

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

**Memory's Anchors: An Exploration of the Role of Material Culture in Remembering the
Jews of Kazimierz in Krakow, Poland**

Katarzyna Wolfson

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Sociology and Anthropology

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Magisteriate of Arts
at Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

September 2002

© Katarzyna Wolfson, 2002



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-72874-9

ABSTRACT

Memory's Anchors:
An Exploration of the Role of Material Culture
in Remembering the Jews of Kazimierz in Krakow, Poland

Katarzyna Wolfson

The quarter of Kazimierz provides an anchor for the memory of Jewish life in Poland. The tangible nature of the quarter promotes different modes of remembering. This ethnographic study investigates the role of material sites, objects and photographs in remembering the Jews of Kazimierz. First, the physical landscape of the quarter is introduced through a walking tour. The tour is supplemented with narratives of three Holocaust survivors who all share personal connections with Kazimierz. Also, the trade in Judaica and its role in the commemoration of Polish Jews is examined. In an exploration of three different categories of objects, their agency is problematized and accentuated. Lastly a photographic narrative of the quarter is presented. Through this visual record the construction and maintenance of the quarter as a place of memory is considered. The following include some of the notions this thesis incorporates: material culture, remembrance, collective memory, consumption and photographic representation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the members of the Kazimierz community. Their profound commitment to the quarter made this process meaningful. Especially I thank Marta, Jacek, Piotr, P. Misia, P. Danek, P. Jozef and P. Henryk for their guidance and kindness.

I would also like to thank Prof. Marie Nathalie Leblanc and Prof. Christine Jourdan for their patient supervision and encouragement throughout all the stages of this research. I am grateful to Prof. Vered Amit for her insightful comments and suggestions.

Finally, I thank my family and friends. In particular, I am indebted to Rania, Jessica and Rebecca for their moral and editorial support. And to Joel whose love and understanding throughout made this work possible.

In memory of my grandparents

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;

then, as you scan
it, you see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.

In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.

(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.

I am in the lake, in the centre
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion

but if you look long enough,
eventually
you will be able to see me.)

This Is a Photograph of Me, Margaret Atwood

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Historical Background	5
Chapter 2: Ethnographic Setting and Methodology	20
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework	32
Chapter 4: Memory's Anchors: a Tour of Kazimierz	46
Chapter 5: Agency of Objects and Souls of Things	76
Chapter 6: Photo Album of the Quarter of Kazimierz	98
Conclusion	132
Appendix	142
Bibliography	148

Introduction

The recent rise in the exploration of and search for Jewish Poland has brought many of those concerned to the former Nazi death camps, to the remaining Jewish cemeteries, to old photographs¹, and to the books of such authors as Scholem Aleichem and Isaac Bashevis Singer². It has brought some to the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz. Many people have recognized its unique character and its potential as a place of remembrance. The first Festival of Jewish Culture took place in Kazimierz in 1990³. At this time however, outsiders rarely braved the quarter's murky streets. Each consecutive Festival has brought more visitors to Kazimierz, both local and foreign. Many of the visitors have been able to appreciate its particular architecture, to pronounce some of its peculiar and yet so familiar-sounding street-names and visit some of its collapsing synagogues. It has been a time of awakening for many Poles, as they begin to address historical inaccuracies and hushed-up issues, many of which, including anything Jewish, had been borderline taboo for decades.

In my thesis I will posit that the memory of Jewish existence in Poland has been anchored in the quarter of Kazimierz. Unlike other Jewish sites in Poland, which are mainly comprised of Nazi death camps, Kazimierz provides a chance to remember and to commemorate Jewish life before it was destroyed in the Holocaust. The quarter's tangible nature gives testimony to this life, which in turn allows its visitors to reflect and to

¹ An actual exhibit titled *And I Still See Their Faces* took place in Warsaw's most prominent art gallery in 1997. It consisted of photographs of Jewish neighbours, friends and strangers. All of the photos, exactly 7000 of them were sent to the organizers following an appeal made on the national television in 1994. Shortly after *And I Still See Their Faces* was published as a hardcover book by the Shalom Foundation.

² The publication, sale and readership of these authors skyrocketed in Poland during the 1980's and the 1990's.

³ Since 1990 the Festival of Jewish Culture has been organized annually. The twelfth edition of the Festival took place in July 2002.

mourn. In this context, I will explore the role of material culture in remembering the Jews of Kazimierz. It is my hypothesis that the materiality of the quarter elicits different modes of remembering. It allows for direct contact with authentic vestiges of a past age. The particular backdrop of Kazimierz encourages a consumption of the past and this phenomenon is expressed in numerous ways. For the purpose of this thesis, I will consider how particular places, objects and photographs participate in reconstructing the memory of the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz.

I will begin the thesis with a brief historical overview of the last thousand years of Jewish presence on Polish soil. The history of Jewish existence in Krakow and in Kazimierz will be addressed in some detail. A more thorough investigation of the landscape of the quarter of Kazimierz will follow in the first ethnographic chapter. First though, I will describe the ethnographic setting and the methodology employed to explore how Jewish material heritage in Kazimierz provides an anchor for the commemoration of the Polish Jews.

In the theoretical framework I will rely on Pierre Nora's notion of sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*) in order to conceptualize the quarter of Kazimierz. The concepts of commemoration, memory and remembrance will also be addressed as I problematize the particularity of Kazimierz as a memorial site that is neither a monument nor a museum. My thesis will entail some re-evaluation of the relationship between memory and material culture. In order to do this I will employ some alternative approaches to the consumption-centred study of things. This will entail the conceptualization of objects as agencies, which have social lives and which are culturally entangled (Appadurai 1986, Dant 1999, Kopytoff 1986, Riggins 1994).

In the first ethnographic chapter titled Memory's Anchors: a Tour of Kazimierz, I will embark on a contemporary tour of Kazimierz. The purpose for this tour is twofold. First, it will acquaint the reader with the quarter and most of its sites. The tour will inform of the various tourist attractions in the quarter such as museums, synagogues and exhibits. Also, the pleasant manner of the tour will facilitate access to information which otherwise would be tiresome to process. Second, the tour will stress the spatial relations of the quarter and the significance of particular sites in the remembrance of the Jews of Kazimierz. Fragments of the narratives of three Holocaust survivors will be intertwined with the contemporary tour of the quarter. They will complement the tour as they will provide the reader with a living and intimate historical record of Jewish life in Kazimierz

In the second ethnographic chapter titled Agency of Objects and Souls of Things, the agency of material objects in the commemoration and remembrance of Jews who perished in the Holocaust will be investigated. The phenomenon of remembering through objects is particularly fascinating and complex within Kazimierz, which has recently become an official site of memory for its former Jewish residents and other Jewish communities. I will posit the antique shops of Kazimierz as sorting posts and transit stations for many of the objects. In this context, I will describe the objects on display as well as those who participate in their trade. Finally, I will acknowledge things as agents of time with souls and stories. This will allow for a more complex analysis of interactions between people and objects. This chapter will be interlaced with three stories of things I collected in the field. These stories will illustrate the role of objects as family portrait, testimony and as keepers of collective memory.

The past becomes present only through representation. The past is not accessible in any other way. All too often the medium of representation is ignored and assumed to provide immediate and unmediated access to the past. In the third ethnographic chapter of my thesis, titled Photo Album of the Quarter of Kazimierz, I will present a narrated visual record of the contemporary Kazimierz. This record will demonstrate the various ways in which recollecting is triggered by photographs. A careful consideration of the narrated photographs will reveal that next to material sites and objects, photographs also act as keepers of memory.

Chapter 1: Historical Background

‘The place is specially intended for Jews. When the Gentiles had greatly oppressed the exiled Jews, the Divine Presence saw that there was no limit and no end to the oppression and that the handful of Jews might, God forbid, go under, the Presence came before the Lord of the Universe to lay the grievance before Him, and said to Him as follows: “How long is this going to last? When you sent the dove out of the ark at the time of the flood, you gave it an olive branch so that it might have support for its feet on the water, and yet it was unable to bear the water of the flood and returned to the ark; whereas my children You have sent out of the ark into the flood, and have provided nothing for a support where they may rest their feet in their exile”. Thereupon God took a piece of Eretz Yisroel, which he had hidden away in the heavens at the time when the Temple was destroyed, and sent it down upon the earth and said: “Be My resting place for My children in their exile”. This is why it is called Poland (Polin), from the Hebrew poh lin, which means: “Here shalt thou lodge” in the exile. That is why Satan had no power over us here, and the Torah is spread broadcast over the whole country. There are synagogues and schools and Yeshivahs, God be thanked.’

‘And what will happen in the great future when the Messiah will come? What are we going to do with the synagogues and the settlements which we shall have built up in Poland?’ asked Mendel.

‘How can you ask? In the great future, when the Messiah will come, God will certainly transport Poland with all its settlements, synagogues and Yeshivahs to Eretz Yisroel. How else could it be?’

Scholem Asch, *Kiddush ha-Shem*⁴

In the last one thousand years, Poland has been both a place of refuge and a place of horrors for the Jewish people. Jewish culture rose to some of its greatest glories and suffered some of its most devastating losses in Poland (Gruber, 1999:15). Long a haven for Jews fleeing persecution everywhere, Poland eventually became home to 3.3 million Jews –“a vibrant and varied population embracing rich and poor, religious and secular,

⁴ Source: A. Polonsky’s *Studies from Polin: From Shtetl to Socialism*, (1993: prologue).

artists and fools, businessmen and jobless *luftmenschen* (literally, people who lived on air, without visible means of support)” (Gruber, 1999:15). Once the place of residence of Europe’s largest Jewish community, Poland became Nazi Germany’s main killing grounds.

Jews were living in Poland as early as the tenth century. They came as merchants, crossing the country’s trade routes. Ibrahim ibn Jakub, a geographer and an envoy from the caliphate of Cordoba mentions the state of Mieszko I⁵ in his reports from year 966 (Balaban, 1991: 4). The first numerous groups of Jews, escaping persecutions in Western Europe reached Poland at the time of the first crusade in 1096. They were welcomed into the kingdom of Poland which in turn needed Jews to stimulate trade and economic growth (Duda, 1991: 135).

In the thirteenth century however Tartar invaders laid waste to Christian and Jewish settlements alike (Gruber, 1999:15). The widespread devastation moved the authorities to encourage immigration in order to repopulate towns. In 1264, Prince Boleslaw the Pious of Kalisz issued a body of laws know as the Calisian Privilege⁶, which guaranteed Jews the right to live in town. In 1304 Jews arrived in Krakow, the capital of Poland at the time. Soon after King Kazimierz Wielki⁷ extended the Calisian Privilege to encompass the right of Jews to live all over his kingdom (Pogonowski,

⁵ Mieszko I (c.921-992) was a Polish Monarch from the Piast Dynasty who converted to Christianity in the year 966. The same year marks the foundation of the Polish nation (Pogonowski, 1987:17).

⁶ “The Calisian Privilege became the basis for the development of an autonomous Jewish nation in Poland which was based on the Talmudic Law (until 1795). Jewish courts were established. Jews were exempt from serfdom and were not obliged to speak Polish or join the military” (Pogonowski, 1987:17).

⁷ “Legend has it that Kazimierz Wielki (Casmir the Great, 1333-1370) had a Jewish mistress, named Esther or Esterka, who bore him two sons. Supposedly, this relation made him more sympathetic to Jews” (Gruber, 1999: 15).

1987:17). He hoped for the creation of a Jewish urban class which would fuel economic and cultural development.

Chronicles from 1304 mention a Jewish street in Krakow near the main square. The street of St. Anne, as it is known today, constituted the main axis of the Jewish district (Balaban, 1990: 3). Jewish owned houses stood here next to houses and lots belonging to Christians. Krakow's first Jewish district had its ritual bath, synagogue⁸, hospital and a wedding house. Behind the city walls, which surrounded medieval Krakow, just about in the place of today's Planty⁹, there was a Jewish cemetery. It was located close to the village Kawiory, the name of which presumably comes from the Hebrew word *kevarim* meaning graves (Balaban, 1990: 4).

Among the various trades practiced by the fourteenth century Krakow Jews, credit operations and real estate sales were most successful. Lewko, Samuel, Chaskiel, Smerlin and Josman are the names of some of the moneylenders who made large-scale transactions at the time (Duda, 1991:7). Lewko is most renowned however, for his work for Kazimierz Wielki. Actually, the King valued Lewko's financial skills so much that he entrusted him the royal mint and the lease on the salt mines of Wieliczka and Bochnia (Balaban, 1991: 18).

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, Jews from Germany, Spain, Italy and other parts of Europe travelled to Poland in order to flee massacres, persecutions and expulsions. It is estimated that at the end of the fifteenth century between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews lived in at least sixty Jewish communities scattered over the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania which had united in 1358 (Gruber, 1999: 16).

⁸ A synagogue is a place where the members of a Jewish religious community gather and pray.

⁹ Planty is a Krakow landmark. It is a park which surrounds the old city in a circular manner.

Soon after the establishment of Jewish communities in Poland however, hostilities surfaced. Growing economic rivalry between Jewish and Christian merchants resulted in strong anti-Jewish sentiments. In Krakow the most turbulent protests took place in 1407, 1423 and 1455 (Balaban, 1990: 4). Jews were blamed then for the Black Death plague, as well as most disasters and fires. The clergy was an active player in cultivating resentment towards the Jews. Cardinal Zbigniew Olesnicki for example, invited John of Capistrano to Poland. This Franciscan monk was already known as the “Scourge of the Jews” in Germany (Balaban, 1991: 44). His preaching fuelled the faithful with so much hatred that in Wroclaw for instance, almost an entire Jewish community was burned at the stake or banned from the city (Gruber, 1999:16). It is said that around this time first rumours of blood libels¹⁰ were spread. This caused almost twenty towns in Poland to invoke the “*de non tolerandis Judaeis*” status and expel their Jewish populations (Gruber, 1999:16).

In 1495, King Jan Olbracht ordered the Jews to leave the city of Krakow (Wojak, 1987:22). They moved to Kazimierz, a settlement linked with Krakow by the Royal Bridge. The influx of Jews from Bohemia, Germany and southern Europe in the sixteenth century made it necessary to expand the settlement of Kazimierz (Wojak, 1987: 22). Land was purchased and the following synagogues were built: Remuh (1553), Wysoka (1556), Popper’s (1620), Isaac’s (1638) and Kupa (1643). These synagogues can still be found in the quarter (Duda, 1991: 136).

The final shape of the Jewish town of Kazimierz was established in 1635. From the beginning it played an important role in international trade. The merchants of

¹⁰ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997), “blood libel is the allegation that Jews murder non-Jews, especially Christians in order to obtain blood for Passover and other rituals; a complex of deliberate lies, trumped up accusations and popular beliefs about the murder-lust of Jews and their blood-thirstiness based on the conception that Jews hate Christianity and humankind in general. The blood libels led to trials and massacres of Jews in the Middle Ages and in early modern times; they were also revived by the Nazis”.

Kazimierz were seen on all trade routes linking Krakow with the West (Silesian and German towns), East (Lublin), North (Gdansk) and South (Moravia and Bohemia) (Duda, 1991: 136). At this time the rabbis¹¹ and seniors of Kazimierz wielded authority over the Jews of the entire Malopolska¹² region. They represented this region in the Parliament of Four Lands, the main governing body of Polish and Lithuanian Jews (Pogonowski, 1987: 18).

The Parliament of Four Lands, or *Va'ad Arba Aratsot*, was founded to keep accounts for the King's treasury of taxes imposed on the Jewish population. In actuality, *Va'ad Arba Aratsot* ruled over virtually every aspect of secular and religious Jewish life in Poland and as such, it served practically as a state within a state between 1580 and 1764 (Hundert, 1997: 437). The statute of the Kazimierz *Kahal*¹³ of 1595, the oldest document of its kind found in Poland, was formulated by *Va'ad Arba Aratsot* (Duda, 1991: 133). Its executive board included the community's twenty-three wealthiest members who appointed a rabbi, supervised law and order in the Jewish quarter, managed synagogues and administered other communal affairs such as records keeping, education, and burial of the dead (Duda, 1991: 137).

Between 1500 and 1648, the Jewish population of Poland and Lithuania grew from 30,000 to 500,000, thereby making it the largest concentration of Jews in the world (Gruber, 1999: 17). Cultural and religious scholarship developed in the Jewish centres of Lublin, Warsaw and Kazimierz. The contributions of Rabbi Moses Isserles (1525-1572),

¹¹ "A rabbi is a Jewish scholar qualified to rule on questions of Jewish Law, often teaching this Law and supervising religious institutions" (Halkowski 1998: 57).

¹² "Malopolska is a region in southern Poland, mainly the area around Krakow. Also referred to under the Habsburgs as Galicia" (Polonsky, 1993: 565).

¹³ "A *kahal* is derived from the Hebrew word *kehilah* and it means congregation, community. In the Polish context, *kahal* was a Jewish council which governed over all of its community's religious and secular affairs" (Polonsky, 1993: 565).

Remuh for short are most renowned. “His critical glosses to the *Shulhan arukh*¹⁴, the rabbinic code of Joseph Caro (1488-1575), enabled this work, written by a *Sephardi*¹⁵ scholar in Safed, to become the basic regulator of the mores of *Ashkenazi*¹⁶ Jewry” (Polonsky, 1993: xvi). Other famous Kazimierz rabbis from this time include: Joel Sirkes (1561-1640), called BaCh from the title of his major work *Bajit Chadasz*¹⁷, and Jomtov Lipman Heller (1579-1654) known for his valued commentary on the *Mishnah*¹⁸, titled *Tosefot Yom Tov*. (Halkowski, 1998: 71).

Jewish life flourished in Kazimierz in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Poland’s first Hebrew printing shop for instance, was established in Kazimierz by Samuel, Asher and the Eljakim brothers, the sons of Chaim from Halicz, in 1534. Isaac Prostitz ben Aaron (1568) and Menachem Meisels (1631) continued the tradition of Hebrew print shops in the quarter (Duda, 1991: 134). The chronicles state that most Jewish children were educated by private tutors. If parents could not afford it, their children’s education was guaranteed by the *Kahal* and was supervised by a specialized school fraternity by the name of *Talmud Torah* (Duda, 1991: 135). The affluent Kazimierz community also ran a *Yeshivah*, a Talmudic university whose teachers included: Remuh, Josef Kac, Mordechai Margalio, Joel Sirkes, just to name a few (Halkowski 1998).

¹⁴ “The *Shulhan arukh* literally means ‘The Set Table’ in Hebrew. This is the last comprehensive code of the *halakhah* which in Hebrew means the way. The *halakhah* denotes the legal part of the Jewish tradition. It defines the norms of behaviour and of religious observance” (Hundert, 1997: 438).

¹⁵ *Sephardim* are descendants of Jews who lived in Spain or Portugal before the expulsion of 1492.

¹⁶ “*Ashkenaz(i)* in its narrowest sense denotes German lands. The term ‘*Ashkenaz*’ however is generally used to denote Jews who share the cultural legacy that derives originally from Northern France and Germany and spread eastward to include Poland and Lithuania and the other lands of east central Europe” (Hundert, 1997: 437).

¹⁷ “The *Bajit Chadasz* is written in a form of a commentary on the Talmudic law of *Arba’ah Turim* by Jacob ben Asher. It takes a clear position in terms of the main problems connected with the practical implementation of Jewish religious law” (Halkowski, 1998:68).

¹⁸ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Mishnah* is a term applied to the Oral Law.

Mid-seventeenth century marks the beginning of a decline of the thriving Kazimierz community. This decline is closely connected with a steady deterioration in the Polish political situation. In 1648, a polonized Cossack chieftain Bogdan Chmielnicki, launched a bloody uprising which turned into two decades of war, destruction and chaos (Polonsky, 1993: xvii). This period is still referred to as the Deluge in Polish history books. After another Cossack rebellion Sweden and Russia invaded and occupied Poland (Balaban, 1991:5). The years of war and turmoil in Poland had a devastating effect on the life of the Jewish people. As many as 700 Jewish communities were destroyed; estimates of Jews killed ranged from 100,000 to 500,000 (Gruber, 1999: 17). Following the Northern War (1702-09), the War of the Succession (1733-35), the Seven Year War (1756-63), and the Confederation of Bar Struggles (1768-72), Poland was partitioned and its territory was incorporated into Russia, Prussia and Austria (1772-1795). Poland disappeared from the maps of the world, only to reappear again as an independent state, 123 years later (Pogonowski 1987).

