

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

German Jewish Writers during the Decline of the Hapsburg Monarchy: Assessing the Assessment of Gershon Shaked

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Gershon Shaked is not only one of the founding fathers of Hebrew literary criticism, but his dilemma as a postwar scholar of Jewish literature reflects as well those of the writers whom he discusses and of the tradition he helps to found, both in Israel and abroad. His experience and his example go to the heart of contemporary Jewish identity. Indeed, they bring into focus the double-consciousness that is, perhaps, the signal feature of Jewish modernism, perhaps of modernism itself.

Which of Gershon Shaked's achievements as scholar and critic are most likely to last? It seems to me that the answer is twofold. Both parts are illustrative of his singular, and yet representative, position. Shaked has advanced a unique concept of history, and he has provided an equally illuminating approach to the connection between literature and life. In his masterly and massively erudite work on modern Hebrew literature, he unfolds a concept of history that is scarcely matched by any such concept in the West.¹ Faced by writers trying to create literature in a language with no literary tradition, writers who had started writing outside Israel, and were addressing a people not yet united in a nation-state, though striving to maintain a ramified heritage that was to be transplanted into *Eretz Yisrael*, Shaked, wanting to plumb the meaning of it all, was confronted with a formidable challenge. The need to reconcile such diverse elements could not be fulfilled by imposing a pattern from outside. The multifarious connections between the religious traditions, and their transposition into a present that was bound to affect them, required a notion of history that would be neither a

linear advance to an imagined goal nor the realization of a preordained telos.

History, then, as Gershon Shaked conceives of it, is a kaleidoscopically changing intertextuality by means of which all of the manifested facets of writers' texts are given a different slant when taken up in subsequent allusions. Thus modern Hebrew literature is presented as a mobile network in which the interlinkage between the heritage, the contemporary challenge, the flavor of localities, aims, and even utopian fantasies is continually processed. What Shaked allows us to see is that history is something that happens, and one might be inclined to maintain that modern Hebrew literature—at least for someone like myself looking at it from outside—provides a vivid picture of history as something in the making. This is the concept of history to which Shaked has given shape.

Shaked's idea of history, portrayed through modern Hebrew literature, would require further elaboration in order to reveal its potential for explaining change and transformation, but I should like to focus on his other achievement: his concept of literature as an adumbration of what lies buried in life. There is no doubt that this approach figures prominently in his interpretation of modern Hebrew literature; however, it can best be laid bare in what I am inclined to call the "deep structure" of the works of two Jewish authors who wrote in German at the eve of the decline and subsequent collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Joseph Roth (1894-1939).

In discussing this aspect of Shaked's work, I am not only on much safer ground than I would be with Hebrew literature, but I also sense a close affinity between himself and these two writers, who appear to have more than just literary significance for him. I should not like to judge which of the two aspects of Shaked's work is of greater import, but I have no hesitation in saying that his penetrating insights into Kafka and Roth are the most innovative I have ever come across.

Of course, it is hard—especially for an outsider like myself—to account for the impetus that made it possible for Shaked to open up the works of Kafka and Roth in such an original and illuminating manner. There are, however, certain indications to be found in his essay on Saul Friedländer, which is permeated by his own autobiographical reflections.² He talks of a pre-Holocaust experience shared by at least some Israelis of his generation, and such an experience, he continues, is at certain moments overwhelmingly

present; it does not obscure the monstrosity of the Holocaust, and yet there is a prevailing consciousness that one does not want to be freed from such an experience.³

Though the past is irrecoverable, it overshadows the present which, in turn, throws light on the past. It is in such a situation—as Shaked writes—that the survivor feels driven to find a place among the fragments of his mutilated self that will allow him to ponder whether there is any relationship at all between him as a victim and the identity imposed on him by his situation.⁴ As such a relationship is impossible to grasp, reflecting on it translates into a heightened sensibility for what it is like to dwell among the ruins of one's self. The trauma of the past can never be eradicated, and so there is no reconciliation with the countries of Europe that turned their backs on their erstwhile Jewish citizens. And Shaked concludes his essay on Friedländer by saying: "I too have lost the foundation of my existence, and hence there is no return to this once and forever destroyed basis."⁵

I am inclined to point out that although Shaked indeed did not return to where he started out from, he did focus on a not unfamiliar past, represented by writers like Kafka and Roth, whose work had fathomed the *condition juive* in the diaspora.⁶ Fiction is a mode of writing that allows one to be transported into otherwise inaccessible situations, but this is not Shaked's concern. Instead, he understands fictionality as a surface structure in which a mutilated life finds expression, though simultaneously without any hope of the catharsis that a manifestation of suffering seems to promise. Thus, the life of the past is present in the fictionality of these writers, the exposition of which—so lucidly done by Shaked—makes it possible to explore the shifting scenes between literature and life.

