

The Absence of Female Jewish Characters on the Post-war English Stage: Thesis and  
Three Plays

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines representations of Jewish women on the British stage from 1945 to the present. I interrogate the lack of varied and realistic Jewish women characters in the canon and discuss this in relationship to my own published and performed plays.

The absence of Jewish women in British modern theatre is explored historically and as a phenomenon influenced by both Christian and Jewish traditions. My research probes how stereotypes from Christian medieval tropes have been transformed and re-awoken, particularly since the 1980s, and how this has impacted the representation of Jewish women.

I highlight the importance of Yiddish theatre as a dynamic space where Jewish women's representation broke the rule of exclusion from public performance and offered a variety of complicated and complex roles on the international stage. The thesis examines the post-war loss of Yiddish theatre and the Yiddish language, and the subsequent effect on the development of Jewish female dramatic characterisation onstage. I reveal the vacuum left with the death of Yiddish, and how with the destruction of the language and culture, the representation of a variety of Jewish women's roles, created by the Yiddishists, was forgotten and lost to subsequent generations.

Post-war playwrights are discussed to explore modern female Jewish characters that have been produced for the English stage. The creation of Anne Frank, as a dramatic figure, is examined to understand how the adaptation of her diary impacts on the representation of Jewish women.

My contribution as a practitioner is revealed within the larger framework of the British cultural and political environments. I examine why there is this absence of Jewish female characters in British modern drama and reveal my own attempts to challenge this and to open up the experience of being a Jewish woman in its many facets and theatrical manifestations.

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## **List of Accompanying Material**

- 1 Professional Portfolio

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I dedicate this doctorate to the memory of my aunt, Edith Newman, and to my grandmother, Esther Jacobs. It was she who taught me that *education is never too heavy to carry around*.

## **Author's Declaration**

I confirm that all the work submitted in this thesis is my own and that it has not been submitted for examination at this, or any other institution, for any other awards. All sources are acknowledged as references.

## Part One: Thesis

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## ***Chapter One: A Personal Hinterland***

### **Resonances from pogrom to Shoah and beyond**

My thesis explores the presence and absence of Jewish women characters on the English stage from 1945 to the present day. It reflects on the characters in my thesis plays of Judith, Anna and Louise in *Woman On The Bridge*, Rina in *12-37* and Joan and Sarah in *Next Stop Paradise*. To examine this presence and absence, I shall be referring to the canon of twentieth-century post-war English drama, and my own work within it as a female British Jewish playwright. My identity, is what Freud called ‘a godless Jew’.<sup>1</sup> I was born in England and yet being inflected by a profound sense of being more European than English, gives my work a particularity and moves it from the mainstream. The majority of my texts nearly always have a historical, rather than a contemporary impulse, and that history is often inspired by war, exile and trauma. I am in the conflicted position of being, in some respects, considered both as established and, at the same time, marginal. Research leads me to realise that this is because my themes, mainly the exploration of Jewish history and Jewish women, appear to be peripheral to the zeitgeist and therefore to current repertoires.

I have read the body of women playwrights producing dramas from the post-war period, as well as having explored the work of younger dramatists producing dramas from 2012 to the present and find, that, apart from gender, we British women playwrights, have little in common. This is because my texts have been fuelled by a European, feminist, Jewish experience and, after much research, I believe that I am the sole UK author representing this particular combination of perspectives. Most of my work is located in the dramatic representation of post-Shoah experience, through women’s eyes. If this locus hardly exists in contemporary British theatre, its dynamism is present in the work of continental European and American feminist Holocaust scholars and dramatists. Here I find synergy.

For the purpose of this thesis, my definition of ‘contemporary’ covers the wide span of 1945–2016, but will also include dramas produced in the thesis period 2012–2016. As this paper focuses on the absence and presence of Jewish women characters in the post-war period, and is framed also by feminist historians and critics, the elasticity of this time-frame is vital. I believe that this is the most fruitful way to chart cultural movements, especially as critical examination of women’s experience in the Shoah did not start until the 1990s; for this reason the paper is looking at a wave that defies being constrained into the thesis period of 2012–2016.

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<sup>1</sup>See <http://www.hagalil.com/archiv/2008/11/freud-e.htm> accessed 17 July 2016. See Peter Gay’s *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).



It is also important to contextualise my dramas within the new body of critical writing, which I shall discuss in this paper, and which is still emerging from the children of those whose families died in the Holocaust.

The academics that I shall investigate share generational, thematic and intellectual connections with creative artists. I believe that our work, although operating in separate fields, can provide a fruitful exchange. Most of us were born between 1945 and 1955 and, as the daughters of the Shoah experience, our shared concerns are with memory, exile, war, trauma and women's narratives. Our sources are similarly inspired by fragmented family histories, but our development of this material is mostly filtered through different genres.<sup>2</sup> I situate myself in this body of writers, described by the writer Eva Hoffman, in an interview with *The New York Times*, as 'the hinge generation'.<sup>3</sup> She refers to those of us whose parents were survivors of the Shoah as the transmitters of that shadow. I feel part of the sisterhood that is Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch and Hoffman. My kinship with stage writers is with contemporary Black British women playwrights who share similar explorations of double heritage, double language and a sense of exile from the mainstream.

Later in this thesis, in order to offer context, I shall describe particular aspects of my own family history. Even though my parents were in the UK, and therefore physically safer than their murdered cousins in Eastern Europe, I wish to show how growing up as a post-war Jew has inflected my work. My discovery during this period of study and reflection has been that my writing is situated more within the context of the academics and historians of my generation than any post-war or younger British woman playwright, apart from those who carry other heritages such as the Black playwrights I will describe later in this chapter. With them I share impulses provoked by a double acculturation.

Although Roland Barthes' 1967 paper *The Death Of The Author* negates the importance of a writer's biography on the work itself, I argue that my biography is one of the keys to an understanding of my work.<sup>4</sup>

In reaction to Barthes' thesis there has been a counter- movement that welcomes personal testimony. Carol Hanisch's seminal 1969 thesis *The Personal Is Political* might be seen as a

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<sup>2</sup> However there is occasional crossover. Eva Hoffman who is best known for her memoir *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language* (London: Vintage, 2008). has written *The Ceremony*, a drama about the 1941 massacre of Jews by Catholic Poles in the town of Jedwabne. *The Ceremony* had a staged reading in 2003 at the Soho Theatre and at the West London Synagogue in 2014.

<sup>3</sup> See [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/18/books/a-prisoner-of-memory.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/18/books/a-prisoner-of-memory.html?_r=0) accessed 15 July 2016.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PersonalisPol.pdf> accessed 12 June 2016. Roland Barthes *The Death Of The Author* translated by Richard Howard. See [http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/death\\_authorbarthes.pdf](http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/death_authorbarthes.pdf) accessed 10 June 2016.

feminist challenge to Barthes' theory.<sup>5</sup> As Burke concedes 'The return of the author does not reopen the closed-casket of his death. The author can be at once both dead and alive'.<sup>6</sup> My work is not autobiographical or laden with personal detail, but it is driven by interviews and decades of meetings with East European and Middle European Jews and gentiles which inform characterisation. At times it has seemed that I have been talking to those directly destined for extermination as children or young people in Nazi-occupied Europe. Some have been concentration camp survivors or ghetto escapees. Therefore, the texts need an awareness and knowledge of this history to absorb the multi-layering inherent in the dramaturgy. The impact of what happened to my parents' generation that was transmitted to me as one of that hinge generation described by Hoffman along with the destruction of European Jewry, as well as the destruction of Europe, has tinged every text, either directly or indirectly.

Other writers within this hinge generation with whom I have found powerful connections are the American radical feminist Andrea Dworkin, French historian Nadine Fresco and Romanian-born, American academic, Marianne Hirsch.<sup>7</sup> As well as Hoffman, these three authors explore Jewish history, through the lens of the personal and the political. They also bring a feminist awareness to their research that resonates with my own practice, and our research has a psychological interrogation of this history. In his *New York Times* review of Hoffman's book *After Such Knowledge*, James E. Young writes that 'Hoffman is properly sceptical of the notion that actual trauma can be transmitted across the generations. "For who, after all, wants to think of oneself as traumatized by one's very parentage, as having drunk victimhood, so to speak, with one's mother's milk?" What then is being passed down to her generation? Not the violent events, but the condition of the survivors' wounded psyches'.<sup>8</sup> Indeed it is this condition, this low-level flow of constant anxiety that is transmitted from parent to child and it is also complicated by a Jewish feminist awareness that encourages our exposure of forgotten or neglected female experience within the narratives we hear. It is the commonality of our fascination with this European history and Jewish feminism, expressed in the writings of Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch and Hoffman, that allows me to see where my work sits. That they are academics and that I am a playwright is unimportant to me. It is not our chosen medium that divides us but our chosen material that unites us.

Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch and Hoffman share approaches that are both personal and academic. Hirsch, whose parents 'fled to the Americas with false papers or passports' writes that 'I now see that along with other feminist colleagues, I turned to the study of memory out of the

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PersonalisPol.pdf> accessed 12 June 2016.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>7</sup> Dworkin lived 1948–2005. Fresco's actual age is not available. Hirsch was born in 1949.

<sup>8</sup> See [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/18/books/a-prisoner-of-memory.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/18/books/a-prisoner-of-memory.html?_r=0)

conviction that like feminist art, writing and scholarship, it offered a means to uncover and restore experiences and life stories that might otherwise remain absent from historical archives'. She calls her work a kind of 'counter history'.<sup>9</sup> Again the connection between the personal and the political is clear. Hirsch writes that gender and sexuality 'have entered Holocaust studies in the last twenty years, they have primarily been used to create a lens through which we can understand the particularities found in women's testimonies and memoirs, and shape a platform that has enabled those stories to emerge and be heard in a context in which masculine and heteronormative stories had for the most part dominated'.<sup>10</sup> Her point is that feminist analysis, and I would add, stage performance, 'can shift the frames of intelligibility so as to allow new experiences to emerge, experiences that have heretofore remained unspoken or even unthought'.<sup>11</sup> We are a diverse group of women : feminist archaeologists exploring what is 'unspoken' or 'unthought' and we are aware of the time pressure. As the survivor generations are dying, direct witness is being lost. Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylinska write that 'even in Poland, despite the geographical and historical proximity to the site of the trauma, Holocaust memory is becoming what Marianne Hirsch has dubbed "post memory" – a vicarious construction predicated on the absence of the historical event'.<sup>12</sup>

What is heard and what is seen, and how we hear or experience fragments of memory, images or silence, are important for me to dramatise and these are evoked in moments of my texts and productions. They are in a Polish childhood song by a woman evoking the Polish culture that makes part of a Jewish life in *Theresa*. They are in the smoke that is blown from the cigarette of a concentration camp guard in *A Dead Woman On Holiday* as a metaphor for the burning bodies. They are in the moment when a ghetto inmate throws a pack of cards in the air in *The Dybbuk* to suggest the power of destiny in the line between life and death. In the thesis plays, they are in the exiled figure of Judith in *Woman On the Bridge* and in the near-silence of Rina after Buchenwald in *12-37*. In *Next Stop Paradise*, Joan England carries a menorah and does not know why. These are some of the images and sounds that Hirsch calls 'post-memory'.

I can only dramatise what has been transmitted to me. The memory is not mine but I am the conduit who creates an atmosphere to transmit a vibration from someone else's memory. Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch, Hoffman and I are the agents of post-memory. However, within Jewish collective recent memory, I suggest that the war against the Jews has a much longer history, and this is what Dworkin addresses. She recalls the importance of pogrom on female experience and

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<sup>9</sup> Marianne Hirsch *The Generation of Postmemory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations After the Holocaust*, edited by Dorota Glowacka, Joanna Zylinska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 3.

I shall refer to this later.

As well as looking at pogrom and Shoah history and post-memory I wish to address the absence of women's presence within religious ritual and celebration. Hoffman's hinge generation is not rebelling against a religious lack of representation, but the fact that we are daring to express Jewish history from a feminist perspective does challenge the pervasive nature of the male narrative within Jewish life.

However, if biblical history seems far removed from us as modern secular Jewish women, we cannot ignore a cultural, political and religious overlap in the collective language of expression, and we cannot fail to notice the lack of female voices. Two major festivals are theatrical. First there is the Passover/Pesach family dinner, during which there is a table-reading of the drama, of Jewish flight from slavery in Egypt that is chronicled in the book known as the Haggadah.<sup>13</sup> Here the narrative starts with the question 'Why is this night different from any other night?' and the actor is the youngest boy in the family. Girls have no voice. Women are responsible for the preparations of the Passover meal but are also silent. Second, Purim celebrates *The Book of Esther* in the Old Testament. In London, Manchester, New York and Jerusalem, boys and young men, in Chassidic districts, fill the streets to celebrate Queen Esther's triumph in Babylon over the genocidal antisemite Haman. Purim releases (male) Jews from obedience to rabbinical control. They are allowed to run wild for one day. Women and girls do not have that day.

In terms of feminist scholarship, and the role of women in The Hebrew Bible, *The Book of Esther*, reveals the triumph of a Jew saving her nation.<sup>14</sup> Esther is admired as a Jewish heroine within Jewish scholarship; after all she foiled an imminent genocide and saved her people from annihilation.<sup>15</sup>

Even though these bible stories have little resonance for the secular Jew, there is still a cultural norm that dictates who is allowed to reveal Jewish history and narrative, and the weight of male dominance adds to the absence of the Jewish woman's experience. It is in more modern times, and in our grandparents' memories, that women's stories start to emerge and there is one word that resounds as a pre-Holocaust horror. A word that is frequently transmitted by women

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<sup>13</sup> See [http://jewishfederation.org/images/uploads/holiday\\_images/39497.pdf](http://jewishfederation.org/images/uploads/holiday_images/39497.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnavalesque* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Nazi propaganda interpreted Esther as being part of a lineage of beautiful Jewesses' associated with witchcraft and devilry. See Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies Vol 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, translated by Stephen Conway in collaboration with Erica Carter, Chris Turner (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), 76.

down the generations. That word is ‘pogrom’.<sup>16</sup>

Dworkin writes, and it is also my experience, that ‘Children of Russian Jewish descent are prodigals whose first words were “mommy”, “daddy” and “pogrom”’.<sup>17</sup> My Romanian grandmother, whose parents were Russian, frequently spoke of pogroms.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, family narratives, of pogrom and Holocaust, have influenced my writing. My personal biography as a Jew, and as a feminist, resounds within the specific context of writing by Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch and Hoffman. We share a particular history within a feminist discourse.<sup>19</sup>

In different ways we are all also discussing a double pressure to keep silent. Within Judaism women are taught that they are secondary. This is the Jewish legacy of silencing women in the public arena. As with all the Abrahamic religions, traditionally, the priest is represented by the male.<sup>20</sup> However there is a deep-rooted culture within Judaism that forbids a woman’s voice in the synagogue. Her only vocal obligation is to recite Shabbat prayers on Friday night. I mention this to point out a double layer of silencing here. Dworkin confirms this.

It is hard to find women’s voices in the long history of Jewish dialogue and discourse. Judaism may have been sex friendly if one followed the rules but women did not get to argue with God about any aspect or dimension of their lives.<sup>21</sup>

Added to the religious dictate of silence there is the historical imperative we post-war children inherited pressurising us to keep quiet about our ethnicity. Literary critic Shoshana Felman illustrates this. As a child she was in a Los Angeles shopping mall when a man asked if she was Jewish. She said yes. When her mother discovered this she was enraged, telling the girl ‘You never, ever tell someone that. [...] You don’t tell a stranger’.<sup>22</sup>

Cathy Caruth, a specialist on literature and the theory of trauma, writes

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<sup>16</sup> The Russian word ‘pogrom’ is associated with the experience of Jews living in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian territory, but the modern pogrom of Kristallnacht, the night of 9–10 November 1938 heralded the beginning of Hitler’s ‘Final Solution’, proving the direct link between pogrom and total destruction. See *Prelude to the Holocaust: Pogrom: November 1938: Testimonies from ‘Kristallnacht’*, edited by Ruth Levitt (London: The Wiener Library, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>18</sup> My grandmother’s English was poor and she would mispronounce ‘pogrom’ as ‘programme’, which led me to believe, as a child, that this devastation was an event that was regularly programmed.

<sup>19</sup> See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women And Rape* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1976), 121.

<sup>20</sup> Reform Judaism and the Anglican Church admitted women rabbis and priests in the late twentieth century.

<sup>21</sup> Andrea Dworkin’s *Scapegoat* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 104.

<sup>22</sup> Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, *Testimony Crisis of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 54.

For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence.<sup>23</sup>

This inaccessibility is an important point. Caruth is talking about the way trauma is not assimilated or even processed.

The silencing of Jewish women by Jewish men, who see Jewish history as a male narrative, is important to challenge. Hirsch remembers watching Claude Lanzmann's 1985 film *Shoah* and asking 'where are the women?' Lanzmann was asked the same question at a National Film Theatre screening of *Shoah* that I attended in the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> After the documentary, a survivor in the audience asked him why he had only interviewed men in his nine-hour film. Lanzmann dismissed her question as if it were too banal to answer.<sup>25</sup>

'Where are the women?' Is a question I have also addressed in my professional career. Seeing only absence I wrote female stage characters in order to express my own research. This was sourced from a rigorous set of interviews with survivors, including the well-known Expressionist dancer Hilde Holger (1905–2001), who escaped the Nazis, to less famous refugees who had survived Auschwitz.<sup>26</sup> Since 1983 I have explored various aspects of the European Jewish experience, both during and after the Shoah, and my grand project has been to fill a historical gap by aiming to represent Jewish women onstage, characters who are not stereotypes, saints or ciphers.

My work sits as being partly establishment and partly marginalised. Public interest was first revealed when I was written about as the first woman director at the National Theatre.<sup>27</sup> Peter Hall's diary entry of 13 September 1978, reveals a mixture of admiration and unease.<sup>28</sup> This attitude from the (male) establishment provoked me to become politically active in promoting parity for women theatre practitioners. My playwriting and directing have been recognised as an important contribution to the dramatic canon, as evidenced by John Lennard's

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<sup>23</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History* (Yale) 187. Yale French Studies, No. 79, *Literature and the Ethical Question* (1991) 187 accessed 13 June 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*, Paris, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Hilde Holger, see <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/sep/26/guardianobituaries1> accessed 21 June 2016. Interview with Ruth Posner, Natalia Karp, Rita Rosenbaum in *Jewish Mothers & Daughters: A Film Archive*, see <http://www.pascal-theatre.com/past-projects/past-events/jewish-womens-video-archive>.

<sup>27</sup> I directed my adaptation of selections from Dorothy Parker's poems and short stories in a Platform Performance (1978–1980) called *Men Seldom Make Passes*.

<sup>28</sup> *Peter Hall's Diaries*, edited by John Goodwin (London: Oberon Books, 2000), 370. 'Saw our short Dorothy Parker platform performance *Men Seldom Make Passes* well directed by Julia Pascal. I hate the publicity she's getting as a result of being a woman: it's so patronising to her sex. But goodness, women directors can direct just as birds can sing...'

essay in the *Blackwell's Companion to British and Irish Drama*, as well as by academics in France, the United States and Germany.<sup>29</sup> In my research for this thesis and these plays, I have drawn upon written and oral testimony from survivors, historians, artists, family members, and on the holdings of Jewish and other archives. This thesis allowed me to explore my work within the larger historical context and to understand why it has not been seen as mainstream, despite positive critical reviews and publication. My practice, and writing this thesis, has allowed me to see the big picture. It has helped me to understand why the British canon seems to resist my dramas and exclude them when talking about major plays, and how this non-inclusion is as a result of a historical dimension that still has weight today.

### **Feminism and Contemporary European and American Voices**

Second-wave feminism has been a crucial influence both politically and personally. I have been profoundly aware of both theoretical and political debates, as well as the demands of working in a sexist arts sector with a poor record of employing female directors and writers. Male hegemony in theatre is my personal experience over the last thirty years. I first became aware of structural inequalities in 1982 as a member of the *Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators*.<sup>30</sup> Sexism in British theatre has been chronicled widely in the work of Janelle Reinelt, Maggie Gale, Viv Gardner, Elaine Aston, Charlotte Canning, Susan Croft and Carol

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<sup>29</sup> Rüdiger Ahrens and Heinz Antor, *Anglistik, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Anglistenverbandes* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Universitätsverlag, 2005), 131. Susan Carlson, *Women and Comedy: Rewriting the British Theatrical Tradition* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 167, 317, 322, 341. Lizbeth Goodman, *Mythic Women/Real Women* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), xxiv–xxv. Phyllis Lassner, *Anglo-Jewish Women Writing The Holocaust: Displaced Witnesses* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Ulrike Behlau, “Remembering the Holocaust in the British Drama of the 1990’s: Diane Samuels, Julia Pascal, Harold Pinter”, in *Contemporary Drama in English: Staging Displacement, Exile and Diaspora*, edited by Martin Middeke (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2005), vol. 12. Mary Luckhurst, editor, *A Companion To Modern British And Irish Drama 1880–2005* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 323–324. John Lennard, Mary Luckhurst, *The Drama Handbook: A Guide to Reading Plays* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 101, 160, 212, 247. Susan Greenhalgh, “Jewish Women Writers and British Culture: Stages of Memory: Imagining Identities in the Holocaust Drama of Deborah Levy, Julia Pascal, and Diane Samuels”, in *In the Open*, edited by Claire Tylee (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006). Agathe Torti, “Text(s) Context(s), Out of Text(s) in Julia Pascal’s Work: *Returning to Jerusalem through Feminist Trails*” in *Coup de Théâtre* no. 20 (October 2005), 241–251. Agathe Torti, “Julia Pascal: Committed Testimony”, in Julia Pascal, *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009). Matthew Reisz, article in *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 13 August 2015. See: [www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/culture/crossing-jerusalem-written-and-directed-julia-pascal](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/culture/crossing-jerusalem-written-and-directed-julia-pascal). <http://www.genderforum.org/issues/anybodys-concerns-ii/i-want-to-create-a-european-jewish-british-theatre-where-women-have-a-new-role-an-interview-with-julia-pascal> accessed 29 November 2015.

<sup>30</sup> The Conference of Women Theatre Directors and Administrators is held by The Women’s Theatre Collection at The University of Bristol. See: [//www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/womens-theatre-collection](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/womens-theatre-collection).

Martin.<sup>31</sup> Within British journalism, the most recent high profile research into a lack of parity was written in 2013 by *The Guardian*'s chief arts writer, Charlotte Higgins.<sup>32</sup>

It was in the 1990s that critical feminist study began to explore neglected voices of women in the Shoah and, apart from the text *Far Above Rubies*, staged in 1983 at the Drill Hall, I chronicle *Theresa*, which premiered in 1990, as my first major Holocaust drama. There is a synchronicity here between these academic studies and my own creative journey.<sup>33</sup> They correspond to the moment when feminism and performance art expressed women's Holocaust narratives. Although the main focus is on this hinge generation's contribution to academic study, and the crossovers between critical and creative output stimulated by women's narratives, I shall also refer to younger writers with whom I am linked, not by age but by subject matter. I shall therefore consider my work within the context of those writing about Jewish history and culture as well noting links within a British context to younger Black writers who have been produced from 2000.

Within the feminist American critics of theatre and performance, most prominent are the American writers Vivian Patraka and Ann Pellegrini. Patraka explores the German writer Nelly Sachs and the French playwright Lilian Atlan, both of whom suffered under the Nazis. She also discusses another member of the hinge generation, American dramatist Joan Schenkar, who was born in 1952. We both share elements of European and German satire common to Bertolt Brecht and George Tabori.<sup>34</sup> In *The Last of Hitler*, Schenkar, dares to imagine Hitler and Eva Braun's escape from 1945 Berlin to their hiding out in a Miami old people's home.<sup>35</sup> Her aim is to counterpoint destruction with humour. As she tells Patraka 'I mean in the best of all possible

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<sup>31</sup> Elaine Aston, *An Introduction to Feminist and Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). Susan Croft, *She Also Wrote Plays: An International Guide to Women Playwrights from the 10th to the 21st Century* (London: Faber, 2001). Maggie B. Gale and Viv Gardner, editors, *Women, Theatre and Performances: New Historiographies* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000). Carol Martin, editor, *A Sourcebook on Feminist Theatre and Performance: On and Beyond the Stage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). Janelle G. Reinelt, Joseph R. Roach, editors, *Critical Theory and Performance* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992).

<sup>32</sup> Charlotte Higgins' *Guardian* report is available online, see: [www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/dec/10/theatre-england-women-underrepresented](http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/dec/10/theatre-england-women-underrepresented) accessed 25 May 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Julia Pascal, *Far Above Rubies*, playscript in the British Library Manuscripts. MPS 1982; 1983. Julia Pascal, "Theresa" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 13–52.

<sup>34</sup> George Tabori (1914–2007) was a Hungarian playwright whose Holocaust plays were often satirical. See Anat Feinberg *Embodied Memory: the Theatre of George Tabori* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Joan Schenkar, "The Last of Hitler" in *Six Comedies of Menace*, edited by Vivian Patraka (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 131–202.



productions I've made you laugh at something just dreadful'.<sup>36</sup> I also mix satire with seriousness. Both of us are supported by a history of clowning and a sense of the absurd that is rooted in Yiddish culture and that has filtered into American mainstream.

Also notable, among American Jewish feminist plays, and a production that predates the 1990s research by academics, is Leeny Sack's 1981 production *The Survivor And The Translator*, subtitled as a solo theatre work about 'not having experienced the Holocaust by a daughter of survivors'.<sup>37</sup> This area of 'not having experienced the Holocaust experienced by a daughter of survivors' reveals the desire to dare to chronicle the effect of trauma on the daughter generation. Robert Skloot, who includes Sack's text in his *Theatre Of The Holocaust*, describes how the production 'provokes her audience to confront the experience of her family's trauma and her involvement with it [...]'.<sup>38</sup> Skloot records Sack as saying 'The story I tell was slipped under my skin before I could say yes or no or Mama. I sit inside the memory of where I was not'.<sup>39</sup> It is the subconscious absorption of trauma that Sack describes and that I acknowledge in my work.

Sack uses Polish and Yiddish. I also employ techniques of multilingualism to reveal exile and displacement. Skloot describes Sack 'running in place on a rusty bed so that the sound of the bedsprings and her accompanying high pitched note become the "sound memory" of a moving train to produce a sound of propulsive terror [...]'.<sup>40</sup> In my production of *The Dybbuk*<sup>41</sup> one of the characters takes a suitcase and manically runs up and down a ladder on the ground. This allows audiences to receive the image of the ladder as a metaphor for the rails leading to the gas chambers, and stage techniques used by us are influenced by the seminal philosophy and practice of Polish director Jerzy Grotowski.<sup>42</sup> Sack and I select ordinary objects – a bed, a ladder – to suggest sounds and images that evoke Shoah. It can be seen on two online clips as an example of how Shoah postmemory is transmitted through a feminist theatre perspective.<sup>43</sup> We use sound and imagery to bring the unspeakable to the consciousness. and its performance in the public

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<sup>36</sup> Vivian Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre Fascism and the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 44.

<sup>37</sup> "Leeny Sack" by Ellen Schiff in *Holocaust Literature Vol II*, edited by S Lilian Kremer Ellen Schiff (New York: Routledge, 2003). The play is published in *The Theatre of the Holocaust Vol II*, edited by Robert Skloot (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 115–158.

<sup>38</sup> *The Theatre Of The Holocaust*, Vol 2, edited by Robert Skloot. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 18–19.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Julia Pascal, "The Dybbuk" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 101–127.

<sup>42</sup> See Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards A Poor Theatre* (London: Methuen, 1975).

<sup>43</sup> Julia Pascal, *Corridor of Light*, from *The Dybbuk*. See

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyjAhoIxo0> accessed 17 July 2016. Leeny Sack, *The Survivor And The Translator*, see <https://vimeo.com/69063938> accessed 15 July 2016.

arena penetrates layers of an audience's mind through sound, light, objects, multilingual techniques, the movement of bodies in space as well as text. It is a way of creatively processing the transmitted trauma discussed by Felman in her retelling of the incident in the Los Angeles shopping mall where it was propelled from mother to daughter. That we as daughters of the damaged generation can now attempt to address what was suppressed is a feminist act, a cultural reclamation and a strong voice in the world that wants our silence.

This European–American experimental style, as produced by Schenkar and Sleet, is also to be seen in the one-woman show *Hi Hitler*, which the German-American Jewish performer Lucie Pohl presented at the Edinburgh Festival in 2014.<sup>44</sup> Pohl, who was born in 1985, shows that the hinge generation can also include those born thirty years after the baby-boomers, suggesting that the weight of family legacy on daughters and granddaughters of the Shoah is pushing them to reveal secret stories. That we, born ten years after the war, should be writing about it is not surprising, but that Pohl who was born four decades after should create this work reveals that there is a historical imperative urging her to give voice and make a show from the perspective of a much younger woman. *Hi Hitler*, her provocative title, is a way into exploring a particular German Jewish family's transmission of the Nazi experience. Her savage humour and particular subject matter means that she is a writer with whom my work sits easily. However, it is important to note that Pohl and Sack are writer/actors performing one-woman shows and that Schenkar has moved away from theatre writing to biography.<sup>45</sup> This reveals that the hinge generation of playwrights, and the women who follow, remain marginal. It could be argued performances Pohl, Schenkar and Sleet are too experimental for audiences. However, I do not believe this is the case. Schenkar, Sack, Pohl and my work, are all feminist works. Is there perhaps an unconscious bias about who owns this history? Certainly Lanzmann's reaction to feminists asking why women's voices were largely absent from his massive nine-hour documentary appears to support this thesis. An examination of the National Theatre history from 1989 to 2009 reveals that stages have only been offered to male practitioners who dramatise the Holocaust. For example, Tadeusz Slobodzianek's play *Our Class*, Simon McBurney's experimental adaptation of Bruno Schulz's *Street of Crocodiles*, Martin Sherman's two plays *Bent* and *Rose* and Joshua Sobol's *Ghetto*.<sup>46</sup> If the Shoah is only represented by male writers

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<sup>44</sup> See <http://londongrip.co.uk/2014/08/hi-hitler-lucie-pohl-the-gilded-balloon-julia-pascal> accessed 15 July 2016.

<sup>45</sup> See <http://www.joanschenkar.com/index.htm>

<sup>46</sup> Tadeusz Slobodzianek, *Our Class*, translated by Ryan Craig (London: Oberon Books, 2009). Bruno Schulz, *The Street of Crocodiles*, adapted by Simon McBurney, Mark Wheatley (London: Methuen, 1999). Martin Sherman, *Bent* (New York: Avon Books, 1979) and *Rose* (London: Methuen, 1999). Joshua Sobol, David Lan, *Ghetto* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1989).

expressing predominantly male voices, even if Sherman's *Rose* is one woman's monologue, then the absence of Jewish women's narratives is profound.

The common theme running through Dworkin, Fresco and Hirsch is that of absence and silence. Patraha in her introduction to *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism and the Holocaust*, evokes 'this terrifying, powerful silence'.<sup>47</sup> She notes that '[...] there is, as yet, no Holocaust play I know of that focuses on the experience of Jewish women and how they configured themselves to oppression'.<sup>48</sup> Crucially Patraha writes that 'What is still needed are more plays that explore the experience of Jewish women and the intersection of female and Jewish identity in the Holocaust'.<sup>49</sup>

### **British Voices**

Of British post-war women playwrights, apart from Diane Samuels' *Kindertransport*, which I shall discuss later in this paper, only Michelene Wandor and Deborah Levy have allusive Holocaust references in their plays.<sup>50</sup> Wandor is prominent as both a critic and a playwright. Her original stage dramas are determined by the British feminist socialist movement, and her female Jewish characters are always rooted within an English domestic setting. In contrast, it is the wider Jewish European world, as expressed by Fresco, Hirsch, Hoffman and Schenkar, where a more complex representation of Jewish female experience, as international characters with complexity, is explored. The Jew, isolated on this island, can fast lose a European legacy, either as a way of assimilating into a culture that is suspicious of 'Europe'<sup>51</sup> or as a way of forgetting a continent where antisemitism nearly annihilated the Jews.

### **Multicultural Voices**

I have studied women playwrights whose work is being produced between 2011 and 2016 on British main stages. These include April de Angelis, Moira Buffini, Lucy Kirkwood, Rebecca

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<sup>47</sup> Vivian M. Patraha *Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations After the Holocaust* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>50</sup> Diane Samuels, *Kindertransport* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995). Michelene Wandor *Women Playwrights and the challenge of feminism in the 1970s*. In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Playwrights*, eds Elaine Aston, Janelle Reinelt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 53-68. See also Wandor's *Look Back in Gender. Sexuality and the Family in Post-War British Drama* (London: Methuen, 1987). Wandor edited the first anthology of writings about the Women's Liberation Movement, *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-1972* (London: Stage 1, 1972). See also <http://www.bl.uk/people/michelene-wandor>.

<sup>51</sup> I write this as the UK has just voted to leave the European Union.

Lenkiewicz, Lucy Prebble, Nina Raine and Laura Wade, as well as the fertile body of work produced by Caryl Churchill over forty years. However, it is Black playwrights, Debbie Tucker Green and Mojisola Adebayo with whom I feel most connection. Adebayo and Tucker Green use Afro-Caribbean and African cultures as I use Yiddish expressions and sound memories. Lyn Gardner interviewing Tucker Green describes her as starting ‘from a voice in her head that won’t go away, and grows into scraps of writing that she then fits together’.<sup>52</sup> Gardner analyses ‘a style of writing that collapses the boundaries between music, poetry and theatre’. This suggests that she is transmitting a world and a culture that she knows and is planting it within a contemporary English theatre tradition. She is making a space for Black women as I am for Jewish women. She is defying a male hegemony that decides how history is told by making spaces for women’s voices. Lynette Goddard writing about Tucker Green’s play *random* describes a sister retelling the random killing of her brother.<sup>53</sup> The action is narrated within a poetic language. This is not verbatim theatre, but a finely-honed stylized text that fuses Caribbean culture with street English.

I see that the too-sweet tea  
 Don’t sweet them.  
 [...] And they sip their tea-  
 and they sat there sittin’<sup>54</sup>

Goddard points out that Tucker Green takes on political violence and that she bucks the trend ‘of socialist realist plays about black masculinity in crisis that made a resurgence in the 2000s’.<sup>55</sup> This is where I find connection. As Goddard says, Tucker Green, unlike ‘the prominent black male dramatists of this era, such as Roy Williams and Kwame Kwei-Armah, [...] foregrounds female perspectives on trauma, violence and abuse, while at the same time questioning some of the limits of contemporary feminism’.<sup>56</sup>

Mojisola Adebayo, who had a Nigerian father and Danish mother, identifies as Black. Of her writing she says ‘It is about giving the family history legitimacy in the world of English literature and reflecting back the voices of our own childhood’. Goddard in Deidre Osborn’s *Hidden Gems*, interviews Adebayo about her one-woman play *Moj of the Antarctic*, which tells the story of light-skinned African-American slave, Ellen Craft, who cross-dressed as a white man to escape slavery. Adebayo remembers crossing the Gambia River and seeing the holding port of James Town, where thousands of African slaves were imprisoned and where many died

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<sup>52</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/mar/30/theatre> accessed 12 June 2016.

<sup>53</sup> See Lynette Goddard’s “Debbie Tucker Green & Poetic Drama” in Dan Rebellato’s *Modern British Playwriting 2000-2009* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2013), 19.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>56</sup> *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009: Voices, Documents, New Interpretations*, edited by Dan Rebellato (London: Methuen Drama 2013), 192.

as they awaited deportation. She describes James Town as a place ‘that could have been an Auschwitz of Africa’.<sup>57</sup> It is this connection between Black and Jewish experience, one of slavery, terror, death and exile that links Adebayo’s dramaturgy to mine. In the 1992 play *St Joan*, for example, I make this a direct reference with the creation of the Black Jewish Londoner Joan Rabinowitz.<sup>58</sup>

Susan Brownmiller makes other connections between the Black and Jewish women by linking the experience of Black women in the United States with that of the ‘sexualized Jewess’. In *Against Our Will, Men, Women And Rape*, she discusses how Jewish and Black women are commonly thought to have ‘unbridled sexuality’.

In this respect Jewish women and black women have a common bond: the reputation of lasciviousness and promiscuity that haunts black women in America today may be attributed to the same degree of historical forcible rape.<sup>59</sup>

How does the Black or Jewish playwright use the complexity of her history and explore what is projected on to her as a result of her ‘difference’? How does she also transmit the complexity of the background that is her heritage? There is no easy answer, but there is the opportunity to challenge stereotypes, language and culture. Of her writing, Adebayo says ‘It very much feels like it is within a broad African, Caribbean and black British aesthetic [...] Sometimes I wonder where I get this from, if there is something in my cultural memory [...]’. She also says that she is ‘Africanising the European literary voice’.<sup>60</sup>

This point is central to my thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*, where I am judaicising the English voice in the character of Joan England. For Adebayo, tucker green and myself, our writing reflects back to the voices of our own grandmothers and mothers and forward to us as outsiders within mainstream British society. This is not to say that English white writers cannot also do this, but it is to suggest that there is an inner experience of cultural, and sometimes linguistic, displacement, which adds a particular layer within the writing.

The implications for my practice, and that of others mentioned here, is that it is not always the feminist affiliations that makes links. There has to be a cultural connection though it may not be the same culture that promotes creative development. I have already explored the relationship between Jewish and Black culture with *St Joan*, and I find myself attracted to the way that tucker green and Adebayo use a double acculturation in their texts. By consciously

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>58</sup> Julia Pascal, *Crossing Jerusalem And Other Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2003), 165–189.

<sup>59</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women And Rape* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 124. Also in Jean Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite And Jew*, translated by George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 48–49.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 145.

using the ‘outsider’ voice we can make the particular universal rather than trying to fit in to English middle class dominance. None of my plays are germinated by English socialist feminism. Rather they are stimulated, and validated, by those with a European vision and experience. It is gratifying to hear Vivian Patraka’s calls for more stage representations of Jewish women’s experience in the Holocaust, especially as I am so often asked, even by educated English theatre practitioners, ‘When are you going to stop writing about Jews?’.

### **A European Jewish Background**

After framing my work within the critical analyses of other writers of my generation and beyond, I shall now contextualise it within its complicated histories. The identity, which is one of a godless Jew, is tinged by a mixture of Lancashire, Dublin, Middle and East European Jewish heritage. My own experience reflects points about what is unsaid and unprocessed, as raised by Dworkin, Fresco and Hirsch.

I was born in Manchester and grew up there, and in Blackpool, during the 1950s and 1960s. I descend from Lithuanian paternal great grandparents, whose children, my paternal grandparents, lived and died in Dublin. The original immigrants came to England around 1880. My maternal Romanian grandparents came to Manchester around 1910. Research has led me to believe that their flight was provoked by the 1903 Kishinev pogrom. This outburst of murder, rape and beatings was so violent that it symbolised decades of pogroms and led to mass migration to Germany, England and the USA.<sup>61</sup>

My grandparents also spoke of Romanian antisemitism.<sup>62</sup> My maternal grandmother’s parents were Russian/Ukrainian and I believe that her family only lived in Romania for one generation. These people were constantly changing countries, language and identity. This multiplicity of cultures was also expressed in a dual identity, as were their names. Esther/Ernestina Goldenberg, married Menachim/Emanuel Jacobson. My grandparents had a private Hebrew name and a public Romanian and English one. Surnames for Jewish émigrés were fluid and sometimes anglicised in an attempt to cover Jewish origins.<sup>63</sup> Many names were deformed at immigration. My paternal family name 'Friedsohn' was written as 'Fridjhon'. This fluidity of identity resonates in many of my texts and is most apparent in the thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*.

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<sup>61</sup> See Andrea Dworkin’s *Scapegoat* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 37.

<sup>62</sup> Ernest Desjardins, *Les Juifs de Moldavie* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale des Chemins de Fer à Chaix et Cie, 1867). Carol Iancu, translated by Carvel de Bussy, *Jews in Romania, 1866–1919: From Exclusion to Emancipation* (New York: Columbia Press, 1996).

<sup>63</sup> Cecil Roth, *Essays in Jewish History* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1934). David S. Katz, *The Jews In The History of England 1485–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

As a Jewish girl and woman, I have experienced my religion and my gender as representing several layers of displacement from the mainstream host society. At Blackpool's Collegiate Girls' Grammar School, I was kept out of the daily prayer assembly. Later it became apparent to me that, as a middle class Jewish woman in the arts, my position was to be marginal in a white, male Oxbridge elite. I am also an outsider within the traditional English Jewish community, which is mainly dominated by the orthodox United Synagogue.<sup>64</sup> Liberal UK Judaism is broadly represented by the Reform movement. Here gay marriages are celebrated and women also work as rabbis. Reform Judaism is seen as the Jewish equivalent of the Anglican Church. I would place myself as being close to Reform, although I do not believe in a deity. I reject the values of the United Synagogue, where a woman, under orthodox Jewish law, is worth half the legal value of a man.<sup>65</sup> I chose not to marry a Jew or to live in a Jewish area. My attraction to Jewish subject matter is towards the culture and history. I identify as a European diaspora Jew. My interrogation of Jewish experience is driven by a need to learn and write about the female narrative. As a result, my playwriting, and my directing, attempt to explore history through the prism of Jewish women's lives.

I have spent most of my creative and intellectual life working through this complicated cultural inheritance. My experience was that The Jew was outside English society. I knew that we were seen as rootless and hard to classify in white, Christian culture. Even our names marked us as 'different'. At 24, I changed mine by deed poll: Marilyn Julia Fridjohn<sup>66</sup> became Julia Pascal. I chose Pascal because of my love of the French language and, also the desire for an attractive surname. The choice of new name also proclaimed my rejection of patriarchy: I refused to be named after father or husband. This fluidity of identity allowed me a feeling of self-invention.

### **Influences On My Writing**

I have spent much of my career writing about issues that emerge from the European Jewish diaspora. Many are inspired by interviews with Shoah survivors. My theatrical interrogations are provoked by the perplexity regarding the lack of female playwrights celebrated in canonical literature and the poverty and prejudice evident in the representations of Jewish women onstage.

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<sup>64</sup> The 2011 census of British Jews counted 263,346 Jews, of a general population of 60 million. Of those, a majority are orthodox, according to the British Board of Deputies' analysis in 2010. See: [www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SynagogueMembership2010.pdf](http://www.bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SynagogueMembership2010.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> See Moshe Meiselman, *Jewish Woman in Jewish Law* (New York: New York and Yeshiva University Press, 1978). Naomi Shepherd, *A Price Below Rubies: Jewish Women As Rebels and Radicals* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993).

<sup>66</sup> My father was born Fridjhon and simplified it to Fridjohn.

I founded the Pascal Theatre Company in 1983 to challenge the sexism of the repertoire and the glaring absence of serious work about Jewish women.<sup>67</sup>

My methodology is inspired by a variety of experiences. I learned dance as a child from 1957–1964, and trained as an actor at the East 15 Acting School from 1967–1970.<sup>68</sup> My dramaturgy, as writer and director, is often informed through Central European dance theatre aesthetics, including Hilde Holger (1905–2001), Kurt Jooss (1901–1979), Rudolf Laban (1901–1979) and Mary Wigman (1886–1973).<sup>69</sup> Equally important has been the theatre of Bertolt Brecht.<sup>70</sup> I believe that the materiality and physicality of theatre is as important as text, not just as a way of uniting stage techniques but as an integral part of expressing an annihilated, multi-layered, multilingual culture. My dramatic languages have been influenced by being the granddaughter of Yiddish-speaking refugees who felt themselves to be displaced – as a woman in a male-dominated industry, a displacement that was, therefore, doubled. The expression of what Brecht called *Verfremdungseffekt* is normal to the children of outsiders and therefore for theatre practitioners such as Adebayo, tucker green and myself.<sup>71</sup>

I have contextualised my own practice through connections to feminists analysing the Shoah and related my methodology to that of other writers of the ‘hinge generation’. We all share a loss of a particular European hinterland. We all have lost the Yiddish language and the wealth of this culture. I wish also to reference another layer of identity in my own family and one that was the seed for characters in the thesis play *I2-37*. This is the Irish culture that belongs

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<sup>67</sup> Pascal Theatre Company has produced plays by Yana Stajno, Melanie Philips, Carole Rumens, Miriam Sivan as well as being a vehicle for my own texts.

<sup>68</sup> Director Mike Bradwell has written about E15 in this period. See his memoir *The Reluctant Escapologist: Adventures in Alternative Theatre* (London: Nick Hern, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> I have always been at odds with the privileging of the verbal in English theatre and have wanted to find a productive tension between the corporeal and the word. This meant that I sought out Jewish artists who could teach me their aesthetic. I met Hilde Holger and attended her London classes. My obituary of her was published in *The Guardian*. See: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/sep/26/guardianobituaries1>. Jooss left Germany in 1934 as a refusal to dismiss his Jewish dancers. His influence in England was profound. See <http://artsalive.ca/en/dan/meet/bios/artistDetail.asp?artistID=174>. Mary Wigman is a controversial figure who continued to work within the Third Reich, see <http://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/wigman/index.html>.

<sup>70</sup> For details of the influences on my directing see Gabriella Giannachi and Mary Luckhurst, editors, *On Directing: Interviews with Directors* (London: Faber, 1999), 115–120. East 15 Drama School grew out of the work of Joan Littlewood. See Nadine Holdsworth, *Joan Littlewood* (London: Routledge, 2006) and Robert Leach, *Joan Littlewood and the Making of Modern British Theatre* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2006). Collaborators have been the German choreographers Thomas Kampe and Wolfgang Stange. Stange’s integrated Amici Dance Company commissioned two texts of mine: *20/20* and *Elegy*. See: <http://www.amicidadance.org/archive>.

<sup>71</sup> See Wilhelm Hortmann and Michael Hamburger, *Shakespeare on the German Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 81 for a description of the *Verfremdungseffekt* in production.



to my father's experience and influenced my own writing. My father's working-class Dublin speech patterns offered a soundscape that I used in my thesis play *I2-37* as well as in the short stage text *Old Newland*.<sup>72</sup> I am also aware that my feminism developed from seeing the way his sisters were treated as secondary to their brothers. My grandmother lived in Dublin's Clambrassil Street and the South Circular Road: popularly known as Dublin's Jewish ghetto. They came to Ireland in the belief that there would be no antisemitism there.<sup>73</sup> My grandfather and his brothers were pedlars and small time money-lenders.<sup>74</sup> They had upward aspirations for their sons, who became doctors; for their daughters they hoped for a good marriage and motherhood. Nobody asked those women if they wanted further education.

### **Irish and Jewish Nationalism**

My father's Irish Jewish family were hazy about their pre-nineteenth century origins. Sometimes they spoke of being Polish, Lithuanian or Latvian, but always also Russian. They were part of a wave of Jews who emigrated from Czarist Russia in the 1880s, to escape increasing restrictions on Jews confined to the Russian Pale of Settlement.<sup>75</sup> The Pale comprised Bessarabia, Crimea, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. Jews living in these territories frequently changed countries and languages, but Yiddish was their linguistic passport. They spoke often of Russian antisemitism and were attracted to the egalitarianism of Bundist ideas.<sup>76</sup> These Jews admired the nationalism of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin and the internationalism of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. They welcomed Communism and Socialism.

However, after the Shoah, my father was traumatised and saw Zionism as the only safe political movement for Jews. In 1941, his Lithuanian cousins had been taken from the village of Janova<sup>77</sup> in the Kaunas district, and murdered in the Girele Grove Massacre.<sup>78</sup> He refused to talk

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<sup>72</sup> *Old Newland* was produced by Theatre Uncut in January 2015 as a short play in an evening of works called *Walking the Tightrope*.

<sup>73</sup> There was one blip in Ireland's history of toleration of the Jews. Father John Creagh provoked a two-year boycott of Jewish shops in 1902. For background on Irish Jewry, see Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland* (London: London and Israel Universities Press, 1972). Ray Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 2003). Bernard Shillmann, *A Short History of The Jews In Ireland* (Dublin: Messrs. Cahill & Co., 1945).

<sup>74</sup> This history of Jewish moneylenders, pedlars and vendors of holy pictures is detailed by Dermot Keogh Jews in *Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and The Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>75</sup> The Pale of Settlement is where Jews were allowed to live in Czarist Russia from 1791–1917. For a map see Niall Ferguson *The War Of The World* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), xvii.

<sup>76</sup> Bundists were anti-Zionist and their ideals were close to the German Socialist Movement. See Henry J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972).

<sup>77</sup> The town is variously spelt as: Janova, Jonava, Jonova, Yonava, Ianovo.

about it. I believe that this silence was transmitted to me. Nadine Fresco describes those traumatised by the knowledge of what happened, and the guilt of having survived it, as experiencing the state of being ‘encombrés de leur vie posthume’ weighed down by the lives they live after ‘death’.<sup>79</sup> My father suffered constant nightmares and Adorno describes my father’s behaviour. ‘By way of atonement he will be plagued by dreams such as that he is no longer living at all, that he was sent to the ovens in 1944 and his whole existence since has been imaginary, an emanation of the insane wish of a man killed twenty years earlier’.<sup>80</sup> It is this unprocessed trauma that lies at the heart of the hinterland of Judith in the thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*.

My father and his family proudly identified as Irish Jews. He was brought to Dublin in 1919 when the Jewish community was at its highest.<sup>81</sup> This was in the aftermath of The Easter Rising and the seismic effect of that event provoked debate about Irish and Jewish nationalism during his youth. However, it was not until the rise of Hitler that Zionism moved from political theory to an urgent political solution against the Nazi plan to destroy the Jews. My realisation of this Irish–Jewish connection was when I heard my father talking of James Joyce’s Leopold Bloom in the same admiring tone that he spoke of prominent Irish Jewish politicians. This also made me understand the connection between literature/fiction and politics/reality. Of the admired politicians, top of the list was Chaim Herzog (1918–1997), sixth president of Israel, from 1983–1993 and Robert Briscoe (1894–1969) who was Dublin's first Jewish Lord Mayor in 1956.

Certainly there were political and historical affinities between Irish and Jewish nationalism: both struggled against the British for a nation state.<sup>82</sup> Ireland’s history of oppression, starts with England’s 1169 invasion. In 1290 Jews were expelled from England. However Jews felt the stranglehold of the British Mandate most poignantly during the 1930s to 1948, as those fleeing Nazi-persecution were denied entry to Palestine.

As well as political links, there were also cultural and linguistic parallels between Irish and Jewish nationalism. Gaelic Irish was outlawed by the English over six hundred years ago.

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<sup>78</sup> Janova’s 1940 Jewish population was 60% of the total 3,000. In 1941, 2,108 were shot in the forest. Shmuel Spector and Geoffrey Wigoder, editors, *The Encyclopaedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 577. See <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Jonava/Jonava.html>.

<sup>79</sup> Nadine Fresco *La Mort des Juifs* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 125. All translations from the French are mine unless otherwise stated.

<sup>80</sup> Theodor W. Adorno *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1990), 363.

<sup>81</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and The Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>82</sup> Elements of these complexities in Irish and Jewish nationalism can be seen in the creation of the Irish Jewish brothers Cecil, Paul and Henry in the thesis play 12-37.

In the twentieth century, Irish nationalists saw the revival of the Irish language/Gaeltach, as an expression of Irish identity and independence.<sup>83</sup> Declan Kiberd writes ‘For Irish politics and Irish rebellion, the cause of the indigenous language had to do with pride and distinction: and the notion that one’s language expresses one’s soul’.<sup>84</sup> In *The Politics of the Irish Language Under the English and British Governments*, Sean Cahill/Seán Ó Cathail also connects the crucial overlap between the Gaelic revival and the promotion of nationhood through liberation from British hegemony.<sup>85</sup> The movement to replace English with Gaelic as the national language was emulated by Zionists who created Modern Hebrew, also known as Ivrit.<sup>86</sup>

When the United Nations voted for the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948, Israel decided that refugee Jews, arriving with their own distinct languages, should be unified with Ivrit, and, although most survivors arrived with the common language of Yiddish, it was rejected as the vernacular of ‘the defeated Jew’. Adam Shatz confirms that ‘There has always been a deep strain of contempt in Zionism for the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe, who lacked the will, or the muscle, to defend themselves against anti-Semitic violence’.<sup>87</sup> To counter Shatz it must be realised that these Yiddishists (as well as non-Yiddish speakers from Greece, Macedonia and Yugoslavia) had no idea of the annihilation to come. However, in this Jewish/Zionist philosophical, political and linguistic war, Yiddish was defeated. Curiously, Ivrit is widely believed to be Israel’s official language but, as elements of British legislation remain on Israel’s statute books, public notices must be posted in English, Arabic and Hebrew.<sup>88</sup>

The politics of language is a vital component for Irish and Jewish nationalism. The umbilical cord is between language and land. Yiddish is the language of the rootless, the cosmopolitan, the internationalist, and the lament for its loss is an expression of grief for the end of a diaspora culture. Later in this thesis I shall discuss the annihilation of Yiddish and its effect on the representation of women in theatre. With both the Irish and the Jewish nations, there is a violence associated with the interdiction of speaking national languages and a physical aggression delivered by the English and the British.

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<sup>83</sup> See [http://irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4172/0111-0126\\_politicsoftheirishlanguage.pdf](http://irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4172/0111-0126_politicsoftheirishlanguage.pdf) accessed 17 July 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of a Modern Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>85</sup> See Sean Cahill/Seán Ó Cathail, *The Politics of the Irish Language Under the English and British Governments*, The Proceedings of the Barra Ó Donnabháin Symposium, 2007, [http://irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4172/0111-0126\\_PoliticsOfTheIrishLanguage.pdf](http://irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu/docs/CP/4172/0111-0126_PoliticsOfTheIrishLanguage.pdf) accessed 16 June 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Classical Hebrew is used only for prayer.

<sup>87</sup> Adam Shatz, “Israel’s Putinisation” in *London Review of Books*, 18 February 2016, page 11.

<sup>88</sup> According to Article 82 of the Palestine Order in Council, passed in August of 1922, official notices must be posted in English, Arabic and Hebrew. See <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/184281/hebrew-official-language> accessed 12 June 2016.

However both nations also share a history of violence against the British state. The Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky visited Dublin in 1938 to learn anti-British tactics.<sup>89</sup> In her study of the Jews in Ireland *The Harp and the Shield of David*, historian, Shulamit Eliash quotes Briscoe's autobiography, describing Jabotinsky's wish to 'form a physical force movement in Palestine on exactly the same lines as Fianna Éireann and the IRA'.<sup>90</sup> Here Jewish nationalism emulates Irish nationalism and there is a common aim to break free from British rule. However, there were also political tensions, which are still irritants between the two areas of nationalism.

Irish antisemitism has been marginal but, where it occurred, it was provoked by the Catholic Church. In 1904, Father John Creagh instigated a boycott of Jewish shops in Limerick, resulting in attacks on Jews.<sup>91</sup> However where there was antisemitism, there was also its opposite. American academic, Marilyn Reizbaum, discusses how Irish philosemitism and Irish antisemitism were both present in Irish Republican discourse. Arthur Griffith (1872–1922) was the leader of Sinn Fein's antisemitic diatribes. In *The United Irishman* of 23 April 1904, Griffith wrote 'The Jew in Ireland is in every respect an economic evil'.<sup>92</sup> However, according to historian Dermot Keogh, Irish Republican leader Michael Davitt (1846–1906) stands out as 'a defender of the Jews'. Davitt had reported on the Kishinev pogrom and counter-attacked Father Creagh's accusations of Jews who 'draw on our blood when they have been forced away by other countries'.<sup>93</sup> After the Limerick boycott of Jewish shops, Davitt wrote in *The Freeman's Journal* of 18 January 1904, 'The Jews have never done any injury to Ireland. Like our own race they have endured a persecution [...]'.<sup>94</sup> For Reizbaum, the Jew in Ireland was 'a scapegoat to a country of scapegoats'.<sup>95</sup>

Davitt was a friend to the Jews but history is still debating the behaviour of Eamon de Valera (1882–1975).<sup>96</sup> As Taoiseach, de Valera refused entry to Jewish refugees fleeing Austria after the Anschluss. According to Rivlin, Briscoe asked him to change this policy. De Valera

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<sup>89</sup> For a background to Jabotinsky, see Colin Schindler, *The Triumph Of Military Zionism: Nationalism And The Origins Of The Israeli Right* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> Shulamit Eliash, *The Harp and the Shield of David* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 40. See Robert Briscoe *For The Life Of Me* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958).

<sup>91</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland. Refugees, Anti-Semitism and The Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 26–53.

<sup>92</sup> See Marilyn Reizbaum, "A nightmare of History: Ireland's Jews and James Joyce's 'Ulysses' ", in *Between 'Race' and Culture. Representations of 'the Jew' in English and American Literature*, edited by Bryan Cheyette (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>93</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and The Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 26.