As a result of Poland's third partition in 1795, Krakow and Kazimierz found themselves in the Austrian occupation zone. Almost immediately after, Kazimierz was incorporated into the city of Krakow (Balaban, 1991:360). This resulted in the loss of its administrative independence. In 1818 Austrian authorities redefined the legal standing of the Krakow Jews. The "*statute regulating the position of Orthodox Jews*" was a major infringement on the diversity of Jewish life in Kazimierz as it introduced the mechanisms for compulsory assimilation (Duda, 1991: 135). The formerly autonomous *Kahal* was replaced by a Committee of Orthodox Jews which was chaired by a Christian member of the magistrate and a rabbi who was required to have a secular education and a command

of both spoken and written Polish and German (Duda, 1991: 136). Jewish children gained unlimited access to state schools in place of their own religious schools. Although Jews were now officially allowed to live all over Krakow, they could buy real estate and work in districts other than Kazimierz only with a special permit. The special permit was granted only to those who were wealthy and to those who were willing to assimilate (Balaban, 1991: 692).

The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries brought *Hasidism* and *Haskalah* to the fore. In central Europe, Hasidism formed as a revival movement that “opposed the increasingly dogmatic and circumscribed Judaism preached and practiced by the rabbis, who had become all powerful in most Jewish communities in Eastern Europe” (Gruber, 1999: 18). First established by Israel ben Eliezer, also known as Baal Schem Tov, *Hasidism* eventually evolved into a system of communities led by *tzaddiks*¹⁹ who were seen as charismatic and saintly leaders and who were revered as workers of miracles and as direct mediators between humans and God (Gruber, 1999:18). The *Haskalah* movement on the other hand, sought to reduce Jewish separateness from the nations among whom they lived while retaining the Jewish religion. It originated in Germany and encouraged Jewish emancipation and enlightenment (Polonsky, 1993: 564). *Haskalah* and *Hasidism*, although in bitter opposition to one another, both contributed to the intensification of the Jewish struggle for equal civic rights.

Poland resurfaced as an independent state after the First World War. Its eastern border stretched far into what is now Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, and much of what today is western Poland belonged to Germany. Its new leaders guaranteed officially to protect the rights of the minorities – of which the Jews were one, making up about ten

¹⁹ “A *tzaddik* translates to ‘the just one’ or ‘a pious man’ from Hebrew ” (Polonsky, 1993: 567).

percent of the population (Gruber, 1999:20). These guarantees were never fully honoured however and were revoked in 1934 (Gruber, 1999: 20).

Throughout the interwar period anti-Semitism was persistent in Europe. In Poland, the National Democrats otherwise known as *Endecja* called for forced Jewish emigration and economic restrictions against Jewish businesses. They also fought to limit Jewish attendance in universities²⁰. The nationalist camp exploited the widespread economic crisis in order to disseminate anti-Semitic propaganda (Rudnicki, 1993:366). Appealing to feelings of social injustice, anti-Semitism identified its source in a figure of the Jew as competitor and exploiter (Rudnicki, 1993:366). Following the rise of Hitler in Germany and after the death of Poland's military leader Marshal Jozef Pilsudski in 1935, the situation deteriorated and anti-Semitism became an active part of the government policy.

Nevertheless, Poland's 3.3 million Jews did form a world for themselves that was full of scholarship, spirituality, culture, political activity and all other components of a rich Jewish life (Gruber, 1999:20). In the mid-1980's, Jewish historian Szymon Datner recalled those days of his youth:

“The world of the Polish Jews was extraordinarily varied, rich, and colourful. And above all it was big and it was what I would call present; very visible. Jews made up 10 percent of the population of the country, but since they lived predominately in the towns, their numbers there were proportionately much larger. In large cities, from 30-50 percent. In smaller towns, particularly in eastern lands, the number of Jews ran as high as 80 or 90 percent. Those were the famous Jewish *shtetls*. And a splendid, exuberant and creative Jewish life flourished everywhere in those towns and villages. There was complete freedom of

²⁰ At first the number of Jews at universities was limited to their percentage in the Polish nation as a whole, a policy which was called '*Numerus clausus*'. By the late 1930's, it changed to '*Numerus nullus*', where no Jews were to be admitted. Those who tried to submit their applications were often beaten by a mob of hateful young nationalists. I heard personal accounts of this while I was doing my fieldwork.

observance and autonomy in religious matters, exceptionally well developed education of all types, at all levels and in all specializations, as well as enormous number of publications in all three languages: Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish. Thirty Jewish newspapers and a hundred of the most varied magazines were being published just before the war. Literary giants, reformers, thinkers, scholars, and politicians grew up and worked in Poland. Dozens of political parties of all colorations were active. They had their delegates and senators in the Polish parliament. There were charitable and cultural organizations, unions of writers and journalists and workers²¹.

World War II began on September 1st, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. Despite Polish resistance, the German army advanced fast through the country. On September 6th, 1939 the German forces were already in Krakow (Duda, 1991: 139). Only two days later the “Streckenbach disposition” forced Jewish businesses to distinguish themselves from the rest with a visible Star of David (Bieberstein, 1985: 16). In October of the same year, Hans Frank arrived in Krakow to fill the post of the chief of administration of the newly occupied territory called “General Gouvernement” (Duda, 1991: 138).

Since the beginning of the war, restrictive orders issued almost daily by the Nazi occupiers controlled the Jews in Krakow and in the rest of Poland. On March 3rd, 1941, Hans Frank ordered that all of the Krakow Jewry must resettle into a strictly Jewish area (Duda, 1991: 59). The ghetto, enclosed by a two-meter wall with four gates to the outside world contained all of Jewish institutions and controlled all of its inhabitants²². Extermination en masse began in June of 1942 with a transport of five thousand from the ghetto to the Belzec death camp (Duda, 1991: 60). Two more transports of five thousand followed before the ghetto ceased to exist. Between March 13th and 14th, 1943, during the

²¹ Source: Ruth Gruber's *Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to East-Central Europe*, (1999: 21).

²² According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) the population of the Krakow ghetto in 1941 reached 20 000.

liquidation of the Krakow ghetto, nearly one thousand of its inhabitants were murdered on the spot, two thousand were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and four thousand were transferred to the Plaszow concentration camp (Duda, 1991:60).

“One sentence can sum up the horror of the Holocaust in Poland. Out of the 3.3 million Jews living in the country at the outbreak of war, only 300,000 survived. Along with 3 million people, almost an entire infrastructure of a civilization erased” (Gruber, 1999:21). Thousands of synagogues, prayer houses and other Jewish buildings were burnt to the ground. Tens of thousands of books and ritual objects were destroyed; ancient cemeteries vanished (Gruber, 1999:22).

After the horrors of the Holocaust, the survivors found themselves trapped in “the civil war conditions which prevailed in postwar Poland and which were caused by the attempt to impose an unpopular and unrepresentative Communist government on the country” (Polonsky, 1993: xxxi). It is estimated that fifteen hundred Jews were murdered in Poland from the end of the German occupation until the summer of 1947 (Weinbaum, 1998: 12). Some of these attacks were perpetrated when Jews returned to their prewar homes and tried to secure the restitution of their property (Weinbaum, 1998: 12). In the worst incident, the pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, forty Jews were killed following the disappearance of a Christian boy, whom, “it was rumoured the Jews had killed while trying to extract blood from him to cure anaemia from which they were suffering as a result of their wartime deprivations” (Polonsky, 1993: xxxi). The same boy reappeared after a few days. The terror however, which followed this appalling event led to the emigration of the bulk of the Jews remaining in Poland.

Despite the subsequent vicissitudes and further large-scale emigration of 1956 and 1968 a small Jewish community remained in Poland (Polonsky, 1993: xxxi). At this time however, only secular Jewish expression was tolerated. Predictably, the activities of the staunchly secular and officially supported TSKZ (Socio-Cultural Society of Jews) “completely overshadowed those of the religious community (...) which was increasingly marginalized and its relations with TSKZ were strained. Understandably, the tiny remnant of observant or traditional Jews could not countenance the TSKZ’s total disregard for the Sabbath and the Jewish dietary laws” (Weinbaum, 1998: 19). With only a few thousand left, Jewish life came to a standstill. Laurence Weinbaum describes it as such:

“Jewish affairs were only to be spoken of in cautious whispers. A silence was imposed on nearly all things Jewish and Jews were blotted out from the history of Poland. In most books on Polish history one now searched in vain for references to Jews. When Jews were mentioned it was only in passing – as if they had played only the most marginal role in the history of the country. The Holocaust completely disappeared as a specifically Jewish tragedy and Polish textbooks and monuments referred to the suffering and death of six million Poles” (1998: 22).

The situation began to change in the late 1970’s and particularly after the rise of the Solidarity movement in 1980 (Gruber, 1999: 21). At this time a number of young Polish Jews discovered their roots and established the so-called “Jewish Flying University”, a group which met clandestinely to study what it means to be Jewish. This movement can be viewed as part of “a general quest to uncover the past that had been so brutally snatched away, distorted and perverted by the ruling Communists” (Weinbaum, 1998:22). Young Jews and non-Jews alike, many associated with the anticommunist

political opposition, began caring for Jewish cemeteries, monuments and other Jewish material heritage (Gruber, 1999:21).

In the mid-1980's a wave of nostalgia for prewar Poland swept the country. Particular taboo issues came to be widely popular and appealing as the restrictions of martial law²³ loosened. In this climate, "Jewish culture became stylish, even chic, in certain intellectual circles, including elements of the Catholic intelligentsia" (Weinbaum, 1998: 25). At this time, Jewish authors were published, Jewish exhibits were launched and "Jewish films of both domestic and foreign provenance were shown. Sometimes these aroused controversy, as in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, but the very fact of this exposure was an important watershed" (Weinbaum, 1998: 25).

As the Iron Curtain fell, a large number of Jewish tourists descended upon Poland in search of their roots. The collapse of Communism allowed for the last constraints on Jewish life in Poland to be removed. Jewish organizations²⁴ arrived immediately to assist Polish Jewry in its efforts to preserve the past and to determine its future (Weinbaum, 1998: 26). At this time, anti-Semitism resurfaced in the public-sphere as the restrictions of a totalitarian rule became a way of the past. Addressing the absurdity of the "Auschwitz without Jews" phenomenon and the remaking of Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of Jewish martyrology was one of many events which sparked strong anti-Jewish

²³ "Martial Law was declared in Poland on December 13th 1981. General Jaruzelski, the leader of the Communist military Junta justified the imposition of martial law as a lesser evil than a fratricidal conflict which "stood on our threshold". Since Solidarity was unarmed and committed to non-violence, the fratricidal conflict might have occurred in the case of a Soviet invasion of Poland with Polish armed forces split, some resisting it, and with others remaining under Soviet orders" (Pogonowski, 1987: 40)

²⁴ "The two key players are: The Joint Distribution Committee which focuses on assisting some 1850 elderly Jews and since 1996 has also been assisting non-Jewish Rescuers (Poles who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust), and the Lauder Foundation which has probably done the most to revive Jewish life in Poland and other states of post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe. It has established a Jewish kindergarten and a day school in Warsaw as well as a summer camp in Rychwald" (Weinbaum, 1998:26).

sentiments in Poland²⁵. On the other hand, it is important to note here that in this climate of intense Jewish recollection and renewal, a philo-Semitic current has also emerged in Poland. Many scholars as well as participants of this Jewish revival have identified this trend as unhealthy, as it idealizes Jews and exoticises the Jewish culture and religion (Gruber1999, Halkowski 1998, Weinbaum 1998).

The history of the Jews in Poland is extremely complex. Most politicians, intellectuals and observers believe that it will take much time and effort to normalize Polish-Jewish relations. The confrontation with the Polish past, during the Second World War and after was initiated with Prof. Jan Blonski's now²⁶ famous article "Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto". This confrontation has been painful for the Polish society at large. The sanitized Polish wartime history has become tainted with the findings of Jedwabne²⁷, to provide the most recent example. One can only hope that with the advent of a serious historical debate in Poland, the Polish-Jewish dialogue will continue.

In this section only a brief overview of the multifaceted aspects of Jewish life on Polish soil was provided. References were made to specifically address the history of Jews in Krakow and in Kazimierz. More detailed investigation of the quarter of Kazimierz will follow in the first chapter of the ethnographic section. First however, I

²⁵ Auschwitz was organized and functioned as the *Museum of the Polish People and Other Nations* for 45 years. The redesigning of Auschwitz has caused considerable tensions between World Jewry and the Polish government and people. These tensions manifested themselves most strongly during the controversy over a supermarket construction right next door to Auschwitz, the Carmelite convent affair and the presence of the Papal cross in Auschwitz I (Weinbaum, 1998:38).

²⁶ Jan Blonski, "Biedni Polacy patrzy na getto", *Tygodnik Powszechny*, January 18th 1987.

²⁷ *Neighbours* written by Jan Tomasz Gross and published in 2000 in Poland and 2001 in the United States records the horrific events of a little Polish town of Jedwabne in which the Polish neighbours murdered their Jewish counterparts in 1941. Sixteen hundred Jedwabne residents are estimated to have been murdered by Poles. After the publication of *Neighbours* an investigation by the Polish Institute of National Memory followed. It confirmed Gross' findings and is now reviewing other similar and suspect cases. The residents of Jedwabne were formally commemorated on the 10th of July 2001, exactly sixty years after the murder was committed. A monument was raised in the memory of Jedwabne residents.

will describe the ethnographic setting and the methodology employed to explore the role of material culture in remembering the Jews of Kazimierz.

Chapter 2: Ethnographic Setting and Methodology

The research for this thesis was conducted in southeastern Poland, in the city of Krakow, mainly in the quarter of Kazimierz, between October 1999 and March 2000. The methods used in data collection were numerous, as I believe it is important to approach a subject through a variety of techniques. Here I will briefly outline the context for my study as well as the methods involved.

Ethnographic Setting

I went to Poland with the intention of looking at sites of Jewish memory. My first thought was to research Holocaust memorials. These seemed like the most tangible and only sites of Jewish memory in Poland at the time. Fortunately, I changed my mind right after leaving for the field. I could not help but wonder if I really would be able to contribute anything new to the already existing stacks of literature on Auschwitz, Birkenau and Treblinka. From today's perspective I also lacked the endurance for the horrifying nature of the Holocaust memorials themselves.

Around this time I stumbled across a short article about Kazimierz. In this Jewish quarter of Krakow, efforts were being made to reconcile with the forgotten Jewish past. I started researching and found a fair bit of information on the web, mostly about the Festival of Jewish Culture and the Centre for Jewish Culture²⁸. I had also visited this

²⁸ Since its opening in 1993 the Centre for Jewish Culture has been operating under the auspices of the Project Judaica Foundation. According to www.judaica.org "the Project Judaica Foundation was established by Mark and Jill Talisman in 1983, to initiate and execute projects related to the rescue, rehabilitation, dissemination, and exhibition of Judaica. Consistent with that goal, the Foundation is an active partner with Jewish communities throughout the world. The Foundation is involved in a college study program in Krakow, Poland; as well as other projects in the Czech Republic, Israel, and the United States. The Centre for Jewish Culture in the quarter of Kazimierz has brought new vitality to the remaining Jewish community. Symbolic of the renewed interest in Jewish culture throughout Poland, the Centre's

place in the early 1990's. On a family trip from the Tatry Mountains²⁹ we had stopped to walk around the streets of Krakow, known as the Polish historical capital³⁰. I wandered off a little from the main town square and within a ten-minute walk I found myself in a foreign environment. All the buildings seemed desolate and bleak. I felt less and less comfortable as I wandered around the streets of this quarter. People were looking at me as if they did not receive outsiders very often. It was a very strange visit. I stumbled upon a synagogue and an old Jewish cemetery, paid a short visit and hurriedly returned to the meeting spot my family had agreed on. Then we drove home and I thought little of it.

My next encounter with Kazimierz comprised of a six months stay. I went there to research the role of material sites in the commemoration of its former Jewish residents. I found it fascinating that this forsaken place was coming to life again. People who had lived there since the end of the Second World War might disagree with me here, as life had not stopped for them and they have made a home for themselves in Kazimierz. Most of them reacted quite negatively to the recent changes taking place in this Jewish quarter to which they have no ties - as such. Neither they nor the state nurtured the need to remember the historical and cultural input of the ten percent of Poland's prewar population. Often any traces left, were quickly erased, renamed and buried³¹. An entire quarter could not be buried, not with its buildings and market places intact.

strongest Polish advocates are non-Jews. The Centre has become a base for many groups who visit Auschwitz/Birkenau camps, because of its modern meeting facilities”.

²⁹ The Tatry Mountains are part of the Carpathian range and are in the south of Poland.

³⁰ Krakow, unlike Warsaw was virtually untouched by the destruction of the Second World War. Although great efforts were made to rebuild Warsaw, the city lacks an age-old climate. It is actually quite bleak. Krakow on the other hand feels ancient.

³¹ I was told by one of the Jewish elders about the Gomulka government (1956-1970) plans to get rid of one of the biggest Jewish cemeteries in Europe, and in its place build a new apartment complex. These plans concerning the Lodz cemetery were stopped by protests and pressure from the American Jewish Congress. This is just one example of the state's policy towards Jewish material heritage.

When most large cities in Poland along with its capital lay in rubble, Krakow provided an anchor to the past, through its streets, archives, libraries and museums. Many of the displaced families who flocked to Krakow after the end of the war populated the vacant Jewish quarter. In many areas, Kazimierz was already inhabited by people who had to abandon their homes when the area across the Vistula River was turned into a Ghetto. There were still empty apartments, now distributed by the government housing authority. The surviving Jewish residents of Krakow also found themselves in Kazimierz shortly following the war. I cannot imagine how haunting it must have been for them to come here and find the synagogues, the cemeteries, the *yeshivahs*³², and the apartment buildings intact. Only the residents were gone. Disappeared. Brutally wiped out in about 4 years, while the allies were fighting to win the war.

Esther, Jacob and Isaac were now only to be heard as street-names. Seven out of eight synagogues were turned into warehouses and cooperatives. The same fate awaited the *yeshivas*, the *mikvehs*³³ and the rest of the Jewish community buildings. Very few of them were actually going to be in the possession of the decimated community. The quarter withered away and nothing was renovated; not just out of neglect. From the perspective of today, it seems to have been a part of a larger plan; to quickly demolish all those uncomfortable remains and replace them with a new concrete apartment complex, so characteristic of all the former Eastern Block cities.

In 1989 everything changed. In Poland, as in many of the neighbouring countries, the totalitarian rule was overthrown. The opposition came out of the underground and

³² "A *Yeshivah* is a rabbinical college, the highest institution in the traditional Jewish system of education" (Polonsky, 1993:568).

³³ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *mikveh* is a pool with running water for the ritual ablution of utensils and people. It should contain three to five hundred litres of water to ensure complete immersion.

began to govern. Polish people were now allowed to have passports in their homes, and read forbidden authors such as Orwell, Solzhenitsyn and Kundera. They were able to learn and discuss that the Soviet Union signed a pact with Germany and invaded Poland on the 17th of September 1939³⁴. Other historical omissions and manipulations were to be corrected too. Changing the name of Auschwitz and correcting its character as a place of Jewish martyrology was met with disdain. During the long years of totalitarian rule many Poles conflated the suffering of Poles and Jews during the Second World War and came to claim the Holocaust as part of Polish heritage.

As Polish-Jewish history was being suddenly inserted into history textbooks, many sensed a conspiracy³⁵. Still, a group of relentless intellectuals, politicians, artists and a few priests crusaded for the retrieval of Jewish memory in Poland; the memory of the Holocaust and beyond. People needed to realize that many of the poems they had to recite in school, many of the paintings they went to view in the museums, and many of the songs they had grown up around were created by Polish Jews. The Jewish presence on Polish soil was to be recognized, cherished, and most of all commemorated.

Methodology

In the beginning of my six-month stay in Kazimierz I spent most of my time at the Centre for Jewish Culture. I was in the process of acquainting myself with the

³⁴ This is just one example of how history was rewritten in Poland following the war. Any discussions concerning the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact would interfere with the imposed post World War II order according to which Soviet Union was an ally and Poland was one of its satellites.

³⁵ "In the freer atmosphere which now prevailed, anti-Semitism also found a fertile ground and was openly expressed. In the 1990 presidential elections, for instance, rumours were spread that candidate Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a liberal Catholic intellectual of aristocratic background, was of Jewish origin. Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, his opponent, shamelessly capitalized on Mazowiecki's plight and even claimed that he could not understand why some people in public life concealed their origins. Another candidate, the shadowy Stanislaw Tyminski, ran on an openly anti-Semitic platform and actually garnered more votes than Mazowiecki" (Weinbaum, 1998: 26).

neighbourhood and its hangouts. The centre opened in 1993 and was located in the heart of Kazimierz in a former prayer house³⁶. Since its opening, the centre had been actively participating in raising awareness about the Jewish people, their culture and history. Each month a new schedule of lectures, concerts, discussions and exhibitions was publicized by the centre and distributed in strategic points of Krakow.

