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The Negative Stereotypes of Jews in Czech Prose at the Turn of the 20th Century

The aim of this article is to deal with Jewish topics in Czech literature. Little attention has been paid to the images of Jews in Czech literature. They have only ever been two authors to write monographies about Jewish topics in Czech literature. The first is Oskar Donath who published in 1923 and 1930.¹ The second is Alexej Mikulášek who published in 2000.² Donath gathered a lot of valuable material in his books which summarized the themes and gave brief descriptions and evaluations of Jewish topics in Czech literature. Mikulášek's methodologically ambitious work has been perceived as problematic. This is because Alexej Mikulášek chooses the label of "anti-Semitism" to the works of conservative writers (like Rudolf Medek), Catholic writers (like Jakub Deml) and a writer from the Communist period Alexej Pludek. But by contrast, Mikulášek separates other "humanist" authors (like Jan Neruda, Vilém Mrštík, Jan Herben and Petr Bezruč) into a different group and calls them only "asemits". Mikulášek states that this grouping is objective based on facts. However, the term "asemitism" had already been given a different meaning. In scientific terminology "asemitism" is defined as the version of the radical Catholic opposition to the Jews in Poland around the end of the 19th century.³ Moreover, in addition to his improper use of terminology, Mikulášek's argument simply does not hold water effectively.⁴ In addition to the monographies by these two authors partial studies and comments exist.⁵ A seminar on subject

¹ Oskar Donath, *Židé a židovství v české literatuře 19. století. Od K. H. Máchy do Jar. Vrchlického*, Brno 1923. Eodem, *Židé a židovství v české literatuře 19. a 20. století. Od Jaroslava Vrchlického do doby přítomné*, Brno 1930. Eodem, *Böhmische Dorfjuden*, Brünn 1926.

² Alexej Mikulášek, *Antisemitismus v české literatuře 19. a 20. století. Teoretická a historická studie*, Praha 2000.

³ Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Bd. III: Begriffe, Theorien, Ideologien*, München 2010, 32–34.

⁴ Michal Frankl, Literární kritika nestačí, *Roš chodeš* 63, 2001, August, 15. Michal Frankl, "Emancipace od Židů. Český antisemitismus na konci 19. století", Praha 2007, 23. Daniel Soukup, Stereotypy, imagologie a literární hodnoty, in: Stanislava Fedrová (ed.), *Otázky českého kánonu. Sborník příspěvků z III. kongresu světové literárněvědné bohemistiky*, Praha 2006, 623. Marek Nekula, Obraz Židů v Nerudových Povídkách malostranských a protižidovský diskurz, in: Michal Frankl, Jindřich Toman (eds.), *Jan Neruda a Židé. Texty a kontexty*, Praha 2012, 61.

⁵ Especially Robert B. Pynsent, Obchod a smyslnost. České spisovatelky a židé okolo přelomu století, in: *Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské univerzity*, series D, no. 43 (1996), 23–39. Jindřich Toman, Mumláni, špatná němčina a nedostatek citu. Židé v kontextu českého nacionalismu, 30. a 40. léta 19. století, in: Zdeněk Hojda et al. (eds.), „*Slavme slavně slávu Slávov slavných*“. *Slovanství a česká kultura 19. století*, Praha 2006, 352–360. Robert B. Pynsent, Český ženský antisemitismus v první polovici dvacátého století, in: eodem, *Đáblové, ženy a národ*, Praha 2008, 413–422. Jiří Brabec, Podoby českého antisemitismu před první světovou válkou; Antisemitská literatura v době nacistické okupace, in: eodem, *Panství ideologie a moc literatury*, Praha 2009, 32–41; 167–198. Robert B. Pynsent, Czech Feminist Anti-Semitism. The Case of Božena Benešová, in: Marcel Cornis-Pope, John Neubauer (eds.), *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe IV*, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 2010, 345–365. Václav Petrbok, „Však my se sami dost dovedeme milovatí“: znovu o česko-židovsko-německé „revolučnosti“ v letech 1843–1847, *Slovo a smysl* 16, 2011, 95–105. Jindřich Toman, „Příběh podané ruky“ (Kapper a Havlíček), *Židovská ročenka 5772*, 2011/2012, 69–85.



Jan Neruda and the Jews was recently organized in Institute of Czech Literature at Academy of Science in Prague.⁶ Yet the topic of Jews in the literature of this period remains at the periphery of research, especially when compared with the history in general.⁷ One of the reasons was the marginalization of Jewish topics during the Communist regime. On the other hand, the study of anti-Jewish stereotypes in literature was not frequent in other countries either as well. The situation began to change a few decades ago, within the context of discussions on post-colonialism and gender-studies (*rereading, gegen-den-Strich-Lesen*, etc.). This brought about a new reading and interpretation of some authors and works of the literary canon.

The negative stereotypes of Jews are related to and depend on contemporary cultural, social and religious practices. They often have historical roots and an economic background. Research of auto- and heterostereotypes is considered a part of the imagology. Contemporary cultural and literary studies view negative stereotypes as mental constructions which are based on only selectively evaluating the current and the historical reality in contrast to having neutral images. The negative stereotypes have the force of prejudice, are characterized by rigidity and very often cause people to act emotionally. They are shared by almost all of the members of a social or ethnic group. So, for example, the picture of a Jew as an anti-Polish spy survived in the Polish consciousness even during the Nazi occupation.⁸ During the so called “Waldheim Affair” in Austria in the 1980s (where the former United Nations Secretary and later President of Austria Kurt Waldheim lied about his Nazi past), there were voices in the Viennese press, which said that affair was caused by the influence and manipulation of the Jews in American politics and media. The literary stereotypes were manifested primarily in the formation of characters which are shown in a simplistic and derogatory way, with the help of some physical features and characteristics that negatively differ from contemporary conventions.⁹ According to Klaus Holz, anti-Jewish stereotypes differ from other national stereotypes so that Jews, unlike other foreigners, don’t embody another identity. Jews have a common collective identity without any individual features. Mona Körte notes the same for images of the Jews in literature: these images are strongly identifying, but without their own identity (Körte in Bogdal 2007: 61) They represent a negation of any identity.¹⁰ Therefore there are three facets to the structure of the “national semantic”: the we-group (i.e. the Czechs), the they-group (i.e. the Germans) and the “third figure” that undermines principles

⁶ In English in *Judaica Bohemiae* 46, 2011, no. 2. In Czech: Michal Frankl, Jindřich Toman (eds.), *Jan Neruda a Židé. Texty a kontexty*, Praha 2012.