<sup>94</sup> Marilyn Reizbaum, "A Nightmare of History: Ireland's Jews and James Joyce's 'Ulysses' " in *Between 'Race' and Culture: Representations of 'the Jew' in English and American Literature*, edited by Bryan Cheyette (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 113.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>96</sup> De Valera was first head of the Irish government from 1932–1948.

refused and even denied a temporary visa for Briscoe's aunt, who was subsequently murdered by the Nazis. Writing about his conflict, Briscoe stated that he 'already knew about the plans for the genocide of my own race' but as a member of the Dáil I think only of what is best for Irishmen and do not permit my emotions or my loyalty to people of my faith to sway my judgment'.<sup>97</sup> When Hitler committed suicide in 1945 de Valera wrote to the Germany Embassy to send 'condolences on behalf of the Irish people'.<sup>98</sup> He was congratulated by the British Union Fascists.<sup>99</sup>

However, even though I inherited an element of my father's identification with Irish nationalism, and the rhythm of the Dublin accent, my childhood experience was growing up in 1950s and 1960s England, where antisemitism was an underground beat in many areas of English culture. Lawyer and academic Anthony Julius argues that British Jews learn fast about covert antisemitism, and he discusses how it affects ambition and self-esteem. He writes, and I agree, that its challenges tend to be oblique, subtle, somewhat insidious'.<sup>100</sup>

### **Antisemitism and its effect on British writers**

In 1954 Jean-Paul Sartre wrote about how he heard a highly educated man quietly saying ' "I don't hate Jews, I just feel that Jews should be less powerful" '. Sartre believes the man to be 'disturbed by the physicality of the Jew'.<sup>101</sup> As a British Jew, who has frequently heard such remarks in England, this scars but the scar must be concealed in order to function in society. Martin Esslin writes about this in relationship to Harold Pinter in *The People Wound*:<sup>102</sup> 'It is well documented in Jewish history and, more widely, in analyses of the psychological repercussions of generations of displacement and unresolved trauma'.<sup>103</sup> Esslin describes what,

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<sup>97</sup> Robert Briscoe, *For The Life Of Me* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958), 280.

<sup>98</sup> Ray Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 2003), 35.

<sup>99</sup> Dermot Keogh *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland. Refugees, Anti-Semitism and The Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 199.

<sup>100</sup> Anthony Julius, "Is There Anything 'New' In The New Antisemitism?" in *A New Antisemitism? Debating Judeophobia in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain*, edited by Ignaski and Kosmin (London: Profile Books/Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2002), 68.

<sup>101</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Réflexions sur La Question Juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 11.

<sup>102</sup> Martin Esslin, *The People Wound: The Plays of Harold Pinter* (London: Methuen & Co., 1970).

<sup>103</sup> Hyam Maccoby, *A Pariah People: The Anthropology of Antisemitism* (London: Constable, 1996). Jonathan Boyrarin, *Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). Lea Wernick Fridman, *Words and Witness: Narrative and Aesthetic Strategies in the Representation of the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). Dalia Ofer, Leonore J. Weitzman, editors, *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998). See Sara R. Horowitz's *Women In Holocaust Literature: Engendering Trauma Memory*, 364–376. Robin Karr-Morse, Meredith S. Wiley, *Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press,

in my family, was an ever-present miasma of angst. A mental suitcase was always packed. My father often told me to be thankful because ‘at least the English did not put us in the gas ovens’, a line I gave to the character of Joseph in my play *Broken English*.<sup>104</sup> Before going to primary school my parents warned ‘if the teacher makes a mistake, say nothing or you will be called a “clever Jew”’. This trope of ‘the clever Jew’ is explored by Sander Gilman in *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence*.<sup>105</sup>

Both of my parents made me aware of the dangers of being a Jew and both influenced my writing in different ways. My father’s admiration of literature encouraged my entry into a serious world of study. My mother, Isabel Fridjohn (1918–2005), was a neglectful maternal figure. There are elements of her in the roles of Anna in the thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, as well as in some of the earlier texts, Esther in *The Yiddish Queen Lear* and Varda in *Crossing Jerusalem*.<sup>106</sup>

My mother’s sister Edith (1920–2009) was a more positive influence. World War Two liberated her from a closeted domestic realm. In her interview for Pascal Theatre Company’s film archive, ‘Jewish Mothers and Daughters’, she talks about trying to enlist as a soldier and of being threatened with imminent arrest as the daughter of ‘enemy aliens’. Her parents were Romanian nationals.<sup>107</sup> As a patriotic Jewish Englishwoman, she was outraged at being marginalised as a foreigner.<sup>108</sup> Edith wrote a letter of protest to the Under Secretary of State at the War Office.<sup>109</sup> As a result she was accepted into the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps. She became the first woman Munitions Officer in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942. Although partly proud of her Jewish heritage, she was also sometimes uneasy about it and had, at particular times in her life, seriously considered converting. This impulse to jettison Jewish identity is described by Bryan Cheyette.

The seductive power of superior Englishness meant that Jews were extremely anxious to win acceptance in their adopted country. [...] In externals and in all

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1997).

<sup>104</sup> Julia Pascal, *Political Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2013), 105.

<sup>105</sup> See Sander L. Gilman, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

<sup>106</sup> Julia Pascal, *The Yiddish Queen Lear/Woman In The Moon* (London: Oberon Books, 2001) and *Crossing Jerusalem and Other Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2003).

<sup>107</sup> Edith Newman, née Jacobs interview, *Jewish Mothers & Daughters: A Film Archive*, Pascal Theatre Company, housed in the British Library Sound Archive. 2006. Stephan E. C. Wendehorst, *British Jewry, Zionism, and the Jewish State, 1936–1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>108</sup> Manchester Jews form a distinct identity. See Bill Williams, *Manchester Jewry: A Pictorial Account, 1788–1988* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987). Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>109</sup> Letter from Edith Jacobs to the Secretary of State for War. 31 August 1940. Personal Archive.

secular thought and actions, the English naturalised Jew is an Englishman, and his family is reared with the education and accomplishments of other members of the English community.<sup>110</sup>

What I find important here is the way Cheyette assesses Jewish identity in British cultural life. He suggests that ‘workaday literary journalists, who are paid to avoid complexity, treat the Jewishness of British-born writers as a form of embarrassment, a guilty secret to be passed over [...] or ignored altogether’. This area can be overcome by dispensing with one’s own Jewish identity, and Cheyette charts the gains and losses: ‘The anglicising origins of the Jewish writers in Britain became a significant element within Anglo-Jewry [...] many British-Jewish women writers converted to Christianity, such as Cecily Sidgwick in the Edwardian period, GB Stern and Naomi Jacob in the 1940s, and Muriel Spark in the 1950s’.<sup>111</sup> His point is that this ‘embrace of a supposedly superior aesthetic order’ was a way of entering ‘the pantheon of culture’. It is the particularity of Jewish identity that has to be bleached out to rise to the top. Harold Pinter appears to have understood this. Cheyette notes that Pinter only wrote one openly Jewish character with Goldberg in *The Birthday Party* and that after that he never represented ‘complex Jewishness again’.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Britain and Ireland: An Anthology*, edited by Brian Cheyette (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xv.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, xv1.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

## *Chapter Two: Mapping the Territory and the Importance of Yiddish Theatre*

### **Jews Represented Historically in Theatre**

I wish to explore where representations of Jewish women exist on the English stage within the canon to examine their position historically and within living memory. This thesis will look at texts within a political, social, religious and historical context, scripts written by Jewish and gentile authors, as well selections from my own plays. In this chapter, before engaging with twentieth and twenty-first century representations, I trace the historical reasons for the lack of Jewish characters, especially women, in English literature and drama, the new opportunities that Yiddish theatre offered to female performers and the effects of that tradition on my writing.

Stage representations of Jewish women are minimal for many reasons: the most dominant is Christian antisemitism. The Normans imported the Jews into England in 1066 to serve as moneylenders, helping the monarchy to finance its wars. Usury was forbidden as a Christian profession.<sup>113</sup> Jews were stigmatised by Christian monarchs as a necessary evil. The profession was not only practised by men; the financier Licoricia of Winchester was close to Henry II.<sup>114</sup> However, Jews were stigmatised as money grubbers and Christ-killers. Images of medieval English art and literature are rooted in this Christian antisemitism.<sup>115</sup>

In 1390, a century after the Jews were expelled from England, Geoffrey Chaucer – the poet known as the father of English literature – wrote *The Prioress's Tale*. This focuses on the murder of the child Hugh of Lincoln, supposedly by Jewish killers. It expresses the inherent antisemitism underlying many areas of medieval English literature.

Our first fo, the serpent Sathanas, That hath in Jewes hart his waspes nest...  
The Jewes had conspired, The innocent out of this world to chace; An homicide  
thereto han they hired. That in an aley, Huge of Lincoln had a privé place... The  
cursed Jew him hent, and held hym fast, And cutte his throte, and in a pitte him  
cast.<sup>116</sup>

The covert antisemitism that Anthony Julius describes connects back to the collective memory rooted in Chaucer. These trace elements still affect this society and, even if they are buried, they are still pulsating.

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<sup>113</sup> Deuteronomy allows Jews to lend money to Christians at interest. 'Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury'. *Holy Bible*, King James Version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 23, 20.

<sup>114</sup> Suzanne Bartlett, *Licoricia of Winchester* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2009).

<sup>115</sup> The 1253 *Rotulus Judaeorum* shows a caricature of male and female usurers attended by devils.

<sup>116</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, edited by Alfred W. Pollard (London: Kegan Paul Trench & Co., 1886), 176.



Where the Jew does appear in poetry and drama, the presence is nearly always male, murderous and satanic. In the *Croxtan Play of the Sacrament*, the Jew attacks the Mass host ‘wounding Him with daggers and nails’ and boils the holy water in a cauldron.<sup>117</sup> Debra Higgs Strickland writes about *The Coventry Plays* showing the Devil using the Jews to ‘murder Christ’ and how the York Cycle depicts four Jews nailing Jesus to the Cross.<sup>118</sup> She also describes how church paintings perpetuate this stereotype. In *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, Stephen Gasson charts seventy one dramas with usurers as characters.<sup>119</sup> This malevolent Jew is developed from the medieval period through the Renaissance and into the nineteenth century. In the public imagination today the most dominant Jewish character is Shylock in William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>120</sup> He exists in the shadow of Barabas in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*.<sup>121</sup> Charles Dickens’ criminal, Fagin, in his novel *Oliver Twist* has been staged as the villainous Jew in the long-running show *Oliver!*<sup>122</sup>

Stage representations of Jewish women from the medieval to the modern period hardly figure. Where they do exist they are mainly converts. Shakespeare’s Jessica, in *The Merchant of Venice* abandons her father to marry a Christian. Marlowe’s Abigail, in *The Jew of Malta*, becomes a nun. If such Jewish female characters disappear to become gentiles, the message is clear. The only good Jewish woman is one who abandons her tribe. However, apart from Christian antisemitism, there are other reasons why Jewish women’s representation is negligible. One major reason is the exclusion of women from public worship. Synagogue is a place of performance which ghettoises women in the gallery or behind a screen. This is sexual apartheid. Added to this, Judaism denies all artistic human representation: the Fourth Commandment forbids the making of human representation.<sup>123</sup> Images of humans were considered

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<sup>117</sup> Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London* circa 1581 (London: 1874), Vol. 6. “The Play of the Sacrament” in *The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, edited by Osborn Waterhouse (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trüber and Co., Ltd, 1909), 55.

<sup>118</sup> Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 115. Stephen Spector, “Time Space and Identity in Play of the Sacrament”, in *The Stage As Mirror. Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe*, edited by Alan E. Knight (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 91.

<sup>119</sup> *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, edited by Frank Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 21.

<sup>120</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Penguin, 2005).

<sup>121</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1997).

<sup>122</sup> Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Penguin, 2003). Lionel Bart’s musical *Oliver!* remains popular throughout the twenty-first century.

<sup>123</sup> *Holy Bible*, King James Version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 178. Leviticus Chapter 26. ‘Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it’. Chaim Potok’s novel addresses how this taboo affects a visual artist. Chaim Potok, *My Name Is Asher Lev* (London: Heinemann, 1972).

transgressional. It is only with the arrival of Yiddish theatre, in the late nineteenth century, that Jewish women take to the stage.<sup>124</sup>

### **Yiddish Theatre**

My awareness of Yiddish theatre came from hearing the language as a child and seeing Yiddish cinema as an adult. My grandparents spoke Yiddish and fragments of the language permeated their spoken English and also mine. Untranslatable words like *chutzpah*, *shlep*, *schmatter*, *schnorrer*, were part of my early vocabulary.<sup>125</sup> Only recently did I become aware of the synthesis between language, culture, stage heritage and the representation of women within this language and art. All these impulses fused when I watched the 1996 season of Yiddish films at London's Barbican Centre. This enabled me to understand how I might be inspired to represent Jewish women onstage. I saw how Jewish women artists were able to inhabit a new creative space.

Yiddish theatre presented a safe area, offering women the protection of their own community while presenting potential international acclaim.<sup>126</sup> The movement developed from the Jewish Enlightenment known as Haskalah.<sup>127</sup> Inspired by the French Revolution, new ideas of equality were transmitted through Yiddish, permeating Jewish life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>128</sup> Sandrow notes that 'the first two Yiddish amateur plays that we know of were written in 1793 and 1796.'<sup>129</sup> By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, professional Yiddish theatre was a dynamic element of international drama, where diverse representatives of Jewish women emerged.

These stage representations often mirrored the power of women within the secular sphere. Shtetl life did not mean purdah. Women haggled in the market or sold goods to support

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<sup>124</sup> Jewish actors Sarah Bernhardt and Eleanora Duse were famous figures in the gentile world; however, here I am discussing the more closed environment of the Yiddish stage. See *Jews and Theater in an Intercultural Context*, edited by Edna Nahshon (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 81.

<sup>125</sup> Rough translations are chutzpah/audacity; schnorrer/beggar; schmatter/old clothes; shlep/to drag oneself around. These are words I eliminate when speaking to English gentiles, which means that I too have a secret language.

<sup>126</sup> See Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 2.

<sup>127</sup> Haskalah is associated with the German philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, 1729–1786. Mendelssohn's Haskalah is associated with the German philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, 1729–1786. Mendelssohn's philosophy was to encourage Jews to observe the habits of the host state while maintaining religious practice. David J. Goldberg, *The Divided Self: Israel and the Jewish Psyche Today* (London: I.B Tauris, 2006), 80. Enlightenment risked the possibility of conversion. The German social activist Bertha Pappenheim (1859–1936) tried to reconcile women's emancipation and learning within Jewish orthodoxy.

<sup>128</sup> In France the prominence of actors Rachel (1821–1858) and Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) revealed how Jewish women could be celebrated on the classical French stage as a result of the Emancipation. There are no English equivalents.

<sup>129</sup> Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 27.

the family. As a result, married women had a small measure of economic power. A pre-nuptial contract, dating back to antiquity, known as a *ketubah*, is mandatory. However, as Judith R. Baskin writes

Rabbinical Judaism, which established the normative pattern of Jewish life from late antiquity through to the modern period, is an andocentric system designed by men...has traditionally considered women as they pertain to men and as they can best support and advance male needs, aspirations, and religious obligations. Since there is a strong recognition that women can disturb the ordered structure of men's lives...Jewish legal rulings have always been anxious to limit the female potential for disruption by relegating women...to domestic roles under the authority of a father or husband.<sup>130</sup>

Baskin's analysis confirms that despite *ketubah* and the right to work, the overwhelming evidence is that Jewish women remained secondary. However, within this history of women's secondary status, there was one way out for the artist, Yiddish theatre.

Women's representations in Yiddish theatre are vital to this thesis as they reveal a foundation for my own female characters. Yiddish Theatre created many radical characters. In David Pinski's 1906 play *Treasure*, the protagonist, Tille, upsets the Jewish community by challenging the dowry system.<sup>131</sup> In Sholem Asch's 1918 drama *God of Vengeance*, Manekele and Rivkele are lesbian lovers.<sup>132</sup> In Solomon Anski's 1920 script *The Dybbuk*, modest Leah becomes a wild creature inhabited by the male spirit.

The power of the female presence is clear from the fame enjoyed by leading actors. Most notable are Hannah Rovina (1893–1980) and Luba Kadison (1906–2006).<sup>133</sup> Both were renowned as Leah in *The Dybbuk*.<sup>134</sup> Ida Kaminska (1899–1980) was triply acknowledged as a

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<sup>130</sup> Judith R. Baskin, "Women and Ritual Immersion in Medieval Ashkenaz: The Sexual Politics of Piety", in *Judaism in Practice*, edited by Lawrence Fine (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 131.

<sup>131</sup> David Pinski, *Treasure*, translated by Ludwig Lewisohn (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915).

<sup>132</sup> Sholem Asch, *The God of Vengeance*, translated by Isaac Goldberg (Boston: Stratford Co., 1918). The Broadway version, in English, was considered so shocking that it was closed down by the police for immorality.

<sup>133</sup> I met Luba Kadison in New York and wrote her obituary for *The Guardian*.

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/may/19/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries>.

<sup>134</sup> Solomon Ansky wrote *The Dybbuk* in Russian and translated it into Yiddish in 1920. I worked from the following French translation: Chalom An-Ski, *Le Dibouk*, translated by Nina Gourfinkel, Hayyim Nahman Bialik (Paris: L'Arche Editeur, 1957). For an English version, see W. Katzin, *The Dybbuk*, translated by H. G. Alsberg, W. Katzin (New York: Liveright, 1971). Ansky is spelt sometimes as Anski. An-Ski or Ansky. I have observed the translators' spellings. Julia Pascal, *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 1–127.

gifted actor, translator and impresario.<sup>135</sup> Kaminska's personal and professional situation reveals how Yiddish dynasties allowed women to rise. Ida was the daughter of famous actor Esther Rokhl Kaminska and wife of Yiddish actor Zygmund Turkow. Her father was Avrom, who owned the Kaminsky Theatre. A theatrical family could support the ambitions of creative Jewish women. Celebrated Yiddish actors working in the UK were Clara Meisels (1896–1959), Fanny Waxman (1878–1958) and Anna Tzelniker (1922–2012).

As well as producing plays directly associated with Jewish life, Yiddish theatre embraced the classics. When Shakespeare's Gertrude, Ophelia, Portia and Lady Macbeth spoke Yiddish, Jews entered the mainstream and legitimised Jewish women actors internationally. They performed in South America, the USA, Poland, and France. In the UK there were Yiddish productions in London, Glasgow and Manchester.<sup>136</sup> In Europe, the high proportion of women audience members is noted by novelist Joseph Roth.<sup>137</sup> In Paris, 1926, he observed Yiddish theatre performances mothers and infants who were noisily involved in the action.

Knowledge of women's engagement in Yiddish theatre has influenced my practice. Prompted by Ida Kaminska's reputation as an actor-impresario, I wrote *The Yiddish Queen Lear*.<sup>138</sup> My text was also a conscious link to Jacob Gordin's Yiddish play *Mirele Efros*, occasionally known as *The Yiddish Queen Lear*.<sup>139</sup> As part of my drama I wished to honour Asch's *God of Vengeance*. The elderly actors, Esther and Anna, play out the love affair written for their granddaughters' generation. Here they are making street theatre to earn a few cents on the Lower East Side pavement.

*Scene from Sholem Asch is played out by ESTHER and ANNIE. A dumb show where Mankele puts Rivkele's hands on her breasts. Then Mankele kisses Rivkele's breasts. They kiss.*

MANKELE: Du bis azoy shayn Rivkele. (You are so beautiful Rivkele.) Komm zu mir. (Come to me.) Lag dein poonim ayf mein Brust. (Put your hand on my breast.)

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<sup>135</sup> For a profile on Kaminska, see Sandrow's *Vagabond Stars. A World History of Yiddish Theatre* (New York: Harper & Row, 1997), 315. Note that she is honoured in the exhibition *The Dinner Party*. See Judy Chicago *The Dinner Party* (NY: Merrell, 2007), 263.

<sup>136</sup> See Raphaela Lewis, "Petticoat Land and the North-West Passage, 1880–1940" in *The Politics of Yiddish*, edited by Dov Ber-Kerler (California: AltaMira Press, 1998), 123–133. David Mazower, *Yiddish Theatre in London* (London: The Jewish Museum, 1996). Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars. A World History of Yiddish Theatre* (New York: Harper & Row, 1997), 70–72.

<sup>137</sup> Joseph Roth, translated by Michael Hoffman, *The Wandering Jews* (London: Granta, 2001).

<sup>138</sup> Julia Pascal, *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (London: Oberon Books, 2001).

<sup>139</sup> Jacob Gordin wrote *Mirele Efros* in 1898. Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars. A World History of Yiddish Theatre* (New York: Harper & Row, 1997), 140, 144, 155.

RIVKELE: Mein tate, er vill nikht offveken? (My father, won't he wake up?)  
 MANKELE: Nein Rivkele er vill nicht wissen. (No Rivkele, your father won't know.) Kissing her Es is goot Rivkele? Es is goot? (Isn't it good Rivkele? Isn't it good?) Du vilst mir hassene hoben? (Do you want to marry me?)  
 RIVKELE: Yor, yor, Manke ikh vil. (Yes, yes Mankele. I will. I will.)  
 MANKELE: Vart, vart Rivkele, tate, mame hobenzik shlufen gelegt. Vilst du shlufen mit mir in eyn bet Rivkele? (Wait, wait Rivkele until father and mother are asleep. Would you like to sleep with me in bed Rivkele?)  
 MANKELE: Yor, yor. Ikh vil. Ikh vil (Yes, yes. I will, I will.)

*They bow. Nobody is there.*

ESTHER: We'll die here on this street. It's meshuggah 'The Yiddish theatre of The Street!'<sup>140</sup>

Yiddish culture has helped me create a wide range of proactive female Jewish characters, which I shall detail later. However, by 1950 Yiddish barely existed. According to Seidman, the loss of Yiddish, and I believe this is true also of Yiddish theatre, 'was particularly devastating for Ashkenazic women'. She writes:

The language debate was prematurely and violently foreclosed by the Nazi murder of half the world's Yiddish speakers and the destruction of Jewish East European life by Stalin's murder of many others including the best-known poets, journalists and actors of Soviet Yiddish culture; by the founding of the State of Israel on the wreckage of Jewish history.<sup>141</sup>

It was also killed off by assimilation. My grandmother's death in 1972 marked the disappearance of the family's last Yiddish-speaker.<sup>142</sup> By this time Jewish women's roles, as represented in Yiddish theatre, were relegated to the museum.<sup>143</sup> The loss is not just linguistic. Professor of Yiddish and Jewish Studies, Emanuel S. Goldsmith writes that

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<sup>140</sup> Julia Pascal, *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (London: Oberon Books, second edition, 2011), 60.

<sup>141</sup> Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (California: University of California Press, 1993), 135–136.

<sup>142</sup> See Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: the Jews In Europe Since 1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>143</sup> See the online Yiddish Museum, <http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/Yiddish-Theatre-in-London> accessed 29 November 2015.

The national essence is not in the bare words; it expresses itself in the internal construction in the contents breathed into the acquired elements, in the phonetic form [...] in the entire sea of feelings, images, associations, jokes, etc.<sup>144</sup>

It might have been imagined that, after the catastrophe of the Shoah, Yiddish would have been reborn in the new Jewish state but, as Seidman notes, ‘Yiddish theatre did not find a homeland in Israel, the language of the diaspora, remained in the diaspora even when Yiddish actors reached Israel. They brought the diaspora with them’.<sup>145</sup> Israeli theatre never absorbed Yiddish theatre’s radical elements of female representation into Hebrew theatre. Israeli theatre, like its British cousin, is andocentric. Writing in *Liberated Women in Israeli Theater*, Shosh Avigal states

That women are subordinate on the stage may come as a surprise to the international community, which has believed the popular image of female power in Israel that has spread around the world. Such an image on the stage and in the society, is very deceptive and divorced from reality.....Most women in Israeli plays are little more than figureheads....<sup>146</sup>

I believe that the loss of Yiddish, and Yiddish theatre, is the destruction of a collective neural pathway. I have tried to address this in my own work by referencing the past within a modern vision.

In my 1992 text and production of *The Dybbuk*, I use elements of Yiddish storytelling as a dramatic structure.<sup>147</sup> The cast of five play Jews imprisoned in a ghetto. Moments from their lives parallel the dramatic re-interpretation of this Yiddish hinterland within a modern feminist perspective. Here Esther, the storyteller, forces the other Jews to play out elements of the original legend.

NAOMI:           Once upon a time, go on.....  
ESTHER:           There were two men who were great friends, two Chassidim.  
RACHEL:           Oh for God’s sake can’t we ever be free of religious Jews?  
ESTHER:           Don’t talk like that, that’s how they talk.  
NAOMI:           I like their music.

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<sup>144</sup> Emanuel Goldsmith’s “Yiddishism and Judaism” in *The Politics of Yiddish* (California: Altamira Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>146</sup> Shosh Avigal’s “Liberated Women in Israeli Theater” in *Theater in Israel*, edited by Linda Ben-Zvi (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 304.

<sup>147</sup> Julia Pascal, “The Dybbuk” in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 101–127.

JAN:                    They don't help us. They don't assimilate. They are in the Middle Ages.

NAOMI:                They die like us.

(PAUSE)

RACHEL:              What's your story?<sup>148</sup>

This dialogue permits the women to highlight frictions between Chassidic and secular Jews. *The Dybbuk* celebrates the Yiddish theatre past by creating a modern feminist text where women perform areas that are traditionally male. Male domination of the burial ceremony is broken when a woman recites kaddish.<sup>149</sup> It is the women, here, who also disturb common practice, by discussing political violence. Naomi announces 'I could kill Hitler'.<sup>150</sup> The production uses elements of kabbalah, realpolitik and personal testimony, and interweaves them to create a filigree-like theatre language. This requires the actors to be educated in several areas of history and of performance styles. The actor playing Rachel performs three roles simultaneously. She is Rachel playing the character of Leah who is inhabited by the dybbuk's voice. Quoting the kabbalah, she reveals the mystical concept 'There are worlds without end'. A moment later she breaks from what has been set up and reverts to the modern Rachel. Abandoning the mystical for the political, she connects disparate elements of play with 1942 hard news. 'England. America. Africa. [...] nowhere is there a space for me'.<sup>151</sup>

Another Yiddish legend that I adapted for the stage was *The Golem*.<sup>152</sup> Challenging convention, I cast Ella Harris to play the legendary Rabbi Loew. This referenced Yiddish-American actor Molly Picon (1898–992) who sometimes performed male roles for stage and screen.<sup>153</sup>

*Theresa*, written in 1990, was about an Austrian Jew who would have had a German rather than a Yiddish language-base.<sup>154</sup> My interviews with German and Austrian survivors revealed to me the chasm between Yiddishists and the more assimilated German/Austrian Jews. Therefore, the influence of Yiddish in this production is more within its realisation in the way it

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 113–114.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 121. Having kaddish spoken by a woman was my revenge against the rabbis who forbid me going to my grandmother's funeral, as noted in my Introduction.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>152</sup> Julia Pascal, "The Golem" in *Crossing Jerusalem And Other Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2003), 89–94.

<sup>153</sup> Picon cross-dressed in the 1936 Yiddish Polish film *Yidl mitn Fidl*. See J. Hoberman's *Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 239. See also Sylvia Paskin, editor, *When Joseph Met Molly: A Reader on Yiddish Film* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publication, 1999).

<sup>154</sup> Julia Pascal, "Theresa" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 13–52.

reflected the polyglot world of my grandparents. My Yiddish-speaking great aunt was dismissive of my fluency in three languages. She spoke nine. In *Theresa* there is Polish, English, German and French. Within the aesthetic, Yiddish is in the spirit, the underground language, presenting a mixture of cabaret, satirical music and dance, and Polish, French and German song, as the support for a political narrative about a Jewish woman murdered in the Shoah. Never naturalistic, it steals from many theatre sources, connecting them with bitter Yiddish irony. For example, Strauss' *Blue Danube* is danced sweetly by an old woman remembering being a girl. By the end of the play the waltz is used ironically as Theresa is taken on a train to Auschwitz.

In *A Dead Woman On Holiday*, humour is expressed by a form of Yiddish clowning, which starts the play. Two stand-up comedians are the prologue to the text set in Germany at the Nuremberg Trials. They play travel guides. This text is edited from the Baedeker Travel Guide of 1936.

ONE:                   And welcome to your holiday in Germany!

[...]

TWO                   Useful vocabulary for the traveller.

ONE                   Friedhof.

TWO:                 Church

ONE:                 Unter

TWO:                 Mensch<sup>155</sup>

The tradition of Jewish clowns is a Yiddish one. These jesters were employed at wedding parties to amuse guests with their outrageous patter, which was destined to defeat the evil eye. I used it in the wedding scene of *The Yiddish Queen Lear*.

JOSEPH:             May you turn into a blintzer and your husband a cat and eat you up  
and then choke to death so we can both be rid of you.<sup>156</sup>

At this point in the play the jester is a male. I create female versions, casting the characters of Rachel and Gail as Rudy and Redy, male comics on one of the popular Yiddish radio stations. The audience see them dressed in dinner jackets, bow ties and tails to deliver fast Yiddish patter and tell off-colour Yiddish jokes.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Pascal, "A Dead Woman On Holiday" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 57–58. Baedeker's small red travel guides were commonly used by tourists. Karl Baedeker, *Germany: A Handbook for Railway Travellers and Motorists* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1936).

<sup>156</sup> Julia Pascal, *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (London: Oberon Books, 2011), 32.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–24.



These examples reveal how Yiddish theatre has helped me imagine creating a space for modern Jewish female representation. Whilst completing this thesis in 2015, I was also directing my 2003 play *Crossing Jerusalem*. The protagonist, Varda, Israeli grand-daughter of Romanian Jews, talks of going to Katz's New York Delicatessen and bursting into tears when she hears the waitress speaking Yiddish.<sup>158</sup> Her mourning for her grandparents' lost world is clear. Emanuel Goldsmith describes this clearly.

However mystical the concept, something of a nation's soul is always revealed in its language...it is also a difference of internal structure.<sup>159</sup>

His point about internal structure resonates. This was emphasised to me in a slip-up by Canadian Jewish actor Trudy Weiss. Here is the original 2003 text, where Varda is questioned by her husband Serge about a former Arab lover.

SERGE: I mean if I met him in the street I'd like to know who he is.  
VARDA You won't meet him on the street.<sup>160</sup>

In one of the 2015 performances, Weiss replied.

VARDA Meet him in the street, you won't.

Weiss' 'error' was a subconscious return to a Yiddish syntax. I recognised it as being true to my grandmother's 'incorrect' English. Consequently, I rewrote the line, which I will include in the play's reprint. This was a key moment, making me question whether one of the reasons for this dearth of Jewish women's roles on the English stage is related to this cultural-linguistic amnesia.

Without the language of our grandmothers, or even references to their voices, I suggest that we risk losing the many stories that make up half of Jewish life. I believe that its demise is a huge loss for the representation of Jewish women. The writers of Yiddish theatre were all male, but they did create varied, complex female roles. With the annihilation of Yiddish theatre, the trails that were made have disappeared, leaving no memory for modern actors looking for strong Jewish female roles.

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<sup>158</sup> Katz's Delicatessen in New York's Lower East Side was established in 1888.

<sup>159</sup> Emanuel S. Goldsmith, "Yiddishism and Judaism" in *Politics of Yiddish*, edited by Dov-Ber Kerler (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1998), 13.

<sup>160</sup> Julia Pascal, *Crossing Jerusalem And Other Plays* (London: Oberon Books 2003), 77.

### *Chapter Three: Jewish Female Characters on the British Stage*

#### **Presence and Absence**

In this chapter I will discuss the major representations, and absence, of Jewish women from 1945 to the present day. My research reveals that there has been little interest in exploring the complexities of Jewish women's experiences, or history, within play texts, rather I have discovered that the representation of Jews is mainly influenced by the political zeitgeist, particularly amongst the left, who tend to decide which authors, and which plays, are commissioned within a framework of a specific political agenda. This agenda also affects the stage representation of Jewish women. I will trace the trajectory of that agenda to investigate how it affects the presence and absence of Jewish women characters within the larger political and cultural picture.

Political attitudes to Jews have changed in the period 1945–1982. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the most famous Jewish woman represented onstage was Anne Frank. Her dramatisation, as a victim/saint, will be discussed later. In the media and through photo reportage after the war, Jews were usually depicted as victims of destruction.<sup>161</sup> During the 1960s, in the US they were frequently associated with the Civil Rights Movement as epitomised in the friendship between the charismatic Reform rabbi, Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, who marched together against segregation.<sup>162</sup>

Major shifts in British attitudes towards Jews starts in the 1980s. There were two reasons for this. The first was as a result of the catastrophic 1982 Lebanon War and the second was the British left's repugnance for the policies of Margaret Thatcher, UK prime minister from 1979–1990. She was seen as philosemitic and pro-Israel, which, for some, prompted an association between her rampant capitalism and the Jews. For those ignorant of Jewish history, Jews and Israelis conflate. As Colin Shindler writes in 'the leader of the Greater London Council from 1981–1986, Ken Livingstone, agreed 'that there was indeed a powerful Zionist connection that ran from the Labour left through the Thatcher government to the BBC'.<sup>163</sup> This awakens

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<sup>161</sup> A large photo archive is available at The Wiener Library. See <http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk> accessed 19 July 2016. See Barbara Rogasky, *Smoke And Ashes. The Story of the Holocaust* (New York: Holiday House, 1998), 41,50,65,67,71, 72,79, 83, 117,118. Martin Gilbert, *Never Again. A History Of The Holocaust* (London: Harper Collins Illustrated, 2000).

<sup>162</sup> Edward K Kaplan, Samuel H Desner, *Abraham Joshua Hechel: Prophetic Witness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), viii.

<sup>163</sup> Colin Shindler in *The Jewish Quarterly* Summer 2016,38-41. See also Nick Cohen, *Waiting For The Etonians. Reports From The Sickbed of Liberal England* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009), 130-131.

eighteenth-century conspiracy theories generated by *The Protocols Of The Elders Of Zion*, which declared that ‘the Jews run the world’.<sup>164</sup>

This was a British phenomenon. In the 1980s, French cinema was starting to reveal hidden Holocaust stories. Most prominent were Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* (1985) and Louis Malle’s *Au Revoir Les Enfants* (1987).<sup>165</sup> Neither explored women’s experiences but both were able – through Lanzmann’s documentary and Malle’s semi-autobiography – to expose more nuanced experience of the Shoah for a broader audience. At this time English stage depictions of Jews were absorbing the political bias of the extreme left that was now filtering into the Labour Party. Jews were no longer considered as victims of Nazi atrocities or as civil rights activists, they were either rapacious capitalists or Zionists with Nazi roots. The images of the money-grubber, from Nazi propaganda and the child murderer from medieval European literature, coalesce.

### **Jim Allen, Peter Flannery and Caryl Churchill**

I would like to examine two major theatre works as examples of this demonisation of the Jew. Peter Flannery’s Royal Shakespeare commission *Singer* (1989), where the narrative traces forty years of the eponymous antihero’s life, moving from the Holocaust to greedy Thatcherite capitalism and Jim Allen’s Royal Court commission, *Perdition* (1987), which associates Zionism with Nazism.<sup>166</sup> Both were approved by mainstream theatre establishments, which were influenced by anti-Thatcher, anti-Israel movements that were current when Ken Livingstone headed the Greater London Council from 1981–1986.<sup>167</sup> Neither offered complex Jewish characters, male or female.

Jim Allen’s *Perdition* is an imaginary courtroom drama, set in Nazi-occupied Hungary, and is based on the trial of Rudolf Kasztner.<sup>168</sup> *Perdition* accuses Kasztner, as head of the Hungarian Jewish Council, of sending his own family, and other Zionists, to Palestine to form a

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<sup>164</sup> *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was written by the French anti-Revolutionary Jesuit priest Abbé Barruel in 1797. See Hadassa Ben-Itto, *The Lie That Wouldn’t Die: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005).

<sup>165</sup> Louis Malle, *Au Revoir Les Enfants*. Film. Directed by Louis Malle. Performed by Gaspard Manesse. Raphael Fejtő, Philippe Morier-Genoud, Francine Racette (1987) France: MK2 Diffusion, France. Feature film. For Shoah see footnote 24.

<sup>166</sup> Jim Allen, *Perdition* (London: Ithaca 1987). *Perdition*, a courtroom drama, blamed Rudolf Kasztner, as Head of the Hungarian Jews, for bargaining the lives of Jews in return for lorries.

<sup>167</sup> *Perdition* was produced just after Thatcher dissolved the GLC, and when sympathy for Livingstone and his policies was high amongst the arts community. Shindler writes in his July 2016 *Briefing Paper to the Labour Party Inquiry on Anti-Semitism* that Livingstone ‘occupied the space where the far Left met the far Right’. See <http://colinshindler.com/articles/chakrabarti-inquiry-on-anti-semitism-in-the-british-labour-party> accessed 4 July 2016.

<sup>168</sup> Jim Allen, *Perdition* (London: Ithaca Press, 1987). Rudolf Kasztner (1906–1957) was investigated in Israel after being accused of collaboration with the Nazis. He was judged not guilty. He was assassinated in 1957.

future Jewish state while abandoning poorer, non-Zionists, to Auschwitz. Kasztner was accused of doing business with Adolf Eichmann, and Allen's thesis, therefore, was that if the Zionist state was set up by Jewish Nazi-collaborators, Israel is rooted in Nazism and therefore, according to his play, is not legitimate. This idea took root. In 2015 this issue was debated at the Student Union of Cambridge University, and the vote declared Israel as a rogue state.<sup>169</sup> When historians revealed problems with Allen's research, Max Stafford-Clark, the artistic director of the Royal Court, withdrew his support. He said that the play was a 'selective and possibly a dishonest piece of writing'.<sup>170</sup>

In *Perdition*, Allen did write an important Jewish woman character: the anti-Zionist Ruth Kaplan, who accuses the Hungarian Jewish Dr Yaron – a pseudonym for Kasztner – of being partly responsible for the liquidation of many of Hungary's Jew. Allen, as a member of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, created Kaplan to mouth his opposition to the Jewish state.<sup>171</sup> As an anti-Zionist Jew, Kaplan, a political cipher for Allen, is crucial to his plot. She accuses the Zionists of being 'Hitler's favourite Jews'.<sup>172</sup> The play was critiqued as twisting history. Professor Glenda Abramson in *Drama And Ideology In Modern Israel* calls *Perdition* 'an anti-Zionist and anti-Israel tract with a barely veiled hint of Holocaust revisionism'.<sup>173</sup> It was also criticised by historians Martin Gilbert and David Cesarani.<sup>174</sup> Allen claimed that he was censored by the so-called Jewish Lobby and was supported by anti-Zionist Jews, including theatre director David Lan.<sup>175</sup> After discovering historical inaccuracies, The Royal Court cancelled the 1987 premiere. Allen eventually admitted errors and his amended script was staged at the Gate Theatre in 1999. This conflation of Zionism with Nazism still dogs the Labour Party.<sup>176</sup>

The second major drama touching on Jewish representation was written during the Thatcher years. This is Peter Flannery's *Singer*.<sup>177</sup> The eponymous antihero is an Auschwitz survivor who morphs into a Rachmann figure. Peter Rachman (1919–1962), was a slum landlord

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<sup>170</sup> See the 2015 debate at Cambridge University on the YouTube clip available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjkivkkZYNo>.

<sup>169</sup><sup>170</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhdWG7NGHE4>.

<sup>170</sup> David Cesarani, "The Perdition Affair" in *Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism in the contemporary world*, edited by Robert Wistrich (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1990), 53.

<sup>171</sup> Jim Allen, *Perdition* (London: Ithaca Press, 1987), 37.

<sup>173</sup> Glenda Abramson, *Drama and Ideology in Modern Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 170.

<sup>174</sup> David Cesarani, "The Perdition Affair", *Jewish Quarterly* 34, 1 (1987), 6. In *The Sunday Times* 25 January 1987, Christine Toomey wrote that Martin Gilbert had found 60 errors in the script. See <http://www.paulbogdanor.com/holocaust/perdition/times.pdf>. Accessed 25 July 2016.

<sup>176</sup> See <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v09/n07/david-lan/diary>

<sup>176</sup> See <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/30/livingstone-muddies-history-to-support-hitler-and-zionism-claims> accessed 3 July 2016. Also Shami Chakrabarti's inquiry, <http://www.labour.org.uk/page/-/party-documents/ChakrabartiInquiry.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> Peter Flannery, *Singer* (London: Methuen, 1989).

in Notting Hill. His name is associated with the exploitation of tenants. Although Rachmann died in 1962, the fictional Singer lives on to profit under Thatcherism. Thatcher's Cabinet contained many Jewish politicians.<sup>178</sup> This seemed to justify Flannery's antisemitic, anti-capitalist agenda. The subtext, as I see it, is to say that Rachman/Singer may have suffered Nazi persecution but this did not change the character of the money-obsessed eternal Jew who flourishes in Thatcherite England. Charles Spencer, reviewing the 2004 revival wrote in *The Telegraph*. that 'Flannery's suggestion that there is a moral equivalence between Thatcherism and the Holocaust seems to me to be nothing short of obscene'.<sup>179</sup> These plays do not emerge from a political vacuum. They come from a legitimisation of the de-legitimisation of Israel. I read both as being sympathetic to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379 (1975), which determined that 'Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination'.<sup>180</sup> I am discussing this political background in order to understand the realisation, or non-realisation, of Jewish female characters on the English stage from the 1980s. As theatre is a political arena in the UK, those who decide on a repertoire, seek to have their views enforced, thereby creating a particular specific political-cultural climate. Therefore, I believe, that it is almost impossible in the UK to divorce the political representation of Jews from prevailing negative feelings around the creation of Israel, which many on the British left see as a rogue state.

Where modern Jewish women do exist onstage, they have, most recently, been created to serve this simplistic anti-Israel agenda. Caryl Churchill (born 1938) is the most celebrated woman playwright of her generation. Her text, *Seven Jewish Children: A Play For Gaza*, is the second major anti-Zionist play commissioned by The Royal Court.<sup>181</sup> Churchill wrote it in response to the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2008–2009; her text is free online. Amateur and professional productions are permitted on condition that donations are collected for Medical Aid For Palestinians.<sup>182</sup> As Mary Luckhurst says, 'The production of the play itself becomes an act of political and human rights intervention'.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> For background on Thatcher's philosemitism see <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/87027/thatcher-and-the-jews> accessed 3 July 2016.

<sup>179</sup> See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/drama/3613988/Tantalisingly-close-to-being-a-classic.html> accessed 3 July 2016.

<sup>181</sup> See <http://jcpa.org/article/the-1975-zionism-is-racism-resolution-the-rise-fall-and-resurgence-of-a-libel> accessed 4 July 2016. This article explores the Soviet refusal to condemn antisemitism as a background to this Resolution.

<sup>181</sup> Caryl Churchill, *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2009).

<sup>182</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/feb/18/caryl-churchill-gaza-play> accessed 4 July 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Mary Luckhurst, *Caryl Churchill* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 80. Churchill's free access to her script is available at: <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2009/02/26/churchill.pdf>.

This text is composed of seven Jewish parents speaking to unseen daughter/s in seven brief scenes. It excited protest, particularly about the Gaza section.<sup>184</sup> There may have been disagreement about the fairness of Churchill's sketchy analysis but she certainly should have been free to express her opinion. Like Churchill, I also criticise Israel's aggressive politics. This is most apparent in *Crossing Jerusalem*.<sup>185</sup> Here, Gideon, an Israeli soldier about to go on reserve, confesses to breaking the arms of stone-throwing Palestinian boys. Yusuf, the Palestinian waiter reveals being stopped from attending his own wedding by Israeli soldiers at the Jordanian border.<sup>186</sup> Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children* lasts 10–20 minutes. *Crossing Jerusalem* lasts two and a half hours. Mine is a full-length drama, where Jews and Palestinians; Muslims and Christians; critique Israel's actions against the Palestinians. Churchill's is a political sketch.

Also worrying in her play is that the girl, constantly referred to only as 'her', is an absent Jew. In many lines of the script, the audience hears words associated with medieval blood libel and Nazi propaganda. 'Tell her we killed the babies by mistake, tell her there's dead babies, did she see babies?'<sup>187</sup> The order, 'tell her', is repeated so often that it sounds like a religious mantra. The effect is so powerful that it suggests that the Jewish parents speaking to the Jewish daughter are lying. Churchill's text builds to a climax that raises the atavistic Christian trope of Jewish disdain for the lives of others. 'Tell her they want their children killed to make people sorry for them, tell her I'm not sorry for them [...] Tell her we're the iron fist now'. Churchill repeats 'tell her' one hundred and sixty seven times in 10–20 minutes, climaxing with phrases that might come from Hitler's Final Solution. In a reversal of history, it is not the Jews who are to be annihilated by the Nazis, rather the suggestion is that the Jews are keen to commit genocide against the Palestinians: '[...] tell her I wouldn't care if we wiped them out [...] tell her I don't care if the world hates us, tell her we're better haters'. Finally, Churchill lances the poisonous accusation 'tell her we're chosen people'. This proclamation of a supposed sense of Jewish superiority is the misinterpretation of Isaiah, which asks the Jews to be a model for gentiles.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Charlotte Higgins, *Is Caryl Churchill's play Seven Jewish Children Antisemitic?*. See <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/charlottehigginsblog/2009/feb/18/israelandthepalestinians-religion> accessed 20 July 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Julia Pascal, *Crossing Jerusalem* (London: Oberon Books, 2003).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 52

<sup>187</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/feb/26/caryl-churchill-seven-jewish-children-play-gaza>. Accessed 20 July 2016. This and all quotes by Churchill on pages 47 and 48 are from this text on this website.

<sup>188</sup> This is Isaiah 49:6: 'I will give thee as a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth'. *Holy Bible*, King James Version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 931.

As for complex representations of Jewish women in this play, there are none. The male and female actors sit at a table. There is no characterisation. The addressed Jewish daughters are invisible. As theatre historian Rachel Clements says, ‘In this play, girls and their environment are strictly controlled’.<sup>189</sup> This central thesis that drives the text does not reflect the experience of living in Israeli society. This democracy is noisy, political and secular. Girls, most of whom will be conscripted, are exposed to muscular political debates and are politically aware. They experience huge moral and political issues from early childhood when they learn to wear gasmasks and go to a sealed room when attacks are threatened. They are not hidden away as the play suggests. Therefore Churchill’s premise of ‘tell her’, as if the girl is a tabula rasa, is inauthentic. The only controlled Israeli girls are those who are born into minority orthodox communities and Churchill does not appear to be representing the Haredim. Therefore, Churchill’s central concept of the hidden girl is problematic. I agree with Mary Luckhurst, who argues

The seven girls remain absent but at the same time the obsessive focus of the discussions. The girls’ simultaneous abduction from and yet imprisonment within [...] their own community is represented as a protective measure for their safety and the future survival of the state of Israel but is slowly revealed to be an uncanny act of aggression [...] and erasure of these spectral girls.<sup>190</sup>

If this Jewish girl represents the future of Jewish womanhood, Churchill is complicit in her erasure. Luckhurst sees the unseen daughter as ‘one of the living dead’.<sup>191</sup> *Seven Jewish Children* adds nothing to the complex representation of Jewish women characters, rather some of its inflammatory language, where Jews declaim their desire for hating and annihilating Palestinians, echoes disturbing medieval libel, and its bleaching out of Jewish female representation is certainly antifeminist.

### **Arnold Wesker, Harold Pinter, Steven Berkoff, David Hare, Nicholas Wright, Cecil Taylor and Bernard Kops**

As well as Jim Allen, Peter Flannery and Caryl Churchill, other post-war British writers, apart from myself, who have included Jewish women characters, and/or Jewish themes and issues, in their dramas include Steven Berkoff, Deborah Levy, David Hare, Bernard Kops, Harold Pinter, Diane Samuels, Cecil Taylor, Michelene Wandor and Arnold Wesker. The investigation here is whether any of these authors are interested in exploring complex Jewish women characters. By

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<sup>189</sup> Rachel Clements, “Apprehending the Spectral” in *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity*, edited by Mary Luckhurst, Emilie Morin (London: Palgrave, 2014), 77.

<sup>190</sup> Mary Luckhurst, *Caryl Churchill* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 180.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

this I mean women who are not part of particular Jewish stereotypes, such as bossy mothers and grandmothers, converts to Christianity or victim/saints.

Of the British Jewish writers mentioned, Wesker, who writes from a broad socialist sensibility, has always celebrated his Jewish identity.<sup>192</sup> However Wesker was never really able to write Jewish complex women. In *Chicken Soup With Barley* he fuses two stereotypes. These are the English seaside cartoon wife and the traditional Jewish wife, known in Yiddish as the balabuster. These co-exist in the character of Sarah Kahn in *Chicken Soup With Barley*.<sup>193</sup> Although Sarah is eventually politicised, at the start of the play, she is depicted as a scold. Her husband pleads ‘Sarah will you please stop nagging me, will you?’<sup>194</sup> She is the kitchen Communist who wields her rolling pin at the Battle of Cable Street. Here Wesker subtly references Brecht’s play *The Mother*.<sup>195</sup> This is an adaptation of the 1906 novel by Maxim Gorky but, as Wesker is writing within a post-war English context, rather than Gorki’s Tsarist Russia or Brecht’s Nazi Germany, the mood is softer. Wesker lampoons Sarah by showing her with her rolling pin and thereby makes her a seaside cartoon character. Sarah is weak compared to Brecht’s *The Jewish Wife*, who embodies acute political intelligence.<sup>196</sup> When *The Jewish Wife* practises her monologue before leaving her gentile husband, she offers the audience a microcosm of a society on the eve of The Final Solution. In *Chicken Soup With Barley*, when the men talk of politics, Sarah talks of lunch. The socialist, feminist Jewish playwright/critic, Michelene Wandor, writing in *Understudies: Theatre and Sexual Politics*, notes admiringly that

Sarah, is the most potent symbol for socialism Wesker has, since she combines a care for humanity with caring for her family. Wesker's socialist vision is based on a philosophy which values the day-to-day care of people for each other (shown in the attention to such activities as cooking, eating, working with wood), and inevitably woman becomes central in this vision.<sup>197</sup>

Wandor sees Sarah’s role primarily as that of the ‘caring mother’. This endorses my point of view that the (Jewish) woman does not exist as a complex figure with her own needs, peculiarities and difficulties as an individual, she is there to serve the family in a traditional way and in this way she serves the play’s conservative message. Within the ideal of socialist

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<sup>192</sup> See <http://www.thejc.com/arts/arts-features/67430/arnold-wesker-reflects-jewish-roots> accessed 3 July 2016.

<sup>193</sup> Arnold Wesker, *Chicken Soup With Barley* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011). For more on the balabuster see Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 29.

<sup>194</sup> Arnold Wesker, *Chicken Soup With Barley* (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), 8.

<sup>195</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *The Mother*, translated by Eric Bentley (New York: Grove Atlantic Press, 1970).

<sup>196</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *The Jewish Wife and Other Short Plays*, translated by Eric Bentley (New York: Grove Atlantic Press, 1994).

<sup>197</sup> Michelene Wandor, *Understudies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 146–147.



paradigm the woman must serve her family. She never jumps out as a Jewish woman who is anything other than a domesticated wife. Wandor, as a British socialist, also never questions the division of domestic labour in Wesker's socialism; for her, socialism is about the household not about engaging with the hard politics of the outside struggle. In *I2-37*, I too use the image of a woman being politicised by The Battle of Cable Street, but matriarch Minnie Green does not rush out with a rolling pin. She is a street fighter, and not a comic stereotype.

MINNIE            The crowd, they are throwing marbles on the ground and the horses  
                         are going down! Down, down down! It's beautiful. Bloody  
                         beautiful. We'll show them, we'll show the bastards that want to  
                         kill us that we can fight...we'll show them we are Jews!<sup>198</sup>

Harold Pinter, though Jewish, rarely wrote identifiable Jewish women characters. First I will discuss the ambiguous character of Ruth in *The Homecoming*.<sup>199</sup> She can be read as Jewish because the biblical name suggests this, Ruth in the Hebrew Bible is a convert to Judaism. However, my reading is that she is a gentile wife who is sucked into the sexual fantasies of the Jewish male. Barry Supple also sees the play as being about Jewish intermarriage.<sup>200</sup> In his review for *The Jewish Chronicle*, he writes that 'The family is Jewish. Ruth is not'.<sup>201</sup>

*The Homecoming* was produced by The Royal Shakespeare Company in 1965. Vivien Merchant, Pinter's first gentile wife, played Ruth. The drama is set within an all-male household dominated by paterfamilias Max. He lives with his brother Sam and his three sons, Joey, Lenny and Teddy. These names were popular among assimilated Jews in the 1960s and their jobs are typical of East London Jewish men. As Baker and Tabachnick write 'The family occupation – or non-occupations – fits into the sociological patterns outlined by JW Carrier in his *A Jewish Proletariat*'.<sup>202</sup> Pinter presents us with a taxi-driver, a butcher, a boxer and an academic. Lenny as the Jewish pimp is also credible.

Supple and others recognise the play as being set in a Jewish family but Pinter has avoided identifying this family as Jewish, seeking to universalise rather than particularise.

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<sup>198</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *I2-37*, 217. The importance of Minnie's direct engagement as a street fighter shows her as an equal combatant in the glory of Jewish crowds fighting the Blackshirts. See Michael Berkowitz's *The Jewish Self-Image: American and British Perspectives 1881–1939* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000). 128.

<sup>199</sup> Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).

<sup>200</sup> "Pinter's Homecoming" in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 25 June 1965, 7, 31.

<sup>201</sup> Efraim Sicher *Beyond Marginality* (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 1985), 111.

<sup>202</sup> In Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 333. Reference to J.W. Carrier's MPhil thesis *Working Class Jews in Present Day London: A Sociological Study*. (London University: 1969), 346.

Efraim Sicher writes how ‘Pinter is most successful when he writes the Jewish content out of his plays [...] leaving nothing to identify it as Jewish’.<sup>203</sup>

Examining this play as revealing the Jewish male desire for the shiksa can be examined within a larger literary spectrum. *The Homecoming*, written in 1964, appeared five years before Philip Roth’s novel *Portnoy’s Complaint*.<sup>204</sup> I see similarities here. Early drafts of *The Homecoming* suggest that this is definitely a Jewish family. Nicholas Grene, observes that, in the first draft, Lenny on a night out with his friend ‘eats the distinctly Jewish dish of chopped liver; and tells Susan (the Ruth figure) that he would have a drink in the house for a “celebration; you know, a barmitzvah or something like that”’.<sup>205</sup> By the final draft the Jewish references are removed. Where Pinter removes Jewish identity, Roth revels in it.

But the shiksas, ah the shiksas are something else again [...] I am so awed that I am in a state of desire beyond a hard-on. My circumcised little dong is simply shrivelled with veneration [...] Maybe it’s dread. How did they get so gorgeous, so healthy, so blond?<sup>206</sup>

My reading of *The Homecoming* is that Pinter’s male characters are, like Portnoy, excited at the erotic appeal of a shiksa. The only Jewish woman in the text, is absent: she is Max’s dead wife, Jessie. Hanna Scolnicov writes of Jessie being ‘the romanticized and vilified wife and mother who was also employed by the family as a prostitute’.<sup>207</sup> This makes Ruth a quasi-Jew who mirrors her Jewish mother-in-law and who serves a Jewish male household. It could even be seen as Pinter’s ironic jibe at the Biblical Ruth. In the Hebrew Bible, the Moabite Ruth converts to become a traditional Jewish wife. Pinter’s Ruth becomes a prostitute for Jewish men. She will replace her dead mother in law. Another area of mirroring between Jessie and Ruth is that both are mothers to three sons. There are no Jewish daughters in Pinter’s play.

If Ruth is interpreted as Jewish, or as a Jewish convert, the identity question is now more complex in this interface between gentile and Jew. As Scolnicov writes ‘Ruth’s acceptance by the family, their readiness to have her fill Jessie’s place is basically incestuous: Her father in law

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<sup>203</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality* (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 1985), 92.

<sup>204</sup> Philip Roth, *Portnoy’s Complaint* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).

<sup>205</sup> Nicholas Grene, *Home on the Stage: Domestic Spaces in Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149.

<sup>206</sup> Philip Roth, *Portnoy’s Complaint* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 144–145. *Shicksa* or *shiksa* is a Yiddish word used originally for a maid. It denotes a gentile woman who is usually seen as sexually attractive to Jewish men. The undertone to this word when spoken by a Jewish male is both pejorative and admiring.

<sup>207</sup> Hanna Scolnicov, *Women’s Theatrical Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 131.

Max tells her “You’re kin. You’re kith. You belong here”<sup>208</sup> The overlaps in identity and relationships multiply. Ruth is the sexual object of her brothers-in-law and her father-in-law. In the last moment of the play Max begs Ruth to take him as a lover and pleads for a kiss. Baker and Tabachnick see ‘Ruth by virtue of the cultural osmosis [...] as existing in both worlds’.<sup>209</sup> Ruth says that she was born nearby.<sup>210</sup> She may have inhabited the same streets as these men but this does not mean that she shares their identity.

Any feminist analysis has to take on whether Ruth, either as a Jew, gentile or quasi-Jew, is a credible character. The play’s success owes much to what Michael Billington calls its ‘brutal comedy’.<sup>211</sup> I would say there are moments of English music hall here. When Max sees Ruth for the first time he asks Teddy ‘Who asked you to bring dirty tarts into this house?’<sup>212</sup> Max proclaims ‘We’ve had a smelly scrubber in my house all night. We’ve had a stinking pox-ridden slut in my house all night’.<sup>213</sup> Crude misogynistic attitudes and this scrofulous vulgarity provoke easy laughter. Playwright Simon Gray, speaking to Michael Billington, says ‘Ruth isn’t a sexual fantasy; she’s a dramatist’s fantasy. She got Harold out of a pickle. You don’t know enough about her and you don’t believe she’d marry a British academic’.<sup>214</sup> Simon Trussler, writing in 1973, is repelled by the im/moral tone of the drama: ‘For the characters of *The Homecoming*, I at least, can feel nothing, other than the occasional shock of surprise or disgust [...]. Here, Pinter’s enterprise is sick, and each thing melts in mere unmotivated oppugnancy’.<sup>215</sup> Trussler feels ‘soiled and diminished’ by the play’s ‘pornographic’ ambiance.<sup>216</sup>

I believe that Ruth’s role is one-dimensional and her embodiment as a sexual object for the men, leads to the sense of ‘pornography’ that Trussler describes. The positioning of Ruth as Jew, shiksa, convert or a Jew-by-association, remains impossible to qualify. It tells us nothing about her as Jew or gentile, but it does tell a great deal about Jewish male fantasy of prostituting the wife of a brother and son.