I volunteered at the centre and spent two days a week at the reception desk, where I was often the first contact for the incoming visitors. The visitors consisted of tourists, mostly American and Western European, but also Polish. There were also Israeli and Polish school groups which came in mostly during the day. The regular visitors, who followed the centre's monthly schedule, came frequently to hear a lecture or a concert, mostly in the evening. While at the centre I was to approach people and tell them a little about the building and the quarter itself. We had a number of brochures available to direct people to all the places they might want to visit. Such circumstances allowed me to have conversations with people not just about how to get to the museum but why they were in the quarter; where they came from; whether they had travelled elsewhere in Poland; and how they felt about this quarter? Usually the same types of questions were posed to me by these visitors. Sometimes they wanted to know more about me and a couple of times I was able to have in-depth conversations with them. On a few occasions I was also able to speak with the artists who were exhibiting their work at the centre, with academics and writers who came there on a regular basis and with some of the musicians. Overtime I also became quite friendly with all the staff working at the desk with me, as

³⁶ According to www.judaca.org the *B'nai Emunah* prayer house was built in 1886 by a worship society. It functioned as such until the war after which it became a carpenter's workshop.

well as the two owners of an antique shop in the cellar of the centre. Eventually, I began to spend two days a week in this antique shop. I will describe my motives for this shortly.

I lived in the quarter of Kazimierz for the duration of my fieldwork. I was completely immersed in its daily life and affairs. My apartment windows looked onto Isaac's synagogue and the Remuh cemetery. I will describe the landscape of the quarter in more detail in the first ethnographic chapter. Although I spent much time in the Centre for Jewish Culture, first at the reception desk and then in the antique shop, I also attempted to introduce myself to all the important institutions which were entangled in the daily life of the quarter. I spent much time in the foyer of the Remuh synagogue in an effort to observe the tourists, as it was probably one of the most recognized and visited places in the entire quarter. I met all three of the guardians of the Remuh synagogue and cemetery and accompanied them throughout the day as they sold the entrance tickets, turned the lights on and off, and distributed head coverings for the unprepared visitors.

Also I attended a couple of the Friday night services at Remuh. Since it is an Orthodox prayer house I had to sit in the women's quarters in the back. Every time I attended a service I met someone new and we talked about the quarter. These conversations often extended beyond the women's quarters of Remuh. One Reform Jewish lady in her forties gave me her email address, another invited me to her home whenever I should be in New York City, and yet another I took to a Shabbat dinner at the Lauder's. She wanted to see what it was like. She was about my age and a native of Krakow and had just found out that her maternal grandmother was Jewish.

From my observations and inquiries the antique shop located in the cellars of the Centre for Jewish Culture is probably the place to visit in Krakow if one is interested in

Judaica. Judaica however, is sold among all sorts of other items which make this place resemble many of the other antique-briquabrique-second hand shops found in the quarter of Kazimierz. Both of the owners are art history renovation/conservation specialists and from what I could see during my time spent there, have good contacts with the rest of the antiquarian community.

Most of my time spent at the shop was divided between formally interviewing the owners, when there were no customers in sight and talking about some of their regular visitors, who were more often trading and getting rid of things than buying. I also tried to approach some visitors. I did not want to interfere too much with the business of the shop, which due to the finicky nature of the antique market is already quite unstable, so I did not pester their clients. However when someone would strike up a conversation with one of the antiquarians I participated in it. Since I spent much time there, about two days a week, when I was not busy interviewing people, I was able to get a taste of what it is that people sell, why they are selling, and how they go about it.

During the time that I spent in this particular antique cellar, I was able to acquaint myself with some of the things on display, especially when the owners were busy with customers. I found piles of documents for example, brought in mostly by one man from a recycling heap. The range of these documents was startling; starting with something as insignificant and as small as a sheet documenting a business transaction of a Jewish metal shop, here in Kazimierz, in the early 1920's, to something as haunting and tragic as Nazi registers of Jewish doctors from 1940. They also had a sizeable collection of Nazi propaganda such as bulletins, books and posters. In the last two weeks of my fieldwork a

couple of authentic posters of anti-Jewish legislation from 1940 were brought into the shop and were purchased almost immediately at a fairly high price.

I tried to casually ask as many people as I could about the things they were purchasing or at least considering. This was the hardest group to penetrate. If they found themselves in the shop and did not find anything they were looking for, they would leave without a word, unlike the sellers who had to make an effort and speak in order to negotiate prices on their merchandise. At one point I printed up a notice for anyone interested in selling/buying/trading or just talking about Judaica, with my name, my area of studies, and the number of my mobile phone. I left the notice at the shop, right next to the cash register. Even though many people read my message in Polish and/or English none actually contacted me. Perhaps my time at the shop and in the quarter was too short in order to develop and expect this kind of trust from strangers.

I also conducted a material culture survey in all of the nine antiquarian shops operating in Kazimierz³⁷. I visited these places quite regularly and became friendly with their proprietors. It was not at all an unpleasant task to drop into these very curious places and talk to their owners. I enjoyed examining their latest objects which were often accompanied by anecdotes about them. Through this material culture survey I found that all the shops were actually interested in carrying Judaica items, and what was actually included in this broad category. The survey also confirmed my suspicions about an underlying link between the Jewish character of the quarter, the antique shops and the demand for Judaica.

³⁷ The names of the shops are: Antyki, Ariel, Desa, Jarden, Na Kazimierzu, Rachel, Starocie, Stary Sklep, Szalom. The survey I conducted along with the results can be found in Appendix A. The material culture survey was anonymous. The antiquarians I befriended forewarned me that shop owners will not likely complete the survey if they have to provide personal information.

In the meantime my bonds with the Kazimierz community were strengthening. People started to acknowledge me and began to recognize that my interest in the quarter was genuine. I was able to conduct twenty semi-structured interviews with people I met by attending different events or whom I approached in businesses of the quarter, such as hotels, restaurants, tour agencies and shops. At least half of those twenty interviews had one or more follow ups. I included a questionnaire I prepared for these interviews in Appendix B. Through these interviews I was also able to select a group of willing participants for my photographic material culture survey, which I will address in more detail later.

Due to the recent revival of interest in the Jewish culture and history, there have been many people before who came into the quarter and expected to find out everything there is to know in about one week's time. "I am not a museum exhibit, fifteen minutes should be enough to cover your assigned area of interest. I am quite busy you see and as a rule I do not do interviews, I have done my share." I was told, upon meeting a Holocaust survivor and an active community elder, who was practically coerced into talking to me by the Jewish Community leader. This is just one example where I felt like an intruder. There were many others. In the end, the above-mentioned elder gave me an hour of his precious time the first time we met. We liked each other so much that we met regularly, every Tuesday at 1 p.m. in the Jewish Community building.

At the end of my stay in Kazimierz I gathered a set of five fascinating narratives. These narratives may be understood as "stories people tell about themselves and their worlds. (...) In a world in motion, narratives provide for a world traveller – whether anthropologist or informant – a place cognitively to reside in and to make sense of, a

place to continue to be” (Rapport, 2000:74). Through the experience of listening to the narratives I became quite attached to a group of elderly Polish Jews who told me about their life before, during and after the Holocaust. Some of them gave me samples of their publications; be they articles from the *Folksztymme*³⁸ or booklets of poems from the camps. They became my grandparents while I was away from home, guiding me around the quarter of Kazimierz with their wisdom and care.

My camera was one of the most important research tools I brought to the field. I was interested in photography as *process* rather than a product of fieldwork (Larson 1987). In this manner, the photographic engagement in the field is to be understood in its own terms and not merely as an adjunct to participant observation (Newbury1999). A photographic camera is not a neutral research tool however. I carried mine around my neck wherever I went and even when I was not taking photographs I observed that people took notice. My camera triggered mostly negative reactions. In the streets of the neighbourhood, people avoided me as soon as they saw my clunky zoom lens. I think that they might have assumed that I was either a nosy photo-reporter documenting the quarter or worse yet, a tourist.

I remember one instance in particular. I was really focusing on taking a photo of an art-nouveau style entrance when I noticed a woman in her fifties who was observing me. She was looking for an extended moment, we half smiled at each other and then she asked me: “Are you taking these for your grandparents in Israel?” I was curious what prompted such a direct and specific question, so I answered her and asked why she thought I might be taking photos for my grandparents in Israel. She was strangely

³⁸ The only Yiddish daily published in Poland after the Second World War. *Folksztymme* was eventually replaced with *Dos Jidisze Wort/Slowo Zydowskie*, a bilingual (Polish-Yiddish) biweekly (Weinbaum, 1998: 31).

overjoyed when she heard me speaking Polish without any accent. “You are from here, you are ours”, she said. After which she explained to me that many people come from the United States and Israel to look for their property and she just took me for one of *those*. I told her that in fact I do not reside in Poland and that Polish identity is more often than not composed of various ethnic origins which should be celebrated not scorned. The woman accepted my reply and left. I think she was confused.

Like so many others (Andrzejewska & Zawadzki 1999, Helander 1999, Markowski 1999) I found that Kazimierz needed to be visually recorded in its present state as it was transforming very quickly after almost fifty years of stagnation. This transformation was necessary and mostly positive. Buildings were being renovated inside as well as outside, streets were repaved, and empty lots became construction sites. There were instances however in which the renovations were hurried and careless. I engaged in many discussions with my interlocutors about the recent transformations in the quarter and what these changes meant for the Jewish character of the place.

These discussions as well as numerous images of Kazimierz, some as old as the discipline of photography itself, prompted me to carry out another material culture survey. This time, I provided the ten participants with disposable cameras and an assignment to photograph what constitutes Kazimierz for them. I wanted to explore how photographs “become resources of social and cultural memory and imagination; the indexical becomes iconic. The photographs themselves become ‘places of memory’” (Newbury, 1999:21). There were altogether ten disposable cameras and ten unique stories about Kazimierz from the participants, who were all connected to the place because they

worked or lived in the area. Those who fit neither of the previously mentioned categories were participants in the recent revival of the Jewish past in the quarter.

As I found out, the range of experience possible in Kazimierz was not only limited to visiting museums or attending the “Retracing **Schindler’s List** Tour”³⁹. The Jewish material culture which defines the quarter as such allows one to acknowledge it in a historical and contemporary sense. Its material heritage in fact, provides an anchor for the memory of the Polish Jews. Here I have provided the context and the methods I used to carry out my research. In the next section I will outline my theoretical framework.

³⁹ As soon as **Schindler’s List** started playing in North America visitors began arriving in Kazimierz with *The New York Times* reviews about the movie and the place where it was filmed; I was told by one of the tour organizers who also happens to be a bookshop owner in the quarter. People expected the quarter and the props to be arranged just as they were while the film was being made. They would be upset that the ghetto entrance was gone. They could hardly believe that it was made out of papier maché for the duration of the film only. They would come into the bookshop and seek answers. This is when the organizers published a small guide describing all the places portrayed in the film. It became one of the most often purchased items in the bookshop and was followed by a tour, which was even more successful. During the summer for example, the tour would take place sometimes three times a day; the demand was so great. Ten years after the movie first came out the demand for “Retracing **Schindler’s List** Tour” has slowed down considerably.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Since 1978 the quarter of Kazimierz has been a part of an exclusive UNESCO⁴⁰ list of monuments and places which are truly precious to humanity's common heritage. Its prewar residents, most of whom perished in the Holocaust, left behind a quarter which despite all the horrors of the war and the carelessness of the post-war era survives them almost untouched. Although it has always been a Jewish site, only recently it has become recognized as such by officials and by the general public. The quarter of Kazimierz is neither a museum nor a monument. On the one hand it is just another neighbourhood of Krakow where people live and work. On the other hand however, the quarter functions as a commemorative space which attracts visitors and tourists.

Commemoration sites derive their power directly from their materiality as immutable evidence and unmediated testimony. The quarter of Kazimierz is filled with authentic vestiges of a past age, such as cemeteries, *mikvehs* and synagogues. These meaningful relics are invested with tremendous symbolic value. Their tangibility authenticates the quarter's Jewish character and the stories of its former residents. In this way, commemorative sites such as Kazimierz give rise to memory. In the quarter of Kazimierz individually constituted memories accumulate to collectively construct and represent public memory which has no single manifestation.

Memory

For the purpose of this study I propose that the quarter of Kazimierz is a site of memory which according to the 1993 edition of the Robert dictionary is "a meaningful

⁴⁰ UNESCO list also includes: Krakow's old city, Wieliczka salt mine, Auschwitz/Birkenau death camp and Bialowieza primeval forest.

entity of a real or imagined kind which has become a symbolic element of a given community as a result of human will or the effect of time” (Nora 1989). “*Lieux de memoire*” are a product of human temporal agency and are quintessentially symbolic. They range from symbols (the tricolour of the French flag) and monuments (the Pantheon) to commemorative events (the 14th of July) and exhibitions (Wood, 1994: 124). Sites of memory comprise the bedrock of a community’s symbolic repertoire (Wood, 1994: 124).

According to Friedlander (1993), La Capra (1998) and Nora (1989), many communities are now immersed in the era of commemoration as particular memories restructure the way the relationship between past, present and future is experienced. “The acceleration of history – an increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good, a general perception that anything and everything may disappear is a mark of our age” (Nora, 1989: 12). Nora further highlights three modern types of memory and these include the archive-memory, the distance-memory and the duty-memory. Duty-memory according to Nora is the sense of responsibility “that weighs upon an individual as if an inner voice is saying, it is I who must remember; as if one’s salvation ultimately depends on the repayment of an impossible debt” (1989:16).

Memory worldwide has begun to be considered as a historically evolving entity providing a thread of continuity between antiquity and the future. Andreas Huyssen (1994: 9) for instance, claims that societal memory is negotiated in and through its values, rituals and institutions. In the case of modern societies in particular, memory is often shaped by public “*lieux de memoire*” such as the museum, the memorial and the monument (Nora 1989, Huyssen 1994). In this context “some monuments are joyously

toppled at times of social upheaval, others preserve memory in its most ossified form either as myth or cliché. Yet others stand as figures of forgetting, their meaning and original purpose eroded by the passage of time” (Huysen 1994:12).

Scholars such as Esbenschade (1995), Hartman (1995), Huysen (1994), Irwin-Zarecka (1994) and Nora (1989) claim that due to the recent obsession with the past, societies now suffer from an overload of memories and have too many museums. Having become such essential components of the contemporary everyday experience has caused the boundaries between the museum, memorial and monument to become fluid. Huysen (1994:12) suggests that the exceptional power of museums and monuments within the public space is fundamentally due to their material quality, something that the television and virtual reality denies.

Museums provide a setting for “conflicting but simultaneously operating processes which make social ideas understandable but not always legitimate”(Karp, 1992: 6). In all museums, selection of knowledge and presentation of ideas are enacted within a particular power system. This power to represent and reproduce structures of belief and experience through which cultures are understood does not work in the same way for all types of museums (Karp, 1992: 2). Art museums privilege visibility; cultural and natural history museums prefer narrative content; and festivals often claim to embody experience (Karp, 1992: 4). Furthermore, as communities look to museums as places to articulate their identity, the past often seems to overdetermine views of the present (Muller-Kreamer, 1992: 371).

Memory can be individual, collective and manifold. As it is constructed and dependent on particular contexts, memory can be fragmented, paradoxical and

inconsistent. Michel de Certeau (1984: 108) for instance, likens the faculty of memory to a sort of an anti-museum. According to Maurice Halbwachs “there are as many memories as there are groups, memory is by nature multiple and specific, collective, plural yet individual. History on the other hand, belongs to everyone and no one, whence its claim to universal authority” (as cited in Irwin-Zarecka 1994). Consequently, memory is a concept which remains in constant movement and is open to dialectic remembering and forgetting. According to Laurence Kirmayer (1996) memory is anything but a photographic record of experience. “Memory is a roadway full of potholes, badly in need of repair worked on day and night by revisionist crews. What is registered is highly selective and thoroughly transformed by interpretation and semantic encoding at the moment of experience” (Kirmayer, 1996: 176).

As a number of commentators have shown, Maurice Halbwachs developed his theory of collective memory in opposition to the views of his former teacher, the philosopher Henri Bergson, who treated memory as primarily a personal and a subjective experience; as a capacity and a resource of the individual psyche (Wood, 1994: 121). Halbwachs, on the other hand, paid attention to the social context within which remembering occurred as well as the “social frames” into which all recollections were woven. In this way, the act of remembering as well as the “*lieux de memoire*” also became products of human and temporal agency. In his understanding, individual and social contexts of memory did not simply coexist. Individual memory could not function without instruments such as words and ideas, which were not self-contrived but appropriated from the surrounding milieu (Wood, 1994:125).

Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* makes a persuasive argument for the performative nature of social memory (1989). Without the performance of physical ritual practices, he suggests, collective memory cannot be maintained (Connerton 1989, Kugelmass 1994, Rosenson 1997). Furthermore, Connerton argues that material objects have less significance in perpetuating memory than embodied acts and rituals. Nonetheless, collective memory is that which exists in the public domain. It provides a means through which a group reconstructs and understands its past.

Furthermore memory can be invoked to heal, to blame and to legitimize. James Young (1993: 3) points out that although the state has the power to influence and shape memory as they see fit, memorials often take on a life of their own. In the Polish context, as the state control over Polish national memory loosened up following the events of 1989, commemorative ceremonies concerning the period of the Second World War became infused with new and unexpected meanings. In the recent years for instance, numbers of memorials have been built by both Polish and foreign non-governmental organizations and private individuals in hitherto uncommemorated sites or alongside already existing official monuments (Gebert, 1994:122).

Memory serves as a means for identity construction (Antze & Lambek, 1996: xvi). The reinvention of Polish national identity in the post-communist context is directly tied to the issues of memory formation and re-evaluation. Redefining most Nazi death camps as primarily, sites of Jewish martyrology and stripping them of their previous Stalinist cast was one of the first efforts of the new Polish government in transforming official memory. The redesigning of Auschwitz-Birkenau has been more clearly defined than that of any other former Nazi death camp. The reasons for this are many. Practically

speaking, Auschwitz is the most often visited commemorative site by foreigners and Poles alike. Ideologically, Auschwitz is the global symbol of the horrors of the Holocaust (Steinlauf 1997).

Only recently scholars such as Friedlander (1993), Karp & Lavine (1992), Nora (1989), and Young (1993, 1994) have acknowledged that our understanding of history is mediated by how it is represented to us; that the past is in fact how we represent it. This applies to all historical depictions but in the case of Auschwitz the gap between representation and history is particularly evident and provocative. Antze and Lambek argue:

“As memory emerges into consciousness, as it is externalized and increasingly objectified it always depends on cultural vehicles for expression. So it becomes important to look at the symbols, codes, artefacts, rites and sites in which memory is embodied and objectified; the coherence or fragmentation of the narratives, rituals, geographies or even epistemologies it relies upon; and the way their authority changes over time” (1996: xvii).

Authenticity in a space as loaded as Auschwitz is concerned with factuality as much as it is about authority (Karp & Lavine 1992). Each year hundreds of thousands of visitors travel to the historical museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau to look at the ruins and the relics. They attempt to put a meaning to it all. This is impossible since in a place like Auschwitz “the ruins of memory are subject to restoration, hence we all become the alienated tourists of our past” (Antze & Lambek, 1996: xiii). Consequently, the difficulty of understanding Auschwitz through representations remains a major intellectual challenge of the new Europe (Huysen 1994).

Andreas Huyssen argues that it is the tangibility of material sites and objects which shapes and structures memory (1994:12). Objects function as mediators between

the past, present and future, however, as they do this, they must not be removed from their historical and social surroundings. According to Jack Kugelmass (1995), the passing of the present generation of the Holocaust survivors as well as the growing generational distance from the actual historical event has caused a shift in remembering. Through this shift objects and material sites have been sanctioned to represent the many dimensions of the Holocaust. "The materiality of objects seems to function like a guarantee against simulation, but and this is the contradiction – their very anamnestic effect can never entirely escape the orbit of simulation and is even enhanced by the simulation of the spectacular mise-en-scene" (Huysen, 1995: 33).

The materiality of objects is also exploited by governments and nations. In a quest to convey the Holocaust experience authentically for instance, half of a barrack that housed Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz-Birkenau has been obtained and reassembled at the Holocaust Memorial in Washington D.C. (Friesel 1994: 230). On another occasion, two silver spoons recently found among other artefacts in Belzec were presented by the Polish Prime Minister during his 1998 United States visit, to the Washington Holocaust Museum Chairman, Miles Lerman whose own family perished in the same camp (O'Neil, 1998: 58 footnote).

Scholars such as Friedlander (1993), Huysen (1994), Young (1993) postulate that in the contemporary process of elaboration of historical consciousness, historiography may well be playing a secondary role to film, television, popular culture, state commemorations, monuments and museums. According to Jack Kugelmass, many people in the contemporary world pursue pseudo-events in place of real experience. "Tourism has replaced travel; the experience itself consists of little more than preformulated tidbits

not much different from a visit to an upscale shopping mall” (Kugelmass, 1996: 199). Hence it is questioned in this context whether the Holocaust will just become “another tourist attraction for visitors to consume, part of what Goffman calls, the ceremonial agenda of obligatory rites” (Linenthal 1995: 269).