⁷ Hillel J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry. National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia*, New York 1988. In Czech *Formování českého židovstva. Národnostní konflikt a židovská společnost v Čechách 1870–1918*, Praha, Litomyšl 2011. Tomáš Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, Praha 1993, extended ed. 2001. Jiří Kovtun, *Tajuplná vražda. Případ Leopolda Hilsnera*, Praha 1994. Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community. The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*, Ewing 2000. Blanka Soukupová, *Česká společnost před sto lety. Identita, stereotyp, mýtus*, Praha 2000. Ruth Kerstenberg-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern II: Heraus aus der „Gasse“. 1830–1890*, Münster 2002. Michal Frankl, „*Emancipace od Židů*“. *Český antisemitismus na konci 19. století*, Praha 2007.

⁸ Štěpán Pellar, *Hrdí orlí ve smrtelném obklíčení*, Praha 2009, 90.

⁹ Cf. Stefan Glenz, *Judenbilder in der deutschen Literatur. Eine Inhaltsanalyse völkisch-national-konservativer und nationalistischer Romane*, Konstanz 1999. Lucie Uhlíková analyzes ethnic stereotypes of Jews in the Moravian folklore: *Obraz Žida v moravské lidové písni* (dissertation, FF MU, Brno 2003). Štěpán Pellar deals with Polish anti-Jewish stereotypes, see the mentioned work.

¹⁰ Klaus Holz, *Nationaler Antisemitismus. Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung*, Hamburg 2001.



of national identity (Holz 2001). In that sense, perhaps it could be compared to the former stereotypes of Afro-Americans in U.S. culture.¹¹

Let us summarize the historical background issues, with some support from the literature. The economic and civil status of Jews in the Bohemian lands changed. Reforms carried gradually out between 1781 and 1867, brought the total equality of the Jewish minority in the Austrian monarchy. Jews were granted citizenship, they won equality before the law, active and passive suffrage, they could move freely, buy property, and operate any business. The cancelling of sealed ghettos and of the Familiant Act (1848), which only allowed the oldest Jewish son to marry caused a migration of Jewish residents. They were two waves of migration, the first running from the ghettos to rural areas, and the second (in the 1860s), when the Jews migrated to larger cities and industrial centers. Economic liberalism and the market system led to changes in their economic status. Before 1848 Jews were mostly part of the lower class of society. At the end of the century they penetrated the economy to a much greater extent. And in rural and urban areas they often belonged to the upper middle class. Analogous demographic changes took place in Central and Western Europe. Modern nationalism is ambivalent: on the one hand, it seeks to reach to political selfdetermination and freedom, on the other hand it eliminates minorities in the name of national unity. The nationalism forms a collective political identity that culminates in “integral nationalism” with features of totalitarianism (Hegen Schulze). According to Anthony D. Smith the modern nation is a ethno-symbolic society characterized by historical myths. However, national conflicts were specific to the Bohemian lands, similar to Poland for instance.¹² The Austrian laws of the early 19th century mandated German as the language of communication with the authorities, in the education, etc for the Jews. This led the Jews in the Bohemian lands mostly inclined to German culture. However, from the end of the 1860s years, the emancipated Jews, especially in Bohemia (to a lesser extent in Moravia and Austrian Silesia), showed more of an inclination to the Czech language. At the end of 19th century, most of them accepted Czechness. Together with this integration of the Jewish population, many Jews rejected traditional religious rituals. At the end of the 19th century, this process started to conflict with the growing Czech nationalism. The Czech politicians combated German nationalism with anti-semitic rhetoric, with economic competition in the background. Generally, it correlated to the crisis of liberalism in Europe and the transition from the liberal to the ethnic concept of the nation. According to Miroslav Hroch’s classification,¹³ the Czech national movement found itself in a transition in to the third phase, which is the culmination of nationalism in the development of a modern European nation. It was characterized by the concept of a national society as an organic unit and its politicians go efforts to reach out to the masses of the population. Further more, intolerance against real and imagined opponents, constructing an image of the enemy, and offensive militaristic rhetoric began to flourish. According to Shulamit Volkov and other authors (for instance Yehuda Bauer), anti-Semitism is not an outdated superstition, but rather part of the cultural code in European civilization that shapes the national cultural identity. From another point of view, Aleida Assmann distinguishes two modes of recollection and cultural memory: “working memory” (Funktionsgedächtnis) and “stored memory” (Speichergedächtnis). The first one is the active, current status of memory

¹¹ Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies. Black Images and their Influence on Culture*, New York 1994.

¹² Cf. Jiří Kořalka, *Češi v habsburské říši a v Evropě 1815–1914*, Praha 1996, 19 etc.

¹³ Miroslav Hroch, *V národním zájmu. Požadavky a cíle národních hnutí v druhé polovině 19. století*, Praha 1999, 12 etc.



and the second is the wider reservoir of memory. In this sense, we can add, the stored memory contains antisemitic prejudices even today. In contemporary Europe, most of these prejudices are not active, but could be activated.

Czech nationalists launched a campaign against German and Jewish merchants and traders under the slogan “Each to his own” in the 1880s. Czech politicians were unsuccessful in promoting their national political agenda. This led to the use of anti-Semitism as a part of their radical anti-German and anti-Vienna rhetoric. The fact that the Viennese mayor from 1897 to 1910 was the popular anti-Semite Karl Lueger, didn’t bother radical Czech nationalists. The strategy of the newly formed Christian Social Party was based on similar rhetoric. This political party tried to position itself against social democracy, which was internationally oriented and allegedly philosemitic. Also the clerical movement that was mainly in Moravia but also in Bohemia used anti-Semitic arguments. Jews were accused of spreading materialism, liberalism, socialism, Freemasonry and “Talmudic morality” that undermined the traditional morals and authority. At that time, a number of anti-Semitic pamphlets and writings emerged that followed the French and German models (written by Jaromír Hušek, Jan Klecanda, Rudolf Vrba, Karel Adámek). These writings demanded the exclusion of Jewish students in public schools, limiting the scope of Jewish merchants, lawyers, doctors, etc.

In April 1897, the Austrian government led by the Count Kazimierz Badeni declared that civil servants in the Bohemian lands should know both Czech and German. Government business would be conducted in both languages for internal Bohemian affairs. Badeni’s ordinance was seen by German nationalists in Austria as the “provocation”. Their obstructions in the Reichsrat stopped parliamentary operation. Street protest against Badeni’s ordinance erupted in Vienna and other cities, there were often anti-Jewish riots. In November 1897, Emperor Franz Joseph dismissed Badeni. After the fall of Badeni’s government, German nationalists celebrated success and Czechs began to strongly protest. The anti-German riots in Prague and other locations in December 1897 showed anti-Semitism as a political weapon and a part of the Czech national ideology. Jews were attacked, Jewish houses, shops and pubs were destroyed. Anti-Semitism culminated around the time of the trial of Leopold Hilsner who was accused of a ritual murder at the end of the 19th century. Despite these excesses, however, Czech anti-Semitism didn’t reach such intensity as the Polish *endecja* or the anti-Semitic movement in Vienna, not to mention the pogroms in Russia and Romania. Nevertheless, the aggressive Czech anti-Semitism meant a severe blow to Czech-Jewish movement. Some leaders of Czech Jews turned from the liberal Czech party (*mladočeši*, Young Czechs) to T. G. Masaryk’s “realists” or to social democrats; some of them adopted the newly forming Zionism. The development of Czech-Jewish relations brought another milestone during the World War I. The vast majority of Czechs perceived the war against Serbs, Russians and later against Italians as a senseless slaughter. The war with all its negative consequences strengthened Czech resistance to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. On the other hand, Czech Jews held during the war a restrained and to the Austrian government more loyal attitudes. At the end of the war and in the first months of Czechoslovakia in 1918 and 1919 there were anti-Jewish attacks; Jews were often perceived as war speculators and usurers (e.g. the pogrom in Holešov). Hannah Arendt adds an interesting observation for anti-Semitic attitudes. According to her, the Jews were the only social group in Europe, which always gave the impression that it represents the state; therefore every other social group,