Questions of Ruth’s credibility as a character are not raised by Billington. He sees her as ‘a positive strong-willed woman who both exposes phallogentric vanity and achieves the

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<sup>208</sup> Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 126.

<sup>209</sup> William Baker and Stephen Ely Tabachnick, *Harold Pinter* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1994), 120.

<sup>210</sup> Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 85.

<sup>211</sup> Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 26 January 1997.

<sup>212</sup> Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 65.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>214</sup> Michael Billington, *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 178.

<sup>215</sup> Simon Trussler, in *Harold Pinter. The Birthday Party, The Caretaker, The Homecoming*, edited by Michael Scott (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986).

<sup>216</sup> Simon Trussler, "A Case Against The Homecoming", in *Harold Pinter A Casebook*, edited by Michael Scott (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1986), 185.

necessary dramatic feat of disrupting the power-structure and changing the situation'.<sup>217</sup> However, Joan Bakewell, Pinter's friend and former lover, 'finds herself repelled by the play's cruelty and viciousness. "How?" she asks "is this woman being deployed? Even if she is running rings around the men, I find that equally disgusting"'.<sup>218</sup>

I suggest that these critics bring their own cultural hinterland to *The Homecoming*. Billington enjoys Pinter's sexually provocative humour, whereas Jewish writers Baker and Tabachnik see it as a critique of the erosion of traditional Jewish values. They write that 'If *The Homecoming* amounts to Pinter's comment on Anglo-Jewish society, it remains a bitter indictment, a companion to Philip Roth's similar attack on Jewish society in the United States'.<sup>219</sup>

It could be argued that the play attempts to explore the forbidden area of mixed marriage between Jew and gentile. In an interview with his biographer, Pinter tells Billington, 'For a Jewish man to bring back a *shiksa* was in those days, a dread thing to do [...]. Their families considered them to be dead'.<sup>220</sup> *The Homecoming* may relate to Pinter's own marriage to Vivien Merchant in 1956 and it certainly resonates in his closest society. Billington discovers Pinter's lifetime friend Morris (Moishe) Wernick and learns that Max, was based on Wernick's father whose brother was a cabbie. Billington sees connections. Morris, Pinter's friend from the same background, married a gentile and emigrated while keeping his marriage secret from his father. Billington believes that this excited Pinter's dramatic imagination. Billington notes that Pinter sent Morris Wernick a first draft of the text. This leads him to conclude that 'What it does suggest is that *The Homecoming* was triggered, in part, by a particular domestic situation and is much closer to observed reality than has ever been acknowledged'.<sup>221</sup> John Russell Taylor agrees commenting that 'it seems reasonable enough that the social and emotional circumstances of his (Jewish) childhood and upbringing should have left some mark'.<sup>222</sup>

As for Ruth, I have found no evidence of her having Jewish identity. I interpret her as Pinter's show of *shiksa* power over Jewish male fantasy. She both empowers the Jewish male and reduces him to her victim. This is a creation of suppressed Jewish male erotic desire and is not rooted in any credible reality. Sicher notes 'The tough dictatorial figure of a father dreaming

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<sup>217</sup> Michael Billington, *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 178.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>219</sup> William Baker and Stephen Ely Tabachnick, *Harold Pinter* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1994), 115.

<sup>220</sup> Michael Billington, *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 163.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>222</sup> *A Casebook on Harold Pinter's The Homecoming*, edited by John Lahr (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1971), 61.

of Judaic morality has given way to a crippled, old man lying on the floor pleading for a shiksa's kiss'.<sup>223</sup>

In Pinter's short play *Ashes To Ashes* (1996), Rebecca, might be considered as Jewish.<sup>224</sup> The premiere was at Riverside Studios in 1998. Pinter states the action as today, with the characters being in their forties. Therefore, if Rebecca and Devlin were born in the 1940s, they would only have been very small children in the Shoah or perhaps were not even born. As Rebecca talks of adult Holocaust experiences that she could never have known as a child, this implies that she is deranged. It could be imagined that the character might be related to Holocaust survivors and may have inherited trauma.<sup>225</sup> Equally Rebecca can be analysed as someone who identifies as Jew but is not. Coincidentally, in 1996 both *Ashes to Ashes* and Benjamin Wilkomirski's supposed Holocaust memoir, *Fragments: Memories of Wartime Childhood*, were published.<sup>226</sup> If Rebecca speaks of particular Shoah images, and is somehow emotionally linked to this event, this could suggest that, as with Wilkomirski, her Jewish identity, is imagined. However, if she is understood to be a Jewish character, who has absorbed someone else's Shoah experience, then she can be read as delusional, thereby fitting into the stereotype of the hysterical Jewish woman.

The play is an interrogation of the mentally fragile Rebecca by her lover or husband, Devlin. He probes her about a previous sado-masochistic relationship, provoking her to reveal how an un-named man had his hands at her throat. At the end of the short drama, Devlin mirrors this action. Sara R. Horowitz notes that 'In many Holocaust narratives by men, women are portrayed as peripheral, helpless, and fragile: as morally deficient; or as erotic in their victimization'.<sup>227</sup> Pinter's depiction of Rebecca, whether she is Jewish or not, a fantasist or not, certainly appears to endorse Horowitz's analysis.

In terms of characterisation there are areas that are not clear. Rebecca speaks as if she has been through the concentration camps. Her memories are of trains and of a baby taken from her. The enigmatic text suggests Shoah without being specific. This endorses the idea that Rebecca is

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>224</sup> Harold Pinter, *Ashes to Ashes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

<sup>225</sup> For a discussion on this see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>226</sup> Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments: Memories of Wartime Childhood* (New York: Schocken Books, 1996) was an imaginary Holocaust memoir, later discovered to be the fantasy of Bruno Dössekker. See <http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1999/oct/15/features11.g24> accessed 10 June 2016.

<sup>227</sup> Sara R. Horowitz "Women In Holocaust Literature: Engendering Trauma Memory" in *Women in the Holocaust*, edited by Dalia Ofer, Leonore J. Weitzman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 367.

a fantasist or a hysteric. She is certainly an unreliable narrator. Pinter adds 'the echo' in the last five pages of the script, as if to heighten Rebecca's disturbed mental state.

REBECCA: They took us to the trains  
ECHO: the trains  
*He takes his hand from her throat*  
REBECCA: They were taking the babies away  
ECHO: the babies away  
*Pause*  
REBECCA: I took my baby and wrapped it in my shawl  
ECHO: my shawl  
REBECCA: And I made it into a bundle  
ECHO: a bundle.<sup>228</sup>

Michael Billington maintains that *Ashes to Ashes* is 'the best of all Pinter's late plays'.<sup>229</sup> He sees elliptical references to Auschwitz and Bosnia: certainly the drama is non-specific. Rather than focusing on the Shoah, Pinter generalises so that the audience never knows which horror is being described. It is contained in an anonymous framework and therefore is not specifically Jewish.<sup>230</sup>

Is the dodging of a specific context a way of avoiding Jewish identity here, or is it, as Horowitz suggests, reductive of the female experience? I believe that Pinter can be accused of both diminishing and obfuscating women's Shoah history here by creating an unstable or false witness. Pinter's lack of specificity is admired by Michael Billington but the Shoah is not the same as the Bosnian genocide. Were Pinter to be specifically writing about Shoah this might, by association, lead audiences to imagine that he was sympathetic to Israel. Pinter loathed the country and he made his views public.<sup>231</sup> The confusion about Rebecca's identity as a Jew, a Jewish fantasist or a Bosnian, avoids commitment to writing about Jewish women in the Shoah and is motivated, in my view, by a desire to be politically correct.

Bernard Kops, like Wesker, has never hidden his Jewish identity, or sought to generalise Jewish experience but he also has not contributed very much to the creation of complex Jewish

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>229</sup> See <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2008/dec/25/pinter-theatre> accessed 20 June 2015.

<sup>230</sup> My opinion is that Pinter deliberately played down his Jewish identity in order to be part of the British establishment. In an interview with *The Telegraph* he declared cricked as being better than sex. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3966609/Harold-Pinter-reveals-why-cricket-is-better-than-sex.html>.

<sup>231</sup> Pinter adds his name to those artists refusing to celebrate Israel's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. See <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/30/israelandthepalestinians> accessed 17 May 2014.

women characters. A prolific playwright, his dramas were mostly seen in the 1960s and 1970s. He is still writing in 2016. In his 2000 play *Dreams of Anne Frank* he wrote an imaginative, oneiric fantasy. His Anne is a rebel, independent of the official stage adaptation, which will be discussed later. Kops was commissioned by Polka Theatre; whose audience is primarily children; this meant limited critical reviews.

Kops was aware of Yiddish stage history. In his 1958 play, *The Hamlet of Stepney Green*, for the 1965 BBC Radio adaptation, he cast Yiddish actor Meier Tzelniker as the protagonist Solly Green.<sup>232</sup> However, the play's two major female roles are peripheral. Bessie Levy is stereotyped as 'attractive, plump and wears cheap jewellery'. Hava Segal is only interested in attracting a man and settling down. In his 2000 drama, *On Margate Sands*, Hugo, the protagonist, is a German Jew plagued by childhood memories as a Kindertransport exile. He talks to his dead mother who is just ash.

Mother. You have no flesh. It's all been burned away. You're smoke. You're nothing. You've got no face. So how can I dream you warm, like this?<sup>233</sup>

If success is judged by production at a 'flagship' theatre, then Glasgow Jewish writer Cecil Taylor could be considered as having received more acclaim than Kops. Taylor's texts date from 1962 to 1981, and it was with the 1981 The Royal Shakespeare Company production *Good* that he achieved the most fame.<sup>234</sup> Halder, the protagonist, is a literature professor who ends up as an SS officer. Taylor's script contains no Jewish women characters. However, in his 1966 play *Bread and Butter*, which premiered at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, he created Ada, a Jewish trade unionist. She is a new Jewish prototype, also popularised in the 1960s television comedy *The Rag Trade*, where Miriam Karlin played Paddy, a truculent shop steward whose comic catchphrase was 'Everybody out!'<sup>235</sup> Taylor's Ada is one of the few political Jewish women on the English stage, but her activities are never imagined as a serious career. They are a prelude to marriage and housewifery. As she says '[...] we shall leave London and live in the country. That'll be our socialism'.<sup>236</sup> Taylor never confronted England's antisemitic history, whereas Wesker and Berkoff did. Wesker's *Blood Libel* premiered in the Norwich Playhouse in

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<sup>232</sup> Bernard Kops, *Plays One* (London: Oberon Books, 1991), 77–158.

<sup>233</sup> Bernard Kops, *Plays Two: Dreams of Anne Frank; On Margate Sands; Call in the Night* (London: Oberon, 2000), 161.

<sup>234</sup> Cecil Taylor, *Good* (London: Methuen, 1982).

<sup>235</sup> Miriam Karlin and Jan Sargent, *Some Sort of a Life: My Autobiography* (London: Oberon, 2007).

<sup>236</sup> Cecil Taylor, *Good* (London: Methuen, 1982).

1996.<sup>237</sup> This cannot have been comfortable for English audiences. Ian Shuttleworth, reviewing it in the *Financial Times*, noted that

Wesker has eschewed the naturalism of his other historical plays in favour of a series of stark scenes loosely based upon actual events, recounting the twelve-year-old William's rape and murder, the town mob's rage against the Jews of Norwich (on the vacuous grounds that surely no Christian could have perpetrated such an atrocity), and the zealous campaign of the monk Thomas of Monmouth to have the boy canonised as a martyr.<sup>238</sup>

Similarly, *Ritual in Blood*, Berkoff's play about the murder of Hugh of Lincoln, was performed at the Nottingham Playhouse in 2001. What interests me here is that Berkoff and Wesker dared to examine areas of medieval English history to challenge the myth of England as a haven for Jews. Neither text advances the development of Jewish female characters, but both expose a neglected antisemitic English history, portrayed mainly through the male experience. Michael Billington in his introduction to *Wesker's Political Plays* quotes Kenneth Tynan's 1960 observation as a critic for *The Observer*.

Like many Jewish writers, Mr Wesker thinks internationally yet feels domestically; and it is this combination of attributes that enables him to bring gigantic events and ordinary people into the same sharp focus.<sup>239</sup>

Certainly Wesker does have a world view but his Jewish women characters are limited to the household or rendered almost anonymous, as in his dramatisation of Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939*.<sup>240</sup> This series of scenes chart the luxurious last days of Jews visiting an Austrian spa as the Nazis close in on them. Faithful to Appelfeld's novel, Wesker's dramatic personae tells us his characters are daughters and wives, part of a group of 'middle-class bohemian Jews'. No individual woman is characterised.

Wesker does attempt to develop Shakespeare's Jessica in the drama *Shylock*, originally titled *The Merchant* at its 1978 Birmingham premiere. The text imagines Antonio and Shylock

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<sup>237</sup> Arnold Wesker "Blood Libel" in *Wild Spring and Other Plays* (London: Methuen, 1994). In 1144 a young boy, William, was found brutally murdered in Thorpe Wood, Norwich. The Jews were accused of slaughtering a Christian child to use his blood for Passover and mock the crucifixion. This is the genesis of the first ever 'blood libel' accusation – a calumny that has spread throughout Europe. Twenty years later the monk, Thomas of Monmouth successfully campaigned for William to be proclaimed a martyr.

<sup>238</sup> *Financial Times*, 1 February 1996.

<sup>239</sup> Arnold Wesker, *Wesker's Political Plays: Chips With Everything, Their Very Own and Golden City, The Journalists, Badenheim 1939. Phoenix. Phoenix Burning Bright* (London: Oberon Books, 2010), 7.

<sup>240</sup> Aharon Appelfeld, translated by Dalya Bilu *Badenheim, 1939* (London: Penguin, 1979).



as friends.<sup>241</sup> Wesker also adds two Jewish women to Shakespeare's dramatis personae. These are the peripheral roles of Rivka, the housekeeper, and Rebecca, the daughter of a Portuguese banker. However, Wesker enlarges Jessica's personality, as originally described by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*, by giving her an education and a political dimension. Of his plays where Jewish women feature, here he is the most advanced. Jessica displays a critical faculty and a feminist sensibility. She protests against the possession of women by men asking 'At what point is the child's right of movement taken into consideration? Does she only become whole when taken from the possession of her father to the possession of her husband?'

Professor Efraim Sicher, of Ben Gurion University, endorses Wesker's Jessica as a more modern representation of Jewish womanhood.<sup>242</sup> However, Jessica is still a relatively minor character. Nevertheless, Wesker has challenged interpretations of Shylock by reframing Shakespeare's original text; that a Jewish writer would have the chutzpah to do this, at that time, was almost taboo.

Berkoff also breaks taboos in his 2012 short text *How To Train An Anti-Semite*.<sup>243</sup>

Dot:                They're at it again!  
 Sid:                Who?  
 Dot:                Sod me, they're bloody at it again...  
 Sid:                Who ya cunt? Don't just fuckin wind me up  
 Dot:                Cunt yaself, y'old bollock. The Jews. The fuckin' Yids are at it  
                          again.  
 Sid:                Wadja mean at it again?  
 Dot:                Knockin' shit outta them poor fuckers in Palestine.<sup>244</sup>

Although Berkoff does not create new Jewish female characters, he fearlessly reveals how English antisemitism can be masked as anti-Zionism. The play was produced in the Jermyn Street Theatre in 2013. Hephzibah Anderson in *Haaretz* notes 'The piece gestures to the blood libel, first set down on paper in 12<sup>th</sup>-century England, and Berkoff is keenly aware of the darker passages in his nation's literary heritage. In the interview he says 'No other nation has had

<sup>241</sup> Arnold Wesker, *Wesker's Historical Plays: Shylock, Blood Libel, Longitude, Caritas* (London: Oberon Books, 2012).

<sup>242</sup> Efraim Sicher, *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature After the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 84.

<sup>243</sup> Steven Berkoff, *One Act Plays* (London: Methuen, 2012).

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>246</sup> See <http://www.haaretz.com/life/culture/.premium-1.554267> accessed 5 July 2015.

literature whereby the Jew has been so desecrated and condemned as the English language [...], citing Fagin [...] Shylock [...] and the King James Bible'.<sup>245</sup>

In 2002, The Royal Court's foray into the politics of The Middle East produced David Hare's *Via Dolorosa*.<sup>246</sup> This monologue, performed by Hare, is about his 1997 British Council tour of Israel and the Occupied Territories. It had no inside knowledge of Israel–Palestine. In *Cool Britannia? British Political Drama in the 1990s*, Mary Luckhurst says Hare 'fail(ed) to write the political play about Palestine commissioned by The Royal Court, producing *Via Dolorosa* instead'.<sup>247</sup>

Those selected are chosen either because they are considered 'fashionable', in the case of Hare, or to fulfil a particular political brief. Hare was given this platform, not for his knowledge of Jews of either gender, but for the vacuous reason of being thought of as a writing/performing celebrity.

Nicholas Wright, has tried to write about Jewish women in his drama *Mrs Klein*.<sup>248</sup> Set in 1934 London, the text shows three Jewish women psychiatrists. Klein, her daughter Mellita and her assistant Paula. Wright focuses on the struggle for Klein's attention between Paula and Mellita. However, the play is really about Klein's obsession with her dead son. He hints that the son may have been a homosexual and Klein's rejection of him as a gay man may have led to his death. This is the most dynamic moment in the text and may result in Wright's being more engaged in the subject of a gay son's rejection rather than a desire to explore the complexity of these psychiatrists. Although Michael Billington in *The Guardian* liked it, other reviews were lukewarm. Charles Spencer in *The Daily Telegraph* on 2 November 2009 wrote 'for much of its first half *Mrs Klein* is often grindingly dull' and *The Independent* critic Rhoda Koenig thought it 'A rather bloodless affair'.<sup>249</sup> Despite being set in 1934, with a background of flight from Nazi Germany, there is little sense of the political. I have interviewed German Jews who fled the Nazis and this text reflects nothing of their experience.

This examination of the creation of Jewish women characters is, in my view, impossible to analyse without placing the commission of plays within its political framework. If certain authors are chosen because it is believed that they will fulfil a certain political brief, and here I

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<sup>247</sup> David Hare, *Via Dolorosa* (London: Faber, 1998).

<sup>248</sup> Mary Luckhurst *Harold Pinter and Poetic Politics* pages 56-68 in *Cool Britannia? British Political Drama in the 1990s*. Eds. Rebecca D'Monté, Graham Saunders (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 57.

<sup>249</sup> Nicholas Wright, *Mrs Klein* (London: Nick Hern, 1998).

<sup>249</sup> See <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/30/mrs-klein-michael-billington-review>. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/6487922/Mrs-Klein-at-the-Almeida-review.html>. See <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/mrs-klein-almeida-theatre-london-1813067.html>.

am thinking about Allen and Flannery, then there must also co-exist a kind of tacit censorship of alternative voices.

### **Tacit Censorship**

Since the 1968 abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's office, we assume that censorship. Although pre-1968 censorship was often to curtail free expression of sexuality there was a political element. In *British Theatre and Performance 1900-1950*, Rebecca D'Monté reminds us of how 'during the first part of the 1930s, the censor demanded that any negative depiction of the Nazis should be cut out of the play or "ruritanianised"'. She details how, even after the Anschluss 'confusion reigned over whether or not Germany should be treated as a potential ally or foe'.<sup>250</sup> D'Monté is critiquing British appeasement but it could be argued that there is a new type of appeasement with the 2006 Racial and Religious Act, which serves as a modern blasphemy law that encourages tacit censorship. Playwright Richard Bean, in a *Daily Telegraph* interview with the critic John Nathan, relates how he wanted references to Mohammed in his play *Up On The Roof* for Hull Truck. Bean remembers that ' "They [the theatre] were just utterly scared s---less. Bradford [with its large Muslim population] is only half an hour away. I love Hull Truck. I didn't want to upset them. It wasn't an important part of the play". And then, with a note of what sounds a little like shame, he adds: "So I changed it" '. Before this decision, Bean recalls calling a meeting with fellow-writers at the Royal Court to discuss his dilemma. ' "I said, they're telling me to change my script or they won't put it on", which was true. I was trying to work out if I had the strength to make a fuss. And then [the playwright] Caryl Churchill stood up in the meeting. The only bit I remember is that she said: "You should be writing about how Muslims are oppressed throughout the world" and she turned around and walked out. I've never spoken to her since, and I won't ever again. I don't think it's right for one writer to tell another what to write about. It was disgraceful'.<sup>251</sup> Churchill is the doyenne of the Royal Court and of what is considered progressive British theatre. I suggest that Bean's revelation endorses that there is tacit censorship that determines which author is commissioned. In the same article, John Nathan writes that Nick Hytner, then director of the Royal National Theatre, 'has also been attacked for saying that he would only put on a play that was critical of the Muslim community if it were written by a Muslim'. This myopic comment would not have worked when considering the removal of the play *Bezhti* from the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's repertoire in 2004. This censorship was not tacit but public. The Sikh playwright Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's play featured a rape in a Sikh temple. After a mass demonstration by local Sikhs, Birmingham Rep cancelled the

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<sup>250</sup> Rebecca D'Monté, *British Theatre and Performance 1900-1950* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015), 32.

<sup>251</sup> See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-features/7572604/Censorship-in-the-theatre.html> accessed 17 June 2016.

production. Stuart Rogers, executive director of the theatre told Sarah Left in a Guardian feature of 20 December 2004, that Rogers admitted that ‘the play’s closure amounted to censorship’.

Political and religious debate is censored today, as evidenced above, and that censorship can be direct or tacit. In 1980 Howard Brenton’s *The Romans in Britain*, staged simulated acts of buggery.<sup>252</sup> It provoked debate but it was not censored. Sex is not taboo today but criticism of certain religions is. The Racial and Religious Act of 2006 has a name that reveals muddled thinking. Marek Kohen has notably deconstructed the concept of ‘race’ as a biological concept.<sup>253</sup> There is also a conflation of ‘race’ with religion in the philosophy behind this Act. To discriminate against anyone’s ethnic origins is shameful but, in a secular society, to criticise a person’s religion is an undeniable right.

As well as tacit censorship there is also censorship by terror.<sup>254</sup> After the massacre of *Charlie Hebdo* staff in January 2015, writers wishing to mock religion risk their lives for the concept of freedom of speech.<sup>255</sup> The murders of those who dare to satirise Islam is censorship by terror and terrorism.<sup>256</sup> However the tacit form, revealed by Bean, and clearly associated with the flagships of new writing, is far more insidious. This opens up the question of how politics and the stage representation of Jewish women elide.

### **Micheline Wandor, Deborah Levy and Diane Samuels**

Writing mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, Micheline Wandor (born in 1940) is the most renowned Jewish woman stage writer of her generation. She, like Kops, Taylor and Wesker, writes only from a socialist point of view. With her 1978 text *Scissors* she explores Israel and Zionism from an English socialist 1970s perspective.<sup>257</sup> Wandor pits her orthodox Jewish male character, Josh, against the National Front rather than sending her women characters into the political battle. Josh gets beaten up when he is at a National Front meeting. The aim here is to provide a solid front of working class Jews against the National Front.

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<sup>252</sup> Howard Brenton, *The Romans In Britain* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980).

<sup>253</sup> See Marek Kohn, *The Race Gallery: The Return of Racial Science* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985).

<sup>254</sup> I would not dare publish my 1984 play *Far Above Rubies*, which was produced at The Drill Hall or I might risk my life. In this work God and Mohammed stand trial for crimes against women. In 1984 I received letters of protest from the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>255</sup> See *The New York Times* Editorial Board feature:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/08/opinion/the-charlie-hebdo-massacre-in-paris.html> accessed 17 June 2016.

<sup>256</sup> Theo van Gogh was murdered by Mohammed Bouyeri in 2004 for making a film critical of Islam’s attitudes to women. Van Gogh produced this with the Somali refugee Ayaan Hirsi Ali who now lives in hiding.

<sup>257</sup> Micheline Wandor, *5 Plays* (London & New York: Journeyman/Playbooks, 1984).

JOSH: Well there was a man talking about immigrants. He said all immigrants must go back to their own country. I said, who are the immigrants please?... So he said the niggers and anyone else who didn't belong. So I said I am a Jew and where do I belong [...]<sup>258</sup>

*Scissors* has two strands. It attacks the street violence of National Front racism and the crack within a Jewish family where religion is at odds with assimilation. Wandor critiques the ritual of barmitzvah but does not address deeper issues that affect girls and women who are barred from this ritual. Barmitzvah takes place in the synagogue in front of the whole congregation. It is the formal performance of a thirteen-year-old boy who must read from the Torah in order to enter the state of manhood. The act of reading in public gives him entry into a world of Jewish men. This performance is formally acknowledged in public by the rabbi. In Jewish orthodoxy, there is no equivalent for girls whose voices are forbidden in the synagogue. If barmitzvah is seen by Wandor as anti-assimilationist, the importance of the performative element, and its effect on human recognition by the group, is crucial in the understanding of how girls and women are absented from Jewish religious practice. Wandor does not notice this. She is an assimilated socialist Jew who sees Judaism as representing an atavistic world. Wandor ignores that barmitzvah represents the celebration of male-only learning and public performance. Her 1970s English socialism dominates any feminist vision.

In contrast, with Wandor's socialist realism, Deborah Levy has chosen to create the Jewish woman within a mystical environment in her play *Pax*.<sup>259</sup> Levy explores archetypes. This is an interesting dramatic option. However, an archetype can appear fleshless.

*Pax*, commissioned by The Women's Theatre Group, has no interest in the individuality of Jewish women.<sup>260</sup> Levy writes 'I found four archetypes who represented twentieth century Europe for me'. Holocaust memory is embodied in the character of The Keeper. Levy says 'I saw her as the past, and as Europe herself. A woman who carries the burden of history around with her'.<sup>261</sup> The Keeper suffers in all the major catastrophes of the twentieth century. She is a generic. When Levy references the Shoah, it is dropped in to a list of suffering by a variety of women from different countries. The difficulties of writing an archetype, either as an abstract or as an accessible character, are tackled in my thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*. Joan England is over four hundred years old but she is a sexy, mouthy East Ender who is on a historical and intellectual mission. Sarah is over five thousand years old but she is a modern Israeli fighting Jewish patriarchy and Christian missionaries. Neither are generics and both are meant to be recognisable, multi-faceted Jewish women who are both modern and rooted in history.

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>259</sup> Deborah Levy, *Plays 1* (London: Methuen, 2000), 3–4.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

The accent on the particular also reveals a writer's politics. I will examine Diane Samuels' 1993 *Kindertransport* and my 1989 play *Theresa*.<sup>262</sup> Both explore Britain's attitude to Jews in World War Two: both had different responses from the British establishment. *Kindertransport* reveals the entry to Britain of 10,000 Jewish children under the Kindertransport policy.<sup>263</sup> This was provoked by the Kristallnacht/Crystal Night pogrom of 9 November 1938.<sup>264</sup>

*Kindertransport* illustrates the generosity of British policy. However, it omits to show which Jews were rejected. Louise London notes

We remember the touching photographs and newsreel footage of unaccompanied Jewish children arriving on the Kindertransports. There are no such photographs of the Jewish parents left behind in Nazi Europe, and their fate has made minimal impact. The Jews excluded from entry to the United Kingdom are not part of the British experience, because Britain never saw them.<sup>265</sup>

Samuels also does not see them. Gratitude to Britain is the main message as evidenced in the declaration of the protagonist, Eva. She buries her identity as a Jew, changing her name to the English 'Evelyn'.

EVELYN:           Germany spat me out. England took me in. I love this place: the language, the countryside, the buildings, even the food.<sup>266</sup>

Eva/Evelyn abandons her Jewish faith and converts to Christianity, thereby linking to a long lineage of Jewish converts.

If *Kindertransport* supports the national narrative as Britain as a safe haven for Jews, my play *Theresa* challenges it. The protagonist, Theresia Steiner, is a Viennese musician, who gains entry into Britain as a domestic servant.<sup>267</sup> When her employers move from Kent to Guernsey in 1939, she accompanied them. In 1940, the Channel Islands were deserted by the British army and evacuation was permitted. A Channel Island policeman, William Sculpher, overruled

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<sup>262</sup> Diane Samuels, *Kindertransport* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995). Julia Pascal, "Theresa" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 13–52.

<sup>263</sup> For Kindertransport memoirs, see Karen Gershon, *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1966), and *I Came Alone: The Stories of The Kindertransport* edited by Bertha Leverton, Shmuel Lowensohn (Sussex: The Book Guild, 1990).

<sup>264</sup> This night heralded the beginning of the end for Jews in Europe. Throughout Germany, Nazis broke windows in Jewish shops, burned synagogues and attacked Jews.

<sup>265</sup> Louise London, *Whitehall and The Jews 1933–1948: British Immigration Policy and The Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>266</sup> Diane Samuels, *Kindertransport* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995), 82.

<sup>267</sup> Most adult Jews fleeing Hitler were only allowed entry as domestic workers, butlers or servants. See Louise London, *Whitehall and The Jews 1933–1948: British Immigration Policy and The Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75–80.

Theresia's desire to leave on the eve of the German occupation. Ironically, the Nuremberg Laws she escaped when leaving Vienna were applied to her in Guernsey. She was made to work as a nurse in St Peter Port's Castel Hospital. In 1989, I discovered the story of Theresia Steiner from a small paragraph in *The Observer*.<sup>268</sup>

I researched this history and the seed for the character of Theresa in Guernsey.<sup>269</sup> I was given secret access to the archive from Nazi-occupied Guernsey. This was a collection of government documents revealing the deep level of collaboration between the Feldkommandatur, the Island Police and the Bailiff, Victor G. Carey. The Bailiff always ended his letters to the Nazis with the greeting, 'I have the honour to be your obedient servant'.<sup>270</sup> Collaboration was present on all levels. I interviewed a woman who also worked as a nurse during the Nazi occupation. When I asked her what Theresia was like, she told me 'she had a big, Jewish nose' and implied that as a Jew she felt superior to gentiles. When I asked her if anybody had considered hiding Theresia, she looked amazed.

Theresia was deported through France to Auschwitz, where she was gassed in August 1942.<sup>271</sup> Unlike Samuels' Evelyn/Eva, there is no gratitude in her character. Her representation is a critique of Channel Island attitudes, where antisemitism was quotidian and casual.<sup>272</sup> Whereas Samuels emphasises the benevolence of British society towards the Kindertransport children, I expose a UK history that has been suppressed in the grand British narrative of World War Two. This disturbs audiences and threatens a history that claims that the United Kingdom was guiltless in the Jewish genocide.<sup>273</sup>

*Kindertransport* is often used as an educational tool.<sup>274</sup> As Claire Tylee notes, the play is a success, because of it 'reaching the widest possible audience by means of a West End transfer

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<sup>268</sup> Channel Islands' war history was mainly unknown in 1990. In 1940, The Channel Islands accepted the Nuremberg Laws. Bailiff Victor G. Carey was the Island's Pétain figure. His grandson, Simon Carey, told me that Winston Churchill did not know whether to hang his grandfather or honour him. He was knighted. Theresia Steiner was sometimes called Theresa on English documents. I use this spelling for the play.

<sup>269</sup> The Channel Islands have a special statute as part of the United Kingdom. Today the Queen is known as the Duke of Normandy.

<sup>270</sup> I use these letters in the play. Julia Pascal, *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London, Oberon Books: 2009), 45, 47.

<sup>271</sup> I found the report of her murder in Auschwitz in Serge Klarsfeld files housed in The Wiener Library.

<sup>272</sup> Madeleine Bunting writes in *The Guardian* 'What has always made the Channel Islands' record so important is that it punctures the complacent British assumption of a national immunity to this combination of amoral bureaucracy and anti-semitism'. See <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jan/24/germany.race> accessed 18 November 2015.

<sup>273</sup> See "The case of *Theresa*: Guernsey, the Holocaust and Theatre Censorship in the 1990s" Mary Luckhurst, in *European Studies: A Journal of European Culture, History and Politics*, 17 (1), 1 December 2001, pp. 255–266.

<sup>274</sup> See <https://www.tes.com/article.aspx?storyCode=6138786> accessed 3 December 2015.

of the original Soho Theatre production, as well as by many performances in America, Germany, and other countries'.<sup>275</sup> My point here is that the choice of production and distribution is determined by the national narrative. In this instance it reveals how the stories a nation tells itself can bury a brutal history and how public theatre, concerning this Jewish history, must reflect the accepted historical narrative or be rejected. Therefore, any representation of Jewish women is always determined by the broader political climate and, now, most particularly, left wing establishment attitudes to Jews and to Israel. While writing this thesis the accusations of antisemitism in the Labour Party and the discreditation of Ken Livingstone in 2016, endorse this political analysis and therefore the creation of Jewish women characters on the English stage.

### **Anne Frank**

Within the dearth of Jewish women's stage representation there is one outstanding personality that haunts the public imagination: an adolescent who has come to represent the human face of the Shoah. Anne Frank (1929–1945) has been immortalised onstage, onscreen and in photographs and sculptures.<sup>276</sup> Her writings were censored: the expurgated version of her diary was the only one available until the death of her father Otto Frank in 1980.<sup>277</sup> This journal was censored in its first translation and printing. It was censored again for the stage adaptation.

Anne (Annalies Marie Frank) was the second daughter of German Jews, Edith and Otto Frank. In 1933, the family fled from Frankfurt to Amsterdam. In July 1942 they went into hiding. Anne had been given a diary for her 13th birthday. For two years she recorded her life. The family was betrayed and arrested in August 1944. Anne died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Otto survived. When Anne's diary was found, it was considered for stage exploitation. Otto controlled all rights. *The Diary of A Young Girl* was first published in Dutch in 1947 as *Het Achterhuis*, sometimes translated as *The Secret Annexe*. The literal translation is 'the back house'.<sup>278</sup>

Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett were commissioned to dramatise the diary.<sup>279</sup> There were 1956 London and Broadway productions. It has been a long-running international

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<sup>275</sup> Susan Greenhalgh, "Jewish Women Writers and British Culture: Stages of Memory: Imagining Identities in The Holocaust Drama of Deborah Levy, Julia Pascal, and Diane Samuels", in *In the Open*, edited by Claire Tylee (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 214–215.

<sup>276</sup> Doreen Kern's bust of Anne Frank at the British Library's St Pancras site was vandalised. This led to its removal.

<sup>277</sup> Anne Frank, *The Works of Anne Frank* (New York: Doubleday, 1959); *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990).

<sup>278</sup> Anne Frank, *Het Achterhuis* (Amsterdam: Contact Publishers, 1947).

<sup>279</sup> Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (London: Samuel French, 1956).

<sup>282</sup> Anastasia Ulanowicz, *Second Generation Memory And Contemporary Children's Literature*.



success. Anne was reconstructed as a modern virgin martyr. Marketing of her was through the world-famous publicity shot where she smiles as if she were a high school student posing for the end of term photograph. This image offers a Jewish Mona Lisa to a world bruised by World War Two. Anastasia Ulanowicz in *Second Generation Memory And Contemporary Children's Literature* writes

Anne Frank's iconic photograph, insofar as it is a testament to her death, this can be read simultaneously as a testament to her inviolate childhood. The black-and-white cover photograph, taken four years before her death, literally covers over the desire to grow up which Anne regularly expresses within the Diary's pages, and instead puts forth the image of a young girl suspended quite literally in a state of childhood grace. The fresh-faced girl in the photograph will never outgrow her charmingly youthful appearance. Instead her death guarantees that her purity and her absolute completeness as a child remains intact, embalmed and made available to the adult gaze desperately in search of an elusive golden age of inviolate childhood.<sup>280</sup>

Ulanowicz also discusses how the cropping of the photo; the removal of the desk and book from the image; has erased Anne Frank's image as a serious writer.<sup>281</sup> The airbrushed version revises her as a happy Miss Teenage America.<sup>282</sup> Writing about the 1959 George Stevens movie, based on the play, Ulanowicz observes how Anne Frank's character is revised to appeal to a largely Protestant American audience. Rather than focusing on the conflicts Anne registers in her Diary regarding her identity as an assimilated German Jew living in Holland, the film merely nods at her Jewish identity by inserting a token Hannukah scene, which so resembles a

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*Ghost Images* (London: Routledge, 2013), 112.

<sup>283</sup> The original photo can be seen on the official Anne Frank website. See [www.annefrank.org](http://www.annefrank.org/en/Subsites/Timeline/Inter-war-period-1918-1939/Emigrating-to-The-Netherlands/1936/A-school-photo-of-Anne-Frank-at-the-6th-Montessori-School-in-Amsterdam-which-she-attends-from-1933-to-1941/#!/en/Subsites/Timeline/World-War-Two-1939-1945/The-German-invasion/1941/Anne-Frank-writing-at-her-desk-in-her-room-in-the-Merwedeplein-apartment-Amsterdam) <http://www.annefrank.org/en/Subsites/Timeline/Inter-war-period-1918-1939/Emigrating-to-The-Netherlands/1936/A-school-photo-of-Anne-Frank-at-the-6th-Montessori-School-in-Amsterdam-which-she-attends-from-1933-to-1941/#!/en/Subsites/Timeline/World-War-Two-1939-1945/The-German-invasion/1941/Anne-Frank-writing-at-her-desk-in-her-room-in-the-Merwedeplein-apartment-Amsterdam>. The cropped still can be seen at:

[http://www.solarnavigator.net/history/anne\\_franks\\_diary.htm](http://www.solarnavigator.net/history/anne_franks_diary.htm).

<sup>284</sup> For a study on the Americanisation of Anne Frank see Professor Mark M. Anderson, "The Child Victim As Witness To the Holocaust: An American Story" in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, edited by Harold Bloom (NY: Infobase Publishing, 2001), 143–162. Also Dina Porat discusses the Americanisation of Anne Frank. "Anne Frank". *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, 1 March 2009, Jewish Women's Archive (Viewed 13 November 2015), see <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/frank-anne>.

<sup>285</sup> Anastasia Ulanowicz, *Second Generation Memory And Contemporary Children's Literature*. *Ghost Images* (London: Routledge, 2013), 112.

typical Christmas dinner that it renders any question of religious and cultural difference invisible.<sup>283</sup> Judith E. Doneson also notes this blurring of Jewish history within the screenplay:

[T]he film makers opt to strive for a feeling of audience identification with the Jewish victims for the purpose of creating a universal antipathy towards all persecution. The Jews and the Holocaust, in other words, can be the symbol for the suffering of mankind.

[...] There are sections in her diary in which Anne speaks explicitly about Jewish persecutions; sections that could easily have been incorporated into the film were the film makers interested in doing so.<sup>284</sup>

Anne is embalmed as an innocent girl and her Jewish identity is bleached. She is generalised and sentimentalised. In the penultimate line of the drama her disembodied, offstage voice, presumably from the grave, says 'In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart'.<sup>285</sup>

Instead of meeting a complex, ambitious young writer, we are served up a bathetic Holocaust icon. This representation of Anne's life and death is grotesquely wrong. Anne Frank died at fifteen from typhus. The images from the liberation of Belsen have been concealed from public view as they were considered too disturbing. Some have just appeared from a former soldier's archive.<sup>286</sup> This is the world Anne Frank inhabited at the end of her life. In Bergen-Belsen she wept at the sight of gypsy girls being driven to the gas chambers.<sup>287</sup>

It is implausible that she was proclaiming such a line at the end of her life. Bruno Bettelheim wrote:

there is a good reason why the so successful play ends with Anne stating her belief in the good in all men [...] If all men are good, there never was an Auschwitz.<sup>288</sup>

Ian Buruma synthesises the reconstruction of Anne Frank's story:

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<sup>286</sup> Judith E. Doneson, *The Holocaust in American Film*, Second Edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 76.

<sup>287</sup> Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (London: Samuel French, 1956), 92.

<sup>288</sup> See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3038505/Burning-huts-Hitler-flags-concentration-camp-victims-starved-death-Harrowing-pictures-Belsen-released-70-years-liberation.html>

<sup>289</sup> Ronald Wilfred Jansen, *Anne Frank Silent Witnesses: Reminders Of A Jewish Girl's Life* (Drenthe, Netherlands: RWJ, 2014), 208.

<sup>288</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart: A Study Of The Psychological Consequences of Living Under Extreme Fear And Terror* (London: Penguin, 1987), 254.

Anne Frank has become more than a writer, and more than a victim of the Holocaust whose eloquent voice happens to have reached us across the stinking pits of Bergen-Belsen. She has become an almost sacred figure, a Jewish Saint Ursula, a Dutch Joan of Arc, a female Christ. I grope for Christian examples, since Jews don't canonize their martyrs as saints. Nor do Jewish saints offer universal redemption. Anne Frank's most famous words – "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart" – have been notoriously wrenched out of context to promise just that. And gratefully they were received, too, especially in Germany. Anne's death, premature and brutal, also lent itself easily to a common thirst, not just for kitsch absolution, but for a kind of sentimental aestheticism. Her smile [...] pops up everywhere, from Santa Barbara, where it was recently on display to promote "tolerance," to the English city of York, where the smile was projected onto a medieval tower where Jews were massacred during the twelfth century. Anne's diary has been set to music. There are cartoon versions, one of them Japanese. Anne has been a character in at least one famous novel. About the only thing we haven't seen so far is Anne Frank on Ice.<sup>289</sup>

Judith Goldstein, writing in *Anne Frank: The Redemptive Myth*, analyses how a Christian narrative overwrites a Jewish experience. She shows how rewriting has used:

elements of Christian belief and symbolism: a hidden child, a virgin, a betrayal, the Holocaust as Hell, a form of resurrection through words. The redemptive tale seems tragically simple, but the real history is complex and convoluted.<sup>290</sup>

There were three main censored areas in the dramatisation and it is important to chronicle what was deliberately omitted. First was her Jewish identity. She was murdered for being Jewish. She was aware of the politics of Hitler's Race Laws and also of being imbued with a sense of Jewish obligation towards others. On 11 April 1942, after a police raid, she wrote 'We Jews are in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, with a thousand duties'. It was cut from the drama as was the following declaration of Jewish identity.

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<sup>289</sup> Ian Buruma, "The Afterlife of Anne Frank", *New York Review of Books*, 19 February 1998, xlv, 3.

<sup>290</sup> Judith Goldstein "Anne Frank: The Redemptive Myth", edited by Harold Bloom, *The Diary of Anne Frank* New Edition (New York: Blooms Literary Criticism, 2010), 76.

If we bear all this suffering and if there are still Jews left, when it is all over, then Jews instead of being doomed, will be held up as an example. Who knows, it might be even our religion from which the world and all the peoples learn good, and for that reason and the reason only do we have to suffer now. We can never just become Netherlanders or just English or any nation for that matter, we will always remain Jews, we must remain Jews, but we want it too. [...] God has never deserted our people; right through the ages there have been Jews, through all the ages they have to suffer.<sup>291</sup>

When she writes of Jews having a moral force towards ‘good’, she references Isaiah’s instruction to the Jews as chosen to be an example to gentiles.<sup>292</sup>

To exist as a martyr-figure, dying to save humanity in some generalised wash of emotion, Anne’s sexuality and feminism were also wiped from the play and film. On 13 June 1944, she wrote in her diary

I was greatly struck by the fact that in childbirth alone women commonly suffer more than any war hero does. And what’s her reward for all this pain? She gets pushed aside when she’s disfigured by birth, her children soon leave her, her beauty is gone.<sup>293</sup>

On the same day she wrote about Jewish transports to Westerbork.

Even girls who stay there for any length of time are expecting babies. It is impossible to escape; most of the people in the camp are branded as inmates by their shaven heads. If it is as bad as that in Holland, whatever will it be like in the distant and barbarous regions they are sent to? We assume most of them are murdered. The British radio speaks of their being gassed. Perhaps this is the quickest way to die.<sup>294</sup>

As well as removing her feminism and politics, Anne’s sexuality was also censored from the play. The following text, written on 5 January 1944 was taboo.

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>292</sup> As discussed earlier in this dissertation, as used in Churchill’s playlet *Seven Jewish Children*, the Old Testament quotation can be reinterpreted politically. See Footnote 151.

<sup>293</sup> Anne Frank, *The Works of Anne Frank* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990), 107.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 32.

I think what is happening to me is so wonderful, and not only what can be seen on my body, but all that is taking place inside. I never discuss myself or any of these things with anybody; that is why I have to talk to myself about them. Each time I have a period, and that has only been three times, I have the feeling that in spite of all the pain, unpleasantness and nastiness, I have a sweet secret, and that is why, although it is nothing but a nuisance to me in a way, I always long for the time I shall feel that secret within me again [...]. Sometimes when I am in bed at night, I have a terrible desire to feel my breasts [...]. I remember that once, when I slept with a girl friend I had a strong desire to kiss her, and that I did so. I could not help being terribly inquisitive about her body, for she had always kept it hidden from me. I asked her whether as proof of our friendship, we should feel one another's breasts, but she refused. I go into ecstasies every time I see the naked figure of a woman, such as Venus for example. [...] If only I had a girl friend!<sup>295</sup>

In the dramatization the next element in Anne's personality to be erased was her ambition. I suggest that her creativity, her sexuality and her Jewish identity were interconnected. Her diary entry of 11 May 1944 reveals her ardent wish to be 'a journalist; and later on, a famous writer'.<sup>296</sup> She sees Jewish suffering as a continuum. If these entries had been part of the stage adaptation, this would have been an accurate representation of a young female Jewish witness during the Shoah. These are not isolated observations. Removing her feminism and her politics is censorship.

The 1996 publication of Anne's unexpurgated diary, sixteen years after Otto Frank's death, prompted a BBC commission in 2009. Deborah Moggach was selected as the new adaptor.<sup>297</sup> Moggach, celebrated for her 2005 television adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, has no Jewish affiliation. Addressing this, she stated in a *Daily Mail* interview that 'I live in Hampstead, which helps [...] it's such a Jewish neighbourhood'.<sup>298</sup> Moggach worked on the script with producer Elinor Day and director Jon Jones. They appear to have no Jewish affiliation and the cast, as far as I can see, are all gentile. In a country so concerned with political correctness it has to be asked, would the BBC have commissioned an all-white production team

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>296</sup> Anne Frank, *The Diary Of A Young Girl* (London: Penguin, 1977), 294.

<sup>299</sup> See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/annefrank/about.shtml> accessed 14 November 2015.

<sup>300</sup> See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1104752/My-Anne-Frank-8217-s-Diary--Writer-Deborah-Moggachs-insight-stroppy-rude-boy-obsessed-teenager.html> accessed 14 November 2015.

for the televisual adaptation of a major black history? Arguing against myself I believe that any writer should be able to write about the other. However, Moggach remained blind to vital aspects of Anne's Jewish spirit, and I suggest that the BBC's choice of her as writer determined the content and tone. Nonetheless, Anne Frank is not Jane Austen. No Mr Darcy rescues Anne Frank from the Gestapo. Moggach made some additions to the first adaptation by presenting Anne's conflicts with her mother, but these were minor points in the grand scheme of Anne's writing. The new adaptation continued the realisation of Anne as a victim rather than as a sexualised, radical Jewish writer. Therefore, from 1954 to 2009, the most poignant universal representation of a Jewish woman has been frozen in girlhood, depoliticised and desexualised.

Understanding the revisionism of Anne Frank's life has helped me understand that my own body of work does not fit into the zeitgeist of dramas purporting to reveal Jewish history that I see in this country. My texts explore the complexities of female Jewish identity and do not present Jewish women as stereotypes to suit a particular narrative. My research reveals that, when Jewish women do appear onstage their realisation is one-dimensional: as particularised in Allen's anti-Zionist lawyer, Churchill's child-murdering Jew, Samuels' grateful convert/victim, Wesker's traditional mother, Pinter's hysteric or Jezebel, and the universalised sainted vision of Anne Frank.

## ***Chapter Four: Jewish women's representation onstage – Julia Pascal***

### ***Woman On The Bridge***

*Woman On The Bridge* had a public reading at the Theatre for The New City, New York, on 14 October 2013.<sup>299</sup> It is to be premiered by Coercion Theatre in Canton, Ohio in April 2017. The protagonist is Judith, a 55-year-old London Jewish journalist who travels to New York to research, but when she goes to the Brooklyn Bridge she impulsively decides to jump off it. Her suicidal voyage is an impulse triggered by a series of events, which awaken earlier family trauma. In New York, Judith meets Anna, her 110-year-old great-aunt. From her she learns that Anna's sister, Esther, Judith's grandmother, committed suicide. This awakens something deep inside Judith's subconscious and is the catalyst that leads her to copy her grandmother's action. However, before examining this familial legacy, which is rooted in my own, it is important to note the importance of Judith's personal identity and her history as an English Jew. It is an unspoken cultural history that informs the writing of the central role.

This is the case of Judith, whose background is similar to mine and whose childhood environment shares much with that of the grandchildren and children of those who were murdered, hidden or simply of other middle class Jewish girls brought up in the post-war era those, such as Nadine Fresco's eight interviewees.<sup>300</sup> Writer Melanie Phillips discusses this atmosphere in her eBook *Guardian Angel*.<sup>301</sup> As secular Jews, we were a tiny minority and Jewishness was not easily revealed. Therefore Judith has been constructed as someone who buries her Jewish identity. This is partly why she leaves London for New York City; a city that is more comfortable with Jewish culture. However, what really pushes her flight is the need to escape her husband's infidelity. The play starts as she enters Manhattan via New York's JFK Airport. She is a wanderer. The myth underlying my narrative is Odysseus. *Woman On The Bridge* structurally follows that of David Mamet's play *Edmond*, where episodic scenes and a lonely journey in Manhattan reveal the protagonist's character and destiny.<sup>302</sup> In *Three Steps on The Ladder of Writing*, Hélène Cixous writes that 'We Need a Dead (wo)man to Begin. To begin

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<sup>299</sup> See <http://ludovicavillar-hauser.tumblr.com/post/64310040616/a-successful-reading-of-woman-on-the-bridge> accessed 1 January 2015.

<sup>300</sup> See Footnote 83.

<sup>301</sup> In her e-book *Guardian Angel*, Melanie Phillips writes about her parents 'Always self conscious about being outsiders in British society, they kept their heads down'. Melanie Phillips, *Guardian Angel*, ebook. See: <https://www.embooks.com/book/guardian-angel>, chapter 5, page 55.

<sup>302</sup> David Mamet, *Edmond* (London: Methuen, 1986).

writing we must have death. [...] young, present, fresh death [...]. The one that comes right up to us so suddenly we don't have time to avoid it'.<sup>303</sup>

Psychologically Judith represents this concept as the granddaughter of the pogrom generation and the daughter of the hinge generation. Judith, at the end of the play, has no time to avoid death. Even as she walks towards life she is unable to sustain the impulse. As well as a historical double layering from pogrom to Shoah, there is also a dramaturgical layering that expresses the psychological. This internal and external journey leads to a jagged movement that exists in the interior of hotels and apartments as well as on the street and underground. The text uses many elements of sound to express the interior soundscape of the character and to suggest absence filled with the chatter of television and street noise creating tangents to avoid a linear structure. In his essay *Trauma, Memory and Transference*, Saul Friedlander writes about the 'essential importance of self-awareness needed by the historian of the Nazi epoch or of the Shoah'. I take historian to also mean the writer or artist. He states that:

the commentary should disrupt facile, linear progression and the narration [...] withstand the need for closure [...] such commentary may introduce splintered of constantly recurring refractions of a traumatic past by using a number of different vantage points'.<sup>304</sup>

This splintering as a psychological phenomenon is dramatised on a meta-level within the play. It is seen when Judith violently smashes a chair, when she slaps her own face, as she hears the destructive narratives of others in the subway, as she reaches out for sexual pleasure with an unknown man and when she arrives at the empty space that once housed the Twin Towers. This void physicalises the void within her. 'And inside it's Ground Zero'.<sup>305</sup> These are the splinters that form the mosaic of her internal state.

Although Hirsch and I work in different spheres, there is a synthesis in the way we use fragments to express absence. I use sound, images, body language and the plasticity of stage text and performance in *Woman On The Bridge*, whereas Hirsch's work investigates the power of lost memory through family photographs and imagery.<sup>306</sup> We are both exploring absence on a collective and personal level. The absence we try to realise, by giving voice and features to the loss, is discussed by psychiatrist Nadine Fresco. In *La Diaspora des Cendres* she talks of children of survivors born after the war experiencing their lives 'as a sort of exile, not from a

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<sup>303</sup> Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on The Ladder of Writing*, translated by Sarah Cornell, Susan Sellers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 7.

<sup>304</sup> See Saul Friedlander, "Trauma, Memory and Transference", in *Holocaust Remembrances*, edited by Geoffrey H. Hartman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), 261.

<sup>305</sup> Thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 148.

<sup>306</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1997).



present or future place, but from a completed time which would have been that of identity itself'.<sup>307</sup>

Fresco's interviews with other children of survivors are crucial to her study of the effect of transmitted trauma. Her research reveals a commonality of parental 'deathly silence on the subject of what happened to them during the Shoah'. Fresco notes how parental language divided space and time into *après/after* and *avant/before*. There is also the 'Avant cet après/ Before this After, c'était le trou noir, béant, vertigineux. There was this gaping, dizzying black hole'.<sup>308</sup>

Hirsch says 'we can never catch up with the past; inasmuch as we remember, we remain in a perpetual temporal and spatial exile. Our past is literally a foreign country we can never hope to visit. And our postmemory is shaped by our sense of belatedness and disconnection'.<sup>309</sup> Nancy K. Miller explores this also in her description of two visits to Kishinev, her paternal grandfather's hometown.<sup>310</sup> Mikhal Dekel evokes the name Kishinev as provoking 'brief synecdochic images' which we know to be gang rape, horrific murder and brutal beatings.<sup>311</sup> It is as if there is an internal, faded map of places in Eastern Europe, carried from The Old Country, that we, the children and grandchildren of this exodus, have printed on our memory even though we know that this inner map belongs to our grandparents and not to us. This landscape represents an emotional and cultural homeland that is not Israel. It is an inner longing for a non-existent country, a Yiddishland. It is the place of *Avant/ Before*, poignantly evoked by Fresco.

Judith appears to seek this lost world when she asks to be taken in by her grandmother's sister. The geographical location is no more, but being close to the body of her relative is a location where she can imagine an escape to new 'home'. Psychologically this is regression. Judith wants to be (grand)mothered but the woman she turns to has no idea how to care for another woman.

Miller, talking of Kishinev, declares it is where she wanted to come from. For Judith her great aunt's New York apartment is the nearest she can get to The Old Country. Hirsch talks of

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<sup>307</sup> Nadine Fresco, "La Diaspora des cendres" in *Nouvelle Revue de Psychoanalyse* (1981), 209.

<sup>308</sup> Nadine Fresco, *La Mort des Juifs* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 118–119.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>310</sup> Marianne Hirsch, Nancy K. Miller, *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). See Nancy K. Miller's chapter *Kishinev Redux*, 254–267, citation is on page 265.

<sup>311</sup> Mikhal Dekel, *The Universal Jew: Masculinity, Modernity and the Zionist Movement* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 151. Note Judaism is matrilineal. Therefore children of raped women are considered Jewish to prevent the victim being punished. For the history of Jewish identity see <http://lawrenceschiffman.com/who-was-a-jew> accessed 17 June 2016.

See <http://www.kishinevpogrom.com/narratives1.html> accessed 16 June 2016.

the impossibility of returning to a past she has never known and yet, for Judith, this return to the body of her grandmother's past is essential. The creation of Judith, who is an orphan of the world that Hirsch and Fresco evoke, is an important landmark in my own writing. Unlike my earlier plays, Judith's Jewish identity is not a political element. Previous dramas featured women whose Jewishness was directly confronted, whereas Judith exists on a more psychological level.

I will briefly list how Jewish women in other texts were politically motivated. Theresa is a Viennese Jewish refugee and Cassandra is a Zionist in *Theresa*. Susanne in *Honeypot* discovers she is a Jew, which propels her to become a Mossad agent.<sup>312</sup> In *Woman In The Moon*, Irena is a hidden Polish Jew and Dora is a Jewish journalist who confronts the former SS scientist Wernher von Braun with his secret Nazi past. In *The Dybbuk*, ghetto Jews Rachel, Leah and Judith dominate the narrative. Sophia in *A Dead Woman On Holiday* is a French Jewish interpreter at the Nuremberg Trials. Esther in *The Yiddish Queen Lear* is a Yiddish theatre actor/manager. Joan Rabinowitch is a Black Jew who dreams she is Joan of Arc in *St Joan*. Marie in *Year Zero* is a Jewish ballet dancer and is in the Resistance. In the same text, Judy – a guignol version of Judy from Blackpool's Punch and Judy shows – is a Jew.<sup>313</sup> Irene in *Broken English* is a Golders Green housewife who smuggles guns to Palestine.<sup>314</sup>

Unlike these characters, Judith in *Woman On The Bridge*, is not easily identifiable as a Jew. Yet she carries a cultural, religious and emotional displacement. The construction of her character is partly sourced by my 2005 interviews with 50 Jewish women.<sup>315</sup> Many of the interviewees expressed memories of Shoah inherited from family members still existent as emotional scar tissue level. Fresco describes it as 'Blessure ingérissable de parents figés dans le silence derrière les yeux secs. Aux enfants, à qui la mémoire étant refusée, on transmettait seulement la blessure.'<sup>316</sup> [This incurable wound is transmitted from the parents, who have never grieved for it, parents who have refused to talk about it, and who transmit only the wound itself'.

