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Barbara Daniela Himmelreich

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to investigate how Jewish-Canadian writers depict Israel in their texts. In this context the term 'Israel' pertains to both meanings of the Hebrew word; the State of Israel (Medinat Israel) and the people of Israel (Am Israel). 'Am Israel' does not refer only to those individuals living in the State of Israel, but to the Jewish people in general.

This paper examines Jewish life in Canada and also analyzes how Jewish-Canadian communities relate to the Jewish state and each other. As this is a paper carried out in the field of literature, the focus will always be on literary representations of those relations – fictional and non-fictional –, but a short overview of the actual circumstances of those issues will be provided whenever possible. One goal of this paper is to investigate whether both definitions of the word Israel are being meaningfully and consistently represented in Jewish-Canadian literature. When it comes to focusing on 'Am Israel', the quest will be for things as simple as Jewish-Canadian authors creating Jewish characters for their texts and the vehicles they choose to depict the Jewishness of these characters. In a second step it is being investigated whether the term 'Am Israel' can actually be applied to Jewish characters in the texts studied. This means it will be ascertained if these Jewish characters feel part of the international Jewish community or whether their Jewishness does not influence their feelings of belonging to a particular group outside of their immediate communities. It is also being explored whether these Jewish characters care about their Jewishness at all, and if so how they define their Jewish identity. Since Judaism is primarily a religion, it is interesting to see whether secular characters care less about their Jewishness than religious characters. And if secular characters self-define as Jews, what they base their Jewish identity on, if not the Jewish religion.

The paper begins with a glance at Jewish life in Canada, which includes Jewish history and the particularities of the Jewish-Canadian experience. The second chapter provides an overview of Jewish-Canadian literature in general and briefly introduces some of its most important representatives. The third chapter takes a look at how Jewish life in Canada is portrayed by those writers and how they

create a sense of Jewish unity in their texts. The final chapter looks outside the geographical confines of the Canadian state and investigates what – if any – importance the Jewish State of Israel holds for the Jewish community in Canada. This chapter also compares and contrasts the reality with the picture created by Jewish-Canadian literature.

Literature is usually representative of the prevailing ideas and paradigms of a society at a certain point in time. It mirrors reality and is often capable of expressing issues people are shy to talk about in real life and therefore writers find it easier to fictionalize these concerns. In light of the ever-present political struggles the State of Israel faces and the still widespread anti-Semitism around the world, it is worthwhile to investigate how Jewish Canadians feel about these issues. In a time when most Western countries – including Canada – hold Israel mostly culpable for the conflict with its Arab neighbours, many Jews have also turned away from the Jewish State or their Jewish identity and rates of intermarriage are nowhere higher than in North America. However, official comment from Jewish-Canadian organisations is usually pro-Israel and claims to represent a unified Jewish majority. In fact, criticism of Israel is still somewhat of a taboo in most established Jewish institutions. It is interesting and necessary to discover what 'the people' really think about Israel and if Judaism is still important to modern Canadian Jews. One way to carry out this research is to look at literature written by Jewish Canadians, even if their motifs and themes ostensibly have nothing to do with these issues.

1. JEWISH LIFE IN CANADA

1.1. Jews and Jewish Identity

1.1.1 Definition of the Term 'Jewish'

As this paper is concerned with Jewish-Canadian literature, it is necessary to first define what is understood by the labels 'Jewish' and 'Canadian'. While it is easier to define who will be considered 'Canadian' for the purpose of this paper - anybody holding Canadian citizenship at some point in their life - it is not as straightforward to define the label 'Jewish'.

This difficulty exists due to the fact that there appears to be uncertainty about how to define the term 'Jewish'. This feeling of uncertainty is shared by Jews and non-Jews alike. Karl Shapiro describes this dilemma in the following way: "An American Jewish writer is a Jew who is an American who is a writer. Everybody knows what an American is; everyone knows what a writer is; but very few people seem to know what a Jew is, including Jews, and including American Jewish writers" (qtd. in Brauner 1). Leslie Fiedler explains his own confusion concerning his status as a Jew:

I was ... more and more confused about what a Jew is – in light of the fact that I can still call myself by that once tribal, sectarian name, though I have abandoned the traditional religion, almost completely lost the traditional culture and no longer speak the languages traditionally associated with Jewishness. (qtd. in Brauner 1)

As we can see, being Jewish doesn't depend on adherence to the Jewish religion. In fact, one can be a complete atheist and still call oneself Jewish. This is due to the fact that Judaism is not only a religion but also a people. "According to Orthodox Judaism, after all, Jewishness is simply a matter of genetics: a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother, irrespective of the degree of religious belief held by that individual" (Brauner 2).

This paper will mostly follow the liberal definition of Jewishness as defined by Ben Siegel in the following way: "the most generally accepted definition is that a Jew is any person who identifies him or herself as such" (qtd. in Brauner 3). This means that writers who have a Jewish father and therefore are not halachically (according

to Jewish law) Jewish, will still be included in this research if they consider themselves to be Jewish.

1.1.2 Jewish Identity

'Jewish Identity' is a very important concept for Jewish communities and has been for quite some time. While it is difficult to define exactly what constitutes a 'Jewish identity', there is no doubt about its importance for Jewish culture, including literature. A possible definition of 'Jewish identity' is the degree to which an individual identifies him or herself as Jewish, and one of the factors influencing this degree is anti-Semitism, which generally pushes individuals towards identifying more strongly and significantly as Jews than before.

Three Jewish authors - Boyarin, Kugelmass and Orlove – have published papers on the subject of Jewish identity presenting their views on this topic. All three authors see Jewish identity as inherently being "other" from dominant mainstream culture. They differ in the degree of importance they assign to this deviation from Gentile society and whether they see greater tension in intra- or inter-faith relations. All three agree that the continued existence of a distinct Jewish identity is important but they disagree on what constitutes authentic Jewish identity and to what degree assimilation is a threat to the future of the Jewish people.

Jewish identity has long been an important subject for Jews in the modern world. People trying to understand what being Jewish meant "were confronted by the problem that Jewishness seemed to fit none of the usual categories" (Strom 91). While most people considered Jews to be a separate nation, it was difficult to establish what defined them as such. Since most Jews did not live together in their own country, "being Jewish was different from being German, French or American. [...] But neither could Jews define themselves by their religion alone" (Strom 91). According to Martin Buber, "Jews eluded all classification. They were an anxiety-provoking spectre to gentiles, a conundrum to themselves" (qtd. in Strom 91).

Today, Jewish identity lies somewhere "within the fields of force represented by enlightenment, antisemitism and Zion" (Meyer 32). Enlightenment is important because it is "that force, which draws Jews out of their particularism to

identifications beyond the boundaries of Judaism” while anti-Semitism is the force that keeps “them within the circle or pushes them back into it” (Meyer 33).

In the past anti-Semitism

rarely attenuated Jewish identity; it served rather to reinforce it. Antisemitism was believed to be part of the divine plan which God had determined for Israel. Exiled from the Holy Land on account of their sins, Jews expected to suffer at the hands of the gentiles until such time as the messiah would put an end to their travails. (Meyer 34)

While most modern Jews no longer believe that anti-Semitism is a punishment from G-d¹, it still manages to “shore up and intensify Jewish identity” (Meyer 58). Instead of turning away from Judaism out of fear of anti-Semitism, Jews react by self-identifying more strongly as Jews and forming stronger bonds to the larger Jewish community. In this respect, “antisemitism sometimes serves to abet the influence of enlightenment by adding negative reasons for abandoning Jewishness to positive ones” (Meyer 33).

1.2. Jewish History in Canada

Jewish immigration to Canada contains different characteristics than immigration of other ethnic groups. Because,

unlike most immigrants to Canada, Jews did not come from a place where they were the majority cultural group. Jews were internationally dispersed at the time of the ancient Roman Empire and after unsuccessful revolts against it lost their sovereignty in their ancient homeland. Subsequently Jews lived, sometimes for many centuries, as minorities in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 1)

1.2.1. Early Settlement

While “Jews participated in the opening up of the Americas to European settlement”, they “were legally barred from residence in New France, where immigration was restricted to Catholics” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 2). [New France was the name of the French Colonies in modern-day Canada.]

“Jews settled in the British colonies to the south” [today’s United States] “and after the incorporation of New France into the British Empire began also to settle in Lower Canada” [today the Province of Ontario] (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 2).

¹ Out of respect for His name many Jews spell the word like this in order to be able to erase it without showing disrespect, as G-d’s name must not be erased or deleted once written down

Some Jews were among those that followed the British Army when it captured Montreal in 1760. In fact, the first non-French, non-Anglo community in Canada was Jewish. The first Jewish immigrants came from the United States, Great Britain and Germany (Tulchinsky, *Root* 11).

Many Jews worked as fur “traders or purveyors to the scattered army garrisons” (Tulchinsky, *Root* 11). The earliest Jewish traders were often captured by Indians. Jews also came as merchants; the St. Lawrence River facilitated the transport of raw materials from the colony to the British Isles. “At least 10% of the Montreal merchants in the 1760s were Jews” (Tulchinsky, *Root* 12). They did not only trade but were active in various commercial fields.

Most Jews at that time were ‘Anglicized’, which means they were close to, but not part of the Protestant Clique. “Because they had enjoyed a British identity before arriving in Quebec, Jews benefited from all of the rights of ‘old subjects’” (Tulchinsky, *Root* 11). Most Jews were middle-class and therefore “in the same economic and political camp as the Anglo-Saxon elites that governed the colony” (Tulchinsky, *Root* 18-19). There appears to have been no visible anti-Semitism. Jews worked without commercial restrictions; they were able to sign petitions and work as officers or civil servants (Tulchinsky, *Root* 16).

Canada’s first synagogue, Shearith Israel, was founded on Dec 30, 1768 in Montreal, when 15 Jews gathered to form Canada’s first Jewish congregation (Tulchinsky, *Root* 8). The fact that such a small community was able to erect a synagogue only eight years after they had first arrived is a sign of their wealth and their belief in Jewish continuity in Montreal (Tulchinsky, *Root* 17). The first synagogue in Toronto, Holy Blossom Temple, was established nearly 100 years later in 1856 (Tulchinsky, *Root* 154).

While Jews in Canada enjoyed many rights, being a member of the government was not yet open to them. Even though “Ezekiel Hart was elected to the legislature of Lower Canada in 1807, [he] was denied his seat on the basis of his religion” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 1). This changed in 1831, when a bill was passed, which gave Jews full entitlement; this was the “first of its kind in the British Empire” (Tulchinsky, *Root* 37). In the US, however Jews had already “enjoyed full civil

rights for almost a century" (Tulchinsky, *Root* 37). When the province of British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871, its "first delegation to the House of Commons included Henry Nathan, the first Jewish Canadian Member of Parliament" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 1).

1.2.2. Jewish Immigration around 1900

The Jewish community in Canada grew slowly, compared to the United States; while there were 120 Jewish men living in Canada in 1800, the "1871 census, the first after Confederation, counted 1115 Jews" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 1). Ten years later, in 1881, "when there were about 250,000 Jews in the United States, there were only about 2,500 in Canada" (Schoenfeld, "Cosmopolitans" 137). About half of them were living in Montreal, which was still the center of the Canadian Jewish community.

At the end of the 19th century, 80% of the world's 10 million Jews lived in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German empires. The possibility of better conditions elsewhere, prejudice, legal discrimination, and violence encouraged emigration. Pogroms - violent mob attacks on Jewish neighbourhoods involving rape, injury, murder, looting and destruction - began in the Russian Empire in 1881. (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 2)

As a response to anti-Semitism half of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe left and immigrated to other countries between 1880 and 1930, most of them to the United States. Out of those circa 4 million Jews, 155,000 moved to Canada.

The following general statements can be made about Jewish immigration to Canada around 1900:

1. The Jewish population grew exponentially during that time. While there were 2,445 Jews living in Canada in 1881, by 1914 that number had risen to 115,000, which represented 1.4% of the Canadian population (Tulchinsky, *Root* 158-59).
2. Jews could be found across Canada "in every major city and in dozens of smaller places"; from western farms, to small and medium town, to large cities (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 2).

3. The Jewish community in Canada was mostly urban. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total Jewish population was concentrated in Montreal (40,000), Toronto (30,000) and Winnipeg (15,000) (Tulchinsky, *Root* 158-80).
4. Immigrants created their own, large immigrant communities, while the 'established' communities remained small and without any immigrant influx. This could be observed especially in Montreal (Tulchinsky, *Root* 255).
5. The new immigrant communities were marked by institutions – "synagogues, labour unions, cultural, newspapers, *landsmanschaften*, Zionists, women's groups, hospitals and youth groups" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).
6. Immigrant communities were generally poor. Occupations ranged from peddlers to sweat-shop workers, to small commercial and industrial owners, to professionals and business people (Tulchinsky, *Root* 158-80).

1.2.3. Prairies

Although most Jews settled in the big cities in the East, a significant number of Jewish immigrants also put down roots in the Canadian prairies. While there were no Jews living in the prairies in 1867, in 1911 there were 14,000. However, two thirds of the Jewish population in the prairies lived in Winnipeg, the capitol of Manitoba (Tulchinsky, *Root* 338).

Various Jewish settlements were established with international, national and local aid agencies. "Eleven Jewish farm colonies were founded in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, assisted by the Jewish Colonization Society" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3). However, the prairie experience was extremely difficult and failed. The pattern went this way: newly established Jewish communities take root, grow and then start to lose members. Norman Levine illustrates this in his short story "Thin Ice":

He told me of the small Jewish community that was once here. 'In 1920 when we came there were ten families. By the end of the last war it was down to three. No new recruits came to take the place of those who died or moved away. When we go,' said Mr Bischofswerder, 'all that will be left will be a small cemetery.' (149)

1.2.4. The “Pull” Factors

Various factors ‘pulled’ Jewish immigrants to Canada during that time:

1. the “*goldene medine*”

America was seen as ‘the golden land’ and Canada was thought to be the same. The Industrial Revolution and resulting growth of the economy needed people for cheap labour and people immigrated with hopes of striking it rich or at least improving their lots in life.

2. the politics of immigration in the late 19th and early 20th century

Canada changed its immigration policies during that time. There were fewer restrictions and immigration became a keystone in government policy around 1900. People were actively recruited to come. Canada preferred British and then other European immigrants, including Jews. This made it possible for Jews to leave Eastern Europe and escape persecution.

3. Canadian cities and farms – the ‘Last Best West’

Due to longer and more intensive immigration, the United States were already densely populated in many places. Potential immigrants were told that there was no land left in the United States to establish farms or build cities, but that this was still possible in Canada.

4. the transportation and communication revolution

Technical inventions and advances made it physically possible for poor people to afford boat and train travel, and the communication revolution allowed immigrants to stay in touch with their families back home and encourage them to join them in their new land. This leads to:

5. “chain migration”

As with other ethnic groups, once a person or group was established at a new place, others followed.

1.2.5. Organization of Communities

Jews set up many organizations when they came to Canada, which allowed them to live according to their religion and tradition. Many organizations were dedicated to the social welfare of their communities.

The first organizations set up in new communities were usually religious institutions like cemeteries, synagogues and schools. Cemeteries were often established first since a proper Jewish burial is very important in Jewish law and without it a Jewish soul is not able to return to heaven. "Jewish immigrants also brought a tradition of establishing a communal body, called a 'kehillah', to look after their social welfare needs. The first Jewish social welfare body in Canada was the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded in Montréal in 1863 to assist Jewish immigrants" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

The two cities with the largest Jewish communities - Montreal and Toronto - also had the largest number of Jewish institutions. These included "hospitals, social work agencies, homes for the aged, libraries and more" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3). Immigrants from the same place also formed so-called 'Landsmenschaften'. "Landsmenschaften were primarily organizations in which immigrants helped each other and which could reply, as a group, to appeals for help from those left behind" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

An organization that organizes Canadian Jews on a national level, the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), was established in 1919. The CJC is the elected "body which represents the interests of all Canadian Jews and coordinates their humanitarian efforts towards those overseas" (Canadian Jewish Congress). Historically, one of its most important concerns was the support of Jewish immigrants and to create a safe haven for Europe's desperate Jews. To that respect "the Congress established the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, which continues as a national agency of Canadian Jewry" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 6).

Today, some of the most important Jewish organizations in Canada include "the Canadian Jewish Congress, student services at Canadian universities, a Jewish continuity commission, the Canada-Israel Committee and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 6).

1.2.6. Modern Jewish Nationalism

"Modern nationalism encouraged the revival of Jewish national identity", one form of which was the organizing of the "modern Jewish cultural life" around the main language of most immigrants from Eastern Europe around 1900 – Yiddish (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

Jewish immigrants wanted to become fully accepted Canadians; however they did not want to give up their Jewish identity and therefore joined "the movement for the reconstruction of modern Jewish life around guaranteed minority rights within modern nation-states, with separate social institutions controlled by the Jewish minority" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

Especially in Montreal, many Yiddish cultural institutions were founded. These included "The Montreal Jewish Public Library, Yiddish theatres, and Yiddish literary" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3) societies. The Montreal Jewish Public Library, which used to be called "the Yidishe-folks-biblyotek, served as a lively community centre for lectures and educational programs" (Waddington, *Maza* 39). Many Jewish immigrants worked in urban factory sweat shops and "were particularly strong supporters of secular Yiddish culture. The language of their unions and fraternal organizations was Yiddish; through it they shared and interpreted their experiences in the new land" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3). Yiddish institutions were not founded only in Montreal, but all over Canada. A very important Yiddish center was Winnipeg, where secular Jews founded a Yiddish day school, which they named "after the famous Yiddish writer I.L. Peretz" (Waddington, *Maza* 37).

The second form of modern Jewish nationalism – Zionism - "aimed at the re-establishment of an independent national state in the ancient Jewish homeland. The mounting enthusiasm for Zionism in Eastern Europe was paralleled in Canada" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3). The first nationwide Canadian Jewish organization - The Federation of Canadian Zionist Societies, established in 1899 - was centred on Zionism (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

Zionism quickly established a large following in Canada, which included many wealthy Jews like Clarence de Sola, "a leader of the social and communal life of Canadian Jewry and long-time president of the Federation of Zionist Societies of

Canada" (Canadian Jewish Congress Archive Collections). The Canadian Zionist movement "contained organizations with competing philosophies. Mizrachi blended Zionism with religious Orthodoxy. Poalei Zion ("the Workers of Zion") had a strong following among the Jewish working class" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 3).

After the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the Canadian Zionist movement changed its goal towards closer ties between Canada and Israel. In 1972 "The Canada-Israel Committee was created to establish an organization that would speak about Israel on behalf of the Jews in Canada" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 6). Canadian Jews have strong connections to Israel on various levels and through different organizations including "universities, hospitals and social welfare projects" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 6). Most Canadian Jews have visited Israel at least once, often on a tour sponsored by a Zionist organization.

1.2.7. Immigration Restrictions during the Shoah

In the 1930s Canada imposed severe restrictions on immigration. Due to racism and anti-Semitism entry permits for Jews were practically never given. Even when the persecution of Jews by the Nazis became a known fact worldwide, Canada kept its door shut and took in proportionally fewer Jews than any other Western Country.

In the 1930s Canada was suffering from the Depression and a resulting high number of unemployment. This created "anxiety about the future and reinforce[ed] traditional racist doubts about 'indiscriminate' immigration. Hostility towards all foreigners, but especially towards Jews, allegedly the least assimilable group, was much in evidence" (Frankel 350). The Canadian government's response was to change its immigration policy and limit entry of people not familiar with farm work. This resulted in strong restrictions against Jewish immigration, as Jews were "considered to be the most urban people of Europe" (Frankel 350). Jews are historically not an urban people out of their own desire, but "if the emancipated Jew is 'the first cosmopolite and citizen of the world,' he is such by virtue of being both stranger and city man" (Baumgarten 1). Discrimination of Jews was not caused primarily by a bias against city dwellers, but by anti-Semitism, "which compounded religious intolerance with the new 'science'

of racism” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 4). Though the fascist movement was also popular in Canada during the 1930s, religious intolerance and anti-Semitism “was found among cultural and political leaders” of all political parties (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 4).

As the desperate situation of the Jews of Europe became more and more evident, Canadian Jews carried out “mass protests and continuous lobbying by political and communal leaders throughout the Depression and war years” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 4), but “pleas on behalf of the trapped Jews of Europe went unheeded. Backed by the government and broad public opinion, Canada more than any other country kept her doors shut in the face of Jewish refugees from Hitler’s Europe” (Brown 348-49).

After WWII Canada relaxed its immigration laws and Jews were again allowed to enter. In the 1940s about 40,000 Shoah survivors immigrated, and during the 1950s French-speaking Jews from North Africa arrived and settled “mostly in Montréal, where their French language was an asset” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 5).

1.2.8. The Contemporary Community

According to the latest census numbers (from 2010), Canada’s Jewish population now amounts to 373,500 people. This makes Canada home of the 4th largest Jewish community in the world after Israel (5,703,700), the United States (5,275,000) and France (483,500) (Jewish Virtual Library).

Most Canadian Jews live in cities, and the largest Jewish community in Canada can be found in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) with about 141,700 Jewish inhabitants, followed by Montreal with about 68,500. The 373,500 Canadian Jews make up about 1% of the Canadian population, and with nearly half of them living in the GTA, “Internal Jewish migration has established Toronto as *the* Jewish city in Canada” (Ehrlich 552).

However a large part of the “2nd- and 3rd-generation Jews born in Canada” has now moved to the suburbs, a process that started in the 1950s once they joined “the professional ranks of doctors, dentists, accountants, lawyers and professors” (Schoenfeld, “Jews” ch. 5). But “rather than dispersing, the [younger] generation

of Canadian Jews [has] moved as a group" to the same area (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 5). In Toronto this area can largely be found along Bathurst Street. Once the individuals moved, "synagogues, schools, community centres and other institutions relocated to these new neighbourhoods" [as well] (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 5).

1.3. The Jewish-Canadian Experience

1.3.1. The Jewish Population in Canada

Canada's Jewish population is still growing albeit slowly. While there were 286,000 Jews living in Canada in 1970, there are projected to be 381,000 in 2020 (About.com - Canadian Jewry). This would indicate that the Jewish population in Canada currently increases by about 5,500 per decade, while about 40 years ago the rate of increment was still about 25,000 per decade.