Memory bespeaks detachment, or perhaps, to borrow an evocative phrase from Paul Ricoeur, a dialectic between appropriation and distanciation (as cited in Antze & Lambek, 1996: xiii). The great divide between memory and history preoccupies many scholars. Few however have addressed the complex relationship between material culture and memory in the contemporary world. Fred Myers postulates that the conditions of transnationalism under which most people in the world now live have created “new and often contradictory cultural and economic values and meanings in objects - that is, in material culture - as those objects travel in accelerated fashion through local, national and international markets and other regimes of value production” (2001:3). In the context of the Holocaust, the recent reification and commodification of the vehicles of memory for the sake of remembering and commemoration is pertinent to my research. In this thesis it will be demonstrated that in the milieu of post-communist Poland memory construction is in fact entangled with the processes of commodification.

Material Culture

The examination of material culture has always been pertinent to the construction of anthropological knowledge. Since the establishment of the discipline, materialist and evolutionary approaches dominated anthropological analysis and provided unchallenged insights into the significance of objects (Myers, 2001:5). During this time, considerations

of style, form and technique were the only alternative until the emergence of exchange theory, which having built on the work of Durkheim (1984(1893)), Mauss (1999(1925)) and Malinowski (1922), maintained a vital trajectory throughout the twentieth century (Levis-Strauss 1949, Sahlins 1965, 1972, 1976) (Myers, 2001: 5).

One of the major contributions of the study of exchange is that it brought to light the importance of “categories of objects in maintaining social life either through giving and reciprocity (Sahlins 1965) or through keeping (Weiner 1985, 1992, 1994)-and in producing identity” (Myers, 2001:5). Unfortunately, much of this work, Weiner has argued, provided a Western economic perspective to “gifts”, reciprocity, authority, ownership and gender (Myers, 2001:5). Hence, instead of considering how objects came to be invested with what Weiner (1994) has called “dense” socio-cultural meaning and value, the deep divide between gift exchange and capitalist economies was explored (Myers, 2001: 5).

Along with other legacies of nineteenth century evolutionary anthropology the focus on material culture began to fade out (Miller, 1995: 148). Due to its ability to focus on things and their social significance however, material culture theory was revisited in the 1970’s. “Much of the early literature came out of ethnoarchaeology and the centrality of material culture theory to archaeological reconstruction of the past” (Miller, 1995:148). The resurgence of the anthropology of art and the critical consideration of museums and their collections also contributed to the revival and development of material culture theory. As a result of this, novel theories on material culture were conceptualized by scholars in the late 1980’s. Appadurai’s edited volume *The Social Life of Things* (1986) was one of the first contributions in the deconstruction of the

gift/commodity opposition. Furthermore, it attempted to disentangle the value that had been built into objects and their means of production. It called for cultural histories of things to be recognized and their social biographies to be explored. In the same volume, Kopytoff proposed that through the tracing of their biographies, things are not alienated from their social context and the wider scope of socio-cultural economy. He suggested that:

“In doing the biography of a thing one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: what sociologically are the biographical possibilities inherent in its status, how are they realized, where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far and what do people consider to be the ideal career for such a thing? What are the recognized “ages” or periods in the thing’s life and what are the cultural markers for it? How does the thing’s use change with age and what happens when it reaches the end of its usefulness?” (1986:66)

The value of objects was now to be acknowledged through their provenance, the history of those who possessed them and ritual practices which surrounded them (Dant, 1999:24). The history and the politics of an artefact’s association with humans were to determine its commodity status throughout its life-course (Dant, 1999:14). In this context, the object became a vehicle of social values.

In 1987, Miller ‘s *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* laid out a general theory “recasting the Hegelian philosophy used by Marx and Simmel, among others, as an approach to contemporary consumption” (Miller, 1995: 142). His work became influential outside the discipline of anthropology. Media and design studies benefited from its implication of the potentially active role of consumers in resocializing commodities (Miller, 1995: 143). The development of material culture studies in the 1980’s demonstrated that social worlds were made up by materiality as much as

materiality was composed by social worlds. It became clear that the focus upon material worlds does not “fetishize them since they are not some separate superstructure to social worlds” (Miller, 1998:3). In this context, the link between consumption and material culture was established and examined in further detail. Consumption according to this perspective represented largely by Miller (1987, 1995, 1998) was seen as responsible for the shaping of the global as well as the social order. Consumption began to be treated as the vanguard of history. Consumers in turn were viewed as directly responsible for shaping the social worlds in which they live, in a “relatively autonomous process of cultural self-construction, because ‘purchase’ is the point at which economic institutions have direct implications for humanity “(Miller, 1995: 41).

The approach of Daniel Miller asserts a specific status for the actions of people as consumers. It does not however permit for the more complex relations between people and objects that constitute material culture without the direct economic consequences (Dant, 1999:34). Instead of treating objects as merely products or commodities Tim Dant’s *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles* proposes to view them as allies, and meaningful artefacts which construct an essential part of the context of our social lives (1999:14). According to this viewpoint, objects do not just serve their intended purpose, they also enable human beings to communicate and express their sense of cultural togetherness and individuality within that collectivity (1999:14).

Consumption is in fact a restrictive approach in understanding how material culture shapes and reflects social forms and processes. There are many different concerns in material culture and in the study of objects, apart from the consumption focus (Dant, 1999:38). According to Dant (1999: 38), some of these look at material culture as: 1)

signs of status and identity (Bourdieu 1984), 2) meaning and equivalence within and between different cultures (Baudrillard 1970, Douglas and Isherwood 1979, Sahlins 1976), 3) knowledge and ideas (Appadurai 1986). Dant recommends an assorted approach that brings material culture studies into the foreground of modern social life. According to this approach humans at times interact with objects as if they are humans and at other times they communicate ideas through objects to other humans and still other times they use objects to signal their identity, and social standing (Dant, 1999:38).

It has been argued that the meaning of a thing is not determined by its form and function alone. The significance of an artefact resides in its material form as well as in its relation to place, people, and time (Dant, 1999:13). According to Wiener's conception of "Inalienable Wealth", some objects or interests, such as body decor or land rights may be exchanged without ever losing their identity and attachment to the lineage that originally owned them (Thomas, 1991:24). Whether passed on as a family treasure from generation to generation or lost in the ravages of war, the essence of a thing lies in what it has become, not necessarily in what it was made to be. This contradicts a pervasive notion in material culture studies and in museum research that the identity of a thing is fixed and founded in material form alone (Thomas, 1991: 4).

The alternative perspective to the consumption-centred study of material culture recognizes that objects do not have a commodity status built into them. Instead they move in and out of the commodity state throughout their social lives (Appadurai 1986, Kopytoff 1986). Objects function as a cause, a medium and a consequence of social relationships (Riggins, 1994: 1). Some of the more recent approaches in material culture studies have resulted in the conceptualization of artefacts as agencies or semi-agencies

(Riggins, 1994: 2). According to Appadurai (1986), objects do not just play the role of passive embodiments of human intentions. They arbitrate meanings, communicate information and demand comprehension. Tim Dant (1999:14) provides an example of an accordion:

“Picking up and playing a button accordion that was made at another time in another place, for another person and another type of music, can release potentials stored within it that were never intended or anticipated by its maker. The picking up and playing disembeds something - tone, a harmonic sequence, a volume, a voice - which is distinctively cultural”

Consequently, things have social lives and are culturally entangled. Vocabulary that is now used relating to objects was in the past reserved for human beings (Riggins, 1994:2).

Consequently, objects can perform as interactive agents.

Webb Kane proposes that objects can function as social media and be open to multiple readings (2001:70). They call for interpretative practices and political strategies, hence they are necessarily caught up in the uncertainties of social action (Kane, 2001:70). Kane argues however that things are not readily separated from their context and throughout they remain as material objects and thus are vulnerable to all that can happen to things (Kane, 2001:70). In addition, material objects are always subject to what Grice (1957) has called “natural meaning”. So a tear in a cloth means that the cloth was snagged in a tree, for example. In the context of a social interaction things can become bearers of “non-natural meaning”, where the same torn cloth can be used intentionally to insult (Kane, 2001:70). Hence, the significance that things carry is deeply embedded in the physical world that surrounds them. Kane argues that:

“The very materiality of objects means that they are not merely arbitrary signs. Their materiality makes a difference both in the

sources of their meanings and in their destinations; such as they are subject to shifting physical, cultural, economic and semiotic contexts. Finally in so far as objects often seem to carry their values and meanings on their selves, as it were, they can play critical roles at the intersection of these shifting contexts. Their power and value emerge at the intersection of their character as conventional signs and their potential roles in a possibly unlimited range of contexts”(2001:70).

Objects aid in keeping alive the collective memory of societies and families which would otherwise be forgotten (Riggins, 1994: 3). Riggins proposes that objects, just like language are polysemic (Riggins, 1994: 3). He states that the meanings read into a particular artefact can be derived from these four most common sources, which are: 1) its physical characteristics, 2) the information conveyed by the object and the space which surrounds it, 3) the observers life-long experience with similar types of artefacts, 4) the texts about them (Riggins, 1994: 3). Furthermore, their openness to multiple interpretations allows humans to invest them with meanings.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) explores the paradox of showing things that were never meant to be displayed. She proposes that ethnographic objects are in fact objects of ethnography. They are created by anthropologists who define, segment and carry them away. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests that artefacts are often made, not found. They become ethnographic objects through the process of detachment and contextualization. Her *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museum and Heritage* (1998) theorizes the artefact and the reasoning of exhibition in the context of lively debates about the death of museum, ascendancy of tourism, production of heritage, limits of multiculturalism and circulation of value in the life world.

Chapter 4: Memory's Anchors: a Tour of Kazimierz

In the first ethnographic chapter I will introduce the quarter of Kazimierz through a sightseeing tour. The tour will emphasize the quarter's spatial relations and the meaning of particular sites in the remembrance of Jews of Kazimierz. Its pleasant manner will assist the readers in acclimatizing themselves with the quarter and its distinct character. This is particularly important as Kazimierz provides both the background and the context for my study of the role of material culture in remembering Jews.

It is my understanding that most visitors become familiar with the quarter through a tour of some kind. I have attended twelve organized tours during my fieldwork. One of the tours which I participated in and which I use as a template for this chapter is also representative of the changing times in Poland. Conducted for the first time as one of the festivities of the "Third Day of Judaism" celebrated by the Catholic Church in Krakow, the tour was led by the Jewish Community elder, Mr. Jakubowicz. Many of those who attended the tour found out about it from their parish, for most it was a first encounter with the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz.

Into the contemporary tour of Kazimierz I will weave fragments of the narratives of three octogenarian Holocaust survivors I collected in the field. These narratives are extremely important to me, not only because they come from wonderful people who have practically adopted me as their curious grand daughter. They are essential to this thesis because they provide it with a living and intimate historical record of Jewish life in Kazimierz. They provide the reader with, as one of my interlocutors put it: "*journeys into the lost time*". Told by survivors, the narratives allow the reader to envision Kazimierz as

a living Jewish quarter, that is no more. Their voices are very important at this time, while Kazimierz is going through many abrupt and irreversible changes.

During my six-month stay in Kazimierz (1999-2000) I found that the quarter has been transformed into a site of memory within one short decade. Organizations such as the Judaica Foundation, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, as well as the local Jewish Community have all taken part in commemorating the Jewish quarter of Krakow and its residents. The slippery and volatile memory of Jewish existence in Poland has been anchored in Kazimierz. It has not been a painless process. Not only have the postwar residents of the quarter appropriated it as their own, they have not been joyous about sharing it with crowds of tourists, officials and security. Their peaceful existence has been disturbed. Much of the time however, they have refused to recognize that this wave of visitors helps their livelihood in many ways. Increased traffic means more money spent at the market, where many of the people I talked to work. It also implies better living conditions because of renovated and repaired buildings, at least for a short while. In the long run, the convenient location of Kazimierz, along with improved safety due to the increased traffic implies gentrification. In fact, the process of gentrification⁴¹ has already begun thereby making many of the current residents weary and afraid of losing their homes. As if matters were not already complex enough what many fear most is the restitution of Jewish property⁴².

⁴¹ During my research I heard stories about many residents who were relocated to one of Krakow's many apartment complexes. The most memorable one was that of all the residents of one building being relocated to another building in a completely different neighbourhood, in a group.

⁴² The residents expressed this fear quite often. They know very little about the actual complexity of the process of restitution of Jewish property. As they understand it, in the simplest of terms, is that one-day the old owner would show up and throw them out. Hence they have not been the friendliest and most welcoming to all the visitors in the quarter because for all they know, these visitors may be looking for their property. The Polish government has not helped to deal with such fears and misunderstandings. It has

From my fieldwork experience in Kazimierz I can conclude that the need to remember Kazimierz's former Jewish residents clearly exceeds the need to forget. The consistent attendance of locals and foreigners at lectures, film screenings and anniversaries is a sure sign of that. The residents of Krakow come here to learn, to question and to commemorate. They are refitting the Jewish civilization of Poland into their memories by attending Hebrew calligraphy workshops and Yiddish classes. The foreigners are also taking part in this recent phenomenon as they attend the "Retracing Schindler's List Tour"⁴³ and visit the synagogues of the quarter. Often being on their way back from Auschwitz/Birkenau⁴⁴, they are glad that they did not ignore this place. Some draw parallels between the heaps of shoes at the Auschwitz Museum and the empty synagogues of Kazimierz. Many still find visiting Auschwitz necessary, others cannot get past its shocking and artificial nature. Many, including myself, find Kazimierz equally as haunting as Auschwitz.

The existence of Kazimierz bears witness to all of its former residents and the rest of the annihilated Jews. It provides evidence to the centuries of Jewish civilization on

in fact ignored the issue for some time. "Legislation regulating relations with most Christian denominations was already concluded in 1991. Only in 1997 the parliament passed a bill regulating its relations with the existing Jewish community and provided for the restitution of Jewish communal property to the existing Jewish communities. The question of restitution in Poland is both emotional and complex and the passage of the new law must be seen as an important watershed in the normalization of Polish-Jewish relations. The bill has been condemned by many Jewish organizations however, as it only provides for a small percentage of Jewish communal property and it does not address the claims of Polish Jews living outside of Poland" (Weinbaum, 1998:36).

⁴³ "Retracing Schindler's List Tour" is one of many tours available. There are various tourist agencies in Krakow which bring visitors to the quarter. Many eager entrepreneurs try to capitalize on this recent revival of Jewish memory in Poland. Some of them are more qualified for such tours than others. The visitors who participate in these tours are mostly Western European and American. The bulk of the tours occurs in the summer time. Because Kazimierz is only ten minutes away from Krakow's main attractions such as the Wawel castle and the main city square (and has been only recently added to the tourist attraction signs), some visitors actually arrive in the quarter by accident.

⁴⁴ It takes about an hour to travel on the train between Krakow and Oswiecim, where Auschwitz/Birkenau is located.

Polish soil. It allows visitors, both Polish and foreign to imagine how life went on. It shows the visiting Poles that their Jewish counterparts often had similar goals, aspirations and concerns. It helps them to question stereotypes. Maybe I am going too far. I believe that the existence of this unique quarter gives its visitors a chance to mourn, to reflect and to remember. It allows its former residents to return to something other than abandoned cemeteries. The following quotation depicts very beautifully one of such many returns:

“And so I come back, after ‘years stormy and turbulent’, to cast an eye over the landscape of my youth and my childhood, where every stone is laden with sweet memories, to walk through the streets where our fates intermingled, where the Street of Corpus Christi crossed with the Street of Rabbi Meisels, and the Street of Saint Sebastian with that of Berek Joselewicz; to tramp through the alleyways named after Esther, Jacob and Isaac - where else in the Diaspora were streets named after the biblical patriarchs? To walk again down Koletek Street towards the sports ground of the Makkabi Club, Orzeszkowa Street to Nowy Dziennik, Miodowa Street to the Tempel prayer-house, Brzozowa Street to the Hebrew school. To pause in front of the synagogue - the Alterschul, Popper’s, Kupah, Remuh - one could deduce from the number of synagogues that the Jews of Krakow were singularly pious. Well - many were; but there were also those who - as described by Isaac Deutscher, the son of Krakow printer and a famous biographer of Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky - there were those who, like himself, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, went to the grave of the holy Rabbi Isserles and ate a ham sandwich - to spite him and their parents.

One could say that Krakow was wonderfully overflowing with Jews. This was a community whose tone was set by Dr. Osias Thon, the preacher in the liberal synagogue and a member of the national legislature; Dr. Ignacy Schwarzbart, a Zionist leader (during the war a member of the National Council of the Polish government-in-exile); Dr. Chaim Hilfstein, after whom the Hebrew school was named; teachers of that school - Scherer, Haber, Mifelew, Rapaport, Katz, Szmulewicz, Feldhorn, Stendig, Waldman, Metalman, Mrs. Goldwasser - many others each of them deserving an epitaph of their own; lawyers - Susskind, Hoffman, Feldblum, Goldblat, Bader, Schechter; the Orthodox Rabbi Kornitzer; the assimilated chairman of the Kahal Dr Landau; Wilhelm

Berkelhammer, Moses Kanfer, David Lazer of the Nowy Dziennik; Rywek Wolf from the students' home; Rosa Rock of the orphanage. Here were active the Przedswit-Hashachar youth organization, Hashomer Hatzair, Gordonia, Akiba, Masada; the Makkabi and Jutrzenka sports clubs; here flourished the worthy middle class families of Tigner, Einhorn, Fallman, Lipschutz, Leser, Selinger, Bester, Rosthal, Stoeger, Freiwald, Herzig, Aleksandrowicz, Karmel, Freilich, Monderer, Ehrlich...

This sounds like a grey list of tenants, but for me it is anything but grey - every single name evokes, with poignant clarity, a distinctive face, movements, gestures, expressions as if it were yesterday. I think of them with unfading affection. I could find my way to their dwellings with my eyes shut, touching, to be sure, the cavity on the side of the door where there used to be the mezuzah.

That human landscape is etched in my heart, my memory. I cannot forget for a single moment that the majority of them, family, friends, acquaintances- none of them was a stranger to me - were hounded to death in the ghettos, in the labour camps, the death factories, the gas chambers. We have got used to talking about this, using words derived from ordinary, everyday discourse, but nobody is able to take in the real meaning of that loss".⁴⁵

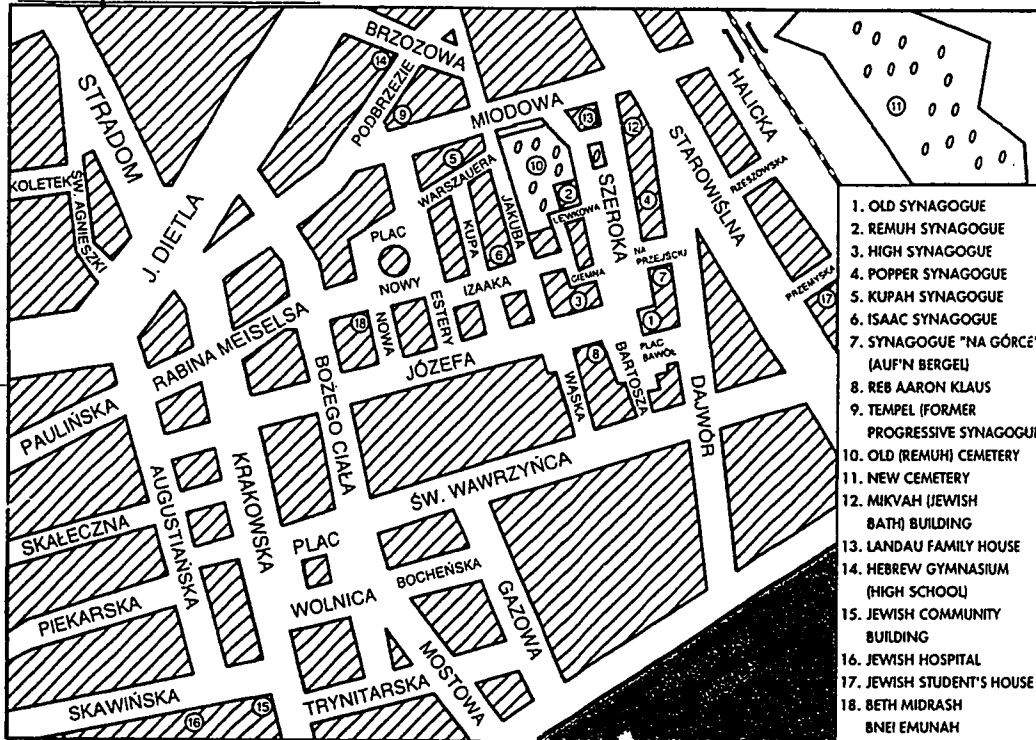
I have reread this fragment of Rafael Scharf's speech many times. Sometimes looking for inspiration and wisdom in his words and other times just following the words as if he was taking me on a tour of a "*human landscape*" that is no more. I cannot possibly imagine his pain when he walks by his beloved school, his own home. His love for the quarter of Kazimierz and its residents has been recorded. Rafael Scharf's reflections and experiences have been published. Today, nearing his ninetieth birthday he remains the spokesman for the quarter of his youth.