Before trying to detail this original approach, let me say a few words about the situation in which these German-speaking Jewish writers found themselves when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was on the wane. The Jews, as Hannah Arendt once remarked, were the "state people" (*Staatsvolk*) par excellence in Austria.⁷ "They did not constitute a nationality," as Carl Schorske has quite rightly observed, not even a so-called unhistoric nationality like

the Slovaks or the Ukrainians. Their civic and economic existence depended not on their participation in a national community, such as the German or the Czech, but, on the contrary, on not acquiring such a status. Even if they became assimilated completely to the

culture of a given nationality, they could not outgrow the status of “converts to that nationality.” Neither allegiance to the emperor nor allegiance to liberalism as a political system posed such difficulties. The emperor and the liberal system offered status to the Jews without demanding nationality; they became a supra-national people of the multi-national state. Their fortunes rose and fell with those of the liberal, cosmopolitan state. . . . Thus, to the degree to which the nationalists tried to weaken the central power of the monarchy in their interest, the Jews were attacked in the name of every nation. . . . If the emperor was supra-national, the Jews were subnational, the omnipresent folk substance of the Empire, whose representatives could be found in every national . . . grouping. In whatever group they functioned, the Jews never strove to dismember the Empire. That is why they became the victims of every centrifugal force, as soon as, and only as long as, that force aimed to subvert the Empire.⁸

This basic situation in which the Jews found themselves within the monarchy was overshadowed by a growing pessimism. As early as 1866, Emperor Franz Joseph had written to his mother: “One just has to resist as long as possible, do one’s duty to the last, and finally perish with honour.”⁹ At that time the emperor was only thirty-six years of age, to quote one authority in the field:

In his will he made arrangements in case “the crown should no longer remain with our House,” and he advised his daughter, Gisela [then living in Bavaria] to claim her fortune on his death, since “it would be safer in Germany than in Vienna.” Likewise, Archduke Rudolf [the crown prince of the empire] before committing suicide at Mayerling, wrote to his sister Maria Valerie, advising her to leave Austria “when Papa passes away” since, as he put it, “only I know what will happen then.”

This pessimism, however concerning “the future of the Monarchy from the 1890s onward can be linked . . . with the great cultural effervescence that was taking place there at the same time. This was the period after all of Schnitzler and von Hofmannsthal in literature; Freud in psychoanalysis; Mahler and Schönberg in music; Klimt and Schiele in painting; and Kraus in satire. Carl Schorske has suggested that the connection is to be found in a flight into art and aesthetics as a reaction to the political sterility of the times, while others have stressed the darker side of this cultural climax itself: the obsession with the ego, with sensuality, with ideology, and with death. . . . Karl Kraus, it will be recalled,

saw the intellectual ferment of his day as a sign of cultural decay or mental hysteria in an Empire that he damned as the 'research laboratory for world destruction'.¹⁰

We need not continue painting this picture of the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire; what has to be kept in mind, though, from this brief survey is the position of the Jews as the actual "state people" of the monarchy, who did not belong to any nationality but did not form one themselves, as well as the modernity that arose out of the declining empire and that—to an overwhelming extent—was the work of assimilated Jews. What Shaked allows us to perceive through his interpretation of Kafka and Roth are basic features of the *condition juive* in such a situation, and the extent to which the assimilated Jews not only brought about modernity, but simultaneously diagnosed it.