Fresco is talking about Shoah, but I believe this wound runs deeper. Jews in England were never re-admitted officially after the 1290 expulsion. This is not largely known. While British schoolchildren may learn about the hegemony of British imperialism and slavery, few

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<sup>312</sup> *Honeypot*, in Julia Pascal, *Political Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2013), 22–58.

<sup>313</sup> *The Yiddish Queen Lear/Woman In The Moon* (London: Oberon, 2001); *A Dead Woman On Holiday* is in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon, 2000), 53–100. *St Joan* and *Year Zero* are in Julia Pascal, *Crossing Jerusalem And Other Plays* (London: Oberon, 2003).

<sup>314</sup> *Broken English*, in Julia Pascal's *Political Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2013), 83–127.

<sup>315</sup> *Jewish Mothers & Daughters: A Film Archive* (London: Pascal Theatre Company, 2006). Housed in The British Library, The Jewish Museum, London Jewish Cultural Centre.

<sup>316</sup> Nadine Fresco, *La Mort des Juifs* (Paris: La Librairie du XXI Siècle, Seuil, 2008), 122.

learn about English medieval pogroms or that the first European deportation of Jews was from England.<sup>317</sup> This background is deliberately evoked in the final thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*.

In *Woman On the Bridge*, Judith never speaks of this hinterland. As the granddaughter of immigrants, she appears to have never totally identified with Englishness: her search for the Yiddish-speaking grandmother's story suggests a longing to find a territory that no longer exists, the place that Hirsch describes as sharing with 'many European Jews of our generation this sense of exile from a world we have never seen and which, because it was irreparably changed or destroyed not by natural or historical evolution over time but by the sudden violent annihilation of the Holocaust, we will never see'.<sup>318</sup> It is by reading Hirsch that I am helped to articulate the construction of my own reaction to this annihilation, and it is by reading Dworkin that I can frame the creation of the grandmother generation as seen in the characters of Anna and Louise in the thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*. Judith, who is English-born has absorbed much of her grandmother's feelings of isolation. Her character encapsulates these tensions before the play begins. This drama is a play, and not an academic thesis, and therefore the protagonist needs to emit the unprocessed silence that is discussed in various ways by Caruth, Dworkin, Hirsch, Hoffman and Laub.

I wish to discuss how trauma is transmitted between generations by revealing this unprocessed silence. At particular moments, the play reveals diaspora and exile through the clashing voices of two distinct cultures. Judith's Jewish, English, assimilated, polite vocal register conflicts with Anna's Yiddish/American brutality. The scarring caused by generations or exile, which is part of the diaspora experience, is recognisable in the aural component of the drama. Judith's middle class English etiquette makes her sound quiet and polite in a harsh Manhattan setting, but she also has a deeper level of inner silence as a result of being conditioned to keep a low profile as an English Jew.

Judith is repressed and self-censors. In contrast, Anna is rude, extroverted self-mocking and appears antisemitic. Both appear to be speaking the same language. However, the audience is aware of the two registers within their speech patterns and, when Anna comments on Judith's voice, this distinction is clear. Anna wounds her with the accusation 'You so damned English!'<sup>319</sup> This helps the audience perceive how language reveals fracture in Jewish experience, even within the same family. There is another layer also going on here too. Silence. The unprocessed trauma described by Caruth, and which has

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<sup>317</sup> Paul Iganski and Barry Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism? Defeating Judeophobia in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain* (London: Profile Books and Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003), 2.

<sup>318</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1997), 242.

<sup>319</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 143.

been transmitted, on the subconscious level, has crossed bloodlines from grandmother to granddaughter. When Anna brings her sister's ghost to the stage by describing her death, this seems to echo the memory that Fresco describes and the weight of unprocessed pain.<sup>320</sup> In fact there are several areas of weight going on here. For the grandmother, Esther, there is the psychological weight of living on when contemporaries have been exterminated. This can be exteriorised by the physical weight of the flat irons. In this way trauma is expressed as an act of self-destruction. Within the play, both weights are materialised in the family story, which is transferred to Judith. She carries that weight of her grandmother's trauma until it too weighs her down and drags her into the East River. My point is that there is a cumulative dramatic patterning. This translates the psychological wound of earlier generations, that which has been described by Fresco, Hirsch et al., into text and performance.

What is cruel here, and the audience sees this, is the way each woman is in exile from any community and from herself. There is no sense of support or sisterhood. Anna rails at the loss of the expensive coat she has bought for her sister. What should have been a classy garment serves as her sister's shroud. Decades after the suicide Anna has no grief, only rage. This too is a denial of the trauma she carries as part of the diaspora, where exile, war and pogrom are part of her inheritance. If she reveals her sister's distress at being forced to drown her kittens, then she also masks her own horror at parents making their child commit this act. The parents are absent from the story but this incident reveals their own emotional desert as they too carry the weight of exile as Jewish refugees escaping pogrom. Anna's language reveals a fragmentation of psyche, only hers is better concealed than that of her sister or great-niece. Her description of the sister's suicide is casual and allusive.

ANNA When I was in Manchester with her I bought her this fancy coat in Kendals. The fog it was so yellow you couldn't see your hand in front. The coat. Cut loose. A-Line. Powder blue. Real angora. Cost me a week's wages. And she! She put weights in the pockets. Flat irons. She couldn't even swim, the stupid bitch.<sup>321</sup>

With this revelation, Anna catalyses a train of events that propel her great-niece to her own death. There are three specific moments revealing Judith's trauma and that foreshadow her attraction to suicide. The first is when Judith is in bed with Andy, here she reveals her impulse to jump from the lighthouse. The second is silent. It is witnessed by the audience when they watch Judith receive the information about her grandmother's

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<sup>320</sup> Nadine Fresco, *La Mort des Juifs* (Paris: Seuil 2008), 125.

<sup>321</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 145.

self-murder. The third is Judith's journey to the bridge and, gradually, it becomes clear that the earlier foreshadowing was leading her to this action. It is Judith's isolation, even though she appears to be functioning well in her career, which drives her to suicide. She has trauma from her grandmother's unprocessed experience, which she carries in ignorance. She cannot share what she does not even know that she possesses. As Dori Laub, a psychoanalyst, and leading figure in the clinical treatment of Holocaust trauma survivors, writes 'Because they were not communicated; they were not transmitted into a holding space, they remained fragmented [...]'.<sup>322</sup> This fragmentation is the key to Judith's psyche. It is in the what-is-not-said that is revealed in the dramaturgy. This inherited trauma must function on what appears to be an inaccessible subconscious, neurological level. This neurology needs to be understood by the playwright, director and, of course, by the actor playing Judith. Caruth and Laub's writings on trauma, silence and fragmentation of the psyche has helped me understand how subconscious knowledge, which inspired the character of Judith, can lead to the materiality of text and production, whilst also becoming available to critical analysis.

The play is dominated by the experience of fractured Jewish women: Judith, her great aunt Anna, the Shoah survivor Louise and the dead grandmother Esther. Judith's choice of job – a BBC investigative journalist – reflects her need to discover the truth about her own history. She is also attracted to the histories of lost women as if this might help her locate missing pieces of her own life. On the Brooklyn Bridge, she meets women who are psychologically unstable. Added to this, through her encounter with the homicide officer Gloria, she hears the voices of murdered women, who mesmerise her and serve as a magnet attracting her to her own death.

Within the text, there are three impulses that drive Judith: the burden of unprocessed trauma as transmitted from her grandmother, alienation from English society, and the trigger of her fractured marriage. It is the accumulation of these that lead her to the Bridge.

Judith carries a genetic tendency that I recognise, as there were many suicides in both sides of my family. The majority were female. Drafting *Woman On The Bridge* led me to investigate the way that trauma can resurface in subsequent generations when triggered by an outside force, in this case sexual betrayal. Although infidelity is trivial compared to the centuries of pogroms leading to Shoah, this personal betrayal ignites angst provoked by centuries of antisemitism in medieval England, Tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany. Perversely, Judith has not chosen to live with or among Jews. Her lovers are gentiles. Here, she chooses sex with the German-American Andy. Her night with a son of her family's wartime enemy exposes an

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<sup>322</sup> Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, *Testimony Crisis of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 51.

attraction–repulsion between Jews and Germans. Their shared history is coiled into this scene and reveals tension in Judith’s character. She recalls D-Day, and the linguistic and historical links between German and Yiddish connect when she remembers Omaha Beach. Andy playfully deconstructs the name of the battleground.

ANDY: Omaha. Oma-ha! Go on.<sup>323</sup>

‘Oma’ is both Yiddish and German for ‘grandmother’. It foreshadows the presence of Judith’s grandmother in the next scene where Judith ‘meets’ the figure of her grandmother through her great aunt Anna. I mention this to show the spiralling plotted within the dramaturgy. Oma/grandmother is a Yiddish sound from Judith’s lost cultural legacy. This word, ‘Oma’ activates the absence of the loving grandmother figure that she searches for in the drama. In this moment we receive the Jewish past through the German lover. A Jew-loving German reaches out to Judith, but she is so absent from her own psychological fragmentation that she does not receive the subtext. Andy represents a human who needs her, but she cannot empathise.

Our genes are described as a kind of book written in a form of helix structure.<sup>324</sup> This image offered me the idea of constructing a helix-like dramatic architecture through a series of inter-twined scenes where Judith’s inherited genetic markers would be lit up by those she met. It is important to acknowledge that Judith is unaware of what she has absorbed or why she is so fractured. Her internal state is concealed, even from herself.

Morse and Wiley’s *Ghosts From The Nursery* helped me understand how an inherited suicide tendency can recur over several generations.<sup>325</sup> This may come from a historical imperative where suicide is the only escape from overwhelming pain and existential despair. It is the hidden effect of generations of suffering, which is the European Jewish experience. I am also thinking of the mass Jewish suicide at Clifford’s Tower in York in 1190, where self-murder was an act of defiance.<sup>326</sup> Suicides in my family were not as Jewish martyrs but were, I believe, provoked by the trauma of exile and displacement. How can a playwright suggest such a complex history without exposition?

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<sup>323</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 134.

<sup>324</sup> See James Watson, *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

<sup>325</sup> Robin Karr-Morse, Meredith S. Wiley, *Ghosts From The Nursery. Tracing The Roots Of Violence* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997), 39–40.

<sup>326</sup> See <http://www.historyofyork.org.uk/themes/norman/the-1190-massacre> accessed 5 December 2015. Paul Iganski and Barry Kosmin, *A New Antisemitism? Defeating Judeophobia in 21st Century Britain* (London: Profile Books and Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2003), 2.

After reading the first draft of *Woman On The Bridge*, my agent, Nicki Stoddart, was astonished when Judith tried to jump from the Brooklyn Bridge. My intention was to reveal that a subconscious suicidal impulse was awoken by learning of her beloved grandmother's suicide. In the first draft this plotting was far too subtle. When Nicki said 'I didn't think she was mad' I realised that I must find a way of slowly revealing Judith's hinterland so that, although the audience may be surprised at her suicide threat, they also understand, from the dramaturgy, that this might be a genetic tendency. Therefore, it was crucial for me to find a stage language to subliminally suggest this. How was I to allow the inner landscape – that complex patterning of genetic and environmental factors – to inform Judith's public, and private, behaviour? How was I to *show not tell*? I chose two ways: through the cityscape and through the performer's body language. Both must fuse.

I did not wish to use psychiatric exposition: my aim was to dramatise Judith's crisis rather than narrate it. One way was to use Manhattan's geography as a reflection of the mind: to reveal the subterranean as well as the visible. From my agent's observation, I realised that even an educated theatre-going audience might not know that an apparently sane individual can jump from a building or throw herself in front of a train. I realised that a helix structure could connect environment and genetic predisposition. The geography of Judith's personality and the geography of Manhattan must be coiled.

Judith watches television in her hotel room. Her mental disarray is plotted subliminally with the screaming of two women in the Reality TV series *Whose Baby Is it?* The question *Whose Baby Is it?* suggests the unseen presence of a lost child: the lost child is also Judith. She hears a bitter struggle for possession of a baby. Unlike this TV baby, Judith was a baby for whom nobody fought.<sup>327</sup>

This scene preludes her visit to her only living family member; her grandmother's sister, Anna. At this point it is clear that Judith needs to be embraced into a loving family. She claims the right to live with her great aunt. However, Anna, is no *balabuster*.<sup>328</sup>

JUDITH	I'll come over in the morning. Move in.
ANNA	What?
JUDITH	With you. <i>(Beat.)</i> Is nine OK?
ANNA	<i>(Eating cake.)</i> Too much sugar.
JUDITH	I'll do your shopping.
ANNA	I get it sent up.

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<sup>327</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 141.

<sup>328</sup> This is Yiddish for the Jewish home-maker/good housewife. Leo Rosten, *The Joys Of Yiddish* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 29.

JUDITH            I'll cook.

ANNA             Nobody cooks!

JUDITH            It'd suit us both.....I'm a great tenant. Hell, I'm family!.....I'm moving in, Anna.

ANNA             No!

JUDITH            Come on!

ANNA             I don't want you here. You hear me? I don't want nobody.

JUDITH            *(She slaps her own face. Anna doesn't notice.)* I understand.

ANNA             *(Mocking her English accent.)* 'I understand. I understand'.

JUDITH            Forget I asked.<sup>329</sup>

This slap exposes the inner language of self-destruction that is transmitted to the audience. Judith punishes herself for asking for help. That Anna does not notice, exposes the family patterning of ignoring distress. Fresco writes about this longing for a larger family that has disappeared in the abyss of the Shoah. 'Hell I'm family' says Judith as she lurches forward in her emotional attempt to be taken in by her grandmother's sister.<sup>330</sup> In *The Dybbuk*, Judith says 'I am haunted by faces, different accents, different bodies, all the lost cousins and uncles and aunts, I want to have known'.<sup>331</sup>

The reference is to the dead Yiddish-speaking family. One of Fresco's interviewees remembers sobbing when listening to a 'scratchy' 78" record where a woman sings in Yiddish. This daughter of a survivor, who speaks no Yiddish, imagines it as a lullaby in the mother tongue. It is this loss of a mother tongue, and a sense of being orphaned that emerges here and that has resonances in *Woman On The Bridge*. Longing, grief and fear of the unknown are part of what she experiences. There is almost a sense of shame at a feeling that has been inherited rather than lived. The woman says

J'ai toujours le sentiment que la peur dans laquelle je suis presque en permanence, c'est la peur que je n'ai pas affrontée moi-même.<sup>332</sup>

I always have the feeling that the sensation of fear, a sensation that is permanent, is a fear that I have never actually had to face.

Fresco says of herself

<sup>329</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 141.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>331</sup> Julia Pascal, "The Dybbuk" in *The Holocaust Trilogy* (London: Oberon Books, 2009), 106.

<sup>332</sup> Nadine Fresco, *La Mort des Juifs* (Paris: Seuil 2008), 125.



Je ne sais pas si j'ai le droit de dire une chose pareille, mais parfois j'ai le sentiment que c'est nous qui avons été déportés. Non parce que nous sommes eux, mais bien au contraire parce que nous sommes venus après et que notre vie n'a plus de sens.<sup>333</sup>

I don't know if I have the right to say such a thing, but sometimes I feel as if it is we who were deported. Not because we are like them, on the contrary, because we came after and that our life has no meaning.

Fresco's analysis of this post-war generation of children of the Holocaust reflects the way Judith's life has no meaning. It is this that drives her to the Bridge and suicide. Fresco's analysis of this generation is that they are 'encombrés de leur vie posthume'/weighed down by their posthumous life.<sup>334</sup>

The question is how to expose the silence that conceals Judith's inner void. One subway scene focuses on the visual: the second emphasises the aural. In this underworld, she does not mask her behaviour.

*Judith is standing on the subway platform. A train is coming. She breathes in as it comes closer.  
She has an impulse to jump in front of it.  
The train pulls in.  
She breathes out.*<sup>335</sup>

In the second subway scene, Judith is in a sealed carriage where she hears about adultery, divorce, deceit and smashed relationships.

*Judith gets on the subway. Voice mix of a group of people standing up talking.*

[...]

MAN R            You remember that time? You and me?

*Woman laughs.*

V/O                Please stand clear of the closing doors.

WOMAN K        Lady, I tell her, it runs between a hundred-and-thirty-eight and twenty-third. (*Loud and irritable.*) What's the cross street?

MAN G            I just wanted to live a few hours with her. Two, three times a week. What's wrong with that? OK I kissed her. But that's all. Well that's what I told her. 'I kissed her, I kissed her, I kissed! OK?'

V/O                The next stop is Fourteenth Street

MAN G            And so I say OK and we go and you know what?

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>335</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 121.

WOMAN B I was leaving the office late. He was my boss.  
 MAN G He's my shrink, not hers, and you know what he says?  
 WOMAN Y (*Shouting.*) Is this a local or an express?  
 WOMAN B And he took me in his arms.  
 MAN G The shrink, could be my son, he says, 'You come to see me together' and we go and you know what? He says, 'You don't listen to your wife'. Can you believe that? You don't listen to your wife!  
 WOMAN B I left my husband and my two young sons for him.  
 MAN G She never stops yakking.  
 WOMAN B And him, he didn't even want to divorce his wife.<sup>336</sup>

This vocal cacophony reflects Judith's psychological fragmentation. The flashes of conversations she chooses to hear are about crises and emotional pain on the journey through the lower depths of Manhattan towards the Brooklyn Bridge. This pull towards water has been foreshadowed in Scene Four.

JUDITH There I am standing on this tiny platform. I look over. Nobody. Sand. Pools of water. Sun slashes.....And inside me. This huge wave. Screaming. Climb over the rail! Do it!<sup>337</sup>

it is a way of subconsciously preparing the audience for the final scene.

JUDITH (*Looking out across the River to the Statue of Liberty.*) [...] There's nothing but me, the city and this water. All I need is enough courage to jump and then. Nothing.<sup>338</sup>

Throughout, Judith is experiencing mental breakdown while appearing to be fully functioning. This is known in psychotherapeutic language as 'masking'. In the 1990s, child psychiatrist Dr Andrew Crowcroft told me about this ability to conceal anxiety; a learned behaviour that helps the depressed person appear 'normal'.<sup>339</sup> This fractured interior is masked

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>339</sup> This way of disguising depression is described in Andrew Crowcroft, *The Psychotic: Understanding Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 108.

by Judith in her conversation with her great aunt, but audiences see it when she is alone. In her hotel room Judith puts on her dress back to front. She swears at herself. She fights with material objects. She hits herself. These actions reveal her inner state. The soundscape reveals the jarring of Judith's thoughts. Judith hears women fighting for a man on reality television. Voices enter her consciousness in the subway. Dotted throughout is the accumulation of police sirens, cars and doormen's whistles. This aural multi-layering reflects the fragmentation of Judith's psyche. Dramatically I wanted to create a symbiosis between inner and outer worlds. I added stage techniques to illustrate the discreet ways that reveal the transition from repressed trauma towards suicide.

Psychoanalyst and child survivor, Dori Laub, has worked since 1979 on a video archive of Shoah testimony. He reports that even forty years 'after the event. Some have hardly spoken of it, but those who have feel that they managed to say very little that was heard'.<sup>340</sup> There is a body of critical work on this area of silence already discussed in the writings of Dworkin, Fresco and Hirsch. Laub writes about the imperative of talking about what happened in the Holocaust and about the impossibility of talking, which 'results in a prevailing silence and tells the reader that 'The Germans called this silence Brückesympptome/Bridge Symptom'.<sup>341</sup>

*Woman On The Bridge* has many characters who are psychologically and literally on the bridge. They are all encumbered by what has been unsaid. Anna has become so armoured against the world that she can never hear the needs of her sister's granddaughter. Louise, a Shoah survivor, is not heard by her children or grandchildren. Judith searches for connections but when Gloria tries to get Judith to talk about what is going on inside her, what Laub calls a healing that is 'pulling fragments together [...]' – he states that in this 'interpersonal space there has to be [...] an internal companion because the process of symbolization and the formation of narrative only happens within an internal dialogue' –, Gloria tries to externalise that internal other, that 'addressee'.<sup>342</sup> At this point in the play Judith has failed to get Anna to listen to her and now she fails to allow Gloria the role of listener.

GLORIA      [...] Don't you come from a people they always trying to kill?

JUDITH      Shut up!<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, *Testimony Crisis of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 79.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>343</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 173.

Laub's studies inform the character construction of Anna, her sister Esther and to some extent, Judith. This traces a direct line from pogrom to Shoah and to the post-Shoah/hinge generation. Loeb interviewed a survivor who described herself as 'someone who had never known feelings of love', which Loeb calls this 'self-inflicted emotional imprisonment'. In this clinical case, the woman's death-in-life state is analysed as her bearing the responsibility for the pain of those she witnessed being murdered. As Laub notes, 'Hitler's crime was not only the killing of the Jews, but getting the Jews to believe that they deserve it'.<sup>344</sup> Judith and Anna are fictional characters, but they are informed by this research about hiding identity, as detailed by Felman's childhood experience in the shopping mall.<sup>345</sup>

As well as exploring the psychological fragmentation of the women in the text, the play was also written with the aim of breaking stereotypes of Jewish female saints, temptresses or sexless *balabusters*. Writing about male stage representations of the mature female, the cultural historian Martha Roth notes that 'Postmenopausal women are figures either of ridicule or fear'.<sup>346</sup> Judith is neither. She holds a successful job. She interacts erotically. Judith up-ends stereotypes of domesticated asexual Jewish mothers and grandmothers. She has no sexual guilt, nor is she constrained by conventional morality. Anne Frank was not allowed to reveal her sexuality and, as far as I know, no Jewish woman, of any age (not even Ruth in Pinter's *The Homecoming*), has been seen enjoying the act of sex on the post-war English stage.

Not only is Judith sexual but she is frank about it and talks easily about the pleasure of multiple orgasms. The following lines reveal her *joie de vivre* co-existing with her death-wish. Here, when she talks about orgasm to her BBC producer, her text is intercut with the voice of Christian evangelicalism as an ironic counterpoint.

JUDITH	And the first time is just the getting ready and the second is good, but the third/
VOICE OFF	/Come and shake your soul!/ /is really head breaking!
JUDITH	Jesus Christ, he loves you!
VOICE OFF	You think we can do a feature on that? What shall we call it? The third coming! ( <i>She giggles.</i> ) <sup>347</sup>

<sup>344</sup> Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, *Testimony Crisis of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 79.

<sup>345</sup> See footnote 25.

<sup>346</sup> Martha Roth, "Notes Towards A Feminist Aesthetic", *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 1(1) 1983, 10.

<sup>347</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 149.

Judith may be emotionally fragmenting but she is still sexual. Witnessing the older woman in bed with the younger man is also a way of countering stereotypes of ageing. Audiences might expect that the 55-year-old female would be dependent on the 25-year-old male. This assumption is overturned: it is Andy who wants to continue the liaison. However, within their scene, there are moments when Judith does reveal her inner landscape to Andy. She selects a memory that foreshadows her end. The confession of wanting to jump from the lighthouse so early in the text, subliminally prepares the audience so that, by the end of the play, they do not think, as my agent did, in an earlier draft, that Judith displays ‘mad’ behaviour out of nowhere. Andy does not pick up on her suicidal hints. In this scene Judith shows that she is an existential character who is exploring the intensity of life through sex while also considering death.

She is also aware of how history and geography osmose. In Normandy she does not just see the beach, she feels the presence of the GIs as they land on D-Day. Their death haunts her as she lies in bed with a German man and remembers the last war. In her preface to *Literature in the Ashes of History*, Caruth asks ‘what does it mean for history to disappear? And what does it mean to speak of a history that disappears?’<sup>348</sup> Judith is subliminally asking the same question in her imaginary memories. Rather than identifying with pogrom or Shoah, she displaces images of associated violence towards Jews and projects it on to young American soldiers with whom she identifies. She, the Jewish woman, imagines herself as an American running into German guns at Omaha Beach. That she does this with a young German-American gives it a disturbing resonance. This is evidence of her psychological fracture.

[...] all those American lads. Running out of the sea into tank fire. Oh Jesus, I’m a boy soldier pissing my pants!<sup>349</sup>

The character is constructed as a complex woman with layers of emotional contradictions. She wants to live and she wants to die. She wants to be independent and she wants to move in with her great aunt. She is bleak and self-mocking. The play is not meant to be depressing but to have elements of humour.

ANDY	What’s your name?
JUDITH	I told you.
ANDY	Angela? ( <i>Shaking his head.</i> ) Uh huh.
JUDITH	Why not?

<sup>348</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 87.

<sup>349</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 136.

ANDY            Angela is blonde with a snub nose.

JUDITH         Tonight that's who I am.<sup>350</sup>

It is only when she is alone, that the audience sees her despair. In the next passage the language of Manhattan's street names reflects her own mental state. Bleeker Street is Judith's bleaker street.

*A hotel room in Manhattan. East 79th Street. Sounds of police sirens.*

*Judith is in a hotel and the sounds are out in the street. The windows are open.*

*She is on the 12th floor.....*

*Judith opens her case and takes out clothes. She throws them on the bed wildly. She puts on a dress. It is back to front. She groans with rage.*

JUDITH         Stupid bitch!

*She rummages among her clothes and papers.*

JUDITH         Somewhere there is a map. I can't get this place, it's all straight lines, avenues-streets, up and down and then suddenly it's all letters Bleeker and Bleeker.....

*Sound of sirens.*<sup>351</sup>

In the last scene, on the Bridge, Judith wants to jump, is persuaded down but slips and falls into the river. The play ends without the audience knowing Judith's fate. Does she survive? The NYPD police told me that survival is almost impossible. In the last moments, Judith, turns back to pick up her forgotten tape recorder: it is this action that causes her fall. The movement backwards is a reflex: repeating her grandmother's fall into water. It can be interpreted as a way of joining the grandmother/mother figure by mirroring her suicide, and it can be understood as the result of her internalising all that she has experienced in the city.

The other female characters in the play were constructed as a result of interviews with mature Jewish women of ambition and achievement. Anna, Judith's great aunt is an amalgam of my grandmother's argumentative sister, Malvina Boldur, my aunt, Edith Newman who was still interested in sex as an old woman, and the straight-talking writer, Martha Gellhorn.<sup>352</sup> Shoah survivor, Louise, is partly a reflection of Polish Jewish Warsaw Ghetto survivor, and member of

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>352</sup> I met Gellhorn when researching for *A Dead Woman On Holiday*, which is set in the Nuremberg Trials, which she attended.

my ensemble, Ruth Posner. Anna and Louise are not Upper East Side Jewish lunching ladies. They smash a common preconception that New York Jews are a rich, homogeneous elite.

Anna represents the previous generation of unloved and unloving women. She is unable to empathise with any relative. Her children never visit and, when Judith turns up, she is hostile. Anna's character is the result of centuries of Jewish education, where a woman learns that she is secondary to the Jewish male.<sup>353</sup> She is a development of my character Esther Laranovska, in *The Yiddish Queen Lear*.<sup>354</sup> Unlike Esther, who is murdered for being Jewish, and Judith who murders herself, Anna is a super-survivor who has outlived the century. She represents the toughness of a Jewish working-class immigrant world. Anna's harshness was learned young.

ANNA                      When we were kids we had cats and they made her drown the kittens. She always howled and still they made her do it. Then she did it to herself.<sup>355</sup>

With this unprocessed memory, we understand the continuum of intergenerational emotional abuse. Within *Woman On the Bridge* not only is there a history of pogrom and Shoah but there is a continuum of abuse between these women. Referring to historical trauma, and its transmission, Hirsch refers to a 'structure of inter-and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience'. She describes the relationship that 'the generation after bears to the personal, collective and cultural trauma of those who came before-to experiences they "remember" only by means of stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up'.<sup>356</sup> *Woman On The Bridge* adds another element that shows how emotional trauma can also be generated within the family itself. Anna remembers her sister howling as she is forced to drown cats. Felines are traditionally associated with the female and the enforced murder of female by female is a component on the meta-level. Added to this revelation is the fact that Anna allows Judith to learn that her grandmother drowned herself. The audience witnesses Judith following the same suicide by drowning. Repetitive patterns are unprocessed. They work both psychologically and through direct speech. Here she denigrates her great niece's sexuality.

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<sup>353</sup> Leilah Leah Bronner, *From Eve to Esther: Rabbinic Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 92. Bronner makes the point that the communal prayer experience, 'was virtually closed to women'. As women had no voice in the synagogue, then in Jewish life they were considered secondary to men. This ancient practice has its effect on modern women, even if they are not aware of where it originates.

<sup>354</sup> Julia Pascal, *The Yiddish Queen Lear/Woman In The Moon* (London: Oberon Books, 2001).

<sup>355</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 144.

<sup>356</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 5–6.

ANNA           (Beat.) And you! If I had a body like yours what wouldn't I do?  
(Pause.) But you dress like a *shlumper*. You got to smarten up  
lady. Look at me. Do I let myself go? Do I?<sup>357</sup>

She describes Judith pejoratively as a *shlumper*.<sup>358</sup> The power of this Yiddish word reduces the autonomous sexual adult to the state of a messy lumpen girl. Anna's casual cruelty is her limited means of expression. She speaks of her sister in the same register, flipping from love to hate.

ANNA           When I was in Manchester with her I bought her this fancy coat in  
Kendals. The fog it was so yellow you couldn't see your hand in  
front. The coat. Cut loose. A-Line. Powder blue. Real angora. Cost  
me a week's wages. And she! She put weights in the pockets. Flat  
irons. She couldn't even swim, the stupid bitch.<sup>359</sup>

However Anna, like her great niece, also has a capacity for self-hatred laced with self-mockery. Again we see the genetic helix dramatised.

ANNA           What am I? A ragdoll. Look at this photo of me. If I'd realised how  
good I looked I'd'a had a lot of guys.<sup>360</sup>

Anna may even appear antisemitic. At the 2013 New York reading, one Jewish woman was upset by what she believed to be Anna's 'antisemitism'.

ANNA           This stinking heat. Every night, smoke in my mouth. The guy next  
door puffing out the window. Straight to my lungs. Probably the  
landlord pays him to give me a good cancer. Asshole wants me out.

JUDITH         Who?

ANNA           Damned Jew landlord.

JUDITH         Aren't you protected?

ANNA           Yeh but he didn't think I'd live so long. Stinking Yid. (Beat.)  
Maybe his foreskin grew back.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 145.

<sup>358</sup> For a full description of the word see Leo Rosten, *The Joys Of Yiddish* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 358.

<sup>359</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 142.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 138..



The intention was not to write an antisemitic character, rather to create a complex character who enjoys Yiddish humour to critique a fellow-Jew. Her punch line is ‘Maybe his foreskin grew back’, thereby overturning the cliché of the mean Jew by outrageously suggesting that ‘the Jew’ is so exploitative that he has regrown his foreskin and become a Christian. This old Jewish woman is no sentimental *bubba*.<sup>362</sup> Her life force is monstrous: she is a fighter to the last.

ANNA            I won’t leave this stinking planet for as long as you live. (*Laughs.*)  
Look at me, you asshole! I’ve got family! What’ve you got? A  
dreck son, lungs full of tar, belly full of schmaltz. Look at me, I’m  
telling you, look at me! Here I am paying peanuts in a great  
apartment eating high-class chocolate gateau with my relative from  
London, England. And here I am! Five minutes from Times  
Square! Eight minutes from Carnegie Hall! Ten minutes from  
Columbus Circle! All that hiked-up rent you’re missing. Well, you  
can whistle Dixie because I’ve twenty more years left in me. You  
know what schmuck, I’ll be dancing on your grave long after  
you’re farted outta a worm’s ass.<sup>363</sup>

The aim of *Woman On The Bridge* is to create new Jewish characters and avoid female Jewish stereotypes. As bell hooks writes of African-American identity, the same could be said of female Jewish identity within dramatic literature.

[...] it is equally important for us to affirm that liberation takes place only in a context where we are able to imagine subjectivities that are diverse, constantly changing, and always operating in states of cultural contingency. To embrace and accept fluid black subjectivities, African American attachment to a notion of the unitary self must be broken.<sup>364</sup>

This is part of the diversity of Jewish representation of Judith and Anna who both challenge any construction of the Jewish woman as ‘a unitary’ self.

The play’s crafting led me to connect the helix design of our DNA patterning to a textual helix, a spiral form where characters’ traits are drip-fed into drama in order to help audiences understand intergenerational trauma. Reflecting on the importance of Yiddish made me aware of how Jewish self-hate and the energy of Jewish survival can co-exist, particularly in the character of Anna. It also made me conscious of how a Yiddish-inflected linguistic substructure can transmit complex, cultural messages. The writing and rewriting of *Woman On The Bridge*, while also directing and rewriting elements of the 2015 production of *Crossing Jerusalem*, as detailed in Chapter Three, allowed me to understand how a small change of syntax can reflect our

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<sup>362</sup> *Bubba* is the Yiddish word for grandmother. It is usually an image rooted in Russian Jewish history where the Jewish grandmother is pictured as a loving old woman in a headscarf.

<sup>363</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 142.

<sup>364</sup> bell hooks, *killing rage ending racism* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 249.

grandmothers' Yiddish. In this way I realised how to transmit their sense of alienation through their particular speech rhythms and thereby communicate elements of complex lives that would otherwise be lost.

There are elements of what Freud called 'The Compulsion To Repeat The Trauma' percolating this narrative.<sup>365</sup> Judith tells Andy of her desire to jump from the lighthouse. Later she makes her way to the Brooklyn Bridge. Between the two events she learns of her grandmother's suicide by drowning. When she first speaks of the desire to jump into water from the lighthouse, she is ignorant, on a conscious level of her grandmother's action. The trauma which caused her grandmother to drown herself, appears to exist in her and the compulsion towards water is evident. It even has a reference when Anna remembers watching her sister being forced to drown beloved kittens as a child. However, if there is a compulsion to 'return to the scene of the crime', and here the crime is what the Germans call Selbstmorder/self-murder, Caruth brings up the antithesis of self-destruction that is present in Freud's concept of moving from death into life.<sup>366</sup> Indeed this is the impulse that happens in Judith's trajectory. Her meeting with Gloria, who represents the struggle for life, urges her down from the Bridge. She agrees to Gloria's desire to 'Kick death in the ass'.<sup>367</sup> In the final moments Judith agrees to come back in the battle of life. However, it is a slip (Freudian?) that causes her to fall. The audience is left with the knowledge that she Judith turned her back on death but that perhaps it was too late.

### **12-37**

12-37 dramatises flashpoints of twentieth-century history in Ireland, England and Palestine. Although the play starts with the male point of view, it is Rina, who is the major female character, and around whom the politics and emotions of the drama pivot. Of the three thesis plays, this is the one that most directly addresses the immediacy of war, trauma and exile. The character of Rina is new on the English stage.

She starts off as a hopeful Yiddish actor but is traumatised by war and multiple rape. Very little has been written about women's Shoah experience compared to archives of male testimony. Israeli historian Judith Tydor Baumel in *Double Jeopardy: Gender And The Holocaust*, writes of how 'the missing 52%', a phrase she attributes to Professor Gershon Bacon,

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<sup>365</sup> For a discussion on this see Bessel van der Kolk, "The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma, Re-enactment, Revictimization, and Masochism" in *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, Volume 12, Number 2, 389–411, June 1989. See [www.cirp.org/library/psych/vanderkolk](http://www.cirp.org/library/psych/vanderkolk) accessed 20 June 2016.

<sup>366</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Literature in the Ashes of History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 5.

<sup>367</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Woman On The Bridge*, 176.

are ‘mostly ignored by researchers dealing with inter-war (Polish) Jewry’.<sup>368</sup> Of that missing 52%, Rina represents an unnoticed history: that of the Jewish woman used as sex slaves in the concentration camps.<sup>369</sup> Here we have presence of women’s bodies and absence of testimony. This is represented in the character of Rina. She was subject to, and witness of, the increased vulnerability of women prisoners as a result of their gender. Tydor Baumel describes how, in Auschwitz, girls and young women were forced to stand naked in front of SS guards as their heads and body hair were shaved. Lanzmann’s refusal to include women’s testimony in his epic documentary *Shoah*, denies the particularity of their experiences. Lucamante writes

Denying the offense of the gaze – which belittled female subjectivity by subverting individuality – would offend the memory of the women who experienced the Shoah, and reduce the experience to universalistic issues that do not lead to a deeper understanding of a particular kind of suffering. It is for this reason that the female experience of the Shoah cannot be absorbed into a general context [...].<sup>370</sup>

No woman in Lanzmann’s *Shoah* tells of how the pregnant, and the women carrying small children, were selected for immediate murder, whereas men of the same age, those in their twenties and thirties, were chosen for labour and had greater chances of survival. Israeli-Irish political sociologist Ronit Lentin confirms that ‘women were targeted not merely as Jews, but also on account of their “biological destiny” as the producers of the next “racially inferior” Jewish generation, and as sexual objects’.<sup>371</sup> Lentin also sees the suppression of women’s voices as a form of hegemonic Zionist masculinity, which ‘silences the voices of non-hegemonic subordinated groups’ including the Arab ‘enemy’. She writes that Zionism, ‘in order to perpetuate itself had to silence Shoah survivors’.<sup>372</sup> The suppression of Yiddish as a Jewish living language in Israel certainly supports her thesis. Lentin suggests that by making Shoah history visible and ‘performative’ this silence is broken.<sup>373</sup>

Analyses of Jewish women’s experiences of war and trauma in the Shoah do not emerge until the late 1990s. The absence of this presence is notable. In 1998, Tydor Baumel writes that

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<sup>368</sup> Judith Tydor Baumel, *Double Jeopardy: Gender and the Holocaust* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 10.

<sup>369</sup> For research on ‘sexualised violence’ towards female survivors of concentration camps, see *Life, Death and Sacrifice*, edited by Esther Hertzog (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing, 2008), 148.

<sup>370</sup> Stefania Lucamante, *Forging Shoah Memories: Italian Women Writers, Jewish Identity, and the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 71. Mira Ryczke Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust: A Memoir*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 83. See Dalia Ofer, Leonore J. Weitzman, editors. *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>371</sup> Ronit Lentin, *Israeli Daughters of The Shoah. Re-occupying the Territories of Silence* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), 48.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

‘women’s Holocaust literature has only recently taken its place on the academic map, due to the growing awareness of feminist history [...]’.<sup>374</sup> In 2000, Dworkin tells us that ‘Jew-whore’ was favored by the Gestapo as a form of address.<sup>375</sup> By 2014, Lucamante writes of the ‘perpetual violence against women in the forms of humiliation, harassment, violence and sexual exchange’.<sup>376</sup>

Writing in 1998, in her essay on *Women in the Forced Labour Camps*, Holocaust survivor and writer, Felicja Karay relates how German commanders selected and raped Jewish women. She details officers’ parties where Jewish women were ordered ‘to serve the guests in the nude and were ultimately raped by the revellers’.<sup>377</sup> She also writes about the numerous women who were brutally raped and murdered. The author Myrna Goldenberg endorses this. She talks of one Auschwitz deportee being ‘singled out [...] to be returned two days later, “scarcely recognisable, incoherent, face and body swollen and bruised”’. She also evidences mass rape of ‘Jewish girls who were buried alive in mass graves that they had dug’.<sup>378</sup> This is the world that Rina lives through and her unprocessed trauma, after deportation, violence and multiple rape, results in a permanent sense of exile, not only from the Yiddish community she knew in Prague before the Shoah, but also as an exile from the self she was before Nazi occupation. This is what scars her and convinces her to be a militant nationalist.

Within the scarcity of women’s narratives there is also the mythologising of the Jewish heroine, which I shall discuss later with regard to Anne Frank; however, I would like to briefly examine the importance of Hannah Senesh. She was not a concentration camp victim but a martyr who is celebrated as a warrior.<sup>379</sup> Senesh was a Hungarian-born Jew who became a Special Operations Executive paratrooper for the British.<sup>380</sup> In 1944 she was parachuted into Yugoslavia, but was picked up by the Nazis, tortured by the Gestapo and murdered in front of a firing squad at the age of twenty-two.

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<sup>374</sup> Judith Tydor Baumel, *Double Jeopardy: Gender and the Holocaust* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 155–178.

<sup>375</sup> Andrea Dworkin, *Scapegoat* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 51.

<sup>376</sup> Stefania Lucamante, *Forging Shoah Memories: Italian Women Writers, Jewish Identity, and the Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 71.

<sup>377</sup> In Felicja Karay Ofer, “Women in the Forced Labour Camps” in *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 291.

<sup>378</sup> Myrna Goldberg, “Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors” in “Women in the Forced Labour Camps” in *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 336.

<sup>379</sup> See <http://www.mjhnyc.org/hannah> accessed 17 July 2016.

<sup>380</sup> *Hannah Senesh, Her Life And Diary* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973). See also Aharon Megged’s play “Hanna Senesh” in *Israeli Holocaust Drama*, edited by Michael Taub (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 79–126.

Senesh is the antithesis of the fictional character of Rina. Amongst Zionists, she is presented as a beacon of heroism and morality.<sup>381</sup> In Israel a Communist kibbutz was named after her, and several streets. She is The Good Jewish Woman who died for her people's liberation; whereas Rina falls into the category of the 'degraded woman' and it is this very degradation of Jewish women that I believe has contributed to the silence around their abuse, rape and murder. As Andrea Dworkin states, 'Hitler painted the Jewish woman as a harlot, wild, promiscuous [...] The women are raped, sterilized, tortured and killed. [...] When the terror subsides, the survivors are re-evaluated [...] They are garbage'.<sup>382</sup> This is Rina's experience. She says of herself 'I am filth'.<sup>383</sup> She either masks what happened or continues the Nazi-Jewish degradation. There are no words for what she has experienced. Caruth asks 'What does it mean to say that victims have no language of their own?' She writes about how the Sonderkommando 'had to call the corpses *Figuren* (figures) or *schmattes* (rags) or "pieces of shit". So the language of the repressor is repressing reality and repressing reference'.<sup>384</sup> It leads to silence.

*A street café. Tel Aviv.*

RINA            Hello Cecil.  
 CECIL            Excuse me?  
 RINA            You don't recognize me?  
 CECIL            Forgive me, the voice yes.  
 RINA            Have I changed so much?  
 CECIL            Jaysus. Rina?  
 RINA            Yes.  
 CECIL            Here?  
 RINA            Yes.  
 CECIL            How?  
 RINA            Illegally.  
 CECIL            What happened?  
 RINA            We were deported.  
 CECIL            Where?

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<sup>381</sup> See Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwarz, *Perfect Heroes: The World War II Parachutists and the Making of Israeli Collective Memory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

<sup>382</sup> Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography Men Possessing Women* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1979, 146–147).

<sup>383</sup> See Julia Pascal, thesis play 12-37, 227.

<sup>384</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Conversations with Leaders In The Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2104), 330.

RINA I'll tell you another time.<sup>385</sup>

As discussed by Dworkin, Rina represents the woman who is reduced as a human being after what happened to her as a sex-slave. She is further distressed by the world's lack of interest. Here she reveals a different silence. The lack of interest in her story.

RINA After the war, I got to London. I saw royal parks, a garden full of roses and people walking dogs, men and women pushing babies in prams. There was an army band in uniform playing patriotic songs on the bandstand. Everything so calm, so civilised, as if nothing had happened.<sup>386</sup>

As with Judith in *Woman On The Bridge*, there is a character fracture where the person appears to function and yet she masks her feelings of numbness. At the end of the play, Paul becomes interested in Rina's Holocaust history. Only now does she allude to her experience.

PAUL (*Beat.*) What happened to you in Buchenwald?

RINA (*Beat*) Nothing.

PAUL I don't believe you.

RINA Then don't.

PAUL You can't tell me?

RINA (*Defiantly*) What they did to us. Women. Don't you know? They picked the best-looking. (*Laughs*) Fucking us was forbidden. So they murdered us.

PAUL But they didn't kill you.

RINA Didn't they?<sup>387</sup>

Rina questions if she is actually alive. Does she even recognise herself as present? This is the death-in-life sensation identified by Laub. She is a complicated multi-layered young woman whose experience fills a gap in knowledge, even if it is alluded to rather than detailed. In *12-37*, the role of Rina challenges the trope that political struggle is male territory. Her personal experience of war, trauma and exile has turned her from believing in the Soviet dream to faith in Jewish Right Wing Nationalism.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *12-37*, 227.

<sup>386</sup> *12-37*, 243.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>388</sup> In British Mandate Palestine, Irgun Zvai Leumi and Lehi (Fighters for the Freedom Of Israel, created by Avraham Stern in 1940) chose individual acts of terrorism against the British. See

Although such a character is challenging to a liberal left audience, I feel that it is important to explore what nationalism means to Jewish women fighters after World War Two. I have no interest in writing ‘Good Jewish Women’, it is those who behave violently, in areas that are traditionally considered male, and who have political agency, which interest me the most. Rina may be abhorrent to many who oppose current Israeli Right Wing politics, and she is a literary daughter of Vladimir Jabotinsky’s nationalism, but she is contextualised within a historical moment when most of Europe’s Jews were annihilated. To present Jewish women merely as converts, saints, martyrs, socialists or temptresses, is to limit that history. Rina exists to reveal women activists engaged in the debate surrounding timeless issues of nationalism and land.<sup>389</sup> With the construction of Rina I also wish to challenge the concept of the domestic woman at the heart of the traditional family. Rina is always an outsider. She is a woman ready to kill for her ideals and, therefore, a radical Jewish woman on the English stage.

Rina’s character reveals the revolution from assimilated, intellectual, Yiddish-speaking diaspora actor to that of a Hebrew-speaking Palestinian Jewish nationalist. She also expresses the post-Holocaust phenomenon of Jew-into-Israeli. Her character raises huge questions around nationalism. She is not conflicted by this as her concentration camp experience has made her understand *realpolitik*.

This is not the case with the Irish-Jewish brothers. As related earlier, Robert Briscoe allowed his Irish identity to over-ride his Jewishness but Cecil’s positioning is less clear. Cecil allows himself to pass as a Catholic Irishman. This raises moral and political questions about the protean possibilities of national identity. It can also be useful to political warfare.

RINA            Does your Tommy audience know you’re Jewish?

CECIL           They know I’m Irish.<sup>390</sup>

‘Tommy’ hears a Dublin accent and is unlikely to guess that behind it may be a Jewish nationalist enemy. The complexity of an Irish Jewish entertainer within the British Army in British Mandate Palestine, his love affair with a woman who has survived Buchenwald as a sex-slave and his relationship with his Right Wing Nationalist brother, all touch huge political issues. I do not find this kind of complexity in the plays of my contemporaries on the English stage.

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Joseph Heller, *The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics, and Terror, 1940-1949* (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

<sup>389</sup> Jewish and Israeli Right Wing movements are capitalist, but they have an added dimension in their violent anti-British nationalist acts. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was a political and philosophical war between Jabotinsky-inspired Right Wingers and Ben-Gurion’s Socialist Israeli government.

<sup>390</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *12-37*, 241.

Whether there is no appetite to investigate this recent past, which still has resonance in contemporary politics, it is hard to know. Or whether there is fear of exploring such themes in case they are not politically correct, as evidenced in Richard Bean's interview in *The Guardian*, is equally hard to know. Bean suggests that there is a kind of taboo around writing about particular subjects that can upset a national narrative. If there is a simple binary of Israel/Bad, Palestine/Good within the current national debate, and we have only to examine how the Labour Party is tearing itself apart on this issue, then writing about Jewish nationalism and its relationship to Shoah experience can be seen as an area that should be avoided.<sup>391</sup> It challenges those binaries. In *I2-37*, I show aspects that are rarely seen onstage: the historical wave from 1936–1948 and how it affected Jewish life in Dublin, England and Palestine. Negating Theodor Adorno's famous maxim that there should be no poetry after Auschwitz, Robert Skloot asks

For what else can the sincere artist do than seek through verbal and visual images to understand an event that, because it contains both opacity and ambiguity in many of its aspects, because it raises the most urgent of human issues, and because it is forever receding in time, complex the desire for some kind of emotional and intellectual engagement with it?<sup>392</sup>

Sara R. Horowitz talks of the 'moral weight of the Shoah writing after the horror Adorno expresses at the intersection of art and atrocity' lingering in critical discourse decades later, 'despite the emergence and recognition – even by Adorno himself – of powerful literary treatments of the Shoah'.<sup>393</sup> I agree with Horowitz and my work expresses this. Rina is part of a long line of women in the Holocaust that I have dramatised in order to break silence and to en/gender Shoah literature. As Cheyette writes 'Although the Shoah has not touched her flesh, the playwright Julia Pascal in her Holocaust Trilogy (1996) communes wholeheartedly with it. Seen together her plays are an unapologetic and obsessive identification with the ghosts that, she believes, still haunt European culture. [...] There is a strong sense in which different pasts – here in the Shoah and women's history – collide to form new wholes'.<sup>394</sup>

### ***Next Stop Paradise***

Joan England in *Next Stop Paradise* is the most picaresque Jewish woman in the three thesis plays, and the text is the most iconoclastic in form. The script explores key moments of English

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<sup>391</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/18/labour-antisemitism-jews-jeremy-corbyn> accessed 17 July 2016.

<sup>392</sup> Robert Skloot, *Theatre of the Holocaust, Vol 2* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 6–7.

<sup>393</sup> Sara R. Horowitz, "Voicing The Void" in *Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>394</sup> *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Britain and Ireland: An Anthology*, edited by Brian Cheyette (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), lxiii.



history to reclaim them from a male narrative and reframe them from a Jewish woman's point of view. It also reflects longings for apocalypse and total world destruction, which makes it so timely after the 2015 and 2016 international terrorist attacks by Islamic fundamentalists.

The action starts with Bill, a London Crossrail worker accidentally digging up the medieval character of Joan England. Joan embodies a buried English history. She is a fragment of the Norman Jewish community brought over the channel by William the Conqueror. She cannot be destroyed. Joan is a chameleonic character whose Jewish identity has been overlaid with Catholicism and Protestantism. She is imagined in this play as a Jewish everywoman, replacing the concept of everyman, as formalised in medieval mystery plays. She defies a canon where historical representations of Jewish women have been neglected. Hélène Cixous writes that 'the dead are our first masters, those who unlock the door for us that opens onto the other side, if only we are willing to bear it'.<sup>395</sup> Joan England comes back from the dead to open the door on to English Jewish history. Unlike Deborah Levy's *The Keeper*, she is not an abstract, suffering generic. My intention is to make her a modern, palpable figure. Joan is a survivor in the fullest sense of the word: she is unable to die. This is of course a metaphor for an English Jewish culture that has been wiped from the history books. Therefore, the intention behind writing her in 2016, some 360 years after the supposed Jewish re-entry, is to proclaim the longevity of Jewish life in England. This challenges the atmosphere referred to in my introduction, a zeitgeist that educates many English Jews to keep a low profile. The play champions the history of English Jewish life. It also raises questions about assimilation. Secular Jews tend to absorb the host culture. Therefore, we Jewish women, who have grown up in a Christian, or post-Christian environment, can count ourselves as 'Christian Jews'. Within the play, the meeting between the English Jewish archetype Joan with the earlier archetype of the biblical Sarah is also an admission that the modern Jew cannot exist without wrestling with the difficult issues of Israel and Zionism. Sarah, the play's second archetype, is not only the wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac, and therefore the origin of Jewry, she still lives on as a provocative presence, stubbornly representing the land of Israel as a symbol of eternal Jewish life. To connect Joan's disparate experiences, I have drawn upon common folk tradition. I have explored the way language, song and poetry, as well as ritual practice, can be used as a language to express the ineffable. Finding a dramatic language for a people who have been ripped out of both the English language and the land of England provoked a tension for me as writer. I wanted Joan to be a woman of the street and of the people. Zelig-like, her speech often reflects that of those she meets. At the beginning, Joan, as time-traveller, would fit easily into the mayhem of Ben

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<sup>395</sup> Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on The Ladder of Writing*, translated by Sarah Cornell, Susan Sellers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 9.

Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair* rather than finding any common crone-ground with Caryl Churchill's *Skriker*.<sup>396</sup> Joan is articulate, *The Skriker* expresses what Mary Luckhurst calls 'nightmarish gibberish'.<sup>397</sup> I want audiences to recognise Joan as a loudmouth they might hear on the bus or waiting in the post office queue. It is her ordinary quality that is a political act. The politics behind the writing also affects a structure that may appear anarchic, but there is a connective tissue uniting several energies. This is the nursery rhyme, a shared element in Jewish and English folk history. *There Was An Old Woman Who Lived In A Shoe* seems to echo the Passover children's poem *A Kid For Two Zuzim*. Connections are also present in non-verbal theatre languages, which often use elements of the absurd. At Yom Kippur a hen is waved over a person's head to absorb sin. Joan rides a stick to represent an English hobby horse. She remembers Norman horses laughing on the boat to England.<sup>398</sup> Within Joan's body and behaviour, Jewish and English popular cultures meld.

Joan is a contradiction of the caricature of The Eternal Jew, condemned to wander the world for supposedly mocking Jesus on his way to crucifixion. This caricature has been in the Christian collective memory long before Hitler used it for Nazi propaganda.<sup>399</sup> The image of the Jew as an immutable, skulking, degenerate – the eternal wanderer – is nearly always projected on to the male. Joan is a bright, healthy, eternal. She challenges the cultural stereotype. Her presence raises questions about Jewish identity itself. Is she a Jew who has become a Christian and who has lost her original identity or does she, despite conversion to Catholicism and to Protestantism, remain a Jew? What is a Jew? A member of a religion or a member of a nation. Can one exist without the other? Always protean, she is not always sure and neither is the audience. The reason for this is to show the symbiotic nature of the two related religions. It also has another dimension, reminding us of how widespread Jewish conversion was. When the Inquisition deported Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492, choices were conversion to Catholicism, exile or death. By the nineteenth century in Protestant England, forswearing Jewish identity allowed entry into mainstream society. Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) would never have been prime minister without baptism.<sup>400</sup> However, I see Joan as a Jewish character. Jews acknowledge that those who are born Jews remain Jews. Therefore, Joan's ability to adapt, within an England that was *judenrein*,<sup>401</sup> represents a resistance to an expunged Jewish past.

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<sup>396</sup> Ben Jonson, *Three Comedies: Volpone, the Alchemist, Bartholomew Fair* (London: Penguin Books, 1966). Caryl Churchill, *The Skriker* in *Plays 3* (London: Nick Hern, 1998).

<sup>397</sup> Mary Luckhurst, *Caryl Churchill* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 6.

<sup>398</sup> This is taken from a cartoon in the Bayeux Tapestry.

<sup>399</sup> The Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* was made in 1940, directed by Fritz Hippler.

<sup>400</sup> Benjamin was born Jewish but his father had all his children baptized in 1817. Disraeli is buried in Hughenden churchyard.

<sup>401</sup> I deliberately use the Nazi expression *judenrein* to pinpoint the fact that the English monarchy

Joan's epic journey is never represented naturalistically or as a traditional 'history play', which is why I chose an elliptical structure. This is partly influenced by Brecht's 1924–1925 drama *Man Equals Man*.<sup>402</sup> Brecht shows Galy Gay, 'the little man', accidentally being absorbed into the machinery of imperialism. He uses the figure of the peasant as a generic everyman who is sucked into the machinery of war. Joan is not Galy Gay. She is not a generic but carries several identities. She represents a character who has never existed on the English stage: a role that marries Jewish, Republican, Protestant and contemporary Messianic drives. At moments, the audience can see where these identities intersect and where they are ignorant of the other.

When she meets Menasseh ben Israel she is simultaneously attracted and repelled. She imagines his penis with interest, but is repulsed by the thought that, as Jew, he may have horns and a tail. Her character incorporates both Jewish philosemitism and antisemitism. The complexity of this Jewish un/ease about Jewish identity has exercised Jewish scholars. The concept of Jewish self-hatred adds a dark layer to Joan's character as a modern Jew who is also infected by the host society's antisemitic virus. Although she suspects Menasseh of growing horns and a tail, it does not occur to her to look for these growths on herself. In this way she is multi-layered and contradictory in her identity. She is unlike *Kindertransport*'s convert Evelyn, the saintly representation of Anne Frank or the domestic Sarah Kahn.

Joan is the first Jew that I have seen dramatised as an uninhibited woman of the people. She is born from the English earth. Her family name 'England' expresses this. Her domain is grit and filth synergising into a theatre language that Peter Brook, calls Rough Theatre.<sup>403</sup>

Of course it's most of all dirt that gives the roughness its edge; filth and vulgarity are natural; obscenity is joyous: with these the spectacle takes on its socially liberating role for by nature the popular theatre is anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional, anti-pomp, anti-pretense.<sup>404</sup>

The drama starts in the dirt of a graveyard to acknowledge the earthiness of Joan's character. When she encounters the Portuguese Dutch doctor Rabbi ben Menasseh, she asks if he has 'a nice maypole', she curtsies in reverse showing both her backside and her disrespect for social hierarchy. She is a washerwoman and has seen all the grime of humanity. Joan is the equaliser in this society.

