ed. Gerard Delanty (New York: Routledge, 2012), 254–266.

33. Magdalena Waligórska, “Der Fiedler als Feigenblatt: Die Politisierung des Klezmer in Polen,” *Osteuropa*, nos. 8–10 (2008): 395–408.

34. Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1989); Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).