The *condition juive* was marked by a dual identity, which Kafka once described in a letter to Brod as follows: "With their hind legs the Jews are fastened to the Jewish tradition of the fathers, and with their forelegs they get no ground under their feet. The despair thus ensuing translates into inspiration."¹¹ Such a self-characterization, which Shaked quotes in full, is all the more remarkable as Kafka's writings show no trace whatsoever of his Jewish heritage, although in his diaries and letters he reveals a searching curiosity about European Jewry. In actual fact, shortly before his first book came out in 1912, he wrote to Felice Bauer, his one-time fiancée, that he would like to go with her to Palestine.¹²

This split between Kafka's private attitude and his work is Shaked's starting point for delineating what dual identity may entail. Kafka does not suppress his Jewish heritage, but transfigures it to such an extent that the deep structure of what it means to be a Jew in the diaspora is tellingly revealed. Shaked provides a phenomenology of this dual identity, which applies not only to Kafka but to Roth as well. Such an assessment distinguishes his approach from the great many allegorical readings to which Kafka has been so frequently subjected. Almost all of Kafka's novels and short stories are devoid of any temporal frame and spatial location. There are no references to either history or nationality. Within such timelessness, however, his characters face nonacceptance within a society that makes them into outsiders; they are in perpetual flight, driven from one place to another, accused without knowing what crime they are supposed to have committed, and thus made to feel guilty because they do not know what they have done.

Nonacceptance, persecution, and exile are made all the more oppressive by the thin air of abstraction that characterizes the world in which this humiliation occurs. There are no reasons to be ascertained for this debasement, and no redemption is foreshadowed in this guiltless suffering. Stripping his narratives of all these references, Kafka penetratingly drives home the situation of the diaspora Jew, and the implications of dual identity. If he had introduced into his stories local, social, and historical references, it would have been easy to blame these for his characters' sufferings. But by barring them, he bars all sociological explanations of what it is like to be without a nationality and without all the other attributes necessary for acceptance in a society that gains its stability not least by what it excludes.

Shaked concludes that Kafka transformed the *condition juive* into a new form of art by converting the fate of being outside history into an "absolute virtue," which is open to manifold interpretations.¹³ I am inclined to add that none of the interpretations provoked by this "absolute virtue"—which I take to be a cipher for what remains unspeakable—can ever exhaust its inherent unspeakability. Nevertheless, Shaked has provided us with a key to this cipher by highlighting dual identity as the hallmark of Kafka's writings. Dual identity means first and foremost that one has none at all, as it is a contradiction in itself to have two identities at the same time. Whoever is driven to a dual identity hangs in an in-between position, and thus experiences what is unattainable. Shaked offers two main explanations for such a situation.

One might say that the *condition juive* was marked by an external and an internal predicament on the eve of the decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On the one hand there was the pressure for assimilation to which Jews felt exposed because they did not belong to any nationality within this multinational realm, although, as Hannah Arendt has rightly claimed, they were the "state people" par excellence, and thus as supranational as the emperor himself. (One must add that such a qualification applied first and foremost to the Jewish elite.) On the other hand, the urgent need to become assimilated meant, as Kafka put it so succinctly, cutting oneself loose from the Jewish heritage without getting sufficient ground under one's feet.

Being exiled within the society in which they lived, and simultaneously responding to this nonacceptance by exiling themselves from their own heritage, the Jews found themselves in a dilemma when the empire was on the verge of collapse. Thus dual identity,

according to Shaked, entailed living in limbo, since two identities are mutually exclusive. As Kafka himself remarked, living in limbo led to despair, and yet this very despair was the source of his inspiration. This brings us back to Shaked's statement that Kafka transformed the Jewish situation into a new form of art. What is implied here is that Kafka does not confine himself to merely imitating the *condition juive* in the diaspora, but that he fathoms the very nature of duality as the mainspring of "inspiration." Being in limbo is a state that cannot be sustained in day-to-day living, and what is mutually exclusive, namely having two identities at once, can never be balanced within the demands of everyday life. And yet the very impossibility of living a dual identity created an urgent need to grasp the multifarious implications of such a situation. Kafka's fiction, therefore, is an enactment of what it is like to live in limbo; he explores all the potential ramifications, more often than not breaking off the very enactment by fragmenting the stories, thus intimating that there are no escape hatches.