⁴⁵ Rafael F. Scharf - Fragments of his opening speech at the Inauguration of the Centre for Jewish Culture in Krakow, Kazimierz 1993. He was born in Krakow in 1914, graduate of the Hebrew High School. "Having obtained a degree in law at the Jagiellonian University, he immigrated to England. Co-founder of *The Jewish Quarterly*, a literary-political magazine. One of the founders of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies at Oxford and a member of the editorial board of its journal *Polin*. He defines himself as Homo Cracoviensis and, although he has lived in London for the last 60 years, his heart, memories and whole life are linked to the city of his birth" (Kapralski, 1999: jacket).

During my stay in Kazimierz I have met some elderly Polish Jews who shared with me their own life stories and within them their connection to Kazimierz. They were now too frail to take me on a tour of the quarter. Even though one person expressed such a wish, cold weather and health concerns did not allow it to materialize. Still, while recording their narratives I felt like a visitor. They were in fact taking me on a tour, their extremely rich and often tragic life experiences, unlimited by the confines of their homes.

The narratives of elderly Polish Jews prompt me to conclude that the quintessence of the past is embodied in material sites. Buildings represent one such locus of material culture, a meeting point for people and objects. Buildings and street names appear often in their life stories. Their detailed accounts provide vignettes of life in Kazimierz before it was destroyed during the Holocaust. They also afford the prospective reader an alternative to the all-encompassing historical texts about the quarter.

Description of the Tour⁴⁶



⁴⁶ The map for the tour of Kazimierz was taken from Henryk Halkowski's book *The Legends from the Jewish Town in Kazimierz near Krakow*, Mercury 1998.

It is the 16th of January 2000. The Day of Judaism is being celebrated by the Catholic Church for the third time. Being organized mainly by the Jesuit Centre for Dialogue, its purpose is to raise general awareness about Judaism and Jews, or as some priests say: "Our Elder Brothers in Faith". The events are many. First a tour of Kazimierz with the Jewish Community leader. Shortly after, an open forum discussion with a priest and a rabbi as mediators. Then a mass with a special homily from the cardinal of Galicia (the south eastern region of Poland). At night, a Hebrew music choir concert in the Franciscan church, and then "*Raisins with Almonds*", a performance of Yiddish ballads and songs sung at the altar of the Jesuit Basilica.

It is 9:00 in the morning. I step outside of my apartment building and find myself on *Warszauer* Street. There is hardly any room to pass through because of the weekly Sunday market that has been taking place since anyone can remember on the *Nowy* (New) Square, more commonly known as *Zydowski* (Jewish). I make my way through the busy crowd and take a right turn on *Esther* Street. In two seconds I find myself in the *Tempel*. The tour has begun. The *Tempel* is full of people. I see no familiar faces. People are posing questions to the Jewish community leader, Mr. Jakubowicz, the tour guide for this special occasion.

It is beautiful inside. Renovations, financed mainly by the World Monument Fund and the Jewish Heritage Council, are still being done. Mr. Jakubowicz tries to explain some basic things about the place itself and Jewish rituals. People ask relentlessly. They are interested in knowing who comes here; how many Jews live in Krakow; why women must sit in the balcony; who is paying for the renovations; what does it mean to be a progressive Jew; are there any orthodox Jews left in Poland; etcetera. Mr. Jakubowicz

answers patiently. He tries to let the people know that Jews are very much like everyone else. He also touches on the problem of anti-Semitism. This is unavoidable since new graffiti has appeared on the entrance arch of this newly repainted sacral building. "*Judenraus*"⁴⁷, and other obscenities in Polish along with a neo-Nazi sign and a Star of David on a hangman's pole are hard to miss for all those attending today's special events in Kazimierz.

People discuss things with one another, and they ask questions. Mr. Jakubowicz mentions a little bit about his problems with the hooligans who destroy cemeteries, who write graffiti, and concludes that they need to hate something. The Jew satisfies that need completely, always having been perceived as a foreign element in the Polish scenery. I think that part of the misunderstandings and intolerance of the Polish towards the Jewish people is that they were never viewed as fully Polish by the majority of society that is. Polish-Jewish history functions as something completely foreign and other, not a part of the national patrimony for the majority of Polish people. Little do they know that their many beloved poets, painters and scientists constitute a part of that foreign world. Mr. Jakubowicz continues to explain patiently as he talks about having issues with Polish anti-Semitism as an all-encompassing concept. He says: "Those so-called anti-Semites have saved myself and our family. Five people are not easy to hide and to feed. They were risking their lives completely. Death penalty to the entire family for hiding a Jew, Poland being the only occupied country with such a measure...had I been waiting for the Americans or the English - I still would be waiting today".

⁴⁷ *Judenraus* means Jews out in German. It is part of the Nazi newspeak employed during the Holocaust.

Tempel, the progressive synagogue in which Jakubowicz started the tour of Kazimierz hosted an American-Jewish *Bar Mitzvah* ⁴⁸ in 1986. The event was made into a documentary film titled: **Spark among the Ashes** ⁴⁹ and was televised on the CNN some years back. It is also the synagogue used for services by the March of the Living and any other organized Jewish tours while being in the quarter of Kazimierz.

The tour of about one hundred people leaves the synagogue and follows Mr. Jakubowicz to the right. We stop along *Miodowa* Street to look directly opposite of the *Tempel*. Jakubowicz points to a nearly fallen building, showing the first signs of renovation. It is the *Kupa Synagogue*. Mr. Jakubowicz explains: “This was the first operational synagogue after the war. On August 11th, 1945, after a service, as people were leaving the building, they were attacked by a mob. The fighting spread over to the neighbouring streets. One woman who had survived Auschwitz was killed in this event, which is officially called the Pogrom of Kazimierz. Very few actually know about it”.

After the war, *Kupa* was used as a government cooperative for war veterans. With the change of the political situation in Poland, cooperatives stopped being funded. *Kupa* was abandoned in a terrible state, with the roof falling in and most of its windows missing. It has recently been reclaimed by the Jewish Community and it is slowly being

⁴⁸ A *Bar Mitzvah* is a rite of passage for every practising Jewish boy. It takes place on the first Shabbat following the boy's thirteenth birthday and welcomes him as an adult into the greater Jewish community.

⁴⁹ Here is a review of Oren Rudavsky's film taken from www.frif.com: "*Jews of Krakow Await US Bar Mitzvah Boy*", read the New York Times headline, as Eric Strom, a 13-year-old Connecticut boy, stood at the centre of a complex human drama that attracted world-wide attention. Krakow's handful of Jews, survivors of one of the largest Jewish communities prior to World War II, were eager to participate in his Bar Mitzvah, first in their synagogues in over forty years. In following the emotional journey of Eric and his family to Poland, the filmmakers capture a riveting story: a woman rabbi faces a storm of controversy over religious traditions and modernity; a Holocaust-devastated Jewish community reflects on its past, present and future; a boy comes of age; an elderly woman, Maria, sees her wish of forty years come true. These remarkable events are set against the backdrop of the rich heritage of Polish Jewry.

fixed. Mr. Jakubowicz already has a plan for it. He reveals only a small detail: “I wish it to be a pension for our youth”, as he calls the elderly.

Before we move on, we should hear what one of the elderly residents of Kazimierz; one of Mr. Jakubowicz’s many youth has to say about his *Bar Mitzvah*, the *Tempel* and its distinguished *Rabbi*:

“Both of my parents went to pray on Szpitalna Street from time to time. It was a beautiful prayer house. There were *shtibloh*⁵⁰ everywhere however. I had my *Bar Mitzvah* at Scheller’s on Rakowicka Street. I think that it was open daily. My father went there only on Fridays and Saturdays. There was also the Kramer *shtibl* close by and others, which I don’t really remember anymore. The Tempel on Miodowa was reserved for the more affluent sphere. Seats were paid for and marked with a brass nametag. The less privileged were able to come in for a service but they had standing room only. Dr. Osias Thon, the Tempel ‘s Rabbi was also a member of the national legislature and a Zionist leader. Did you know that before the war Poland had a couple Jewish members in the national legislature, amongst them were Thon, Schwartz, and Sommerstein from Lwow⁵¹? Tempel as a more progressive synagogue was closer to the city centre than all the other nearby *schuls*⁵². Still, Tempel, Popper’s Kupa, Isaack’s, Wysoka, Remuh and Old were all within a 200meter radius of each other”(Jozef Reiner recorded at the Jewish Community building on January 15th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author).

We have not moved very much. Still on Miodowa Street, we are heading towards yet another important site of Jewish history in Kazimierz. As we pass by the School of Business and Marketing, we learn that this building belonged to the *Takhemoni* Jewish school and society. The Jewish community council is in the process of putting a commemorative tablet on the building. “We are happy that the building is being put to

⁵⁰ “A *shtibel* is a small Hasidic meeting place for prayer; *shtibloh* is a plural form of the noun” (Polonsky, 1993: 567).

⁵¹ Lwow or Lemberg was a major city in southeastern Poland. In 1945 it became part of the Soviet Union. Currently it is within the borders of Ukraine.

⁵² “A *shul* is a tiny prayer room” (Gruber, 1999: 1)

good use, frankly we would not have the money to finance it with all the other renovations going on. We do want the students of this school as well as the residents of the quarter and anyone who walks by for that matter to realize and acknowledge what was here before the Holocaust, and to remember”, Jakubowicz continues.

Before continuing the tour with Mr. Jakubowicz, we must turn left on *Berek Joselewicz* Street and left again on *Brzozowa* Street, the corner building with a commemorative bronze relief is the Hebrew High School. Let us stand for a moment and listen to a proud alumnus of the high school:

“I began to attend the Hebrew high school - an all Jewish school in 1924. I was thirteen years old. Some of the children at my school came from Kazimierz, but not all. Their parents were merchants, lawyers and doctors. School was relatively expensive. And I remember all this as a former student of the Hebrew high school on Brzozowa Street in Kazimierz. I am sure that you have probably walked by there many times; it is close to your apartment ⁵³ on Warschauer Street. I remember when the building was tiny and then it expanded. It was definitely the core of my life, that school. Gym classes for instance first took place in a courtyard nearby that the school rented. After there were more students, gym classes were held on the grounds of the *Maccabi* stadium, by the Vistula River, quite a ways from Brzozowa Street but we loved going there. Especially for *Lag Ba Omer* ⁵⁴ - everything happened on the grounds of the Maccabi stadium.

So that was my liaison with Kazimierz. My friends lived there, famous Mordechai Gebirtig ⁵⁵ too - he had 2 daughters you know, and one of them - Siwka was in my grade.

He wrote about her in his poems. At school Siwka was Szarlota and they lived around the

⁵³ I lived on Warschauer Street for the duration of my fieldwork in the quarter of Kazimierz.

⁵⁴ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Lag Ba Omer* falls on 18th day of Iyyar. It is a semi-holiday which commemorates the withdrawal of the plague, which killed Rabbi Akiva's disciples.

⁵⁵ Mordechai Gebirtig was born in Kazimierz on May 4th 1877. All his life he worked as a carpenter. He was also a poet. “In the words of Menachem Kipnis, a popular humorist, writer, collector, and interpreter of Jewish folklore, Gebirtig was ‘a blessed folk bard who sings about the Jewish life, love, family, mother and children. The poverty and unfortunate lot of Jews is painted by Gebirtig in warm and genuine tones, as only an authentic folk soul can’. He is most known for “*Unzer Shtetl Brent*” (Our Shtetl is Burning) a poem and a prophetic vision of the impending Holocaust written after the pogrom in Przytyk in March of 1936. He was killed June 4th 1942, shot dead on his way to the cattle trains destined for the Belzec death camp. Abraham Neuman, the painter was also shot and died on the corner of Janowa Wola and Dabrowki streets with Gebirtig. None of the family members of the poet-carpenter of Kazimierz survived the war”(Ciałowicz, 1997:4).

corner from Brzozowa on Berka Joselewicza Street # 5. My friend, Minah Molkler lived in the same building. Her parents were quite wealthy and were able to equip her with all the schoolbooks. I remember going there to study from her books; there were many of us who could not afford our own books. (I think Minah lives in Israel now and as far as I know she never married). Books really cost a fortune, especially on top of the tuition for the high school. We, meaning my younger brother Yehuda and I got a discount on our tuition. My parents paid the amount of one tuition for the two of us. When Yehuda died they still kept my tuition at 50 % off. As I said, books were really costly and there were so many subjects to study for. Because I entered a class along with many others, where the rest already spoke Hebrew since grade one, I had a really difficult time with learning it. Before this, both my brother and I took Hebrew lessons with a wonderful teacher, an elderly man who taught it to us, the way Latin is taught, as a lifeless language. We knew the grammar, the orthography; we were able to read but could not talk in Hebrew. We went for our entrance exam and had no clue about what was being said to us.

Yes I love that school till this day. The best proof of that I suppose is that I still correspond with some of my friends from the Hebrew High School. They are now in Israel and most of them live in what they call 'parents homes', not old age homes, you see. We write to each other in Polish of course, not in Hebrew. I have visited them since I have been to Israel a couple times and I must boast that even though I was not the best student I managed fine. Most of my friends were better students than myself, especially one that I still keep in touch with; she left Poland relatively early, in 1933, and was the only out of our class, as far as I can remember that lived in Kazimierz. She came from a very religious family. And out of fifty boys and girls in our class, she went on to study in the Warsaw Judaistic Institute. That's where Prof./Rabbi Schor was the rector and where I was able to attend Prof. Balaban's lecture once. I had an aunt in Warsaw and following my maturity exam⁵⁶ I visited her. It was my family's attempt to introduce me to the world outside of Krakow. I remember that Institute and especially Prof. Balaban's lecture until this day" (Emilia Leibel recorded at her home, February 2nd, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author).

We shall take a right turn now. "Basically follow along the wooden fence", Mr. Jakubowicz announces. People try to read the posters on this abandoned fence. Through

⁵⁶ A maturity exam is a comprehensive test at the end of the four years of high school.

its cracks, they look at the empty lot inside. A building stood here not long ago. One woman used to visit her friend here. And then one day the building fell under its own age. There are many cases of such negligence within Kazimierz. One of the explanations, which goes along the lines of other policies towards Jewish patrimony in Poland after the war is, the less traces left the better. Another explanation for allowing beautiful nineteenth century apartments to collapse is the profit to be made on the plots of land in this part of Krakow.

Before we enter the courtyard of the *Remuh Synagogue*, we walk along an old wall, which separates the *Remuh cemetery* from *Szeroka Street*. On the wall there is a warning sign for the *Kohanim*⁵⁷ to take the other side of the street due to the possibility of human bones extending beyond the walled cemetery. People ask about the Kohanim, they want to know who they are and how could anything like this apply to Krakow, where human bones are probably buried under every street. Mr. Jakubowicz tries to explain the best he can without passing judgement on the people asking or the Hasidic Jews who put up the sign on the wall.

We enter the *Remuh Synagogue*. In the foyer, head coverings are waiting for the unprepared men. Although many men are already wearing hats, due to the cold weather, there are not enough *yarmulkes* (skull caps) to go around. Some men decline, others put them on readily. Somehow everyone manages. We enter the prayer room without paying the proper visiting fee (usually 4 *zloty*⁵⁸ for adults and 2 *zloty* for children/students); the group is exempted due to the special nature of this tour. Jakubowicz, points to the wall separating the men from women and explains that men would not be able to focus on

⁵⁷ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *kohanim* denotes 'priests'. The post of a *kohen* is authorized by a hereditary right.

⁵⁸ *Zloty* (zl) is the Polish currency. At this time 1 Canadian dollar is equivalent to 2.5 Polish zloty.

prayer sitting with their wives and that is why women are seated in the back. “This used to be an orthodox prayer house”, he emphasizes. It still is theoretically. In practice however, being one of only two synagogues which are open for prayer here in Kazimierz, it attracts a whole range of Jews. “*Nowadays the Orthodox and the Reform pray here*”. Only in Kazimierz can such unity be achieved between the Orthodox and the Reform; more out of necessity than choice, probably.

What is the *Aron ha Kodesh*⁵⁹, the *bimah*⁶⁰, what does the *Cantor*⁶¹ do? What is the meaning of the eternal light? Questions come from every direction. The Jewish Community leader talks about *Rabbi Moses Isserles, Remuh* in short, as he shows us the place where the Great *Tzaddik* used to pray 400 years ago. Directly above one can see a plaque with the following inscription: “*It is assumed that in this place the late Remuh stood and prayed, pouring out his contrition to the Eternal*”. We are told that nobody still dares to sit on his chair. We are also asked to pay more attention to the doors of the *bimah*. They are very old.

Later we enter the *Remuh cemetery* (see photographs 1 and 2). We make our first stop at the tomb of *Remuh* and his family (his father-the Synagogue’s founder, his first wife *Golde*, his sister and brother, his grandmother *Gitel* and his brother-in-law are all buried here). Around the anniversary of *Remuh*’s birthday, which is in about three months from today (the 18th of *Iyar* in the lunar calendar is equivalent to mid April-May),

⁵⁹ *Aron ha Kodesh*, or Holy Ark. “This is the place where the Torah scrolls are kept, built against or set into the east wall of the synagogue sanctuary. Often very decorative, even in ruined buildings still quite visible” (Gruber, 1999: 8).

⁶⁰ “A *bimah* is a raised area in the centre of a synagogue where the cantor stands leading the service and where the public reading of the Torah takes place. In *Remuh* it is also surrounded by an iron grille” (Gruber, 1999:8).

⁶¹ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Cantor* intones the liturgy and leads the prayers in a synagogue.



Photograph 1: The tombstones of *Remuh* and his family. Taken by the author.



Photograph 2: The *Remuh* cemetery and part of the synagogue as seen from *Szeroka* Street. Taken by the author.

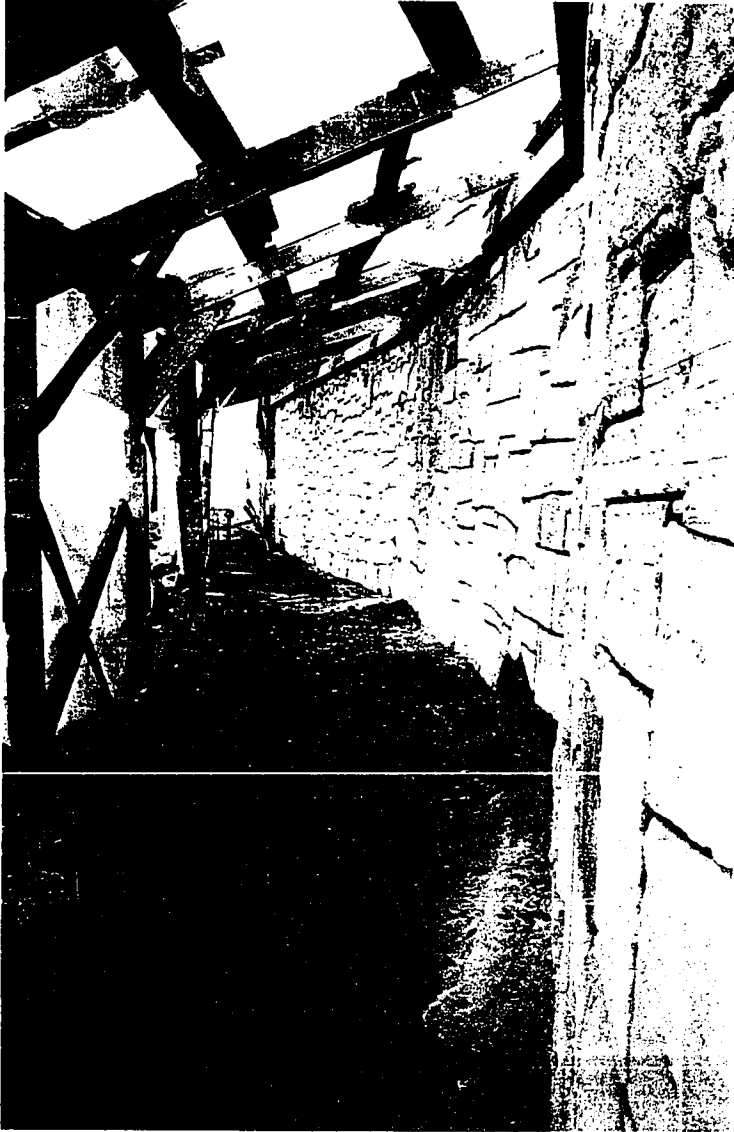
many Hasidim come to Kazimierz to pray at his grave. They are usually on tours, which travel only to the sites of the Great *Tzaddiks*. One evening around 11 pm, I witnessed three bus loads of Hasidim arrive right in front of the *Remuh Synagogue*. Not having arranged anything prior, they were looking for the key holder frantically. I think that they had many places to visit still before flying out of Poland the next day.