which came into conflict with the state rebelled against Jews.¹⁴ Due to this, the Jews in the Ukraine, in Eastern Poland and Lithuania could be considered as bearers of Russification, Jews in the Austrian monarchy, on the contrary, as bearers of Germanization or Magyarization.

This examination of Jewish stereotypes in literary works is not meant to discuss these concrete historical events. They have been documented in fictional world of literary works, in specific literary techniques such as narrative strategies, representations of characters, configurations of style and metaphors (for example, comparing the figures of Jews with animals).¹⁵ Thus, this article differs from most of the literature on this subject (including the aforementioned monographs by Oskar Donath and Alexej Mikulášek). They stayed at “images of the Jews”, in the mere registration or vague, not reflected literary thematology. On the contrary, I will try to demonstrate how these literary configurations used to construct patterns, rituals and ideological emblems. I proceed from the fact that literary works as aesthetic objects (Jan Mukařovský) do not form closed structures. Sense of literary works is transformed within new social and cultural paradigms (Maurice Halbwach’s *cadres sociaux* of collective memory). They are forming different and variable work’s concretizations (Felix Vodička, Wolfgang Iser) in a new cultural framework. So, also negative stereotypes in literature can now be perceived by new way. In the words of contemporary theories of the cultural memory: texts and their interpretations that have been excluded from the official canon, *archives*, or have been marginalized, may now appear as the current space of cultural memory. It is not just about memory represented by literature but also about *the internal memory of literature* (e.g. techniques of style, motifs, characters and genres, their transformations and alternations) and *the literature as memory* (literary narrative as an interpretation of the past).

For instance, figures of the dangerous enemy, and motifs of the prohibited area occur in old fairy tales and epics. These figures and motifs are associated with a: a warning before crossing the (symbolic) border, b: seduction of the enemy, which pretends to act as a friend and helper. They were related to the forgetting and disturbance of memory. The hero was confused, put to sleep or seduced. According to Jan Assmann,¹⁶ these scenes of forgetting were connected with the transformation of living conditions and social circumstances of the society. The old epic works provided readers with a clear division of positive and negative values. In contrast, the confused hero was not in a position to orientate himself. Usually, he saw the light in the end. Similar techniques are used to describe negative stereotypes of the Jews in literature. Aleida Assmann notes that mental images change in the reduced collective memory in static icons. The narrative becomes a myth (Assmann 2006: 40). In contemporary Czech society, the image of the Roma as dangerous rapists and thieves acts as a such negative stereotype icon.

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland, New York 1964, 25.

¹⁵ Cf. Martin Gubser, *Literarischer Antisemitismus. Untersuchungen zu Gustav Freytag und anderen bürgerlichen Schriftstellern des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1998, 309 etc. Mona Körte, Juden in der deutschen Literatur, in: Werner Bergmann, Mona Körte (eds.), *Antisemitismusforschung in den Wissenschaften*, Berlin 2004, 353–374. Mona Körte, Literarischer Antisemitismus, in: Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus III*, Berlin 2010, 195–200.

¹⁶ Jan Assmann, Die Katastrophe des Vergessens. Das Deuteronomium als Paradigma kultureller Mnemotechnik, in: Aleida Assmann, Dietrich Harth (eds.), *Mnemosyne. Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*, Frankfurt a.M. 1991, 345.



We can mention as an example the popular novel *Jak Martin Chlubil bloudil a na pravou cestu opět se vrátil* (1889; *The Story of Martin Chlubil who Wandered Off and Returned to the Right Path*). The author is a Moravian Catholic priest Václav Kosmák. The main character is an honest peasant named Chlubil who, however, is proud of his wealth and cleverness (chlubil=boaster). He attempts to imitate “high educated society” and its habits. For example, he is trying to eat “in the Viennese manner” with a knife and fork even though everyone in his house has always eaten with a spoon. According to the narrator, he makes a fool of himself. Then he decides to put his son in the German secondary school. His son sends him a greeting card for Chlubil’s name-day. It is written in German and nobody in the house can understand it. Chlubil visits his son in the town and finds that his son does not understand the letter; and he can not even speak German, and the greeting to his father was copied from a book.

A dangerous situation arises when some new friends from the town coax Chlubil to become a member of the provincial parliament. He becomes a candidate for the Liberal Party, which is depicted in the novel as an alliance of Germans, Jews and Czech renegades. The party members manipulate voters and get him elected. His patriotic Czech friends turn away from Chlubil but he is still blinded by his winning the election and really becomes the Moravian deputy. He spends a lot of money and his estate declines. Chlubil borrows money from the slick Jew named Štern. The Jew acts subserviently to Chlubil while in fact he really wants to buy Chlubil’s estate and settle in the village with his own relatives. At the last moment, however, Chlubil gets his feet back on the ground. With the help of an honest Czech official he repays his debt to Štern. Chlubil moves his son to the Czech school and resumes farming on his estate.

We can mostly find negative Jewish stereotypes in the character of Štern:

„Před samou sněmovnou vrazil do žida Šterna.

‘Ah, pan poslanec!’ zvolal žid *s chytráckým úsměvem*.’¹⁷

“Chlubil hit the Jew Štern right in front of the House of Commons.

‘Oh, Mr. Deputy!’ the Jew shouted with a *sly smile*.” (stressed by J.H.)

„Štern se svým zetěm Goldschmiedem obskakovali a *lichotili kde komu*.’¹⁸

“Štern fussed over the guests, with his son in law Goldschmied, and *flattered* everyone.” (stressed by J.H.)

Therefore, the narrator’s comments emphasize the hypocrisy of Jews.

„‘Nepotřebujete peněz,’ ptal se *židák* a hleděl *nebohému Chlubilovi* upřeně do očí, jako *had* ptáku, ježž chce pohltnouti.’¹⁹

“Do you not need money? the *kike* asked and stared intently in the *poor man*’s eyes, like a snake at a bird, which he wants to devour.” (stressed by J.H.)