There is a faint ring of Dante's *Inferno* in these stories, which is made all the more telling by the eclipse of all hope, let alone solution. What could be the "absolute virtue" of this new form of art, which quite rightly is perceived in Kafka's writings? One might answer this question by saying that fiction as an extension of human beings allows us to figure out what is beyond conceivability, such as the manifold defeats of living in limbo, and thus fictionality may turn into an artistic triumph, because it lures into presence what otherwise would remain ungraspable. This triumph would be Kafka's "virtue," in Shaked's terms. But in what way is it "absolute"? A tentative answer could be that it redeems an irredeemable situation by conjuring it up as an image. The image that Kafka has created of dual identity as life in limbo teems with suggestions that each reader is tempted to work out for him- or herself, only to learn that the references brought to bear cause a vast intangibility to collapse into a mere allegory, which has to be dismantled again in order to reincorporate features excluded from the explanatory pattern that readers fashion for themselves.

Shaked himself has demonstrated how such an experience is engendered in his reading of Kafka's novel *Amerika*. He likens the life of the hero to the myth of Sisyphus, though this does not imply that Kafka's narrative is just a recurrence of an ancient myth. Instead, the story functions, according to Shaked, as a means of spelling out the inconceivable implications of failed repetition.¹⁴ Each chapter has a unity of its own, yet their sequence does not

move forward, let alone point to what is to come. There is nothing but unending repetitive failures. Such a pattern of discontinuity, strictly observed in the composition of the novel, turns into a challenge for the reader. This becomes all the more compelling, as the surface structure of the text has a great many social references, tempting the reader to look for something underneath that may tie them together. But whenever the reader does try to provide missing links between the chapters, the bridges built have to be demolished again in view of the new information that is now to be accommodated.

Thus the established patterns must continuously be discarded. As this goes on to the "end" of the novel which—in actual fact, peters out into open-endedness—the reader is turned involuntarily into a Sisyphus, and is thus made to experience what it means never to get ground under one's feet.¹⁵ As the reader is driven to a cyclic repetition of failed meanings, the Sisyphus syndrome highlights an underlying pattern of the modern world, which realizes itself by continually invalidating any kind of reality. Consequently, a nightmarish unreality keeps growing, which makes the incidents perceived into palpable manifestations of an inescapable labyrinth, in which the reader is left to wander in a hopeless state of disorientation. It is interesting to note that Kafka, in a letter to Felice, described his ideal way of life as being locked away with his pen in a spacious vault, allowing him to delve into the innermost recesses of himself, tearing out into the open what is impermeable.¹⁶

Shaked's analysis of Kafka's *Amerika* becomes all the more intriguing when viewed in relation to the American Jewish authors to whom he devotes a great deal of his attention.¹⁷ If Kafka's *Amerika* is—as Shaked makes us see it—a panorama of flickering shapes that arise out of an inescapable labyrinth, it is diametrically opposite to the world of the American Jewish writers insofar as they exchange Kafka's labyrinth for mythological or literary patterns that structure their stories. Be it a Jewish Schlemihl in Malamud, a Caliban or a Don Quixote in Saul Bellow, characters from Fyodor Dostoyevsky or Leo Tolstoi in Lelchuk, or structures taken either from Boccaccio or the commedia dell' arte in Philip Roth—in all these instances, traditional European patterns serve the American writers concerned to explore social conflicts, to level criticism at the American way of life, or to meet the challenges of social Darwinism in the new world by trying to uphold moral standards inherited from their past. It is one of Shaked's most piercing insights that he has brought out the deep-seated difference between Kafka and the

American Jewish writers, not least by choosing for such a demonstration Kafka's *Amerika*, which allows him to drive home the predicament of dual identity. Execution would be a redemption for Kafka's hero, but perennial persecution is the only form of execution open to him. The setting of the New World thus serves only to make the dilemma more oppressive by canceling out the promises that the land of unlimited opportunity had seemed to hold in store.

Shaked's insight into dual identity as life in limbo, the salient features of which he has so masterfully delineated by contrasting Kafka's *Amerika* with the American Jewish writers, has yet another side to it, for it explains the tremendous fascination Kafka exercised after the Second World War. Although Shaked does not deal directly with the veritable explosion of interest that elevated Kafka to the pinnacle of modernity, he nevertheless provides a key to this unprecedented impact on contemporary consciousness. To what extent, then, is dual identity, demonstrated by Shaked so persuasively as a manifestation of the *condition juive*, also a pointer to the situation of subjectivity in the modern world?