This small increase is still larger than the numbers in the United States where the Jewish population has been shrinking slowly during the same time period. From 5,400,000 in 1970 to 5,280,000 in 2005 and projected 5,200,000 in 2020 (About.com - US Jewry). While the Jewish population in the United States is still much larger than in Canada, this translates into a loss of 120,000 Jews in 35 years. The reasons for this decrease in Jewish population are mostly related to intermarriage and a smaller number of children per family.

The question why the Jewish population is growing in Canada but shrinking in the United States can be answered by looking at some statistical data.

Percentage of Jewish population that attends Jewish Day School (About.com)

United States: 29 percent	Canada: 55 percent
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Percentage of Jewish population that marries out (About.com)

United States: 54 percent	Canada: 35 percent
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As these numbers show, Canadian Jews seem to lead more distinctively Jewish lives, especially in comparison with American Jews. The percentage of children attending Jewish Day Schools is nearly twice as high in Canada and the number of intermarriages is nearly 50% higher in the United States even though the Jewish

dating pool in the US is about 14 times larger than in Canada. This seems to suggest that children and teenagers who mostly socialize with other Jews are more likely to find a Jewish marriage partner than those who don't. This is also one of the main reasons Jewish parents send their teenaged children to Jewish summer camps. Jewish continuance is a very important concern for North American Jews and intermarriage is seen as one of its biggest obstacles.

Violent Anti-Semitic Incidents in 2004 (About.com)

United States: 17 Canada: 52

Another interesting figure is the reporting of violent anti-Semitic incidents in 2004. As there are ten times more people in the United States and fourteen times more Jews, it would be expected that the number of incidents is much higher in the United States. In fact, the number is much smaller, considering the size of the population it is extremely smaller. If this suggests that there is less anti-Semitism in the United States, this explains why there is a higher number of intermarriages in the United States and more children attend Jewish schools in Canada. As we have seen before, anti-Semitism leads to increased identification with Judaism and stronger bonds to fellow Jews.

Percentage of Jewish population that has ever visited Israel (About.com)

United States: 35 percent Canada: 66 percent

As this paper analyzes Israel within a Jewish-Canadian context, it is also interesting to look at a statistical figure concerning visits of the Jewish populations in Canada and the United States to Israel. Similar to the number of Jewish school attendance, the percentage of Jews who have visited Israel is nearly twice as high in Canada than in the United States. This suggests that Canadian Jews have a stronger connection to Israel than American Jews; however they are much less vocal in their support of Israel. One explanation for this is the relatively smaller number of Canadian Jews or the lower degree of importance which the world ascribes to Canada in comparison with the United States. Another, and more likely explanation, is the more widespread occurrence of anti-Semitism in Canada, which dissuades Canadian Jews from openly stating their support for Israel. This

question will be analyzed more thoroughly in the fourth chapter in the section "Jewish identity in Canada".

In conclusion it can be said that

Canadian Jews have higher rates of in-marriage than American Jews, are more likely to send their children to Jewish schools, are more likely to live near other Jews [and] give more per capita to the United Jewish Appeal. Recent research indicates the continuation of these differences and reports in addition, higher levels of ritual observance in Canada than in the United States, and a greater likelihood of reading a Jewish newspaper, belonging to the Jewish Community Center, belonging to Jewish organizations and having Jews as closest friends. [In addition, a high number of Canadian Jews is] able to converse in Hebrew, [feels] close ties to Israel, and [has] visited Israel. (Schoenfeld, *Cosmopolitans* 142)

1.3.2. Assimilation and Religious Observance

The majority of Canadian Jews is fully assimilated in the respect that they take part in every aspect of public life and other than in regards to religious observance, differences from their Gentile compatriots are barely visible. Many Canadian Jews - even if they self-identify as Jews - are "not observant of rituals and never [go] to synagogue" (Waddington, *Maza* 43). A large number of Jews also celebrates Christian holidays like Christmas, "because everyone else did, and so we wouldn't seem too different being Jews" (Kalman 61).

This level of assimilation has led to professional and financial success for a large part of the Jewish community. On top of the fact that "20 percent of individuals appearing on a list of the wealthiest Canadians in 2000 were Jewish" (Ehrlich 550), Canadian Jews are mostly middle-class, with good jobs and a higher-than-usual income. In addition, according to the 1991 census "Jewish immigrants earn substantially more than [...] non-Jewish non-immigrants: men earn almost 50 percent more and women over 40 percent more" (Elazar and Weinfeld 259). As it usually takes a generation or two for immigrants to achieve the same degree of financial income as the majority of the established population, this is a remarkable fact.

Assimilation was an important goal for the Jewish community in the past, when Jewish children of immigrants often resented their differences from Canadians with an English background and were ashamed of their parents who spoke with an accent. As Miriam Waddington remembers,

Canadian society during the twenties and thirties brainwashed every schoolchild with British Empire slogans, and promoted a negative stereotype of all Eastern European immigrants, but especially of Jews. Moreover, during all my primary-school years, the phrase 'dirty Jew' had regularly been hurled at me from the street corners and back alleys of North Winnipeg. (Waddington, *Maza* 42)

While the majority of Canadian Jews is secular, altogether they are still more observant than American Jews. Of the religious Canadian community, a significant number is modern orthodox. "In the last 20 or 30 years the Centrist modern orthodox community has shifted right towards ultra-orthodoxy" (Diamond 18). Ultra-orthodox Jews reject secular society, but they are not against modernity or politics.

Like other Canadian Jews, many Orthodox Jews have moved to the suburbs, which poses no insurmountable challenges since Orthodox Jews and the suburban society have the same aims: "the nuclear family, the transmission of middle-class values to children, and the role of education in providing opportunities for upward mobility" (Diamond 9). While the fear of anti-Semitism is still high in Canada, more and more Orthodox Jews are confident enough to "wear kipoth outside of synagogues" (Diamond 107). Especially in the areas predominantly inhabited by Jews, such as Bathurst Street in Toronto.

1.3.3. Jewish Life in Toronto

The Greater Toronto Area is the nucleus of the Jewish Community in Canada, and Bathurst Street is the Center of the Jewish residential area in Toronto. The downtown area of Bathurst Street in Central Toronto has always been home to a significant part of the Jewish community, but starting in the 1950s "Toronto's Jews have settled Bathurst Street in successive waves, continually pushing the Jewish frontier northward" (Diamond 187). What is remarkable about Bathurst Street is the fact, that Jewish settlement has not centered around a specific area and spread out in the form of an ever-increasing circle, but instead concentrated on

one street that led out of Toronto and Jews simply continued building new homes on that street even if this put them far away from the center or even the city limits.

In the year 2000 Jewish neighbourhoods on Bathurst Street stretched for over 8 miles "like pearls on a necklace, in a progression from 1950s neighbourhoods at the southern end to still uncompleted subdivisions in the middle of cornfields at the northern end" (Diamond 187). "As one Toronto resident explained in 1995, Bathurst Street is to Toronto Jewry 'what the Nile is to Egypt: a narrow strip of life with desert on both sides'" (Diamond 186). Curiously, only communities built directly on Bathurst Street prevailed and those "formed east or west of Bathurst failed, as distances were perceived as being greater" even if they were geographically closer to important institutions on Bathurst like the Holy Blossom Temple, the Jewish library or the Jewish schools (Diamond 50).

Jewish settlement along Bathurst Street really began in 1950 when a consortium "announced plans to build seventeen-hundred-unit housing complex on two farms at the northwest corner of the Bathurst-Lawrence intersection" (Diamond 35). Ten years later the Jewish population on Bathurst Street had increased by 800% percent to 42,000. At that time this part of Bathurst Street still belonged to North York, and within 30 years it "was transformed from a rural community of 3,400 people into a corridor of 93,000 people" (Diamond 36).

1.3.4. Jewish Education

In the past most Jewish children attended public schools, which "served as an important vehicle for socialization into the majority society" (Shrager, qtd. in Pomson 308) and spent their afternoons or weekends at private Jewish institutions where they received religious instruction. Today "Jewish parents willingly send their children to separate parochial schools. Either they no longer fear being viewed as outsiders or they have indeed become insiders" (Shrager, qtd. in Pomson 308).

The idea of Jewish all-day schools came to Canada in the 1930s through European immigrants. "These held two major advantages: 1) more hours of Judaic

instruction, especially at a time when students were at their freshest [and] 2) elimination of religious conflicts in public schools” (Diamond 90).

The first day schools were mostly directed at religious Jews who wanted their children to have both a good secular education that would permit them to attend university later on, and Jewish religious instruction. Once the pool of religious parents was exhausted and the day-schools wanted to attract children from secular, middle-class families, “the day schools pushed the boundaries of Jewish education in a new direction by bringing together religious and secular styles in a single educational institution” (Diamond 95). “This modernization can be seen in four areas: 1) inclusion of girls in formal setting 2) promoting an image of professionalization 3) modern facilities and equipment 4) incorporation of secular holidays and personalities into the general studies curriculum” (Diamond 95).

While nationwide only about 55% of Jewish children attend a Jewish day school - often due to a lack of Jewish schools in smaller communities - this number is much higher in Toronto, where “there has been, over many decades, a high level of community funding and support for Jewish day schools. [...] Rates of day school enrolment in Toronto have been higher than in almost any other North American city” (Pomson 310).

Nowadays most Jewish day schools are non-religious or at least non-orthodox. “The growth in the liberal Jewish day schools population has been attributed to four general causes” (Pomson 307):

1. The decay of public education.
2. Jewish embourgeoisement. [...] The increased capacity of many families to pay for private education.
3. The confluence of multiculturalism and the “school choice” movement. [...] Legitimized efforts by minority communities to counteract the dissolution of their cultures and identities in the public school system, even if that choice involves withdrawal from the system itself (Miller, 2001 qtd. in Pomson 308).
4. Concern about Jewish continuity. Within the organized Jewish community, day schools are invariably depicted as the most effective available vehicle for promoting the development of a distinct Jewish identity at a time when rates of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage have risen to unprecedented levels

(Jewish Educational Services for North America & United Jewish Communities, 1999, qtd. in Pomson 308).

1.3.5. Important Relationship to the United States

Canada is often mistaken for the United States of America by people who are not from either country, as differences between those two countries are hard to see at first glance. For Canadians however it is generally very important to distinguish themselves from their southern neighbour, and they relish every difference they can point to. This is similar to the relationship between Austria and Germany, and is sometimes described as the 'little brother' syndrome. Jewish Canadians however feel a strong bond to the United States, and historically Canada was never their Promised Land, but only the 2nd best after the United States, which they regarded as the golden land for refugees.

A very important difference of the Jewish experience in Canada and the United States was how they were welcomed on arrival. While the United States from the start were a country where immigrants of all ethnicities and religions were - at least formally – welcome, Canada was clearly a Christian country, with no intention of opening itself to other cultures and religions.

Tired, huddled masses arrived at Ellis Island to be greeted by the welcoming words of Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty; later immigrants to Montreal would see a large electric cross on the top of Mount Royal, a reminder of the Christian past that they thought they had left behind. (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii)

During the time of the Shoah Canadian Jews counted on the United States to get involved in the war and become the saviours of the Jewish people. As history would prove their fears right, Canada had no intention of saving the European Jews.

Jake had only been a boy during the war. [...] He could recall his father and mother, his uncles and aunts cracking peanuts on a Friday night and waiting for the United States, for those two unequalled champions of their people, Roosevelt and Walter Winchell, to come off it and get into the war. (Richler, *Horseman* 107)

The image of America as 'the golden land' has much to do with the image of New York, which ever since the first Jews settled there in 1654, seemed to be destined "to become the hub of the modern Jewish universe" (Rischin 171).

New York. It had always been their true capital. Ottawa? Quebec City? Those were bush league towns where you went to pay off a government *goy* for a contract or building permit. (Richler, *Horseman* 106)

From the start New York infused Jewish imagination with the dream of freedom and opportunity, which still remains “even as the founding of the ancient new nation of Israel infused all of Jewish life, and much of humanity, with a crucial new *élan vital*” (Rischin 171).

It seems that the only place in the world that can compete with Israel in terms of ‘Jewishness’ is New York, where nearly two million Jews have made their home, which makes it the 2nd largest city with a Jewish population in the world, after Tel Aviv in Israel. Even in religious terms New York holds the 2nd place by being the home of Yeshiva University, “The hallmark of Modern Orthodox synthesis” (Diamond 13).

The New York Jewish community is so important and significant to World Jewry that it “has emerged as the most avidly researched metropolis in modern, and indeed, in all of Jewish history. Ineluctably, no other urban complex has been so pivotal to the trans-Jewish, trans-American, trans-European and transworld experience of twentieth-century Jews as the megashtetl on the Hudson” (Rischin 171).

1.4. The Shoah and Anti-Semitism in Canada

Canadian Jews used to be silent on the subject of Shoah commemoration. The Shoah survivors are the ones who made sure the Jewish community in Canada didn’t forget or ignore what happened to European Jewry. When Holocaust denial attained notoriety in the 1970s many Shoah survivors “had shed their immigrant mentality and now considered themselves Canadians” (Bialystok 285); they started speaking up about what happened and were unwilling to silently watch the revival of anti-Semitism.

Also in the 1970s, young Canadian Jews began seeing the legacy of the Shoah as their defining element of Jewish identity (Bialystok 287). They “found themselves disengaged from their roots in the Jewish community. Unlike their parents and grandparents, they had no traditional neighbourhoods, secular organizations, or

Yiddish to tie them to each other and their past. Many of them felt rootless" (Bialystok 287). Other than their parents, who "had largely disregarded the survivors and felt that the Holocaust was a tragedy that did not affect them directly" (Bialystok 291), these young Jews defined themselves vis-à-vis the Shoah. "Working together with survivors and their children, they were instrumental in pushing the established community to adopt Holocaust programs and erect memorials to the event" (Bialystok 287).

Another important factor that contributed to Shoah awareness was "the explosion of research and media coverage about the event. [...] By 1980, a field of research had been firmly established that encompassed history, literary analysis, and the social sciences" (Bialystok 285). Of even greater importance was "the depiction of the Holocaust in the popular media. One example was the attention devoted by Hollywood. [Between 1980 and 1990] at least twenty-three feature films and thirty-four documentaries on the topic were produced" (Bialystok 286).

Canada's shameful actions during the time of the Shoah came to light in 1982 with the publication of *None Is Too Many*.

The book was a wake-up call for the Canadian Jewish community. It made them mindful of the fragility of their position by documenting Canadian antisemitism for a new generation. For the wider community, *None Is Too Many* questioned the Canadian myth of tolerance and acceptance contributed to the new examination of immigration policies and ethnicity. (Bialystok 286)

In the 1980s the effort to "bring to justice war criminals who had sought refuge in Canada" became a major issue for the Jewish community (Schoenfeld "Jews" ch. 6). "Remembrance of the Holocaust and the struggle with its implications" are not only personal issues for children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, but also communal issues in Canadian Jewish life (Schoenfeld "Jews" ch. 6). Today "the memory and message of the Holocaust creates a basis for Jewish unity in spite of religious diversity" and ensures that Jews of all denominations work together to make sure that the Shoah will happen 'never again' (Meyer 57).

Before World War II most Jews in Canada were politically passive, due to "deep-seated fears of anti-Semitism. The nature of Canadian life was such that Jews, like other minorities and ethnic groups, felt themselves to be fairly weak when trying

to penetrate into the political life of a society that focused primarily on the French and English Canadians” (Waller 81). While this has officially changed and every area of public life in Canada is now open to Jews, the fears of anti-Semitism have not disappeared yet and usually for good reason. Anti-Semitism is still alive and well in Canada and many Canadian Jews have experienced anti-Semitism throughout their lives.

In the 1920s Jewish children were forced to sing Christian hymns and memorize passages from the New Testament in school and when their parents objected, they were told that Canada was a Christian country, and Jews “are not and cannot be citizens of any country except their own – and that is Palestine” (Davies 117). Many Jewish Canadians faced antisemitism during their childhood not only in schools, but especially in the streets of Montreal or Toronto. Irving Layton talked about “his own beleaguered childhood in the streets of Montreal. The battle now was not over territory or racial slurs, but over higher concerns of the self” (Sherman 16).

While less anti-Semitic incidents have been reported to the police, Canadian Jews still feel that there is lots of anti-Semitism in their country. “In a 2003 survey, about 30 percent of respondents reported that they had experienced actual anti-Semitism in public places in the previous three years” (Goldberg, Schnoor and Weinfeld 551). For a while now anti-Semitism has often been conducted under the cover of ‘criticism of Israel’ and Canadian Jews “have wondered whether criticism of the State of Israel has become a ‘respectable’ way for non-Jews to engage in an anti-Jewish discourse” (Goldberg, Schnoor and Weinfeld 551).

2. JEWISH-CANADIAN LITERATURE

2.1. Jewish Writing in Canada

2.1.1. **Important Themes and Concerns of Jewish Literature**

Before the 19th century there existed barely any Jewish literature in English. Literary representations had for the most part been done by non-Jews, and as late as 1900 the literary image of the Jew was thoroughly negative and depicted Jews as villains.

He was a fairly thorough-going materialist, a physical coward, an opportunist in money matters, a bit of a wizard in peddling his pharmaceutica; queer in his religious observances in so far as he still paid attention to them, clannish in his loyalties, secretive in his living habits, servile in his relations with Christians, whom he abominated; for physical signposts he had an outlandish nose, and unpleasant odor, and frequently a speech impediment also. (Liptzin 69)

Once Jewish literature started to appear in English, critics tried to determine what defines Jewish texts and what, if anything, they have in common. "Some critics have proposed that such universal topics as conflict between generations or ethical commitment are signs of Jewish texts" (Furman 103).

Ethical issues and morals are especially prominent in Jewish writings. "Cynthia Ozick identifies 'the imposition of moral structure in natural life and on nature itself' as a distinctively Jewish principle" (qtd. in Furman 103). Among those ethical issues "the sanctity of human life, the inexorable responsibility to one's family and to the larger human community bear down on the most resonant protagonists in Jewish American fiction" (Furman 103). While novels that explicitly deal with Jewish religion are rare,

the Judaism of the novels lies in the point of view of the novelist. It is found in the tensions which contribute to the novels their sense of yearning. It is found in the moral sense and the heightened vision of the novelists, expressed in wryly oblique terms and giving the novels whatever uniqueness may be claimed for them. (Sherman 236)

This moral sense often takes the form of protagonists who

curiously resemble one another and consequently plot similar courses for engaging the deep moral issues. They are often highly intelligent but

impassive, disaffected, and estranged from their families. At the beginning of a novel, they appear to plod mechanically through life, often holed up in an office where they pursue professional but meaningless careers. To restore meaning into their lives, they often must eschew their intellectual impulses and embrace the deeper truths that lie in the human heart. More often than not, these truths are to be realized only once the protagonists revisit their childhoods or reckon with their family's history generally. (Furman 104-05)

The protagonists in Jewish literature not only seem to be taking a similar journey towards a 'moral awakening', but they also often share the same characteristics and traits. They are "morbidly sensitive to (and likely to equate with anti-Semitism) any Gentile criticism of anything connected with things Jewish, but at the same time fiercely self-critical; proud and ashamed of their 'difference'; intellectually vain and self-deprecating; emotionally effusive and given to sceptical detachment" (Brauner 32).

While they paint a more positive picture of Jewish characters than anti-Semitic non-Jews did around 1900, "there is a sense in which they, too, are part of a process of mythologization which leads to the creation of Jewish archetypes, a manifestation of what Zygmunt Bauman has termed 'allo-semitism'" (Brauner 32). Since it is difficult to define what authentic Jewishness is, and how it can be portrayed in literature, Jewish writers need to be careful not to fall under "the lure of idealizing some aspect of Judaism or Jewish culture as authentic Jewishness" (Roth 173).

Ethical concerns are not exclusive to Jewish literature; therefore there has to be more to a text in order to define it as 'Jewish'. Some critics have argued that a Jewish text displays a 'Jewish sensibility'. "Jewish sensibility concerns precisely those subjects and values that receive disproportionate attention among Jews. Antisemitism, financial success, verbal aggression, and assimilation are all particularly significant in Jewish life" (Telushkin 17). This Jewish sensibility is so ingrained that "some essentially Jewish qualities may adhere to the writing of the most thoroughly acculturated Jews. [...] Certain modes of imagination or general orientations [...] seem characteristically Jewish, even where the writer scrupulously avoids all references to his ethnic origins" (Alter 59-60).

An example for this phenomenon is Norman Levine's short story "Thin Ice". "Thin Ice" is about a writer who is stuck in a snowstorm far away from home and running out of money to pay for food and shelter. Even though the story is ostensibly not very Jewish, many important themes of Jewish literature appear in it. These are: Being the 'other', a sense of dislocation, the perception of wisdom and authority, the importance of learning and professional success and a sense of connection to other Jews. The appearance of all these typical Jewish themes can be considered as displaying a Jewish sensibility.

2.1.2. The Particularism of Jewish-Canadian Literature

Jewish-Canadian Literature is characterized by "linguistic and thematic influences derived from successive waves of immigration [such as] immigrant acculturation, the Holocaust, Zionism and the birth of the state of Israel, and fear of assimilation" (Fuerstenberg). There is a second factor that differentiates Jewish-Canadian literature from that of other minority groups; "unlike most immigrant groups, Jews brought writers who tended to write with a "foreign" perspective for a worldwide public. The writers who arrived after WWII intensified the "international" tendency; and their influence, and that of the Holocaust, became dominant" (Fuerstenberg).

An important theme in early Jewish immigration literature was modernization, which was seen as Americanization. Various Jewish writers said that Jews should not be seen as immigrants, but instead assimilate as quickly as possible into North American society. As a consequence Jewish writers often had difficulties with self-identity. In fact, there has been "a distinct falling off, a downplaying of explicit Jewish themes as one moves from early pieces translated from Yiddish to the more contemporary stories by Canadian-born writers" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 15). Today, Jewish writers in Canada often don't write about Jewish themes, either because they are worried about "contributing unwittingly to anti-Semitism", or, since most writers are secular Jews, they don't feel comfortable portraying Jewish identity, as they don't feel secure in their own Jewishness. This has "led many Jewish writers to remain silent on questions of Jewish identity, and many others to write of it uneasily, tentatively, elusively, ambivalently" (Brauner 31).