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was the first European power to deport Jews.

<sup>402</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *Man Equals Man*, translated by Gerhard Nellhaus, John Willett, Ralph Manheim (New York: Arcade, 2000).

<sup>403</sup> Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1965), 65–97.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

As well as Brecht, there are several other structural influences. The 1978 Young Vic Peter Brook production of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu* was an aesthetic that I admired.<sup>405</sup> Its simple staging and dependence on props, text and a naïve acting style, helped me imagine writing in Rough Theatre style. It helped me to realise that I could tell this story theatrically and avoid any 'realistic historical' representation, particularly with the meeting between Oliver Cromwell and Menasseh ben Israel. I did not want to dramatise the figure of Cromwell. He is playfully realised as a glove puppet and then performed by the worker, Bill.

For the actual setting, I owe a theatrical debt to George Tabori, whose *Jubiläum* takes place in a graveyard where the dead arise.<sup>406</sup> I owe a literary debt to Virginia Woolf, whose hero/ine Orlando transcends time and sexual definition.<sup>407</sup> Orlando changes gender, Joan changes identity. The concept of aerial marionettes, evoking images from the Bosch-like Day of Judgment, is inspired by the 2015 Christmas window displays in Galeries Lafayette Hausmann, Paris. There I saw flying fairies, angels and devils. The fusing of these diverse influences provide the mille-feuille framework of the play.

The question of language was one that needed to be anchored within a simple vernacular. As with Joan Rabinowitch in *St Joan*,<sup>408</sup> Joan England; her twin in name and time-travelling skills; is imaginary. They are different in that Joan Rabinowitch sometimes uses a poetic register and French words, whereas Joan England speaks the vernacular. Both Joans are serious and comic. In his chapter 'Rough Theatre', Brook declares that 'theatre's purpose is to unashamedly make joy and laughter [...] Along with serious, committed and probing work there must be irresponsibility'.<sup>409</sup> Joan displays these qualities.

MENASSEH     What is this dance?  
JOAN            This is England! You want to come here, you have to be as mad as  
                  the rest of us.  
MENASSEH     What are you doing?  
JOAN            Every May. Round the Maypole. Got a nice maypole have you?  
MENASSEH     What?  
JOAN            We were mad before Cromwell and we've been madder ever  
                  since.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Alfred Jarry, edited by S. W. Taylor, translated by C. Connolly, *The Ubu Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1969).

<sup>406</sup> George Tabori, *Jubiläum* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1982).

<sup>407</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (London: Hogarth Press, 1928).

<sup>408</sup> Julia Pascal, *Crossing Jerusalem And Other Plays* (London: Oberon Books, 2003), 165–189.

<sup>409</sup> Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1965), 69.

<sup>410</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*, 287.

Joan is also informed by my attendance at the 2013 Conference of Christian Zionists organised by The Friends Of Israel in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.<sup>411</sup> As the only Jew among 350 evangelicals, including members of the Amish and Mennonite communities, I listened to the Christian passion for The Second Coming. The common focus on literal Bible reading helped me to locate and develop Joan's impatience for Christ's return. I also spent a day in Jerusalem with this group and saw the city through their eyes. I had read about eschatology in the seventeenth-century Thomason Tracts, housed in The British Library, but being within this community, and experiencing their collective voice, gave me the foundations to imagine, see and hear Joan. Messianic longing is theatrical, and the concept of the Last Judgment is total theatre. For a sceptical, mainly secular, UK audience, Joan had to be experienced as sympathetic, funny, faulted and fervent. She must express seventeenth-century English Protestant eschatological desire, and also reveal the umbilical cord that runs from Pennsylvania to Jerusalem and Judaea. My empiric experience, from reading seventeenth-century pamphlets and of meeting modern Christian Zionists, allowed me to imbibe the voices that were to become Joan's, who becomes a kind of ghost. She is important as a character as she informs the audience of two missing histories: that of Jewish life in England from 1066–1290 and that of the philosemitic movement in Cromwell's Republic. As David Katz notes

[...] without the firm basis of philo-Semitism and support for the language and culture of the Jews which existed in England in the sixteenth and the first part of the seventeenth century the mission of Menasseh ben Israel would have been an utter failure.<sup>412</sup>

When Protestants discovered the Hebrews through the Bible and studied Hebrew in universities, Jews, as a concept, fascinated scholars and philosophers. Christians read their Bible literally. In several prophetic texts, The Second Coming will be realised when certain conditions are met. Central to these is the return of the Jews to all four corners of the earth. The Book of Deuteronomy proclaims that, Jews must be dispersed 'from one angle of the earth unto the other'.<sup>413</sup> Angle of the earth/Angleterre, translates in French as 'England'. Therefore Protestants believed that God was instructing them to reverse Jewish expulsion.<sup>414</sup> This prepared the connection between English Christian philosemitism and Menasseh ben Israel's campaign to

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<sup>411</sup> This was supported through a Santander Travel Grant facilitated by The University of York.

<sup>412</sup> David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England 1485–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 114.

<sup>413</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History Of The Jews Of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

<sup>414</sup> Antonio Montezinos told Menasseh ben Israel in 1644 that he had made contact with Hebrew-speaking Jews in Ecuador, remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes. Menasseh ben Israel related this to Cromwell.

lead the Jews back to England.<sup>415</sup> Cromwell met ben Israel and read his book, *Spes Israel, The Hope Of Israel*.<sup>416</sup> At the 1656 Whitehall Conference, Cromwell asked Parliament to readmit the Jews. He was refused. Although the 1290 deportation edict was never revoked, Jews did trickle in to England, hiding their religion by pretending to be Spanish or Portuguese Catholics. When they were discriminated against as ‘Catholics’ they revealed their true identity and were tolerated. This history has been conveniently blurred in the English imagination to hide the truth about the brutality of monarchical deportation. Official Jewish return has been wrongly celebrated as 1656, and 2006 was wrongly celebrated as the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>417</sup>

At the crushing defeat of ben Israel’s ambitions for Jewish return, Joan flies forward to the modern state of Israel. There she meets a major new Jewish archetype, a re-imagined biblical Sarah. Like Joan, Sarah cannot die. In Genesis 18:12 Sarah says, ‘After I have grown old I shall be young again’. Sarah appears late in the text, but her presence is vital. The purpose of this meeting of the two archetypes is to show the buried English Jewish history through Joan’s eyes in the first part of the play. Her meeting with Sarah is to take Jewish female history back to Genesis and to challenge patriarchy. Abraham, the father of monotheism is dead but Sarah, the mother of all Jews, and Christians, still lives. These two archetypes also represent two aspects of modern Judaism: diaspora and Zionist. Joan’s diasporic character encompasses Catholicism and Protestantism. She is a mixture of Jew and Christian. When she is in the presence of the Jewish matriarch, Sarah, her Christian side is challenged to fight the Jew but when she is in Israel, Joan, behaves like a Christian Zionist. She will triumph if she can convert Sarah the first Jewish woman. This has a kind of reverse biblical history. Genesis tells us that Abraham converted the men and Sarah the women. This means that Sarah converted gentiles to Judaism. Here I explore how a Christian Jew converts the first Jewish woman. The arc of the play, which ends in apocalypse, needs Joan to convert Sarah to Christianity and it needs Sarah to resist.<sup>418</sup>

JOAN                    You are a Christian now!  
*(Sarah laughs with derision. Joan speaks over her laughter.)*  
SARAH                And you! You should become a Jew!<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England 1485–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 113.

<sup>416</sup> Menasseh ben Israel, *Spes Israel, The Hope Of Israel* (London: 1652).

<sup>417</sup> There is an irony in the queen commemorating this event, as reported in *The Jerusalem Post*. See <http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-News/UK-Jews-queen-mark-350th-anniversary-of-community>.

<sup>418</sup> See Leila Leah Bronner, *From Eve To Esther: Rabbinical Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 166. She quotes Rabbi Hunia’s commentary on Genesis ‘Abraham converted the men and Sarah the women’.

<sup>419</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*, 318.

The topsy-turvy nature of this conversion fever shows that the connective tissue between Judaism and Christianity cannot be broken. The two archetypes express opposing personalities, religions and politics. Joan is both the feminist, diasporic spirit of English Jewry and a Christian Zionist. In her, the seemingly contradictory lives are one. Sarah represents Zionism from Genesis to modern Israel. Joan, though she comes from the English earth is a new form of Wandering Jew. Sarah is fixed. She is Israel. There is a deliberate political tension. Joan is extrovert and sometimes raucous; Sarah, who has laughed at God when he told her she would have a child at ninety, is more grounded. She is constructed as both a biblical pillar and a modern, politically aware intellectual. There are also similarities. Both are young–old. Both are sexual. Joan flirts with Menasseh. Sarah, remembers how, at 65, she was seduced in Egypt. As the Jewish religion celebrates sexuality, albeit within marriage, Sarah and Joan exist as erotic women who are easy in their own bodies.

Certainly they fight about religion but they collude in a feminist aesthetic. Sarah and Joan commandeer traditional male territory at the Passover dinner table. This is a setting that interests me as a public and private space. In *Crossing Jerusalem* and *The Yiddish Queen Lear* there are two meals that explode family cohesion. Here the opposite happens. The women share the pleasure of seizing male territory. They connect through Jewish and English folk ritual. Connecting cultures makes them family.

JOAN	Then came the dog and bit the cat, which ate the kid, which my father bought for two zuzim. [...] and beat the dog
SARAH	which bit the cat which ate the kid which my father bought for/
JOAN	/two zuzim. <sup>420</sup>

However, the dramaturgy presents an even greater attack on Judaism's misogyny, which will startle Jewish audiences. At the end of the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, the (male) rabbi blows the ram's horn, known as the shofar, signalling the end of the most important fast. When Sarah does this, when she assumes public power, she dramatically displaces more than five thousand years of male domination.

As a character, Sarah is also a watershed in English drama. She understands realpolitik and is fearful of Israel's deconstruction. I have never seen a play on the mainstream English stage that allows an Israeli to express an existential fear of loss of the nation state. Her language

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<sup>420</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*, 312. This is taken from the Chad Gadya is intended to keep children amused at the end of the Passover Service.

suggests current wars with Hamas and Hizbollah, as well as reflecting the painful accusations of Christ-killing. The play is relevant in the 360<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Menasseh ben Israel's Petition to Oliver Cromwell. It also expresses Israeli fear of the possibility of future exile.

SARAH            Oh God in whom I no longer have faith, what happens if we lose  
                         Israel?  
JOAN              How can that be?  
SARAH            They rise against us. They say we have sinned. That we do not  
                         deserve this land.  
JOAN              You refused the messiah.  
SARAH            That too?  
JOAN              You betrayed him to the Romans.<sup>421</sup>

Within this text, which references Bible study and Talmudic philosophy, the women unpick what has traditionally been male biblical exegesis.<sup>422</sup> One example is when Sarah says 'God abandoned the Jews. I abandon God'. Scholars will see this as a reference to the Book of Job who, no matter how sorely he was tested, refused to blame God. It also has resonance as a post-Shoah commentary where Jews question a God who let them be annihilated.<sup>423</sup>

The underlying question here is who writes history? Joan carrying a suitcase full of books symbolises the wandering Jewish People Of The Book, but there is a new resonance, which is that of Joan digging and carrying books as she needs to find something. She digs up a book that she cannot read. She is searching for an earlier story that moves back to the matriarch. The play ends with the Genesis story. Crossing the aeons, Sarah has written a book for Joan that transcends the struggle between Judaism and Christianity. This goes back to the myth of Eden and turns it on its head. At the end of the text, Joan tells Bill about Sarah's book, which rewrites Genesis. Hers up-ends the myth of the creation of humans in the Garden Eden. Instead of Eve emerging from Adam's rib, it is he who is born from her.<sup>424</sup>

*Next Stop Paradise* takes a huge historical leap with this epic form, and Jewish women are at its core. They are shifted from being observers to engaged intellectuals. In this text the

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>422</sup> Elements of these debates are chronicled in Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 156.

<sup>423</sup> This is discussed in "Revelation and Mass Murder" in Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *God And The Holocaust* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1996), 47. See also a reference to Eli Wiesel's commentary on God being tried in Auschwitz in Mark Larrimore's *The Book of Job* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 221.

<sup>424</sup> Julia Pascal, thesis play *Next Stop Paradise*, 318.



male characters serve the women. Bill digs up Joan, she digs up the books. He is a conduit for her stage presence: she is never onstage without him. He allows audiences to see and hear her. However, the play's main focus is on a new character in English theatre. It is as if the skeleton of a dead Jewish history has returned with flesh and blood to dance and sing as part of a vibrant English folk history. It also re-presents Sarah, whose presence was totemic as Abraham's wife and Isaac's mother. *Next Stop Paradise*, is a radical departure in my writing. It ends with a reinvention of the myth of Genesis and it explores fragments from the beginning and the end of monotheism as witnessed by two new Jewish women characters.

## **Conclusion**

This research has allowed me to delve into why Jewish women's experience is so under-represented onstage and given me a historical perspective within Christian and Jewish traditions. It has also endorsed my awareness of male hegemony at a structural level; a hegemony that remains interested only in the male voice and marginalises the female. More recently, there has been an increase in the sound of female artists demanding fuller representation onscreen and onstage, a cry that attracts publicity but never changes the status quo. I have felt the frustration of being marginalised, both as woman and as a Jew, all of my career. During this period of reflection, I have become more aware of the stereotypes projected on the Jewish female. This has led me to two major discoveries.

The first is how much Yiddish theatre has influenced my creative journey. I had never analysed my work in the light of this hinterland and it is now clear to me that Yiddish theatre is/was an underground stream. It was and is a continual provocation that urges me to the wildest part of my imagination. As Yiddish theatre is so heterogeneous, I experience it as an anarchic force and it has helped me to challenge accepted structures of writing. Yiddish theatre is always experimental: it comes with no history. There never was a classical Jewish/Yiddish theatre and therefore the novelty of the form is its plasticity. It was, and for me still is, a liberation from orthodoxies in Jewish society and from classical theatre. As discussed, it promoted the vibrant presence of extraordinary Jewish women characters. It has liberated me to do the same and I will continue to do so.

The second discovery is the predominance of Anne Frank as a generic for Jewish female experience and Holocaust study. Her theatrical, cinematic and current presence as an educational tool endorses the image of the saintly Jewish girl and calcifies it. The annual event of Holocaust Memorial Day, which marks the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January, encourages British schools to teach Anne Frank's story. The Anne Frank Trust (UK) promotes Anne Frank as a salve to help community problems of racism and bullying in contemporary Britain. Her sweet

pre-adolescent smile is a kind of sticking plaster used to comfort parents whose sons have been killed in London knife crime.<sup>425</sup> In this educational context, she is promoted as a Jewish girl who symbolises victimhood. She is meant to help young people feel less isolated. In contrast, I believe that my work, with its complex representations of Jewish womanhood, counteracts this pervasive image of Anne Frank-the- forgiving-victim. Reflecting on the wide range of Jewish females that I have created makes me aware of the way I have challenged stereotypes of Jewish saints or Jewish women who redeem their status as Jews by converting to Christianity.

The three thesis plays are examples of how I have created new Jewish figures within my work. The construction of Judith was a huge challenge for me. I have never written a character whose psychological hinterland, and family trauma, has been the main driver in her journey. It is the first time that I have written a Jewish woman who is not forced into action by war, exile or a Jewish identity crisis. Judith was difficult to craft. The problem was how to make action from someone who appears passive. I am aware that a character's latent dynamic is difficult to make jump off the page. Finding her arc does feel as if there has been achievement in revealing how inner action can be expressed. In this way the creation of Judith has taken me on a new journey. She is a dramatic representation of the hinge generation.

Rina in *I2-37* is a character I had never previously investigated. Research has helped me become aware of this hidden history of women as sex slaves during the Shoah. The journey for me here was to reveal Rina's trajectory from innocence to experience and to also hint at sexual power in one who has been brutalised. I was aware that to present a Jew who is not a victim like Anne Frank; a Jew who is a political killer; takes the dramatisation of Jewish womanhood into a new direction.

*Next Stop Paradise* presents the conundrum of dramatising. Joan England, a Jew left over from the Norman invasion, is a fantasy that I needed to invent in order to show what is ignored in the grand narrative of English history. Here my struggle was to find a theatrical means of using humour to explore huge themes. Fantasising the role of Jewish Joan England gave me access to ways of presenting the expulsion of the Jews from England, the importance of Oliver Cromwell in the English Jewish narrative messianic fervour and Christian Zionism. In this play there are two new Jewish women characters who are larger than life, and yet who represent two important areas of Jewish womanhood that have never been imagined onstage. Joan England is England's history through the experience of a Jew, and Sarah is an expression of the first Jewish woman who still lives today in Israel. These characters transport the audience into primal questions about human genesis, messianism and the ability to transcend death. I feel I have been

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<sup>425</sup> See <http://www.annefrank.org.uk/what-we-do/preventing-prejudice-today> accessed 25 January 2016.

encouraged by this study and reflection to push my work and my Jewish female characters into new, unimagined worlds.

The research has not diminished my frustration with the secondary status of women in British theatre, rather it has heightened it. I am now able to understand it within the big picture; a zeitgeist that is obsessed with the male narrative and male endeavour. This affects how my work is assessed. The marginalisation of my work by the so-called flagships is frustrating. To be mainstream is to be noticed by historians and scholars. My output has been on the fringe and, as a result, academics do not always know my writing. However, paradoxically, I am recognised by certain scholars who do know about Jewish writing. My work is respected as a result of productions and publication. This means that I must always be proactive and submit my texts widely. *Crossing Jerusalem* has just been chosen as one of the top ten plays in the 2016 New York Jewish Plays Project.<sup>426</sup> This exposure should help promote my work in the US.

I feel that my plays over several decades have made a significant intervention in the absence of Jewish women characters on the English stage, and I am aware that nobody has observed this absence as a problem, which is disturbing. In 2015, while directing my production of *Crossing Jerusalem*, I understood just how far I was challenging Jewish female stereotypes. The role of Yael, an Arab Jew, became even more significant at a time when the world was reeling in the fall-out of war in Iraq, Syria and the Middle East. No other British playwright has produced a Jewish female character who is also from an Arab culture. My work on Israel fits no easy binary definitions of Jews and Muslims. Recognition of achievement will not happen until readers or audiences are aware that stereotypes are being smashed. What is disappointing is the lack of acknowledgment of this contribution and the dearth of penetrating critical analysis around the subject.

The wide reading has allowed me to understand also how the political nature of my work can be threatening to the accepted narrative. Therefore the central problem for me is how to receive public funds to support my plays. These two issues are connected. Censorship works subtly in the UK. For example, in *Honeypot*, produced at The Diorama Theatre in 2011, Susanne, a Swedish Jew, is a political assassin revenging the murders of Israeli athletes in the aftermath of the 1972 Munich Olympics. I believe that the subject matter was antipathetic to the public mood. In 2011, London was looking forward to the 2012 Olympic Games. Nobody wanted to be reminded of Munich. I felt that to even mention it was 'bad taste'. However, had *Honeypot* been produced at the National Theatre, it would have received serious reviews. With no grant, I was forced to self-produce at the tiny Diorama Theatre. The play was mainly

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<sup>426</sup> See <http://www.jewishplaysproject.org> accessed 25 January 2016.

ignored.<sup>427</sup> I wrote a feature about the background to the text in *The Independent* but, apart from websites, there was little interest from mainstream press.<sup>428</sup> Venue affects notice and critical attention. Censorship around women's dramas and Jewish women's scripts is a major concern of this thesis. My plays challenge this censorship. I am often asked, even sometimes by Jews, 'when are you going to stop writing about Jews and write about something else?' The question affirms the trope that Jewish experience is peripheral. I doubt that many white, male authors are asked when they are going to stop writing about white men. Yet to censor myself would feel a betrayal of all I have done and a denial of who I am.

As Claudine Vegh writes

It is very difficult to be a Jew; to insist on remaining one, when one is, as I am, neither practising nor even a believer may seem aberrant. But to refuse one's Jewishness would somehow be unbearable.<sup>429</sup>

To refuse one's Jewishness when hostility to the state of Israel is sometimes directed at European Jews, can seem an attractive option. Jews can sometimes pass. However, this research and reflection has made me aware of other women scholars who are also excavating our shared history, both as Jews and as women. We are all breaking the silence of our childhoods and the discoveries we are making and revealing in a variety of forms, helps to support and sustain our collective archaeological 'dig'. It forms a kind of literary sorority. The voices of Dworkin, Fresco, Hirsch and Hoffman, provide a wider framing and remove the sense of isolation that I have experienced with my dramas. What I admire here is that these women are Jews who also, as Vegh says, insist on remaining Jewish.

As I complete this thesis in 2016, I feel that I have been provoked to interrogate my own sense of what it means to be a Jewish woman writer and what my responsibility is to fill the near-void where Jewish women's complicated lives should be. I have been pleased to push my own boundaries further and to become increasingly aware of Jewish women's achievement as source material for future plays. Helene Cixous writes 'We don't know [...] exactly what our

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<sup>427</sup>I have learned that Arts Council England is unlikely to fund work of mine that focuses on Jewish women. An arts officer has told me that I 'do not belong to a minority'. Although ACE prioritises minority arts, the groups considered worthy are 'The arts in Black, Asian and Chinese communities'. See <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/1385.pdf> accessed 4 December 2015.

<sup>428</sup>See <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features.honeypot-the-startling-story-of-the-killer-in-heels-2358004.html>.

<sup>429</sup>Claudine Vegh, translated by Ros Schwartz, *I Didn't Say Goodbye* (London: Caliban Books, 1984), 19–20.

relationship to the dead is. Individually, it constitutes part of our work, our work of love [...]. We can think this with the help of writing [...] if we dare to write. Also with the help of our dreams, they constantly give us the marvellous gift of constantly bringing back our dead alive'.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on The Ladder of Writing*, translated by Sarah Cornell, Susan Sellers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 12.

## Part Two: The plays

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**PLAY ONE: *WOMAN ON THE BRIDGE***

Final Draft November 2013

Reading produced by The League of Professional Theatre Women, October 2013, New York, USA.

## CHARACTERS

JUDITH GREEN	A BBC radio journalist. 55. She is slim.
ANDY VOGEL	25-year-old New York actor.
GLORIA SANCHEZ-RYAN	New York Police Department officer. 44. She is a New Yorker of Puerto Rican parentage married to an Irishman.
SUSAN PETERS	23-year-old New Yorker.
LOUISE WACHMAN	80-year-old Polish/American Jew. Holocaust survivor.
ANNA WEIB	110-year-old woman. She's a New Yorker who came to the USA from Romania in 1946. Great-aunt to Judith.

Hospital worker.

A couple of joggers.

Skateboarder.

*With doubling the play can be done with 5-7 actors.*

## LOCATIONS

*JFK airport.*

*A hotel bedroom in Manhattan.*

*The New York subway.*

*An apartment mid-town Manhattan.*

*Brooklyn Bridge.*

*The play is set in New York. Today.*



## SCENE ONE

*Inside of a jet that has just flown from London to John F. Kennedy. This is in blackout as lights are coming up slowly. Voices 1-4 are middle-class English women.*

V/O (New York air hostess) Please keep your seat belts fastened until the aircraft comes to a complete stop.

*Sound from the interior of the plane. The sound of the steps arriving outside and the doors opening.*

V/O (Male pilot, American) Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to JFK where the local time is 7 p.m. On behalf of Captain Frank Ulysses and his team, we hope you had a pleasant flight, we appreciate your business and look forward to seeing you again on American Airlines.

*Spotlight on Judith inside JFK Airport. She is disoriented and lost in the soundscape. These voices are shouted at the lines of people waiting to pass the entry lines.*

V/O 1 Line 25! Over here!

V/O 2 Passports open at the photo page!

V/O 3 Move it!

V/O 4 Line 30!

*During the following dialogue, her phone is ringing and she picks it out of her bag, looks at the screen, and refuses the call.*

*Sound mix of different accents and voices in the airport as people are milling around and getting into lines.*

VOICE 1 Where do we queue?

VOICE 2 Down the hall?

VOICE 3 Is there a toilet here? I didn't go on the plane.

VOICE 4 Don't say toilet say restroom/

VOICE 3 A whole seven hours and I'm dying, but if the plane crashes and I'm caught with my knickers down...!

VOICE 4 /or bathroom.

*Judith's phone is ringing again. This time she answers.*

JUDITH Stop calling me. Just stop.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER *(Yelling.)* Lady. Over there. Line number five.

*Judith is carrying a small bag and a laptop in a shoulder bag as well as newspapers and her immigration papers. She puts her index finger out for finger printing at immigration.*

V/O You here to work Miss?

JUDITH I'm here to see Manhattan.

V/O Vacation or business?

JUDITH Sorry?

V/O *(Irritated.)* I said vacation or business?

JUDITH To see the Brooklyn Bridge.

V/O Miss! Look straight at the camera. *(Beat.)* And again. Straight!

*Judith looks straight out.*

V/O OK. Next. *(Judith doesn't move.)* I said next!

## SCENE TWO

*A hotel room in Manhattan. East 79th Street. Sounds of police sirens.*

*Judith is in a hotel and the sounds are out in the street. The windows are open. She is on the 12th floor. Sounds of traffic. Judith dials. Her phone is on speaker. She does not have it in her hand.*

JUDITH Hey Diane, sorry you're not there. What time is it in London? I'm in the hotel.  
*(Judith opens her case and takes out clothes. She throws them on the bed wildly. She puts on a dress. It is back to front. She groans with rage.)* Stupid bitch!  
*(Judith slaps her face. She tries to get the dress on right but the logic of it defeats her. A phone rings. It is her London phone.)* No! No! No! *(She throws it on the bed. She returns to the speaker.)* Diane he's calling me all the time. I can't. I just can't.

*She rummages among her clothes and papers.*

JUDITH       Somewhere there is a map. I can't get this place, it's all straight lines, avenues-streets, up and down and then suddenly it's all letters Bleeker and Bleeker. If I understand the underground then I'll be alright. All right. Right. Right. Right.

*Sound of Sirens.*

*In total frustration, Judith turns on the TV remote. She tries to fold her clothes into neat piles but they come out a mess. The programme is reality TV.*

PRESENTER ...and you, Patrick, you say that Darren, Felicia's child, this three-year-old boy, is not yours. Is that true?

PATRICK       That kid doesn't even look like me.

FELICIA       He's lying. He's got a new girlfriend and she's put him up to it.

CARA           That's not true. The bitch wants to get his money, to pay for her and her kids. But he's my fiancé. He's going to be my husband.

PRESENTER And see you after the break.

*Sound of romantic music.*

MALE V/O     Hey guys! Are you worried about your performance? This may be the answer to your dreams.

*More romantic music.*

MALE V/O     If you want to please the woman in your life, and give her the greatest pleasure in the world, Prialis is for you.

*Judith's mobile phone rings. She looks at the number and cancels the call.*

MALE V/O     But if you have any of the following conditions consult your doctor first.

*More romantic music. Her mobile phone rings again. She yells at it.*

JUDITH       Yes Peter. I'm in New York. Leave me alone can't you?

MALE V/O     Palpitations or any uneven heart beat...

*Romantic music is still playing.*

MALE V/O Chest pain, changes of vision, shortness of breath, constant erection.

*Her phone rings.*

JUDITH No!

*She answers it.*

JUDITH I've nothing to say to you. (.....) What do you want of me Peter? (...) It's over. I told you. I'm through. (.....) What? Well you can't.

*Hangs up. Pause. Phone rings again.*

JUDITH Will you stop calling me?

*Hangs up. It rings again.*

JUDITH I'm crazy? You fuck your mother's maid and I'm crazy? (.....) Oh, excuse me! Not the maid. What is she? Oh, the carer. Well she didn't care much about your marriage.

*Hangs up. Packs. Phone rings again.*

JUDITH *(Beat.)* You and me? In fifteen years it was never just you and me. I'm getting out of here. (...) Anywhere you can't find me. (...) What for? It's over. You killed it. (...) At least you're alive! What does that mean? Nothing? So go. Be alive. Live with her. (...) You can't leave me? You can't leave her and you can't leave me? Did you become a Muslim? I'm out of it. You hear me? OUT.

*She hangs up.*

*Her mobile phone rings again. She throws it on the bed. Judith takes a newspaper and beats a chair with it. She is sobbing with fury.*

PRESENTER And, after that short break welcome back to Whose Baby Is It? Now Patrick and Felicia. Stop fighting and calm it will you?

PATRICK Felicia's a slut. A whore. She's done it with everyone. She can't prove that's my kid!

PRESENTER I have the DNA test here and, now Patrick, if it's positive will you support the child?

CARA           It's not true. She wants to steal him back.

FELICIA        You bitch, you stole him with your fat tits and your fat ass.

PRESENTER Now ladies stop fighting. Here is the evidence. (*Music.*) And the answer is...  
(*Drumbeat.*) Patrick... the DNA proves that Darren is (*Drumbeat intensifies to a climax.*) ...your child!

*Uproar from the crowd. Once established it is broken by the sound of a whistle from a doorman hailing a cab in the street, which changes the scene.*

### SCENE THREE

*In the subway. Minimal lighting.*

*Judith is standing on the subway platform. A train is coming. She breathes in as it comes closer. She has an impulse to jump in front of it. The train pulls in. She breathes out.*

### SCENE FOUR

*Judith's hotel bedroom. New York. Upper East Side. East 79th Street.*

*Judith is in bed with Andy.*

ANDY           Sorry.

JUDITH        It's OK.

ANDY           I'm never so quick.

JUDITH        It's OK.

ANDY           You got me going.

JUDITH        Yes.

ANDY           Maybe later.

JUDITH        Yes.

ANDY           It's stress.

JUDITH Don't worry.

ANDY I always worry. *(Beat.)* Why did you lie?

JUDITH When?

ANDY Online.

JUDITH What?

ANDY You said you're old.

JUDITH You're sweet.

ANDY You're like a girl.

JUDITH *(Wryly.)* That's right.

ANDY You know you should be careful.

JUDITH That's not an issue.

ANDY What?

JUDITH It's unlikely.

ANDY What?

JUDITH Oh. Nothing.

ANDY You don't even know who I am.

JUDITH You're OK.

ANDY I could be a murderer. Strangle you with a sheet. Nobody would know.

JUDITH One schmuck less in the world. *(Beat.)* You want to sleep?

ANDY What's your name?

JUDITH I told you.

ANDY Angela? (*Shaking his head.*) Uh huh.

JUDITH Why not?

ANDY Angela is blonde with a snub nose.

JUDITH Tonight that's who I am.

ANDY I'm Andreas.

JUDITH (*Holding out her hand in mock courtesy.*) How do you do!

ANDY Everyone calls me Andy.

JUDITH So we both have names beginning with A.

ANDY And yours is?

JUDITH Anon. I wrote a lot of poetry. (*She looks at him for a response.*) Never mind.

ANDY Gertrude!

JUDITH (*Laughing.*) Gertrude!

ANDY Cleopatra?

JUDITH I love it!

ANDY Ophelia?

JUDITH Oh-feel-ya.

ANDY Eurydice?

JUDITH Well, you're either an actor or a singer?

ANDY How did you guess? (*She shrugs.*) What's your work?

JUDITH     You know.

ANDY        No.

JUDITH     People.

ANDY        You don't give much away.

JUDITH     Coming out of the lift – sorry, elevator – did you see that cute marmalade cat?/

ANDY        /Why won't you tell me?/

JUDITH     /Yesterday I tried to get him to come in but he was shy. All orange cats are male, did you know that?

ANDY        I like cats too. And dogs. 'Angela!'

JUDITH     *(Stretching.)* Do I want to sleep or eat?

ANDY        First a nap and then we'll go out.

JUDITH     No. We won't.

ANDY        Mm?

JUDITH     Go out.

ANDY        What?

JUDITH     I don't date.

ANDY        You don't date?

JUDITH     I'm a married woman.

ANDY        Oh.

JUDITH     Does that bother you?

ANDY        I thought you were...



JUDITH     What?

ANDY       ...maybe divorced.

JUDITH     Why?

ANDY       No ring.

JUDITH     It pinches.

ANDY       Someone's wife. Je-e-s-u-s.

JUDITH     And that's a problem?

ANDY       Where is he? Your husband.

JUDITH     What time is it in Europe?

ANDY       Seven.

JUDITH     Probably having dinner with another woman.

ANDY       Oh.

JUDITH     OK. For you, I break the rules. Let's go out.

ANDY       You should be with him.

JUDITH     Maybe he should be with me.

ANDY       You're smart. I like that.

JUDITH     There's a diner on Madison does great omelettes. I'm sure it's still open.

ANDY       Marriage is marriage.

JUDITH     You're very old for a young man.

ANDY       How old?

JUDITH Five thousand and something. What are you? Catholic?

ANDY Maybe.

JUDITH And you believe?

ANDY I'm Bavarian.

JUDITH Ah yes. Andreas. Why have you no accent?

ANDY *(In stage German.)* Vot, du vant me to talk like in der cinema?

JUDITH Ja! Bestimmt. *(German for 'Yes! Exactly'.)*

ANDY My parents came to New York when I was a kid. They always say Bavaria is not Germany.

JUDITH Meaning?

ANDY I don't know. More Latin. More Italian. Hell, I'm tired.

JUDITH Yes, sleep. That's what men do. It's chemical.

ANDY Was it enough?

JUDITH What?

ANDY My dick.

JUDITH What?

ANDY I know I was too fast, but it's always like that the first time.

JUDITH No angst.

ANDY But I mean even if it's not that long, the width, that's what counts isn't it. That's what women tell me.

JUDITH Oh you don't need to worry.

*He sleeps and then jerks awake.*

ANDY Did I sleep?

JUDITH One whole second.

ANDY What time is it?

JUDITH Midnight.

ANDY And tomorrow morning I've got to get this audition or I'm dead.

JUDITH What is it?

ANDY Ten of us for one role. My first Broadway break. Hey, why don't you meet me afterwards? Give me something else to think about.

JUDITH I'll call you.

ANDY You don't have my number.

JUDITH I'll take it.

ANDY What's yours?

JUDITH I've no cell.

ANDY I don't believe you.

JUDITH If I want you, I'll find you.

ANDY Do you know how many cute young men there are in Manhattan. They'll all be hitting on you. You'll forget me.

JUDITH You're crazy!

ANDY If I don't get this part I could come to London. See you there. Would you like that?

JUDITH When I was thirty you were born.

ANDY I don't care.

JUDITH Why you interested in someone my age?

ANDY You're pretty. You're soft.

JUDITH And that's all there is to it?

ANDY You're a woman.

JUDITH I like that.

*He changes position.*

ANDY You shouldn't deceive your husband. *(Judith laughs.)* It's not right.

JUDITH You are joking.

ANDY I mean it.

JUDITH If it bugs you, why do you want to come to London to see me?

ANDY I don't know.

JUDITH Why don't you date women your age?

ANDY They want money. They want a husband. Not actors who wait tables.

*SILENCE.*

ANDY They get to thirty they want a baby. You had babies?

JUDITH No.

ANDY Did you want them?

JUDITH I had a shit mother. Repetition's not my thing.

ANDY Your mom? What was her problem?

JUDITH She wanted to be the only girl in the/

ANDY /We could have a girl/

JUDITH /world and gave me away. To her mother./

ANDY /My looks. Your cute ass!

*Judith laughs. Andy looks awkward and then joins in.*

ANDY Tell me something.

JUDITH What?

ANDY About the old lady brought you up. Your grandmother.

JUDITH The only person who ever loved me.

ANDY Why wouldn't she love you?

JUDITH But she never said it.

ANDY What else?

JUDITH She had a funny accent. Foreign. Almost German.

ANDY Tell me something secret. About her.

JUDITH When I was fourteen. I found The Marquis de Sade hidden under tea cloths in the sideboard. Old people thinking about sex! Yuk! (*Moving to get up.*) I need to eat.

ANDY (*Holding her back.*) Tell me.

JUDITH Tell you what?

ANDY A story from your life.

JUDITH What do you want from me Andreas? I've nothing to give you.

ANDY Distract me.

JUDITH From what?

ANDY I am frightened of tomorrow. I don't want to think about it.

JUDITH OK.

ANDY Go on.

JUDITH When I was forty I met this man.

ANDY Who? This husband?

JUDITH Then he was someone else's. (*Beat.*) I can't do this.

ANDY OK.

JUDITH I have to get out of here.

ANDY Your first kiss.

JUDITH OK.

ANDY How old are you?

JUDITH Twelve.

ANDY Twelve.

JUDITH Mature kid.

ANDY Who is he?

JUDITH A friend of my brother's. Tall, blond, with a long nose.

ANDY Tell me.

JUDITH It's at a party. Everyone is a teenager. I'm just a kid in white ankle socks! He's sixteen.

ANDY Go on.

JUDITH      It's summer. All the other girls are in nylon stockings. They've got such big legs!

ANDY        Where are you?

JUDITH      A trashy seaside town in the north of England. We're in the smart area.

ANDY        Name?

JUDITH      You wouldn't know.

ANDY        Name!

JUDITH      Southport. Ever heard of it?

ANDY        No. *(Beat.)* What does he do to you?

JUDITH      Pulls me onto his knee.

ANDY        What's his name?

JUDITH      Michael.

ANDY        And?

JUDITH      I can smell fresh sweat.

ANDY        Yes.

JUDITH      His shirt open, his mouth open on mine. I taste salt from the peanuts he's been eating, mixing with salt from his sweat and whenever I smell that from a man in the tube, in the subway, I get turned on.

ANDY        More.

JUDITH      That's it.

ANDY        You have to tell me more.

JUDITH      I have to nothing.

ANDY Please baby.

JUDITH Baby!

ANDY I want to hear about you.

JUDITH Baby?

ANDY Why are you so mean?

JUDITH You're right. I'm a bitch.

ANDY Tell me something.

JUDITH What?

ANDY Anything. I want to hear something. From your life.

JUDITH OK baby! (*Beat.*) I'm at the top of a lighthouse. It's summer but the sky's half grey and half black. All around me. Shafts of glare.

ANDY What happens?

JUDITH Three hundred and sixty five stairs. They get narrower. I climb past people going down so that my foot is on this wafer stone. At the top, the wind is so high.

ANDY I like it!

JUDITH There I am standing on this tiny platform. I look over. Nobody. Sand. Pools of water. Sun slashes.

ANDY How's the sky?

JUDITH Slate.

ANDY And the sand.

JUDITH Moving. I think it's going break and dead bodies'll push up, like the End of the World.



ANDY           The End of the World!

JUDITH        And inside me. This huge wave. Screaming. Climb over the rail! Do it!

ANDY           More!

JUDITH        No.

ANDY           I said more!

JUDITH        Are you threatening me?

ANDY           Me? I could get wild about you. What do you like?

JUDITH        No!

ANDY           What arouses you?

JUDITH        Bite the side of my hand.

ANDY           Like this?

*She moves in pleasure.*

JUDITH        And the other. *(He bites the left hand.)*

ANDY           You got what you want now it's my turn.

JUDITH        You want head?

ANDY           Yes. *(Beat.)* Yours. Take me somewhere I've never been.

JUDITH        You're crazy!

ANDY           England. No, France.

JUDITH        France?

*SILENCE.*

ANDY           Is that a problem?

JUDITH        None at all.

ANDY            Not Paris. That's such a cliché.

JUDITH        OK.

ANDY            Where are you?

JUDITH        Omaha Beach. The American cemetery. Normandy.

ANDY            You were there with a man?

*Pause.*

JUDITH        Yes.

ANDY            Michael?

JUDITH        Michael! No!

ANDY            Your husband?

JUDITH        *(Beat.)* Just a man. *(Beat.)* Oh you're sulking! How sweet!

ANDY            You're laughing at me.

JUDITH        Not at all. You're delicious.

ANDY            Omaha. Oma-ha! Go on.

JUDITH        The sun is hot.

ANDY            What's happening?

JUDITH        I am in the GI graveyard. French guards are trying to close the place. It's nearly six.

ANDY            Are they walking with dogs?

JUDITH        No dogs.

ANDY           How are they moving?

JUDITH        In silent cars. Not to disturb the dead.

ANDY         *(Beat.)* Cars or small trucks?

JUDITH        A sort of mini jeep.

ANDY         What do you see?

JUDITH        The grass neat. Like it's shaved.

ANDY         What else?

JUDITH        Tourists with back packs. Old US military with their middle aged children.

ANDY         More. Go on.

JUDITH        I can't. *(Andy bites her hand again.)*

ANDY         I have to know.

JUDITH        Young men, your age. Boys' graves. Tightly -packed in neat rows stretching as far as the sea. And all those American lads. Running out of the sea into tank fire. Oh Jesus, I'm a boy soldier pissing my pants!

ANDY         I need to see that place.

JUDITH        Enough!

ANDY         I need this.

JUDITH        Row after row after row 'til your eye hits the water.

ANDY         What?

JUDITH        Simple white crosses and white stars/

ANDY         /*Stars?*/

JUDITH /of David. With only the name and the date of death. A name and a date.

ANDY What do you see?

JUDITH Tight skin. Sharp jaws. White perfect teeth. Eyes staring in terror. and the guys in the jeeps are screaming in French, get out we're closing, and then the clock strikes six but it doesn't chime like normal French church bells it chimes in French.

*She tries to sing The Star Spangled Banner.*

ANDY Angela? *(She doesn't react.)* Tell me your real name.

JUDITH I can't.

ANDY Tell me! *(He searches her bag. He finds her passport.)* Judith.

*She turns towards him and kisses him passionately. He responds. Street sounds of traffic and sirens intensify.*

#### SCENE FIVE

*An apartment in Manhattan. West 54th Street.*

ANNA You come round here asking questions. My children never come and here I am in a stinking apartment that the landlord won't fix. No letters, no calls, no emails. Years you don't come. Why now?

JUDITH It's your birthday.

ANNA And?

JUDITH I'm doing a radio story in New York.

ANNA What about?

JUDITH A recce. I tell my editor I've got to see Manhattan before I die. I've done New Orleans - Katrina, Los Angeles - Watts, but never here! What took me so long? And I tell Diane, she's my boss but kind of a friend too, I tell her I'll sniff around. Find a few stories. She says OK. And I think, why not come and see you. Hell, you're my grandmother's sister. My last living relative. How many years? I was a kid.

ANNA           You running from something?

JUDITH         What?

ANNA           Why you want to see a hundred-ten-year-woman?

JUDITH         Didn't you want me to come?

ANNA           Look! *(Takes some skin from her arm.)* Hanging off me like a schmatter. Stunner. That was Anna Weib. And I didn't know it. What would I have done if I'd known?

JUDITH         *(Offering her a box with a cake in it.)* Shall we open this?

ANNA           This stinking heat. Every night, smoke in my mouth. The guy next door puffing out the window. Straight to my lungs. Probably the landlord pays him to give me a good cancer. Asshole wants me out.

JUDITH         Who?

ANNA           Damned Jew landlord.

JUDITH         Aren't you protected?

ANNA           Yeh but he didn't think I'd live so long. Stinking Yid. *(Beat.)* Maybe his foreskin grew back.

JUDITH         Is he hassling you?

ANNA           Sticks his son in the upstairs apartment to keep an eye on me. And the bastard won't fix the place. You going to open that? I didn't eat for four weeks. What am I? A ragdoll. Look at this photo of me. If I'd realised how good I looked I'd'a had a lot of guys. Look at you. Like drek. Why you wear so many clothes? Like a refugee. What's wrong with you?

JUDITH         You said you wanted/

ANNA           /You look like shit/

JUDITH /lots of guys?

ANNA One to massage my feet, another to rub my legs and thighs, and another two to pummel the pain in my ass I got with that shyster always trying to get me outta here. And for my tits, a couple to sweeten them so they get sassy, pop up like when I was young and didn't know how good they are.

JUDITH My husband's having an affair.

ANNA *(Ignoring this.)* Your parents. Still around?

JUDITH Both dead.

ANNA When?

JUDITH Couple of years ago.

ANNA Your parents! Who were they? Nobody from nowhere!

JUDITH Nobody came to their funerals. *(Beat.)* Where are your children? *(Anna ignores this.)* Is there a knife here?

ANNA I'll see him out, that lobos. *(Looking up at the ceiling.)* Look at that damp. And the shower curtain stinks of urine, but it's not piss. It's mould. *(Beat.)* What husband?

JUDITH Some older man I married fifteen years back.

ANNA How old?

JUDITH Seventy-two. But he's fit and slim.

ANNA Seventy-two huh? I could use a toy boy. Can he still shtup?

JUDITH Not like he used to.

ANNA Pity. *(Beat.)* This she. His age?

JUDITH Mine.

ANNA He takes that stuff to bone up?

JUDITH Yeh. It's like being battered to death by a rhino.

ANNA So get yourself a young stud. Whaddya need him for?

JUDITH *(Rips open the cake box.)* I've got it.

ANNA Give me.

JUDITH I mean, I've got what to do.

ANNA Is this chocolate? It's got magnesium. For long life, you know that?

JUDITH I'll stay with you.

ANNA What?

JUDITH This place is huge.

ANNA Look at that wallpaper. I bought it.... When? When was Suez? Come on.

JUDITH Suez?

ANNA Hungary? Got it! Fifty-six. Last year a magazine crew shot some photos here. Don't tell him. He'll want a cut.

JUDITH I'll bring my things over.

ANNA You see that table. Mahogany. Five bucks from Canal Street. Worth five hundred now.

JUDITH I'm in this crap hotel.

ANNA And that vase. Louis Quatorze. It's from Paris, France.

JUDITH Did you go to France?

ANNA What?

JUDITH I went there last summer. With my husband. *(Beat.)* Where were you on D-Day?

ANNA England. The place was full of heavy vehicles and jeeps driving to the coast. Roads so full, whole country was shaking. Why you talking about D-Day? You weren't even born. Where were you? Nowhere. Nobody.

JUDITH Nobody knows I'm here except my boss.

ANNA The boss. Louis Quatorze! Isn't that the guy who built Versailles? He had a wife and Madame Pompadour. And lots of mistresses. You never hear of a queen with lots of guys. *(Laughs.)* Well, except in Manhattan. *(Eating.)* Not bad.

JUDITH I'll come over in the morning. Move in.

ANNA What?

JUDITH With you. *(Beat.)* Is nine OK?

ANNA *(Eating cake.)* Too much sugar.

JUDITH I'll do your shopping.

ANNA I get it sent up.

JUDITH I'll cook.

ANNA Nobody cooks!

JUDITH It'd suit us both.

ANNA Your meschugenah grandmother. How many times did I ask her to come?

JUDITH I didn't know that.

ANNA But no. She wanted to be in England. Didn't want to move again. And what happens? Kaput!

JUDITH What kaput?



ANNA Is that dumb or is that dumb?

JUDITH I'm a great tenant. Hell, I'm family!

ANNA That's how smart she was.

JUDITH Who else do you have? I'll talk to the landlord/

ANNA /Kaput. Putka. Why did she do that?/

JUDITH /get him to lay off.

ANNA Everything to live for, what was wrong with her?

JUDITH You have rights.

ANNA How old was she?

JUDITH Who?

ANNA Hungary? Suez? Come on.

JUDITH Fifty-six.

ANNA Right. *(Beat.)* A young woman.

JUDITH I'm fifty-six tomorrow.

ANNA A child.

JUDITH I'm moving in, Anna.

ANNA No!

JUDITH Come on!

ANNA I don't want you here. You hear me? I don't want nobody.

JUDITH *(She slaps her own face. Anna doesn't notice.)* I understand.

ANNA           *(Mocking her English accent.)* 'I understand. I understand'.

JUDITH         Forget I asked.

ANNA           I asked her. Yes I did. 'Live with me. We'll figure it out together'. Oh no. Wanted to stay in England. That's what she said. Here was too many people. Here was too much noise. Is that a reason? My kid sister, never had nothing to say. You know you can be too quiet and nobody gives a shit. What did she say when they made her a match with a man she didn't want? Stumm. One man her whole life. One schlang! And then he dies. And what's she got? No husband. No kids nearby. Come here I say and is she even listening? So she's lonely. Is that a reason to do it?

JUDITH         What?

ANNA           Why did she do it?

JUDITH         What? Do what?

ANNA           You don't know?

JUDITH         What?

ANNA           Almost sixty, she didn't have a line on her face, you know that?

JUDITH         What are you telling me?

ANNA           *(sings)* Esther Esther sat on a wall/ Esther Esther had a great fall/ All the kings' horses and all the king's men/ Couldn't put Esther....

JUDITH         *(interrupts)* Did she have an accident?

*SILENCE.*

JUDITH         Tell me. Please!

ANNA           'Please'! You so damned English.

JUDITH         Why was there always silence? Tell me.

ANNA I'm tired. You should go now.

JUDITH I've come a long way/

ANNA /Not as far as I have

JUDITH Sorry.

ANNA Sorry? Sorry's not your job. You know how terrible it is when you can't die? Maybe she was lucky. Down into the cool water. No gas. No hanging. No bullet to the brain. No skin drooping like a schmatter.

*Judith looks at her.*

ANNA The guy. He came to fix some windows. You think he'd be more careful. Sorry. You're not to be sorry. He. He should be sorry. What do I do? Sue him for malfeasance? Look at me. Bruised all over. Last week, he leaves his toolbox and down I go. Flat. On. My. Back. Missionary position but there ain't no preacher on top of me. (*Laughs.*) If you're shtupping and you get on top he sees your face hang. All my friends, broken hips, broken femurs, everything they got made new again. Me? I can't break. Why you come here? Recce? You even speak English?

JUDITH Reconnoître. First meaning, check out a place for future war. Second meaning. Check out future radio programme. Brooklyn Bridge. My job, check it out. It's an amazing icon. Most Brits hardly know it.

ANNA Everyone's snooping around. And now you. You always was a nosey bitch.

JUDITH Nosey is how I make my living.

ANNA This husband of yours? He left you?

JUDITH He wants me back. He won't get rid of her, but he wants me back.

ANNA How many husbands did I have?

JUDITH Three.

ANNA Only three?

JUDITH Did she really kill herself? (*Silence.*)

ANNA When we were kids we had cats and they made her drown the kittens. She always howled and still they made her do it. Then she did it to herself. (*Beat.*) And you! If I had a body like yours what wouldn't I do. (*Pause.*) But you dress like a shlumper. You got to smarten up lady. Look at me. Do I let myself go? Do I? When I was in Manchester with her I bought her this fancy coat in Kendals. The fog it was so yellow you couldn't see your hand in front. The coat. Cut loose. A-Line. Powder blue. Real angora. Cost me a week's wages. And she! She put weights in the pockets. Flat irons. She couldn't even swim, the stupid bitch. (*Looks up and shouts.*) You bastard! I won't leave this stinking planet for as long as you live. (*Laughs.*) Look at me, you asshole! I've got family! What've you got? A dreck son, lungs full of tar, belly full of schmaltz. Look at me, I'm telling you, look at me! Here I am paying peanuts in a great apartment eating high-class chocolate gateau with my relative from London, England. And here I am! Five minutes from Times Square! Eight minutes from Carnegie Hall! Ten minutes from Columbus Circle! All that hiked-up rent you're missing. Well, you can whistle Dixie because I've twenty more years left in me. You know what schmuck, I'll be dancing on your grave long after you're farted outta a worm's ass.

## SCENE SIX

*The New York Subway. The journey Downtown to City Hall.*

*Judith is standing on the platform edge. She is carrying a small tape recorder. Sound of the oncoming train. It gets louder and louder.*

JUDITH It's the Six. Red lights. Like a dressing room mirror.

*Train pulls in. Doors open.*

MALE V/O Please stand clear of the closing doors.

WOMAN Y Excuse me. Is this train going Downtown?

JUDITH Uptown or Downtown or in my lady's chamber?

*Two notes <bing bong> to announce voice-over to passengers.*

MALE V/O Please stand clear of the closing doors.

*Judith gets on the subway. Voice mix of a group of people standing up talking.*

WOMAN K And what? Madison and what?

MAN R You remember that time? You and me?

*Woman laughs.*

V/O Please stand clear of the closing doors.

WOMAN K Lady, I tell her, it runs between a hundred and thirty eight and twenty third. (*Loud and irritable.*) What's the cross street?

MAN G I just wanted to live a few hours with her. Two, three times a week. What's wrong with that? OK I kissed her. But that's all. Well that's what I told her. 'I kissed her, I kissed her, I kissed! OK?'

V/O The next stop is Fourteenth Street

MAN G And so I say OK and we go and you know what?

WOMAN B I was leaving the office late. He was my boss.

MAN G He's my shrink, not hers, and you know what he says?

WOMAN Y (*Shouting.*) Is this a local or an express?

WOMAN B And he took me in his arms.

MAN G The shrink, could be my son, he says, 'You come to see me together' and we go and you know what? He says, 'You don't listen to your wife'. Can you believe that? You don't listen to your wife!

WOMAN B I left my husband and my two young sons for him.

MAN G She never stops yakking.

WOMAN B And him, he didn't even want to divorce his wife.

WOMAN H I was driving and I see this sign on the gas station. 'My boss is a Jewish carpenter'! Takes me a while to get it.

WOMAN B And I knew I'd done wrong. The boys. I kept seeing their faces. And I asked my husband, I want to come back...

MAN G And he asks me, this guy, he asks me, 'but what do you feel now?' and he's thumping his gut, 'in here? What do you feel godamnit!'

WOMAN B ...but he said no.

MAN G He tells me 'Be a man'. This kid old enough to be my son!

WOMAN B So I never did go back to the boys. They're men now. My sons. Retirees! Imagine!

MAN C And you know? She brings me over her real interesting friends and she leaves me alone with them.

V/O Chambers Street. This is Chambers Street.

WOMAN H I got it! Jesus. That's not his real name!

MAN C This goddess. Six foot blonde with a square jaw and a look cuts right through your vital arteries. Tells me her name is Missy.

MAN P (*Busker.*) Ladies and gentlemen. I'm not going to tell you that my cat died.

WOMAN B I left two boys for a miser. My son, he's sixty years old. And can you believe this? He still blames me for leaving.

MAN C 'Missy'. What kind of a name is that for a grown woman?

WOMAN B He still cries!

MAN P ...or that my dog got eaten alive by fleas. I'm not going to tell you that I'm hungry and homeless. I'm going to tell you what I do. I am a poet. And I'm going to offer you one of my own poems.

V/O Next stop is Brooklyn Bridge. City Hall.

MAN P        So whatever you can spare from your hearts. God bless you. But first of all I'll tell you my name. It's 'Forever'.

MAN Z        *(Older Black guy.)* Hey lady you got kids?

JUDITH       No.

MAN Z        You spend a night with me, I'll give you kids.

*Judith laughs.*

MALE V/O    Stand clear of the closing doors.

### SCENE SEVEN

*Brooklyn Bridge. Sound of cars and horns. Sounds of people walking across the bridge.*

JUDITH       *(Into her tape recorder.)* Testing. Diane. OK, this is Judith. Doing the recce. Talking to my editor. Doing all the right things. *(She changes into conversational mode.)* Hey! Wish I were in De Martino's with you drinking Chianti and you telling me about some important producers' meeting and you getting flashes of your new guy doing it to you! *(Back to professional.)* So I'm coming out of the subway. I'm looking up and inside my head The Flat Iron Building. And The Chrysler. And the Empire State. *(To herself.)* And inside, it's Ground Zero. *(She smacks herself on the chest. Light change. Back to professional.)* Out at City Hall, I'm turning left and walking past the traffic. The road curves. And there it is!

*At the beginning of The Bridge from the Manhattan end. A man is hanging off a cable one arm outstretched posing for the camera. A woman with an "I Heart New York" T shirt is posing Monroe-style for the camera. Other cast members are walking towards the Bridge taking photos. Reverse so that the audience becomes The Bridge.*

*Judith exhales.*

JUDITH       Oh God. So long. So wide. So high!

*Sound of cars going by. A hospital worker in blue scrubs eats a bagel and is listening to the radio on headphones.*

MALE V/O    *(Radio)* Another fine day across the city, high around 70 but a chance of showers 74 degrees in Central Park...weather station, Ted Dibley....

*Sound of helicopter. Sound of car horns. Sound of traffic intensifies.*

VOICE OFF Open your heart to divine love! Come and shake your soul!

*During this speech, a man passes on rollers. A woman jogs. Judith dodges them.*

JUDITH *(Back to tape recorder.)* OK Diane. I am trying to follow your example. I wake up this morning and there's this Adonis next to me. Young guys. I'd forgotten they can do it over and over.

VOICE OFF Open your heart to divine love!

JUDITH And the first time is just the getting ready and the second is good but the third/

VOICE OFF /Come and shake your soul!/  
/is really head breaking!

JUDITH /is really head breaking!

VOICE OFF Jesus Christ, he loves you!

JUDITH You think we can do a feature on that? What shall we call it? The third coming!  
*(She giggles.)*

*Sound of Chinese music on someone's radio as they jog past.*

JUDITH OK, suppose we go for the Brooklyn Bridge anniversary idea. Question is which? What's the hook? First day of construction? First jumper? First plot to destroy?  
*(She inhales.)* Hell Diane, the span of it all, walking from Manhattan to Brooklyn. Wow, the drop into the East River!

VOICE OFF He died that you may live!

JUDITH Just listen. *(Holding up her mike to the sky. Sound of helicopters intensifies.)*

VOICE OFF Just get the Jewish people back to I-s-r-e-a-l and the Lord is coming!