The Jew is stigmatized pejoratively as *židák* (*kike*) and *had* (*snake*), on the other hand, the peasant Chlubil (*poor man*) arouses compassion.

¹⁷ Václav Kosmák, *Jak Martin Chlubil bloudil a na pravou cestu opět se vrátil*, Telč 1889, 229.

¹⁸ Ibid., 336.

¹⁹ Ibid., 296.



„Žid zasyčel cosi po židovsku jako *had*.“
„Was ist? ‘Schlechte G’schäfte.’“²⁰
“The Jew hissed like a *snake*, something in a Jewish manner.”
“‘Was ist? ‘Schlechte G’schäfte.’” (stressed by J.H.)

The Jew and his wife are foreign. They don’t speak Czech. The Jew is compared to a snake, the animal that is the epitome of evil.

„Ale člověče, kam jste dal rozum? Vždyť je to žid?“
‘A není žid člověkem?’ bránil se Chlubil.
‘Je, ale jakým!’ ozval se teď mlynář prudce. ‘Žid v osadě a štika v rybníce, to je jedno.’
‘[...] Vždyť to bylo naší chloubou, že máme farnost bez židů, a teď bychom si jich nasadili sami? To přece nesmí býti!’²¹
“‘Man, where did you put your mind? After all, he’s a Jew!’
‘And isn’t a Jew a man?’
‘He’s a man and what a man he is!’ the miller replied sharply. ‘A Jew in the village and a pike in the pond, it’s the same. [...] We were proud that we have a parish without Jews. Now, we’d let Jews settle in the village? It can never be happen.’”

Chlubil argues that a Jew is a man. The miller, the unambiguously positive character, denies it. He compares the Jew with a pike, a predator that devours other fish. Jews are dangerous and therefore they should be excluded from the community of decent people.

This argument seems to also be the author’s conviction. It does not distinguish between Jews, every Jew is judged negatively. This opinion is not Catholic anti-judaism but racist anti-Semitism. Pride in the village without Jews is reminiscent of Goebbels’ proud report from 1942 that Berlin is *judenrein*.

Another example is the image of anti-Semitic riots in Prague in December 1897 described in Viktor Dyk’s novel, *Prosinec* (1906, December). Viktor Dyk, at that time twenty, was a personal participant in these events. These riots initiated his shift towards Czech Nationalism.²² However, he does not give a one-sided depiction of these events in his novel. Similar to historical reports and later reconstructions,²³ the fictional world of Viktor Dyk’s *Prosinec* describes a procession of German nationalist students in Prague, the beating of one of the German students as a consequence of his attack on a Czech medical student, the vandalizing of Aerenthal’s Palace, the intervention of troops on Wenceslaus Square, and the breaking into of German and Jewish shops. The main characters are some Czech students. Two of them watch the looting of a Jewish liquor shop. The Prague Czech rabble gets drunk and lights fires.

²⁰ Ibid., 351.

²¹ Ibid., 341–342.

²² Cf. Jaroslav Med, *Viktor Dyk*, Praha 1988, 21. Robert Kvaček, *Doba zrání*, in: Josef Tomeš (ed.), *Básník a politik. Sborník z konference k sedmdesátému výročí úmrtí Viktora Dyka*, Praha 2004, 30.

²³ Helena Krejčová, *Pražský prosincový pogrom roku 1897*, in: Jiří Pešek, Václav Ledvinka (eds.), *Ponížení a odstrčení. Města versus katastrofy*, Praha 1998, 73–78.



„Stará štěnice cucala dlouho naši krev. Ať ji vrátí! Abraham ji cucal, Izák ji cucal. Všichni *vyvolení* ji cucali. Posvítím si na starou, přečpanou štěnici. [...] Chceš aby zapálil ti budou, starý zloději?”

Vztek židův vybuchl. ‘Všechno si zapalte! Všechno si vemte!’²⁴

“‘Old bugs have sucked our blood for a very long time. Let it return! Abraham sucked, Isaac sucked. All the *chosen people* have sucked it. I’ll shine on the old stuffed bug. [...] Do you want me to set your stall on fire, old thief?’

The Jew’s rage exploded. ‘Ignite everything! Take everything!’”

After a moment, the two students meet the damaged Jew again. He curses the Czech vandals in German but he shuts up when he sees the Czech students.

„Umlkl opatrně. Ale oči zbabělcovy dovedly se méně ovládnout nežli jeho ústa. Změřil je pohledem utajené nenávisti. A jeho pěsti byly stále zaťaty. [...]

‘Viděl jsi?’ tázal se Hackenschmid, když přešli. ‘Nenávistný chlapík!’

Kopulent pokynul.

Poté mružel chladně: ‘Eh, což; neobtěžujme se sentimentalitami. Neměli nikdy citu pro nás – proč měli bychom jej míti pro ně?’²⁵

“‘The Jew paused warily. But coward’s eyes wasn’t able to control themselves, unlike his mouth. He sizes them up with secret hatred. And his fists were still clenched. [...]

‘Did you see?’ asked Hackenschmid when they passed. ‘A hateful guy!’

Kopulent nodded.

Then he muttered coldly: ‘Oh, we’ll won’t bother with sentimentality. They had never feelings for us – why should we have feelings for them?’”

This scene alone could be a good example of the author’s anti-Semitic attitude. Comparison of Jews with insects, as well as with pigs, had belonged to the Jewish stereotypes since the Middle Ages. It was marked by characteristics such as impurity, risk of infection, odor, and diabolism. The concept of the connection of Jews with the devil appeared soon in the 14th century. The damaged Jew behaves cowardly, he speaks Czech with the vandals but when alone he switches into German. It is obvious he looks hatefully. It can be expected that he will take revenge on them. Neither of the students participate in the looting but, on the other hand, they don’t intervene in the situation and don’t help the innocent Jew. Kopulent refuses to be compassionate with him. He argues, like the Czech nationalist journalists: Jews only seek to make a profit on everything, and they refuse to blend into the Czech nation.

However, the fictional world of Viktor Dyk’s novel is more complex and versatile. Besides the perspectives of Hackenschmid and Kopulent, it also presents the perspective of Hackenschmid’s girlfriend, Julie Vintrová. She takes a different view of the riots:

„Hlouček výrostků, drzých a odhodlaných, napadl židovský krám v těsné blízkosti slečny Vintrový. Mohla sledovati výjev, který ji dovedl pobouřiti.

[...] Zástup rozbil okno u výkladu i dveří, vnikl do vnitřku obchodu a tam počal drancovati. Obchodník chtěl se hájiti, ale vida přesilu, couvl raději. Tiše, bez hluku počal dav, zatím posílený zvenčí, drancovati krám. Jedni brali uvnitř balíky s látkami a zbožím a

²⁴ Viktor Dyk, *Prosinec*, edited by A. Grund, Praha 1940, 308.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 311–312.



podávali je svým nejbližším sousedům. Z ruky do ruky kolovala kořist. Všecko se dalo v největší rychlosti a v nejúplnějším pořádku.