As a result of this uneasiness and ambivalence, Jewish Canadian writers often “look elsewhere for their founding myths”, be it Europe, Israel or America. Leslie Fielder puts Canada in “a ‘no-man’s-land’, invisible from both the United States and the United Kingdom” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii). Similarly, “Canadian-Jewish literature finds itself in between New York and London, simultaneously belonging and not belonging to Jewish culture south of the border and British culture on the other side of the Atlantic” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xviii). Jewish-Canadian literature has two countries it shares strong ties with, but it is different from both literary traditions. “Caught between the extremes of American nobility and English conservative rootedness, Canadian-Jewish literature charts a middle course between the ironic and the iconic, wandering and fixity, so that the margin becomes an all-encompassing center” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xviii).

Secular Jewish-Canadian writers seem drawn to “a spiritual and mythical past where in the words of Kreisel’s Hassid, ‘melody is the pen of the soul’” (Greenstein *Solitudes* 5-6). They write about Hassidim and use Yiddish phrases “in an effort to overcome post-Holocaust absence” (Greenstein, *Solitudes* 6). Since they don’t feel completely comfortable to invoke “Hassidic, cabbalistic, or messianic impulses from their European past, they may add an ‘anarchic breeze’ of humour or irony to their socialist ideals. Their Jewish jokes, in conjunction with their critical scepticism and unorthodox hope, may overpower their powerlessness” (Greenstein, *Solitudes* 9).

Though the literal exile of the Jewish people ended in 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel, memories of exile are strong, especially for Jews living in the Diaspora. These reminders of exile are present in Jewish- Canadian literature, where “Jewish writers add three millennia from the Euphrates, Nile, Jordan, and Sambation to the three thousand miles of Canadian geography from the St. Lawrence to the Saskatchewan” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxi). Jewish-Canadian Literature often “reaches out to other marginal groups—from indigenous Indians to Quebecois to European immigrants in a multicultural society. This dialogue is often accompanied by rivers of the Diaspora and Canada that speak of home and exile” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlvi).

This being situated between home and exile has led to Jewish-Canadian literature being both part of the dominant culture and a marginalized group. It provides "a unique slant or critical perspective on the dominant culture that articulates both an inside and outside view" (Greenstein, *Solitudes* 17). Jewish writers in Canada belong to a very small distinctive group; they are not only marginalized because they are Canadian, but also because they are Jewish. Historically, "Jewish writing in Canada [was] doubly ghettoized and regionalized between Montreal and the prairies" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xi).

Canadian literature in general has been described as possessing a certain ghetto-garrison mentality; "Canadian-Jewish writing internalizes the ghetto-garrison mentality as each writer seeks a means of escaping the ghetto while adhering to its traditions" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii). They want to be without the restrictions of being a Jewish Canadian, but they also don't want to give up Jewish traditions. This is "at the very heart of Jewish-Canadian literature, this tension between erecting and destroying ghetto walls, between constructing boundaries and assimilating territories, between *voyageur* and blind *voyeur*" (Greenstein, *Solitudes* 15).

Jewish Canadian writers are also ghettoized through outside pressure by gentile Canadians, who wonder if Jewish writers could ever be real Canadian writers.

Is this your Canadian poet, with the foreign name?
 What does he know of fir trees? Can he get along
 With matters of old French or Indian fame?
 Has ever a local flower sprouted in his song?
 And this the man to sing Canadian weather
 Confederated vegetation, Canuck dew?
 O, he and the maple do not go together.
 A guide he needs to paddle his canoe.

A Canadian poet! Why,
 He has not stolen even a single line
 From British poesy! (Klein "Tailpiece to an Anthology" *Poems* 631)

Jewish-Canadian literature has always been influenced by the past and the loss of the Jewish way of life in Europe. Around 1900 "Yiddish writers doubled as ethnographers and returned to the *shtetl* to capture what they feared was a dying world" (Ravvin, *House* 3). 60 years after the Shoah, "novelists and poets today

continue to brood over their losses, their missed opportunities, and the incongruous coincidence of their good and full lives, experienced in the shadow of so much ill fortune across the sea" (Ravvin, *House* 3). Writers are motivated to write about the Shoah by a "nostalgia for the dark intensity of events that preceded their birth" (Finkelkraut qtd. in Ravvin, *House* 3).

There is a

familiar post-war pathos that distinguishes much Jewish writing since the Holocaust: the promise of recovery among ruins, an acceptance of charges wrought by passing generations alongside a steadfast need to reincorporate – at least in the imaginary realm – a world that has vanished, its remnants obscured by woodland and geological loam. (Ravvin, *House* 5)

Most Jewish-Canadian writers "have attempted to deal artistically with the tragedy" (Fuerstenberg). They usually focus on the victimization of the Jewish people, especially after the Shoah. Even though they feel at home in Canada, "the memory of the European destruction haunts Canadian Jewish writers" (Brenner 108). The recurring motif of the Shoah in Jewish Canadian literature "tells us something about the sense of exile in this community, which focuses on the tragically lost cultural and religious roots in the 'old world'" (Brenner 109). One such author, who "writes obsessively and surrealistically about the Shoah in his short stories, such as 'Dancing at the Club Holocaust'", is J.J. Steinfeld, the son of Shoah survivors (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlii).

Jewish-Canadian writers have traditionally been silent on the subject of Jewish identity. This may be due to the fact that the ones who decide to write about the so-called Jewish-Canadian experience face a challenge; because "the repertoire is restricted by the limited sense we have of what it means to be Jewish" (Heft and Rotchin 58). Nowadays it seems that for many Canadians being a Jew means supporting Israel and commemorating the Holocaust. But if Canadian Jews define themselves only via larger Jewish issues that concern all Jews worldwide, like the Shoah and Israel, what makes the Canadian Jewish experience different from any other Jewish experience?

"These days being Jewish in Canada, is a largely undifferentiated experience" (Heft and Rotchin 58). Often the only thing that differentiates Jews from other

Canadians is their connection to Israel. This can be positive or challenging, depending on how the individual feels about the Israeli conflict with its Arab neighbours. As a consequence, "it may be that the future of Jewish writing, in Canada and elsewhere, will focus on supporting Israel, since that seems to be the most meaningful and problematic" (Heft and Rotchin 58). But, while supporting Israel is a distinctively Jewish characteristic, it is nothing specific to Canada or Canadian Jews. If Israel is going to be at the center of Jewish-Canadian literature, there will have to be a specific "Jewish-Canadian perspective", if it wants to distinguish itself from other Diaspora writing (Heft and Rotchin 58).

At the moment, there seems to be no such authentic perspective of dealing with Israel. When Klein and Richler wrote about it, "it was part of a larger effort to explore what it means to be a Jew" (Heft and Rotchin 60). A.M. Klein handled this dilemma in a successful way with his novel *Second Scroll*, "because he explored a larger sense of Jewish meaning and grappled with the Zionist enterprise as one important dimension of the Jewish experience within that richer context" (Heft and Rotchin 61).

While Israel seems to have become the focus of Jewish literature, it is important to remember that a Jewish text doesn't have to be about Israel, or the Shoah or anything else overtly Jewish. Any text written by a Jewish writer should be considered Jewish literature, independent of what the text is about. Any experience that a Jew has is a Jewish experience.

We are capable of writing a Jewish poem about a wheelbarrow, because if we are Jewish in any way, then our wheelbarrow is Jewish too. Any Jewish experience is a Jewish experience worthy of examination. I reject that you and I – or anyone else for that matter – can sit here and say "This Jewish experience is more meaningful than that." (Heft and Rotchin 63)

The work of Jewish-Canadian writers "has rarely been discussed in terms of its particularity – with attention to the ways in which Jewish culture and tradition account for the kind of writing they produce" (Ravvin, *House* 156-57). Their Jewishness has rarely ever been a factor when their texts have been analyzed, but instead they have been regarded and discussed as mainstream Canadian literature. Since it has not yet been used for "a deeper study of the problematics

and particularities of Jewish Canadian identity" (Ravvin, *House* 157), my thesis will try to do this on a very small scale and only as an introduction to this field.

Northrop Frye used a Jewish metaphor to talk about Canada's centennial, because "there is something Hebraic about the Canadian tendency to read its conquest of a promised land, its Maccabean victories of 1812, its struggle for the central fortress on the hill at Quebec as oracles of the future" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii). Frye regarded A.M. Klein as thoroughly Canadian, and even considered it an 'accident' that Klein wrote about Zionism in what Frye calls "the most passionate and intense of all Canadian novels, A.M. Klein's *The Second Scroll*" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii). He doesn't even take into account that Klein was Jewish and Zionism a theme very close to his heart. It is possible that Canada's tradition of reading Jewish writers as part of the mainstream had their beginnings with Northrop Frye, Canada's most important literary critic. Although Jewish Canadian writers like Eli Mandel, Irving Layton, Miriam Waddington and Leonard Cohen "represent some of the most important influences of mainstream Canadian poetry, they also reflect in various ways their Jewish heritage, e.g. in Cohen's darkly satiric *Flowers for Hitler* (1964) and his [song] 'Death of a Lady's Man' (1978), in which he attempts to blend romantic and Holocaust visions" (Fuerstenberg).

Contemporary Jewish writers seem to be eager to find "their own methods for shuttling between a past world and our own" (Ravvin, *House* 5). It seems that Jewish-Canadian writers feel a "compelling urge to make the past part of a fictional present" (Ravvin, *House* 4). A big motivator for looking back and trying to understand the past, is "this leap, in the course of three generations, from one world to the next" (Ravvin, *House* 4). Jewish-Canadian writers come from diverse backgrounds, but what they have in common are their "recurrent attempts to mediate between tradition and modernism, home and exile, Jewish-Canadian particularism and universal significance" (Greenstein, *Solitudes* 3).

Jewish-Canadian writers often have to put up with a lot of criticism from other Jews. Their works are being scrutinized on an additional level, and it could be said that "the Jewish writer is therefore doubly on trial: as a writer before his fellow Jews, [...] and as a Jew before the outside world" (Brauner 36). No matter how

much of their Jewishness is visible in their works; one group of Jewish readers is always going to be unhappy. "If the artist's Jewishness is merely incidental to his work, he is an assimilationist, denying his heritage; if his Jewishness is the subject of his art, he is taken to be representing the community at large and, consequently – inevitably – to be *mis*representing that community" (Brauner 36).

2.2. Jewish-Canadian Writers

Jewish writing in Canada can be grouped by language and geographical region. This chapter will briefly discuss some of the most influential Jewish-Canadian writers and the groups they represent.

2.2.1. Yiddish Writers

The first Yiddish-speaking Jews came to Canada in the late 19th century, when a larger number of Jewish refugees arrived from Russia, from which they were forced out by pogroms. Around 1930, when there were about 156,000 Jews in Canada, nearly all of them spoke Yiddish as their first language, which led to the creation of numerous newspapers, journals and other literary institutions (Fuerstenberg). Montreal's Yiddish writers brought with them "a legacy ranging from secular radicalism to Chasidism, which manifested itself in nostalgia for the Old Country and a utopian vision of Zion" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xiii). One of the most important writers among the 'Yiddishists' was Y.Y. Segal (1896-1954), the editor of the Yiddish newspaper *Der Kanader Adler* ("The Canadian Eagle"). "The use of Yiddish declined in Canada as succeeding generations turned to English; recent arrivals from Arab countries, Israel and Russia know no Yiddish" (Fuerstenberg).

2.2.2. Writers from Winnipeg

Jewish-Canadian literature traditionally had two centers; Montreal and Winnipeg (Cree, for 'muddy water'). The most prominent writers from Winnipeg are Jack Ludwig, Miriam Waddington, Eli Mandel and Adele Wiseman, who have been as influential for Jewish writing in Winnipeg as Klein, Richler, Cohen, and Layton have been in Montreal (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxi). The difference between Montreal and Winnipeg has been characterized in the following way: "Montreal is a New York of the north with a Parisian twist, while Winnipeg is a

northern version of Chicago with its Jewish-Ukrainian mix and Yiddish socialist background" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxii). Life in Winnipeg was characterized by "the spirit of individualism on the prairies" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxix) and "an education that takes writers back to British roots: 'Even as children or grandchildren of immigrants, we proclaimed our loyalties not so much to Canada as to British North America'" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxii).

2.2.3. Francophone Writers

Most Jewish-Canadian writers are Anglophone Ashkenazi, but among the Francophone Sephardic Jews three writers have emerged as important and influential: Monique Bosco, Naim Kattan and Régine Robin. All three are immigrants who came to Canada after fleeing Jewish persecution in their birth countries. Monique Bosco was born in Vienna in 1927 and had to flee from the Nazis, which brought her first to Paris and then Montreal. Naim Kattan was born in Bagdad in 1926 and came to Canada via Iran and France, fleeing from Arab persecution after the establishment of the state of Israel. Even though he is from the Middle East, he "carries Europe with him – 'Jews reconstructing, in the framework of the new continent, an ever-receding Europe'" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxi). Some consider him to be the most important Jewish-Canadian writer in French. Régine Robin was born to Jewish-Polish parents in Paris, 1939 and immigrated to Montreal in 1977. "She has been described by Le Devoir as 'Montreal's grande dame of postmodernism'" (Demchinsky & Naves 136).

2.2.4. Anglophone Writers from Montreal

Abraham Moses Klein (1909-1972) is generally regarded by many critics as the father of Jewish-Canadian literature in English, and therefore will be discussed in more detail than the other writers. Klein was raised in the working-class Jewish immigrant district of Montréal, where he learned Yiddish and Hebrew, which enabled him to "make proper use of biblical and liturgical motifs in his fiction" and translate Yiddish texts from other authors into English (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xvi).

Klein wrote mostly about Jewish concerns and permeated his texts with Jewish images and ideas. He expressed the feelings and thoughts of the “generation that witnessed the destruction of European Jewry and the fulfilment of the Zionist dream” (Caplan). He is the author of the first Canadian Holocaust poetry, which he titled *Hath Not a Jew* (1940), and “in the bitter hyperbole of his satire *The Hitleriad* (1944) he vented his spleen against the Nazis” (Caplan). A.M. Klein travelled to Israel in 1949 and subsequently wrote his allegorical, Zionist “novel *The Second Scroll* (1951), which covers Jewish history in the Diaspora and Zion from early in the twentieth century until mid-century” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xvi).

Klein wrote at a time when Jewish-Canadian literature changed from being “a Yiddish literature with roots in Europe to an English-language Canadian Jewish tradition.” He translated Yiddish literature into English, and “wrote for a contemporary English audience, making use of Jewish themes at a time when no popular readership could yet be said to exist for such a literature” (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 12).

A.M. Klein took material from his predecessors and passed it on, often by translating it into English, and the writers who come after him make use of his texts and build onto his legacy. Like a prophet Klein talked about this himself in his poem “A Psalm Touching Genealogy” (1944), which begins “with his heritage - Not sole was I born, but entire genesis - and ends with his legacy: And there look generations through my eyes” (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlv). A.M. Klein’s career was groundbreaking for Jewish-Canadian writers who came after him, “but we still lack what might be called a transcultural reading of Jewish Canadian literature, which would provide a clear sense of the peculiarities of its reception and of its entanglement with Canadian culture” (Ravvin, *House* 158).

The other three considered to be the most important Anglophone Jewish writers from Montreal are Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen and Mordecai Richler.

Irving Peter Layton’s (1912-2006) family immigrated to Canada from Romania. His birth name was Israel Lazarovitch but he changed it in order to make it sound more Canadian, since he strongly identified as a Canadian. He often wrote about

explicit, controversial themes and usually from a cultural instead of religious perspective. Layton wrote mostly poems in more or less free verse; the themes in his works are related to his sense of Jewish alienation, and he saw himself as spokesperson for underappreciated poets and for Canadian Jews or Jews in general. Layton wrote a genealogy about his fierce and defiant mother "Keine Lazarovitch 1870-1959", and an essay "For My Two Sons, Max and David", in which he admonishes them to "be none of those humiliated Jews but instead be gunners in the Israeli Air Force" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxii). Layton was a strong supporter of Jewish independence and disliked Jewish stereotypes like 'The Wandering Jew' or 'the Jew to gas' (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxii). Layton was also a strong supporter of Israel, and by 1967 he "begins focusing in his writing on militant support of Israel. Layton's poetry" became

increasingly concerned with Jewish, rather than artistic, alienation and with anxiety over Israel's survival. From leftist politics of the 1930s and 1940s to post-Shoah cosmopolitanism and humanism to identification with Israel after the Six-Day War, Layton's ideological trajectory to the right reflects the directions of other Jewish writers in North America (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxii).

Leonard Cohen (born in 1934) is a poet, novelist and songwriter. Cohen published his first collection of poetry *Let Us Compare Mythologies* in 1956. "As a Jew, Cohen has always been acutely aware of the Holocaust, and images of the Nazi genocide permeate and condition his work" (Scobie). Like "Klein and Layton, Cohen condemns local and universal antisemitism that culminates in the Shoah" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxiii). He identifies with Jewish suffering and therefore "feels alienated from the bourgeois comforts of Montreal's Jewish community" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxiii). Similar to most Jewish-Canadian literature, Cohen's writings are rarely analyzed from a Jewish perspective, confirming Matt Cohen's assertion that in order to be considered Canadian mainstream, and be celebrated as a great piece of Canadian literature, all Jewish factors have to be ignored and downplayed. Leonard Cohen is a celebrated writer in the Canadian literary canon, but references to his being Jewish are far and in between. If allusions to his religion are made, it is usually to the fact that he spent time in a Buddhist temple, something Canadian readers and critics appear to be much more comfortable with, than with a self-identifying Jew. Cohen

himself has made a clear statement regarding his religion in an interview with the British newspaper *The Guardian* in 2004: "I'm not looking for a new religion. I'm quite happy with the old one, with Judaism" (De Lisle).

Mordecai Richler (1931-2001) was born and raised in Montreal and later spent 18 years living in England (1954-72), but always felt rooted in Montreal, and most of his fiction takes place in that city. Richler has said that

'To be a Jew and a Canadian is to emerge from the ghetto twice.' Double emergence means looking to the hum and buzz of implication in other cultural capitals: 'Like Jews again, Canadians are inclined to regard with a mixture of envy and suspicion those who have forsaken the homestead (or *shtetl*) for the assimilationist flesh-pots of New York or London' (qtd. in Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxv-xxvi).

Since Richler spent about 20 years living abroad in England, he was familiar with those feelings of envy and suspicion. Richler was committed "to fictionalizing Jewish life in Canada" and addressing "the broader Canadian scene" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 11). Richler worked with satire, "and its direction suggests that his works have a moral basis, but that this is also a force that counters his constructive concerns" (Heft and Rotchin 316). It was said that "Mordecai Richler was the only working writer of fiction whose career addressed question of politics and Jewish identity" (Heft and Rotchin 316).

2.2.5. Writers from Ontario

Jewish literature in Ontario, and particularly Toronto, "traditionally has been thin, compared to that of Montreal and Winnipeg" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxix). This may have to do with its "later wave of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds" which caused a lack of a shared "usable past" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xxxix). While Montreal dominated the literary Jewish scene for most of the 20th century, "in the past few decades, however, there has been an exodus from Montreal to Toronto in response to Quebec's threat of separation from the rest of Canada" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlii).

The Jewish literary majority in Ontario can be characterized as traditionalist and "Matt Cohen's decades-long struggle with Ontario's conservative literary establishment epitomizes the differences between Jewish writing in Montreal and

Toronto" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlii). Important Jewish writers from Ontario include Cary Fagan, Anne Michaels, Aryeh Lev Stollman and Michael Redhill.

Cary Fagan (born in 1957) "is an award-winning children's author, a writer of adult novels, an editor and a contributor to a number of magazines and newspapers" (Fagan "Children's Books). In his works Fagan is looking for "literary forefathers and foremothers who don't exist in Canadian literary history" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 15). This may signal dissatisfaction "among writers with the local culture as raw material" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 15), as if Canadian culture and history were not enough for him. For Jewish writers this is not unusual, since they have never drawn just on the culture of their host country, but also always on Jewish history and culture. Cary Fagan makes "use of earlier Jewish literary traditions – whether Yiddish, European, or American – to imagine a different kind of Canadian tradition" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 15).

Anne Michaels' (born in 1958) first novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996), brought her national and international acclaim. Robert Fulford remarked that *Fugitive Pieces* "attracted more international praise than any first novel by a serious writer in Canadian history" (*Canadian Encyclopedia*, "Michaels, Anne"). In her novel Canada is a place of exile, a "strange and familiar home away from home" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xliv).

Michael Redhill (born in 1966) is a poet, playwright and novelist. Redhill has written plays about Israel (*Building Jerusalem*, 2001) and the Shoah (*Goodness*, 2005) and has gained national and international acclaim for his novel *Martin Sloane* (2001).

2.2.6. Writers from Ottawa

Matt Cohen (1942 – 1999) represents a generation of Canadian Jews who grew up in the 2nd half of the 20th century and often turned away from Jewish religion or culture as youngsters, but were forced to recognize that - willingly or not - they could not fully escape their Jewish heritage. This recognition was often impressed upon by them by Gentile Canada, which is still pervaded by – at least subconscious – anti-Semitism.

When he grew up in the 1950s in Ottawa Cohen often experienced anti-Semitic slurs, and turned away from Judaism after his bar mitzvah at the age of 13. Cohen was a secular, assimilated, "self-proclaimed rootless and self-hating" Jew, who married a Gentile and was therefore mourned by his religious family for having left the Jewish people (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xl-xli). However, in the later part of his life he lived in a traditionally Jewish area in Toronto, frequented Toronto's YMHA, and started to include Jewish subjects in his writings. "An outsider to the Jewish community, he feels equally alienated from the Canadian mainstream, which he views as too conservative and Christian" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xl).

Cohen became involved in left-wing politics in Toronto in the 1960s, but was uncomfortable with the left's leader George Grant, whom he saw as "part of the British-Canadian ruling establishment, whose authoritarian nature and anti-Semitism had frequently rung extremely sour notes in my life" (qtd. in Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xli). In his 40s Cohen turned away from Ontario politics "to tap his Jewish roots." He travelled to Madrid in order to do research for his historical novel, *The Spanish Doctor* (1984). At first he identified with Spain "as the land of his ancestors, where he finally feels like an insider, in contrast to his outsider status in Canada." But quickly he started seeing "the present as a thin transparency covering the historical landscape of the Inquisition" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xli). As much as he considered himself a self-hating Jew, he couldn't dissolve himself from the historical reality of his family and his people being persecuted for their faith, and as if against his own will, he found himself drawn to writing about Jewish subjects and issues.