*Gloria passes by wearing NYPD uniform.*

JUDITH Hey officer.

GLORIA Can I help you, ma'am?



JUDITH This your beat?

GLORIA Maybe.

JUDITH *(Showing her press card.)* Can I talk to you?

GLORIA You need to speak to our press office.

JUDITH Just a few words.

GLORIA I'm busy, lady.

JUDITH It won't take long.

GLORIA I'm expected/

JUDITH /Two minutes/

GLORIA /at the precinct.

JUDITH You see people jump from here?

GLORIA What?

JUDITH Suicides?

GLORIA Why you asking?

JUDITH It's an idea for a story.

GLORIA You from The London Times?

JUDITH BBC Radio.

GLORIA Radio huh. You talk funny. Like the queen!

JUDITH Not quite. *(Beat.)* Tell me something. You get a lot of suicides here?

GLORIA A few. But mostly they go to LA. The Golden Gate. Here you need to walk the high wire.

JUDITH     *(Looking at the suspension wiring.)* I was expecting...

GLORIA     Last Wednesday there was a floater...

JUDITH     ...what? Something like Waterloo Bridge...

GLORIA     Fourteen-year-old Chinese American flunked his exams...

JUDITH     ...not two motorways.

GLORIA     ...couldn't face telling his parents.

JUDITH     All the photos and the films of here. You only see this part. Never those roads down there. I mean if you jumped – splat! – under a Chrysler.

GLORIA     What?

JUDITH     *(Recording.)* So it's mainly kids?

GLORIA     *(Beat.)* All kinds. Something about this view makes them crazy. No, they're crazy first. *(She is wary.)* You really should talk to our press office.

JUDITH     The problem is I don't want the official line. I need the personal.

GLORIA     Yeah, well I don't know. NYPD. Everyone wants a piece. Movies, novelists. We get strict instructions. *(Looking at her phone.)* I'm sure I have a number for public relations.

JUDITH     I understand but these things take weeks. But please Officer, I've an early morning flight. I need something now.

GLORIA     I don't know.

JUDITH     That kid that jumped, the Chinese American?

GLORIA     That's more of an impulse thing. A serious jumper checks into a high-rise hotel. Opens a window.

JUDITH     There are two types?

GLORIA Sorry lady. I'm not allowed. If you want information you really need to talk to ESU. Emergency Services Unit. It's their speciality. I'm homicide. Look I really have to go.

JUDITH One more minute?

GLORIA I've got to get to my retirement party.

JUDITH What?

GLORIA Starts in half an hour.

JUDITH How old are you?

GLORIA We can get our pension at forty-four.

JUDITH You look thirty!

GLORIA I have two daughters. They ask me, 'when are you going to come home in a box mommy?'

JUDITH Oh.

GLORIA So you see it's not just about age.

JUDITH You must be crazy about them.

GLORIA Sure I am.

JUDITH How old are they?

GLORIA Eight and ten.

JUDITH What are their names?

GLORIA *(Beat.)* You got kids?

JUDITH No.

GLORIA      So nobody needs you to be home.

JUDITH      Right.

GLORIA      Sorry I didn't mean it that way. *(Beat.)* Today's a big day for me. Got to go, lady.

JUDITH      Glad I am part of your big day then.

GLORIA      *(She starts to walk away and stops)* Problem is...

JUDITH      Yes?

GLORIA      I'm crazy about my job.

JUDITH      And crazy about your kids.

GLORIA      And I can't have both.

JUDITH      Why not?

GLORIA      Every morning. I wake up frozen. I see my girls, watching me in a coffin.

JUDITH      Shit.

GLORIA      I want to sleep a whole night/

JUDITH      /Won't you miss/

GLORIA      /is that too much to ask?

JUDITH      /all this?

GLORIA      I'll take a break and then I'll go private.

JUDITH      That's good?

GLORIA      It's safer.

JUDITH      Private detective. Doing what? Spying on cheating husbands?

GLORIA      What a drag.

JUDITH      Won't you miss your buddies?

GLORIA      Sure. They're kind of family.

JUDITH      And the adrenaline kick? How will you get that?

GLORIA      You real weird.

JUDITH      Why do you say that?

GLORIA      Lady from nowhere. Suddenly you're inside my brain. You shoulda been a cop.

JUDITH      I'm a coward.

GLORIA      We all are.

JUDITH      Not you. *(Beat.)* You got a husband?

GLORIA      Why do you ask?

JUDITH      I don't know.

GLORIA      Ryan's waiting for me at the precinct.

JUDITH      He's a cop?

GLORIA      Yeah.

JUDITH      And he wants you to retire?

GLORIA      How do you know that?

JUDITH      That way you're home with the girls.

GLORIA      He says it's the right decision.

JUDITH      And you?

GLORIA     *(Beat.)* Hell! In thirty minutes I'll be drinking champagne and all the boys will be there. Tonight, I'll sleep calm.

JUDITH     You'll miss the streets.

GLORIA     I'll get over it.

JUDITH     And if you don't?

GLORIA     New life. My own boss.

JUDITH     Taxes, invoices.

GLORIA     My mom was home for me. I gotta do the same for my girls. Your mom work?

JUDITH     You mind if I switch this on?

GLORIA     My last day. What the hell.

*Judith turns on the tape.*

JUDITH     So Officer *(Looking at her tag.)* Ryan? Ryan-Sanchez?

GLORIA     Irish husband. Parents from Puerto Rico. Look how they label us. Like a grocery store. Very low class. *(She takes out paper but doesn't read it.)* I gotta give this speech.

JUDITH     Can I hear?

GLORIA     Bad luck. *(She puts it back in her pocket.)* Like the groom seeing the bride's dress. Today, my job is bring that Gloria Sanchez Virgin Cop into the party with me. Can you believe, twenty-one-year-old rookie in South Jamaica.

JUDITH     Where's that?

GLORIA     Way out in Queens.

JUDITH     Was the rookie scared?

GLORIA        Excited to death. We go in and there he is. My first cadaver. Spider crawling out of his nose. And the phone goes in his apartment. Some guy. 'Is Jerry there?' I tell him 'Jerry can't talk to you right now'. And he says 'Why not?' 'Cos he's a dead man'. And he's screaming, 'Oh my God, he's dead! Oh my God, he's dead!' And you're not supposed to do that, it has to be face to face but how can it be face to face when the guy's on the phone. You really recording this?

JUDITH        You mind?

GLORIA        You putting me on radio?

JUDITH        No.

GLORIA        You could get me fired.

JUDITH        Aren't you retiring?

GLORIA        *(She shrugs.)* You gotta cigarette? *(Holds her neck.)*

JUDITH        I don't smoke. Are you in pain?

GLORIA        I have these cadaver bones in my neck. He musta been a smoker and I'm dreaming cigarettes.

JUDITH        How did you get them?

GLORIA        I'm out on a chase. I fall out of a police car straight on to my neck. They give me new bits. The question is, whose body is in me?

JUDITH        That's scary.

GLORIA        I'm getting too old to be spinning around pavements on my spine. Ryan's right. I should get out of this. Look at me. All held together with steel pins and metal plates.

JUDITH        You look like Hollywood.

GLORIA        Yeh but inside I'm all through.

JUDITH        Are you? *(Beat.)* Why did you go for homicide? Isn't that the boys' territory?

GLORIA        Because I'm no girl desk cop. All that worrying about can I get home for five and make dinner crap. You want a bagel? *(Has two and offers one.)* Only go to waste.

JUDITH        I don't eat wheat.

GLORIA        You one these health freaks? You look like a stick insect. I know. No carbs. *(She eats.)* OK so pick out the lox and throw the rest. *(Judith looks at the bagel and eats. Silence while they both chew.)* You think there's too much cream cheese? *(Pause.)* You know, if I was a guy I'd live off selling spunk.

JUDITH        What?

GLORIA        Hundreds of gallons, every day, thrown in the trash. I get to thinking that, in that mess, is my child. He may be Black, Chinese, Caucasian or Indian. Now, he looks like snot. Sorry I'm putting you off.

JUDITH        I like the way you talk.

GLORIA        I like the way you listen.

JUDITH        When did you want to be a cop?

GLORIA        Maybe seven. *(Beat.)*

JUDITH        Tell me.

GLORIA        I'm out in the street. Guy falls out of a window. White gunge coming out of his ears. Then the cops come and I want to be running hard with those guys.

JUDITH        Amazing!

GLORIA        Now why would a grown man jump?

JUDITH        Your parents want you to join the police?



GLORIA Sure. I was brought up strict Puerto Rican. Even in the projects. Other girls out late with boys. Not me. My mom. You study. You stay home. You have a mom like that?

JUDITH No.

GLORIA How was yours?

JUDITH My 'mom'. She wasn't around much.

GLORIA Who looked after you?

JUDITH Some old woman. *(Beat)* Nobody.

*Judith moves off the walkway and climbs up to the side bridge. Susan enters looking dishevelled. Nobody notices her.*

GLORIA Nobody. This old woman must've been somebody.

SUSAN Hey officer?

GLORIA Yes Miss?

SUSAN I've asked about a hundred people already in this city. I was in the 17th Street precinct. I walked all the way from there. I need some cash. The cops there, they wouldn't listen.

GLORIA Beat it.

SUSAN I had a fight with my partner. Kicked me in the head, you hear me? I left the apartment and I came to the cops and I walked out with no cash, you hear me?

GLORIA Move it. Now!

SUSAN I've not eaten for days. I went to the store. For fish. Black kid behind the counter. I tell him what you throw away, could you see yourself just putting it in a bag for me? Only goes in the garbage. And he says, 'I can't give you no fish but I can give you something'.

*Judith starts recording.*

SUSAN I've not eaten for days. I went to the store. For fish. Black kid behind the counter. And I'm thinking he'll give me some roe or maybe a can of tuna and he says, 'Lady, all I can give you right now is my name'. Then he holds out his hands like this. 'Gabriel'. Like he was some fucking angel. You see if you could just let me have a few dollars. You what you doing? You recording?

JUDITH Free country.

SUSAN You got my voice in your machine?

GLORIA Get outta here.

SUSAN What if I jump off of here, you could sell it. You take a photo?

JUDITH *(Beat.)* If someone were to jump, I mean if I were to jump, wouldn't this be the perfect spot? A woman, my size. All she needs to do is climb over.

SUSAN She's stealing my soul officer.

JUDITH *(As she moves out. Talks to herself.)* Get to the arc lights and keep going.

SUSAN What about you Miss? You gotta few dollars in your purse?

GLORIA Hey English! What the hell you doing?

*Judith pulls a cocktail dress out of her bag and changes into it.*

GLORIA This some kind of game?

JUDITH It's my birthday. Hungary. Suez. Fifty-six. Get it? I'm giving my husband a present.

*She photographs herself with her phone.*

GLORIA I don't see no husband.

JUDITH Me neither!

GLORIA      Get down! Now! Everyone's gonna call 911. You'll be surrounded. (*Takes out phone.*)

SUSAN      Maybe a five-dollar bill?

JUDITH      It's OK. (*She turns off her machine.*)

GLORIA      What?

JUDITH      It's an experiment. To see how it feels. Relax.

GLORIA      Stop fooling around. Get down!

JUDITH      (*She is quite far out on the girder.*) Now I can breathe! First time in weeks.

GLORIA      English, that's enough!

JUDITH      NO! Go to your party.

GLORIA      I'm going nowhere.

JUDITH      Oh God I had no idea it would feel like this! You ever been out here? Maybe that cadaver you got jumped and hit the road.

GLORIA      I got you wrong. I'm losing it. I thought you were like me.

JUDITH      Like you?

SUSAN      Lady, look in your pocket? Your purse? Maybe a spare dollar?

GLORIA      You got family?

JUDITH      What?

GLORIA      Someone I can call? What's your name?

JUDITH      You saw my press card.

GLORIA      I didn't catch/

JUDITH /Forget it/

GLORIA /your name? *(Beat.)* Why you doing this?

JUDITH It's incredible. Like a stone gone from my chest!

GLORIA You making me late.

JUDITH So go!

GLORIA I gotta be at the precinct in fifteen. *(She's talking fast as she thinks what to do.)*  
You thinking about jumping? It's a filthy way to die.

SUSAN Who's talking about dying? *(She sits and watches.)*

V/O Hey! Sanchez. What's up?

GLORIA *(To offstage, cops coming towards her.)* Cool it guys!

JUDITH You let them near here and I swear to God.

GLORIA *(Yelling at the cops.)* Keep your distance.

JUDITH You tell them!

GLORIA Rivera's making a cordon. Nobody can cross the Bridge. You gonna stop the whole of New York City. You want to paralyse Manhattan to Brooklyn?

JUDITH Manhattan to Brooklyn! How about that!

GLORIA Why you doing this?

JUDITH Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

GLORIA What?

JUDITH Your grandmother still alive?

GLORIA What?

JUDITH Is she?

GLORIA What's with the grandmother?

JUDITH Forget it.

GLORIA Who is she? Your mother's mother?

JUDITH Sometimes I hear her voice.

GLORIA Tell me about her.

*SILENCE.*

JUDITH Had a great fall. You learn that in America? (*Beat.*) Oh God! Look at her. That's the Statue of Liberty?!! She's amazing! Did you know France gave it to America? And America gave France her boys.

GLORIA You ready to come down now?

JUDITH (*Looking out across the River to the Statue of Liberty.*) It's like the End of the World. There's nothing but me, the city and this water. All I need is enough courage to jump and then. Nothing.

GLORIA Not true! You'll be in agony even before you hit water. One massive, bursting heart. You really want that?

*Struggling to win her attention she fixes on Judith's shoes.*

GLORIA What are they? The- latest-Paris-fashion-walking-off-the-bridge shoes?

JUDITH A suicide takes them off, then she jumps.

GLORIA Where you hear that crap? And this is about what? Some guy? You screw my important day. For some creep?

JUDITH Turn around. Walk away.

GLORIA I can't.

MAN/OFF Hey you up there! Make my day! Jump!

JUDITH        When I'm ready, not when you tell me, you piece of shit.

GLORIA        Move that vehicle you asshole before I have you arrested.

MAN/off        It's a free country officer!

GLORIA        Move it fast or I'll have you banged up for incitement to murder. Now English.  
I'm running out of time here.

*She waves the paper with her speech on it.*

JUDITH        Walk lady. Go. Read your speech. Have a great life!

*SILENCE.*

GLORIA        OK. Here's the deal.

JUDITH        What?

GLORIA        I give you my speech, you give me a step.

JUDITH        Fuck your speech.

GLORIA        You don't mean that.

JUDITH        Don't I?

GLORIA        You and me. We the same. We need to know. It's what keeps us alive isn't it.  
Find out stuff? *(They stare at each other.)* You in deep trouble lady. Want me to  
call for help?

JUDITH        Want me to go over?

*SILENCE.*

GLORIA        OK. OK. Listen, I'm going to make you an offer.

JUDITH        Not interested. Hey cop. You never saw me.

GLORIA        I can't do that.

JUDITH        Why not?

GLORIA I serve the city.

JUDITH You're retired.

GLORIA Not yet.

JUDITH They're waiting for you.

GLORIA Here's the story.

JUDITH What?

GLORIA I give you what you want. You give me something back.

JUDITH No deal. (*Moves away towards the edge.*) I like being here. You know that!

GLORIA One fucking inch.

*SILENCE.*

GLORIA You want me to beg? (*Gloria gets down on her knees.*) Look at what I'm doing. You see this? Look at me. Kneeling! This I only do for Jesus and his holy mother. What do you want English?

*SILENCE.*

JUDITH Your first day.

GLORIA What?

JUDITH As that virgin cop. Give me Sanchez before she meets Ryan.

GLORIA First you move and I don't want some friggin' gnat step.

*Judith takes a small step back towards Gloria.*

GLORIA Good. Now turn that thing on.

*Judith switches on her recorder.*

JUDITH I'm waiting.

GLORIA OK. I'm in an apartment in Lexington Avenue.

JUDITH      And?

GLORIA      Roaches. Millions of them. Big black fuckers. Stinking like a dead person.

JUDITH      Go on.

GLORIA      A young woman's been shot. She's lying on the bed. I'm looking for a piece and I see something black in a drawer and I put my hand inside and it moves! There's millions of the bastards. From the walls from the carpet, running all over me.

*Enter Louise.*

LOUISE      Hey Detective.

GLORIA      *(Mock polite to Louise.)* Can I help you?

SUSAN      Nobody helps nobody here. Go screw yourself. *(To Louise.)* A few dollars, you got something for me lady?

GLORIA      Look English, I'm holding out for you. Now there's these two crazies. Give me a break. One more step.

LOUISE      Who you talking to?

GLORIA      Look over there, grandma.

LOUISE      Oh. Oh! Oh!

JUDITH      Who's grandma?

GLORIA      So you see if it's not urgent.

LOUISE      Last Christmas. I went to visit my daughter. All the way from Queens out to Westchester. It was snowing. To see the baby.

GLORIA      Move it.

LOUISE      And when I get there she says you can't stay. You have to go to a hotel. In their warm house with fancy wooden floors you have to take your shoes off and her



dog, all powdered and in a tiny mink coat, he gets better attention than I do. In a hotel she says when their house is full with empty bedrooms.

GLORIA OK now move on.

LOUISE And she gives me some food on plastic plates and plastic cutlery. What's the matter? You too fancy to wash dishes?

GLORIA I'm not telling you again.

LOUISE In Poland/

JUDITH /Poland?

LOUISE /after 1945, if any kids had parents or grandparents, we knew they were Catholic. I even learned their prayers and everyone believed me. Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee.

GLORIA Blessed be the fruit of thy womb. Now grandma Jesus will really love you if you get outta here.

LOUISE I was thinking officer, if you come with me to their apartment and tell them, then they'll understand. I'm an American. I have rights. Don't I have rights officer? Rights to see my own grandchildren?

JUDITH Hello grandma. Where you from?

LOUISE Where you think? Where they tattoo your arms with kisses?

JUDITH You were there?

SUSAN You got some money for me?

LOUISE (*Looking up.*) What's Madame doing up there?

JUDITH Were you?

SUSAN You make me sick to my stomach.

LOUISE My daughter. She's working in a beauty parlour.

SUSAN You hear what I'm saying?

*Susan leaves.*

LOUISE No two the same. Like a fingerprint. That's what she says. Brazilian. What does she know of South America? She's never been out of Queens. *(Looks up.)* Nice shoes.

JUDITH You want them?

GLORIA No!

LOUISE You think if I give them my daughter she'll let me see the kids?

JUDITH Catch? *(She takes off a shoe and holds it up. Louise catches it.)*

GLORIA Shit.

LOUISE She's 9. Big feet for a small girl. Helps you run fast.

*She tries it on.*

LOUISE I need the other. Oh look! You've got a fancy machine!

GLORIA I'm telling you for the last time.

*Judith takes off second shoe and carries it in her hand. She switches off her tape.*

LOUISE She's an English major. Goes up to people. Asks if they know the difference between 'I have no mother did you know that?' and 'I have no mother, comma, did you know that?'

JUDITH Nobody has a mother these days.

LOUISE Now I'm no shrink but to me that's aggressive. You think that's aggressive?

*Judith's phone rings. She looks at the screen.*

JUDITH *(She listens.)* Where am I? Where are you? You told her to go to hell yet?

GLORIA *(Yelling offstage to another cop)* It's OK Rivera. I'm handling this.

JUDITH       What do I want? I want to feel her twisted mouth under my heel. *(Beat.)* I'm on Brooklyn Bridge! That's where. *(She switches it off.)*

GLORIA       Your husband screwing around?

JUDITH       Leave me alone.

GLORIA       That's why you want to jump? Is that it? Now I am calling for back-up.

JUDITH       You do that and I'm going out there.

GLORIA       *(Deciding to change tactics.)* You think sometimes I don't want to end it all?

JUDITH       You?

GLORIA       'You are a piece of crap. You always was a piece of crap. You always will be a piece of crap'. That's the voice in my head when I walk in front of traffic late night with the headlamps in my eyes.

JUDITH       You do that? *(Turns on machine in such a way that it's as if she isn't aware of her action.)*

*During the next speech, Judith comes down from the third arc light to the one nearest Gloria's. She is listening.*

GLORIA       And the cars stop and the drivers scream at me. So I go home. Everyone's asleep. I take out my gun and I polish the barrel. And I hold it to my head. And you know what stops me pulling that trigger? A photo by my bed. Me and 946 police cadets. Company 57. Graduation Day in Madison Square Garden. And they throw the confetti at us. Like it's a wedding. And I'm getting married to the city. You getting this in that machine?

JUDITH       Yes.

GLORIA       I'm giving my life to protect the 1.75 miles between Canal Street and the lowest tip of Manhattan. And in that photo there's me and the Mayor shaking hands. And then again with it. 'You're trash. No matter how many times you shake hands with the Mayor you ain't never going to wash off the smell of your own shit'.

JUDITH OK.

GLORIA And the only thing that stops me, it's not my husband, it's not my girls. It's knowing I can put on this uniform day after day and when I wear it then I'm somebody. *(Beat.)* And you know what English, I don't think I can go on not doing that. *(A police car passes and the blue light is flashing.)*

JUDITH Get him away from here!

GLORIA You really want to jump because of a guy? It's not worth it!

JUDITH What do you know!

GLORIA There's got to be at least one person who cares for you.

JUDITH Really?

GLORIA Your mother?

*Judith laughs for a long time.*

GLORIA You angry with her? You mad at her and you take it out on your husband.

JUDITH *(Beat.)* What's this? Some cop shrink bullshit? Go to hell. *(Turns off her machine.)* When I've gone at least he'll know who I am.

GLORIA What you doing. Never works.

*SILENCE.*

GLORIA You listening English?

JUDITH What?

GLORIA You want to know about dying? I'll tell you stuff I never told nobody.

JUDITH What?

*She switches on her tape recorder secretly.*

GLORIA You want my first homicide?

JUDITH I don't care.

GLORIA So why you switched on?

JUDITH No reason.

GLORIA This young woman. Actress. Lived in Soho. In her apartment block, these construction workers they were bugging her. Noise all day long, she can't sleep. All night she's working tables in a restaurant and all day she needs rest. Goes down to see the guys.

JUDITH What guys?

GLORIA Immigrants. No English. First she's polite but soon she's telling them fuck off on a regular basis.

JUDITH Come on!

GLORIA One night she comes back home and there's one guy and it's four in the morning and he's still making noise so she yells at him and he hits her and she falls down. So he gets scared. Takes her upstairs to her apartment. Into the shower. She's out cold but she's not dead.

JUDITH How does he know?

GLORIA There's a pulse. So he takes a belt and he strangles her. But he makes it look like suicide. And for the next few days all her friends are leaving messages but she never answers. Someone calls 911.

JUDITH You get the call?

GLORIA We go in there. And the friends say no way it's suicide. She has a husband. She has a young kid. She has auditions.

*Her phone rings.*

JUDITH Don't take it!

GLORIA I gotta.

JUDITH I said no.

GLORIA It's the precinct. They're waiting for me.

JUDITH That girl?

GLORIA Yeh.

JUDITH What happened?

*Phone stops ringing. Silence.*

JUDITH *(Yelling.)* I said what happened?

GLORIA Check your machine!

JUDITH It's on, damn you!

GLORIA I did the confession.

JUDITH Just you?

GLORIA Yeh. He tells me, after he knocks her down and sees she's hurt. He's frightened she'll go to the cops. Terrified he'll get deported.

JUDITH The woman. Who is she?

GLORIA Russian. Jew. Been here ten years.

JUDITH Oh?

GLORIA You a Jew, English?

JUDITH What was her name?

GLORIA Kozinskaya.

JUDITH Where from?

GLORIA Moscow. Came when she was a kid. This we find out from the family and the guy. We go to her apartment. We find this footprint on the toilet seat. His. I tell him I know it's you. And he says no.

JUDITH In the precinct? Just you and him?

GLORIA That's right.

JUDITH What do you feel?

GLORIA His sweat. Kinda rancid. Gets up my nose. I'm kinda trying not to breathe in. All I know is I've got to get the story.

JUDITH Go on.

GLORIA His body is screaming for nicotine and caffeine. No coffee. No cigarettes. So he gets real tired. Me, I'm drinking coffee. And he's all on edge.

JUDITH What does he say?

GLORIA Tells me how he hit her and she banged her head on concrete. He feels a pulse and thinks she's dead and she looks so beautiful in his arms and maybe he can fuck her.

JUDITH Does he do that?

GLORIA No time. He's got to move fast. So he takes the belt from her jeans and hangs it from the metal rod at the window and he stands on the toilet seat. (*Points to the recorder.*) Check it's working.

JUDITH OK.

GLORIA He says she's real heavy for a light woman and all the time he's telling me he's sobbing like a kid.

JUDITH (*Applauds mockingly.*) You one helluva cop.

GLORIA Sure. I'm Jesus Christ's right hand. Come on. *(She doesn't move.)* Don't you come from a people they always trying to kill?

JUDITH Shut up!

*Her phone rings again. She looks at it not sure whether to answer. It rings through the next speeches.*

GLORIA And you want to end it because your guy puts his dick in some other woman? You kill yourself for that? That's not it. There's got to be something else.

JUDITH I said shut it.

GLORIA What's the story?

JUDITH No story.

GLORIA I don't believe you.

JUDITH What do you care?

GLORIA I don't. But then I'm here. Now. With you English. So something tells me I do care.

*SILENCE.*

JUDITH For what?

GLORIA You, you bitch! *(SILENCE.)* I'm waiting. You got something in here *(thumps heart)* and I want to know what it is.

JUDITH Nothing. *(She thumps her chest.)* A stone to help me sink.

*Judith seems upset. SILENCE.*

GLORIA What you thinking English?

JUDITH Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. You're the one wants to talk.

GLORIA You owe me/

JUDITH /nothing!



GLORIA I got down on my knees and begged. I begged to you. Jesus Christ! What else do you want from me? *(Pause.)* Jesus, I'm trying to save a life here.

JUDITH Trying to save the dead.

GLORIA What dead?

JUDITH My grandmother.

GLORIA Yes! That's it!

JUDITH What?

GLORIA What did she say to you?

JUDITH When?

GLORIA When you were a kid?

JUDITH Nothing.

GLORIA Stop this!

JUDITH *(Beat.)* She said I had strong limbs. I didn't know that word meant. I see her looking at me. Kind of amazed that I am alive. *(Beat.)* She lost a lot of people.

GLORIA What people? *(Silence.)* What does that mean, she lost a lot of people? *(Beat.)* You've got to live for her.

JUDITH I've got to die for her.

GLORIA You love her.

JUDITH You can't love the dead Sanchez.

LOUISE *(Half-asleep.)* I went to Church and looked at the lovely lady with the baby.

GLORIA Can't you?

LOUISE ...the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!

GLORIA That's it! It's not the husband. It's her!

LOUISE He died that you are saved! That's something!

GLORIA And you think jumping brings you together?

JUDITH Maybe.

GLORIA That's bullshit.

JUDITH Is it?

GLORIA You're here now with me. Not her. And you and me. We've got a deal.

JUDITH Did I say yes to your crap deal?

GLORIA One more step. *(Gloria's phone rings.)*

JUDITH Don't take it!

GLORIA I gotta.

JUDITH I said no.

GLORIA It's Ryan. He's waiting for me.

JUDITH Leave me alone. I don't want you to see.

GLORIA You're smart. You're good-looking. You got your whole life.

*Judith's phone rings. She looks at it not sure whether to answer. It rings through the next speeches.*

GLORIA You've got friends.

JUDITH I've got nothing. What do you know with your good cop shit. Fuck you.

GLORIA      And fuck you. Go on. Jump. Fuck up my day. My party. My whole life. But, if you go, then I'm sure as hell going to watch.

JUDITH      No way!

GLORIA      You fuck my day lady/

JUDITH      /I won't let you.

*Her phone stops ringing. Police cars are coming close. Their blue lights are flashing. Sound of helicopters.*

JUDITH      They've stopped the traffic. Did you do that?

GLORIA      *(Yelling off.)* I'm telling you hold it guys. I've got this controlled.

*Judith's phone rings again. The ringing gets louder and louder. She throws the phone at Gloria who catches it.*

JUDITH      Tell him this is what he gets for fucking her.

GLORIA      This isn't about him. Don't do this! God loves you!

JUDITH      God! You and your sentimental Christian shit.

GLORIA      You can't just end it.

JUDITH      Watch me!

GLORIA      Your grandmother. What was her name?

JUDITH      None of your business.

*Judith moves away from her.*

GLORIA      You smash up my last day and it's none of my business?

*Desperately playing for time with a new story.*

GLORIA      This corpse she's pregnant. In the morgue they cut her and out comes this perfect little girl. Dead.

JUDITH      What?

GLORIA       The father's married to a gorgeous Filipina, the dead girl's his white girlfriend. The guy. Works in Sanitation Garage Four, located on a pier in the Hudson River. This man, he and his wife live in Queens. One night he meets with the girlfriend. Girlfriend's pregnant. She wants the baby to come quick. And the doctor says have sex. Now this guy he never leaves the house at night but this Saturday...

LOUISE       *(Waking.)* Hello pretty lady!

GLORIA       ...he tells his wife I'm going drinking in Manhattan.

LOUISE       Give me the other shoe.

JUDITH       Why are you still alive?

GLORIA.      She calls him but he doesn't pick up...

LOUISE       Why you so mean?

GLORIA       ... because while he's having sex with the girlfriend, he shoots her in the back of the head and dumps her in the Hudson.

JUDITH       Ugh. *(She holds her head.)*

GLORIA       Two a.m. I pick him up with the guys from the precinct. We tell him your girlfriend's dead and he gives this real fake sorrow look. We check his phone. His cell sites were triangulating. So we see that he was at the port exactly where the homicide happened.

JUDITH       You love this!

GLORIA       We find dried blood on the pier where he threw her. He cleaned up but not between the boards. So I'm cuffing him and I'm smiling.

JUDITH       *(Looking at her machine.)* I'm running out of juice here.

GLORIA       He shoots her. And the kid. For a few dollars! To stop having his pay garnished to pay for his child. And listen to this. It's January. The Hudson's all ice. And two

days later, the girlfriend. She floats up. And that's strange because bodies they sink and usually we don't find them 'til spring. Ow! ( *Holding her neck.*) My neck.

JUDITH      You saying she floated up deliberately? Like she's telling you something? Is that what you're saying?

GLORIA      Can a dead body talk?

JUDITH      Stop staring at me!

GLORIA      I've got it!

JUDITH      Got what?

GLORIA      I'm taking you with me.

JUDITH      NO!

GLORIA      You sure dressed for a party.

JUDITH      You. You need to shut up and let me think.

GLORIA      Come on lady!

JUDITH      You want to save me because she floated up. Because of all those dead women. They're inside you. Right?

GLORIA      That girl was fucking someone else's husband. But did she deserve to die?

JUDITH      Yes.

GLORIA      You never did it with a married man?

JUDITH      (*Beat.*) Go to hell!

GLORIA      You any different from her?

JUDITH      Fuck you! (*Beat.*) You, you're sick. Sick from those cadavers you carry. Hell they're even inside you!

GLORIA And now you, English, you inside me too. But you, you're still breathing.

JUDITH Well, you're too late so Mazel Tov and goodbye.

*Switches off and turns.*

GLORIA *(Yelling.)* Hey lady! Look!

*Gloria takes out her speech and rips it up.*

JUDITH *(Turning.)* What are you doing?

GLORIA Fuck retirement! I'm here! With you! We'll go to my non-retirement party. You and me! Now! Now at least I'm alive!

JUDITH That's what he said. 'At least I'm alive'.

GLORIA I'm gonna kick Death in the ass. And you gonna do the same.

JUDITH Am I?

*A rocked-up version of Schubert's Death and the Maiden comes from Louise's ghetto blaster.*

*Louise wakes.*

LOUISE Did she steal my music. The girl? (To JUDITH.) You want to dance? Come on! Dance with me! I can be your grandma!

*Louise dances. Judith pauses before responding by holding out her arms.*

LOUISE You want to live with me? My daughter! She'll be so mad!

GLORIA Come on English. Say, what is your name?

JUDITH OK. Ryan. You win. But only for a few minutes.

GLORIA *(Triumphant.)* Yes! Hell, I need a drink and the champagne's getting hot.

*Judith moves forward towards her.*

GLORIA Thank you God. Thank you Jesus.

JUDITH Hell, I forgot my tape

*She goes back to get it and takes a few steps towards Gloria. Judith gives a little dance and, as she does, there is the sound from a police siren from the boats below. The arc lights come on and, blinded, she slips and falls into the East River. Louise continues dancing. Music is still playing.*

GLORIA      *(Yells.)* She's over. Get the boats! NOW!

*Judith's phone is ringing. Sirens.*

*A woman with the T-shirt "I Heart Brooklyn Bridge" poses for a camera shot. A guy on rollerblades crosses the stage.*

BLACKOUT

**PLAY TWO: *12-37***

Final Draft September 2015.



CHARACTERS:

MINNIE	(Naomi) Green.
PAUL GREEN	Naomi's oldest son.
CECIL GREEN	Naomi's middle son.
HENRY GREEN	Naomi's youngest son.
EILEEN REILLY	Paul's girlfriend.
NIRMAL SEN	a doctor colleague of Paul's.
HARRY COHEN	boxing trainer, later Naomi's husband.
SOLOMON MIKHOELS	Yiddish actor.
RINA GOLDBERG	niece of Mikhoels.
ARI	activist.
SHOSHANA	activist.
Ensemble (voices, crowds).	

*Locations are Dublin, London, Palestine, the new state of Israel.*

*The play starts in 1935 and ends in 1948.*

SCENE ONE

*DUBLIN*

*1935. A bedroom in a poorly furnished house. A man is in the bed. He is in his sixties, thin and dying. Three sons are in the bedroom with him.*

CECIL        Shema Yisroel Adenoi Elohanu –

PAUL        It won't help.

CECIL        Adenoi Echod.

PAUL 'Hear O Israel. The Lord is One'. What the hell is Israel or the Lord for Da?

CECIL We can pray.

PAUL Sure, and I'm going to marry Marlene Dietrich.

HENRY Now you're talking.

PAUL Let's get it over with. The poor bastard is in agony.

CECIL We all agree. *(Beat.)* That's certain?

HENRY Agree or not agree, it's all a lot of bloody nonsense.

PAUL Like your bloody stupid prayers.

CECIL What about ma?

PAUL What about her?

HENRY Should she be asked?

PAUL What's the point?

HENRY Cecil's right. We should ask her.

PAUL Look, you eejits. They give him three weeks at the most. That's three weeks of vomiting blood and screaming in pain. You want more of that?

CECIL What's the hurry?

PAUL You know what that pain is like? It's not like one of your bloody migraines, you know.

HENRY You're in an awful rush. Sure you haven't got a pretty nurse to see?

PAUL And if I have, what's it to you?

CECIL Eileen Reilly. You want to get in her knickers, is that it?

PAUL Jaysus, will you give me a bit of peace? Do we or don't we?

HENRY Let's vote?

PAUL Sure. We could ask Dev if he wants to count the vote if you like.

CECIL A vote's a good idea.

PAUL Right.

CECIL Suppose he can hear us?

PAUL Of course he can bloody hear us. And he's wishing we'd put him out of his misery now. He can't eat, his bones are sticking out worse than a Friday night chicken after you lot've been picking at it. Is that a life worth living?

HENRY When there's life, there's no hope?

PAUL Stomach cancer is no hope.

CECIL But is it allowed? What does the Talmud say?

PAUL Jaysus, who cares what the bloody Talmud says, do we go ahead or not?

CECIL We vote.

PAUL Who's for putting him out of his misery?

HENRY Suppose we ask him again?

PAUL You meschuggah? He's been begging for out for the past week.

HENRY He might not be ready.

PAUL Ready? Ready? Who in his right mind is ever ready? You want me to call a priest for the last rites?

CECIL He was so proud when we all graduated. Sitting so proud, like a little Litvak. And you remember how he pulled out four cigars from his pocket. We sat there

smoking. Saying nothing. Like he was Abraham with three new sons. (*Beat.*) You know, every night, I dream I am back there taking finals. Sitting, looking at the bloody question, and not knowing the answers. Every morning, I wake up sweating.

HENRY        Me too. Only I am in surgery. The patient is ready. And suddenly my mind is blank. Is it an appendix I have to do, or a hernia?

CECIL         I never wanted to be a doctor.

HENRY        I never knew that.

CECIL         A chazan. Just to sing in the synagogue would have done me fine.

PAUL         A cantor! Jaysus, will you get that head out of the shtetl and into the twentieth century?

HENRY        I didn't want to be a doctor, either.

PAUL         Jaysus, now it's confession time?

CECIL         What then?

HENRY        A pilot.

PAUL         Yes, and I wanted to be Johnny Weissmuller in 'Tarzan'.

CECIL         God help you.

PAUL         Well then, God or no God, do we take this great bloody democratic vote or not?

HENRY        We vote. But if one of us disagrees, then we don't do it.

CECIL         Done.

PAUL         Gentlemen and gentlemen, we are gathered together tonight to vote on whether we shall allow our beloved father to suffer in agony for several more weeks until the good Lord takes him and turns him into dust, or whether we shall set aside our

Hippocratic Oath and inject a fatal dose of morphine. All who wish to help our father, soon to be in heaven, raise their right hand.

CECIL            Shema Yisroel adonai elohainu adonai echad. *(Beat.)* As long as it's not me that does it.

*Henry lifts his hand. Cecil lifts his hand while praying with his eyes closed. Henry looks at Paul.*

## SCENE TWO

### *KILLINEY BAY*

*Paul is walking along the beach at night with Eileen. They are laughing. He kisses her. They sit on a bench in a beach hut. A lighthouse lamp flashes regularly.*

EILEEN        Look at the moon. And the sound of the waves. You think everyone is dead and we are the only people in the whole world that's alive.

PAUL            You and me. And not a squirrel or a mouse or a giraffe.

EILEEN        Just you and me. That would be lovely.

PAUL.         And a kiss?

*(They kiss and it gets hot. She pulls back.)*

PAUL            What's the matter?

EILEEN        The lighthouse. The man inside. You think he gets lonely?

PAUL            No. It's what he wanted all his life. To work in a lighthouse and never see a soul.

EILEEN        Perhaps he sees all the dead souls that wander from the shipwrecks all round.

PAUL            Shipwrecks?

EILEEN        From Spain maybe. Or the Americas.

PAUL            That's England opposite.

EILEEN        I know, silly. Did your family come this way?

PAUL            Vilna to Dublin?

EILEEN      Why not?

PAUL          They bought a ticket from the Old Country for the United States. They got off the boat and it was six months before they knew they'd been cheated. It wasn't New York at all. It was London.

EILEEN      So why did they come to Ireland?

PAUL          A bit closer to America? Give me a kiss. *(They kiss. She pulls away.)* What's wrong?

EILEEN      Nothing.

PAUL          Don't be shy, Nurse! No one can see us. You weren't so shy last week. *(Beat.)* You worried? Don't be. I'll be careful.

EILEEN      Eejit!

PAUL          Come closer.

EILEEN      Someone might see.

PAUL          No squirrels or giraffes, I told you.

EILEEN      *(Beat.)* My father has taken to following me.

PAUL          What?

EILEEN      Since Ma died.

PAUL          You never said...

EILEEN      There was nothing to say.

PAUL          Six months and you said nothing to me?

EILEEN      I think he knows about us.

PAUL          Jaysus.

EILEEN He asked me.

PAUL What did he ask you?

EILEEN Said he saw us in Bewley's. *(Beat.)* In Bewley's, 'with the filthy Jewman'.

PAUL What did you say? *(She moves away.)* What did you say? Will you tell me?

*(Eileen lifts her shirt up. Her back is sore with red strap marks).*

PAUL The filthy stinking bastard. I'll kill him.

EILEEN No.

PAUL I'll beat the living daylights out of him.

EILEEN He's my da.

PAUL He's a bastard, that's what he is.

EILEEN I know.

PAUL What'll we do?

EILEEN I promised I won't see you again.

PAUL We'll get married. We'll go to England and get married.

EILEEN Don't be silly. You've just qualified. *(Beat.)* And anyway, what will your ma and da say?

PAUL My da...

EILEEN Your da what?

PAUL *(Beat.)* Nothing. I'm over twenty-one.

EILEEN The problem is, I gave my word.

PAUL I'll teach him a lesson. I'll strap him 'til he begs for mercy.

EILEEN      *(Beat.)* Let it go.

PAUL         Let it go? He could've killed you!

EILEEN      I think I would like something.

PAUL         What?

EILEEN      That kiss you wanted back a few minutes. You still want it?

*(Paul kisses her absently. He gets up and looks at the sea.)*

### SCENE THREE

#### DUBLIN

*The synagogue. Light three men. In shadow are the women in hats – they are either in a separate stage area or raised up. Paul is saying kaddish for his father. The other brothers are on stage with him. All three are in prayer shawls. Paul prays in Hebrew and breaks into English. This is what he is thinking while he prays.*

PAUL         Yis kadal... *(Thoughts)* Why is it that the eldest son says kaddish for his father? If it was the youngest, it would be Cecil and he loves this rigmarole. Who'll say it for me, I wonder? Nobody. I'll drown on a gorgeous cruise in the Mediterranean with a lovely girl and our bodies full of champagne will float off into the horizon. *(Beat.)* Goodbye Da. What sort of bloody life did you have in the end? None at all. Selling holy pictures to the Catholics. Was that a life? England and Ireland. Was that a bloody life? What about the rest of the world? And always the little man. The little scared Yid made scared by his own father. Now your da, there was a character, even if he did beat the hell out of us every Sunday morning because we wouldn't learn Hebrew. Grandfather, zayde, such soft words for a man with a strap. Straight out of the shtetl to Clambrassil Street, trying to strap the meschugass out of his three beautiful grandsons. Jaysus was I scared of that man. Came on the boat. All on his own. Fleeing the Tsar's army. Jaysus. Him in the army. Him on a horse. A little whippet of a man with a Yiddish in his Irish – so strong you could swallow it. And da at his funeral. Da saying kaddish like me now. Jaysus. Son and son and son and on and on, the same bloody nonsense. When does it end? I'll marry Eileen and have goy sons and then nobody will say kaddish for me. To hell with the lot of them. To hell with all this bloody



superstitious nonsense. I'll marry Eileen because Da said if I ever married a shiksa, he'd say kaddish for me and now it's too late. That's it. I'll marry her. Where? In London. We'll do it in a town hall in London's fair city. She's got the creamiest thighs in all Ireland. Da, did you ever see a woman naked apart from ma? I don't think so. Did you ever sit on Killiney Beach and make fast, furious love with a good Catholic girl? No. You married who they said you should. Always did what your da told you. Well, to hell with you, Da! I'm going to marry Eileen and there's damn all you can do about it.

#### SCENE FOUR

*DUBLIN*

*The kitchen. Minnie is preparing food. Paul enters whistling.*

MINNIE      You shouldn't whistle. Not for a year.

PAUL         A year, is it?

MINNIE      Call your brothers down, will you? Dinner'll soon be ready.

PAUL         In a minute.

MINNIE      I don't want it to get cold.

PAUL         I've something to tell you.

MINNIE      Oh?

PAUL         Well, perhaps later.

MINNIE      Will you call them or do I have to go upstairs myself?

PAUL         *(Shouting up.)* Cecil, Henry. Grub's up.

MINNIE      Sit down, will you? You're always under my feet.

PAUL         I'm not tired, Ma. What's to do?

MINNIE I'm telling you first. You can tell your brothers.

PAUL What?

MINNIE I'm selling the house.

PAUL What?

MINNIE I can't keep it on. The mortgage.

PAUL What?

MINNIE I've seen the solicitor.

PAUL What?

MINNIE He left debts.

PAUL What debts?

MINNIE He gambled all over town.

PAUL The bastard.

MINNIE He gambled on the house.

PAUL I don't believe this.

MINNIE Neither did I at first.

PAUL How much?

MINNIE Two thousand.

PAUL You're pulling my leg.

MINNIE I wish I were.

PAUL Two thousand. How?

MINNIE      The gee-gees.

PAUL        The sly bastard.

MINNIE      Yes.

PAUL        The deceitful, lying bastard.

MINNIE      Yes. It takes your husband to die to know what he's up to.

PAUL        But two thousand pounds...?

MINNIE      That's why I have to sell.

PAUL        And then where'll we live?

MINNIE      England.

PAUL        What?

MINNIE      London.

PAUL        Are you meschuggah?

MINNIE      I can't stay. The shame.

PAUL        You did nothing wrong. We did nothing wrong.

MINNIE      It reflects on us.

PAUL        We could pay back a little each month. We'll do that.

MINNIE      We take the ferry in ten days.

PAUL        Ten days!

MINNIE      Your father's cousins will take us in. The East End. Just 'til we get settled. It's the least they can do.

PAUL        What did you say to them?

MINNIE      Everything.

PAUL        Oh God.

MINNIE      I've no choice.

PAUL        Ten days. That's it then. Goodbye, Dublin. Ten days.

MINNIE      Now, you tell them.

PAUL        Jesus, Mary, and Holy St. Joseph.

MINNIE      Don't talk like that.

PAUL        I don't understand him. He said nothing.

MINNIE      I've got a buyer.

PAUL        Already?

MINNIE      Mrs Witztum next door. She's another set of twins on the way.

PAUL        *(Beat.)* You go. Take the others. I'll follow.

MINNIE      We all go together.

PAUL        A month. Six weeks. I've a lot to organize.

MINNIE      You're head of the house now.

PAUL        I know, Ma. Just give me time.

MINNIE      Time? Time? Don't talk to me about time. Our parents, they got up and they left.

PAUL        This is not a pogrom.

MINNIE      All we have is your father's good name. If we stay, there is not even that.

PAUL        Yes, Ma, I understand, but I need to do a few things. See people.

MINNIE        We are a family. We go together or not at all.

PAUL            Then not at all.

MINNIE        That's impossible.

PAUL            Go without me.

MINNIE        I'd rather slit my wrists.

PAUL            It's so sudden

MINNIE        I've bought the tickets. Here. (*Looks in her bag.*)

PAUL            For God's sake, Ma.

MINNIE        We need to start fresh. You, Cecil, Henry, me. A new life. A new country.

PAUL            England. What in God's name can we do in England?

MINNIE        You'll work as a junior doctor in the London Hospital. For a year you won't earn much, but after, you can set up on your own or specialize. I've looked into it. We'll get out of this poverty. I'll be so proud of my sons. My three doctors!

PAUL            I can change the ticket. I am begging you, Ma.

MINNIE        The house is sold. She's moving in.

PAUL            What?

MINNIE        I have the right to sell my own house, don't I? (*Paul is silent. Beat.*) You were going to tell me something?

PAUL            What?

MINNIE        You said you had something –

PAUL            I don't remember.

MINNIE      Can't be important then.

PAUL        That's right.

## SCENE FIVE

*LONDON*

*1936*

*A street in the East End. Sound of Oswald Mosley giving a speech. Henry, Paul, and Cecil are standing listening at the side of a crowd who are offstage. They are dressed quite differently from their Dublin days and look more like London toughs.*

HENRY      (*Mocking Mosley*) 'And over in Germany, they are building roads. Over in Germany, they are giving men work. Over in Germany, they are building healthy, strong bodies so that they can send them travelling, right? Only the scaremongers, the Communists and the Jews dare to criticize what Adolf Hitler is doing for his people who are rising like new flowers crushed but not defeated by world capitalism and the Jews'. (*Beat.*) Jaysus, they make me sick. We should've stayed in dirty Dublin.

PAUL        You know what I do when I hear all this shite?

HENRY      What?

PAUL        I think of something quite gorgeous. Like a lovely female. That's what I do.

CECIL        And where will that get you?

PAUL        You've only to see a pretty girl walking and you forget those boyos. You see, it's the movement that catches the eye. The billowing of a dress in the wind. A certain walk. The head high with a cute little hat, just a bit mysterious and proud, the little firm titties, the shapely waist, a bit of style, the legs high stepping with a neat calf. When I hear that shite then I think of the poetry of women.

HENRY      Would you give it a rest? You're like a bitch in heat.

PAUL            You know it's awful rum. All day you can be looking at women's bodies in the hospital and you'd think you'd be sick of all that now, but it's not the case is it, the streets are full of women. God, I just want to do it to them. (*A woman passes.*) Will you take a look at that! Mm... What I wouldn't do with her.

CECIL            You think our father was like you?

HENRY            If he was, he certainly hid it.

CECIL            But did he think like we do?

PAUL            Course he did, he just didn't dare –

CECIL            What happened to your lovely Eileen?

PAUL            Nothing.

CECIL            Threw her over, did you? Like you did all those girls before her.

PAUL            It's a long story.

CECIL            You know Henry, I never saw a fella so cruel to women. All of them. Jewish girls. Shikshas. Picks them up, steals their hearts, then throws them away.

HENRY            You could be a decent brother.

PAUL            How do you mean?

HENRY            Pass them on to me.

CECIL            I don't know why you're so shy.

HENRY            I never know what to say to girls.

PAUL            You don't need to talk. They talk.

CECIL            It's true. You always get the talkers, the best lookers, you had all the luck. Even Da liked you the best.

HENRY Did he like any of us?

*A young woman passes. Paul makes an appreciative sound.*

HENRY You forgot your little nurse, I see.

PAUL No, that's not true. I still write to Eileen.

HENRY And Adolf Hitler is going to be Bar Mitzvahed.

CECIL It's not girls we'll be thinking of, but how to save our skins if this malarkey goes on.

HENRY There's a meeting. Ten minutes. Back of the Anchor pub.

CECIL Oh yes?

HENRY Want to come?

PAUL What sort of meeting?

HENRY Communist. Educational. Organizational. Training. How to deal with these Mosley boys.

PAUL We don't need to study Marx to know how to deal with them. We'll smash their thick skulls all the way from Hoxton to Hyde Park.

HENRY The Mighty Muscle of Mile End Road.

*Paul shadow-boxes and then leaves.*

HENRY Paul, you bastard. Where's he gone now? What about the meeting?

## SCENE SIX

LONDON

EAST END

*The boxing gym. Paul is working out with a trainer. It is his first time.*

HARRY Stand properly. Up. You got to protect yourself. You're a stand-up boxer, most Jewish boys are. You're far too old for all this, but we'll see what's there anyway.



Your face. Protect it. Keep the hands up. Lead with your left – what are you, right handed? – so you lead with your left. And you need to lose a stone. Smart Yiddishe boy like you, lose a stone and you’ll make a decent welterweight. Come on, kid. Move. Why are you standing back? Don’t stand square or you’re going nowhere. On the side, keep the feel moving on the side. Bobbing and weaving. No, that’s wrong. You’ve got to keep the elbows in to protect yourself. Keep the concentration there. Stop smiling. Keep a straight face here kid, this is serious work. Now move. I said, move boy! *(He lifts his hands.)* Now stick a left hand. *(Paul hits the trainer’s right hand.)* Keep your chin down. *(Paul hits again.)* No, don’t throw your punch from backwards. Look, I can see you taking your hand back. I know what you’re going to do and I get in first. Bang. Throw your punch from where it is. Bang. Bang. Now try landing the left as well as the right. Good. Now we’ll try some combination punches. Combination. It’s like dancing, a few steps at a time so a few punches at a time. Use the advantage you’ve created. If you hit the guy, he’s stunned. You hit him in the head, then the gut. Or you go head, gut, chin. I told you stop standing back. You never step back. You hit him, he’s off balance, you hit him quick again – take the advantage. If you throw one and miss, he’ll be ready to counterpunch you, smart Jewish boy like you, that you don’t want. You need to train boy, you can’t box if you don’t train. Run, skip, get to that punchball every day. You need stamina. You’re not a yeshiva bocher. Build up those muscles. Concentrate on the speed of the hands, the reflexes, the feet. If you’re taller than the other guy, then you going to concentrate on your jab or your left hook. You can give hooks to the body or to the head. Bang. Bang. *(They stop.)*

PAUL Jesus, this is my brain you’re talking about.

TRAINER You need to protect your brain?

PAUL What about a headguard?

TRAINER You want to be a fighter or write poetry?

PAUL Do you have to get the brain squashed to hell?

TRAINER Listen, a headguard? That’s not for the brain. That’s to protect that bit, near the eyes. To stop you getting cut.

PAUL            So the brain gets it. No way out of that one?

TRAINER        Sure there is. Use your brain so nobody gets near it.

PAUL            Smart.

TRAINER        In all the years I been training, nobody asks me such a question. Let me tell you, a guy who wants to protect his brain or be a brain surgeon, he doesn't become a boxer.

PAUL            I'm not going to be the next Joe Louis. I just want to learn a few punches.

TRAINER        Alright. Alright. You just kill me with this talk about the brain. You want to box or you want to protect the brain? Boy, don't waste my time if you're not serious.

PAUL            A right hook. A left hook.

HARRY          You better train properly, boychick

PAUL            An upcut. A jab. A south paw.

HARRY          Get that footwork under control. I want to see you running every morning

PAUL            *(Playing.)* A north paw?

HARRY          and skipping every night

PAUL            A west paw? An east paw. An east paw?

TRAINER        I want to see you punch that ball. Come on, show me, come on hit me.

PAUL            You want that?

TRAINER        Come on kid

PAUL            You really want that?

SCENE SEVEN

LONDON 1936

A MODEST HOUSE IN THE EAST END

*Friday night at home. Minnie is preparing the dinner table. It is Friday night. She lights candles and says the prayer for Sabbath. She covers her head for the prayer and takes off the scarf when it is done. The boys are sitting round with caps on.*

MINNIE       *(Blessing over newly-lit candles. Her head is covered with an unfastened scarf.)*  
Baruch atah adonai elohainu melech haolam, asher kiddishanu b'mitzvotav,  
vitzivanu l'chadlik ner shel Shabbat. Shabbat Shalom

*They kiss each other. Cecil says the blessing for the wine.*

CECIL         Baruch atah adonai elohainu melech haolam, boreh peri ha-gaffen.

*Henry says the blessing for the bread.*

HENRY        Barchu atah adonai elohainu melech haolam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

CECIL         Let's forget the chopped liver, Ma. Just do the soup. Alright?

MINNIE       Are you not well?

CECIL         I'm just not that hungry. The chopped liver I'll have for breakfast.

MINNIE       For breakfast? Are you meschuggah?

PAUL         The goyim have bacon and eggs.

MINNIE       Whatever you say.

*She pours out soup from a tureen. They drink some wine.*

HENRY        There was a delivery today and the child was a mongol.

MINNIE       The poor mother.

PAUL         Not poor. We spared her.

MINNIE       What?

CECIL           The obstetrician, the chief man, he just left it on a sink. All naked and cold.

MINNIE         What?

CECIL           We came back an hour later and it'd stopped breathing.

PAUL            The mother never knew.

MINNIE         What was she told then?

PAUL            That the baby was born dead.

HENRY          You think that's right?

PAUL            I don't know.

MINNIE         Couldn't the child be saved?

CECIL           For a life of misery?

PAUL            The kid wouldn't be miserable. It's the mother.

HENRY          But is it right?

PAUL            You didn't say anything at the time.

HENRY          I didn't realise what was happening. They took it away. How was I to know what they were going to do?

CECIL           Or not do.

PAUL            We became doctors to save lives, didn't we?

MINNIE         A girl or boy?

PAUL            Girl.

MINNIE         They used to leave infants on the side of the mountain.

HENRY          Wasn't that the Greeks?

PAUL Or the Persians.

CECIL All the places we've lived, with the Greeks, with the Persians, with the Egyptians, with the Germans, the Russians, and we don't speak any of those languages. What a bloody waste.

MINNIE You speak Hebrew.

CECIL To do what? Tell jokes to God?

HENRY Do you think it's right?

MINNIE They should have told the mother the truth.

PAUL But they spared her the moral dilemma.

MINNIE But that's not right. Like Henry says.

HENRY I didn't say anything, I just asked the question.

MINNIE More soup? There's kneidlach left.

CECIL Don't mind if I do.

HENRY She could've had the choice of keeping the baby and caring for it or giving it up to adoption.

PAUL Either way, it's pain for her whole bloody life.

CECIL Life is all pain.

PAUL This way there's a bit less. Sure she feels sad for a while but she can have another without the burden of the first.

MINNIE She might have loved her. A girl. I'd've liked a girl.

PAUL A mongol?

CECIL They are loving kids.

MINNIE        It's her flesh.

CECIL         But what about the mother's life? Nothing but looking after the kid day and night. The mongol never grows up. Or if you're lucky, God forbid, the kid dies at twelve, but that's twelve years of agony. And for what?

HENRY        The woman's husband hasn't got a job. Who's going to pay for it? The kid can't work.

MINNIE       I don't know, I don't know. I don't think it's so simple.

PAUL         Is this a subject for Friday night? Let's talk about something a bit happier.

MINNIE       Shall I bring in the chicken?

*She leaves.*

HENRY        They say that Harry Cohen is to be our new father.

PAUL         What?

CECIL        She's been seeing a lot of him.

HENRY        She's still a looker, why not?

PAUL         Well, that didn't take long. Ah, so that's why she hangs around the gym. And I thought she was wanting to watch me.

CECIL        A year. *(Beat.)* She's allowed.

PAUL         Jaysus.

HENRY        You think it's too soon?

CECIL        She's a woman. She must miss a man in her bed.

PAUL         Jaysus.

HENRY        It bothers you?

PAUL Did I say that?

CECIL It bothers you.

PAUL No, it's just that –

CECIL What's wrong? You don't like Harry Cohen?

HENRY Did you think Ma was just interested in him for his politics?