People ask Mr. Jakubowicz about candles, messages or *kvittleh*, and the stones holding them down on some of the tombs in this cemetery. Before he answers, other people volunteer. They have heard about these customs before. Shortly after, Jakubowicz recounts the story of stones being thrown in the window nearly hitting someone during the service of *Simhat Torah*⁶², last fall. Although these incidents are rare, they frighten people. Especially so, given that most of this congregation is elderly. In fact, one of my interlocutors told me that such incidents are making people rethink their attendance at the late services in the fall and winter, because it gets dark quickly and they feel unsafe.

“Most of the *mazzevahs* are still hidden in the two mounds that you see on your left”, Mr. Jakubowicz tells the tour. “Most of the ones standing by the graves were also hidden. In 1959 they were dug out by archaeologists”, he continues. This is a very special and a peculiar cemetery because the actual tombstones, the *mazzevahs*, do not belong to the gravesites beneath them. All of them originate from this cemetery but they have been moved around over time. Someone asks whether the *mazzevahs* hidden in the mounds will be uncovered soon and where will they be placed. The community leader answers that he is not certain whether they should be uncovered just yet. “The community has very modest funds. As soon as they are dug out we will need to secure them from the

⁶² *Simhat Torah* marks the rejoicing of the Torah. It happens on the 23rd day of Tishri. “On this day the annual cycle of reading the Torah finishes and a new one begins. Joyful processions with the Torah scrolls take place in synagogues and prayer houses. Festive dinners are eaten in the homes” (Duda, 1991:125).

surrounding environment. You can see that we have done that already on some of the tombstones. We installed the little roofs to protect them from the acid rain for instance”. Everyone agrees that for now they are better off buried.



Photograph 3: The Wailing Wall at the *Remuh* cemetery. Taken by the author.

We move towards the outskirts of the cemetery. The group gathers close to a wall-like barrier (see photograph 3). There is scaffolding there. This part of the barrier is known as the *Wailing Wall*. It is composed of fragments of *mazzevahs*, which were

broken by the Nazis who tried to destroy this cemetery. After the war, fragments of the tombstones were retrieved from piles of rubble. Something needed to be done with them, since they still belonged to the cemetery. Hence the construction of the *Wailing Wall* which was initiated by the father of the present Jewish community leader. It is a work in progress monument. When new pieces are found they are cleaned and cemented onto the inside of the cemetery wall. The effect of the broken tombstones in this particular place is very powerful.

When we leave the *Remuh* courtyard we find ourselves in the heart of Kazimierz right in the centre of *Szeroka* Street. “Helena Rubinstein, the accomplished beautician and businesswoman, was born in the building right across from us. And the first building on your left houses a *mikveh*”, Jakubowicz tells us as he points to a large structure. According to Prof. Majer Balaban⁶³, the first information about the building could be found in the Jewish community chronicles from 1595. The building was built much earlier though, a chronicle from 1567 informs about an accident where the floor collapsed and ten women drowned. There were two such bathhouses in Kazimierz in the seventeenth century. According to the chronicles, Felcher was the name of the leaseholder of this particular mikveh and he charged three *grosze*⁶⁴ for the entrance.

Wojtek, the contemporary leaseholder of the building has turned it into an institution, which goes by the name of *Klezmer-Hois*. This house of *klezmer* (Jewish musician-entertainer) provides quarters to a café-restaurant and a guesthouse. While at

⁶³ Prof. Majer Balaban was a renowned pre-war historian and author of many books on Kazimierz. The information on the *mikveh* is taken from his *Przewodnik po Żydowskich Zabytkach Krakowa* a 1990 republication of his 1935 guide around Jewish Krakow.

⁶⁴ One *grosz* is one hundredth of one zloty. It translates to 1 cent.

the restaurant, one can taste *gefilte fish*⁶⁵, *cholent*⁶⁶, *kneydl*⁶⁷ and other basics of the Jewish cuisine. These dishes are delicious. The fact that they are not kosher presents a problem for some Jewish tourists. *Klezmer-Hois* also hosts evenings of Yiddish songs lead by Leopold Kozlowski⁶⁸; otherwise known as the “Last Authentic *Klezmer* of Galicia”.

In order to continue the tour, we must make a first right on *Lewkowa* Street to reach *Isaac's Synagogue*. The group begins to walk. I hear people making comments about the foreign-looking names and letters on some of the businesses of *Szeroka* Street. The letters are stylized to look Hebrew. While most businesses employ this Jewish-style lettering to spell out Polish words, there are a few which have actually attempted to write in Yiddish and Hebrew on their restaurants and guesthouses. Many of the foreign visitors to Kazimierz find this practice appalling and kitschy. Here is what one of the Jewish elders of the quarter has to say about it:

“I know that many people find the use of Hebrew letters, on non-Jewish businesses objectionable. I understand. In a strange way though, I see them as reminders, for the locals mostly, that once Jewish life blossomed here. That Jews built these houses and lived inside them until not so long ago. Also it is important for people to know that Jews lived everywhere in this city, like in any other city or village. For instance, when I was running away from the Germans in 1939, I spent a night in a home of a Jewish farmer around Kolbuszowa. Anyhow, it is all right that now Kazimierz has become a symbol of Jewish presence in Krakow but people definitely need to know that it was not just another ghetto here.

⁶⁵ *Gefilte fish* means ‘filled fish’. In order to prepare this dish the fish flesh is ground up. Bread, egg, onion, sugar and pepper are added. After the fish is refilled it is stewed in onions and served.

⁶⁶ *Cholent* is a popular *Shabbat* dish because it can be prepared beforehand and cooked overnight. It usually consists of beans, meat and potatoes.

⁶⁷ *Kneydl* are dumplings made from either mazzah meal or broken up mazzot. Some are filled with meat or fruit. *Kneydl* can be used in soup, salad and in desserts.

⁶⁸ Leopold Kozlowski is a direct descendant of the brilliant clarinetist, Naftule Brandwein.

After the war Kazimierz did not exist as a quarter, you know. Sure, the locality was still called Kazimierz, but the people were different. There were almost no Jews left here. Even still, *Remuh* opened shortly after the war was over. All of our other synagogues were turned into warehouses and storage buildings. *Tempel* for instance, functioned as furniture storage for a while. Then it began to operate as a prayer house again. My father-in-law went to pray there and I began to go regularly in 1976. We used to pray in the little addition on the side of the *Tempel*. There were too few of us to take up the main hall of the synagogue and to heat it on top.

I suppose that Kazimierz began to breathe again sometime in the late 1980's. The renovation process of a few fallen buildings began. People came to visit this forgotten place. Even a *Bar Mitzvah* was celebrated here. The event itself was made into a film titled **Spark Among the Ashes**. Then the Festival of Jewish Culture began to take place annually. Now, Kazimierz as a quarter lives through the mass of foreign visitors and Jewish tourists. They are one of the reasons that *Tempel* is being renovated. This year *Tempel's mykveh* will also be renovated. This will suit the more Orthodox, I think.

Certainly, the materiality of Kazimierz encourages remembering, which takes many shapes and forms, some more fortunate than others. People should be more cautious in retrieving lost traces and fragments of Kazimierz however. It is unacceptable to create a vision of this place and people who inhabited it as if nothing happened. I am not speaking of revisionists here. I just mean that it will never be the same again. The Holocaust destroyed our life here. We need to salvage memories from humanity's forgetfulness. I chose that as the title of my own lectures⁶⁹. It is obviously inspired by themes put forth by Jewish institutions. We need to remember the time of German occupation because during that time Jewish life in Poland was destroyed. We need to really care for the places and people who are still around. They are the last witnesses"(Jozef Reiner recorded at the Jewish Community building on February 12th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author).

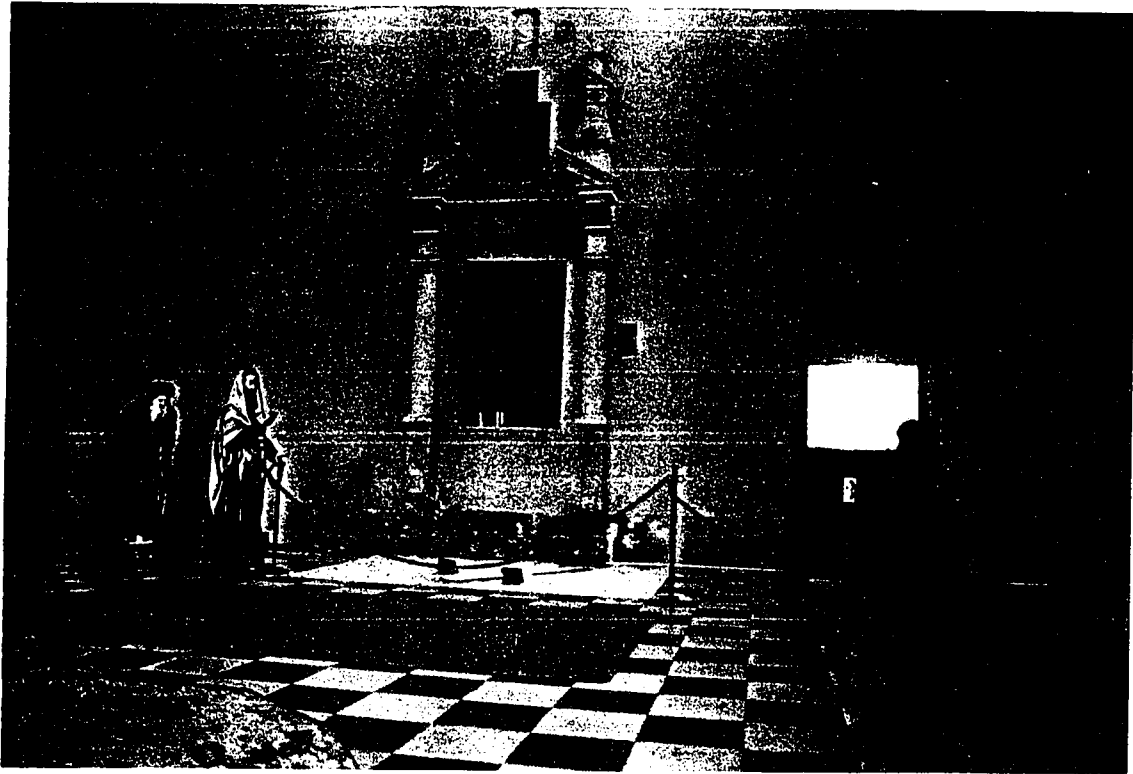
We have arrived at Isaac's. Founded in 1638 by a senior member of the Jewish community named Izaak Jakubowicz, the *Isaac Synagogue* is the largest and grandest

⁶⁹ "Save from forgetting" is the title of meetings with Mr. Jozef Reiner. The meetings usually occur at *Klezmer-Hois* to mark important anniversaries. The last meeting I attended honoured the 55th anniversary of the liquidation of the Plaszow camp. Mr. Reiner read part of his memoirs after which his son played the violin with his ensemble the *Reiner Trio*.

building in the Jewish quarter. Until 1939 it was a place where religious Jews assembled every day for prayers. The Holocaust brought these prayers to an end. The Torah scrolls were taken from the synagogue and profaned. “Reopened in 1997, after almost a decade of intense renovation it houses the Isaac Synagogue Project”, Mr. Jakubowicz tells us. “Its intention is to enable visitors to see the interior of the landmark synagogue and to make it possible to learn more about Jews. Screenings of old films illustrating the life of Kazimierz residents in 1936 and the expulsion of the Jewish population to the ghetto across the Vistula River in 1941 are held non-stop”, one can read on a poster in the foyer of *Isaac's*.

With its non-stop film screenings⁷⁰, sacral music that can be faintly heard outside of the building, and two-dimensional figures of religious Jews (four to be exact, each made of photos blown-up to life-size proportions glued onto plywood), the *Isaac Synagogue* is a haunting place (see photograph 4). It makes me feel uncomfortable. I can see that some members of the tour are responding to the strange air inside. In fact, I know from my interviews conducted in the quarter that many people feel uneasy about the Isaac Synagogue Project. The installation around this monumental temple is haunting not only because the people it depicts on film or in photographs perished in the Holocaust. It is also haunting because the last traces of their existence are being appropriated into an installation that is engineered to haunt. This seems to be the biggest issue that the visitors have with this project.

⁷⁰ According to the Isaac Synagogue Project brochure, the life of Kazimierz was filmed by an American filmmaker, Julian Bryan in 1936. The expulsion to the ghetto was filmed by German cameramen. The film was used by the SS and the Gestapo as a learning tool.



Photograph 4: Inside the *Isaac Synagogue*. Two figures of religious Jews can be seen on the left. A big screen television set playing the above-mentioned documentaries on the right. The Holy Ark is in the centre. Taken by the author.

On the side of *Isaac's*, in an addition that used to serve as a school, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation has its quarters. They hold *Shabbat*⁷¹ dinners there every Friday for the small community of elderly men and women as well as some young people who stop by after the service. The people in today's tour of Kazimierz are very surprised. Most of them have lived their entire lives in Krakow and yet they had no idea such meetings took place here. I think that they are intrigued. As for myself, I have attended a *Purim*⁷² party

⁷¹ *Shabbat* is the seventh day of the week established by God as a day of rest. It starts on Friday at sunset and ends with Saturday's nightfall. It is accompanied by special liturgy and customs.

⁷² According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Purim* is celebrated on the 14th day of Adar to commemorate Jews being saved from Haman's persecutions. Haman was the chief minister of the Persian king Artaxerxes. The Book of Esther is read in synagogues, in homes *Hamantashen* or Haman's ears are baked. People are joyful; they sing, eat and drink wine.

and a *Chamukah*⁷³ here before. During one of the *Shabbat* evenings I was introduced to another former resident of Kazimierz. He still remembers this building when it hosted a *Mizrachi* school he attended. We should listen to his account for a moment:

“I was born in Kazimierz on Mostowa Street. I can tell you where it is. I never walk by there; it is too painful for me.... Our whole family lived there, along with my great grandma. When I was little she was forty years old; married at fifteen, she outlived four husbands. My grandfather had a shop on Krakowska, right around the corner from our home, close to Jozefa Street. Before he was a watchmaker he sold shoes. On *Purim* we would go on Krakowska as a family, to watch the costume parade. It was always a joyous day in our neighbourhood.

I went to a *Mizrachi*⁷⁴ school on Kupa Street # 18. I still remember my teachers' names. Prof. Reinhold taught Hebrew, Prof. Ginsburg taught Polish and Prof. Szechter taught us the *Humasz* (Pentateuch). In his class we had to translate all five books of the Torah from Hebrew to Yiddish. That was a difficult task. You see I did not know Yiddish all that well, only colloquially. My grandmother had to help me with the rest. At that school I was also taught how to pray according to the *Sephardi* and the *Ashkenazi* custom. Of course I still remember it all as if it was yesterday.

When I was thirteen we moved to Sarego Street, in the Stradom quarter. We came to Kazimierz to pray on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. We prayed at the *Bet Midrasz* (prayer hall) on Szeroka, close to Na Przejsciui Street. My grandfather, father, brother, two uncles, a cousin, all and myself went to pray there. There is no trace left of that prayer house. The residents who moved into it following the war made homes for themselves there.

On the 5th of September 1939 I left Krakow with my neighbour and his brother-in-law. We were going east. I was the youngest of the group. My father had arranged my escape carefully. My mother gave me four pieces of bread for the journey. She also tried to give me a blanket. I did not take anything. The summer was exceptionally hot that year and I

⁷³ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Chamukah* takes place on the 25th day of Kislev and is celebrated to commemorate the victory of the Maccabees and the rededication of the Jerusalem temple in 165 BC. Often called the Festival of Lights, it is a celebration of joy. It is accompanied by a daily lighting of candles or oil lamps to commemorate the Light Wonder that happened in the temple, which had been regained from the enemy's hands.

⁷⁴ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Mizrachi* is a religious Zionist movement whose aim is expressed by the following motto: “The Land of Israel for the people of Israel according to the Torah of Israel”.

could not foresee how difficult my escape would really be. Before I left home I said goodbye to my parents and siblings. That was the last time I ever saw them.

After I left home I went to pick up my friend Joel Grossbart. He was from a *Hasidic* family. They lived in Kazimierz on the corner of Sebastiana and Dietla Street. He changed his mind that morning, became terribly frightened of the unknown that was ahead of us. His sister and mother were begging him to go; I still remember that. He perished. There is a tablet in the foyer of Remuh, which commemorates the entire Grossbart family. It was commissioned by Joel's sister, whom I ran into a few years back. She miraculously managed to survive the war on Aryan papers. She resides in New York City now and has actually married my friend who lived on Kupa Street next to our *Mizrachi* School.

I think that remembering would have been different had I left Poland. I would have had a new life and would have been able to create new memories. Staying here I am always surrounded by different traces of my life. That is why I try to prepare well for our interviews. I want Kazimierz to be remembered and recorded properly"(Daniel Bertram recorded at his home on February 22nd, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author).

Henryk Halkowski⁷⁵ joins us now and takes over as tour guide around Kazimierz. Mr. Jakubowicz must hurry as he is about to participate in an open forum discussion about the Polish-Jewish dialogue, along with Rabbi Pecaric and a few Jesuit priests. Approximately three-quarters of the tour leave to attend the forum or to go home. The rest, which now consists of about twenty people stay to finish the tour with Mr. Halkowski. As we walk away from *Isaac's*, Halkowski tells me that until ten years ago the synagogue housed a monument conservation workshop. Many statues of Lenin and Stalin were forged here in the past age.

⁷⁵ Henryk Halkowski knows everything about Kazimierz. "Ask him a question and you will get at least a dozen answers", I was told in the beginning of my fieldwork. He took me on one official tour of the quarter and countless informal ones. An active member of the local Jewish community, he has been studying the history of the quarter for ages and is very concerned about its future. He is also an accomplished writer, translator and philosopher.

Walking along *Jozefa* Street, I hear some of our tour members speculate on the origin of the name of this particular street. “Jozefa is definitely named after the biblical Joseph, Virgin Mary’s husband”, one woman says. “It could also be Joseph, the son of Jacob, from the Old Testament”, she adds. A man joins in, dismissing the biblical connection altogether. “The name of this street honours Franz Joseph, the Emperor, who during his visits to Krakow inhabited a residence nearby”, he states in all seriousness. We pass by a building with two stars of David and Hebrew letters in between. People take notice. “Prior to the war this was one of Krakow’s many prayer societies, which were scattered all around this area and in fact all over the city”, Halkowski informs us.



Photograph 5: The courtyard at *Jozefa* Street #12. Taken by the author.

Before we hurry over to the *Museum of Jewish History and Culture*, we take a peek into a few of courtyards along *Jozefa* Street. They are characteristic, with their wooden balconies running all along apartments whose doors face the courtyard. The most

familiar courtyard is at #12 linking *Jozefa* Street with the Street of *Rabbi Meisels*. First photographed by Ignacy Krieger⁷⁶ a hundred years ago, this spot still remains the most picturesque place of the quarter (see photograph 5). It is also here that Steven Spielberg filmed the expulsion of the Kazimierz Jews to a ghetto across the river for his film, *Schindler's List*. Many foreign tours of Kazimierz actually begin in this very courtyard.



Photograph 6: A map of Jewish heritage sites around Kazimierz. In the background is the *Old Synagogue* which now houses the *Museum of Jewish History and Culture*. Taken by the author.

The *Museum of Jewish History and Culture* is located in the oldest synagogue in Poland, in the heart of the Kazimierz district on *Szeroka* Street (see photograph 6). The *Old Synagogue* dates back to the fifteenth century and is a massive, fortress like building in the late-Gothic Renaissance style. During the war the Nazis used it as storage. Since

⁷⁶ Ignacy Krieger was a photographer in Krakow during the nineteenth century. Many of his photographs survived the war. They are one of the few visual records of the quarter of Kazimierz and its residents (Markowski, 1999: 150).