Cohen's posthumous memoir, *Typing: A Life in 26 Keys* (2000), offers glimpses into his perception of his own career and the Canadian literary scene. In it he represents "Jewish and Canadian writing as separate entities with different musical registers and keys to understanding" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xlii). In his memoir "Cohen challenges the Canadian literary establishment over what he viewed as its narrowness, its resistance to non-mainstream voices, and, ultimately, for its rejection of Jewishness as part of its broader cultural character" (Ravvin, "*Cosmic Spine*" 476). In his autobiography he wrote that his readers and especially

his critics sensed "that I betrayed my Canadianness by writing about being Jewish" (qtd. in Ravvin, "*Cosmic Spine*" 482).

Even after *Nadine* was published, people would say to me: "Are you going to write about Canada again?" I would answer that most of *Nadine* takes place in Canada, and that her being Jewish doesn't mean she isn't Canadian. Then they would be offended, as if I'd made a hostile remark. (qtd. in Ravvin, "*Cosmic Spine*" 482)

Another Jewish-Canadian writer from Ottawa who wrote critically about Canada was Norman Levine. Levine (1923 - 2005) lived for most of his life in England but wrote about Canada and England equally. In 1956 Levine took a cross-country trip through Canada and wrote about it in his book "*Canada Made Me* (1958), which is part autobiography and part observation of contemporary Canadian life. The work, harshly critical of his native land, did not appear in a Canadian edition until 1979" (Boyd).

2.2.7. Refugees from Europe

Two important representatives of Canadian writers who were Jewish refugees from Europe, who also consistently wrote about the Shoah, are Henry Kreisel and Chava Rosenfarb.

Henry Kreisel (1922-1991) was born in Vienna and managed to escape Austria before the 'Anschluß' in 1938. He escaped to England where he was put into an internment camp for being an enemy alien and by 1940 he was transferred to another internment camp in Canada.

Chava Rosenfarb was born in Lodz, Poland in 1923, and later incarcerated by the Nazis in the Lodz ghetto together with her family. In 1944 Rosenfarb was sent to Auschwitz and after surviving a few other concentration camps, she was liberated in 1945. In 1950 she immigrated to Canada and has lived in Montreal ever since.

As this chapter has demonstrated Jewish-Canadian literature displays very strong regional characteristics as nearly all Jewish-Canadian writers have been influenced by the communities they grew up in. However, they are all concerned with similar themes and motifs, which often center on the question of how to combine their

Jewish identity with their Canadian citizenship and general Jewish concerns such as Israel, the Shoah and Jewish continuity.

3. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

The term "people of Israel" (Am Israel) refers to the Jewish people as a whole, not only to those living in the state of Israel. In order for Jews to be considered a people, there have to be certain ties binding them together other than religion; otherwise there would be "the people of Islam" or "the people of Christianity". This chapter will attempt to locate and analyze those ties and their portrayal in Jewish-Canadian literature.

3.1 Connection to Other Jews

The first step in determining any ties that bind Jewish characters to each other is to analyze whether Jewish characters feel a connection to other Jews at all, and if so, what are those feelings based on and how do they reveal themselves.

3.1.1 Solidarity with Other Jews

In Jewish-Canadian literature Jewish characters often feel solidarity for other Jews and there seems to be a perceived duty to help each other in times of need. When a Jewish family is in financial trouble in Layton's short story "Piety", other Jews gather and collect some money for them. The unfortunate family can accept the goodwill without feeling embarrassed or humiliated, because they know that if the tables were turned, they would act the same way. "When the neighbours learned their misfortune, they got together enough money to install a secondhand stove. Mrs Karpal was grateful but neither abashed nor truckling" (25). It appears that Jews can expect a certain degree of help from each other, no matter what the circumstances are.

The reason Jews feel compelled to help each other is not entirely clear, but whenever Jews are in danger or need, the Jewish community immediately comes together and supports each other. It is an automated reaction that is often justified with no more than the thought 'they are Jews, I have to help'. In fact, "a Jew is inwardly compelled to come to the defence of a fellow Jew by a family feeling that may be well hidden from his own awareness" (Steinsaltz 58). No

matter what differences there may be between individual Jews, “whenever there is a threat from outside, the Jewish family reacts as a united body” (Steinsaltz 58).

Often the younger generation wants to break free from their ties to the Jewish community, which they perceive to be constricting and motivated by clannish and outdated behaviour. However, their relatives are capable of making them feel guilty about this desire with only a few words. This is well demonstrated in a scene from Richler’s short story “The Street” in which the protagonist returns from a trip to Europe and is met by his grandmother with a question:

“How is it for the Jews in Europe?” she asked me. A direct question from an old lady with a wart turned like a screw in her cheek and in an instant I was shorn of all my desperately acquired sophistication; my *New Statesman* outlook, my shaky knowledge of wines and European capitals; the life I had made for myself beyond the ghetto. “I don’t know,” I said, my shame mixed with resentment at being reclaimed so quickly. “I didn’t meet many.” (38)

3.1.2 **Proprietary Feelings about Other Jews**

Jews often feel they can lay claim to other Jews’ accomplishments, as if they had a proprietary right to them just because they share the same heritage. In Richler’s short story “The Street” Jewish inhabitants of Montreal’s St. Urbain Street are proud of the fact that “among us we numbered the rank-one scholars in the province, gifted artists, medical students, and everywhere you looked decent, God-fearing people” (50-51). They take pride in the fact that their community is made up of outstanding scholars, just as if they were members of their own families.

Professional success is highly valued in the Jewish tradition and often comes with recognition and respect from the wider Jewish community. In Norman Levine’s short story “Thin Ice” a Jewish professor goes on Sabbatical to a small community and “the leading Jewish businessman [gives] a dinner in [his] honour at the Jewish community centre” (88). The professor is considered famous and successful, and therefore the Jewish community is happy to welcome him as one of their own. They don’t know anything about him beyond the fact that he is a university professor, but that is enough for the community to organize a dinner in his honour. In fact, professional success may outweigh personal flaws if the Gentile society admires the individual and this in turn leads to recognition for the Jewish community. Leonard Cohen demonstrates this in his novel *The Favourite Game* in

which the protagonist is a famous writer who has turned away from Judaism. It displays that the Jewish community may disprove of a certain individual because he turned away from religion or tradition - and in case he is a writer if he writes negatively about the Jewish community -, but if he is successful at what he is doing "he was considered a mild traitor who could not be condemned outright. He might not be an ideal member of the community but neither was Disraeli or Mendelssohn, whose apostasies the Jewish regard for attainment has always overlooked" (6).

3.1.3 Viewing Other Jews as Family Members

In the same way Jewish characters are proud of other Jews' accomplishments, they are ashamed when they hear about Jews committing a crime. "Those Jews who are dishonest are more likely to commit white-collar crimes than crimes of violence. In fact, Jews are shocked when they hear that 'one of ours' has been arrested for rape or murder" (Telushkin 64). They act as if they had just learned a relative had committed this crime. Jews also usually worry about what Gentiles will think of them when they hear about those acts, since they expect Gentiles to always judge them as a group and not as individuals.

As Jewish characters feel a family bond for each other and are family-oriented people who enjoy each other's company, they often seek each other out and like to spend time with each other. When they think someone might be Jewish, they make contact and when it is confirmed they invite each other over for dinner and to meet other family members, as if a distant relative had come to town and would now get to know the extended family. Norman Levine gives a good example of this in his short story "By a Frozen River" in which the Jewish protagonist has a short conversation with one of his neighbours. "A couple of days later she knocked on my door and said she was Mrs Labelle and she was Jewish. She heard from Savage that I had a Jewish name. Was I Jewish? I said I was. She invited me back to meet her husband" (144).

The familial bonds Jewish characters feel for each other are well displayed and probably a little exaggerated in Elie Friedman's short story "Tzachi and the Scruffy Tel-Avivi", which takes place in Israel. In it a man drives down a street in Tel Aviv

and suddenly has a TV thrown down on his car. He walks up the stairs in order to confront the person who threw down the TV. After the culprit tells him about his worries, the protagonist consoles him and when he leaves he tells him not to worry about it and that it will be okay. He treats him like a friend or relative and not a stranger who just put his life in danger. Just as Israel is considered to be the quintessential representative of anything Jewish, this story taking place in Israel best represents the way Jews anywhere in the world feel like members of a large family. Since they feel like family members, Jewish characters usually expect respect and decency from other Jews. In the short story "That First Morning" by Yaacov Zipper Jewish boys hassle a peddler and he implores them to leave him alone. His argument is that they are Jews like him and should show compassion and solidarity. "Isn't it enough that the other boys don't let me ride through in peace?" His outburst sounded more like a plea than an outburst of anger. 'May you never come to my bitter fate. Go find yourselves better playthings' (22).

As a consequence of feeling like relatives, Jews often believe that they are entitled to intervene in other Jews' lives and give them advice or reprimand them for their behaviour. "That was a symbol of Israeli culture—if a baby cries, it's everybody's business. [...] this is the interference that comes with feeling that you are part of a large family" (Sylvia Barack Fishman qtd. in Salkin 8). In Henry Kreisel's short story "Chassidic Song" the secular Jewish character Arnold Weiss is outraged by the fact that a stranger asks him about his level of religious observance and whether he married outside of the faith. But the simple fact that Weiss is Jewish and had a Hassidic grandfather makes the Hassid Shemtov feel fully entitled to ask him such personal questions.

Impertinence. What right did he have to ask such a question? [...] He spoke as if he had known the other's grandfather and so had a right to question him and to issue moral commands. [...] "What right have you to ask me these questions? Are you my conscience? Who appointed you?" Without a moment's hesitation, Josef Shemtov said, 'Moses Drimmer appointed me. The grandfather. I sit for him.' (29)

3.2 Religion

One of the most important factors uniting Jews is - theoretically - their shared religion. This chapter will focus on the portrayal of religious and non-religious Jews

in Jewish-Canadian literature and on what part religion plays in binding them together as one people, on whether lack of religiousness influences the degree of Jewish self-identification of Jewish characters, and on how religious and non-religious Jews relate to each other.

3.2.1 Religious Jews

3.2.1.1 Hassidim

A very important stereotypical Jewish character is that of the Hassid. Hassidic characters are often employed to demonstrate devoutness, simple lives and absolute adherence to religious laws. Sometimes assimilated Jewish characters dislike and are embarrassed by Hassidic characters, because of their 'in-your-face' Jewishness and their old-fashioned dress and appearance. "His assistant [...] is particularly obnoxious to the 'Jewish community' of Woodenton because he wears the long gabardine and beard of the fanatical Hassidim" (Solotaroff qtd. in Malin 19). In other instances secular Jewish characters feel respect towards them and wish they could lead such simple lives as they think Hassidim do.

I do not know how people can speak ill of them, unless it is out of envy; they are so clearly happy and secure in their ways. [...] the serenity and innocence of the young women's faces, the attractiveness of the children, dressed always so prettily; the quiet affection family members show towards one another, the gentle protectiveness with which very small children guide and oversee even smaller children. (Robyn, "Keys" 125)

They usually realize though that they would have to give up many of the commodities of modern life, which they are not willing to do.

In his essay "Jewish Icons" Jack Kugelmass argues that many North American Jews consider themselves "other" even though they individually don't lead lives that are distinct from the mainstream. He believes they have lost a sense of that which should make them different from Gentile society and define their Jewish identity. When assimilated Jews encounter or think about Hassidim they often reflect on the cultural divide between them and how it would feel to live like them. Kugelmass describes this as "moving from the radical separation of self and other to the possibility of self as other" (37). While Jewish life changes continually, depending on external circumstances, the only thing that remains unchanged is

the life of Hassidim, who in the eyes of many Jews live the way all Jews did thousands of years ago. This of course is wrong as Hassidism stems from the eighteenth century. But Jewish folklore has created this image of Hassidim as the eternal Jews. Many Jews idealize Hassidic life and do not want to see the “human frailties that ultimately make them like rather than unlike us” (41). Hassidim seem to be the ones who ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people and defend Judaism against the onslaught of “assimilation and cultural attenuation” (50). There is a feeling that their world is the authentic Jewish world, which secular Jews (should) belong to as well. Most secular Jews do not want to belong to this world, but they feel that somehow they should if they want to lead truly Jewish lives. It leads to a feeling of insecure, unsettled identity. Questions like “Who am I? Who should I be?” arise.

3.2.1.2 Religious Observance

Most Jewish-Canadian literature portrays secular Jews, but when religious characters appear, the focus is often put on their religious observance. In Norman Levine’s short story “By a Frozen River” the Jewish character Mr. Bischofswerder lives in a small town in the Atlantic Provinces without any other Jewish men around. Even though he is alone, he is so devout that he goes to synagogue every Friday evening and Saturday morning and holds a service by himself. He is very excited when a fellow Jew comes to visit and joins him in shul. ““Do you realize,” he said, ‘this is the first time I’ve had someone in the *shul*/with me at Friday night for over three years’” (149). But he wouldn’t stop going to synagogue just because he is by himself. He doesn’t try to draw attention to his devoutness; he is simply a devout, religious Jew who practices his faith.

In Richler’s novel *St. Urbain’s Horseman* religious observance is very important to the protagonist’s father and therefore the first parcel Jake receives from him after he moves to England only contains Jewish items: “A Jewish calendar, listing the holidays to be observed, a skullcap, and a prayer book” (193). Observance of the Shabbat is especially important, which is why Jewish sweatshop workers in Irving Layton’s short story “Piety” try to work for a Jewish manufacturer who will give them Saturday off, even if that means that “likely as not he paid them less than the current rates—God, he reasoned, wished to reward him for keeping the

Sabbath hallow" (24-25). Being able to observe their religious laws is more important to them than earning a regular wage, which would still be too little to properly live on.

Even secular Jews appreciate religious observance and sometimes feel a pang of jealousy because they don't share their convictions and strong beliefs. In Leonard Cohen's novel *The Favourite Game* the secular character Breavman talks about his religious uncles. He marvels at their faith, but worries that they don't realize "how fragile the ceremony was" (7) and how easily Jewish religious observance could end, if more Jews turned away from religion. While he is not religious himself, he worries about the loss of Jewish liturgy. "They participated in it blindly, as if it would last forever. They did not seem to realize how important they were, not self-important, but important to the incantation, the altar, the ritual. [...] The beautiful melody soared. [...] Couldn't they see how it had to be nourished?" (7). Breavman is upset because he is not able to share the simple faith of his uncles. He feels they "had bred him to a disappointment. He was bitter because he couldn't inherit the glory they unwittingly advertised. He couldn't be part of their brotherhood but he wanted to be among them" (8). He feels a connection to them, but he doesn't want to share their beliefs, which to him presents an insolvable conundrum.

Jews, even those who are not religious, are usually respectful of G-d. Jewish jokes "aimed at G-d tend to be the gentlest in the Jewish tradition—ironic digs, rather than belly laughs. The disparity between G-d's perfection and the imperfection of the world He created inspires much of the humor about G-d" (Telushkin 143-44). While there are secular Jews who belittle or ridicule religious Jews, the majority does not feel this way at all. In Sarah Robyn's short story "Looking for my Keys" the protagonist, a secular woman, has a relationship with a Jewish man, who "is respectful of religious people [and] does not need to justify himself by deriding them, as some do" (125). And this respect for religious people is one of the reasons she loves him. An interesting fact from real life is that for some reason, totally irreligious Jews support the Orthodox Jewish outreach program of the Lubavitch movement. Even if they are not religious, they support those who are and possibly wish they could be more religious themselves (Telushkin 25).

Observance of Jewish laws is often presented as a requisite to belong to the Jewish people, which is an explanation for why secular Jews sometimes feel guilty for not keeping the commandments. It appears this makes them feel like second-class Jews, not truly worthy of belonging to the "Chosen people", though this term is practically never used in Jewish-Canadian literature. In Monique Bosco's novel *Sara Sage* a Jewish child has been raised to respect G-d and obey all his commandments. Therefore she is astonished when her parents seem to disregard the commandment of circumcision. She wonders whether G-d wouldn't "be angry at this delay in obeying his commandment. How could they dare to exempt this child of destiny from the first law of the covenant?" (74). She has been raised to feel proud and privileged for being Jewish, and believes "that this ritual offering of every male on God's altar was required for the honor of belonging to the privileged group" (77).

3.2.2 Non-religious Jews

3.2.2.1 Religious Observance

In Jewish-Canadian literature it is usually secular Jews that are being depicted as going to synagogue instead of religious Jews, and the authors describe how the protagonists feel about it and what it means to these secular Jews. In Robert Majzel's novel *Hellman's Scrapbook* a man remembers being brought to a synagogue by his parents as a little boy. His parents were secular, European Jews who immigrated to Canada after the Shoah and usually never went to synagogue. "Neither you nor Mama was a believer, but you'd had some sort of relapse, or maybe you felt it was something you ought to do for your only son, if only just once, or then again maybe I was just a prop, an excuse for you to go back and test the waters" (Majzel 99). His memories also reveal that his mother was very much against the visit to the synagogue but his father felt a strong urge to go and was also quite nervous about the visit.

Mama was against it. You argued I would decide later: by taking me to the synagogue you were giving me the option. If later he doesn't want to go, he'll stop going, you said. But she shook her head and pressed her lips together: if he decides later, she said, he can start going later. He should at least know what it is, you said, pulling on my arm. (Majzel 99)

The grown man still doesn't understand why his father took him to synagogue, since they left early and never came back, but the fact that he remembers this day shows how important it was to him and his parents. One reason his parents stopped attending synagogue even though it still held meaning for them, may be the fact that they were Shoah survivors. Many survivors simply couldn't conceive of worshipping G-d anymore after he allowed the destruction of the Jews in Europe. In another story another Jewish man remembers being dragged to the synagogue as a boy by his father. "One holiday, I believe it was Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah, when I was eight or nine, my father insisted we all go to the synagogue in town. I did not understand why because we had never attended synagogue before and no one ever expressed an interest in doing so" (Stollman 201). His parents were Shoah survivors as well. It appears that religious observance is easier for the 2nd or 3rd generation after the Shoah, even if they are less devout than their parents or grandparents, since they are able to view religious observance independently of the Shoah, or see it as the one way to ensure Jewish continuity and thereby get their revenge on the Nazis and their plans to extinct the Jewish people.

The synagogue is not only a place of worship, but also a place where the Jewish community gets together. In Norman Levine's short story "Thin Ice" a secular Jew is stranded in the Canadian province during a snow storm without money and his first thought is to find a synagogue in order to get warm and receive something to eat or drink, even though he has not been to a synagogue in decades. It seems to be an instinctive reaction; when in need a Jew's first impulse is to look for support from the Jewish community. "It will be warm. There might be a Bar-Mitzvah or some kind of Kaddish afterwards" (93). In another of his short stories a secular Jew, who is on vacation, is asked whether he will come to synagogue with a fellow Jew, and his instant reaction is to decline, since he has not "been in a synagogue for over twenty years" (Levine, "By a Frozen River", 146). However, the Jewish home he is a guest at right then reminds him of his childhood. When he goes to synagogue he respectfully puts on a clean white shirt and tie and a suit and is amazed by how this little synagogue in the middle of nowhere is built exactly like the synagogues he used to know as a boy. He continues to attend synagogue for seven weeks every Friday night and Saturday morning, even though he is not

religious and has no interest in rekindling his faith. The reason he attends is that he doesn't want a fellow Jew to have to be in synagogue by himself. In this case religious observance has less to do with G-d but with community service. Unrelated to the fact whether someone is religious or not, there is a "sense of obligation that binds Jew to Jew" (Dembo qtd. in Malin 137-38), which means supporting each other in many ways including attending synagogue.

Even though the hero of Richler's *St. Urbain's Street* is completely secular he consistently thinks and acts in Jewish religious ways. For one, he constantly thinks of his first born as his Kaddish, and worries about him being swapped at the hospital. "Reassuringly, he wore a bracelet with his name on it, but all the same Jake committed distinguishing features to memory. After all, this was his *kaddish*" (228). Jake also plans to have a bar mitzvah for his sons and years before plans for the gifts he wants to give them. "Comes his bar mitzvah, he thought, no fountain pens. Instead his first nickel bag. 'Today you are a man, *bubele*. Turn on'" (11). He even turns to prayer when he has a toilet malfunction at a dinner party, and speaks a prayer before pulling the chain to flush. "*Baruch ato Adonoi*, he said twice, before he pulled the chain. It flushed" (185). In one scene Jake is in a plane and it looks like they might have to make an emergency landing. When his seat neighbour asks him if he believes in G-d Jake's answer is: "'Of course I do. I always have.' You hear?" (357). When he is in danger, he suddenly worries that he might be punished by G-d for not leading a religious life. At some point the reader might start to wonder how secular and assimilated Jake Hersch really is, and whether he is not putting on a show in front of the world and himself in order to prove that he can fit in with and be successful in Gentile society.

Just like Jake Hersch, it seems that many modern Jews have convinced themselves that they must turn away from Jewish orthodoxy if they want to lead modern lives and be fully integrated into their North American societies. However, they still seem to long for some sort of religious observance, which has led many Jews to turn to Asian religions. In fact, "assimilated Jews have been disproportionately represented among the tens of thousands of Americans attracted to Eastern religions and mysticism. It is estimated that one third or more of Americans who journey to India to study with spiritual masters are Jews" (Telushkin 129). A

reflection of this trend is portrayed in Cara Fagan's short story "Nora by the Sea". Though Nora and her family try to live a distinctly Jewish life - even keeping kosher though they are not religious - they have a "brass Krishna" standing on their "mantle next to the Menorah" as a reminder of the time the parents spent in India (126).

Independent from their infatuation with other religions or complete lack of religiousness, the Shabbat still holds a special meaning for many non-religious Jews, especially those who grew up in a religious household. Consequently many secular Jews have some sort of a Shabbat Dinner on Friday nights, even if they are completely irreligious. Many novels or short stories feature a scene in which secular Jews are having a Shabbat meal or talk about the importance of the Shabbat. In Sarah Robyn's short story "Looking for my Keys" the narrator talks about getting home from work on Friday afternoon and meeting her daughter at the door: "Then she let me in with her keys, took the bag of challah loaves from me, and ran to set the Sabbath table, for even though I am not religious, I light candles on Friday evenings, I serve a Sabbath meal" (126). In Richler's *St. Urbain's Horseman* the secular protagonist who is married to a Gentile woman and leads a completely assimilated life is still aware of the beginning of the Sabbath: "It was Friday night and although they didn't light candles or perform such ablutions that would enable them to welcome the Sabbath like a bride, something remained, and on occasion it stirred within him" (71).