Dual identity implies being grounded in neither identity, and such a situation squares almost exactly with what modern subjectivity is exposed to. It is the hallmark of the latter that any ground it might have, is withheld from it. This may be one of the reasons why ideologies have been so rampant in our century. They are concoctions devised to compensate for what remains unavailable. Unavailability of origins is the stigma of modernity that inscribes itself even into its compensations. Lack of access to any base is a nagging presence in the conscious life of the modern subject, whose decentered position makes it not only into a subject without self, but also into a vortex of ever-changing shapes. Such a duality is double-edged: on the one hand it may cause paralysis, but on the other it energizes the drive to cope with it.

Thus inaccessibility turns into the matrix of an experimental creativity, which is both the epitome and the predicament of modernity. Being wedged between dualities entails that, in Kafka's frightening terminology, there is no ground under one's feet. Simultaneously, it is impossible to keep alive in limbo, just as it is impossible to exist on the tip of a pin as Søren Kierkegaard, another forerunner of modernity, put it. This insoluble duality is at the heart of creation, as was sensed most keenly by the Jewish intellectuals of the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire in consequence of the paradoxical experience of dual identity to which this "state people" of the monarchy found itself condemned. It was the attempt

to overcome such imposed self-alienation that made the Jewish intellectuals of the empire into the spearhead of modernity.

There are similar traces also to be spotted in the work of Joseph Roth, to whom Shaked has devoted several important essays that are both enlightening and moving. Roth was Kafka's junior by eleven years, which makes all the difference between them in view of the historic changes Roth witnessed and was subjected to. Interestingly enough, Shaked does not deal with Roth's yearnings for the vanished monarchy, which Roth considered his *Vaterland* (fatherland)—a word that has its peculiar ring in German only. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was, as he solemnly avowed, his fatherland because it allowed him to be both a patriot and a citizen of the world, both an Austrian and a German among the many nationalities of the monarchy.¹⁸ Roth has built a monument to the perished empire in his masterpiece *Radetzky*, published in 1932, two years after his first really great novel *Hiob* had appeared. If the former is a lament for an irretrievable past, the latter describes the exodus from the shtetl. And it is to *Hiob* that Shaked has devoted his attention, not least perhaps as Roth's nostalgia for the empire remains on the surface of Jewish life, whereas Shaked wants to get down to its roots. Therefore he looks for traces of "Jewishness" in this German-Jewish novel on Job which, by common consent, is one of Roth's peak achievements. This search makes him explore the deep structure of Roth's narrative, just as he had done in his penetrating analysis of Kafka's work.

However, in Roth's case it is another form of duality that Shaked focuses on: that between different languages.¹⁹ Roth's hero, Mendel Singer, does not speak German, and so his language has to be transposed into an alien idiom. This becomes all the more intrusive when Jewish terms such as *melamed*, *schlemasel*, *matzo*, *tefilim*, or even German-sounding words like *kosak* have to be rendered in German, for whatever equivalent is given, the two designations never have the same meaning. This, as Shaked maintains, brings out a sociosemiotic duality.²⁰ Different cultural codes are coupled with one another, thereby throwing light on their respective specificity, and simultaneously adumbrating what cannot be fathomed and thus defies translatability. Hence we arrive at a paradoxical situation: what is represented in Roth's novel proves to be a state of affairs that does not exist in the very language through which it is presented.²¹

Again there is a palpable split that in turn brings out the quandary of assimilation. The heritage has to be defamiliarized in

order to be preserved, but it can only be preserved in a state of disfigurement. Simultaneously, Roth tries to make up for these sacrifices by what has been described as the intertextual patterns of the novel, which are programmatically indicated by the title of the narrative.²² The title foreshadows what is to come: namely a network of multilayered relationships between the Bible and a welter of texts from the Jewish canon, religious observances, myths, and legends, all of which are intertwined with, and shade into, one another. Such an intertextual pattern, in which the Jewish heritage as well as the life of the shtetl in all its facets is assembled, figures as cultural memory, thus overshadowing the process of assimilation that destroys Mendel Singer's family and turns him into a modern Job.