CECIL Don't spoil it for her.

PAUL Spoil what?

CECIL She listens to you.

PAUL Like hell she does.

CECIL Never listens to me.

PAUL Harry Cohen.

HENRY There's nothing wrong with him.

PAUL Harry Cohen.

CECIL If she marries him, we'll all be Cohens. The priestly sect.

HENRY Give over, Cohen's like Smith.

CECIL It never crossed my mind. Harry and Ma. Ma and Harry.

HENRY Would we have to call him Da?

PAUL *(To Cecil aggressively.)* And you think this is a good idea, do you?

CECIL Why are you so against it?

PAUL I didn't see it coming.

*Minnie enters.*

MINNIE Do we need more challah. *(Silence.)* What's wrong?

PAUL You getting married, Ma?

MINNIE What?

PAUL To Harry Cohen. Behind my back?

MINNIE What?

PAUL Our father hardly cold and you running round with other men? Is that the truth?

HENRY Paul!

CECIL He's having you on.

PAUL Harry Cohen!

MINNIE I haven't said –

PAUL Oh, I see. You were waiting for permission.

MINNIE His wife died last year too.

PAUL That's convenient then.

MINNIE He's a mensch. Please Paul, don't be like this.

HENRY Cecil will sing at your wedding, Ma.

MINNIE Paul? Say something. *(He says nothing.)* He'll be good to you. *(Beat.)* He's not a gambler or a drinker.

*Cecil sings a wedding song.*

MINNIE You've a lovely voice.

PAUL That baby. I still see it. Cold. Cold. Cold.



*Pause. Everyone looks at Paul, who thumps his left palm with his right fist seven times.*

## SCENE EIGHT

*THE LONDON HOSPITAL*

*1936*

*Two doctors taking off their surgical gowns and washing their hands. They are Dr Nirmal Sen and Dr Paul Green.*

PAUL           God, I'm all in.

NIRMAL        It wasn't that bad.

PAUL           When he cut through the bone. With a saw, like he was cutting wood. The sound. The smell. The bone.

NIRMAL        You know, I always expect to see people inside the skull. Miniature people. As if his whole life was encapsulated within his cranium. Like little dolls.

PAUL           And the poor fella feels nothing when you cut through his head. I know it, but it still hurts me in a way all the other operations don't. Someone getting into your brain. As if he can see the most private part of you.

NIRMAL        It is.

PAUL           Suppose he saws through and sees all the girls you ever kissed.

NIRMAL        Or more than that!

PAUL           Or all the thoughts you ever had?

NIRMAL        How in hell can you get a tumour in the brain? And they cut it out. Suppose they take out too much. Must happen all the time.

PAUL           And if the tumour comes back –

NIRMAL        – and they drilled a hole for nothing? Cracked open your skull for nothing at all.

PAUL           They say that if you touch one section of the brain, then all your life flashes before you. Like your brain is a film with everything you ever did recorded.

NIRMAL     You ever think of women while you're in surgery?

PAUL        All the time.

NIRMAL     Oh?

PAUL        Eileen.

NIRMAL     Who is Eileen?

PAUL        Back home.

NIRMAL     What happened?

PAUL        She's a Catholic. I'm a Jew.

NIRMAL     I once had a Muslim girlfriend.

PAUL        What happened?

NIRMAL     My father beat the hell out of me.

PAUL        Her father beat her.

NIRMAL     Eileen?

PAUL        Why can't I get her out of my mind?

NIRMAL     Try another?

PAUL        I haven't stopped. Jewish girls. Good lookers. My mother loves them. I take them dancing. To dinner. To the films. And then when I put my arms around them, I freeze. It's like taking out your sister.

NIRMAL     And Eileen?

PAUL        It's over a year. What's the point? Probably married by now.

NIRMAL     Maybe they're right. Different culture. Makes for problems later. Kids.

PAUL           We shouldn't have kids then.

NIRMAL        You want them when you are old.

PAUL           But now you're young.

NIRMAL        Yes.

PAUL           You want them?

NIRMAL        Not really. Do you?

PAUL           I want to put my arm around Eileen Reilly's waist. That's all I want.

NIRMAL        Come to India with me.

PAUL           Will that help me get over Eileen?

NIRMAL        You say you want to do something useful. There you could be really useful.

PAUL           Indian poverty or English poverty, what's the difference?

#### SCENE NINE

*THE GYM*

*1936*

*Paul is training. He is punching a punchball.*

HARRY         Your mother and I are getting married.

PAUL          *(Unenthusiastic)* Mazel tov.

HARRY         I want your blessing.

PAUL          *(Beat)* You have it.

HARRY         Thank you. Son.

PAUL Not son.

HARRY Alright, what?

PAUL Anything you like. Shlemiel. Lobbos. Schmuck. But not son.

HARRY I understand. You loved your father.

PAUL Did I?

HARRY It's how it should be.

PAUL I don't know if I loved him. Love. There wasn't too much talk of love, you know. You got up. You went to school. You studied Hebrew – if not, your grandfather beat the living daylights out of you. You learnt the Torah. You learnt to study at the Protestant School on St Stephen's Green because the Protestants, were less antisemitic than the Catholics. You learnt to listen when your parent talked of how Cromwell let the Jews into England and when the Catholics cursed Cromwell you kept your mouth shut. You kept your nose clean and your head down. And then, when we got into Trinity, three smart Jewish boys, well, we got on with that too. We got on with studying to please them because didn't they want sons who were doctors? They beat us when we started to be hooligans.

*Starts training and punching the punching ball.*

PAUL Da beat the hooligans out of us and he was right. Told us to keep our heads down. That they would call us dirty Jews and we had to be clean and upright. We had to behave like a mensch because we had nothing but our good name and we had to make it our life's work to keep it good. Not to make mistakes was smart. And if we saw others making mistakes, like our teachers in school, we learnt not to say something because they would say we killed Jesus or, 'Look at the clever Jewboys, don't they know it all'. I don't know about love, Mister. I don't know about fathers and sons. I only know I had a grandfather with no money and no English. I only know he used to drill me in Hebrew when I was three years old. Aleph, bet, gimmel, dalet, hey, and every time I learnt a new letter he gave me a chocolate. And so the Hebrew language has always seemed very sweet to me. I only know I had a father who didn't seem to do much but study Hebrew and sell the Virgin Mary to those who had the faith. I only know that there was always the

Old Country – we carried even if we had never been there, and that in that same Old Country, they spoke another language which was and wasn't German. I only know that my father died of stomach cancer and that we came to London, and I left a lovely girl behind because she didn't carry that Old Country with her because she had another country that belongs to her and not to me, and now that we are here I only know that I am a doctor and that I serve the poor and remove their cancers, lance their boils, and tell them they are all right when I know they will be dead of bad food and bad living, and that tuberculosis kills the poor like flies because they can't afford the sanatorium in the mountains. I don't know if I can ever call you father, Mister.

*Harry punches the ball.*

HARRY      What you training for? You going to box?

PAUL        I am a doctor.

HARRY      So what you doing all this for? Tough guy, huh? *(Spars with him.)*

PAUL        Recreation.

HARRY      Recreation? You got time for recreation? I thought they worked the tochus off you junior doctors?

PAUL        Stops me thinking about women.

HARRY      Uh?

PAUL        I get angry.

HARRY      You get angry?

PAUL        I see women having kid after kid and nothing to feed them properly with. I see men worked to nothing. Dead before their time. It makes me want to kill.

HARRY      I'll make her a good husband. I'm only forty-five. Channa, God rest her soul, and I – we had no children. I don't care if you don't want me to be a father to you. I want you just to know me and what I am.

PAUL           What's to know?

HARRY         You're a fighter and I'm a fighter. You fight with your brain. You are a good boy.

PAUL           You know that?

HARRY         I fight for the poor, too.

PAUL           How's that?

HARRY         I was in Spain.

PAUL           What made you come back?

HARRY         I was wounded.

PAUL           You look alright to me.

HARRY         I mend quick.

*Paul throws a punch at him. He dodges it.*

HARRY         I don't want to fight with you.

PAUL           Scared are you?

HARRY         You are not my enemy.

PAUL           Is that so?

HARRY         *(Beat.)* You like the theatre?

PAUL           Sure.

HARRY         You don't like me, do you?

PAUL           You're nothing to me.

SCENE TEN

LONDON

TOYNBEE HALL

1936

*A hall in the East End. Makeshift stage with a curtain. Soviet-Yiddish actor Solomon Mikhoels is performing the end of 'King Lear' in Yiddish. Minnie, Harry, Paul, Cecil, and Henry are sitting at a table. They applaud. Mikhoels comes over to them.*

MIKHOELS Harry.

HARRY Meet my new family. Minnie. Well, Naomi is her real name. Paul. Henry. Cecil. May I introduce my great friend, Solomon Mikhoels.

MIKHOELS Delighted.

HENRY I didn't understand too much, but you were wonderful.

CECIL I've never seen anything like it.

MINNIE You came all the way from Moscow just to perform for us?

MIKHOELS Not tonight, but yes!

PAUL And how is Moscow?

MIKHOELS Beautiful.

PAUL And you have enough to eat?

MIKHOELS Of course.

PAUL I thought there was famine. In the Ukraine....

HARRY Anti-communist propaganda.

PAUL ....that the peasants don't like the collective farms.

CECIL           Where did you read that?

PAUL            The papers.

MIKHOELS    The West wants to discredit Stalin's achievement.

MINNIE        I read that women are equal in the Soviet Union. That they all have jobs and kindergarten for the children.

MIKHOELS    It is true. Women work. They drive tractors. They drive buses.

HENRY         You want to drive a tractor, Ma?

MINNIE        Down the Mile End Road?

MIKHOELS    You should come and see for yourself. There is no state religion. Everyone works. No unemployment.

MINNIE        No pogroms?

MIKHOELS    No pogroms.

CECIL         The Cossacks used to rip the unborn babies from pregnant women and put a live cat in their uterus.

HENRY         Jaysus, Cecil.

CECIL         Then they cut the woman's hands off so she couldn't remove the cat.

MINNIE        For God's sake.

*Rina enters.*

MIKHOELS    Darling. (*He kisses her.*) Let me introduce my young cousin. From Czechoslovakia. Rina Goldberg.

*The men stand.*

RINA          Please. Sit down.

MIKHOELS    Rina is going to be an actress. She's going to study in Vienna.



HENRY        *(Kisses her hand.)* You should go straight to Hollywood.

CECIL        Forgive our brother. He is a romantic.

HARRY        Rina – Henry, Cecil, Minnie, and Paul.

RINA         Paul?

PAUL         *(Mock bow.)* Enchanté mademoiselle.

CECIL        What sort of actress are you going to be? A Yiddish actress?

RINA         Perhaps. First, I must get my training.

CECIL        Why don't you train here?

HENRY        Our brother is very subtle.

RINA         What do you mean?

CECIL        Then you and I could work together. A double act.

RINA         Do you act?

PAUL         He acts the eejit.

RINA         I think one day, I will have a career in Yiddish theatre.

HENRY        *(To Mikhoels)* How is Yiddish theatre allowed if the Jewish religion is not?

MIKHOELS    In the Soviet Union, Yiddish is a national language. Like Armenian or Georgian.  
*(Harry pours from a bottle of vodka.)* Spasseeba *(Russian for 'thank you'.)* Good stuff. Well Harry, you have a lovely wife. L'chaim! *(Everyone drinks.)*

MINNIE       Thank you. Almost-wife.

*Paul looks at Rina. Everyone looks at Paul. A strange moment of silence.*

HARRY        Join us, Paul. Join the Party.

PAUL I don't know.

HENRY It's the only way to organize against Mosley's thugs.

PAUL I'll fight with you, don't worry.

HARRY Cecil?

CECIL I was never very good at joining things.

RINA But you must join the Party. *(Awkward pause.)*

HARRY Henry?

HENRY We fight together so we don't die together.

RINA You are a clever man, Henry. I like you.

*Cecil looks angry. Paul looks at Rina.*

CECIL Sir. *(Half-mocking.)* Your cousin is a lovely girl, May I have your permission to take her out?

RINA You don't have to ask him.

MIKHOELS Women decide for themselves now.

CECIL Yes, but if I ask her, she may say no.

RINA Why don't you ask me directly?

CECIL *(Mocking.)* Blind fear.

HENRY I thought it was me you liked best?

RINA *(To Paul.)* And why not you?

MIKHOELS Stop teasing, Rina.

CECIL I asked first.

SCENE ELEVEN

*The gym. Paul is training.*

MINNIE I brought you some lunch.

PAUL What are you doing here?

MINNIE Thought you'd be hungry.

PAUL Everyone will see you.

MINNIE Are you ashamed of your mother?

PAUL Of course not, but this isn't a place for women.

*He is still angry with her.*

MINNIE The wedding is set.

PAUL Oh yes.

MINNIE I want my three sons to be with me on the day.

PAUL Is that so?

MINNIE Cecil and Henry will be there, of course.

PAUL Well, at least you've two good sons. *(Beat.)* You know how our Da died?

MINNIE I've mourned him.

PAUL Have you?

MINNIE What does that mean?

PAUL In Harry Cohen's bed, did you think of our Da?

*She slaps him.*

PAUL Alright. I've no right.

MINNIE Too true you've no right. He, your 'beloved' da, well didn't he love us so much he gambled our lives away?

PAUL Yes.

MINNIE I pawned everything I could so you three could have the fees to study.

PAUL Yes.

MINNIE It was me who made doctors out of you.

PAUL But did you love him?

MINNIE I've been a widow for a year. Now I want a man who knows how to love me. *(Beat.)* And you. Have you mourned your girl in Dublin?

PAUL For God's sake, she's not dead.

MINNIE It's not what I mean.

PAUL Will I go back for her – is that what you're asking me?

MINNIE I don't know what I am asking you.

PAUL Spit it out. I know what you want.

MINNIE What about Rina? She's a lovely girl.

PAUL Mother.

MINNIE Intelligent –

PAUL She's a beauty. *(Beat.)* But no, I don't think so.

MINNIE And why not?

PAUL Did you come here to talk about making a match?

MINNIE To bring you your lunch.

PAUL I won't starve, you know.

MINNIE Why are you doing this boxing. To fight the fascists?

PAUL *(Beat)* Maybe I'm fighting with myself.

MINNIE What? *(Beat)* The wedding. *(Beat.)* Will you come, son?

*(Paul doesn't answer.)*

## SCENE TWELVE

*CABLE STREET.*

*4 October 1936*

*The Battle of Cable Street.*

HENRY So why do they have to march into a Jewish area?

HARRY It's called free speech. Free marching. Freedom.

CECIL Free to hate us.

HARRY Are you ready for action?

CECIL Where's Paul?

HENRY I don't know.

*A Jewish man comes up to them.*

MAN Go home. Get off the street. It's safer at home.

CECIL We're not frightened.

MAN We don't want our community to get into trouble.

CECIL Don't worry.

MAN In England, it's best to get off the streets.

CECIL Thanks for your concern.

MAN Off you go, then.

HENRY Hey Mister, let the Board of Deputies keep its nose out of our business.

MAN You don't want to stir up antisemitism, do you?

CECIL It's not the Jews who do that.

MAN Uncle Joe does you no favours, you know.

HENRY Nor does the Board.

MAN Your friend Karl Marx. He didn't like the Jews either.

HENRY Will you leave me be?

MAN Don't you see I am trying to protect you? Go home!

CECIL You go home, Comrade. Or shall I give you a bloody nose?

*(Man leaves.)*

*A Blackshirt runs across the stage as if he is being chased. Paul runs on after him.*

*Naomi runs on.*

MINNIE Look at the police. Must be two hundred of them. In double, single file. Now they are going into the crowd. They are taking out their truncheons. Would you look at that, they are making a passage for the Blackshirts to cross. The police is looking after them! Would you look at that! And no the crowd won't let them through. Would you look at them pushing the police back. And...yes!!! The police are giving up. The crowd is pushing forward. They won't let there be a space. They are throwing paving stones. Over there! Isn't there a lorry on its back? And over there another! Bloody marvellous barricades! No! The police are up now. On their horses. And there are our fellas up on the roves throwing pots and pans and I-don't-know-what down on them. And yes! The horses are falling.

HENRY Jaysus, it's wonderful. And look, there's Paul He's beating the hell out of one of the Blackshirts!

MINNIE        The crowd, they are throwing marbles on the ground and the horses are going down! Down, down down! It's beautiful. Bloody beautiful. We'll show them, we'll show the bastards that want to kill us that we can fight.

HARRY        Go for him, Paul.

MINNIE        That we're not frightened of the bully boys!

HARRY        Rip the face off him!

MINNIE        We'll show them we are Jews!

*Paul comes running on, looking battered. Harry follows him.*

MINNIE        We beat them! We beat the bastards!

*Paul whirls his mother in his arms*

PAUL         You think Pearse and Connolly felt like this in 1916 at the Post Office?

MINNIE        Both of you- move your tochus. Quick!

*Sound of crowd shouting. Fade to Blackout.*

#### SCENE FOURTEEN

*LONDON*

*SPRING 1946*

*Speakers Corner*

ANARCHIST    And Jesus said, he died for our sins. So if he died for our sins, then we don't have any sins.

COMMUNIST    How many of you ladies lost husbands and father in this war? Brothers and sons? And what is this Labour government going to do to help those ladies without men in their family? You've got a dirty mind, young man.

FEMINIST     Who was it ran the factories and the farms when the men were away? Who was it drove the tractors and the ambulances? Who was it parachuted behind enemy lines?

COMMUNIST        You may say they deserved it. Krauts and Bosch and Jerry. But when you finish calling the names, then what are you talking about? Young men like your sons and fathers.

ANARCHIST Ever see a cat guilty because she has had two tom cats mating with her and her kittens are from two different fathers? Ah, but we are not animals, you will tell me.

*A man approaches Paul.*

ARI                You're Paul Green?

PAUL             Yes.

ARI                Ari Schwarz.

PAUL             How do you know me?

ARI                I'm a friend of your father's.

PAUL             Stepfather.

ARI                Harry tells me you're a fighter.

PAUL             Sometimes.

ARI                A doctor and a fighter. Isn't that a contradiction?

PAUL             And how was your war?

*(Pause)*

ARI                And yours?

PAUL             Quiet.

ARI                Lucky man.

PAUL             I was in India.

ARI                Harry told me.



PAUL           You seem to know a lot about me.

ARI             You're an interesting young man.

PAUL           You didn't say.

ARI             What?

PAUL           Your war?

ARI             Ah well, you know, geography is all. They say it is good luck or brains, but no, it's geography.

PAUL           You're not from round here.

ARI             Tottenham.

PAUL           And before?

ARI             Vienna.

PAUL           What happened?

*Ari rolls up his sleeve. There is a tattoo on his left arm.*

ARI             *(Shrugs)* Geography is all.

PAUL           What do you want from me?

ARI             You had an easy war. Maybe you want to make up for it?

PAUL           The war's over.

ARI             Is it?

PAUL           *(Beat.)* What do you want?

ARI             Join us.

PAUL           Us?

ARI           Come off it. You've been heard talking.

PAUL         What?

ARI           You want the British out of Palestine as much as we do.

PAUL         Of course.

ARI           So do something about it.

PAUL         I'm a doctor. I heal people.

*FLASHBACK*

*December 1939. Nirmal and Paul after an operation. Paul is reading a letter.*

NIRMAL      You look worried.

PAUL         A girl I once knew.

NIRMAL      Oh.

PAUL         Czech girl. Her uncle is a Soviet actor. I just wonder where she is.

NIRMAL      Let's hope she is not in Prague. Maybe she is in Moscow?

PAUL         Yes.

NIRMAL      Smart guy, Stalin.

PAUL         Why do you say that?

NIRMAL      Stalin–Hitler Pact. No war for the Soviet Union.

PAUL         Hitler's a thug.

NIRMAL      Make of your enemy your friend.

PAUL         What's that supposed to mean?

NIRMAL      There are even some Indians who think that friendship with Hitler will help get the British out.

PAUL         You think that, do you?

NIRMAL      We want independence, not the British Empire.

PAUL         At any cost?

NIRMAL      Who are you to moralize to me? *(Beat.)* I'm thinking of going back.

PAUL         Is that so?

NIRMAL      How can I live with the English?

PAUL         You involved?

NIRMAL      That's my business.

PAUL         Of course.

NIRMAL      Would you fight the British?

PAUL         Are you mad?

NIRMAL      But they don't allow the Jews in. Not here. Not Palestine.

PAUL         They allowed my family in.

NIRMAL      Oh, that's fine then, as long as you are alright, forget about your cousins over in Europe.

PAUL         England has been good to us.

NIRMAL      England produced Sir Oswald Mosley.

PAUL         We beat him.

NIRMAL        So keep going. Attack those who made him. The English elite. You think they care about you? A few do-gooding liberals maybe, but that's precious few. And you're so bloody grateful, you can't see that their policies are turning away boatloads of Jews.

PAUL            Every country in the world is doing that. Do I go to war with the whole world? Is that what you want to do?

NIRMAL        Who are you to tell me how to fight for our people? Why don't you fight for your own? Or are you just too big a bloody coward man?

*BACK TO 1946*

ARI             I had a boy your age. Wanted to be a lawyer.

PAUL            How did he die?

ARI             You don't want to know.

PAUL            What do you want from me?

ARI             There's a lot of work to be done.

PAUL            I have people here.

ARI             Your Irish girlfriend is married now. What is it, two kids and one on the way. I don't think she'll be crying for you.

PAUL            *(Swallows)* How do you know?

*Paul looks at him. Beat.*

ARI             Cigarette?

PAUL            Makes me cough.

ARI             I like a man who doesn't depend on tobacco.

PAUL            Bronchial childhood. Damp Dublin housing.

ARI             We'll have to get you fit.

PAUL I haven't said yes.

ARI Can you use a gun?

PAUL They taught us something in the British Army.

ARI Excellent.

PAUL I should've been on the Normandy beaches. At least if I'd died for something, I'd've done my bit. What did I do? Watch worms come out of people's noses. What did I do? Maybe I fathered Indian babies. The women out there, they make you forget Europe. I slept through the war.

ARI Then you're waking up now.

PAUL I haven't made up my mind.

ARI Think about it, my boy, always use your brain. But don't take too long or the whole thing will be over and you'll have missed it. Again.

## SCENE FIFTEEN

*TEL AVIV 1946*

*Sounds of voices speaking Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Russian.*

*Bright sunshine.*

*A street café. Tel Aviv.*

RINA Hello Cecil.

CECIL Excuse me?

RINA You don't recognize me?

CECIL Forgive me, the voice yes.

RINA Have I changed so much?

CECIL Jaysus. Rina?

RINA Yes.

CECIL Here?

RINA Yes.

CECIL How?

RINA Illegally.

CECIL What happened?

RINA We were deported.

CECIL Where?

RINA I'll tell you another time.

CECIL How did you get here?

RINA The Poles helped me.

CECIL The Poles? Wait a minute... what are you drinking?

RINA Vodka.

CECIL Did you know I was here?

RINA I heard there was a crazy Irishman in Tel Aviv.

CECIL And you know it was me?

RINA You. Or Henry. Or Paul.

CECIL Are you glad it was me?

*He makes to kiss her. She avoids it.*

CECIL Sorry.

RINA I changed, you know.

CECIL Forgive me.

*Pause*

CECIL Henry's dead.

RINA How?

CECIL Joined the RAF. Map reader. Wanted to be a pilot, you know.

RINA I liked him.

CECIL Burned to death. Alive. In German airspace.

RINA When?

CECIL 1943.

RINA Your mother? Harry?

CECIL My mother stays in bed all day. She waits for Henry to come to see her. She won't accept it.

RINA And Paul?

CECIL Paul? *(Beat)* I dream of Henry every night. I feel my skin on fire and imagine it's me being shot down by a Messerschmitt. *(Takes out a toy airplane.)* He gave me this before he went on his first mission. He'd wanted to be a pilot since he was a kid.

*Rina reaches out a hand to him.*

RINA Where are you living?

CECIL Room, Hayarkon Street. It's not the Ritz.

RINA I need somewhere.

CECIL            Would you stay with me? I promise not to touch if you don't want.

RINA             That was ten years ago, Cecil. I am not the same, you know.

CECIL            You can sleep in my bed. I always liked hard floors.

#### SCENE SEVENTEEN

*Jaffa.*

*Paul walks down Jeffet Street. A woman approaches him.*

SHOSHANA *(In Hebrew)* Can you tell me the way to the Christian Brothers School?

PAUL            *(In Hebrew)* Just down the hill.

SHOSHANA Would you like to walk with me in the park?

PAUL            What man could refuse?

SHOSHANA Anyone follow you?

PAUL            Not even a lizard.

SHOSHANA How can we trust you?

PAUL            I think you know that.

SHOSHANA Oh?

PAUL            What am I to do?

SHOSHANA You like Jaffa?

PAUL            I imagined it as an orange grove.

SHOSHANA Not a filthy port?



PAUL I like it. I like the clock tower. I like the Arab market. I like that the street winds up past the Scottish mission and the French Christian Brothers. A little bit of Europe.

SHOSHANA Levantine getting you down?

PAUL Maybe. What's my job?

SHOSHANA You'll get your orders.

PAUL I am not afraid to die.

SHOSHANA No use to us dead.

PAUL I know the British.

SHOSHANA You are British.

PAUL Irish.

SHOSHANA You could pass.

PAUL I know how Tommy thinks. They're not all bad.

SHOSHANA Yes, but they are all here.

PAUL They'll sicken of it.

SHOSHANA But when?

PAUL They just need more encouragement. I shoot straight.

SHOSHANA And how are you going to feel when you dynamite a barracks full of British soldiers sitting down to roast beef and Yorkshire pudding?

PAUL How should I feel?

SHOSHANA They are British. You are British.

PAUL I said Irish.

SHOSHANA Then you should know how to fight the British.

PAUL I know my own history.

SHOSHANA Which history is that? Irish? British? Jewish?

PAUL It gets complicated.

SHOSHANA What's your passport?

PAUL British.

SHOSHANA Ha!

PAUL A mere detail.

SHOSHANA The point is from our point of view, these soldiers, they're your age. You might have gone to school with some of these men? You might even have boxed with them in the East End.

PAUL Is there anything about me you don't know?

SHOSHANA You don't seem to like women.

PAUL Really?

SHOSHANA No girlfriend for a long time.

PAUL I'm choosy.

SHOSHANA You're a good-looking man.

PAUL You like me?

SHOSHANA We don't get involved.

PAUL You might make an exception in my case?

SHOSHANA No exceptions. Between the brain and the cock there is too much space.

PAUL Where did you learn your English?

SHOSHANA From British officers.

PAUL Ah! *(Beat)* What am I to do?

SHOSHANA A few bank raids and then we'll see.

PAUL Boy's Own.

SHOSHANA We decide tactics, not you.

#### SCENE EIGHTEEN

*TEL AVIV*

*A small room. Rina in bed with Cecil. Sound of people shouting. Jeeps passing.*

CECIL What do they teach you when you learn to be an actress?

RINA How to use your voice. How to breathe.

CECIL I am breathing you.

RINA You're meschuggah.

*He smells her hair.*

CECIL You know what I'd like to be?

RINA What?

CECIL Your right breast.

*Rina laughs.*

RINA What?

CECIL No, but then I'd be jealous of anyone who touched you.

RINA            You are a funny man.

CECIL           I love you.

RINA            You don't know me.

CECIL           You are still as beautiful.

RINA            I am filth.

CECIL           You are all I ever wanted, Rina.

RINA            Irish romanticism.

CECIL           Is that so bad?

RINA            You don't ask me what I am doing here.

CECIL           You like mosquitos?

RINA            No.

CECIL           Irgun or Lehi? Or is it Stern?

RINA            It's best that you don't know.

CECIL           You are protecting me, are you?

RINA            If you like.

CECIL           And who protects you?

RINA            I don't need it.

CECIL           Haven't you had enough?

RINA            We have to do something. Even now, after all that we've been through, the British won't let us in. I used to pray for the British to bomb us, and now who would've thought it was the British who would be our enemy?

CECIL           What will you do?

RINA            I don't know yet.

CECIL           I don't want you in danger.

RINA            Danger! *(Laughs)* Oh, you are so naïve.

CECIL           *(Offended)* I am sorry, Rina.

RINA            What were you doing in 1940?

CECIL           They didn't let me join up, what with Henry being in the RAF. I stayed in London as Jerry bombed it to hell. You know, being a doctor suddenly meant something. *(Beat.)* And you? In 1940, Neville Bloody Chamberlain in Munich. Czechoslovakia. I thought of you night and day.

RINA            Well, I certainly wasn't studying Yiddish theatre.

CECIL           What happened to you?

RINA            Not now. *(Beat.)* And Paul?

CECIL           India. Never talked about it.

RINA            Married?

CECIL           No.

RINA            You?

CECIL           We were all a bit in love with you.

*Rina turns on a radio.*

WOMAN        *(Voice-over)* You are listening to the Voice of the Hebrew Underground. There will be no peace for Great Britain either in this land or any other as long as she holds on against the will of the people. Our nation is not weakened because they imprison our brave warriors or hang our sons or deport them to Africa to be killed. Throughout the world, Jewish people will strike for their people – for we

have been swindled and betrayed by Great Britain. A great and eternal people, the People of the Bible has been betrayed. Therefore, we condemn you Great Britain! Therefore we do war upon you!

*She turns it off.*

RINA            You believe that about the People of the Bible?

CECIL           Blarney.

RINA            So why are we here?

CECIL           We're here because we're here because we're here.

RINA            What?

CECIL           Because we need a country.

RINA            Isn't Britain your country?

CECIL           Can you say 'my country' if you can't say 'my people?'

RINA            You entertain the British! But you sing to the people you hate.

CECIL           Not hate.

RINA            Damn you Cecil

CECIL           Those lads. They could be me.

RINA            You!

CECIL           They're not here because they want to be.

RINA            Could be you? We are you.

CECIL           Yes. *(Beat)* And what about the Arabs?

RINA            We'll find a way. *(Beat.)* Why do you do it?

CECIL           What?

RINA           Perform for Tommy.

CECIL           I want to be here.

RINA           Why don't you do something active? To help. If not us, then Haganah, Ben Gurion at least.

CECIL           Never very good at joining Parties.

RINA           Sometimes you have to commit.

CECIL           You hate, don't you?

RINA           We have to hate. We have to hate the British rule here. How else can we change it?

CECIL           Rina, darling Rina.

RINA           *(Beat.)* Dr Mengele experimented on my sister.

CECIL           Oh God.

RINA           They beat my father to death in front of me.

CECIL           Rina.

RINA           And I was in a special block with other young women.

CECIL           You don't have to tell me if you don't want.

RINA           And you ask me why I hate. And you want me to worry about the Arabs.

CECIL           They live on this land.

RINA           Partition.

CECIL           I thought you were a socialist?

RINA I was before.

CECIL And I still am.

RINA So share the land with them if you still feel that way, why not, but get it off the British first. Then you can see if your great socialist dreams work.

CECIL Do you believe that can happen?

RINA Not really. How can we live in peace with the Arabs? They want the land. We want the land.

CECIL We lived with them before.

RINA Abraham cast out his concubine Hagar. And her son Ishmael.

CECIL We are the same family.

RINA Are we?

CECIL And what are you?

RINA I learnt I was a Jew in Buchenwald.

CECIL I am sorry.

RINA You're sorry!

CECIL Forgive me.

RINA There's nothing to forgive. Only your naïveté.

CECIL I can't believe we have to be at war with the Arabs. Surely we can make a life with them?

RINA The Mufti of Jerusalem supported Hitler. You can trust that, can you?

CECIL It's not so simple. The Mufti made friends with the Jews' enemy just like the Irish did with Germany. Not all Arabs are Jew-haters.



RINA            Maybe you can't trust any of them, Arabs or Irish. For God's sake, you've got to stand up for your own people, haven't you?

CECIL           I do. I am here. I am here to build a new country. I just can't join one side or the other. *(Silence.)* Ben Gurion wants the state to have Jewish thieves and Jewish prostitutes just like everyone else. I'd like us to do better than that. Is that too much to try for?

*Rina is uncomfortable. She gets up and walks around.*

#### SCENE NINETEEN

*The two scenes here must have the effect of montage. All the cast is used.*

*Palestine.*

*29 June 1946. Black Sabbath*

VOICE           *(Voice-over)* From Lt. General Evelyn H. Barker to all divisional commanders: His Majesty's Government has authorized the High Commissioner to put into effect Operation Agatha. D-Day for this operation is Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> June. This operation means a declaration of war against the Jewish extremists.

*The telephone exchange. Cast sitting with telephone ear pieces on. Two soldiers in full battle dress, revolvers drawn and faces blackened with grease burst in and tear the sets off the operators, disconnecting calls.*

VOICE           *(Voice-over)* Convoys with troop carriers and buses to stop at King George V Avenue, Mamillah Road, Keren Hakayemet Street. Seal off the Jewish Agency. Search for code books, documents, weapons, anything from Haganah. Stern or Irgun. Arrest everyone. Nobody is beyond suspicion. Old men with beards, young girls, as many as you can.

*The soldiers rough up the cast, who sing the Hatikvah as an act of resistance. Crossfade to Paul writing on a blackboard. Cast members become members of Stern and Irgun, awaiting orders for the bombing of the King David Hotel. Rina is amongst them.*

*July 22 1946*

*Light change. Change to Jewish action against the British. The preparation for the bombing of the King David Hotel.*

PAUL           The operation is being undertaken by several of us. But you will not know the whole picture and this is deliberate. Syrian Jews, disguised as Arabs, are going in to the hotel to plant the churns with the dynamite. One of the Sudanese hotel staff has sold us his uniform. We'll get some more the same way.

RINA           What will I do?

PAUL           You'll be given orders.

RINA           What about a warning?

PAUL           Yes.

RINA           There are so many Jewish workers there.

PAUL           You can make the telephone call 30 minutes before the explosion. *(To the others)* You will be divided into two teams; one in the north of the hotel, one in the south. One man in each team will be armed with grenades and pistols; the other will carry matches for lighting the fuses. Gideon will give you the signal. As for the exact date, remain alert, it could be any time now.

#### SCENE TWENTY

*Cecil's Room. Rina is there with Paul, waiting. Cecil arrives.*

CECIL          Rina?

RINA          I brought you someone.

CECIL          Jaysus, will you look at it?

PAUL          Shalom.

CECIL          Jaysus! When did you get here?

PAUL I hear there is a good act on at the British Officer's mess. Thought I'd slip in and see how your singing's improved.

CECIL Well, well. Want a drink?

PAUL That would be grand.

CECIL How's ma?

PAUL No change.

CECIL *(To Rina)* I've not seen her in a year.

PAUL No change.

CECIL What are you up to?

PAUL Better not ask.

CECIL Well, well. I might've guessed. Wherever there's shite, you head straight for it.

PAUL And you don't?

CECIL We are made of the same stuff. L'chaim!

*The three raise their glasses.*

PAUL I didn't know you two were in touch.

RINA Yes.

PAUL Since when?

CECIL A couple of months now.

PAUL Does he look after you, Rina?

RINA I don't need looking after.

CECIL Well, on that happy note, will you excuse me? I have a performance in an hour.

RINA Does your Tommy audience know you're Jewish?

CECIL They know I'm Irish.

PAUL I'll leave you to get ready.

CECIL Not at all. You can relax here if you want. I'll be back in an hour or so. We'll go out to dinner and catch up. The three of us. What do you say?

PAUL You're a real shit, you know.

*Cecil leaves. Silence.*

RINA Strange.

PAUL What?

RINA Alone with you.

*Rina goes to kiss Paul. He gets up suddenly.*

RINA Say you feel nothing for me.

PAUL Rina, we are soldiers now.

RINA And soldiers don't have feelings?

PAUL We are always at war.

RINA In war there can be love.

PAUL A kiss, and then another, and then what? Aren't you with him?

RINA That's nothing at all. *(Beat.)* Say you feel nothing for me.

PAUL Rina, please.

RINA What is it?

PAUL We have to be ice.

RINA I can't. Since I first saw you in London back in thirty-six, I felt my heart was going to explode.

PAUL I never knew that. You flirted with Henry. And now, what's this shite with Cecil? Trying us all, are you?

RINA That was ten years ago. I was a kid.

*She puts her hand on his face.*

PAUL Listen. You could be caught. You could be tortured. They would want you to name names. And they would promise you my life in return. Don't you understand? This is not a game for lovesick young girls.

RINA God in heaven, is that how you see me?

*During his speech, she comes toward him.*

PAUL I am tired of the soft look in your eyes when we are going through a training session. I am tired of that yearning expression you give me. I am tired of the way you move your body a certain way when you are close to me. I am tired of the whole bloody female business. Don't you see that? Tired. Tired. Tired. Stay with Cecil and you can both rot in hell.

*He kisses her passionately.*

*Bring up radio.*

*Spotlight on Cecil. Cecil sings the "Marriage of Figaro,"*

*Mix with Pathe News item.*

VOICE *(Voice-over)* And King David Hotel was newly built in 1930, taking its name from the citadel of David, Israel's great King famous for his love of songs and his fight against Goliath and the Philistines. Now a haven for the British, this H-Shaped building reinforced against any earthquake is constructed from stones which have a reddish tinge. Legend has it that when the Romans massacred the Jews, a stream of blood seeped into the mountains and made the rocks red. This wonderful hotel has hosted Greece's Princess Eugenie, the mother of King Farouk, the Rothschilds, the Warburgs, the great prince of American cars Walter Chrysler, and the great British warlords Allenby, Mountbatten, and Churchill.

*Rina and Paul are under a blanket.*

RINA           After the war, I got to London. I saw royal parks, a garden full of roses and people walking dogs, men and women pushing babies in prams. There was an army band in uniform playing patriotic songs on the bandstand. Everything so calm, so civilized, as if nothing had happened.

PAUL           Yes.

RINA           Anee ohevet ata. I love you. *(Beat.)* You are not happy.

PAUL           Rina. Stop that now. We have got a job to do here. We could be arrested at any minute. The less we know of one another, the better. We can't afford to get attached.

RINA           I know you love me from what just happened.

PAUL           From what just happened?! That's hormones, little Rina. That's spunk. That's Mother Nature. That's how we're programmed. Like dogs. Love. You think that's love? You really are a naïve little girl. Maybe Cecil loves you. I don't. This is the grown-up world, not fairy tales.

*Cecil walks in.*

CECIL          Oh.

PAUL          Oh shite.

CECIL          Oh I see.

PAUL          It's nothing.

CECIL          Nothing, is it?

PAUL          Not what you think.

CECIL          What's wrong, Rina? Aren't I enough for you?

RINA          Cecil.

CECIL           You have to have my brother too?

PAUL           Please, it's not like that. I didn't want her.

CECIL           So that's why you took her? You didn't want her? So what did you want? Dear brother. You wanted to laugh at me. Is that it? All the time you were doing it with her, you were hitting out at me, is that it? Like your punchbag, her, me, herr, me, destroy everything just like that, just like you did with our father?

PAUL           For God's sake.

CECIL           You killed him. You're killing all that I have with her.

PAUL           I didn't kill him.

CECIL           No, you got Henry to do it for you.

PAUL           I didn't even bloody vote yes!

CECIL           No, but you set the whole thing up, didn't you?

PAUL           I didn't bloody kill him.

CECIL           Just made sure one of us did. Does it really matter who does it? It's he who thinks of it first that does it.

PAUL           I loved him too, you know.

CECIL           I loved Rina. And you want to kill that.

PAUL           For God's sake, I loved her the minute I saw her.

RINA           Can I say something?

CECIL           So now you love her. Everything I hold precious you've got to take.

PAUL           I've always bloody loved her. She made me forget Eileen. I just never said.

CECIL Sir Lancelot. Pure love, was it? That's certainly what it looks like. Oh, this gets better and better.

PAUL I can't show it. Not like you. Always letting rip whatever's in your head.

CECIL Oh, the noble Brutus.

PAUL Rina, say something.

RINA Cecil, it's my fault.

CECIL No, don't say that. You are mine. He knew it. He just takes you to sneer at me.

PAUL To sneer?

CECIL You take. You throw away. You don't care. You were like that all your life. When Ma wanted a bit of happiness, you couldn't even have the grace to be at her wedding. Your heart is dead.

PAUL You're right. My heart is granite. Take her. She's yours. *(Beat.)* No, I'll tell you what, you want to fight for her?

RINA Stop it.

*Cecil doesn't move. Paul moves around him threateningly.*

PAUL Come on kid, you're a smart kid, aren't you, move boy, I said move boy, come on, throw your punch, bang, bang, you got to hit me quick, get those reflexes working, get a blow to the head or to the body, come on, straight to the gut, never step back, you got to get me off balance, not you, reflexes, feet, body, head, bang, bang.

*Cecil hits out violently. Paul lets him.*

CECIL You know what? You always had everything. You. Back in Dublin, the girls you wanted, the shicksas, the Yiddels, it's Paul, always Paul. What was I? Nothing. The clown of the family. Cecil he's nothing. Ma and you. Always Ma and you. The first born! Me? Did she even see me? Did she even notice I was born? Cecil.



The lobbos, the runt of the litter. You, you got everything. Even when I wanted a toy train, for months I begged for one because all the boys in school they had one and I wanted to be like them and oh yes she bought one with the money our da never made, she went to Grafton Street and she paid good money and who did she give it to?/

RINA /Stop this. Both of you.

CECIL /He took everything and now he wants to take you.

RINA Take me? Take me? You think I am a prize? I am to be taken by him? By you? We're here to work. A bloody train. Is this what this is about? What your ma did when you were wetting your trousers? We are here to do a job. Get out! Both of you. Get out.

#### SCENE TWENTY-ONE

*Cecil is in the street. He is drunk.*

CECIL And welcome to all our British soldiers. You're doing a grand job. A grand job, I say. Out here in this godforsaken country. Did I say godforsaken? No. That's wrong, isn't it. Not godforsaken, there's nothing but gods out here. *(Beat.)* You like the girls. Oh, the girls are lovely. Not like the girls back home, they are ready to do a bit of you-know-what. That's what we like, isn't it boys! A bit of how's your father. It's alright for the officers, they've got their wives with them, but what about us? We have to make do with the locals, don't we? And there are some real good lookers out here, that's if their fathers will let them go out with Tommy, which of course they won't. But then you can always find a little Esther or Fatima who wants a night out without telling their da. Now I ask you, between the Arab girls and the Jewgirls, what are we going to choose boys? *(Beat.)* I say, I say, I say, what's the difference between a scorpion, a camel, and a British soldier? Don't tell me you boys don't know. A scorpion has a sting in its tail. A camel has a hump on its back. And a British soldier has a Jewboy round his throat.

## SCENE TWENTY-TWO

*The King David Hotel.*

*Stage fills with workers at the King David Hotel. Most are dressed as waiters and waitresses.*

*Some are office workers. Choreographed movement scene which happens during the monologue.*

*This is played straight out.*

PAUL            Noon. Everyone is moving slowly. Arab messengers walk at half speed between offices. There is the sound of typewriters. Clerks sit and look out of the window, their brains sleepy from sunlight. The air shimmers in the heat.

                  The 'Arabs' arrive with the milk churns. In the police station, there are alarm systems rigged to the main British posts. Barclays bank. Immigration office. Main post office. Government house. King David Hotel. Gideon leads the men into the main corridor. So cool, the concrete floors in that main kitchen. Doors, passages, offices, frosted glass, and behind one, a switchboard with women army officers, the blood system of the military HQ. Oh God, a chef sees them. What are you doing? Gideon draws his revolver. Avidor takes out a machine gun. The cooks look up from chopping the vegetables. What about lunch? It has to be served in an hour. Monday, the most hectic day of the week. The hotel is full of Arabs and Jews, Greeks and Armenians, as well as the British. On the top floor, Golda Meyerson's emissary Harry Beilin meets Major Ernest Quinn, Quinn liberated Belsen, too bad. Quinn is a British officer who likes Jews. Beilin tells Quinn, stop worrying. All those Jewish arrests. Don't worry. No retaliation planned. Calm down.

                  The churn has to be dragged along the basement corridor and past the women controlling the telephone exchange, past the storeroom and into the Regence's room. Against the pillars they go. They are watched only by the Hittite thrones in the room. Out in the street, the army patrols. Barbed wire, armoured cars with Bren guns, jeeps. The last churn is being delivered now.

                  Hell, our man is spotted, there is pandemonium in the kitchen. An Arab has gone crazy, they say. The British always blame the Arabs for pilfering.

                  There are five grams of gelignite inside each cylinder with 50 kilograms of TNT around it. Sulphuric acid to destroy the wood plug. And when it drips in to the detonator, well then we'll see, won't we. There are two real Arab porters hiding

under a table. A Sudanese is bleeding after banging his head trying to escape. The alarm goes off in the Mamillah Road police station. A bomb is it? What again? Just relax. It's nothing. Gideon dressed as a Sudanese leaves and walks out towards Julian's Way. Amatzia lights a cigarette. With the tip of it, he touches the fuse. Two hundred yards to the north, Shlomo lights a cigarette with leads to the four cans of petrol. But the explosion isn't working. Julian's Way in front of the King David remains open.

RINA 12.21. I dial ~Jerusalem 1114. It rings twice.

MAN 1 'King David Hotel'. Can I help you?

RINA This is the Hebrew Resistance Movement. We have placed a bomb in the hotel. The building is going to blow up. You have been warned.

MAN 1 There are bombs in the hotel.

MAN 2 Who says?

MAN 1 A woman rang.

MAN 2 More false alarms.

MAN 1 Shouldn't we evacuate?

MAN 2 A hoax

RINA Consulat General de France?

WOMAN 1 Je vous écoute.

RINA Nous sommes la résistance hébreu. Nous avons posé une bombe dans l'hôtel King David. Je leur ai dit d'évacuer le bâtiment. Ouvrez vos fenêtres si vous voulez échapper à l'explosion!

MAN 3 Ouvrez les fenêtres!

WOMAN 1 Ouvrez les fenêtres!

WOMAN 2 *(Arab Switchboard Operator speaking to her boss)* King David Hotel reception. Bombs. A woman called. Message in Hebrew and English. We should leave.

MAN 4 There's a special table booked for Mr Albana for ten people on Saturday night. Be sure the restaurant gets the message, will you? I'm off to lunch.

WOMAN 2 Suppose it's for real?

MAN 4 For real? It's to humiliate the British. They like to see them standing on the streets. Waiting. Waiting for explosions that never happen.

RINA *(Telephoning)* Is that the Palestine Post?

MAN 5 Yes.

RINA This is the Hebrew Resistance Movement. We have placed a bomb in the King David Hotel. We have warned them but you must warn them as well.

FOREIGN MAN 1 An army officer shot in the basement.

FOREIGN MAN 2 ...said we'd be killed.

FOREIGN MAN 3 Men in Arab clothes.

FOREIGN MAN 2 Milk cans.

ENGLISHMAN Doesn't anyone speak English here?

ARAB WOMAN We received a call about a bomb. We've got to evacuate.

ENGLISHMAN Thank you, but I've heard that one before.

OFFICER Best be sure. Go upstairs everyone. Pull your bed away from the wall and lie on your bed.

RINA 12.32. Only ten people in the bar, usually it's packed at this time.

FOREIGN MAN 1 Bombs in the basement.

ENGLISHMAN Well, for Christ's sake, we'd better go and find them.

MAJOR Don't worry. It's another hoax.

*Sound of fire alarms. The following is said by the cast. People are running and stopping in panic.*

RINA 12.37.

*Cast speak the following lines.*

ONE Hot gas, 350 kilograms of TNT.

*Sound of explosion. Bright orange lighting effect.*

TWO The pressure is 34,000 times normal.

THREE The clerks on the floor above...

SIX Bursting livers, hearts, lungs.

FOUR It's a 500-kilogram aerial bomb.

FIVE The milk churns have disappeared.

SIX The pillars of the Regence have disappeared.

SEVEN The stone walls billow out and seem to dance slowly as they shudder inwards, to meet smoke and flames.

ONE Oh, the suction.

THREE Rings are ripped from fingers.

TWO Trees are ripped from the ground.

SEVEN Bodies ripped from gravity to fly through the air.

SIX Concrete rips out into the air at a hundred miles an hour.

FIVE Arabs in a bus killed outright.

FOUR 12.37. Thirteen people alive disappear.

TWO Cufflinks, bracelets, wallets, explode into dust.

THREE A Jewish typist's face tears off.

ONE It is painted on the pavement below.

FOUR Furnace heat, air, and dust. I am choking to death.

FIVE The noise. It breaks my eardrums.

SIX Girders fall.

SEVEN Plaster.

ONE Chandeliers and stone snapping necks.

THREE Coat racks piercing chests.

FOUR Ceiling fans decapitating those on lower floor.

FIVE Pillars dance.

TWO Walls crack.

SIX The noon sun disappears.

ONE *(Ecstatic)* Oh God, I am alive!!

TWO But who do I know is in there?

THREE Look, there are parachutes flying.

FIVE No. They are women, their dresses like clouds.

SIX British, Arab, Armenian, Jew.

SEVEN Who did it?

TWO           How many?  
THREE        There's a great bloody hole in the King David!

FOUR         It's the Secretariat that's gone up.

FIVE         Who is still there?

SIX           In the rubble?

SEVEN        The blond soldier head crushed under stone.

ONE          The place looks like a torpedoed ship chest.

THREE        Mrs Grey-Donald crawls out.

ONE          'I'm perfectly all right, my dear'.

TWO          The Arab with a squint –

THREE        – is straight-eyed now.

FOUR         His curls are standing on end.

*Sound of air raid sirens.*

ONE          Curfew, curfew in thirty minutes!

FIVE         Arabs and army engineers jacking into the rubble with pickaxes.

SIX          Who is down there?

SEVEN        Quick, doctor, give a shot of morphine to the man trapped below.

*Rina walks through as if in a dream.*

RINA         There's a man down there! Get him out! Quick!!!

*Cecil is dead, but she sees his ghost. Lighting change. Everyone else freezes.*

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

*Rina isolated in a spot light.*

*This is a memory scene.*

RINA           And I am bone-tired. You on me, in me, sucking, devouring me, not letting me sleep as if tomorrow they will kill us and now you must drink me until you have swallowed me and I have totally disappeared. You suck the saliva out of my mouth like champagne. You ask me to eat something and then pass it to your mouth. I am bone-tired from your body and my eyes – I can't close. Your brother does not love like you. Takes me quickly, urgently, and then it is over, whereas you, as soon as you have emptied you say, don't go, stay in me, and we remain like that until you start again, caressing gently at first. I feel that you can never leave as if to leave me would be your death. *(Beat)* From the same womb and to the same womb. How can two brothers be so different? *(Beat)* From one to the other until I have no will except to have both their hands on me and in me. *(Slightly vacant.)* The German Jews when they left Germany they put German soil in their pockets. How can anyone love the land that much? *(Beat)* In Theresienstadt... this man watching. Can't look away. .... his face staring. His eyes brownblack and his nose pointed and round at the same time. The mouth is like a woman's. His voice, whispering. Telling me..... Before, yes before ....a bookbinder in Prague why is he telling me this.... And I can't talk to him. I am dry, my mouth is cracking. *(Beat)* And he gives me his soup. Later, yes much later, in the train, Oswecim, standing because to sit was....and crushing, sour urine, shit running down legs and to stop this in my nose and the screams in my head...I make myself vanish, go somewhere else, disappear....between sleep and half sleep- a pain deep inside me, my insides between my legs, passing out of me and towards someone next to me.... And the someone... I could smell the heat of his breath on my ear...I can feel him looking at me...just staring with ....staring....and it was him

*She remembers Cecil is with her.*

CECIL           Does he, does Paul *(Beat)* do what I do?

RINA           What?



CECIL I don't know how to put it.

RINA Does he do what?

CECIL Put his mouth –

RINA Yes?

CECIL – where I do?

RINA Oh. That.

CECIL Does he taste you?

RINA No.

CECIL I never did that to any other woman.

RINA Why me?

CECIL Because you are you. There's no part of you I don't want in my mouth.

RINA Yes.

CECIL You're clean.

RINA *(wryly)* Of course.

CECIL With other girls I thought it was, somehow, dirty.

RINA *(As if seeing something.)* What's that?

CECIL Henry, he loved you too you know, he was too scared to say anything. He was all closed up when it came to women.

RINA What is that?

*Others unfreeze.*

ONE Get that man out!

TWO           Who is he?

SEVEN        His leg is over there.

THREE        Jesus H. Christ, what a mess.

FOUR         Is there anything that can identify him? A watch? Teeth?

FIVE          What's this?

SIX           A toy bloody airplane.

*Rina walks up to them and looks at the plane. She wails.*

RINA         No!!

#### SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

*Sounds of jeeps leaving Jerusalem. Scene opens halfway through a fight.*

RINA         We should never have done it.

PAUL         It's time to stop agonizing. You knew what you were doing.

RINA         I thought I died in Buchenwald, I thought nothing would affect me.

PAUL         How was I to know he'd go to Jerusalem?

RINA         We killed him.

PAUL         For God's sake, it was bad luck.

RINA         *(Beat.)* We destroyed the King David. David. Our greatest king. We'll never be able to rule ourselves after this.

PAUL         David killed the schmuck Goliath if you remember. And we just got Goliath to go home.

RINA         We're forgetting Cecil.

PAUL           It was mid-day. His place is Tel Aviv. It never crossed my mind he'd even be near Jerusalem.

RINA           Perhaps you killed him because he loved me?

PAUL           Rina, please stop this.

RINA           Alright. You didn't know.

PAUL           There were other Jews killed too.

RINA           And British and Arabs. *(Beat.)* Just a mess of bloody flesh. Who cares what they are.

PAUL           It's over.

RINA           Is it?

PAUL           They are leaving. We won.

RINA           Did we?

PAUL           There will be a vote. United Nations.

RINA           *(Laughs)* United Nations!

PAUL           *(Beat.)* What happened to you in Buchenwald?

RINA           *(Beat)* Nothing.

PAUL           I don't believe you.

RINA           Then don't.

PAUL           You can't tell me?

RINA           *(Defiantly)* What they did to us. Women. Don't you know? They picked the best-looking. *(Laughs)* Fucking us was forbidden. So they murdered us.

PAUL But they didn't kill you.

RINA Didn't they?

PAUL Why did you take up with Cecil then if you were so dead?

RINA I was curious

PAUL Oh?

RINA To have a man fuck 'with love'. *(Beat)* Did you ever love?

PAUL Once. *(Beat.)* Did you? *(Pause)* Who? Tell me.

RINA A man who gave me his soup.

*SILENCE*

PAUL And me?

RINA Perhaps.

*Paul smiles.*

PAUL And now you feel guilty.

RINA I would have married Cecil, and so as his widow you as the brother must take me on.

PAUL Where did you learn that shite?

RINA That's what you have to do. Marry me. *(Beat)*

*She takes off his shoe and spits in his face.*

PAUL What the hell are you doing?

RINA That's what has to be done. Now you are free of me.

PAUL How do you know all this?

RINA I am a Jew.

*Silence. He takes back his shoe and cleans off the spit.*

PAUL            Jesus Christ.

RINA            What do we do?

PAUL            Live in Israel?

RINA            We're pariahs.

PAUL            Live in London?

RINA            Enemy country?

PAUL            That war is over.

RINA            Is it?

RADIO            *(Voice-over)* And on this day, after the historic UN vote, a new country for Jews has been established and as the blue and white flag flutters, we hear the sound of the Israeli national anthem – the Hatikvah, which means hope.

*Movement scene where the ensemble celebrate but the movement changes from joy to a slow-motion stylised dance which has pain within it. Cecil whistles the tune of Jerusalem and it mixes with him singing the Hatikvah. Rina is dressed in a white veil. She stands with Paul as if in marriage. Suddenly, she turns her head to the side as if seeing a ghost, and Cecil stands beside her so that she the bride is between the two brothers. Cecil takes the toy airplane and makes it fly, as the lights fade down to BLACKOUT*

**PLAY THREE: *NEXT STOP PARADISE***

Final Draft January 2016.

## CHARACTERS:

JOAN ENGLAND	She is at least 446 years old. Actor can be any age.
SARAH	She is at least 5,000 years old. Actor can be any age.
BILL	A worker 30-45.
OLIVER CROMWELL	(played by the actor who performs BILL).
MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL	35–50.

### Ensemble

AMERICAN PREACHER.

PLAYER 1 (m/f).

PLAYER 2 (m/f).

PLAYER 3 (f).

### Author's notes

The play is not naturalistic. It is set in London 2016, 1656 and modern Israel.

*Next Stop Paradise* explores key moments of English history to reclaim them from a male narrative and reframe them from a Jewish woman's point of view. The action starts with a London Crossrail worker accidentally digging up the medieval character of Joan England in what was a former graveyard. Joan embodies a buried history of English Jews. As a living ghost, a fragment of the Jewish community brought to England by the Normans in 1066, she is a buried survivor who returns. Joan is a protean character whose Jewish identity has been overlaid with Catholicism and Protestantism. She is imagined as a Jewish Christian everywoman, replacing the concept of everyman, formalised in medieval drama, and in history, as the generic. Joan is an act of reclamation; a defiance of traditional history where womankind has been erased.

The text explores notions of apocalypse current in Oliver Cromwell's England and in modern Christian Evangelism in the US and in Israel.