3.2.2.2 Jewish Food

3.2.2.2.1 Cultural Significance of Keeping Kosher

Many secular Jews nowadays perform religious customs for absolutely non-religious reasons. While the debate over the question whether Judaism is a religion or a people is still raging, many Jews have decided for themselves that it is a people that they can belong to, independent of their religious convictions. Nevertheless, secular Jews often feel that they are not Jewish enough or are not leading authentically Jewish lives, which is one of the reasons they send their children to Hebrew school. While they raise their children to be secular Jews they still want them to be familiar with Jewish religious customs because they regard

them as an essential part of being Jewish. A good example for this contradictory phenomenon is the large number of secular Jews who keep kosher.

Jews who were raised secular turn to kashrut for cultural reasons, as a way to define their Jewish identity, looking for ways to express their Judaism in a non-religious way. In Cary Fagan's short story "Nora by the Sea" the protagonists are a Jewish family from Toronto who keep kosher "not from some religious superstition but to give the children what Michael called cultural definition. Her father, on the other hand, defied such signs of faith with the same glee he had felt as a sixteen-year-old music student newly arrived from the village" (135). Here one can see the cycle of Jewish assimilation in Canada. While Nora's father and his generation were eager to give up all Jewish customs in order to assimilate as quickly as possible, contemporary Jewish families in Canada often keep kosher, even though they don't see it as a commandment from G-d, but in order to define their Jewish identity. Such literary characters are usually assimilated and don't feel they have to distance themselves from their Jewish heritage in order to be accepted by Gentile society. Other than their forbearers who a generation ago turned away from anything Jewish in order to advance their level of assimilation, these characters remember their grandparents' homes with a fondness and long for the kind of food they received there as children. The cycle comes full circle when some secular characters start keeping kosher, not for religious reasons, but in order to express their Jewish identity. This is similar to the issue of public education. In the past, Jewish parents sent their kids to public school so they would be quickly assimilated into Canadian society, but nowadays most Jewish parents in Canada send their children to Jewish schools. Instead of trying to hide their Jewishness and assimilate as quickly as possible, they want to remind their children of their 'otherness'.

In Howard Engel's novel *Memory Book* the protagonist Benny, a secular Jew is at the hospital after an attack. His mother comes to see him and informs him that according to Jewish tradition it is permitted not to keep kosher, if it causes a problem for other people (197). Even though the story is about crime at the university and the protagonist's Jewishness is never front and center and he doesn't seem to keep kosher anyway, Engel has the characters talking about

Kashrut as a way to indicate their Jewishness. Eating kosher food is such an integral part of being Jewish that for many Jews it has lost its connection to religion and has simply become a cultural expression. With the paradigm of 'Who is a Jew' shifting away from religious, and moving towards cultural markers, Kashrut seems to have made that move as well.

3.2.2.2.2 Negative Consequences of Not Keeping Kosher

Jewish characters often feel guilty if they eat non-kosher food in front of religious Jews. In Henry Kreisel's short story "Chassidic Song" a secular Jew [Arnold Weiss] rides on a plane from New York to Montreal, sitting next to a Hassidic Jew, with whom he starts a conversation. When the flight crew brings around sandwiches, the Hassid declines since they are not kosher. Arnold Weiss takes a moment to decide, but then he accepts the sandwiches. One of them is cheese and one ham. He slowly starts eating the Cheese sandwich, which is the lesser evil of the two, but he can't bring himself to look at his seat neighbour and he can feel his disapproving eyes upon him. Even though he doesn't know the Hassid and doesn't owe him anything, he feels uncomfortable eating non-kosher food in front of him. It is as if the Hassid had the right to admonish him about his lack of religious observance, simple because of the fact that he was a fellow Jew. When secular Jew Jake Hersh visits his aunt Hanna in *St. Urbain's Horseman* she asks him about whether he fasts on Yom Kippur and he apologizes for the fact that he doesn't. Even though he is very comfortable with his choice to lead a secular life, he still feels like he has to apologize for it to his aunt, since he knows kashrut is not just a matter of choice, but something all Jews are supposed to keep.

3.2.2.2.3 Eating Gentile Food as Sign of Assimilation

Food is seen as such an important determiner of identity and belonging to a particular group that the first thing Jewish characters who turn away from religion often do, is to stop eating kosher food. "He proclaimed himself a shomar-shabus no more. Defiantly, he ate non-kosher food and was prepared to work on the Sabbath. His elder brothers disowned him" (Richler, *Horseman* 161). This is mostly

apparent in texts that were either written towards the first half of the 20th century, or in stories that take place during that time. Often Jewish characters are depicted as eating Gentile food and showing a disdain for traditionally Jewish food in order to prove their degree of assimilation and establish a Gentile identity for themselves. In Mordecai Richler's *St. Urbain Horseman*, the protagonist's sister is doing all she can to leave Jewish society behind and become a real Gentile. One way in which she does this, is by adopting Gentile customs when it comes to food and drink. "Jenny's party was characterized by a free flow of liquor and food. Not fortifying, over-rich Jewish food, as Jake had longed for, but instead ghetto-emancipated canapés and hors d'oeuvres" (150).

Duddy Kravitz, another character in *St. Urbain's Horseman* and the protagonist of Richler's most famous novel *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, has become rich and famous. He is assimilated and eats Gentile delicacies as a kind of status symbol, but in reality he doesn't like the taste of Gentile food, which is why he orders side dishes of chopped eggs and onions for himself, in order to change the Gentile dish and make it taste as close to Jewish food as possible (458). It seems that in order to be accepted into Gentile society, Jews feel they have to adopt Gentile customs and traditions, and forgo their own. But in reality, they still long for the food and traditions they grew up with.

The protagonist, Jake Hersh, also pretends to like Gentile food, but in reality he doesn't and actually sneaks his own Jewish food into a party in his jacket pocket. "Jake locked himself in the bathroom and immediately reached into his jacket pocket for the salami on rye Nancy had thoughtfully prepared for him" (183). When Jake goes to play baseball, he brings lots of Jewish food with him for sustenance. "Jake generally strolled to the Heath, his tattered fielder's mitt and three enervating bagels filled with smoked salmon concealed under the Observer in his shopping bag" (239). It seems whenever he is preparing or buying food for just himself, he always picks Jewish food. Only when he shares with other people, he pretends to enjoy Gentile food. "The smoked salmon, an ecumenical concession, came from Cohen's; and once more, Jake insisted on chopped liver as well, preparing it himself, lustily singing *Adon Olam* in the kitchen as he wielded his chopper" (286). A scene in *St. Urbain's Horseman* aptly demonstrates the

different outlooks on food between traditionally Jewish and Gentile families, when the Jewish character Mrs. Hersh has a look inside her daughter-in-law's fridge and despises everything she sees in there, even though these things are considered delicacies in Gentile society.

Mrs. Hersh [...] descended into the kitchen, which she knew from sour experience would be stuffed with *dreck*. In the fridge, bacon and sausages from Harrod's, some smoked eel maybe, and a larder crammed with tins of crabs and lobster, mussels, snail shells, pork beans and other *traifes*, but no gefilte fish or kosher salami. (46)

3.3 Interactions with Non-Jews

If 'the people of Israel' in Canada is not only a symbolic term but actually forms a real, identifiable group, meaningfully different from the rest of Canadian society, it follows that there could be discernible cultural differences when a Jew interacts with a non-Jew, similar to when two different cultures encounter each other. Since orthodox Jews lead very different lives even from secular Jews, this chapter will focus mostly on how interactions between secular Jews and Gentiles are portrayed in Jewish-Canadian literature. In a first step it will look at what differences are perceived to exist between Jewish and non-Jewish Canadians, and in a second step on whether any differences still persist when Jews are totally assimilated or even married to Gentiles.

3.3.1 Differences between Jews and Gentiles

3.3.1.1 Family Ties

One major perceived difference between Gentiles and Jews is how strongly they feel connected to their families. Literary tradition often tells of the Gentile hero who leaves his home and moves out into the world in order to make his fortune. On the other hand, Jewish stories often portray protagonists who start their journey by trying to get away from their family and everything that ties them to the past, only to realize in the end that the ties that bind them to their family and people are what ultimately matter most. Michael Redhill demonstrates this difference between Jews and Gentiles in his novel *Martin Sloane*, in which a Jewish woman and a Gentile man marry and have a family. The family lives in Ireland, but

at some point the mother leaves for Canada to visit her ailing mother. A few months later

she sent a telegram, as her own father had, and begged them to sell everything and come to Canada. Her mother had stabilized, but she could not leave. No, she did not want to leave. There was no argument from Martin or Theresa – they missed her too much to consider such a thing as a country or a home of any importance, but their father was grief struck anew. (189)

Mr. Sloane loves his family very much, but when it comes to leaving Ireland, he chooses his country over his wife and children. While his wife travelled across the world to see her ill mother, he won't leave Ireland to be reunited with her. Not only is he willing to be separate from his wife, but he also effectively gives up his children, whom he will never see again. He does this in a seemingly callous, heartless way by not informing them in advance but simply refusing to board the ship they had all booked passage on to Canada. "Martin's father [...] put his mouth beside Martin's ear. You take care of your mother, he said. [...] And your sister, Martin. You will be the man of the house. Martin looked at his father, and searched his face. Where are your bags? He asked him. I'm not going, Martin, his father said" (191). Mr Sloane doesn't prepare his children for his departure; he only tells his son he is staying behind after his daughter has already entered the ramp up to the ship. He doesn't even say goodbye to her. This is in great contrast to Jewish characters, who are usually very emotional when it comes to farewells and never say goodbye without lots of kisses and embraces.

3.3.1.2 Jews as the Eternal 'Other'

In Leonard Cohen's novel *The Favourite Game* the protagonist is a successful writer and has found access into Gentile society. However, they still regard him as an outsider and very different from them. "His Semitic barbarity hidden under the cloak of Art, he was intruding on their cocktail rituals. They were pledged to Culture (like all good Canadians) but he was threatening the blood purity of their daughters" (Cohen, *Favourite*, 6). Because he senses their prejudice against him, the protagonist tries to act as stereotypically Jewish as he can. "He punctuated his speech with Yiddish expressions which he never thought of using anywhere else. In their living-rooms, for no reason at all, he often broke into little Hasidic dances

around the tea table" (Cohen, *Favourite*, 6). This harkens back to what Meyer said about anti-Semitism strengthening Jewish self-identification; instead of trying to fit in, the protagonist is driven to highlight his Jewish identity more than ever before by the anti-Semitic prejudices of Gentile society.

In his essay "Surfacings" the Jewish ethnographer Benjamin Orlove investigates the 'otherness' of Jews in the eyes of Gentiles from a Jewish point of view. Orlove discovers that Jews are normally very aware of their position as outsiders and being "other" in non-Jewish settings. Jews usually face the dilemma of either revealing the fact they are Jewish and experiencing discrimination, or keeping it secret and feeling "a lingering sense of inauthenticity" (3). He also ascertains that Jews see themselves as outsiders, not only because they belong to a marginalized group, but also because their religion is often regarded as inferior if not worse by the people around them. While there are tensions, Orlove also discerns positive aspects of being "other"; it allows one to empathize with others and it helps to keep the bonds between Jews strong and enduring.

3.3.1.3 Views on Assimilation

Prejudice between Jews and Gentiles goes both ways as Jewish characters also often think in terms of negative stereotypes about Gentiles and want to keep their lives and families separate from their Gentile surroundings. In *St. Urbain's Horseman* the gentile character Nancy knows that for her Jewish mother-in-law everything she doesn't know is a "sinister gentile contrivance" (40). In the Richler short story "The Street" Jewish children want to keep far away from the Gentile world. They only hear negative stories about it and are afraid of Gentiles. "Our world was rigidly circumscribed. Outside, where they ate wormy pork, beat the wives for openers, didn't care a little finger if the children grew up to be doctors, we seldom ventured, and then only fearfully" (48).

Jewish characters are very wary of assimilation and this includes celebrating Gentile holidays. At least the parents are; Jewish children are often quite happy about being invited to a Gentile holiday party. In Miriam Waddington's short story "The Halloween Party" two Jewish children are invited to a Halloween party and at first they are very excited about it, but then they remember that their father

probably won't allow them to celebrate a non-Jewish holiday. "And sure enough when we brought it up that evening, my father took the position that we ought not to celebrate a Christian holiday. Although Helen and I pointed out that Hallowe'en had nothing to do with religion my father insisted that it was a culture symbol" (18). When the children tell their Gentile neighbours that they are not allowed to go, "Miss MacNeill thought it a shame that my father would let a thing like being Jewish stand in the way of our having fun with other children" (18), but her husband is more understanding. This story demonstrates that Gentiles usually don't understand how important it is for Jews to segregate themselves from Gentiles and fight assimilation. Jewish parents are often worried their children might forget about their Jewish identity if they interact too much with Gentiles. In this story the Jewish father explains to his Gentile neighbour that he doesn't want his children celebrating Christian holidays, since he is afraid that once they move one step into that direction, everything is lost and his children will turn away from Judaism and become assimilated. He has suffered for being Jewish and "I don't want them to forget who they are, where they belong. And here, in this country, it is easy to forget. There are so many who are forgetting" (19).

3.3.1.4 Cultural Misunderstandings

In *St. Urbain's Horseman* the Jewish protagonist is married to a gentile woman. When his mother comes for a visit the differences between the Jewish and Gentile lifestyle come to light. One important point of contention is kashrut. One day the gentile wife picks up kosher salami for her mother-in-law and prepares a sandwich for her. Her mother-in-law refuses to eat it and explains that she buttered the bread, and it is not kosher to mix meat and milk. As a result her daughter-in-law gets angry and starts yelling. "Mrs. Hersch stared, amazed. Pogrom, pogrom. 'Oh! Oh! Oh!' Nancy stamped her foot. She stamped it again. 'Sometimes all your Jewish hocus-pocus' - Six million isn't enough for them" (79). This scene illustrates that Gentiles don't understand Jewish customs and need an interpreter for them. It also displays how many Jews automatically think of the Shoah and anti-Semitism whenever they have negative interactions with Gentiles. The person who could have helped out here is the son and husband, who has a foot in both worlds. But for some reason he doesn't seem to care about facilitating communication

between his mother and wife. He is a secular Jew who doesn't keep any of the commandments and regards them as superstition himself, but whenever a non-Jew criticizes them, he gets defensive and angry. He is quite happy riding the fence between both worlds, but he has no interest in fostering mutual understanding.

Gentiles are not only unfamiliar with kashrut, but they can also never fully understand what the Shoah did to the Jewish psyche. Some are not even aware of its existence, even in Canada. In Chava Rosenfarb's short story "The Greenhorn" a Shoah survivor immigrates to Canada and is approached by a Gentile work colleague who asks him where in Europe he has been before he moved to Canada.

"I was in Czechoslovakia, in Austria, in Germany, in Italy ..." "Jésu Marie! You've seen the entire world! Were you so rich? You must have been one of the richest people in the world." "No, one of the poorest." "You were a businessman, weren't you?" "No. A DP." "I don't understand." "In English it's called a 'displaced person'." "Oh, you mean a displeased person. That's what I am too." She nods knowingly, but from the expression on her face, he realizes that she has no idea what this means. (83)

This vignette displays the large gulf of understanding and experience between Jews and Gentiles. She has no evil intention, but she doesn't understand what he has experienced. It is as if they are from two different worlds, which is indicated by how differently they think about the various countries he has been to in Europe. She thinks he was there on vacation and had a wonderful time, while he was there as a refugee after the Shoah just trying to survive and possibly find any surviving relatives. How can this bridge ever be crossed?

3.3.1.5 Physical Appearance

A further difference between Jews and Gentiles is their physical appearance. According to Sander L. Gilman there are three significant features of the Jewish body: "the Jewish nose; the Jewish penis; and, finally, the debate about the mutability of the Jewish body in the Diaspora" (61). The 'Jewish nose' here stands for the visibility of the Jewish body in general. Some feature of the Jewish body usually reveals his identity, "even when the Jew gives up all cultural signs of his or her Jewishness and marries out of the 'race'" (63). The term 'Jewish penis' refers to circumcision and the attacks on male circumcision which are often barely veiled

anti-Semitic attacks, which accuse “the Jewish body as representing the evil of the Jewish psyche” (64). One expression of their anti-Semitism is to argue that “all circumcised males are inherently child abusers in that they insist on the circumcision of the next generation of males” (64). By this logic male Jews are evil simply because they were circumcised by their parents as babies. The third term ‘mutable body’ refers to the fact that while physically different, Jews also seem to look like everybody else and are therefore able to “pass”, which infuriates anti-Semites beyond any measure.

The idea that Jews look different than Gentiles is not only a Gentile prejudice but also very popular in Jewish imagination. Jewish-Canadian literature portrays this impression on various occasions. As has been mentioned before, Jews like to socialize with other Jews and one way of guessing whether somebody might be Jewish is to draw conclusions from physical appearance. This can lead to misunderstandings as in Michael Redhill’s novel *Martin Sloane*, where a Jewish character invites a Gentile for dinner with his family on a ship because he mistook him for a Jew. “Your father’s nose is the reason you’re here today, the story would always end. Your Zaida Mosher thought Daddy was Jewish and invited him to dinner in our cabin” (186). In the short story “Chassidic Song” by Henry Kreisel a Jewish character reveals that he did not think somebody looked Jewish and therefore had no interest in talking to him. “I had no intention to speak to you. [...] I didn’t even think you were Jewish. You don’t even look like a Jew” (31). This vignette demonstrates that not only Gentiles, but also Jews have preconceptions about what other Jews should look like. Richler even alludes to the discussion whether there is something like a Jewish look in his short story “The Street”: “Even if a man was so stupid, such a putz, that he couldn’t tell from their faces or if—like Tansky, perhaps—he indignantly held that there was no such thing as a Jewish face [...]” (41).

3.3.2 Mixing with Gentiles

3.3.2.1 Assimilation

Some North American Jewish writers do their best to “demonstrate that Jews and Gentiles are really indistinguishable” (Guttmann 48). In order to improve the

image of the Jew in literature, they “fabricate [...] a picture of Jews that reflects contemporary middle-class life and concerns, and so help create the basis for an American Jewish identity palatable for mass consumption by both Jews and non-Jews” (Roth 56). These Jewish characters “have Jewish names and speech patterns”, but there is “little specifically Jewish substance” that differentiates them from Gentiles (Schiff 152). Their aim appears to be to show that Jews are just like everybody else and there is nothing meaningfully different about them, but that their little differences are nothing more substantial than what distinguishes Italian-American or Irish-Americans from the rest of the population. The goal seems to be total assimilation, and it is not fictional, since a large part of the North American Jewish community is assimilated and knows little to nothing about Judaism.

In Matt Cohen’s novel *Elizabeth and After* the character Adam Goldsmith has as Jewish name and characteristics that could be considered stereotypically Jewish, however Matt Cohen never determinedly states whether Adam is Jewish or not. There are many hints, but nothing conclusive. It is as if Matt Cohen wants to show that the only difference between assimilated Jews and Gentiles are their names.

In *The Favourite Game* Leonard Cohen describes a rich, assimilated Jewish family. The Breavmans are assimilated and want to be treated as equals, however they don’t want to intermarry but remain Jewish. They look down on Gentiles and un-assimilated Jews and believe they are better than everybody else, because they consider themselves to be “the only Jews left; that is, super-Christians, first citizens with cut prongs” (3). The family patriarch compiled a list called “the Code of Breavman” which puts their level of assimilation in clear terms: “We are Victorian gentlemen of Hebraic persuasion. [...] We do not wish to join Christian clubs or weaken our blood through inter-marriage. We wish to be regarded as peers, united by class, education, power, differentiated by home rituals” (3).

When interacting with Gentiles, assimilated Jewish characters often use Christian expressions, which sometimes confuse their counterparts. An example is an exchange between a Jewish patient and his nurse in Howard Engel’s *Memory Book*:

It takes me all day to get through *The Globe and Mail*. A book could hang me up until the Second Coming.” “Get along with you! You’re doing very

well here. But I thought you were Jewish, Mr Cooperman.” “I was. I mean, I *am*; but when it comes to measuring the time it will take me to recover my old reading speed, the phrase seemed appropriate. What could be longer than an unbeliever’s idea of the Second Coming?” (80)

The nurse does not expect him to use a Christian expression because he is Jewish. Instead of this displaying an affinity towards Christianity on his part, he explains that he is using the Christian term because he doesn’t believe in Jesus and therefore the term adequately explains how he feels. He uses Christian terminology without giving up his own expressions and beliefs. He is assimilated but retains his Jewish identity.

Sometimes assimilated Jews express doubts about the speed of their assimilation. “There was a letter [...] from [...] Sammy’s school. Next term he would require a cricket outfit. In three generations, from foxy Jews to fox-hunting ones. What next? Lord Hersh of St. Urbain?” (Richler, *Horseman* 12). Jacob Hersh and his family are so assimilated that his son is starting to play cricket. Even though Jake is happy his son is so well integrated into society, he still feels a little uncomfortable about how quickly his family is becoming Gentile and turning away from their Jewish ancestry.

3.3.2.2 Intermarriage

Intermarriage is usually portrayed as a source of conflict in Jewish-Canadian literature. Generally the parents of a Jewish character are very unhappy if he or she marries a Gentile and their reactions range from superficial acceptance to outright opposition and cutting all forms of contact with their intermarried child.

In Michael Redhill’s *Martin Sloane* the gentile husband believes that his Jewish father-in-law resents the fact his daughter married out of the tribe. “He’s finally got his revenge, he said. Your father. Duped, he was, now he’s getting you to take the rest of the trip” (185). The Jewish father was duped because he thought Mr. Sloane was Jewish and introduced him to his daughter, but in reality he is actually an Irish catholic. “See now, his daughter’s an Irishwoman married to a Mick, he’ll do anything to turn back the clock” (185-86). In addition to being married to a Catholic she is also living on the other side of the planet and since Jewish families

always want their members close to each other, there are apparently two reasons for the Jewish parents to dislike their gentile son-in-law.