[...] Nezvyklá živost v pohybech charakterizovala zástup. Jeho ostražitost, vynucená možným nebezpečím, se stupňovala. [...] Bylo to ohyždné...²⁶

“A crowd of teenagers, brash and determined, attacked the Jewish trade close to Miss Vintrová. She could watch the scene which filled her with indignation.

[...] The mob broke the shop window and the door window, burst in and began raiding. The seller wanted to defend his shop but saw a superior force and rather retreated. The crowd, reinforced from outside, began raiding the shop quietly, without noise. Some of them picked up packages with goods and fabrics from inside and handed them over to their nearest neighbors. Booty circulated from hand to hand. Everything was done at top speed and organization.

[...] The crowd was characterized by the unusual liveliness in its movements. Forced by possible dangers, its vigilance escalated. It was ugly.”

Anti-Semitic stereotypes do not feature here. The Jewish shopkeeper is not cowardly, he just retreats from superiority in numbers. The looting crowd is reminiscent of a gang of professional thieves who use the opportunity to plunder. Julie is outraged by this behavior. She refuses to attach the national flag to her clothes. Jan Assmann's definition of cultural memory can be mentioned here. It is also realized in symbolic forms like rituals, clothing, and tattoos²⁷ all of this forms the social identity. The Czech national flag is undoubtedly one of these forms.

Kopulent apologizes for the vandalism in the following dialogue with her. He claims that “it is the war” and that the riots against Germans and Jews were caused by the long-standing oppression of the Czech nation. Kopulent distorts the relationship between victims and attackers; so he legitimizes the persecution of the Jews. He argues that the Czechs are not enemies of the Jews but Jewish “betrayal” (of the Czechs to the Germans) justifies the Czech “defend” against them. Julie disagrees with his argument. She breaks up with him. The fictional world of the novel *Prosinec* is broader than the figures of the anti-Semitic rhetoric at that time. According to Aleida Assmann, the Kosmák's novel presents “das nationale Gedächtnis” or rather “das politische Gedächtnis” (the national memory or the political memory) characterized by a radical simplification, normativity, collective rituals and construction of myths. On the contrary, the Dyk's novel presents “das kulturelle Gedächtnis” (the cultural memory), a plurality of meanings in texts and images.²⁸

Negative stereotypes of Jews have a long tradition in the European literature. Christopher Marlowe presented the demonic, villain Barabas in his drama *The Jew of Malta* (1589 or 1590). This figure probably inspired another heartless Jewish moneylender Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1600).²⁹ Jews were often described as repulsive

²⁶ Ibid., 290–294.

²⁷ Jan Assmann, op. cit., 343.

²⁸ Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*, München 2006, 40–58.

²⁹ The figure of Shylock is not only the image of a heartless usurer and revenger. See for instance the following studies: Anat Feinberg-Jütte: „Shylock“, in: Julius H. Schoeps, Joachim Schlör (eds.), *Antisemitismus. Vorurteile und Mythen*. München 1996, 119–126. Janusz Bodek: Fassbinder ist nicht Shakespeare, Shylock kein Überlebender des Holocaust, in: Klaus-Michael Bogdal, Klaus Holz, Matthias N. Lorenz (eds.), *Literarischer*



(hooked noses, bright wigs and red hair) and were usually depicted as avaricious usurers. Such Jewish figures are also depicted in the novels of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1838), Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (Debit and Credit, 1855) and Wilhelm Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor* (The Hungry Pastor, 1864). The characters are clearly divided in these works. The treacherous, greedy and heartless Jew on the one hand, and the honest and naive positive heroes on the other hand.³⁰ Such contrasts could also be found also in Czech novels. The opposites could be presented as religious (the Jew vs. the Christian; mainly the Catholic), as national (the Jew, mainly the Germanized Jew vs. the Czech), as social (the Jew vs. the working man) and especially moral (the Jew vs. the moral man). There are more of these schematic contrasts manifested in most of Czech novels, to be discussed. These five works written by well-known authors are Antal Stašek's *V temných vírech* (In Dark Whirls, 1900), Alois and Vilém Mrštík's *Rok na vsi* (One Year in the Village, 1903–1904), the fifth part of the series *Naši* (Our People) called *Adamova svatba* (Adam's Wedding, 1907–1908) by Josef Holeček, Jindřich Šimon Baar's *Jan Cimbura* (Jan Cimbura, 1908), Božena Benešová' *Člověk* (The Man, 1919–1920) and Vlasta Pittnerová' *Čtvery děti* (Four Sets of Children, 1922). This selection includes the authors of various aesthetic orientation; conservative, regional, Catholic, as well as leftist social. An attempt will be made to identify significant motifs, narrative strategies and configurations of style where anti-Semitic stereotypes become evident.

The first is physical appearance of Jews adversely different from other characters. They are visual stereotypes of hair color, shape of the face, especially the nose and lips, flatfeet and hunched stature. Generally, the male characters manifest a lack of manliness. Kohn from *Borová* in *Rok na vsi* has a face with an indented, leaky nose. Maxl Katz, another Jew in this novel, is described as follows:

„Na kratičkých nohách viselo veliké břicho, tvořic s širokou hrudí jeden beztvary špalek. Na krátkém býčím krku seděla hranatá hlava s tváří neholenou, vlasy štětinatými a vousy jak beraní černá vlna.“³¹

“His big stomach hung on very short legs. His stomach and broad chest formed a shapeless block. His square head and unshaven face sat on his short bull neck. His hair was bristly and his beard like black ram's wool.”

Holeček's Jewish character Lepoldka (in *Adamova svatba*) has sparse teeth and a false face that tries to be friendly. He looks uncomfortable even as a boy:

„Měl velikou hlavu na dlouhém a tenkém krku; tvář smědou a pihami hustě skropenou; nosík se křivil skobičkou, dolní pysk se odvaloval; vlasy byly černé, hrubé a husté, přehusté, ruce dlouhé a veliké.“³²

“He had a big head on a long and thin neck. His face was tanned and covered with abundant freckles. His little nose was curved like a hook, his lower lip rolled down; his hair was black, coarse and dense, very dense and his arms were big and long.”

Antisemitismus nach Auschwitz. Stuttgart, Weimar 2007, mainly 185–190.

³⁰ Martin Gubser indicates this division as Manichaeism, a moral dualism with simplistic choice between good and evil. Cf. footnote 15.

³¹ Alois Mrštík, Vilém Mrštík, *Rok na vsi II*, ed. V. Válek, Brno 2011, 327.

³² Josef Holeček, *Naši. Adamova svatba I*, Praha 1930, 232.