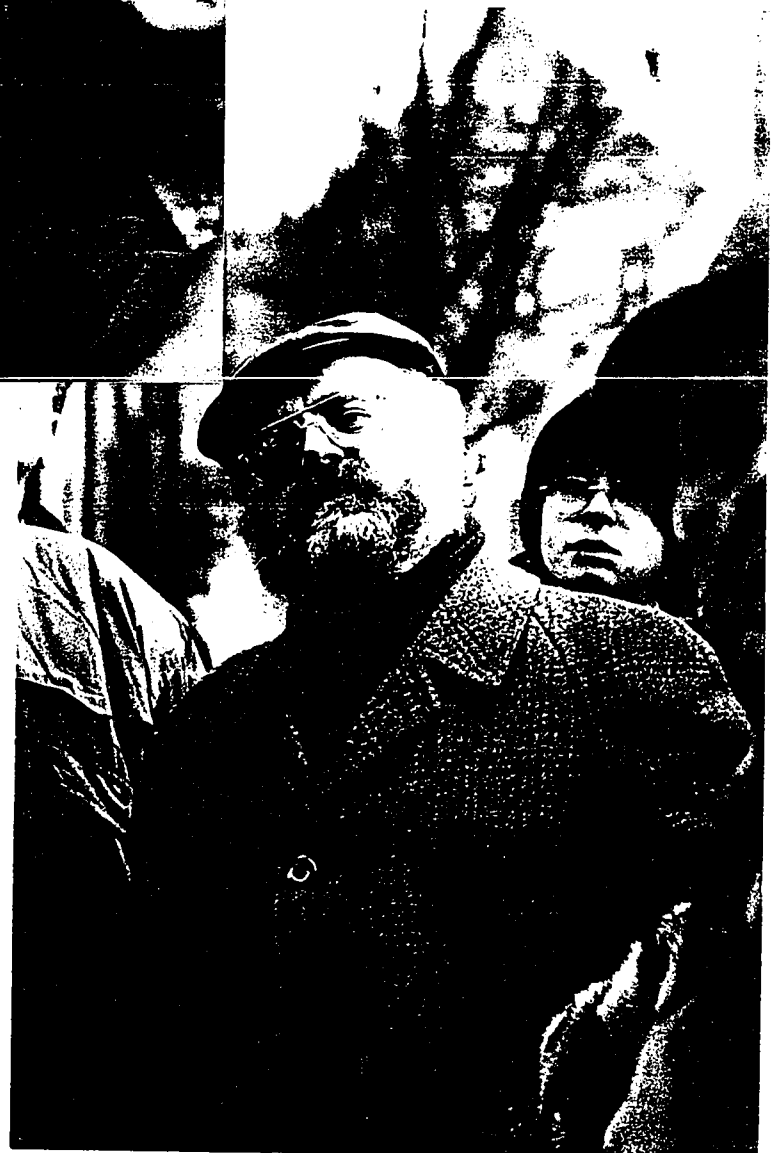
1958 when it was restored, the *Old Synagogue* has housed collections of liturgical items, ancient Torahs, and utensils. There are also photographs, documents and artwork detailing the history of the Krakow Jewish community before and during the Holocaust. Our guide points to a huge *menorah*⁷⁷, “During the war this menorah was taken by Hans Frank to his adopted residence in the Wawel Castle. Miraculously, it was found after the war and only the eagle on top had to be changed. The original one went missing, it had been replaced by a Nazi eagle to suit Frank’s taste”, he tells us. Halkowski also points to the beautiful Holy Ark and the wrought iron *bimah*, as they are the only original elements inside. Everything else was destroyed.

As we leave the museum the tour comes to an end. Before everyone goes their own way Mr. Halkowski points to a monument in the large square in front of the *Old Synagogue*. It commemorates thirty Poles who were shot in this very spot during the war. The tour members have not seen this place before. They move over to the actual monument to read the inscription. It has been a long day. For many of the tour this was their first visit to Kazimierz. They are happy they came. They ask Mr. Halkowski if there will be such a tour for the fourth celebration of Judaism, next January. Halkowski does not know, he encourages them to come here on their own; Kazimierz after all is part of their city.

⁷⁷ According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *menorah* is a name given to a seven-branched candelabrum which according to the Bible was a prominent feature of the Tabernacle erected by the people of Israel in the wilderness as well as in the Jerusalem Temple.



Photograph 7: Mr. Jakubowicz, the Jewish Community leader and our tour guide #1. Taken by the author.



Photograph 8: Mr. Halkowski, the tour guide #2. Taken by the author.

Conclusion

The tour of Kazimierz guided by Mr. Jakubowicz and Mr. Halkowski, two recognized representatives of the Jewish quarter was a success. Just like many other tours it presented the quarter to a group of first-time visitors. This time the visitors were Polish. They were residents of Krakow mostly, who heard about this tour from their parishes or the local papers. The tour brought to light the numerous initiatives involved in the commemoration of the quarter's former residents and in raising awareness about their contributions. It introduced the visitors first-hand to the many projects which are taking place in the area, some of which include: renovation of synagogues, recognition of Jewish property, placement of commemorative inscriptions on buildings as well as the activities of many organizations such as the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, the Centre for Jewish Culture and the Jewish Community.

Most of the former residents of Kazimierz perished in the Holocaust. They have left behind a quarter, which despite all the horrors of the war and the negligence of the post-war era survives them almost untouched. It has always been a Jewish site. Only recently however it has become recognized as such by the officials and by the general public. The reasons for this are many; the revival of interest in Jewish history and culture coinciding with a long-awaited change of a political regime in Poland is the most significant one.

The very existence of Kazimierz commemorates the Jewish life that went on here for seven centuries. The quarter, like the former Nazi death camps provides a site of Jewish memory in Poland, unlike the former Nazi death camps it focuses on Jewish life before the Holocaust and afterwards, as well as the Holocaust itself. Kazimierz is also a

living quarter of Krakow, where people reside, shop and come on tours. It is a place where memories clash and coexist. It is a living memorial. The landscape of the quarter and its tangible nature, give witness to Jewish existence in Poland and to the brutal assault against it.

In the following chapter I will explore the antique shops of Kazimierz. I will describe the objects on display as well as those who participate in their trade. Throughout the chapter I will weave together three stories of objects I collected in the field. These stories will illustrate the role of objects as testimony and as keepers of collective memory. In this context I will articulate the role of the objects in the remembrance of Jewish Kazimierz.

Chapter 5: Agency of Objects and Souls of Things

The quarter of Kazimierz is home to at least nine antique shops. They all represent recent entrepreneurial initiatives, with the exception of a government-operated shop⁷⁸. Apart from one basement location, the shops occupy ground floor offices of the nineteenth century apartment buildings and are easily spotted by the passers-by. They differ in character from the antique shops in the main city square, where one can purchase high art. It is important to note here that Krakow has always been known for its unique collections of art. Even though they were greatly impoverished by the plunder of war, there was definitely more left here than anywhere else in Poland.

In this chapter I will problematize the agency of material objects in the commemoration and remembrance of Jews who perished in the Holocaust. The phenomenon of remembering through objects is particularly fascinating and complex, especially within Kazimierz, which has recently become an official site of memory for its former Jewish residents and other Jewish communities. I will consider the antique shops of Kazimierz as sorting posts and transit stations for many of the objects, which after fifty years in attics, barns and hiding spots find new owners and travel across boundaries and oceans. Also I will weave into the chapter three stories of objects which I was told in the field. I have found that these objects are not passive. Daily they perform as interactive agents. They communicate meanings between humans. Their identities are not fixed and immutable. Often they are purchased, not for their actual purpose, but for what they have become.

⁷⁸ The government-operated shops, which go by the name of *Desa*, have been functioning since the 1950's. They have affiliates in every large city in Poland, I was told by one of the shop's employees.

The shift from thinking of things as mere products and recognizing them as “meaningful allies” (Dant, 1999:35) is pertinent to my research. Acknowledging things as agents of time with souls and stories allows me to undertake a more complex analysis of interactions between people and objects. The quarter of Kazimierz provides the setting for these interactions to occur. With the help of the three stories of things related in this chapter I will conceptualize the role of objects in commemorating the Polish Jews. In particular, I will look at the role of things as family portrait, testimony and as keepers of collective memory.

Souls of Things

There is a whole range of objects including “unique, baroque, folkloric, exotic and antique, which act counter to the requirements of functional calculation and answer to other kinds of demands, such as witnessing, memory and nostalgia” (Baudrillard, 1996:73). Often recovered from the garbage heap, things regain their value and re-enter the world of exchanges. Whether at auctions or in museums, artefacts, some never meant to be displayed, serve as signifiers of time and as authenticators of human experience. According to Baudrillard (1996:75), the antique is always, in the strongest sense of the term, a “family portrait”, the immemorialization of a former being, in the concrete form of an object.

Here I will relate a story of a spice box. This story introduces the notion of an object acting as a “family portrait”. Mrs. Leibel’s spice box is the only tangible thing she has left to remind her of her family home, her parents and the Jewish people before the Second World War. The spice box is a family heirloom, which survived almost as

miraculously as its owner. It is to be passed on and cared for with great affection even in the worst of times. This special vessel, in which herbs and spices are burnt during *Havdalah*⁷⁹ at the end of *Shabbat*, has kept the memory of her family alive. Although not used much anymore for its intended purpose Mrs. Leibel's spice box confirms her strong sense of belonging to the Jewish world.

The Spice box

"It reminds me of my family home. My father received it from his father when he became engaged to my mother. When I was little I remember being in awe of our spice box, which stood among other family heirlooms in the glass case. One day my father promised me that once I matured and had my own family and a home he would pass on the spice box to me. As you can imagine I did receive it when I got married and had my own household. It stood in the most honourable spot because it had been a gift from my father whom I loved very much. Until this day I still do not know how it happened that I left home with the spice box in my handbag. That is all I have left from before the war; the handbag, a few photos and our spice box. They all have been accompanying me for some seventy years now.

After being forcibly relocated to the North of the Soviet Union, already in Kosmodemiansk we had a coffer with a few things. All of our possessions were in there. The spice box was in the very bottom wrapped and concealed in an old sock. We also had some regular clothes since we intended to return to Poland where we had to look like people again. We could not just keep on wearing those

⁷⁹ *Havdalah* is a blessing recited at the end of *Shabbat*. It emphasizes the distinction between the sacred and the ordinary.

quilted garbs. I am not sure, but I think that by this time I had no dresses left in the coffer.

This was already after the fall of Stalingrad ⁸⁰. My husband was working in a maltose factory, making a type of marmalade for the war effort. I must tell you that the factory was located in an old and beautiful Orthodox church. Inside, a huge smokestack rose up into the sky along what once was a beautiful tower. We were both working there. One day I came home and discovered that someone had emptied our coffer. Clothes, undergarments, and a piece of fabric belonging to this Russian woman for whom I was to make a dress were stolen. Everything except for the old sock, which lay there untouched, protecting the spice box that once belonged to my father and my father's father.

And today you can appreciate my little spice box tower. My daughter knows that when it becomes hers she is to care for it and keep it safe even during the worst of times. We lost everything possible. This is all I have left of my family and my history. Our spice box travelled with me thousands of kilometres and now it stands here again in a honourable place...These are not pleasant memories, unfortunately"(Emilia Leibel recorded at her home on January 28th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author).

The story of the spice box was related to me by Mrs. Leibel in her home during one of our first meetings. I had noticed the magnificent filigree spice box as soon as I came into her crowded apartment. I made a mental note of it and restrained myself from asking about it. I wanted her to develop some trust in me first. I did not want to frighten a

⁸⁰ February 2nd 1943 marks the turning point of World War II as the German Sixth Army capitulates in Stalingrad.

ninety-year-old woman who after one phone call had agreed to see me and tell me about her life and about Kazimierz. Especially since I had already noticed that while researching the processes of remembering Jews in Kazimierz, the subject of artefacts brought on an array of reactions in all of my interlocutors. I felt like a prying treasure hunter asking people about their personal belongings. This is not something I would usually do while interacting with people I had just met. I realized that I was walking a very fine line, when someone had very delicately warned me to keep quiet about their artefacts because of the ever-increasing theft of antiques in Poland and in Krakow.

When I felt comfortable enough I asked Mrs. Leibel about all of the beautiful Jewish art which covered her walls. Some she had bought at exhibits and lectures which took place in Kazimierz, while others she had received from friends visiting from Israel. During our meetings she brought out her family photographs and a collection of books about the Polish Jewry, which she had managed to assemble throughout her life. Our relationship had become much more intimate. I had now seen her husband's picture, one of the few that survived the war, and I had heard the story of the spice box. I was never going to look at another spice box, whether in a museum cabinet or in the disarray of an antique shop, the same way I did before I met Mrs. Leibel.

The significance of an artefact resides in its material form as well as its relation to place, people and time (Dant, 1999:13). During my research I found that most of the things being sold and bought in the quarter of Kazimierz could be classified in the "family portrait" category. The story of the spice box is representative because it is unique. Most of the other objects I encountered had lost their original owners and were in transit, on their way to being sold or bought in the antique shops.



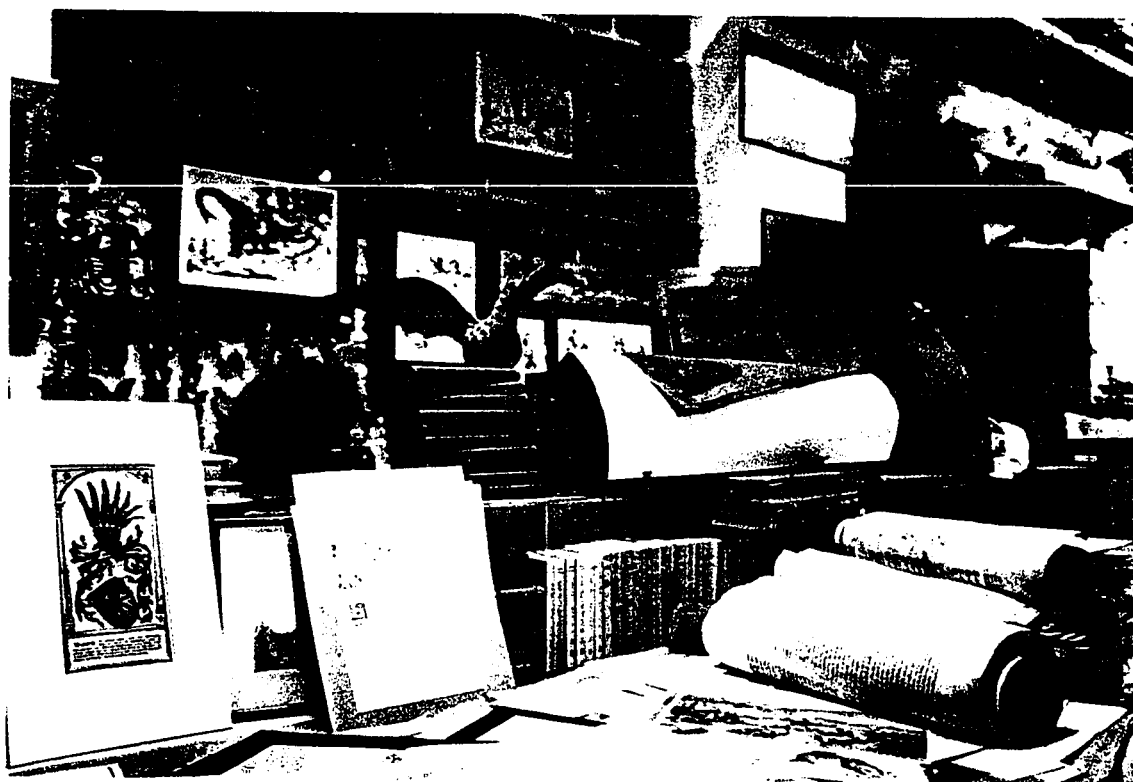
Photograph 9: *Stary Sklep*, an antique shop on *Jozefa Street*. Taken by the author.



Photograph 10: Butterflies and portraits for sale. Taken by the author.



Photograph 11: Marionettes, porcelain vase and a *menorah* on display. Taken by the author.



Photograph 12: An incomplete Torah for sale. Taken by the author.



Photograph 13: Nazi propaganda on display.
Taken by the author.



Photograph 14: Antiques for sale at an outdoor market. A Polish Army helmet, a brass swastika from the wartime and a metal depiction of a rocking Hasid were placed right next to each other.
Taken by the author.

Buying and selling Judaica

In the shops of Kazimierz I encountered, among other artefacts: paintings, furniture, rugs, teapots, old books, and Judaica (which does not necessarily exclude any of the above-mentioned items). I found that the term Judaica, in the context of Kazimierz, refers to a rather limitless category of things whose owners were Jewish. It is important to bear in mind here that the Jewish status of the quarter seems to have an influence on the classification of objects as being possibly Jewish and that both the sellers and the buyers partake in this presumption. Consequently, Judaica in the context of Kazimierz is constructed through its milieu. The category includes obvious items such as books in Yiddish or Hebrew, Torah scrolls, prayer shawls, spice boxes, and *menorahs*. From the conversations and hours of observation I spent in one particular shop, I discovered that certain documents and photographs qualified as Judaica as well. Their Jewish status was often determined through traces such as signatures, inscriptions and visual appearances.

During my fieldwork I found that many of these artefacts had been recently purchased from individuals, who often found them in their own homes, the homes of their deceased parents, their attics or barns. They had brought them for many different reasons. Some find them useless and instead of throwing them away, which I was told happens with most of the antique photographs, postcards, documents and books, bring them in hope of some monetary gain. The more active participants in the antiques market actually track down Judaica because they know that the demand for such items is high.

The following story, told by one of Kazimierz's residents exemplifies the kind of informal trade which has often occurred in the quarter due to its Jewish character. It also introduces the notion of objects acting as keepers of collective memory.

The Wise King Solomon

“In the early 1950's I was working in a co-op with an accountant who resided on *Brzozowa* Street. This street, you must remember was once in a heart of a Jewish microcosm, along with the other streets such as: *Podbrzezcie*, *Sebastiana* and *Berka Joselewicza*. The accountant knew that I was Jewish. I never hid that from anyone. We talked about related matters, sometimes.

When his mother-in-law died, the accountant and his wife inherited her apartment on *Brzozowa*. While cleaning the apartment and its cellar they had discovered a prewar woven tapestry depicting the King Solomon. It was rolled and out of its large frame. It had been either given to his mother-in-law by Jews for safekeeping or it had been left behind by the Jewish tenants that lived on *Brzozowa* before they were resettled to the *Podgorze* Ghetto.

One day he approached me about the tapestry and said: ‘you are a Jew, it may be valuable to you, we do not have a place for it’. And I bought it from him for nothing, one hundred and fifty *zloty* if I remember correctly. I bought it because it reminded me of the prewar times. I remembered Jewish women weaving religious pictures and people buying them to decorate their homes. We certainly had one in our family home.

The tapestry is very large. It takes up approximately half of the wall above my sofa. It has been on that wall for almost fifty years depicting the just King Solomon with a scribe on one side and a courtier on the other. The courtier is holding up a baby as two women are disputing over it. Both claim to be the baby's mother. Only one of them can be real. You know the story right? I think

that there are still many spots in Kazimierz like the cellar that the accountant and his wife inherited” (Jozef Reiner recorded at the Jewish Community building on March 2nd, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

The King Solomon tapestry brings back the prewar times to this resident of Kazimierz. Acquired from a stranger after the war, the tapestry has become a treasure for Mr. Reiner. It is a shard of someone else’s life which now preserves the memory of Mr. Reiner’s family home. Found in the quarter of Kazimierz by one of his coworkers it serves as testimony to a people who disappeared almost without a trace. Fifty-five years following the war, the tapestry depicting the Wise King keeps the collective memory alive.

The demand for Judaica is a relatively new phenomenon in Poland. It is directly related to the current mass scale re-evaluation of Polish-Jewish history, as well as a decade of transformations in the Polish political landscape. Poles and foreigners⁸¹ both are participating in this recent trend. I think that the opening of Polish borders to foreign visitors, which was preceded by the change of political regime, is an essential factor in the phenomenon.

Most of the time, the buyers and the sellers constitute two distinct categories. From what I observed, those who sell, often come from within the quarter. They might have found a *siddur*⁸² or a *tales*⁸³ in their attic and were looking for profit, having already realized the high demand for such items. Others came with an old commode and a set of plates; others still with old photographs and postcards. There were also those who came

⁸¹ When I say foreigners, most of the time I mean visitors from Western Europe and North America. They are usually travelling for leisure, as opposed to most of the visitors, from Ukraine and the former Soviet Union, for example who come to Poland in order to buy, sell and trade.

⁸² A *siddur* contains regular prayers for the whole year in a book format.

⁸³ A *tales* in Yiddish or *tallit* in Hebrew means prayer shawl.

to pass off new things as antiques, brand new brass *menorahs* for instance; so confident of their high value and authenticity that when they were refused they caused a scene. Not that the antiquarians were completely disinterested in new items. They just followed the market trends and above all did not like being swindled.

In most cases Poles sell and foreigners purchase. Soaring unemployment rates⁸⁴ in Poland have not aided in generating a wealthy society. The free market economy however, has allowed a few to accumulate the financial resources necessary for the collection of antiques. In the case of Judaica, the motivation for the purchase may be the only factor which sets some Polish buyers apart from the foreigners. I remember a particular occasion in the shop where I spent most of my time, when an incomplete Torah had two buyers. One of them was an observant Jewish man, who believed that the Torah should be purchased and buried because it was incomplete, the other a Polish woman who was interested in the Torah solely because of its craftsmanship and historical value. The three books of the Torah, which were otherwise in perfect condition, had been found in a hiding spot underneath a pile of coal by a man while cleaning out his parents' cellar. In the end the Torah scroll remained in the shop. While on display, the symbolism of an incomplete Torah found after sixty years of hiding could not be missed. That symbolism however differs depending on the socio-cultural position of the potential buyers.