In most Jewish-Canadian literature it is the Jewish relatives who are depicted as not being happy with the intermarriage. Non-Jewish relatives are rarely shown, as if the authors want to focus on what intermarriage means for Jewish families and care less about the gentile family's reaction. Often it is the Jewish mother who is depicted as disliking her gentile daughter-in-law but never saying it to her son directly, but instead complaining to other family members about it. In Engel's *Memory Book* Mrs. Cooperman complains to her son about another son's gentile wife. "Sam's wife won't let me step inside her tiny, perfect kitchen. I might drop a carrot on her floor. I'm sure she thinks I'm too ethnic for her neighbours.' 'Ma, that's just not true.' 'Just *you* try to make a cup of instant with her looking on.' She exhaled her hostility audibly" (56). What appears to be a typical family issue is magnified by the fact that the daughter-in-law is not Jewish and Mrs. Cooperman suspects her of prejudice against 'ethnic' Jews.

In Richler's novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* the protagonist Jake knows his mother disapproves of his having married a Gentile, and he challenges her to say something bad about his wife. "With a house in the higher reaches of Outremont and a good Jewish girl for a wife.' 'I've never said a word against Nancy.' 'And it's best that you never do,' he said, 'because I love her'" (90). Jake makes it clear to his mother that if he ever had to choose between her and his wife, he would always choose his wife. He doesn't see the differences between Gentiles and Jews as a problem, but instead believes that 'all you need is love'. His generation has a very different outlook on this than his parents' generation. When he was younger he exploited his family's aversion to intermarriage by pretending to have gotten a gentile girl pregnant, when he actually needed money for a trip to New York. "This is serious, Uncle Lou. I've knocked up a *shiksa*.' [...] 'Either I raise the money for an abortion or I've got to marry her'" (101). Jake knows that for his family marrying a Gentile or having a child with her is one of the worst things he could do. He doesn't care at all, since that is exactly what he does a few years later, but he doesn't mind taking advantage of his uncle's dislike.

Jake's father reacts to his son's intermarriage in a very negative way; he writes him an angry letter and threatens to cut him out of his life if he really goes through with the marriage. "Dear son, his father's letter began. You take it for granted that I will bless this unholy marriage and seal it with a gift check, but I must disappoint you. In the past I have had to defend your character on many occasions, but how can I defend you for this disgraceful deed that you are planning?" (212). Jake expects his father to be happy for his marriage and even send him a check as gift. The question arises if Jake is really so blind to his father's aversion to intermarriage, or if he believes this dislike wouldn't go very deep. "In your letter you state that you are not marrying a Jewess or a Gentile, but a woman, THE WOMAN YOU LOVE" (213). Jake reiterates that he is marrying for love and it doesn't matter to him whether his wife is Jewish or Gentile, and he expects his father to feel the same way. Since nobody in his family feels this way, this means that Jake is very different from his relatives. He lives in a different world and expects his family to adopt his way of thinking. He doesn't understand why they cling to old customs and traditions. "And what about her family, if she has any? Do they want to accept a Jew in their midst? *Goyim* are such bigots, as we all know" (213). Jake's father accuses his daughter-in-law's family of prejudice, without ever having met him. He doesn't realize that he is the one operating out of prejudice and bigotry. "From after Aug. 20, your fatal day, my door and all that goes with it will be closed to you. The doors of all the Hersh family will not welcome you" (213). Jake's father exiles him from the family from the day he marries a Gentile woman, and says that his children "will be considered illegitimate" (214) by Jewish law. The reader does not learn if the wedding really constitutes a permanent split between father and son, but years later Jake Hersh flies to his father's funeral and has to listen to his relatives accusing him of breaking his father's heart when he married a Gentile woman. "Rotten thing. Animal. The day you married that *shiksa* you broke his heart" (404). Even though it has been many years and he has three children with his wife, his family still hasn't forgiven him for marrying outside of the tribe.

One way of reacting to parental disapproval of intermarriage is for the young couple to form a life unconnected to any of their families. The couple in Aryeh Lev Stollman's short story "Die Grosse Liebe" is married, but they don't know each

other's family. It is as if they knew the intermarriage would cause issues if they talked about it, so they ignore their families and act as if all that mattered was the present and their love for each other. "Though we have now lived together for many years, she does not ask me about my family, nor do I ask about hers. I like to think of our life together as in the present, so long as the present maintains its own sense of privacy" (206).

The Jewish parents are not the only ones having problems with intermarriage, but it is often the cause for friction within the intermarried couple itself. When an intermarried couple argues in Norman Levine's short story "By a Frozen River", the husband accuses the wife of being unhappy because she didn't marry a Jewish man and it becomes clear that this is a long-standing point of contention between them. "It was quiet until eleven that night. I could hear them talking. Then he began to raise his voice. 'Shut up. God damn it. Leave me alone. You should have married a Jewish businessman. You would have been happy'" (148). At the end of the story the husband even decides to leave his wife because he doesn't want to put up with her disappointments in him anymore. In *St. Urbain's Horseman* Jake Hersh and his gentile wife Nancy have a disagreement: "Nancy was not pleased. 'Oh God,' she exclaimed. [...] Bloody shikse, he thought, seething inwardly, Ontario hick" (283). Even though he is secular and happily-married, when Jake is angry his first reaction is to revert back to Jewish prejudices against uneducated Gentiles and he regards everyone who doesn't "know the Holy One's Secret Name, the sayings of Rabbi Akiba, or how to exorcise a dybbuk" (283), as uneducated and simple. It seems that his true feelings come out when he is angry and that means that subconsciously he is always aware of them being a mixed couple and he is not completely happy with that.

In addition to the couple or their parents, complete strangers often take issue with intermarriage, as displayed in Henry Kreisel's short story "Chassidic song". "'And your wife?' Josef Shemtov insisted. 'She is Jewish, too,' said Arnold Weiss. '*Gott sei Dank*,' said Josef Shemtov, with a great sign of relief" (32). When hearing that a Jewish stranger whom he has just met is married to a Jewish woman, a Hassidic character is clearly relieved, as if every intermarriage would hurt him personally. For observant Jews every intermarriage means the loss of a Jewish soul and even

secular Jews feel disappointment when they hear a famous Jew has married 'outside of the tribe'.

One way to fight intermarriage and ensure Jewish continuity is for Jewish parents to send their children to Jewish summer camps and hope they meet their future spouse there. "Each one father's little princess, and they are in the tents each night experimenting. [...] And no one cares. Let them, the director says. That's what the parents are paying for. They want their kids to fall in love with Jews, so they won't fall I love with Goys" (Lambert 88).

3.3.2.3 Children from Mixed Marriages

Nowhere is interaction between Jews and Gentiles more complete than within children from mixed marriages. In most cases in Jewish-Canadian literature those children are raised without any religion or as Christians. While some families may celebrate holidays from both religions, virtually none are raising their children as Jews. This decision is usually not explained and readers are forced to draw their own conclusions. It appears that the Jewish parent is usually very assimilated and doesn't really care about Jewish tradition or religion; otherwise they might not have married outside of the Jewish people in the first place.

In *St. Urbain's Horseman* Jake believes that mixed marriage kids have a place in both religions. "They were a new breed, these mixed-marriage kids. With a Christmas tree in December and matzohs in April. [...] Instead of being unwanted, hounded here for being Christ-killers, mocked there for being bland WASPS, they belonged everywhere. With a stake in Je—vah² and a claim on Christ" (280). He believes that they aren't outsiders in either world, but are able to combine the two cultures and take what they like out of each one. This may be wishful-thinking on his part, because at another point during the novel he imagines the future and how his children will act after his death. In this daydream he sees both his children as embarrassed for having a Jewish father and not being familiar with any Jewish traditions anymore.

Molly

² Out of respect G-d's Hebrew name is not be said or written in Jewish tradition

Well, I won't have them. It's morbid for the children. Besides, I haven't told them that they're one quarter kikes.

Lord Hersh

For form's sake we should dispense with his last wishes. There's only one. (reading) He wanted his son to say ... (difficult reading) *kaddish* for him. Anybody know what that is?

Molly

Isn't that the greasy stuff he used to make in the kitchen? (306-07)

Ever since his wife was pregnant with his first son, Jake was very much aware of the fact that this son was his kaddish; i.e. that he can say the prayer for the dead over his body which will ensure his entry into heaven. In his nightmare Jake imagines that his son doesn't even know what kaddish means and that his children will try to forget they have any Jewish blood in them.

After his son was born, Jake made sure to have him circumcised as is required by Jewish law. Even though halachically his children aren't Jewish - since their mother is Gentile - by circumcising his son Jake clearly intends to include him in the Jewish people, by fulfilling the commandment that all Jewish boys should be circumcised as a sign of their covenant with G-d. Since Jake is secular and doesn't keep any commandments, this is another Jewish custom that has been re-appropriated from its original use. While circumcision used to signify a covenant with G-d, for many Jewish parents nowadays it has acquired a different meaning. It serves mostly for them to declare their belonging to the Jewish people, if not the Jewish religion. When Jake's sister views her niece's blond hair as a sign that she is not part of the Jewish people, Jake protests and points out that he used to be blond as a child as well. He clearly cares about his children being regarded as Jewish by their paternal relatives. He is an optimist and believes that mixed-marriage children can really be part of both cultures and don't have to choose one side over the other.

As much as Jake likes to tell himself that his children can feel at home in both worlds, he does have trepidations about the fact that they grow up as Christians, and Christmas is always a touchy subject for him. "Only the evening before, at the school concert, Jake had sat, the only glowering man among as many beaming parents, as Sammy sang with others":

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head: [...]" (284)

"Yuletide was, in any event, an uneasy season for Jake, the tree in the living room an affront no matter how rationally he explained it away to himself" (285). Jake feels that he disappointed his ancestors who survived pogroms and anti-Semitism in order to ensure Jewish survival, while he, who lives in a safe world doesn't do much to keep his family's Jewishness alive. "His forebears hadn't fled the shtetl, surviving the Czar, so that the windows of the second generation should glitter on Christmas Eve like those of the Black Hundreds of accursed memory. Old Hanna, for one, would have said, feh, Yankel" (286).

The protagonists of Michael Redhill's novel *Martin Sloane* are an intermarried couple and their children, for whom intermarriage is a big issue because the father wants to raise his children as Christians and his Jewish wife is very much against it.

Martin's father wanted to make a detour into St. Joseph's Church, to thank the Virgin. Colin, their mother said, You're not taking any child of mine into a church. [...] They argued like this for a few moments; Martin and Theresa had been through these attempted detours many times. Their father still clung to his stray hope that he'd get the four of them into a church one day. (142)

In this novel the children of mixed marriages feel that they belong to neither religion and want to pick one side. "Why don't you make one of us Catholic and one of us Jewish? Theresa asked. Then there won't be any more of this half and half business" (143). However their Jewish mother wants them to believe in G-d without picking one religion in which to worship. "I think not, said Adele. We don't need to be divided against each other" (143). Even though she has married a Gentile and raises her children in a mixed marriage, she doesn't want them to become Christians. And she herself still feels very Jewish, even so far as going to the synagogue sometimes and forbidding her children to go there with her. "I'll keep my word, said their mother, shaking her head. [...] You'll honour your father's wishes as you do mine" (144).

4. THE STATE OF ISRAEL

This chapter will focus on the representation of the State of Israel in Jewish-Canadian literature. Before analyzing fictional texts this chapter will try to analyze whether the Jewish state is of any importance to the Jewish-Canadian population and if so, how this is portrayed in Jewish-Canadian literature.

4.1 Jewish Identity in Canada

4.1.1 Political Attitudes towards Israel

The opinions of about 90% of the Jewish-Canadian population can be classified as the views of the mainstream Jewish community in Canada. In general, their attitude is to stand with Israel whether it is right or wrong. The mainstream can be divided into three sub-categories; right wing, centrist and left wing. The right wing is made up by about 15% of the mainstream community and they can be subdivided into religious and non-religious. The right-wing is traditionally strongly supportive of Israel and its policies and usually doesn't believe in giving up land for peace. The majority of Canadian Jews can be called Centrist; they are neither right nor left, and while they support Israel, they can be critical of its actions and policies as well. The third group within Mainstream Judaism is the Left Wing, which constitutes about 15% of the mainstream population. This left Wing is supportive of the existence of the State of Israel, but they are very critical of Israel's actions towards Palestinians and strongly support the creation of a separate Palestinian State.

Besides the mainstream movement, there are two smaller streams in the Jewish-Canadian community. There is the right which is made up mostly by Modern-Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews. These groups can take up very extreme viewpoints in relation to Israel; either they oppose the existence of the state of Israel altogether, or they want the state of Israel to have borders which would make the state much bigger than it is today.

The last group is the Left Wing and this group is most outspoken in its criticism of Israel and many of its members oppose the existence of a State of Israel, but for other reasons than the Right Wing. Ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that Israel can

only exist once the Messiah has arrived, and only G-d can create this state. A creation of the State of Israel by the hand of human beings can be interpreted as lack of belief in the coming of the Messiah and as blasphemy. Opponents of the State of Israel on the Left Wing believe that Israel has no right to exist as the land belongs to the Palestinians; “they consider Israel and America to be colonial powers and they blame Israel for inviting Arab aggression against it. This Left Wing opposition to Israel’s existence is held by a minority of people in the Jewish community but by a majority in the global Left movement” (Wisse).

4.1.2 Israel’s Importance to Jewish Identity in Canada

The State of Israel is very important to the majority of Canadian Jewry and even integral to how many Canadian Jews define their very ‘Jewishness’. Often they mostly identify as Jews via their connection and feelings about Israel and it influences their whole outlook on life and politics. “It connects to all aspects of my being—the personal and the collective, the past and the present, the symbolic and the real, the immediate and the transcendent, the heartbreak and the hope” (Lisa D. Grant qtd. in Salkin 42). Many secular Jews don’t know how to connect to their Jewishness since they are not religious and don’t follow any Jewish customs. Israel fills that hole, because it “has given new meaning to my life as a Jew. I now feel a connection to my heritage” (Jane Friedman qtd. in Salkin 125).

Israel is not only the homeland of the Jewish people but also at the center of the Jewish religion and the landscape where the most important events of Jewish history took place and its most important protagonists lived. “To care about being Jewish means caring about Israel, this in turn means that the State of Israel has a special hold on my soul” (Eric H. Yoffie qtd. in Pearl 115). Many Jews believe that “Jewish life cannot be sustained without Israel at its core” (115). If Diaspora Jewry should forget about or stop identifying with Israel, one of the most important aspects of Judaism – maybe the most important – would be lost.

A larger number of Jews describe their first visit to Israel as a life-changing experience that moved them more than they had ever imagined and determined what their future relationship would be to the larger Jewish community in general and to Israel in particular. A Canadian Jew on her first trip to Israel had an

“indescribably moving, orienting experience.” Visiting Israel changed her whole life. “I became, for the first time, deeply fascinated with being Jewish. My subsequent education, career, manner of life—everything—was shaped by that first exposure” (Mittleman qtd. in Salkin 40-41).

This centrality of Israel to Jewish life in Canada is well illustrated in Mordecai Richler’s novel *Barney’s Version*. In this novel the protagonist decides to ‘infiltrate the Jewish establishment’ and he does this by pretending to be passionate about Israel: “A guy can’t be too young to want to do his bit for Israel” (161), volunteering to help with fundraising for Israel, and decorating his house with books about Israel and Israeli dignitaries. Clearly, he sees Israel at the center of Jewish interests in Montreal. “In preparation for the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Mock WASP to my house, [...] I purchased appropriate books and left them lying about: the latest Harry Golden, a biography of Herzl, the new Herman Wouk, a photo book on Israel” (21).

4.1.3 The Six-Day War

One event in recent history that exponentially increased Jewish identification with Israel and its cause in Canada was the Six-Day War in 1967, in which the State of Israel was able to defeat the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon – all of its neighbouring countries - in 6 days and was able to recapture Jerusalem from the Jordanians. This put the capital of Israel and the Jewish people – Jerusalem, or Zion – into Jewish hands for the first time since the expulsion of the Jews from Israel at the hands of the Romans 2000 years ago.

“As in other Diaspora communities, the Six-Day War was a watershed that mobilized the Jewish community” (Waller 82) in Canada and led to change in Jewish community life, which from this moment on focused to a large part on providing support for Israel on a physical and psychological level, in parts by organizing activities “in the political sphere” that would influence the Canadian government in a pro-Israel way (Waller 85).

The Six-Day War was not only the first time many Diaspora Jews openly identified with Israel, but

for many Jews, it was [even] the first time that they publicly identified with the Jewish people. [Israel's] convincing victory over the neighbouring Arab states enabled the Jews of the world to view themselves as participants in victory. No longer was the popular image of the Jews as chronic losers, forced to pay a heavy price for their mere survival, being reinforced. (Beilin 6)

After the Six-Day War Gentiles started looking at Jews differently; no longer were they regarded as weak and cowardly, but even anti-Semites wondered if Jews were stronger than they thought. Ever since the Six-Day War in 1967 "the status of Jews in America has been elevated, [and it has] enhanced the self-esteem of individual Jews who had been hesitant to identify as Zionists" (Shoshana S. Cardin qtd. in Salkin 143).

Especially since 1967 Israel has been a strong concern for Jews all over the world and for many Israel has become the number-one priority. "It has been easier for Jewish members of Congress, and especially Jewish senators, to convene meetings on issues related to Israel than to meet as Jews" (Beilin 64). Many secular Jews, who until that point didn't know how to identify as Jews, since they no longer believed in the Jewish religion, now found a new object on which to base their Jewishness, and today Israel is one of the most important issues to connect World Jewry.

As with the larger Jewish community, "Israel's Six-Day War [...] changed the political consciousness of many Jewish writers in Canada" (Greenstein, Introduction, *Anthology* xii). Many, who had never even written about Israel before, started to include Israel into their works in a meaningful way. Mordecai Richler, who was working on his novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* during the Six-Day War, features the war prominently in his book. When a group of Jewish people comes together after a funeral, they talk about various things, but "above all, they marvelled at the miracle of the Six-Day War and followed, with apprehension, the debate over the ceasefire continuing at the U.N. One rabbi, a suburban mod, wanted the Israeli victory enshrined by a new holiday, a latter-day Passover" (401). In another scene the Hersh family sits around the radio listening to news of the War. Even though they have just buried a member of their family, they are moved to tears "to hear the ram's horn blown at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem" (389).

In the novel Jake Hersh - a secular and assimilated Jew – “allowed he was extremely concerned about the Israeli situation” during the Six-Day War (379). After Israel beat the Arab armies, acquaintances of the protagonist come up to him and congratulate him and buy him drinks, as if he had been personally involved in the war. And he accepts their compliments, since he feels that ‘we’ “did it” and he is convinced his cousin Joey was there, in the midst of it, and probably even at the most prestigious front, the “struggle for Jerusalem” (385). When he goes through all the papers, looking for a picture of his cousin, he finds a picture of the one Israeli soldier he met in Israel among the leading Israeli officers. Jake assumes that Colonel Elan “had fought bravely, leading his men, not following after” (385). Even though he did not like the Colonel very much while he was in Israel, Jake has great respect for his military character and abilities and now views him in the most positive terms. “Colonel Elan, looking uncommonly handsome and assured” (385). Even though Jake is a left-wing liberal and anti-War activist, he can’t help feel proud of the Israeli victory and personally affected by it.

Jake is also convinced that most North American Jews will have “given generously to support the Israeli war effort” (385). He is filled with pride and maybe for the first time in a long time identifies with Israel and Jews all over the world. Throughout this novel Richler demonstrates how The Six-Day War served as a catalyst that brought Jews closer together to each other and to Israel.

4.1.4 Jewish Criticism of Israel

“Jewish boys and girls, children of the generation that saw Auschwitz, hate democratic Israel and celebrate as ‘revolutionary’ the Egyptian dictatorship. Some of them pretend to be indifferent to the anti-Jewish insinuations of the Black Panthers; a few go so far as to collect money for Al Fatah, which pledges to take Tel Aviv. About this, I cannot say more; it is simply too painful.” (Irving Howe qtd. in Alexander & Bogdanor xi)

While the Six-Day War was a point in time when identification with Israel was at an all-time high, increasingly many Jews have also become very critical of Israel, some of them even feel more hostile towards Israel than gentile anti-Semites. These negative feelings about Israel concentrate mostly on the Israeli army and its confrontations with the Palestinians, as well as Israel’s wars with Arab countries. When Israel fought wars in which they were not simply defending themselves but

also taking the offensive, some Canadian Jews became less supportive of Israel. It seems that while most Canadian Jews want the State of Israel to survive, they want this to happen without military confrontations. Either because they are against war in general or because they believe that the Israeli army carries out acts which are irreconcilable with Jewish morals and ethics, which in turn sheds a negative light on World Jewry in the eyes of Gentiles and motivates anti-Semitic outburst in the Diaspora.

Whilst many Jews in the Diaspora have become outspoken critics of Israel and its army, they also "often experience censorship and reprobation at the hands of fellow Jews when they try to talk to the Jewish community and the larger community about the issue" (Morris 20). For many Jews criticism of Israel is still a taboo, or something that should never be discussed outside of the Jewish community. Mordecai Richler has often been criticised by the larger Jewish community for his negative portrayal of Jews and his criticism of Israel. Like Philip Roth in the United States, Richler was chastised by the Jewish community because "many believed Richler was revealing private stories, intimate narratives of Canadian Jewish life that did not require public airing. Richler himself has said that he is interested in criticizing the 'things I believe in or am attached to' - liberal values, Jews, and Canada" (Ravvin, *Mainstream* 12).

In his novel *St. Urbain's Horseman*, Richler depicts a Jewish character, Jake Hersh, criticising Israel and being reprimanded for it by his family. This is reminiscent of Richler being criticised by the Jewish community about writing negatively about Israel or Jews. Mordecai Richler himself has said that Jake Hersh is the character who most resembles his own opinions and sentiments. He is "closer to me than anybody else" (qtd. in Ramraj 9). Jake Hersh has strong feelings about Israel. While he can't help feeling relieved and proud that Israel won the Six-Day War, his feelings are not free of ambivalence. For example, he hesitates to give money to the Israeli war effort, but in another scene he thinks about volunteering for the Israeli army. He regards Moshe Dayan as a hero, but he also knows that if Dayan had been the General of a different army, he would despise him. He realizes that when it comes to Israel Jews apply different criteria than when it comes to other countries. This makes him feel guilty because, while he feels an obligation to

support Jews and the Jewish state, he also feels that he should stand by his convictions. In the end "Jake wrote out a check, but unhappily. Being the old kind of Jew, a Diaspora Jew, he was bound to feel guilty either way" (385). He is not able to pick one side, and feels dual loyalty, not to two countries, but to two 'states of mind'. That of the Jew who supports Israel and the Jewish people, and that of the liberal who rejects military actions.