In addition to the Jew's physical deficiencies, their dwellings are depicted as dirty, similar to animals' lairs. As well, as previously mentioned, the Jews are frequently compared to animals. It is often a snake (evil), a fox (cunning) or predators (aggression). In *Rok na vsi*, the Jew appears at the same level with the dog and cat.

„Před domy vyhřívají se psi, u starostů macek se čistil, prackou si přičesává bílou hlavu, ba i ten žid vystrčil soví hlavu [...]“³³

“Dogs basked in the sun in front of houses, the chairman's tomcat cleaned himself, he brushed his white head with his paw. Even the Jew showed his owlish head [...]”

The character Silbermann in the novel *Člověk* (published about later than most of other works) belongs to the second generation of Jews, which are the children of the poor Jewish outcasts who had become rich. He is refined and sophisticated, he boasts that he looks like the famous Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen. But his reddish hair is a part of the traditional stereotypical images of the Jews (an allusion to the scarlet beast from the Apocalypse). This can be compared to the figure of Fagin in Charles Dickens (*Oliver Twist*) or the banker Türkheimer in Heinrich Mann (*Im Schlaraffenland; The Land of Cockaigne*).

Other types of Jewish parvenus are figures from the novel *V temných vírech* written by Antal Stašek. They have flashy expensive clothes and precious rings.

The second significant negative stereotype is the Jewish manner of speech. Although they are very eloquent, they distort Czech, prefer German or Yiddish, and speak with a foreign accent.

„Matka Sára přinesla lampu, syn jí pověděl něco o Lasici a něco přidal cizím jazykem.“³⁴

“Mother Sarah brought a lamp, her son told her something about Lasice and added something in a foreign language.”

„Ke slovu se přihlásil Kranich. [...] ale maušloval, když mluvil v rozčilení neb v strojené afektaci. Byl v tom podoben semitským divadelním hercům...“³⁵

“Kranich asked to speak. [...] his speech was muddled by his heavy Yiddish accent when he spoke in anger or in unnatural manner of speaking. It was like Semitic theater actors...”

Silbermann deviates from the other figures again. He speaks Czech correctly but while his speeches are spectacular, they are empty and idle. Silbermann's manner of speaking also shows the third stereotype, namely the lack of creativity among the Jews. For instance, according to Richard Wagner and Jan Neruda, the Jews do not constitute original values, they only mimic skillfully. This imitation is a part of Jewish behavior which should be as a third stereotype revealed.

³³ Alois Mrštík, Vilém Mrštík, op. cit., 82.

³⁴ Josef Holeček, op. cit., 290.

³⁵ Antal Stašek, *V temných vírech*, Praha 1974, 484.



„Silbermannův vkus nebyl ani dost málo osobní, zato vždy podřízen vzorům nejlepšímu a poslední londýnská móda projevovala se nejen jeho kapesníky, ale do jakési míry i jeho slovníkem [...].“³⁶

“Silbermann’s taste was not in the least bit individual but it always followed the best styles. London fashion was manifested not only in his handkerchiefs but, to some extent, in his vocabulary as well [...].”

The fourth stereotype is connected to a traditional character of the Czech novels about village life: the Jew peddler as a comic figure. This character appears in Holeček (uncle Samek from Pištín) and in Mrštík’s *Rok na vsi* in the figure of the old “Ahasver”. In one scene of this novel, the comic situation turns into callous mockery.

„Hlásný bubnoval. Lidé vybíhali [...].

Žid ztratil kůžky od kůzlat a prosí, kdo je našel, aby je hned přinesl k panu starostovi.

Žid sám stál před radnicí a pysky tak se mu třásly – jak bědoval nad svými kůžkami. Měl pytel děravý, založený jen šátkem. Vylezly mu a ztratil je.

Ubohý žid!

Lidé se smíchem vraceli se k teplé večeři.“³⁷

“The watcher drummed. The people came out. [...]

The Jew lost some baby goat skins and asked to bring them, whoever had found them, to the village chairman. The Jew stood alone in front of village office and his lips trembled. He lamented over his lost skins. His bag had holes plugged just with a scarf. The skins had fallen out and were lost.

The poor Jew!

The people laughed and went back to their warm diner.”

Here it also seen that these Jews, like the old “Ahasver”, while not perceived as an enemy, are considered to be foreign. Actually, they are discriminated against mainstream society.

In general, almost all Jews in these novels are crafty, cunning and immoral. Immoral and dishonest manners are the fifth and the most frequent stereotype. They find expression in hypocrisy, servility and flattery, however, this Jewish behaviour is revealed by the narrator. It is done directly through the author’s evaluation and comment, or indirectly, through confrontation of the false and the true nature of the Jewish characters.

„Má úcta, pantáto, má úcta, panímámo, pojd’te dál, můj krám si prohlédněte, za troník zboží koupit nemusíte, zadarmo vám kalíšek likéru pro zahřátí naliju, zadarmo kornoutek cukroví pro dětičky přidám.’ Marné lákání, marné sliby. [...]

Ale nezdar neodstrašuje pana Salomona. ‘Mlčte a mějte strpení,’ napomíná svoje pomocnice, ‘jen až přijdou páni partafýři, poleze k nám, ta pakáž selská, hloupá a my je ožralé a oškubané dohola budeme vyhazovat.’“³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 355.

³⁷ Alois Mrštík, Vilém Mrštík, op. cit., 56.

³⁸ Jindřich Šimon Baar, *Jan Cimburá*, Praha 1985, 329–331.



“My deep respect, my dear Sir, my deep respect, my dear Madam. Come in, see my shop, you needn't buy any goods even for a penny, I'll pour you a warmer-upper free, I'll add some candy for your sweet children.' Vain enticement, vain promises. [...]

However, Mr. Salomon doesn't balk at his failure. 'Be silent and be patient,' he admonishes his helper. 'Soon as the foremen from the work teams come, this stupid peasant scum will crawl to reach us. They'll be pissed and completely fleeced and we'll throw them out.'”

„... pověděla panímámě o zamýšlené škrobárně, do jejíž výstavby hodlal Lustig Netočila vychytrale zatáhnout...“³⁹

“She told to her mother in law about an intended starch factory. Lustig cunningly wanted to involve Netočil in this project.”

The content of a dialogue between two women is here reproduced. But the word “cunningly” is not part of their talk. It is the narrator who assesses the plan of Lustig and indicates a potential problem for Netočil. Later, that actually occurs actually and Netočil loses most of his possessions. So a pact is then formed between the narrator and the reader. The reader knows about negative Jewish stereotypes and after this allusion expects Lustig will behave according these stereotypes.

The Jewish common collective identity without any individual features is also manifested also in their heartless materialism. They perceive human relations, especially love, from the perspective of profit and money.

„Láska je sice krásná věc, ale lepší jsou peníze bez lásky než láska bez peněz.“⁴⁰

“While love is a beautiful thing, money without love is better than love without money.”

This statement by the Jewish figure Lustig is denounced by the narrator as immoral and shameful.