### The Character Of Joan

Joan is a chameleon who defies death. She was born a Jew in Normandy and was taken to England in 1066 as part of William the Conqueror's army. Jews were needed as moneylenders in the new Norman kingdom. She hid during the 1290 deportations by pretending to be a nun, converting to Protestantism during the Reformation. When Cromwell took power she was infused with the prevailing apocalyptic fervour of England during the Protectorate. Her character is Darwinian. She morphs in order to survive the surrounding culture. Joan does not always remember that she is a Jew. She is reactive, naïve and instinctive. Overturning the (male) archetype of The Eternal Jew she is everywoman, the Eternal Survivor. To her, the Apocalypse is the next stage in her continuity. Although she has turned to Christianity, it is the seam of Jewishness that attracts her to Menasseh ben Israel in his quest for Jewish return. On one level she knows that he must succeed to ensure her safety. Sometimes she forgets her Jewish identity; however, her Jewishness leads her to Israel, as does her Christianity. There she meets the first Jewish woman, Sarah. As Joan survived by becoming a Christian, she wishes to preserve Sarah's longevity by making her a Christian too.

### Glossary

#### Yiddish words used in the text.

Luftmensch. Someone with their head in the clouds.

Meschuggah. Crazy.

Meschggenah. A crazy person. Crazy in the sense of eccentric, driven, highly individualistic rather than someone who needs hospitalisation.

Treyfe. Food that is forbidden. Shellfish, pork.

#### Hebrew terms

L'chaim. This means 'to life'. When glasses are raised for a toast, this is the greeting.

Tuchus or tochus. Bottom.



## References

The horses laughing that Joan mentions are from the Bayeux Tapestry, where the official commentary points out the smiling animals are happy to be part of the conquering army.

A shofar is the ram's horn blown at the end of the Day of Atonement by the rabbi. It marks the end of the most serious day of the year. In this text it is Sarah who takes the male ceremony.

The swinging of a chicken is part of Jewish ritual carried out in the days between New Year and before Yom Kippur. The belief is that the fowl will absorb the sins of the person whose head is circled.

The men with the cross on their backs represent those who come to Jerusalem and imagine that they are Jesus. Many are to be found in Israeli psychiatric hospitals.

When Sarah talks of being a Kurd, this is a reference to her origins as a Chaldean in Mesopotamia: modern day Kurdistan. See 2 Kings 24:2 'And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets'.

Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel came to England to petition Oliver Cromwell to allow Jewish re-entry to England in 1656.

## Music

For a reference on *Jerusalem The Golden/ Yerushaliyim* see

<http://www.israelvideonetwork.com/the-most-graceful-jerusalem-song-you-will-ever-hear>. Other songs are traditional.

SCENE ONE

An Englishwoman returns. London 2015.

*Sounds of trucks and heavy vehicles at a London excavation sight.*

*Lights up on a worker in a hard hat and luminous jacket. He digs and stops. He looks in amazement as a woman, covered in mud emerges from the ground.*

JOAN                      You took your time.

BILL                      What the hell?

JOAN                      Got a drink?

BILL                      My God, oh God, am I asleep?

JOAN                      Don't be frightened. I won't hurt you.

*(Bill takes a swig from a flask.)*

JOAN                      What you got there?

*(Bill looks at her and takes another drink.)*

JOAN                      Who are you?

BILL                      Who are you?

*(Joan smiles)*

BILL                      I'm dreaming. I am going to wake up.

JOAN                      It's me that's just done that. I'm thirsty.

*(Bill offers her his water bottle.)*

JOAN                      A real drink.

*(Bill gives her the hip flask. He looks around.)*

BILL                      Keep mum.

JOAN                      Mum? *(Drinks.)* That's better.

BILL                      Who the hell are you?

JOAN                    Give me a minute.

BILL                    I got it! You're one of those women gone missing round here. That's it.

JOAN                    What?

BILL                    Who did it? Who tried to kill you? Like that girl in Victoria Park, out for a run and some madman cops her.

JOAN                    What?

BILL                    Some foreigner was it? Pole? Bosnian?

JOAN                    What?

BILL                    Country's not ours anymore.

JOAN                    Got anything to eat?

BILL                    Only my lunch

JOAN                    You know when I last ate?

BILL                    Ham sandwich OK?

JOAN                    Anything not treyfe? *(Both look out front.)*

BILL + JOAN            What's treyfe?

JOAN                    Where did that word come from? *(Beat.)* Give it over.

BILL                    Organic, gluten-free, wheat-free, sprouted alfalfa OK? Terrible Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

*(Bill gives her the sandwich. She eats).*

JOAN                    You know what I'm thinking.

BILL                    What?

JOAN                   The horses.

BILL                   Horses? You eat horses?

JOAN                   I'll eat anything. On the boat over. Those horses, I'll never forget them. Ils ont rigolé en route pour l'Angleterre. *(Beat.)* What language is this? They were laughing on the boat. French horses on the way to England.

BILL                   I know we are digging bedlam but I didn't think I'd find a crazy right here!

JOAN                   Ship so heavy with horses, cheese, wine, Chartreuse, Armagnac. Well everyone knows that there's nothing decent to eat in the land of Angles and Saxons. And I'm there on the boat and I think it's going down. I'm going to die. Please God save me. *M'aidez! Aidez-moi!* And a great comet came into the sky. A sign! A sign of the death of England. *(Beat.)* *M'aidez! May Day!*

BILL                   You speak French.

JOAN                   What's French?

BILL                   What they speak in France.

JOAN                   What's France? *(Beat.)* You French?

BILL                   French? Me? Bleedin' English.

JOAN                   This is England?

BILL                   London town missis.

JOAN                   Why are you digging?

BILL                   Crossrail.

JOAN                   Cross I know. *(She crosses herself the Catholic way. Looks around to see if anyone is watching. Crosses herself the Protestant way.)* What is rail?

BILL                   What century you in mate?

JOAN                   You disturbed me.

BILL                   What?

JOAN                   Down there. Kipping.

BIL                    You a ghost?

JOAN                   Touch me.

BILL                   Bleedin' ghost.

JOAN                   I'm alive. Touch.

BILL                   I take your word for it.

JOAN                   Flesh and blood. Nobody knows about me.

BILL                   Oh shit. What do I do, call the ghost police?

JOAN                   What?

BILL                   My daughter, she believes in ghosts.

JOAN                   Can I meet her?

BILL                   No!

JOAN                   Where is she?

BILL                   She's at school. Where should she be? *(Joan yawns loudly.)*

JOAN                   I've just been sleeping. You with your drill. Enough to disturb the dead.

BILL                   Oh God you're not a ghost. You're a zombie. It's the end of the world.

JOAN                   I am just one of the forgotten. But now you will remember me. If one man, and his daughter, talk of me, then I can never be erased.

BILL                    Maybe I should call 999.

JOAN                    999? What's that? The end of the earth?

BILL                    You cuckoo lady. That's it. They said this site was bedlam and you one of those crazies come back to haunt me.

JOAN                    You a Christian?

BILL                    I'm English.

JOAN                    You got an English name?

BILL                    Bill. Well, William.

JOAN                    The Conqueror!

BILL                    More the digger.

JOAN                    Not the Shaker?

BILL                    You deaf? The digger.

JOAN                    There are Levellers down there where I come from. And Fifth Monarchists. Ranters and Ravers.

BILL                    And you come from where exactly?

JOAN                    The boat sails into Sussex. Rolling green lands with fruit and sweetness. A real Garden of Eden this England. Me and William. The horses, the barrels of wine, got any more to drink? *(Changes time in her memory.)* And then, down there with the Diggers and the Levellers we had some good talks. No preachers! No king! No Church! No marriage! Only men and women free! Free to love whom we please. All for the glory of God! *(She raises her drink.)* L'chaim! L'chaim! *(She looks startled.)* What does that mean?

BILL                    More French. You don't know what you saying missis. Screw loose?

JOAN                      Screw? Loose?

*SILENCE*

*(Neither understands the other.)*

JOAN                      I was there.

BILL                      And where was that?

JOAN                      You talk 999 and the end of it all but I was there at the beginning.  
Beginning of the world some might say.

BILL                      Oh yes?

JOAN                      With William. We were very close.

BILL                      Oh yes?

JOAN                      They needed me.

BILL                      Right.

JOAN                      I knew why

BILL                      Oh yes?

JOAN                      Money.

BILL                      You Mrs Rothschild?!

JOAN                      And then when they, William and his crowd, when they became the  
English.

BILL                      Yes?

JOAN                      That is when they were no longer French.

BILL                      I hate the French.

JOAN                      I hate that king *(spits)* may he rot in hell.

BILL William? You said you liked him.

JOAN Edward. Let each of his palaces have a thousand beds and each bed a rat and each rat a louse and each louse a bedbug.

BILL What?

JOAN They came for us, house to house.

BILL What?

JOAN All of us. Out! Out! Out! Magna Carta my arse. English king. English church. English knights. That's what they tell us. Deportation or death.

BILL Where did you go?

JOAN Back to France. Well that is what they thought.

BILL Oh?

JOAN (*Looking round.*) Can you keep a secret?

BILL Call me mum.

JOAN What?

BILL You can trust me.

JOAN Anybody listening?

BILL All down the pub.

JOAN There are spies everywhere.

BILL I promise you.

JOAN In the name of Jesus?

BILL Jesus Christ!



JOAN I hid!

BILL That so?

JOAN In sculleries, in pantries, in coal holes, in cellars, in graves.

BILL You hid in graves.

JOAN No-one looks in graves. Once there was a funeral and I saw all these people, beggars, priests, nuns. I found places.

*(From her tomb she takes a nun's habit.)*

JOAN Hail Mary full of grace

BILL You some kind of conman/woman/man?

JOAN What's that?

BILL Confidence trickster. Con. Don't you speak English?

JOAN Hail Mary full of grace.

BILL What?

JOAN The Lord is with thee.

BILL You are some kind of crazy? *(Looks around.)* I should call someone.

JOAN *(Terrified.)* No! You promised.

BILL I promised. *(SILENCE)*

JOAN You believe in Christ and his holy Mother?

BILL Where do you get all this stuff?

JOAN I don't know. It comes out of my mouth.

BILL Don't worry, I won't tell anyone about you but you must be some kind of nutter. Hiding in the ground. That's it. Come out to scare me but you don't. Not me. How do you live down there?

JOAN A woman can live a long time in the cold. *(Going into memory.)* No they are coming they are coming for us. The Protestants!

BILL What Protestants?

JOAN Don't you understand? We were forbidden. If they caught us they would kill us.

BILL What you on about?

JOAN *(Trying to remember.)* Tu dors. You sleep. Tudor! That's it. Catholic, Protestant.

*(She uses her two fists to show the two sides fighting).*

JOAN Look! *(Takes a puppet.)*

BILL What's that?

JOAN *(Male voice)* I am Henry VIII you ignorant serf. Get on your knees before God's anointed.

*Bill does it to appease Joan.*

JOAN *(As Henry.)* You can call me Your Royal Highness you stinking lowness.

*Bill does a mock curtsy.*

*Joan takes out a female puppet.*

JOAN *(Spanish accent.)* I am Queen Catherine of Aragon.

*Henry bashes her.*

JOAN *(As Catherine.)* Ow! Ow!! Ow!!! You want shot of me because you want a younger wife. Well I want a younger husband. You are a disaster.

JOAN *(As Henry.)* Carry on like that and I'll chop off your head!

JOAN *(As Catherine.)* You would not dare!

JOAN *(As Henry.)* I want a son, a son, do you hear me? Not bloody Mary.

JOAN Why is it that they all want sons?

BILL What's all this?

*(Joan drops the puppets)*

JOAN Don't you know your own history? Catholics burning Protestants.  
Protestants burning Catholics.

BILL What?

*During this monologue Joan removes her nun's habit.*

JOAN And they are burning- burning- burning the Hail Marys and the incense and the monasteries and the convents and I have to run and run until I get out into the fields and I hide in barns and in hedgerows and I hear whispers that there is a great queen, a Protestant who has stopped the burning us Catholics but I don't know if that is true and I hide in rabbit warrens and up trees, I hide when the men on horses ride by with fire and axes, I hide while they chop off ears and noses and in the burnt-out monasteries and I hide in churches and with the Shakers and Levellers, the Diggers and the Quakers and I hear the Bible and I read the Bible and I bless God for making me a Protestant and a free woman and I hide there until I can no more and I go to the crowd in Whitehall on a cold January day and the people wait in silence while the king is taken out and his head on a block and the axe raised and the men in black hoods standing beside him and when the blade falls there is a great cry from the people of London who look up into the sky to see if a planet will drop down on to the earth and send it boiling in hot fires as the steel of the axe cuts through the sinews and bones and the great silence when the 'royal' head falls from the white shirt and the silence could cut through the heavens and then the sparrows sing and the cats mew and the dogs bark as if nothing at all has happened. And the people look at the head that the king proclaimed as anointed by God but God said nothing because this head, it's no different from all the other heads. And the blood that flows

is not blue and the skies do not darken and the cold January day remains a cold January day and the earth does not stop turning and there is no flash from the sky and there is no comet fallen and the world does not end. And there are no more, no more kings and queens. Hurray! And I hide and no more and I go with the people now. And I watch them baptising sheep and goats in God's name and they are reading the Bible and, in the Bible, they talk of Hebrews and who are the Hebrews? And I go with them and I tell everyone I see about God and his word and how now nobody must call anyone king or queen or majesty or highness and that we are all the same and equal and that the common wealth is ours and all the land and the gold within this island must belong to us equally. And they take out the Bible and they say that those who were cast out by the King must return and they must people the four corners of the earth and go to Angleterre so that Jesus can return. And a rabbi comes to see the big man at the top, the man who is not king and is king and is going to protect us so that I need no longer hide, so that I can be safe and I love him.

*She returns from the grave with a pair of candlesticks.*

BILL                    Why you got candles?

JOAN                    Don't know. I carry them with me. Why? *(Yawns.)* Oh I am so so tired. And here I lay me down to rest.

BILL                    What? You eat my lunch and then you fall asleep. What am I going to tell my boss when he sees you here?

JOAN                    Nobody will see me. And I will see you. Oliver.

BILL                    Oliver! I'm Bill.

*(They are both tipsy. From now on he appears to speak with her voice, as if her spirit has invaded his.)*

JOAN                    Say it with me so that we can both see him. Oliver come to this Eng, Eng, what is it?

*(He takes a cross from inside a grave)*

BILL -land!

JOAN He will come. We have only to wish it. Not Oliver!

BILL Make up your mind. Who?

JOAN Our Lord. And all the people who were ever born and all who have ever died, and all who shall ever die and they will rise out of their graves. Bill

BILL Bill?

JOAN and Joan.

BILL But I'm not dead.

JOAN John and Mary and Jack. All will return to meet Jesus!

BILL Oh you're a religious nutter!

JOAN And it came to pass in that terrible year of 1290, *(as a modern voice)*  
*Jewish bastards out! Out of England or we kill you now!*

JOAN *(Previous narrative voice.)* And who decided? Was it John and Mary?  
Was it Jack and Jill? And you may think of the moneylenders as  
strangers but it was they, it was we, who built the monasteries and the  
abbeys, it was we who paid for the kings of England, it was we who paid  
Richard/  
/the Lionheart?

BILL /the Lionheart?

JOAN for his crusades and how did the king thank the moneylenders?

BILL Let me guess! Murder?

JOAN York.

BILL Lincoln.

JOAN Norwich.

BILL London.

JOAN ‘Death to all Jews. All Christ-killers!’

BILL I liked it better with the puppets.

*(Joan takes out a puppet of Cromwell. She plays him as well as herself).*

BILL Who is that?

JOAN Oliver Cromwell you English ignoramus. Shake his hand.

BILL Watcha mate.

CROMWELL You! Don’t you know that I am the Lord Protector of all England?

BILL *(Bowing.)* My Lord.

CROMWELL No bows or curtsies. No subjects or royal highness. We shall have no kings. Only our Lord Jesus Christ. Only he is majesty above us. Jesus had to die so that he can return to our earth. And he will return when the Jews are at each corner of our world. Death to the Whore of Babylon, the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

JOAN *(Sings)* Onward Christian Soldiers Marching On To War!/  
*(Sings)* All things bright and beautiful/  
*(Sings)* /With the Cross of Jesus Marching On Before.

BILL *(Sings)* /All creatures bright and small

CROMWELL *(To the audience)* Members of parliament. I pray you. Let us re-admit God’s holy people, let us hasten the coming of the Lord. Let us have a new Jerusalem here on our land!



PLAYER 1                    Here are oaths, corruption, decadence and a secret vice that eats men up like a canker

PLAYER 2                    A child with two heads?

PLAYER 1                    Who'll give me twenty?

PLAYER 3                    *(To Bill spoiling for a fight.)* You! Lion face! What did you say to me? You... You punk. You stinking piece of rubbish.

BILL                            I didn't say nothing mate.

JOAN                            Don't you hurt my friend or I'll tear your head off.

PLAYER 2                    Two shillings. That's all I ask. Two shillings only. To see something very special behind this curtain. A man. A woman. If you want to see what's going on it'll cost you only two shillings.

PLAYER 1                    Here there is a bigger wickedness than Satan ever devised for the destruction of mankind.

*Joan has a mask at the back of her head and at the front. She says the following turning around.*

JOAN                            Who is the wisest man?  
Abraham  
And who were his sons?  
Jacob and Esau.  
And who stole his brother's birthright?

PLAYER 3                    Hey you, this is our patch.

JOAN                            The earth belongs to us all brother.

PLAYER 3                    Not to you foreign bitch.

JOAN                            Esau. Or was it Jacob? *(Beat.)* What? What did you say?

PLAYER 3                    You heard me.



PLAYER 1                    *(Trying to deflect this.)* Who is the greatest judge?

JOAN                         Solomon.

PLAYER 3                    Who angered God the most?

JOAN                         Ahab/

PLAYER                      /The Jew bitch. Who is God's best-known prophet?

JOAN                         Elijah. Who was Israel's greatest Queen? *(Beat.)*

*(Player 3 raises his fist in Joan's face)*

JOAN                         Esther! Who gave the Jews God's law?

PLAYER 1                    Moses.

JOAN                         Who is the greatest soldier of God?

PLAYER 1                    David.

JOAN                         Who is loved most by God?

PLAYER 3                    David.

JOAN                         Who was born from the House of David?

PLAYER 1                    Jesse.

JOAN                         Who was born from the House of Jesse?

PLAYER 2                    David.

JOAN                         And who was born from the House of David? Who was born the son of a virgin? Who is the Saviour of the World? Who suffered that we might be free? Who died that we might live?

PLAYER 3                    Who betrayed Him?

PLAYER 2               Who condemned Him?

PLAYER 1               And who killed Him?

PLAYER 2               The damned bloody Jews.

*Players 1 and 2 beat the floor three times announcing attack.*

BILL                     Joan! Hide!

### Scene Three

#### Joan Meets a Dutch Rabbi and England's Lord Protector

*London 1656.*

*Lights up on Joan and Bill folding laundry from a basket. Bill folds when he is silent.*

*During this scene Joan becomes more cockney as she is influenced by Bill's presence.*

*The laundry woman's song.*

JOAN                    In London's fair city. Where the lads are so pretty  
I'm washing the keks of sweet Oliver Crom  
He wants them so white now,  
I won't raise an eyebrow  
I'm scrubbing and drubbing

*Joan sees a man in the shadows and screams.*

MENASSEH            Excuse me Madam, I didn't mean to frighten you.

JOAN                   *(Looks round.)* Who you calling 'Madam'?

MENASSEH            You, noble lady.

JOAN                   What lady? *(Menasseh hands her his card.)* Dr Menasseh ben Israel. Is that English?

MENASSEH            I have come from Holland.

JOAN                   A Dutchman!

BILL                   A stinking foreigner!

MENASSEH            Not stinking, madam, sir. No.

JOAN                    Well, I'm not doing your washing. Who are you?

MENASSEH            A rabbi. A teacher.

JOAN                    Don't you teach me!

MENASSEH            No Madam, I have no intention.

JOAN                    You speak funny.

MENASSEH            I am massacring Shakespeare's beautiful language.

JOAN                    Come to see the boss?

MENASSEH            The boss? I like that. Yes.

JOAN                    What you want him for?

MENASSEH            I need to talk to him about the return of the Jews.

JOAN                    Jews? No Jews here. You see any Jews. I see no Jews.

BILL                    *(Conspiratorially to Joan.)* You see any Jews? Yids here mate? No way.  
Not a single, solitary Jew left. All gone. Scarpered or murdered. No, no.  
No Jews here.

*(She looks around anxiously and puts her hand in front of his mouth.)*

JOAN                    *(Whispering.)* Shut it! *(Loudly)* I hear that lot nailed up Jesus Christ.

MENASSEH            That was the Romans.

JOAN                    You would say that wouldn't you.

MENASSEH            Jesus was a Jew.

*(Joan and Bill laugh too long).*

JOAN                    Don't be ridiculous!

MENASSEH I assure you dear lady.

JOAN Stop calling me a lady.

MENASSEH What should I call you?

JOAN Call me Joan.

MENASSEH My lady Joan.

JOAN You flirting?

MENASSEH Never!

JOAN You married?

MENASSEH And you?

JOAN I am not sure.

MENASSEH There is some doubt?

JOAN I'm nobody's wife or daughter or sister or mother. I'm Joan.  
*(Improvising.)* Joan England.

MENASSEH England. That's the land for us too.

BILL You got to wander the world mate.

MENASSEH Why is that?

BILL Cos that's what Jews do. Isn't that right Joan?

JOAN That's right.

MENASSEH Well it's time to stop. Time to find a home. Leave Amsterdam.

JOAN What you doing in Holland?

MENASSEH We escaped from the Portuguese Inquisition.

BILL                    Bleedin' Portuguese shite.

MENASSEH            And here, we need to buy a graveyard.

BILL                    Graveyard right here mate. Soon going to have a train running right though it but you won't mind that will. Dead don't hear do they. Dead don't see.

JOAN                    You all dead then?

MENASSEH            We need to be in the land so that we can be in the land.

JOAN                    What?

MENASSEH            We need burial ground

JOAN                    Jews die then do they?

BILL                    I know one who does not know how to.

JOAN                    Shut it.

MENASSEH            Jews die. Oh yes Jews die.

JOAN                    But I thought you was the Chosen People.

MENASSEH            I wish he had chosen somebody else. But you, I see you are a learned lady.

JOAN                    I hate ladies and gentlemen.

MENASSEH            Oh?

JOAN                    No kings and queens, no lords and ladies. Everyone the same under their clothes. You must be nice naked.

MENASSEH            You embarrass me madam.

JOAN                    Not Madam!

MENASSEH            Will he be long?

JOAN                    I don't know. (*Looking at her laundry*) I would leave this stuff here but he owes me.

(*Joan produces the Puppet/Cromwell.*)

JOAN                    Know who this is?

MENASSEH            A puppet.

BILL                    Where's your imagination?

JOAN                    This is Oliver Cromwell. You have to bow. (*He does.*) No, you don't you have to salute. (*He does a modern army salute.*) Not right. I don't know.

(*'Oliver' makes coughing noises*)

JOAN                    My Lord!

CROMWELL            What do I owe you? (*She hits him.*)

JOAN                    Go away! (*Puppet/Cromwell goes.*)

JOAN                    Oh look at that!

MENASSEH            What?

JOAN                    Fleas jumping around in the washing! And I beat and beat.

MENASSEH            (*moves away*) Fleas bring plague.

JOAN                    Must put more vinegar in the rinse.

MENASSEH            Who are you? Are you a witch?

BILL                    She's a witch!

JOAN                    How dare you!

BILL                    A real witch.

MEANSEEH I hear England is full of them.

JOAN Lift me.

MENASSEH What?

JOAN Come on.

MENASSEH *(Struggling with her weight)* Like this?

JOAN Question!

MENASSEH Quick.

JOAN Do I have weight?

MENASSEH Yes plenty. *(Puts her down.)*

JOAN A witch has no weight. Ergo Joan is no witch.

MENASSEH You know Latin?

BILL Joan knows everything!

JOAN Amo, amas, amat.

MENASSEH You can love in Latin!

JOAN God is love!

MENASSEH What?

JOAN God is you.

MENASSEH No!

JOAN God is all of us.

MENASSEH Yes but the Lord is the Lord!

JOAN                    My Lord is love. *(Beat.)* You're not bad looking, you know that?

MENASSEH            You flatter me!

JOAN                    If you were a pig/

BILL                    /she'd tell you

MENASSEH            I believe you

BILL                    You fancy him!

JOAN                    You jealous? *(To Menasseh.)* What you want then? You want to come here? To this island? You want to be English?

MENASSEH            Yes.

JOAN                    This is a wild place. *(Joan swings a stick.)*

BILL                    With this one, mate watch out, you never know what will happen next.

MENASSEH            What are you doing?

*(Joan parts her legs and rides the stick as if were a wooden hobby horse).*

JOAN                    And now I've got a horse!

BILL                    And she's got a thing about horses!

JOAN                    Watch me ride!

*(She puts a cow's tail on the back of her coat)*

JOAN                    Now I've got a tail!

MENASSEH            Why?

JOAN                    That's the fool's tail and I have a ladle so that the people can put pennies in it.

MENASSEH            What is this dance?



JOAN                    This is England! You want to come here, you have to be as mad as the rest of us.

MENASSEH            What are you doing?

JOAN                    Every May. Round the Maypole. Got a nice maypole have you?

MENASSEH            What?

JOAN                    We were mad before Cromwell and we've been madder ever since.

MENASSEH            And in the Republic. Is the country now free?

JOAN                    Free to kiss you. *(She does. It is clear that he likes this.)*

BILL                    Steady!

JOAN                    *(Stops.)* What if they decide I'm a witch and burn me alive?

MENASSEH            I won't let them.

JOAN                    *(Impressed by his reaction.)* What's your name again?

MENASSEH            Menasseh ben Israel but you can call me Manny.

JOAN                    Manny. *(She curtsies.)*

MENASSEH            What did you do that for?

JOAN                    What?

MENASSEH            You curtsied to me.

JOAN                    No I didn't!

MENASSEH            I saw you!

*(She curtsies with her back to him, pushing out her bottom)*

JOAN                    See I take it back

*(She brings out the puppet Cromwell).*

CROMWELL            Oh so now you have time for me! Now you want your money!

MENASSEH            My Lord

CROMWELL            Dear Sir, it is I who should bow to you. But you see me rather diminished.

MENASSEH            Sir, I am nobody

CROMWELL            Sir, Rabbi Sir, you are one of the most learned men in Europe.

MENASSEH            And you, Lord Protector, one of the bravest.

BILL to Joan.            *(He kisses her free hand.)* Let me be Cromwell?

*She removes the puppet.*

*Bill takes off his luminous jacket and puts on a black coat.*

JOAN                    *(spits on her hand and then wipes Bill's/Cromwell's collar.)* Look at you. Filthy. Blood all over you. You're the top dog now. Got to look good. Warts and all.

BILL                    No warts on me. I'm clean.

JOAN                    You want to be Cromwell? He was a mess.

BILL                    Someone needs to represent that neglected bastard.

BILL/CROMWELL      Drink Manny?

MENASSEH            Thank you, Oliver. *(Bill offers flask.)*

BILL/CROMWELL      Burgundy. Left by King Charles.

MENASSEH            I hear my Lord Cromwell abstains.

BILL/CROMWELL      You hear wrong.

*'Cromwell' grabs the flask from Joan's other hand.*

MENASSEH            *L'chaim!*

BILL/CROMWELL    *L'chaim!*

MENASSEH            How do you know *L'chaim*?

BILL                    From her! (*Remembering he is Cromwell.*)

CROMWELL            Well didn't Noah say *L'chaim*! Noah drank wine! Therefore it is good.

JOAN                    Bottoms Up! And death to all Puritans who hate toasts!

*(Joan is staring at Menasseh's back)*

BILL                    Why are you looking at our rabbi?

*(Joan touches Menasseh)*

JOAN                    He says he is a Jew.

BILL                    Like you!

JOAN                    I've been baptised. I renounce The Devil and his works!

BILL                    Why are you staring?

JOAN                    If I am to be a Christian then the Jew has a tail and

CROMWELL            horns? (*Menasseh smiles.*) Are you sure there are no horns?

MENASSEH            I trust my wife Rachel.

BILL/CROMWELL    (*Lifting his flask.*) To your wife and I hope to meet her.

MENASSEH            I am not here to talk of women. We need your permission for the Jews to return.

CROMWELL            Why should I give it?

MENASSEH            Because what is good for us is good for you. Because- I- am- you



CROMWELL /he is our refuge and I pray to God that he will bless you with his presence

MENASSEH and bless England

JOAN with our presence

*Menasseh and Cromwell do a double-take.*

BILL So now you are a Jew again. Make up your mind woman.

CROMWELL When the Jews are restored to the four corners of the earth/

JOAN Angle-terre! England! Get it?

BILL/CROMWELL /and when they return to the Holy Land, when the Jews are converted to the truth of Christ/

MENASSEH /On some details we may not agree.

BILL/CROMWELL For our Lord to return to redeem the world the Jews must return to England. A toast! To Jewish return!

MENASSEH Will you ask parliament?

BILL/CROMWELL Ah, between what I believe and how Parliament feels, there is somewhat of a gulf.

*The next nine lines are fast and intercut.*

MENASSEH Nobody wants the Jews.

CROMWELL Nobody wanted Oliver Cromwell.

MENASSEH Not the Muslims/

CROMWELL When I was younger I was down down down.

MENASSEH /Not the Christians.

CROMWELL But God trashed me for a purpose.

MENASSEH            We Jews may have God

CROMWELL            If all the creatures from hell were to torment me it is nothing compared to the loss of God's presence.

MENASSEH            but can we have England?

CROMWELL            England has enough problems.

MENASSEH            And Jews would add to them?

JOAN                    John the shoemaker doesn't like his wheelwright neighbour Alan because he's a stranger.

CROMWELL            And he certainly doesn't like Peter the ploughman from the next village or

JOAN                    Joseph the butcher from the next county. Lancashire hates Yorkshire,

CROMWELL            Sussex hates Kent

MENASSEH            but you can unite the country and be the Jews' saviour.

CROMWELL            Unite this mess? And Ireland? God forgive me for Ireland.

MENASSEH            Lead us into this Promised Land. You can do it!

*FLASH OF LIGHT TO SHOW A MOMENT OF RELIGIOUS FERVOUR*  
*(The following eight speeches are extracts of The Book of Revelations.)*

JOAN                    I saw an angel standing in the sun.

CROMWELL            I saw an angel come down from heaven with the keys of a bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

JOAN                    And he laid his hand on the dragon which is the devil

CROMWELL            and Satan and bound him a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit.

JOAN I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God

CROMWELL and the sea gave up the dead which were in it and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire

JOAN and I saw a new heaven and a new earth

CROMWELL and I saw the holy city, this new Jerusalem.

MENASSEH Let us return! (*LIGHT CHANGE.*)

CROMWELL I am not the king! Parliament will decide.

MENASSEH You want new lands, spices, coffee, tea, silks, cotton. There are Jews in the colonies. The Dutch in Brazil. The Spanish in America.

BILL/CROMWELL (*In amazement.*) AMERICA?

MENASSEH We will help you. We will be patriots! Only let us in.

BILL/CROMWELL Are you bribing me?

MENASSEH From your mouth to God's ear?

*LIGHT CHANGE*  
*Cromwell addresses Parliament.*

BILL/CROMWELL Men of parliament

JOAN (*Singing*) I saw three ships come sailing by

BILL/CROMWELL It is time

JOAN (*Singing*) Come sailing by

CROMWELL It is time to open the doors to our Jewish brothers

JOAN (*Singing*) I saw three ships come sailing by

CROMWELL Hear me! Hear me? Hear me?

CROWD No!

*Cromwell takes a stick and hits the ground in rage.*

CROMWELL I cannot rule by absolute decree. Don't you understand? The English people have spoken and the English people do not want the Jews.

MENASSEH *(Howls)* All been for nothing.

*Cromwell motions for him to come in secretly*

CROMWELL Come in through the back door. This is England! You think anyone will notice?

MENASSEH Sneak in under cover. Is that what you want? Hiding in the dark like thieves in the night? No!!!!!!

*(He crumples into a grave.)*

JOAN I am getting out of here too.

BILL Where are you going?

*Both are drinking.*

JOAN *(Sings.)* What shall we do with the drunken sailor?  
Earlie in the *(stops)* I need more wine.

BILL I like it here with you.

JOAN What about Bedlam? Liverpool Street?

BILL This is more fun.

JOAN Yeh?

BILL Who are you?

JOAN Joan England.

BILL Jew-woman? Christian-woman?



JOAN           What do you think?

BILL           You still got those candlesticks? *(Joan takes them out of her bag.)*

BILL           Jew-woman!

JOAN           So let's go to Jewland.

#### Scene Four

Joan travels to Israel 2016.

*Light change. Sound of sea.*

*Joan takes out two boats to symbolise their travel. She moves them wildly through the air as if they are comets as she speaks the following.*

JOAN           And I saw a sea of glass mingled with fire and those who were victorious over ...who shall not fear thee O lord...and I heard a great voice saying to the seven angels pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man and every living soul died in the sea, And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of water and they became blood and I saw unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of false prophet/

BILL           /Look! Land!

JOAN           Jaffa. Yafo. Where the whale cast up Jonah!

#### Scene Five

Jaffa 2016

*Joan arrives with Bill. They 'get off' the boats. There is a cacophony of Hebrew and Arabic. There is a wave of heat. Joan and Bill's bodies react to the double wave. This is stylized. Light*

*Change as they arrive in Jerusalem. This should be a gradual crossfade so that the end of the scene and the start of the next are imperceptible. Bill is carrying Joan's suitcases.*

Scene Six  
Jerusalem 2016

BILL           What you got here. English earth?

JOAN           It can snow in Jerusalem.

JOAN           *(Singing)*

*Strains from the following songs are intercut:*

*Once in royal David's city!*

*Jerusalem by William Blake, Music H. Parry*

*Praise My Soul The King of Heaven.*

*Light change. A moment where Joan becomes a nightclub singer. She takes the cases during the song.*

*Yerushalayim- Golden City.*

Scene Seven  
Interlude of images showing the entry into the Old City.

Movement Scene during Joan's song

*A series of images follow and intercut. The whole cast is used.*

*From upstage right and upstage left two men cross each other in the middle of the stage. Each is carrying a cross on his back.*

*Two men cross the stage in monks' habits and they beat each other on the back with whips.*

*Two men cross the stage with prayer shawls and tefillim.*

*Two Israeli soldiers cross the stage.*

*A woman crosses the stage with a placard. 'The Lord Is Coming!'*

*A man crosses the stage with a placard. 'The Lord has arrived!'*

*A woman crosses the stage with a placard. 'The Lord has left!'*

*LIGHT CHANGE*

Scene Eight  
A Jerusalem Street.

*Bill is still carrying the cases.*

*A man is speaking and Joan pushes him aside and takes over his place. He pushes her. There is a knockabout physical fight during this text.*

PREACHER The Jewish people

JOAN are but a speck on the world population. How can such an insignificant number of people be so high on the radar?

PREACHER How is it these people are the centre of God's prophetic vision?

JOAN You know they are front and centre of God's programme.

PREACHER When a baby boy is born, eight days after the birth

JOAN it's a party. And yet blood happens, blood happens.

PREACHER I know this is a sensitive subject.

PREACHER I was at my brit. Thank God I can't remember it.

JOAN The Bible presents the Jews as a special people, a loved people, that's what the Torah says.

MAN IN CROWD What's the Torah?

JOAN First five books of the Bible ignoramus.

PREACHER God's chosen People. I am a Jew but I have found the way. I know that the messiah has come. And that he will come again. I am a follower of Christ. But I am also a Jew. Now many Jewish people will say, Chosen, Chosen.

WOMAN I wish he had chosen somebody else!

PREACHER *(surprised)* Right! But God wanted the Jews to reveal his word. Through the Jews.

JOAN The Jews were the ones to reveal God's word.

PREACHER Every morning, a Jew he says a prayer

JOAN 'Thank you God for not making me a woman'.

*Preacher puts his hand over her mouth.*

PREACHER They recite the Shema. Their daily statement of faith back to God. We manifest his name Isaiah Chapter 43. Genesis 12. And God calls Abraham to leave his father's house.

JOAN Abraham was 75 years old. God spoke to him and Abraham obeyed. God would show him a land. All the land you see I give to you and your descendants.

PREACHER Abraham is the start for all of us. Muslims call him father. Jews call him father. Christians call him father.

JOAN Abraham hears God tell him that your seed will be blessed.

PREACHER If you know Christ as your saviour you are like Abraham. Blessings to those who bless and/

JOAN /curses to those who curse.

PREACHER God has blessed through the Jewish people. You are saved where you have a mansion ready for you in heaven. The Jewish people are responsible for your salvation and for being here.

JOAN Abraham, was a 100 years old when he circumcised himself

BILL Ugh!

PREACHER his son Ishmael and his son Isaac. A covenant between Abraham

PREACHER and God. Here we see the promise



*Cast leave only Joan and Bill remain. He has a spade on his back.*

Scene Nine

Joan goes to the Judean Hills

JOAN           Judaea. Look. The hills. Olive groves. Sheep. Stones.

BILL           What's in the cases?

JOAN           Me to know and you to shtumm.

BILL           If I have to shlep them

JOAN           You know shlep?

BILL           If I have to shlep them, I have the right to know

JOAN           You my husband now?

BILL           Did I break the glass?

JOAN           You know 'break the glass'?

BILL           Last time a Jewish man puts his foot down?

JOAN           How do you know this? You're a goy.

BILL           I don't know! Same way you got words in your head in England. It's happening to me here. Hell what is in these cases?

JOAN           Give me that. *(She takes his spade and digs.)* 'Seek and ye shall find'. What?

BILL           Luke Chapter 11 verse 9. Now how do I know that?

JOAN           What are you doing?

BILL           Opening the case. Damned lock.

JOAN           Stop that.

*She digs up books. She looks through them.*

JOAN            Damnation. I can't read this. What is it?

BILL            Hebrew?

JOAN            No. Not Hebrew.

BILL            How do you know?

JOAN            I can read aleph bet.

BILL            How is that?

JOAN            I have no idea. This, it's not Hebrew, it's Aramaic! Now who reads Aramaic?  
Maybe you can see some Ethiopian wandering around?

BILL            You sure you're not a witch.

JOAN            Look around. African Jews. From Ethiopia.

BILL            No Ethiopians up here.

JOAN            I know the answer is here if only I can read it.

BILL            Answer to what?

JOAN            What?

BILL            To what?

JOAN            Digging the earth is not getting me anywhere. I need to work.

BILL            Work?

Scene Ten

Joan works in a Jerusalem Jewish hospital

*A bed is wheeled onstage with Sarah an old Jewish woman in it. Joan is still digging and reading the books she finds. Bill takes the book away and gives her a mop. Joan mops. Sarah is unable to see Bill. He is not in her time span.*

SARAH Shush

JOAN I'm not talking

SARAH Shush

JOAN Shush?

SARAH What?

JOAN I said nothing.

SARAH Why?

JOAN I promised.

SARAH What did you promise?

JOAN To work with the Jews. I must be silent.

SARAH Nonsense!

JOAN The rules

SARAH The rules! Talk. Who are you?

*SILENCE*

SARAH So shush

JOAN Yes



SARAH Do you always obey the rules?

JOAN Yes

BILL Liar! *(Sarah does not see or hear Bill).*

JOAN Shut up! *(He puts his hand to his mouth mockingly.)*

SARAH Why are you here?

JOAN It is my mission.

SARAH You are a missionary?

JOAN No. I have to...

SARAH Shush?

JOAN Shush!

SARAH I'm asking you

JOAN Can I clean around the bed?

SARAH I asked your name.

JOAN I made a promise

SARAH What is it?

JOAN and now, talking to you, I am breaking it.

SARAH Oh you rebel!

JOAN Don't mock me.

SARAH Would I do that?

JOAN Just because I have to

SARAH      obey orders?

JOAN        Yes

SARAH      A woman's voice, it shouldn't be heard?

BILL        This is shtumm?

SARAH      What is your name?

JOAN        It is enough that I know yours.

SARAH      How could you?

JOAN        You are chosen

SARAH      What?

JOAN        God loves you

SARAH      Sure he does

JOAN        Don't you believe that?

SARAH      Which God is this?

JOAN        The one and true God

SARAH      True?

JOAN        He gave us his one and only son

SARAH      Oh that one!

JOAN        You don't believe in God?

SARAH      God abandoned the Jews. I abandon God.

*SILENCE*

JOAN        I have to swab the whole floor

SARAH        So swab. I swab. You swab. They swab.

BILL         Joan!

SARAH        Oh yes?

JOAN         The Lord

SARAH        Oh yes!

JOAN         He sees everything

SARAH        There is a spot there that God missed.

JOAN         You mock God but he sees you and

SARAH        /he forgives you

JOAN         Yes

SARAH        I'm an old woman.

JOAN         Methuselah lived until he was 969. He died when God considered the world so  
sinful that he caused the Great Flood.

SARAH        Yes well it's not rained in months.

JOAN         God will send rain to his land.

SARAH        You are a Christian woman?

BILL         Huh!

JOAN         Yes

SARAH        You won't convert me.

JOAN         You are a Jew who has abandoned God. But I love you.

SARAH        You love me!!! You don't even know me.

JOAN            You are a Jew. Therefore I love you. You are in Israel, therefore I thank you. You are here so that He may return.

BILL            Show her the book. Maybe she reads Aramaic?

JOAN            Can you read this?

SARAH          *(Waves her hands before her eyes.)* Cloudy.

JOAN            Oh.

SARAH          How old are you woman?

JOAN            Younger than Methuselah.

*Joan continues swabbing.*

*SILENCE*

SARAH          You think you can convert me through silence

JOAN            When Jesus Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, he was silent and yet he spoke to our Lord.

SARAH          I shall die in this country of messiahs and priests god, god, god, Yayweh, Jehovah, Allah, El Elohiym. And I shall see the end of the world? Is that what you are telling me?

SARAH          You won't tell me your name but you know mine.

JOAN            You said Sarah.

SARAH          I am Sarai. I am Sarah. The mother of all those troublemakers. Mother of Judaism, mother of Christianity. You think that's not enough weight on my back?

JOAN            What is your story?

SARAH          And there was no food. We were starving. Like skeletons walking from Canaan through Sinai to Egypt and they said I was so beautiful

BILL            You still are/

SARAH /and they told Pharaoh and Pharaoh took me to his harem. And there were hundreds of women there with perfume and silk and they washed me and dressed me and I lay in their arms when I was frightened that Pharaoh would take me and when I told them I can be your grandmother, I am sixty-five years old, they did not believe me and they asked how can this be? You are young in body. And I tell them because no child has slept in my belly and stretched me from the inside. I am barren and they say yes but you are beautiful, your beauty seduces the king, the Pharaoh. And my husband, Abraham tells the King that I am his sister because the King will kill a man to take his wife. He tells him that I am the daughter of his father but not of his mother. And when the plagues come the King asks me why they have come, I say I do not know but perhaps it is because he has taken me and that I am another man's wife. And the King he summons my husband and he tells him leave my country and take your wife with you. And I see my image in the glass and the skin is fresh and the eyes are bright and the lips red and my arms and legs tight with skin so hugging my arms and legs and I look like a young girl because there never was no child in my belly. And we were happy in Egypt. I can't die.

JOAN *(Echoing her.)* I can't die. *(Beat.)* You really are Sarah?

SARAH Yes.

JOAN The Sarah?

SARAH Yes.

JOAN Genesis tells us that Abraham buried Sarah in a cave in Hebron.

SARAH Huh! Should have found a goy gravedigger.

JOAN You are my mother.

SARAH Seems I have the misfortune to be the mother of all Jews. But you, you are not a Jew.

JOAN No. No? I don't know. *(Beat.)* And like Jesus, you came out of the ground?

SARAH Like Jesus? That luftmensch. I never liked him.

JOAN           *(Ignoring this.)* That makes you over 5,000 years old.

SARAH        God won't let me die.

JOAN         How is it possible?

SARAH        And who are you now you can talk?

JOAN         Joan. Joan England.

SARAH        *(She snorts.)* England. What did England ever do for us? Satan *(she spits three times)* came for us and England does nothing. *(As if talking to the government.)* Look at us! Gas, bullets, burning alive. Look at us. Nowhere to go. You turn us away and put us behind wire. England! Land of the free! Promises to the Arabs! Promises to the Jews! England! Double-dealing England. Look at all the mess you made! Curse you! And what is Joan England doing here?

JOAN         I have come to serve the Jewish people because/

SARAH        /You too, you want to use us. To hasten the coming of your messiah

JOAN         And yours!

*(During the next speech, Sarah covers her ears with her hands.)*

JOAN         And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of water/

SARAH        *(Defiantly)* /and they became blood

JOAN         and I saw unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon

BILL         *(Seduced by her fervour)* and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of false prophet

JOAN         and he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue geddon!  
*(Sarah has uncovered her ears.)*

SARAH        Meggido. That's miles from here.

JOAN         Let's go.

SARAH      No!

*(Joan wheels the bed around the stage. Bill follows with the suitcases.)*

Scene Eleven

Joan and Sarah Go To Armageddon

*(A man walks by with huge stone tablets on his shoulders.)*

JOAN          Who is that?

SARAH        Moses. What's that meschuggenah doing here? He never made it to Israel.

JOAN          Moses? Sea splitting in two? That Moses?

The telling of the plagues as a game

Show theme.

JOAN          Plagues? How many?

SARAH        What?

BILL          What?

JOAN          Shtumm!

BILL          She can't see me.

*(He plays in front of Sarah. She sees nothing.)*

JOAN          Shut it.

SARAH        Bet you don't know how many! Frogs!

JOAN          Boils!

SARAH      Locusts! Blood, Lice

JOAN        *(Scratching)* Fleas!

SARAH      Anthrax. Hail. Locusts,

*(Joan goes blank. Bill covers his eyes.)*

JOAN        Darkness!

SARAH      The Slaying of the First Born.

BILL        How many/

SARAH      /ten or twelve?

JOAN        Twelve? *(Working it out.)* Lice and fleas are the same, twelve is tribes not plagues/

SARAH      /And then he delivered his judgment against our enemies. And Pharaoh's magicians said, 'look it is the finger of God!'

JOAN        And Israel saw the great hand which the Lord laid on the Egyptians and the people feared the Lord and they believed in him and his servant Moses.

SARAH      *(Now into the game.)* How many plagues were the Egyptians hit? Ten. And at sea.

*(Bill holds up 10 fingers and moves them 5 times)*

JOAN        Fifty!

SARAH      I'll give you fifty!

JOAN        And he turned their rivers into blood so that they could not drink their water. He sent swarms of

SARAH      flies and frogs, he increased the caterpillars,



JOAN            he destroyed their vines with hail and their trees with frost. He sent fiery bolts to kill their cattle.

*The next text, which includes moments from the end of the Passover service, is choral and could be musical or sprecht-gesung. Its purpose is to show where English absurdism connects with the absurdist element of the Passover service.*

SARAH        If he had brought us out of Egypt enough for us

*(Joan is lost. Bill mimes throttling.)*

JOAN        If he had slain their first born, enough for us!

SARAH        Only one kid. Only one kid, which my father bought for two zuzim, only one kid, only one kid.

JOAN        Then came the dog and bit the cat, which ate the kid, which my father bought for two zuzim. As I was going to Banbury Fair! Then came the stick *(she raises it)* and beat the dog

SARAH        which bit the cat which ate the kid which my father bought for/

JOAN        /two zuzim. Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross *(rides the stick mockingly)* to see a fine lady on a white horse!

SARAH        Then came a fire and burnt the stick which beat the dog which bit the cat which ate the kid, which my father bought

JOAN        Then came the water and quenched the fire, which burnt the stick which beat the dog which bit the cat, which ate the kid, which my father bought for

SARAH        two zuzim, Then came an ox and drunk the water,

JOAN        which quenched the fire, which burnt the stick which beat the dog which bit the cat which ate the kid, which my father bought for

SARAH        two zuzim,

BILL            Doctor Foster went to

JOAN            Gloucester.

BILL            In a shower of rain. He stepped in a puddle.

JOAN            Right up to his duddle/

SARAH          Then came the slaughterer and slaughtered the ox, which drunk the water, which quenched the fire,

JOAN            which burnt the stick which beat the dog which bit the cat which ate the kid. As I was going to St Ives I met a man with seven wives!

SARAH          Then came the angel of death and slew the slaughterer who slaughtered the ox,

BILL            Each wife had seven sacks/

JOAN            /Each sack had seven cats

SARAH          which drunk the water, which quenched the fire, which burnt the stick which beat the dog which bit the cat, which ate the kid, which my father

JOAN            I saw three ships come sailing by  
Come sailing by  
Were four and twenty white mice  
With chains around their necks

SARAH          Then came the Holy One, blessed be He, and slew the angel of Death/

JOAN            I saw three ships come sailing by

BILL            Come sailing by

SARAH          /who slew the slaughterer who slaughtered the ox, which drunk the water, which quenched the fire, which burnt the stick which beat the dog

BILL            which bit the cat which ate the kid

SARAH        If he had divided the sea.

JOAN         Enough for us. If he brought us through it, dry foot.

SARAH        Enough for us! We longed for The Promised Land.

JOAN         England!

SARAH        If he had fed us with manna/

JOAN         /enough for us! *(Singing)* Ring a ringa/

SARAH        If He had given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Siniai

JOAN         /roses. A pocket full of

SARAH        enough for us. If he had brought us to Mount Siniai

BILL         /posies

SARAH        and not given us the Torah

JOAN         /Atishoo

SARAH        And not brought us to the Land of Israel.

BILL         Enough for us.

JOAN         Atishoo. *(Discovering the abbreviation of the French.)* A tes souahaits!

BILL         We all fall down!

*'MOSES' wanders past looking into space.*

SARAH        Hey you! You never got to Israel. Remember? What are you doing here? Place is full of crazies. *(To Joan)* I remember Joshua the carpenter's son.

JOAN         You knew Jesus?

SARAH Joshua? Sure. All is life- trouble. Mary smacked his tochus day and night. Not hard enough!

JOAN You knew Jesus? But you Jews you murdered our Lord

SARAH You! You dare say that? The Romans crucified Jews in their thousands. They ran out of trees. Jesus was a Jew you ignoramus.

JOAN Why do people keep telling me this?

SARAH What are you? A Jew? (*Joan looks around her.*)

BILL A Christian Jew? (*Joan crosses herself one way.*)

SARAH A Jewish Christian? (*Joan crosses herself the other way.*) You don't know what you are!

JOAN I know that the Jews are also waiting for the messiah. They too will rise from their graves on the Mount of Olives. Look at Moses. He is still looking for the land and the land must be peopled with Jews.

SARAH What, so that Jesus can return and most of the Jews die? That's your damnable prophecy isn't it? Oh God, in whom I have no faith, what happens if we lose Israel? They rise against us. They say we have sinned. That we do not deserve this land.

JOAN You refused the messiah.

SARAH That too/

JOAN You betrayed him to the Romans.

SARAH Not again!

JOAN The Jews will/

SARAH /convert?

JOAN           Seven circles around the coffin and all will rise with the coming of the Lord.  
(*Beat.*) The Jews, they sinned. That's why Moses is wandering. They betrayed  
God's word by worshipping the Golden Calf. But now they are here and He is  
coming. I can feel it. The End of Days. The Rapture.

*The stage is full of people in biblical robes.*

JOAN           He's here I can feel him and I am here with Sarah and Moses my Lord the Saviour  
is coming to save me to save the world and a new Kingdom will be born for more  
than a thousand years!

SARAH        NO!

JOAN           It is in the Bible! It is God's word!!

*(She digs back into the soil and throws books into the air.)*

JOAN           Ezekiel, Daniel,

SARAH        The Jews return. That's what you want? Jewish death?

JOAN           God punishes those who abandon him.

SARAH        The Jews die?

JOAN           It is written. (*Beat as she realises she is a Jew.*) Wait, am I a Jew? That means I  
die? No! That's wrong.

SARAH        It is written!

JOAN           Some die.

SARAH        Damn you!

JOAN           So live. In the life of our Lord!

SARAH        Live! Accept Jesus Christ, God's only son, as the living Messiah!

JOAN           The Jewish Messiah! Given to the whole world. For redemption.

SARAH More than five thousand years later and you Christians are still going on and on about the Jews!

JOAN You are *(Beat)* I am not- his people. It is coming. I can feel it. The Rapture. The End of Days. Soon he will be here. It is written. Our bones are dried and our hope is lost, we are cut off from our parts. Thus saith the Lord God, behold oh my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of the earth and bring you into the land of Israel. I can hear the trumpets of the Last Judgment! Accept! Accept the Messiah! Jesus is King!

SARAH No!

JOAN You must!

SARAH No!

JOAN Sarah will convert! Abraham's wife will convert! The first Jewish woman will accept Jesus as the one Christ! The Jews will be saved!

SARAH I don't want to be saved, I want to die.

JOAN Take my hand.

SARAH What for?

JOAN Be with me. Be with my God.

SARAH What?

JOAN Jesus was a Jew.

SARAH Why do you start all this?

*(Joan throws water over Sarah.)*

SARAH What are you doing?

*(Joan grabs Sarah and puts her hand over her mouth. Sarah struggles hard with Joan as Joan speaks the following lines.)*

JOAN I call on God, on behalf of Sarah, to cast out the devil from this woman. *(She spits three times.)* Sarah, wife of Abraham, mother of all the world, she Sarah renounces Lucifer! She renounces his power and his war with the one and true God who is the father of our Lord, who has been sent to earth to wash us of our sins and to save us. God save this woman, save our mother who rejects Beelzebub and renounces his deceit, his corruption and his kingdom. *(Joan's voice is animal in the next line.)* I renounce the devil. In the name of Sarah, who had a child at ninety, I take for her the name of Jesus Christ as saviour so that she may escape the fires of hell

*(Sarah breaks free. She knocks Joan to the ground. Joan gets up and raises her fist like a boxer.)*

SARAH How dare you!

*(Joan suddenly laughs.)*

JOAN You are a Christian now!

*(Sarah laughs with derision. Joan speaks over her laughter.)*

SARAH And you! You should become a Jew!

JOAN And I saw a new Jerusalem coming down from god out of the heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It is there. I am Alpha

SARAH *(Laughs)* and Omega

JOAN Why are you laughing?

SARAH Because I am Sarah! And you are a Jew!

JOAN How do you know?

SARAH Because I am five thousand years old!

JOAN They are coming. Can you hear them? *(To Sarah. The next text is Joan proclaiming biblical prophecy.)* And thus saith the Lord I am against thee. And I will bring an army. From Persia. From Libya. From Arabia. All of them. Be thou prepared for the sword and the axe and the many peoples gathered against the mountains of Israel, shall come up against my people Israel all of them riding on horses/

SARAH        No! They come to destroy us. To annihilate us. To wipe our names from the face of the earth.

JOAN           /there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.

*(Joan changes)*

JOAN        I don't want to be a Jew.

SARAH       No! I will fight. They kill us in England, they kill us in Spain, they expel us from Arabia, they hate us in Israel, they think we control the world/

SARAH       I will make war against those who come to kill us! And I was born in Mesopotamia, before I am a Jew, I am a Chaldean, I am a Kurd. We fight! We fight the Syrians and the Moabites and all who want to destroy Judah.

JOAN        If I am a Christian then Jesus will come and save me and when he comes there will be war and everlasting peace and I will rise from my grave young and alive

*Sarah has broken free. She takes a ram's horn and blows it loudly. The stage becomes lit in a mass of colour as angels, devils, witches and strange animals appear to fly as Sarah remains centre stage blowing the shofar.*

*Joan freezes as she sees The End Of The World. A final image of the two women. They are lit separately. Sarah is active and blowing the shofar. Joan is ecstatic as she sees the Messiah. She has opened her suitcases and is throwing books into the air. The rest of the stage is used on many levels to reveal images from The Last Judgment.*

*Lights fade*

## Scene Twelve

### The Return To Liverpool Street

*Then sound of cranes and excavation. Bill looks at the audience in amazement. Another man in a worker's luminous jacket walks onstage. Joan is lit in isolation. She is sitting on the floor with the books all around her.*

MAN        Hey Bill. We've been looking for you everywhere.



BILL           What?

MAN           Lunch break's over. Back to work.

BILL           Do you see her?

MAN           See who?

BILL           Her! Joan what are you doing?

MAN           I don't see nobody mate.

BILL           Joan. Joan England.

MAN           You been on the whisky mate?

BILL           Joan? Joan?

MAN           There's nobody here but us.

BILL           A body. A living body.

MAN           Get back to work Bill.

*(Joan gets up. Walks downstage and upstage several times with a book which she reads).*

BILL           Joan. What are you doing?

JOAN          It's my life. The book! It's my life!

BILL           Back with William? With the other Bill?

JOAN          Before!

BILL           What?

JOAN          She put it in my suitcase.

BILL           What?

JOAN Sarah. She wrote my life.

BILL What does it say?

JOAN 'And in the beginning/

BILL Yes?

JOAN /There is light

BILL Yes?

JOAN And the first are the animals. Then comes the woman.

BILL What?

JOAN She names the animals and plays with them. But she is lonely and she cries out to the sun. Give me another human! And the sun which is red goes yellow and she is sleepy in the light. And as she lies down there is someone else, someone coming from her rib

*She gets up and walks away*

*She stops and turns back to him.*

JOAN And she calls him man.

*Sounds of cranes and drilling. Joan walks past Bill. She is followed by Sarah and Moses.*

*Blackout.*

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