In another novel - *Barney's Version* - Richler creates a Jewish character that is in charge of collecting donations for Israel. This character enjoys hearing about anti-Semitic attacks, because it makes it easier to collect donations. This character uses fear mongering to collect donations and is a very negative character.

'Don't get me wrong. I'm against anti-Semitism. But every time some asshole daubs a swastika on a synagogue wall or knocks over a stone in one of our cemeteries, our guys get so nervous they phone me with pledges. So, things being how they are this year, what you've got to do is slam-dunk your target about the Holocaust. Shove Auschwitz at him. Buchenwald. War criminals thriving in Canada to this day. Tell him, 'Can you be sure it won't happen again, even here, and then where will you go?' Israel is your insurance policy, you say. (162)

There are many anti-Semites who say Jews use the Shoah to receive undue compassion and pity and to cover up unjustifiable acts by the Israel army. It is no wonder that Richler received strong criticism for creating this character from his Jewish readers and was accused of being a self-hating Jew.

4.2 Diaspora

4.2.1 **The Jewish Diaspora**

The Canadian-Jewish Community is part of the Jewish Diaspora. "Current theories of Ethnic Identity describe Diasporas as culturally distinct groups scattered in distant countries who stay in touch with their homelands and with each other" (Schoenfeld, "Jews" ch. 6). In the context of this paper the term 'Diaspora' describes "the Jewish experience of displacement from the land of Israel and the dispersal of the community to multiple locations" (Shapiro 55). One can only talk about Diaspora if a sense of connection exists with a former homeland. "This sense of connection must be strong enough to resist erasure through the

normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating and distancing” (James Clifford qtd. in Shapiro 56).

Diaspora is a loaded term, which “suggests periphery, and necessarily implies an organic, original, more authentic sense of rootedness in a centre elsewhere” (Shapiro 76). Many Canadian Jews would disagree with a statement claiming their rootedness in Israel, however, they might agree with the assertion that “Diaspora necessarily suggests a doubled relationship or dual loyalty towards places, that assumes some connection to the location currently inhabited, alongside a continued involvement with and relationship to ‘back home’” (Clifford, Lavie and Swedenburg qtd. in Shapiro 76). Israel doesn’t supersede Canada in the heart of most Canadian Jews, but it holds an equally important status, at least for some. If Canadian Jews had to decide between allegiance with Canada or Israel, most would probably choose Canada. However, if the choice was between Jews and non-Jews, many of them would align themselves with Jews, since their connection to other Jews is stronger than their connection to either state. This explains the importance of Israel to non-religious Jews; it is not the land or its history that accounts for its importance, but the fact that it is the homeland of the Jewish people and the only place in the world where Jews are in power and can control their own destiny.

4.2.2 The Relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry

Israel is very important for Diaspora Jewry; however, this relationship is not free of ambivalence, and especially Jews in North America seem to have a hard time with supporting Israel 100%. This ambivalence is nicely illustrated in the short story “The Brief Summer of Amir and Ariella – An Allegory” by the Canadian writer Josh Lambert, which – as the title suggests - can be read as an allegory of the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. In this short love story an Israeli and a Canadian Jewish girl function as stand-ins for Israel and Canadian Jewry. They at first admire each other and start a relationship, but it falls apart due to their differences and their inability to overcome those differences. But even after they split up, they never stop thinking about each other and never manage to find somebody else to fill the gap left by their breakup. “She is the most beautiful girl he will ever hold” (94). Israel will never have a better friend than Diaspora Jews.

"She flirts with all types of boys and men [...], but no man will make her feel as safe and protected as she remembers feeling with him" (95). Though they will look for other allies, Israel has a special place in the heart of Diaspora Jews, which no other country can ever fill, and in times of danger the only country where they feel safe and protected from anti-Semitism is Israel. "They live without each other, almost unaware of their longing and comforted by their memories of those brief weeks when they were together in a world that made perfect sense" (95). In respect to Israel and North America this might refer to the time after the Six-Day War when North American Jews were proud of Israel and proudly declared themselves as Zionists. This was before the 1982 Lebanon War, and before criticism of Israel has spread to Jews. Before that time most Jews were supportive of Israel and there was no moral question for them to answer in regards to the Palestinians. Those were simpler times and many North-American Jews wish they could go back to those times. "She shows him gentleness; he shows her aggression" (90). The Diaspora and Israel learn from and compliment each other. While Jews have traditionally been seen as weak and an easy target of anti-Semitism, Israel has put this prejudice on its head and nowadays most Gentiles see Israel as a brute and aggressor. Israel and the Diaspora need each other; "it is Israel which prevents the universalism from degenerating into cosmopolitanism; it is the diaspora which saves Israel from becoming arrogant or parochial in her particularism" (Parkes 164). The Diaspora and Israel mutually need each other and can never be completely whole without the other side. "The phrase he wants, if it exists, is stranded somewhere between his two languages, and he can neither think it in Hebrew nor speak it in English. Eventually, he settles for 'I nid you'" (Lambert 90). The connection between Israel and Diaspora Jews can't be fully explained, it can't even be put in words, neither in Hebrew nor in English. It is somewhere in the middle with neither side privileged or disadvantaged.

For many observant Diaspora Jews it is difficult to justify to themselves why they are not living in Israel, since the Jewish exile officially ended in 1948, and they believe in G-d's commandment for Jews to live in Israel, which He gave to Abraham and which was meant for all future Jewish generations. One way to justify the existence of Diaspora life is its ability to "provide Israel with support from the outside" (Shulamit Reinharz qtd. in Salkin 65). By providing Israel with

support and giving Jews options of where to live, the Diaspora has a justification to exist, even in the times of a re-established State of Israel, which “claim[s] to be the exclusive place for Jews” to live (Brenner 109). Diaspora Jews are aware of their strong obligation to support Israel since they are the only ones supporting Israel, while “the Arabs have twenty-three Arab states and fifty Muslim states on their side” (Rabbi Alan Silverstein qtd. in Salkin 50).

4.2.3 Israel Experience Programs

Jewish community leaders in the Diaspora are often disheartened by how little interest the young generation of Jews seems to show in Israel. Therefore “the organized Jewish community has poured money and resources into Israel Experience Programs, with the goal of fighting assimilation and increasing attachment to Israel” (Shapiro 57). Israel Experience programs can take all kinds of forms from kibbutz work to archaeological digs and Jewish studies programs and can last between a few days to a year or longer.

After participating in an Israel experience program, many “participants come to develop a strong sense that compared to other countries there is something inherently different about the physical land of Israel” (Shapiro 61). They start seeing Israel as “a Jewish country that offers a unique freedom to express one’s Jewishness in public, [and many] were enthusiastic about the idea of being Jewish in what they perceive to be a society in which Judaism is a shared, common feature of life” (Shapiro 68). Israel is regarded as a place that “belongs to participants by virtue of their Jewishness and the impression of their footsteps” (Shapiro 59). One of the reasons Israel Experience programs are so successful in fostering a closer relationship to Israel and increasing Jewish self-identification among its participants, is the fact that for many people this is the first time they are in a country where they are part of the majority and where their own traditions and customs are carried out by and understood by nearly everybody else. This circumstance can only result in a sense of ‘belonging’ and affecting an emotional response in the people experiencing it.

The very important and successful program “Birthright Israel” was inaugurated in 1998. “Financed by the Israeli government, private donors, and the Council of

Jewish Federations, the program commits to paying for the airfare to Israel and the first ten days of an Israel experience program for Jews aged fifteen to twenty-six" (Shapiro 7). Michael Steinhardt, one of the donors of the Birthright Israel program, hopes that "the Birthright trip can develop into a tradition analogous to that of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah [...]. Our hope is that a trip to Israel will be another rite of passage of Jewish life" (Shapiro 7). Studies and queries carried out with Birthright Israel participants demonstrated the high success of the program in establishing a close connection to Israel for North American Jews, and placing Israel at the center of Jewish identity.

4.3 Jewish Power and Powerlessness

Jews have traditionally been in the position of the powerless, and that position has developed the special brand of Jewish humour. "Because people in power are able to deal with their problems directly, they have no need to settle for the personal gratification of a sharp put-down or witticism" (Telushkin 173). And even Israeli humour, which is not being created out of a position of weakness, produces its funniest jokes when dealing "with those aspects of life about which they feel powerless: the economy, the country's horrendous drivers, the bureaucracy that has resulted from decades of state socialism, the politicization of every aspect of life, the widespread rudeness of the population, and *yerida*" [emigration from Israel] (Telushkin 174).

Powerlessness and being victimized has always been a big part of the Jewish experience and Jews are well aware they are living in a "world capable of infinite evil, [and] the establishment of Israel restores to a segment of the Jewish people control over its own destiny. With the memory of the Holocaust fresh in our minds, the absence of power is a curse, and the State of Israel has removed that curse by returning power to Jewish hands" (Eric H. Yoffie qtd. in Pearl 115).

The existence of Israel is of the utmost importance because only a free, independent Jewish state is capable of preventing a second Shoah. That's why it is so important for most Jews anywhere in the world to ensure the continued existence of the State of Israel. Because Israel is the one place in the world where

"we Jews get to choose our own fate, rather than rely for our survival on the tolerance of others" (David Horovitz qtd. in Pearl 35).

While most Jews are in agreement on the importance of the continued existence of the State of Israel, they diverge on how this existence should be brought about and defended. Israel's military successes mainly affect Jews in the Diaspora in two ways; either they are proud of Israel's victories, or they are repulsed by the mental image of Israeli soldiers fighting Palestinian civilians.

For many Diaspora Jews this image of an aggressive Israeli military is one that they can't combine with their own ideas of what Judaism is and should stand for. They feel uncomfortable about a strong Israeli military because of the

tension between being victimized and fighting back, and the responsibility to Jewish tradition with its emphasis on ethical behaviour and a strong value of justice. These anxieties are produced by questioning what it means to fight back, or even, as the Israeli military sometimes does, instigating violence. (Morris 22)

According to Boyarin becoming a warrior is a step out of history for Jews, who traditionally choose evasion of conflict over fighting. He argues that there is an inherent difference between Jewish and European cultures, in regards to how they react to issues of power and dominance. Boyarin argues that the main difference between the Rabbis and European ideals of manhood is the importance that is set on "enabling continued Jewish existence versus defending sovereignty unto death" (Boyarin 315). While most Jews in modern age believe in fighting back against victimization, this belief is in direct opposition to the Jewish morals they have been taught, which stress the avoidance of violent confrontation.

Jewish writers, who want to portray this ambivalence towards the Israeli military often turn towards the figure of the golem. In Mordecai Richler's novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* Jake Hersh explains this mystical figure to his non-Jewish listeners: "The Golem, for your information, is the body without a soul. He was made out of clay by Rabbi Judah Ben Bezalel in the sixteenth century to defend the Jews of Prague from a pogrom and, to my mind, still wanders the world, turning up whenever a defender is most needed" (377). The golem "is a particularly appropriate figure for Jewish writers seeking to represent the complexities of the

Jewish relationship to power, powerlessness and justice in the light of the Holocaust and the founding of the state of Israel” (Morris 16-17).

There has been a “tremendous increase in the appearance of the golem in American Jewish literature” in the last few decades (Morris 20). This took place “against this backdrop of internal tensions within the American Jewish Community”, related to Jewish criticism of the Israeli army (Morris 20). The mainstream Jewish community doesn’t appreciate fellow Jews criticising Israel, at least not outside of the community. Therefore Jewish writers have turned to the figure of the golem, because by using it they don’t have to write about the Israeli army in literal terms, and they can reserve their criticism for ‘insider ears’ of other Jews, because they know what the figure of the golem signifies.

4.4 Shoah and Anti-Semitism

4.4.1 Israel as Safe Heaven from anti-Semitism

Israel’s status as a strong, powerful country is certainly especially important in light of the Shoah, and today most Canadian Jews view Israel as insurance policy against a second Shoah and a safe haven from anti-Semitism. At the same time Diaspora Jews are also constantly afraid of Israel being destroyed by one of its Arab enemies, and during Israel’s wars these fears are especially prominent. One of those wars was the Yom Kippur War in 1973, during which many Canadian Jews “perceived the crisis in stark terms: Israel’s future was at stake. Some even feared a second Holocaust” (Waller 83). As a consequence Canadian Jews created “The Coordinating Committee for Emergency Aid to Israel. Its establishment reflects the view that fund-raising was the one area where Canadian Jews could do something concrete on behalf of Israel” (Waller 83). Today this is still the way in which most Canadian Jews support Israel; by donating money to it.

For Jews throughout the world the danger of a second Shoah or similar persecution is a realistic threat, “given the assault on Jews throughout history” (Shulamit Reinharz qtd. in Salkin 65). Many non-Jews don’t understand or even belittle this subconscious, yet ever-present Jewish fear, but they choose to forget or ignore the fact that the Shoah took place in a modern, civilized country in the

middle of the 20th century and anti-Semitism is ever present, even in 'enlightened' countries like Canada, the United States, Britain, etc. Jews on the other side are very much aware of the fact that there is only one place on earth "where the value of every Jewish life is immutable [and that Israel is] the only true sanctuary we will ever have in a world torn asunder by evil and hatred" (Assemblyman Dov Hikind qtd. in Salkin 80-81). In conclusion, "Israel stands as a bulwark against the inconceivable—the systematic annihilation of Jews" (Assemblyman Dov Hikind qtd. in Salkin 80).

As comfortable and safe Jews feel in North America, they still believe "that one day [they] may be forced to leave. So truth be told, I sleep better at night knowing there is not just the Land of Israel, but the sovereign State of Israel, the national homeland of the Jewish people, my constant, comforting 'where' for my ephemeral, fragile 'is'" (Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin qtd. in Salkin 72). And even if they themselves are not in immediate danger, knowing that Jews anywhere in the world have a place to go if they are at peril, provides comfort to World Jewry who is worried about each other. Some writers have even argued that "the tie that binds most [...] Jews to Israel is neither emotional nor religious, but is based on a practical, political concern for the security of world Jewry" (Eisen, Liebman and Cohen qtd. in Shapiro 56). This indicates that Israel's role for most Diaspora Jews is to protect World Jewry from annihilation and lower the risks of anti-Semitic attacks. The theory goes that if anti-Semites around the world know that Israel is willing to protect Jews worldwide and even interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries if it involves Jews, they will think twice about attacking Jewish communities. This theory seems to be correct, because although anti-Semitism still exists, the creation of the State of Israel has played a vital role in ensuring that anti-Semitism "is not nearly as virulent as it has historically been" (Harold Grinspoon qtd. in Salkin 74).

The biggest fear of Diaspora Jewry is the possibility that anti-Semitism will transform into a second Shoah, and they realize that "Israel is critical to assuring that an event as disastrous as the Holocaust [...] never again befalls our people" (Harold Grinspoon qtd. in Salkin 74). This is also true for Canada, where the Shoah constitutes the most important link between Canadian Jews and Israel. "On the

one hand, the Holocaust is the mirror through which the Canadian Jewish community sees the State of Israel and Israel is the safeguard against another Holocaust. On the other hand, Holocaust consciousness mobilizes the community to use its political influence for Jewish causes" (Brenner 109).

In Richler's novel *St. Urbain's Horseman* Jake Hersh returns to Montreal for his father's funeral and feels like he has stepped back in time, "returned to an innocent and ordered world he had mistakenly believed long extinct. Where God watched over all, doing His sums. Where everything fit. Even the holocaust which, after all, had yielded the state of Israel" (396). Richler talks here about the belief that the Shoah was G-d's punishment for Jews turning away from religion and the establishment of Israel a reward to those Jews who stayed true to the Jewish faith. Richler fails to mention the first part of this belief. Maybe he was worried about receiving criticism for somehow putting blame for the Shoah on Jewish shoulders. In any way, Israel is forever linked to the Shoah, be as it as a safe haven from the danger of a second Shoah, or as a reward for living through the Shoah and not giving up on the Jewish religion. Similarly to how G-d tested Job in the Torah in an attempt to see how faithful he would remain even if the worst imaginable things happened to him.

4.4.2 Anti-Semitism passes as Anti-Zionism

While numbers of anti-Semitic attacks in Western countries are decreasing, hatred and vicious persecution of Israel is at an all-time high. Most of what passes as anti-Zionism or legitimate criticism of Israel is actually anti-Semitism. The world at large seems to be happy to have found "a respectable label for their racism. They call it anti-Zionism and that passes as viable" (Bernice Rubens qtd. in Pearl 40). The anti-Semitic feelings are the same as they have always been, but the Shoah gave anti-Semitism a bad name and for a while anti-Semites didn't know how to express their hatred, especially since criticism of Jews and Israel was taboo for a short time after WWII. All this changed in the 1960s and 1970s, especially with the political Left's adoption of Palestine as their pet project and Israel as their object of hatred.

Diaspora Jews know that attacks against Israel are actually attacks against Jews. "True, they may be dressed up as anti-Israel or anti-Zionist, but 'we people' are the ones under attack" (Lord Greville Janner qtd. in Pearl 72). When terrorist attacks take place in Israel, Canadian Jews feel as affected as Israelis or as concerned because they view the attacks not as actions against Israelis but against Jews. "Until recently, it was not acceptable for left-wingers to make anti-Semitic attacks. But now, that has changed" (Lord Greville Janner qtd. in Pearl 72). Left-wingers may claim that they are merely pointing out Israel's faults, but most Jews are well aware of the fact that criticism against Israel is mostly 'good, old-fashioned' anti-Semitism. And in Canada they are not alone, because Irwin Cotler, the Canadian Justice Minister researched modern anti-Semitism and found that most critical acts of Israel are actually a cover for anti-Semitism. He declared that

people become anti-Semites when calling for the destruction of Israel and the Jews; when denying the Jewish people's right to self-determination; when they de-legitimize Israel as a state or attribute all the world's evil to Israel; when Nazifying Israel, denying the Holocaust or singling out Israel for discriminatory treatment in the international arena. (Gerstenfeld ch. 1)

Especially the last point is carried out on a daily basis by international politicians from all parties. In the Canadian magazine *Macleans* Barbara Amiel wrote about the disproportionate condemnation Israel receives from the UN and the world press, while other countries barely receive a reprimand.

Israel, less than 60 years old with only 6.4 million people, appears to soak up most of the world's moral outrage at the expense of many worse situations unremarked. The inaugural session in Geneva last month of the newly constituted United Nations Human Rights Council spent its time focused on "Israeli human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories." Never mind violations in Darfur, China, Zimbabwe, etc. Iran's delegation included Saeed Mortazavi-a wry touch. Mortazavi is Iran's prosecutor general, implicated in torture and illegal detentions. Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi died while in his custody. There were no international warrants for his arrest in Geneva when he checked in as there would have been had comatose Ariel Sharon shown up. At least, if Canada's own Louise Arbour had her way.

Particularly the disproportionate reproaches of Israel by the international community, instigated no doubt by one or more of the 50 Muslim countries or the odd anti-Semitic politician in a Western country, has led many Jews around the world to defend Israel even more than before and ignore even reasonable criticism

of Israeli actions against the Palestinians. In the same way anti-Semitism reinforced Jewish identity, unjustified criticism of Israel increases Jewish solidarity with Israel.

4.5 The Jewish Homeland

The creation of the modern State of Israel in 1948 has allowed the Jewish people to return to its ancient homeland after nearly two thousand years and again feel included in the family of nations and determine its own destiny. Without Israel the Jewish people would still be "outsiders, sojourners, a wandering people always in the minority" (Samuel Heilman qtd. in Salkin 85). Israel's existence allows Diaspora Jews to know that there is "a place where all things are possible for us" (Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz qtd. in Salkin 86).

When Canadian Jews travel to Israel for the first time they are often overwhelmed by the feeling of homecoming, belonging and being connected "to something purposeful and larger than myself" (Wayne L. Firestone qtd. in Salkin 53). They often realize a seemingly obvious fact for the first times in their lives: "Jews have a homeland in Israel" (Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz qtd. in Salkin 86). Most of all they are usually delighted by the fact that 'everyone is a Jew' and all the signs are in Hebrew. Seeing signs in the language they usually learned as children and they know has been passed on in their family for countless generations gives them "a sense of identity and belonging. We wandered no more" (Larry King qtd. in Pearl 53).

Most Jews who visit Israel can sense that it is different from other countries, but they can't explain why. One way in which Israel is different than any other country, is that it "is the only democracy in the world that has had to fight for its life from inception to the present" (Ruth R. Wisse qtd. in Pearl 8). But more likely the difference they talk about is the fact that it is the only country in the world where Jews are in the majority and in a position of power, where Hebrew is the dominant language and Jewish holidays are the public holidays. For Diaspora Jews who have always been a minority and never part of the mainstream, this is a very significant change; one that everybody notices, if only subconsciously. Another reason Jews from anywhere in the world feel at home in Israel is the fact that

Israeli culture incorporates many Jewish values: "The cherishing of children. The redeeming of an abducted community member. Using your brain when there are no other natural resources. Talking and reading and writing" (Sylvia Barack Fishman qtd. in Salkin 9). Even secular Israeli culture stems from Jewish origins.

Many Jews come back to Israel again and again, and also won't let terror attacks deter them from visiting and supporting Israel. When asked why they willingly put themselves in danger, one of the answers that appear frequently is: "This is where I belong" (Ida Haendel qtd. in Pearl 79). "Israel is the birthplace of both the Jewish people and the Jewish soul throughout our three thousand years of travel to, in, and from it" (Michael Bogdanow qtd. in Salkin 60). Israel is not only a safe haven for Jews from all over the world, but it is actually a homeland that "pulls us ever back to our roots and one in which the world can see a nation with a proud heritage of freedom and democracy, fighting for a democratic way of life" (Shoshnah S. Cardin qtd. in Salkin 143). Israel is at the intersection of the longstanding Jewish tradition of "being torn between nostalgia for a glorious mythic past and the longing for a redeemed and perfect future" (Rabbi Bradley Hirschfield qtd. in Salkin 102). Israel is the place where both these longings can be fulfilled.