This narrative technique is very simple. They closely resemble the procedures of trivial literature. The conflict is more interesting when the naivety of the villagers that are not used for financial transactions clashes with the clever Jews, accustomed to market operations for generations. The conflict of opposing mentalities is often depicted as a contrast of a right and a wrong morality. The original situation is described as idyllic. It changes with the arrival of Jews who cause moral destruction. They threaten the traditional values of the rural communities. Therefore, the image of the Jews continues the old tradition, the image of the enemy, an intruder who comes to rob and to destroy.

„Bývaly časy, kdy Habrůvka byla jako jednou dobrou a ctnostnou rodinou. [...] Židovský a polopanský vkus, zahnízdív se dříve v městech, přešel jako mor i na lid venkovský. [...] Městská rozmařilost, militarismus, nevěstky, továrny, sešlost morálky, tupá indolence i k otroctví [...]. Krevní choroby nosí do Habrůvky vojáci, nemanželské děti ze židovských služeb děvčata, nestrávené a až k pláči zpitomělé ideje nosí z Brna dělníci a

³⁹ Vlasta Pittnerová, *Čtvery děti*, Třebíč 1999, 145.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 116.



tak zvaná židovská morálka všemu tomu dodává teprv křenu. Jásá Izrael. Vždyť v mravním úpadku lidu odjakživa spočívala i vítězná síla jeho rasy.“⁴¹

“There was a time, when the village Habrůvka was one good and virtuous family. [...] Jewish and half-lordly manners that had settled in cities first, then came to the village like a plague on rural people. [...] Municipal wastefulness, militarism, harlots, factories, the decline of morality, dull indolence even to slavery. [...] Soldiers carry blood diseases to Habrůvka. Our girls employed by Jews come back with illegitimate children and our workers come back from Brno with such pathetic stupid and stodgy ideas that we have to cry. The so called Jewish morality is the last straw. Israel rejoices. After all, the victorious power of its race always consisted of the moral decline of the other people.”

In these comments from the narrator in *Rok na vsi*, schematic stereotypes of Jews change over/to preaching racial anti-Semitism. The parish priest from Habrůvka, a philanthropist who helps and protects the villagers, believes in ritual murders. He explains the contemporary decline of moral as a consequence of Jewish influence:

„Víte-li pak, pane fořt, že v Holešově se přihodila zas nová rituální vražda?”

‘Taky jsem četl. Stálo to ve Weltblattu.’

‘Dva židi jsou už v soudním vyšetřování a mluvíte si, co chcete – já tomu věřím,’ d’ubal pan farář špicí své hole do měkkého chodníku. ‘Talmud je talmud, a tuhle na říšské radě dobře jim to tam jeden z talmudu vysypal [...]’

‘V pravdě, je tomu tak.’⁴²

“Do you know, Mr. Forest Ranger, a new ritual murder has happened again, in Holešov?”

‘I read it too. It was in Weltblatt.’

‘Two Jews are going to be under judicial investigation soon. Say, what you want, I believe it.’ The priest tapped into the squashy pavement with the tip of his cane. The Talmud is the Talmud, and recently, one deputy put it very well in his position in the Reichsrat [...]’

‘Indeed, it is so.’”

The other representant of the local intellectuals, a teacher, does not share this attitude. However, the priest is a very authoritative figure and the narrator holds a similar view.⁴³ The priest’s opinions echo the clerical antisemitism, that was spread in the Bohemian Lands by the popular booklet *Der Talmudjude* (1871) written by the professor of the Faculty of Theology in Prague August Rohling. According to Rohling, the Jews are allowed to treat “uncircumcised” as if they were subhuman, according to an alleged commandment in the Talmud. They can rob, cheat and swear falsely against them and they may ritually kill them. Jews plotted liberal and socialist movements and the international Jewish conspiracy strove to destroy the Christian world. Even though these falsifications were disproved, they provoked a great response throughout Europe and especially in Austria-Hungary.

⁴¹ Alois Mrštík, Vilém Mrštík, op. cit., 482–483.

⁴² Ibid., 466.

⁴³ See Vilém Mrštík’s anti-Semitic article *Semitismus – jezuitismus* (Semitism – Jesuitism) from 1901, in his *Moje sny. Pia desideria II* (1903, *My Dreams: Pia desideria II*). The fight against Jews is here as a fight against evil and obscurantism depicted. Jews are imbued with the spirit of the Talmud that preaches hatred against Christians. Jews are secretly organized with the help of international usurers.



The idea of a Jewish conspiracy originated in the Middle Ages in connection with the myth of ritual murder. It can be identified as the sixth negative Jewish stereotype. At the end of the 19th century, it usually emerged only in a cheap trashy literature, for instance in Eduard Rüffer's *Spiknutí židů v Praze, 1873, The Jewish Conspiracy in Prague*). Surprisingly, however, it is also found in the novel Antal Stašek's *V temných vírech* (*In Dark Whirls*). Stašek was a leftist socially oriented author, his wife had Jewish roots. Nevertheless, one episode of his novel documents a specific anti-Semitism. The narrator presents an association of Jewish businessmen named the Alliance israélite, which aims to dominate the world of business, politics and the press. Jews offer help and money to prominent industrialists on the condition that they will fight against anti-Semitism. Their main objective is to destroy the social democrats and anarchists, which have to be locked up or sent the mental hospitals.

„Sdružení, jež mne sem vyslalo, slibuje vašim šlechetným snahám vydatnou pomoc, když do svého programu postavíte nejen boj proti socialismu a anarchismu, ale když vypovíte válku všelikému antisemitismu.

Myslím, že to nebude neskutčné... Víte, pánové, v jakých poměrech jsme k trůnům a k oltářům. Je vám známo, že trůny a oltáře jsou naše... to jest... pardon nesprávně jsem se vyjádřil... že trůny a oltáře jsou našimi přáteli a příznivci... [...] Máme stejné cíle, máme stejné nepřátele... Nuže, spojme se i stejným programem, stejnou taktikou [...]. Jen pod tou podmínkou slibuji vám jménem evropského židovstva pomocnou ruku a především peníze...”⁴⁴

“The alliance that sent me here promises to help your noble efforts copiously, if you not only put the fight against socialism and anarchism in your programme, but if you also declare war on anti-Semitism all kinds.

I think, it will be not difficult... Gentlemen, you know what our relationship is with thrones and churches. You are aware that thrones and churches are ours... that is... sorry I expressed that incorrectly... thrones and churches are our friends and supporters... [...] We have the same goals, we have the same enemies... Come, join forces with the same programme, with the same tactics too [...]. Only under that condition, I promise you on behalf of European Jewry a helping hand, and particularly money...”