Cultural memory is collective memory, which cannot be genetically transmitted, and thus has to find its own form. Intertextuality is the epitome of cultural memory, through which forgetting and remembering, the feed forward of the storage, the representation of the absent, and the compensation for loss are given salient features. When cultural memory recalls the absent into presence, when it remembers what has been forgotten, and when it mourns what is irretrievably lost, a duality emerges, intertwining that which is ineluctably separate. Again a duality of a different sort looms large, and what it shows is the graduated sequence of ever-changing dualities into which the basic split of dual identity issues. Instead of a solution to the initially imposed self-division, this very split generates multiple dualities, each of which is marked by the effort to overcome what has caused it. There is a final duality in Roth's *Hiob* to which Shaked draws our attention. Emigration leads to catastrophe, and yet Menuchim, the son of Mendel, becomes an acclaimed artist, thus redeeming his social group through the recognition earned. Shaked explains this final duality as a parallel between a negative and a positive paradigm of assimilation.²³ Only the artist appears to be able to achieve reconciliation of the dual existence foisted upon him by the world in which he wants to assert himself.

Such a reconciliation was certainly Roth's own longed-for option, borne out not least by his correspondence with Stefan Zweig, whom he admired, as Zweig seemed to have found security in a paradise regained, whereas he, Joseph Roth, considered himself an outcast, cut off from where he wanted to belong.²⁴ Shaked conceives of this correspondence as an epistolary novel, which he reads as if an intended reader were implied.²⁵ It is only such an assumed

reader who can experience the exchange between Roth and Zweig as the inherent drama between the deracinated Eastern and the assimilated Western Jew. Never to be able to take roots again after having left the shtetl caused Roth to elevate Zweig into his super-ego, an adored stepfather, and a deeply revered prison guard. Shaked makes us feel how the split of dual identity cuts to the quick—a pain that Roth wanted to alleviate, if not to undo by an exaggerated devotion to Zweig, who featured for him as a role model, since he seemed to have overcome the stigma under which Roth labored all his life.

Reconciliation, however, is not an ultimate goal for Roth, in spite of his desire to achieve as an artist what his dual identity denied him. Nevertheless, fathoming the unfathomable made him, like his Jewish contemporaries, into a pioneer of modernity. Becoming an artist in order to redeem a bisected life has a hidden dimension to it that Roth explored in his short story "Leviathan," which Shaked has selected as the basis for his assessment of Roth as an artist.²⁶ The duality that Shaked spotlights in this story—published in its entirety only one year after Roth's death (1940)—reveals the deep structure that underlies dual identity, and simultaneously allows us to perceive the mainspring of artistic creation. The hero, Nissen Piczenick, is a peddler, dealing in corals that come out of the ocean in whose depths resides Leviathan, symbolizing both fecundity and destruction. The hero is drawn to this ambivalent symbol, and his craze for corals arises out of their doubleness, as these petrified creatures indicate for him the transference of life from water to land.²⁷ Thus the corals and Leviathan form a link between the unbounded space of the sea and the quotidian life of the shtetl. Piczenick has a deep emotional bond to corals, which for him are much more than just merchandise; the life of the shtetl, however, grows more and more unbearable for him.²⁸ Emigration becomes his burning desire, and it draws him more and more toward plunging into the ocean, in order to shed the identity by which he feels hedged in, and find another in the boundlessness of the sea. However, at the bottom of the ocean reigns Leviathan, whose duality is duplicitous, as he symbolizes fecundity and destruction. Thus the ocean represents paradise and hell at the same time. The exodus from the shtetl, subconsciously motivated by establishing contact with the ocean, ends in disaster: Piczenick is drowned. Death by water, according to Shaked, has a dual implication: emigration as the last act of assimilation means heading for death; and the

desire to get to one's roots by delving into the unconscious means death by dissolution.²⁹

One final aspect of this duality deserves attention. Roth himself characterizes his hero as an "oceanic Nissen Piczenick," a human being who "has been turned from inside out," and Roth leaves no doubt that he unreservedly approves of his hero's actions.³⁰ "Oceanic," of course, has a Freudian ring; and Leviathan, according to Roth, is boundless, infinite, and thus transcending all limitations. The corals, on the other hand, have almost artistically wrought shapes. It is not difficult to read such a pairing as interplay between the primary and secondary process, or in the words of another brilliant, though unjustly forgotten Viennese Jew, Anton Ehrenzweig:

[the] creative ego rhythm [must] be able to suspend the boundaries between self and not-self in order to become more at home in the world of reality where the objects and self are clearly held apart. The ego rhythm of differentiation and dedifferentiation constantly swings between these two poles and between the inside and the outside world. . . . Temporary dedifferentiation if it is extreme, as in oceanic states, implies a paralysis of surface functions and so can act very disruptively. But the ego could not function at all without its rhythm oscillating between its different levels.³¹

Ehrenzweig concludes by saying that the "minimum content of art, then, may be the representation of the creative process in the ego."³² What is represented is not something given, but something that does not yet exist. This is exactly what Roth has achieved. Through his hero he has illuminated the precariousness out of which art arises, and has transmuted his own ineluctable duality into a vivid perception of the creative matrix.

Shaked's sociosemiotic approach has the priceless quality that it allows for multiple readings of the authors concerned. Even if he does not exhaust the potential readings that offer themselves—impossible in a book, let alone in an essay—he does unfold a whole range of implications inherent in dual identity. The sociosemiotic approach shows how different cultural codes have to be read, and points to what emerges from the clashes between and the couplings of these codes. Since a basic drive of European modernity originated in the dual identity of the Jewish intellectuals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Shaked's assessment of what is mutually exclusive unfolds itself as a trailblazing means of reading culture.

Notes

1. Gershon Shaked, *Geschichte der Modernen Hebräischen Literatur. Prosa von 1880–1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1996), which is an abridged version of the five-volume edition *Hassiporet Haivrit* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1977–1993).

2. “Kein anderer Ort: Über Saul Friedländer,” in Shaked, *Die Macht der Identität. Essays über jüdische Schriftsteller* (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenaeum, 1986), pp. 181–191.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

6. See “Kafka: Jüdisches Erbe und hebräische Literatur,” in Shaked, *Die Macht der Identität*, p. 23.

7. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), especially chap. 2.

8. Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1980), pp. 129ff.

9. Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815–1918* (London and New York, 1994), p. 229.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

11. Quoted by Shaked in “Kafka: Jüdisches Erbe und hebräische Literatur,” *Macht der Identität*, p. 18. All translations, if not otherwise indicated, are mine.

12. See Elias Canetti, *Das Gewissen der Worte* (München: Hanser, 1983), p. 77.

13. “Kafka: Jüdisches Erbe und hebräische Literatur,” in Shaked, *Macht der Identität*, p. 30.

14. See “Der ewige Jude in Kafkas ‘Amerika’,” in *ibid.*, p. 37.

15. See *ibid.*, p. 40.

16. See Canetti, *Das Gewissen der Worte*, pp. 97 ff.

17. See his essays on Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, and Allen Lechuk, in Shaked, *Macht der Identität*, pp. 115–180.

18. See David Bronson, *Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1974), pp. 400–402, who quotes at length Roth’s preface to the prepublication of *Radetzky marsch* in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of April 17, 1932, in which Roth expressed his deep devotion to the vanished *Vaterland*.

19. "Wie jüdisch ist ein jüdisch-deutscher Roman? Über Joseph Roths 'Hiob'," in Shaked, *Macht der Identität*, p. 82.

20. Ibid., p. 83.

21. Ibid., pp. 92ff.

22. See *ibid.*, p. 88.

23. Ibid., pp. 90ff.

24. See "Die Gnade der Vernunft und die des Unglücks. Zum Briefwechsel zwischen Zweig und Roth," in Shaked, *ibid.*, p. 71.

25. Ibid., pp. 60 and 62.

26. Shaked, "Kulturangst und Sehnsucht nach dem Tode. Joseph Roths 'Der Leviathan'—die intertextuelle Mythisierung der Kleinstadtgeschichte," in *Joseph Roth. Interpretation—Kritik—Rezeption*, eds. Michael Kessler and Fritz Hackert (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1990), pp. 279–298.

27. See *ibid.*, p. 282.

28. Ibid., p. 284.

29. Ibid., pp. 285 and 289.

30. Joseph Roth, *Werke III*, ed. Hermann Kesten (Köln 1976), p. 276.

31. Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Expression* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971), p. 121.

32. Ibid., p. 174.