Israel has held special meaning for the Jewish people for thousands of years throughout its exile. "We have been evicted from countries—never to return—and have risen, as in the Golden Age of Spain, only to fall, as during the Inquisition. But our collective memory of Israel and our connection to it has never ended" (Michael Bogdanow qtd. in Salkin 60). The return to Israel has been the dream of the Jewish people since its expulsion; its existence now is a gift that many believe Diaspora Jews should appreciate and honour by either moving to Israel or at least visiting frequently.

When I think of being Jewish, I think of eighty generations of grandfathers and grandmothers, all holding hands. They're now looking at me, and with their eyes they whisper: "We've been praying, learning, suffering, debating, and asking for two thousand years for what you have right now: the chance to take that final step back to our homeland." (David Suissa qtd. in Pearl 86)

In her poem "My Travels" the Canadian writer Miriam Waddington alludes to the status of Israel as the Jewish homeland and her own personal connection to Israel, when she talks about a document signed by Simon Bar Kochba, a famous Jewish leader during the rebellion against Roman occupation 2000 years ago:

On the mountains
of new Jerusalem
in a house of
glass and stone
I read in a broken
Alphabet the deed
of sale written
in the hand of
my forefather Bar
Kochba

Later in the poem the narrator talks about feeling homesick and going back to Canada, but to her surprise she doesn't know where her true home is anymore.

I am homesick I
am packing up
I am going home
but now I don't
know anymore
where home is.

In his short story "The Street" Mordecai Richler describes the Jewish community of Montreal of the 1930s and demonstrates how the wish to re-establish the Jewish homeland was on everybody's mind and even influenced their attitude towards the British Royal Family. Since "neither could they help or hinder the establishment of Israel", they seemed of no consequence to them (45). Also they felt that the Jewish kings Solomon and David were much more impressive, and that they therefore "could afford to be patronizing" (45). Once it became clear that Britain was not interested in helping to establish Israel, attitudes of Canadian Jews like *St. Urbain's Horseman's* hero Jake Hersh turned negative. "He had despised the British because they stood between him and his homeland" (189). During World War II Canadian Jews were willing to donate money for British people in need, but they were much more willing to donate money for Israel. "He helped collect money for Bundles-for-Britain and later, from the same houses, more money to buy arms for Hagana" (190). When Jake finally visits Israel, even though at that time he had become a secular, non-observant Jew, he can't help thinking of Israel in Jewish

religious terms and getting excited. "Jake began to feel elated. After all, this was Eretz Yisroel. Zion" (251). In Richler's short story "The Street" the protagonist travels to Europe after World War II and when he comes back home to Canada "my uncles reproached me for not having been to Israel" (38). This suggests that visiting Israel is something that can be reasonably expected from Canadian Jews if they are physically close to it.

One of the reasons Canadian Jews feel they are qualified in speaking out on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is the Jewish belief that Israel "is a place to which all Jews have a spiritual claim" (Lynn Schusterman qtd. in Salkin 98). Coming home to Israel is considered by many a divine birthright, which may be one reason the founders of an Israel Experience Program have named it 'Birthright Israel Program'. Different from any other country in the world, Israel is a place that millions of people can hold a claim to, even if they have never visited or lived there. The mere fact that they are Jewish entitles them to move to Israel at any time they want and acquire Israeli citizenship.

4.6 Israel as Common Jewish Denominator

4.6.1 Israel Connects World Jewry to Each Other

As most Diaspora Jews have turned away from religion and frequently also from Jewish traditions, often the only thing unifying them is the State of Israel and the need to support and defend it. With Jews living in so many different countries and cultures around the world, Israel has become "the common denominator in the Jewish world, so one hope for ensuring the future of the Jewish people lies in institutionalizing the connection between Israel and the Diaspora" (Beilin 7). Israel is the strong connection Jews from all over the world share with each other; "differences in looks, language, or religious observance" are being cancelled out by the fact that they are all part of the Jewish people and feel connected to the Jewish homeland; Israel (Matthew Brooks qtd. in Salkin 10).

"The sense of Jewish peoplehood [...] represents the strongest component of Jewish identity today" (Fox & Scheffler 175). For most Jews in the Diaspora, Israel is the "chief embodiment" of Jewish peoplehood, and they are committed to its

survival (Meyer 81). "The sense of peoplehood remains stronger than any other foundation of common Jewishness" (Meyer 82). Even though there are increasingly tensions and disagreements between Diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews, strong ties of peoplehood ensure that "their shared sense of solidarity" will go on (Fox & Scheffler 175).

Diaspora Jews, independent of their level of religiousness, fully accept the status of Israel as the center of the Jewish world. An example for this centrality is the discussion currently going on in Israel regarding the question if the Chief Rabbinate should be the only authority on conversions to Judaism in Israel or not. A seemingly local discussion has incensed Jewish communities all over the world who feel they will be impacted by whatever decision will be reached. "The importance world Jewry ascribes to how Israeli authorities define a Jew gives Israel centrality in the Jewish world even before it [became] the largest Jewish community in the world" (Beilin 67). Even though Israel has no authority over religious decisions made by Diaspora Jews, it possesses a kind of 'natural' authority on all Jewish and religious matters in the eyes of World Jewry. This authority is anchored in the belief that, "in many ways, Israel reflects the collective consciousness and best efforts of world Jewry" (Stanley P. Gold qtd. in Salkin 167).

4.6.2 Israel's Survival Equals the Survival of the Jewish People

Israel functions as the representative of the Jewish people when it comes to survival and keeping the Jewish spirit alive, which has been under constant attack from the beginning. "The continuously embattled nation of Israel, is also among the tiniest nations on the globe, yet manages to survive. Everyone knows by now that no one can kill our spirit, yet some are still trying" (Jackie Mason qtd. in Pearl 80). Diaspora Jews identify with Israel and for the most part feel personally affected when an attack takes place in Israel. In *St. Urbain's Horseman* Jake Hersh, being the liberal Jew that he is, tries to reason with his relatives and tell them that the Israelis were also committing horrible acts during the Six-Day War, but his family only gets angry at what they perceive as his 'self-hating Jew' persona and say that Egypt was ready to carry out a second Shoah. "By Jake here,

whatever we do is rotten. Whatever they do is A-1. Do you know they had ovens ready in Cairo for our people?" (401)

In Jewish-Canadian literature Canadian Jews are usually depicted in a state of agitation when they hear Israel is under attack. They fear that Israel will be destroyed and even secular Jews like Jake Hersh, who is often critical of Israel and ambivalent about the Israeli army, feels that he "would have to volunteer. He would be obliged to fight" (384). Like most other Jews he feels that the survival of Israel is critical for the survival of World Jewry and that every Diaspora Jew will have to make sacrifices to ensure Israel's survival.

4.7 Israel's Centrality in the Jewish Religion

While "at first glance, an attachment to Israel appears to be a cornerstone of North American Jewish life, Steven Cohen (1991) asserts that, contrary to this public impression, Israel remains largely peripheral in the private religious sphere for most American Jews" (Shapiro 56). Although Israel is central for public Jewish life in North America, "most American Jews know nothing of the centrality of the land of Israel in the Jewish religious tradition" (Shapiro 56). Judaism for many Jews nowadays has less to do with religion and more with Jewish peoplehood. Though Israel in modern times seems to have little religious importance for Canadian Jews, "for almost 2,000 years, until the creation of the contemporary state of Israel, the idea of the *land* of Israel functioned as an integral part of Judaism" (Elazar qtd. in Shapiro 72) and "the goal of return to the idealized land of Israel, regardless of how spiritualized and future-oriented, has formed a central part of the Jewish experience until the modern era" (Elazar qtd. in Shapiro 73).

Most Israel Experience programs don't focus on Israel's religious meaning since they know a large fraction of their participants will be secular Jews, but one program that tries to create a religious experience for its participants is *Livnot*. The ambition of the organizers is for participants to "assign the religious meaning and personal relevance to the country that transform it from vague space into holy place, any land into homeland" (Shapiro 55). While most Canadian Jews see Israel's importance in its safe haven for world Jewry, "*Livnot* allows North American Jews to feel that Israel possesses some inherent, religious meaning,

value and significance beyond simply its political importance as a modern nation-state" (Shapiro 75). Whereas the ideal outcome of most Israel Experience programs is to create "future immigrants or philanthropic supporters of Israel, *Livnot* achieves something far more subtle. The program makes the 'traditional', religiously meaningful concept of Israel and the longing for it a palpable, plausible possibility for participants" (Shapiro 77). The organizers of *Livnot* are seemingly not interested in trying to push the participants towards immigration to Israel, but to form a deeper bond to Judaism and the Jewish community via a connection to the mystical Eretz Israel.

Even though most participants of the *Livnot* program are non-religious, many of them "expressed their joy at being in a place where 'everything' shuts down on Shabbat" (Shapiro 68). Even if that might mean inconvenience for them, they respect and appreciate that Israel is religious enough to shut down on Shabbat. This has less to do with a general respect for religious observance, but more with their impression that leading a religiously Jewish life is the most authentic kind of Jewish life, and in Israel 'everybody' seems to be living an authentic Jewish life.

4.8 Israeli Characters in Jewish-Canadian Fiction

4.8.1 **The Rude, Aggressive and Resourceful Israeli**

Israelis are usually depicted as being rude or aggressive in Jewish-Canadian literature. Very often it is also alluded to their time served in the Israeli army and a certain toughness in them is implied. "He [Amir] is twenty-four years old and has already served his country as a soldier and an officer" (Lambert 85). While most people around the world, including Jews, consider Israelis to be rude and abrasive, "Israelis do not commonly think of their society as rude but as *dugri*, Hebrew slang that suggests no beating around the bush" (Telushkin 176). What is seen as rudeness by other cultures is viewed as straightforwardness by Israelis. Israelis don't see the value of many social customs and instead put great importance on honesty and 'saying it like it is'. What at first is considered rude by outsiders often becomes one of the most endearing features for Diaspora Jews when they get to know Israelis better. Especially the Israeli custom of interfering with everybody

else's business as if they are family is considered charming and wonderful by Diaspora Jews, who appreciate the inclusiveness of Israeli culture.

In the short story "The Brief Summer of Amir and Ariella – An Allegory" Amir, the Israeli, plays basketball in a very aggressive way, without giving any thoughts to injuring the Canadian boys he is playing against. The Canadian Jewish girl he is dating is repelled by seeing his aggressive behaviour, but secretly she can't help picturing Amir beating up a teacher she had problems with. This is similar to the way some Canadian Jews feel about the Israeli army. They accuse them of being extremely aggressive and unnecessarily violent, but secretly they often admire them exactly for those characteristics. Jews being the aggressors is still the exception and most Canadian Jews would consider themselves as physically weak and intellectually strong.

In Matt Cohen's *Elizabeth and After* the Jewish character Carl is violent and threatens a Gentile who broke into his house and killed his cat. He believes that if he doesn't defend himself or is aggressive, then people will try to take advantage of him. This echoes the way Israelis and many Diaspora Jews think about themselves and the Israeli military. If they are not seen as violent and dangerous then they will be attacked by one or more of Israel's many enemies and its survival would be at stake. "How's a man to defend himself if he can't fight? A man stops fighting and people try to take advantage of him. You know? People start to think they can get away with things" (99).

The foundation of the modern state of Israel was one of those moments where every Jew alive at the time will always remember where they were when they first heard about it. And consequently they like to refer to that moment as a time reference. "Born the same month as the state of Israel" (Gladstone 195). Jewish characters are sometimes described in comparison with Israel, and similarities are being presented as positive characteristics. "Both were small but tough, impossible to push around, and highly resourceful" (Gladstone 195). The terms in which Israel is being described are usually in terms of its toughness, resilience and scrawniness. Rarely do Jewish-Canadian writers focus on its geographical features or its high degree of culture. It seems that Israeli characteristics worthy of discussion are only those related to its military prowess, be it by its admirers or

detractors. "Verbal competitiveness and aggression" are regarded as not only Israeli but typical Jewish characteristic (Telushkin 17). However, to illustrate this characteristic of Diaspora Jews Telushkin talks about discussions in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset (17). Anybody trying to make a general observation about World Jewry is likely to refer to Israeli examples, since Israel is regarded as representing all quintessential Jewish qualities.

The Israeli soldier, whom Jake Hersh meets in Israel, is described in poetic language in *St. Urbain's Horseman*. "A Colonel Elan, [...] was waiting for him. Squat and sinewy, his solemn face hardened by the wind, Elan was casually dressed. 'Shalom,' he said" (252). While he is small like most Jews, his features are strong and his face is 'solemn' and 'hardened by the wind'. This description very much depicts him as the romanticized character of the Israeli soldier, who is quiet and strong. Richler uses for him unusually poetic language to describe Colonel Elan. This seems to indicate an admiration Jake feels for the Israeli army and its soldiers.

4.8.2 The Difference between Israelis and Canadian Jews

Different from many Canadian Jews, Israelis are mostly working class and can only dream of the riches many Canadian Jews grow up with. "Amir tries to forget his room in his parents' three bedroom apartment in Ashkelon, and how he has to ask two days in advance to borrow his mother's 1986 *Corsica*" (Lambert 92). When Jake Hersh travels to Israel he is confronted by Colonel Elan, who reminds him of this large difference between Israel and Canada, or at least Canadian Jews; Israel is a poor country in need of financial support. "It's because we need the currency. We need it to survive" (Richler, *Horseman* 254).

In the short story "The Brief Summer of Amir and Ariella – An Allegory" the two main protagonists; an Israeli man and a Jewish-Canadian girl, are very different from each other, but since they don't know how to talk about their differences they avoid talking about them at all and instead concentrate on what attracts them to each other. Similarly many Canadian Jews and Israelis focus on what connects them; their heritage and religion, and don't talk about the things that separate them from each other, like their political views. "We have nothing to talk about.

[...] He said he doesn't even go to temple on rosh hashana or yom kippur or anything even though hes [sic] from Israel" (Lambert 92).

Another major difference between Israelis and Canadian Jews is the lack of religious observance on the Israeli side. Most Israelis are non-religious and even make fun of Diaspora Jews who follow the commandments. This often astounds Diaspora Jews who expect a country in which 'everybody is Jewish' to be especially religious, since there is no overt anti-Semitism, or other reason for them to not practice their religion. What they don't realize is that anti-Semitism has kept the Jewish people together to a degree for the last 2000 years. If nobody else wants to interact with you, or treat you like an equal, you are forced to stick with your own. Also, religious practices often acquire more meaning if you are kept from performing them. If a simple gesture like lighting candles on Friday night constitutes an act of defiance, people are more likely to carry it out if they care about their heritage. In Israel, where there are no restrictions on practicing the Jewish religion, many people have turned away from religion as a means to define their identity.

Since Jews in Canada and other countries around the world are still in the minority, they often practice religious customs as a way to strengthen their Jewish identity, remind themselves of who they are and distinguish themselves from the Gentiles around them, even if they have become secular Jews. In Israel, where 'everybody is Jewish', there is no need to remind yourself of your Jewish identity by keeping the commandments. While Jews in the Diaspora usually define Jewishness as a religion, in Israel it is much more fitting to describe it as an ethnicity. This harkens back to the discussion of who is a Jew. Judaism is not just a religion, it is a people, the people of Israel or 'Am Israel' in Hebrew.

5. CONCLUSION

As this paper has demonstrated, Jewish characters in Jewish-Canadian literature care very strongly about their Jewish identity and the well-being of the worldwide Jewish community. Even though Jewish individuals have been living in Canada since the first days of its British colonial history and for a long time they have been made to feel as second-class citizens with fewer rights than British and French immigrants. This discrimination has forced Jewish individuals to forge strong bonds to their coreligionists and even after Jews received equal rights in Canada, those ties continued to remain strong.

Nowadays most Canadian Jews are secular but they still strongly self-identify as Jews. Instead of the Jewish religion they base their Jewish identity on shared history, familial ties and anti-Semitic persecution, especially during the Shoah. While most modern Canadian Jews are secular, many continue to adhere to religious rules like keeping kosher, lighting candles on Shabbat, fasting on Yom Kippur, etc. as a way to strengthen their Jewish identity and distinguish themselves from their gentile compatriots.

Another way for secular Jews to strengthen their Jewish identity is to care about and support the Jewish state of Israel. Being actively involved with the State of Israel allows secular Jews to feel that they are leading authentically Jewish lives and that they have not given up their right to claim a Jewish identity by letting go of religion. Israel unites Jews around the world and reinforces their belonging to the Jewish people. Without Israel many secular Jews would have been fully assimilated and indistinguishable from their non-Jewish countrymen and –women. While most Jews nowadays live in Western, free countries they still are confronted by anti-Semitism, and the existence of Israel gives them peace of mind by knowing that in a worst case scenario there is always a place where they can go and be welcomed with open arms and protected. This is especially important in light of the Shoah and the increasing number of anti-Semitic attacks in even Western countries like the European Union and Canada over the last decade.

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ABSTRACT – DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es zu untersuchen, wie jüdisch-kanadische Schriftsteller Israel in ihren Texten porträtieren. In diesem Zusammenhang bezieht sich der Begriff "Israel" auf beide Bedeutungen des hebräischen Wortes; den Staat Israel (Medinat Israel) und das Volk Israel (Am Israel). "Am Israel" bezieht sich hier nicht nur auf diejenigen Personen welche im Staat Israel leben, sondern auf das jüdische Volk im Allgemeinen. Ein weiteres Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es zu untersuchen, ob beide Definitionen des Wortes Israel bedeutungsvoll und konsequent in jüdisch-kanadischer Literatur vertreten sind. Da es sich hierbei um eine Arbeit im Gebiet der Literaturwissenschaft handelt, liegt der Fokus immer auf den literarischen Darstellungen dieser Beziehungen, aber ein kurzer Überblick über die tatsächlichen Umstände dieser Fragen wird offeriert, wann immer möglich.

Die Arbeit beginnt mit einem Blick auf das jüdische Leben in Kanada, welches die jüdische Geschichte und die Besonderheiten der jüdisch-kanadischen Erfahrungen beinhaltet. Das zweite Kapitel bietet eine Übersicht der jüdisch-kanadischen Literatur im Allgemeinen und eine kurze Einführung in einige ihrer wichtigsten Vertreter. Das dritte Kapitel wirft einen Blick darauf, wie das jüdische Leben in Kanada von diesen Autoren porträtiert wird und wie sie das Gefühl jüdischen Zusammenhaltes in ihren Texten darstellen. Das letzte Kapitel untersucht welche Bedeutung der jüdische Staat Israel für die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Canada hat. Dieses Kapitel vergleicht und kontrastiert auch die Wirklichkeit mit dem Bild, welches von jüdisch-kanadischen Literatur erzeugt wird.

Das Ergebnis der Recherche ergibt, dass jüdischen Charakteren ihre jüdische Identität und das Wohlbefinden der weltweiten jüdischen Gemeinschaft sehr wichtig sind. Für lange Zeit wurden Juden in Kanada als Bürger zweiter Klasse behandelt und diese Diskriminierung hat sie gezwungen, starke Bindungen zu ihren Glaubensgenossen aufzubauen, und auch nachdem Juden in Kanada gleiche Rechte erhielten verblieben diese Beziehungen stark und andauernd.

Heute sind die meisten kanadischen Juden säkular, aber sie identifizieren sich selbst immer noch sehr stark als Juden. Statt der jüdischen Religion stützen sie ihre jüdische Identität auf eine gemeinsame Geschichte, familiäre Bindungen und

antisemitische Verfolgung, vor allem während der Zeit der Shoah. Obwohl die meisten kanadischen Juden nicht religiös sind, führen sie weiterhin religiöse Traditionen aus, als eine Möglichkeit ihre jüdische Identität zu stärken und sich von ihren nichtjüdischen Landsleuten zu unterscheiden.

Eine weitere Möglichkeit für säkulare Juden ihre jüdische Identität zu stärken, ist den jüdischen Staat Israel zu unterstützen. Dies ermöglicht säkularen Juden zu spüren, dass sie ein authentisch jüdisches Leben führen und dass sie nicht ihr Recht auf eine jüdische Identität durch Loslassen von der Religion aufgegeben haben. Israel vereint Juden in aller Welt und stärkt ihre Zugehörigkeit zum jüdischen Volk, ohne Israel wären viele säkulare Juden vollständig assimiliert und nicht von ihren nichtjüdischen Landsleuten zu unterscheiden.

Während die meisten Juden heutzutage in westlichen, freien Ländern leben, werden sie immer noch von Antisemitismus konfrontiert, und die Existenz Israels gibt ihnen Seelenfrieden durch das Wissen, dass es im Notfall immer einen Ort gibt, wohin sie fliehen können und wo sie mit offenen Armen begrüßt und geschützt werden. Dies ist besonders wichtig vor dem Hintergrund der Shoah und der steigenden Zahl von antisemitischen Anschlägen in westlichen Ländern wie Kanada im letzten Jahrzehnt.

CURRICULUM VITAE

AUSBILDUNG

Mar 2009 – Sep 2009	University of Nevada, Las Vegas Recherche für meine Diplomarbeit
Sep 2007 – Jun 2008	University of Toronto Austauschstudienjahr
2005 - 2007	Universität Wien Diplom für Deutsch als Fremdsprache
2004 - 2011	Universität Wien Studium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik
2002 - 2004	New College Durham, United Kingdom BA in Management, Business and Administration
2000 - 2002	European Management Academy, Wien Diplom in International Management
1986 - 1994	Amerlinggymnasium, Wien Matura
1982 - 1986	Volksschule Corneliusgasse, Wien

BERUFSERFAHRUNG

Seit Dez 2010	Selected Services GmbH Customer Support Mitarbeiterin
Nov 2009 bis Jun 2010	Berufsförderungsinstitut Wien Deutsch-Trainerin
Aug 2008 bis Feb 2009	Best Trainerin
Feb 2007 bis Okt 2008	Lernquadrat Nachhilfelehrerin in Deutsch und Englisch
Okt 2006 – Feb 2007	Vienna International School German Language Assistant
Mar 1998 – Okt 2006	Austrian Airlines Customer Service Agent

ZUSÄTZLICHE QUALIFIKATIONEN

- **IT**

- ECDL (European Computer Driving License)

- HTML, Flash, Dreamweaver

- Alle MS Office Applications

- **Sprachen**

- **Deutsch** – Muttersprache

- **Portugiesisch** – gut

- **English** – fließend

- **Italienisch** – Grundkenntnisse

- **Hebräisch** – fließend

- **Französisch** –
Grundkenntnisse

- **Spanisch** – gut

- **Trainerqualifikationen**

- Gender Mainstreaming Zertifikat

- Managing Diversity Zertifikat