On the one hand, this scene is a part of the left-wing anti-Semitic rhetoric, as is already known from Proudhon, Bakunin and the young Marx.⁴⁵ Jews and Jewish capital are attacked here because they are bearers of the usurer's mentality. On the other hand, the idea of a Jewish conspiracy appears here. According to Oskar Donath, the association, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which has been mentioned, existed in fact, but it had a completely different role. It worked quite apolitically. It founded schools and helped persecuted Jews in Galicia, Romania and elsewhere. Nevertheless, this organization emerged frequently as an argument for anti-Semitic propaganda. So Jan Klecanda and Karel Adámek accused the Alliance Israélite Universelle of being a Jewish conspiracy. Paradoxically, Rohling also blamed the Jews for the fact they stick by the Socialist International (reminiscent of the later

⁴⁴ Antal Stašek, op. cit., 484–485.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx and later Vilém Mrštík both talk about the Jewish jesuitism. In his article *Zur Judenfrage* (edited 1844), Marx formulated that the secular basis of Judaism are practical need, greed for money and gimmicks (Schacher). After all, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from the Jewery. Jan Neruda could have been inspired by these formulations of Marx in his pamphlet *Pro strach židovský* (1870, *Due to Fear of Jews*).



Nazi constructions “Jewish Bolsheviks connected with plutocrats”.) Jewish conspiracy is a basic anti-Jewish stereotype. It offers a simplified and clear picture of the reality, it constructs a demonic, treacherous and slippery enemy. At the same time, it legitimizes anti-Semitic attacks as a righteous defense. Dissemination of these phantasmagoria was caused also by the (apparent) mystery of Jewish religion. At the end of the 19th century, an average Christian knew almost nothing about the Talmud or Jewish rituals. Actually, this stereotype was a negative of the romantic mysterious Jewish characters (in the Czech literature by K. H. Mácha).

The repertoire of stereotypes has to be completed with one other type. The eighth negative stereotype is Jewish sexual debauchery. Even if it is not effectively evidenced,⁴⁶ it can often be found in picturesque images of a lecherous Jew or *la belle juive*, beautiful but reprobated Jewess.⁴⁷ They come from the late medieval Christian images of Jews (Orientals) as devils or devils’ allies.⁴⁸ Jewish sensuality also played a role in the myth of ritual murder. In the novels at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, this Jewish debauchery was often contrasted with virginal purity and innocence of rural Czech girls and boys.

„...spatřil opravdu člověka, v upjatém kabátě a v širokém klobouku, jenž se liščími kroky blížil ke kříži. [...] Cyrila až zarazila jeho samčí a nestoudná tvář, tím odpornější při krůčcích svědčících o největší opatrnosti.

‘Čekáš už na čokoládu?’ zašeptal u samého plotu. [...] nevysoká bosá dívka vyšla tanečním krokem na louku. Krátká sukně se lehounce rozvála poskoky téměř dětskými.

‘Až půjdeš ke mně sloužit, každý den ti koupím bonbony,’ šeptal Silbermann. ‘Ve Vídni užiješ cukrovího víc než tady suchýho chleba.’⁴⁹

“Really, he saw the man in a tight coat and wide hat that walked to the cross in fox steps. [...] Cyril was perplexed by his masculine and shameless face. It was even nastier, because the man walked most carefully.

‘Already, you are waiting for chocolate?’ he whispered close to the fence. [...] a small girl came to the meadow in dancing steps. Her short skirt lightly flew up when she bounced innocently.

‘Once you are in my service, I’ll buy you sweets every day,’ Silbermann whispered. ‘In Vienna you’ll enjoy sweet things, you’ll get them more than you get dry bread here.’”

This quotation from the novel *Člověk* (The Man), written by Božena Benešová, is reminiscent formula of trashy literature. The Jew Silbermann, which is outwardly a member of the social elite, is in fact a cynical, immoral and depraved man. In the novel he is an opponent of the honest and moral Czech musician Cyril Trojan.⁵⁰ F. X. Šalda, who critiqued

⁴⁶ According to historical sources, prostitution and extramarital relations were much less frequent in Jewish communities. See Zdeněk Hojda et al., op. cit.

⁴⁷ Livia Bitton-Jackson, *Madonna or Courtesan? The Jewish Woman in Christian Literature*, New York 1982. Florian Krobb, *Die schöne Judin. Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Tübingen 1993.

⁴⁸ Czech, Slovak, Polish and German folk proverbs used often synonymously expressions devil and the Jew. Cf. Marta Toncrová, Lucie Uhlíková, *Svůj je svůj, cizí je cizí: Lidová rčení, pořekadla a přísloví ve světle etnických stereotypů*, *Český lid* 87, 2000, no 2, 99.

⁴⁹ Božena Benešová, *Člověk*, Praha 1957, 147–148.

⁵⁰ See the mentioned moral dualism with simplistic choice between good and evil, cf. footnote 15.



the novel, wrote about this character: “This Jew Silbermann looks like he escaped from a cheap inferior novel. A lecher who seduces fourteen year old girls, a master of masks and disguises, sometimes a dirty little trader from the village in Moravian Slovakia, sometimes an artistic dilettante in Vienna and a social magnate.”⁵¹ Šalda’s opinion was isolated at the time, other critic’s responses were completely positive. In 1921, the novel *Člověk* was awarded the Czechoslovak State Prize. British critic Robert B. Pynsent didn’t notice this anti-Jewish stereotype until the 1990s.

The novels by the Mrštík brothers, Holeček, Baar and Benešová present direct conflicts between the majority of Czechs and or Moravians and the treacherous Jews. Jews are always intruders and attackers. They seek to get hold of possession property and land in immoral ways, and to seduce innocent girls. Their opponents are mostly members of the middle and lower middle class, farmers, cottagers, artisans, tradesmen and poorer intellectuals. They are the ones who were the people to which anti-Semitic rhetoric was focused. In some cases the plot ends with the Jews getting rich, and in other cases they are shunned and forced to leave the village. For instance, in Baar’s novel the shunning the Jews and running them out of causes the return of the original idyllic state in the village. It becomes “virginal” again.

„To jsem rád, zase je osada naše panenskou.’

‘Jak to myslíte?’

‘Je osadou, na které není žida.’⁵²

“‘I’m glad that our village is virginal again.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘It’s a settlement there isn’t any Jew’.”

Jewish characters had a peripheral position in the above-mentioned novels. So they were excluded from the majority of the community from the beginning. Differences between the old Czech residents who embody traditional moral values and the Jewish intruders with their low morals cause dramatic conflicts. Sometimes the Jews win, but sometimes they are and část out of the community. Purity and ethnic homogeneity of the original Czech community is so confirmed.

All these stereotypes are related to the ancient tradition in different ways. But they also anticipate a new, racial type of anti-Semitism that culminated in the Nazi ideology.

⁵¹ F. X. Šalda, Božena Benešová, *Šaldův zápisník* 8, 1935–1936 (reprint 1994), 278.

⁵² Jindřich Šimon Baar, op. cit., 337.