Usually the buyers of Judaica and other antiques did not reside in the quarter of Kazimierz, with the exception of a trendy crowd which had fairly recently begun to inhabit or set up their studios and businesses in the quarter. They, unlike the majority of Kazimierz residents, had the dispensable income to take up such a hobby. Many of the

⁸⁴ 17.4% is the current unemployment rate in Poland. This figure was taken from *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the leading national daily from July 26th, 2002 article titled: "*Hausner: stopa bezrobocia wzrosnie*".

items purchased served as props in the cafes, restaurants and galleries, which were stylized in accordance with the quarter's mysteriously desolate air.

As I already mentioned, foreigners who happened to be visiting the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz represent the largest group participating in the purchasing of Judaica and antiques. Since 1989 the rates of visitors to the quarter have been growing steadily; as of 1999, North American, German, French, British and Israeli tourists were the most likely to be encountered. Having approached many and discussed Kazimierz with a few, I concluded with caution that some of the above mentioned tourists were Jewish. Some had just returned from visiting Auschwitz/Birkenau. Others, after having visited the Remuh Synagogue and cemetery or having attended the "Retracing Schindler's List Tour", wandered into the antique shops and immediately responded to their contents. Their reactions varied from awe and excitement to anger and distrust.

Description of the antique shop

The antique shop in which I spent most of my time in had the largest accumulation of Judaica. The owners had gathered a sizable collection of books both in Hebrew and in Yiddish, both religious and laic. I was informed that a large part of their collection had been bought in the last two years from a man in his early forties who found them hidden in his barn while he was cleaning it up. These books were arranged in the Judaica section, alongside sections on Krakow, the Polish Eastern Borderlands, World War II and other various historical periods.

For the most part their collections were well organized and indexed. At the same time however, many overflowing binders and folders awaiting their appraisal were

dispersed throughout the shop. Pieces of furniture which were for sale acted as temporary displays for the stacks of art reproductions, graphic designs, postcards and documents. A wide assortment of Judaica mixed seamlessly into the ordered chaos of the antique shop. Some Jewish documents had been recovered from garbage and recycling piles. They dated back to the 1920's and 1930's and often represented business transactions and receipts. One could find, for example, a confirmation of a purchase of two litres of white paint from the Metalman brothers or a receipt for four-dozen eggs from the Jewish market square.

At one point the owners had taken great care to arrange everything artfully. With the passing of time however, friendly clutter began to steal its way into the shop. Kitschy porcelain dolls sat next to a one of a kind silver spoon. An antique *Chanukah* lamp and a modern brass *menorah* spent most of their time with a collection of butterflies and old maps. Nazi propaganda journals rested on the Balkan rugs and quilts. An incomplete Torah scroll was temporarily positioned next to a stuffed beaver. In the midst of all this chaos, the owners, two bearded men, orchestrated the traffic of unique commodities.

The owners of this particular antique shop had invested much thought and emotion into their enterprise. Both of them were graduates of art history, with a specialization in the conservation and reconstruction of antiquities. They were both very communicative and sociable. One was definitely chattier than the other. He related to me many incredible stories he had heard from people who just decided to drop by. He met some renowned people in his shop. His fondest memory was talking to Roma Ligocka whose experiences provided the idea for the girl in the red coat⁸⁵ in the **Schindler's List**.

⁸⁵ **Schindler's List** is a black and white film. The only time one actually sees colour is during the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto in March of 1943. A little girl running away from the Nazis is wearing a

He also shared with me a personal story. It was about a fragment of lace, which was given to his grandmother in very tragic circumstances during the Second World War and had since become a family treasure. I decided to recount this very story in this chapter because it embodies the idea of objects serving as testimony.

Fragments of Lace

“I inherited these parts of lace⁸⁶ from Zina. At this point, I only remember her first name. She resided on Szewczenki Street # 137. She was my grandmother’s neighbour in Poland’s Kresy⁸⁷, before the war. Her son-in-law was a lawyer. This is as much as I know about Zina.

My grandparents settled in a small town of Zdolbunow in 1920. They were neighbours with a Jewish woman by the name of Zina. They lived together well. They were able to count on one another for help, council or advice. German occupation put an end to that in 1942 or 1943. Zina along with all the other Jewish residents of Zdolbunow was escorted out of the town square and gathered in a nearby gorge. There, they were murdered, their bodies thrown into a mass grave. My grandmother told me that the spot of the mass grave is now overgrown with large trees.

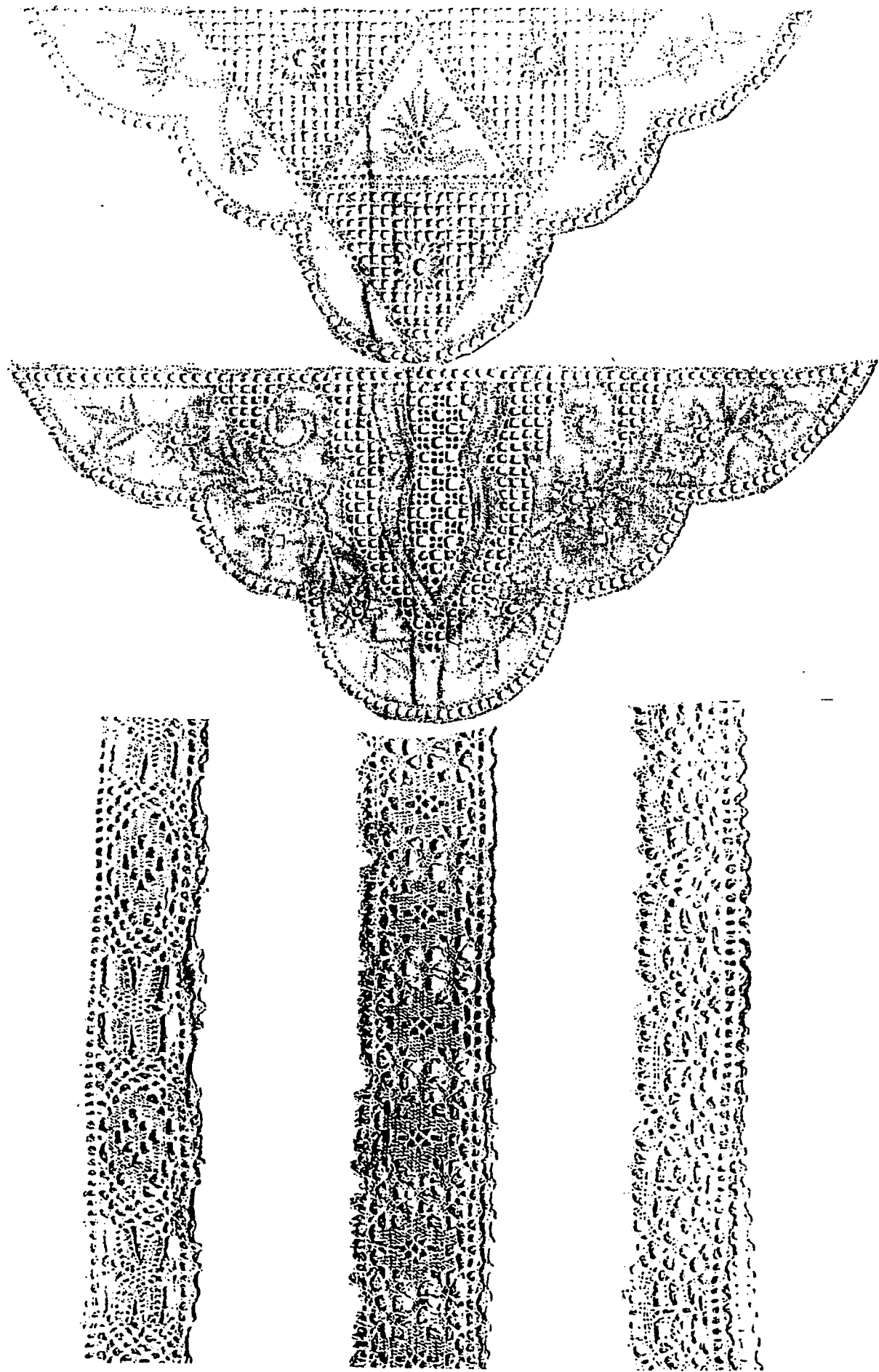
red coat. Oscar Schindler sees her from a hill while enjoying horseback riding. At that moment a change occurs in Schindler. He decides to help the Jews. In the film the girl in the red coat perishes. Roma Ligocka survived. She wrote a book titled *The Girl in the Red Coat*. She also happens to be the cousin of Roman Polanski, another survivor of the Krakow ghetto.

⁸⁶ Photocopy of Zina’s lace can be viewed on page 92.

⁸⁷ “Kresy were the eastern provinces of Poland between the two world wars. They were annexed to the Soviet Union at the end of the war. Their residents were repatriated west to a former German territory which was annexed to Poland after the war. Today Kresy form parts of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine” (Polonsky, 1993: 565).

Before being escorted away from her home to her death in the gorge, she offered these fragments of lace to my grandmother. She said that she did not need them anymore. They must have been important to Zina. She gave them to my grandmother for safekeeping, as a trace of her existence here, as an alive and tangible human being.

I was 8 years old when I saw the pieces of lace for the first time. I think that it was my first encounter with something Jewish. I did not really know what Jewish meant before then. I was really close to my grandma and I really liked examining the few things that were salvaged from the turmoil of war in Poland's former eastern provinces. There was a porcelain plate that belonged to my great grandfather, my grandmother's mirror, an album of family photos and Zina's lace. And here they are, fragments of a regular, machine-manufactured lace. One kind meant to be sown into bed sheets and the other into undergarments. They have accompanied my grandmother who along with a large majority of Kresy residents was repatriated west. They have travelled as far west as Bardo Slaskie, Lower Silesia in the late 1940's to return east again in the late 1990's. Now they are with me in Krakow, which is about halfway between Bardo Slaskie and Zdolbunow. For me they are quite extraordinary. Through them I remember that my grandmother, who passed away 12 years ago, had Zina as a neighbour" (recorded on December 12th, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author).



The story of Zina's lace demonstrates that objects play an essential part in allowing memory to continue. Sixty years after she was forced out of her home never to return her existence is recorded and commemorated. The antiquarian who shared the story with me had already familiarized his ten-year-old son with the presence of Zina in his family history. The value of her lace lies in its origin. "I did not buy the lace, I have it from Zina. It is a concrete proof of her life. A witness. When people come to Kazimierz they often try to acquire things they remember from childhood, from family stories. It enables them to keep the memory alive", the antiquarian told me.

Agency of Objects

Kazimierz almost forces its visitors to retrieve family stories, dramas and anecdotes. People enter the shops asking for particular items because their family is originally from Poland. The surroundings instigate an automatic association between the things for sale and the former residents of Kazimierz and Polish Jews at large. Each object becomes loaded with memory. For some people, behind each a tragic tale awaits to be told. One of the antiquarians put it in these terms:

"I think that many people who come into our shop or any other shop in this quarter immediately link the things on display with the former residents of Kazimierz. This quarter makes many people extremely aware and very emotional, in a historical sense. They see, some for the first time, the consequences of the Holocaust. The abandoned synagogues and the desolate buildings, which once were full of Jewish residents. They bring people back in time. So they come in and react very emotionally to these objects. In any other circumstance they would not perceive them as exclusively Jewish. Here they do".
(Recorded on January 23rd, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

The tangible nature of Kazimierz awakens the senses. Its unique urban complex and ancient Jewish landmarks such as synagogues and cemeteries revive memories. Among older generations those memories may be personal. I talked to a group of Jewish tourists from France who found the visit to be extremely painful. It brought back memories of the Holocaust to them. They were able to imagine the chaos and the screams. They thought that they heard the sound of heavy boots marching in the streets. Kazimierz seems to have effects of this magnitude on many people. One of the innkeepers of Kazimierz told me about this woman, presumably in her late sixties or early seventies, who had come to visit the quarter with her daughter. He could feel her nervousness; he called it negative excitement. He had encountered this in visitors many times before and presumed that it was provoked by an earlier visit to Auschwitz/Birkenau. He explained:

“The elderly woman was not happy with the price I had offered for a room which she really liked and in which she intended to stay, with her daughter, for a few days. She tried to barter with me and when I was not letting the price down she left to look elsewhere. A few moments later she came back yelling something about the beds. That she knows these beds and whom they belong to, something to that effect. Maybe she was implying that the antique beds in the room she liked had Jewish owners and that I had somehow come to possess them in a questionable way”.
(Recorded on November 24th, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

In the quarter of Kazimierz two worlds collide. The world of its Jewish residents, most of whom perished in the Holocaust, clashes with that of its current inhabitants. This creates a difficult context for many of the quarter’s first time visitors. Some of the less historically aware tourists expect the women at the market to be Jewish. They are surprised to find out that they are not, I was told by some of the market merchants. Many

others have serious reservations about the Polish-owned, Jewish-style cafes which are mostly located on Szeroka Street.

The sale of Judaica in the antique shops of the quarter is also questioned. Visitors react negatively to certain types of objects, the way these objects are displayed, their prices and that they are for sale. One of the antiquarians told me:

“This space is constantly contested. I remember someone not being happy about the fact that we were selling a painting of Holy Mary in our shop. It did not fit with the rest of Judaica items. Also the sale of Nazi propaganda is often viewed as controversial. One time, we had a visitor react quite violently to Jewish documents from the time of war. He asked if we sell hair and soap too”.

(Recorded on March 5th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Many have reservations about the sale of the Jewish documents that the antiquarian mentioned. A young American-Jewish woman I had befriended during my time in Kazimierz, could not bring herself to visit these shops anymore. She loved antiques. She used to consider hunting for the curios and the bizarre her favourite past time. She could not bear that the traces of Jewish life were for sale. She thought that perhaps they should not be on display. Maybe they could be in a museum but not in a shop next to Nazi propaganda and other unrelated items.

During my time at the shop I was exposed to many different interpretations of the displayed Judaica items. I met another young American Jew who visited the shop regularly while he was in Poland. He was looking for any possible documents concerning his great great-grandfather who was born in Tarnow in 1814. In an effort at retracing his family's history he has travelled all across of central Europe. He has a beautiful chronicle of his family which contains photos, descriptions of places where they resided, accounts of their neighbours and friends. This chronicle was established by his grandparents. His

parents contributed to it and now it has been passed on to him. “His entire family has been engaged in the continuation of memory for generations now. How inspiring. They have actually gotten as far as the son of the great great-grandfather who left Tarnow for Budapest, where part of the family decided to leave to America”, I was informed by one of the proprietors. The shop has a few of such regular clients. They have their addresses and phone numbers on file in case anything comes up. They also had visitors who came across their shop by chance and found shards of their own life in there. Here is one example:

“Two years ago, an elderly couple from the United States stumbled upon our shop. In a binder with Jewish documents they found papers from the Eastern Borderlands, a small town close to Rawa Ruska, where the man was originally from. In a Nazi register of Jewish nurses from 1941, they found a record of a nurse that took care of the man when he was a child. He fell ill often and she gave him shots. In 1941 she had to register in order to work. Soon afterwards through this very register she was probably found, deported and killed. She most likely perished in Belzec, along with the rest of the little town... He cried when he found this document. Still he was glad he stumbled upon it. He had been gathering information about his little town and its residents for years”.

(Recorded on March 26th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Conclusion

The location of this particular antique shop plays a key role in the kind of trade that occurs there. Being situated in the heart of the Jewish quarter it brings clients interested in the buying and selling of Judaica. It is important to keep in mind here that in the context of Kazimierz, Judaica denotes a category of objects constructed by their milieu. Most of this broad category can be classified as inalienable wealth. According to Annette Weiner, ‘inalienable wealth’ represents objects which are exchanged without

ever losing their identity and attachment to the lineage that originally owned them (Thomas, 1991: 24). Inalienable wealth in the context of Kazimierz signifies anything previously owned by Jews as well as anything presumed to be previously owned by Jews. Due to the quarter's Jewish past and its current revival, the objects on display in the antique shops of Kazimierz are viewed as Jewish by many of the sellers and the buyers. This judgement is often constructed through directly associating the things with the material space that surrounds them.

The three stories I weaved into this chapter reveal the role of objects as family portrait, testimony and as guardians of collective memory. The stories about the spice box, the tapestry and the lace illustrate that things are polysemic (Riggins 1994). They can be representative of individual histories as well as collective events. Furthermore, their tangible nature and openness to a variety of interpretations permits the infusion of things with meaning. Often what is important about material objects in the context of remembering Jews in Kazimierz is not what they were but what they have become.

The next chapter will focus on the role of photographs in constructing Kazimierz. A rich visual record accompanied by narratives will be presented in order to explore different modes of remembering that occur in the quarter. In this last ethnographic segment I will consider photographs as an essential part of the material culture which mediates one's experience of the quarter of Kazimierz.

Chapter 6: Photo Album of the Quarter of Kazimierz

The practice of photography is central to the 20th century's symbolic landscape (Barthes 1982, Sontag 1990). At the same time, photography is firmly integrated into the ways identities are managed and memories are cultivated (Berger 1997). According to Susan Sontag (1990) for instance, the dense presence of photographic images in the human world signifies that in fact the images have become a species of reality which influences and transforms what is considered real. Photographs are like monuments, Kugelmass argues, "they are iconic representations of other times and other places, but with a peculiar transportability" (1993:314).

During my fieldwork I became fascinated with the problematic power of the visual reproductions of the quarter of Kazimierz. For the purpose of this argument, visual reproductions constitute a broad category which includes all the prewar, as well as recent images of Kazimierz published as posters, postcards or parts of a book. I thought it necessary to explore further their role as material culture in the quarter. I sought to learn more about the ways in which the images of Kazimierz mediated the experience of remembering its Jewish residents. As I embarked on this task, I kept in mind the following words: "Photography by its very nature is 'of' the past. Yet it is also 'of' the present. It preserves a fragment of the past that is transported in apparent entirety to the present – the 'there-then' becomes the 'here-now' " (Barthes, 1982:44).

In this chapter I will present a narrated visual record of the quarter. The record was collected by a group of ten participants, each armed with a disposable camera⁸⁸. Their task was to photograph what constitutes Kazimierz for them. In my thesis I have

⁸⁸ I provided the cameras. Each participant had a disposable Konica 200 ASA camera. The lack of a flash and the low sensitivity of the film spoiled some photos. Everyone including myself was surprised with the quality of the rest of the photos which did turn out.

addressed so far the role of material sites and objects in remembering the Jews of Kazimierz. I have also considered their significance in the construction and maintenance of the quarter of Kazimierz as a place of Jewish memory. Here I will explore the different modes of remembering which I posit that the quarter elicits. This will be accomplished through a careful consideration of the narrated collection of photographs of contemporary Kazimierz. First however I will retell a story of a certain photograph:

“I allow myself to send you a photograph of my lost Family. In the picture, sitting in the centre is Osjasz Grossbart, my grandfather, with his wife, children and grandchildren and the soldiers who visited us. It was taken during the First World War. Because at that time there was no possibility of taking an amateur photograph without natural light, the tables were hurriedly taken out of the garden -hence the tablecloths are askew. On the wall of the porch, an unclear picture can be seen-it is the portrait of the ruling Emperor Franz Josef and Emperor Wilhelm. Grandfather’s house, a garden and a small farm were located in Podgorze, at that time a village near Krakow, today one of its districts.

Nearby, there was a cloister, which was turned into a field hospital during the War. My grandfather, as any religious Jew, could not endure the fact that sick Jewish soldiers had to eat *hametz*⁸⁹, during *Pesah*⁹⁰, so he invited them over. They came for the whole day, helping in the kitchen, and went back to the hospital after the evening prayer. The week of festivities resulted in a deep friendship. I remember that the officer who is holding me on his lap was in love with Aunt Ela (first from the left). But soon afterwards, he was killed in the War.

The wealth of my grandfather’s house was proven by a *sukkah*⁹¹ made of bricks, with a moving roof. The other thing he was proud of was a candelabrum in the style of the Duchy of Warsaw. But for me, the most grand was the peach tree growing by the

⁸⁹ *Hametz* denotes leavened bread. The use of *hametz* is strictly prohibited during Passover (*Pesah*).

⁹⁰ *Pesah* or Passover begins on the 15th of *Nisan*. It commemorates the Jewish Exodus from Egypt.

⁹¹ According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) a *sukkah* is used during the festival of *Sukkot* (booths or tabernacles) in which the children of Israel dwelt in the wilderness, after the Exodus.

southern wall of the house. Soon afterwards, in 1918, we moved from there. The Solvay factory had built a rail line across grandfather's fields, to carry rocks from the quarry, and grandfather said that the grains grown were bad after that. He sold the whole farm. It was during such inflation that after six weeks, he couldn't buy a house with his money, just a flat. Well at least it was in central Krakow near Planty.

In the middle, surrounded by soldiers sits my grandfather, Osjasz Grossbart. On the left, with a spoon in her hand, my grandmother can be seen. She used to spend days in the kitchen, always in a dress that had buttons from top to bottom, with a cushion under her feet. I used to do up the buttons at the bottom for her, as she could not bend down. For 25 years she had a bad heart, but she outlived my grandfather. My mother is dressed in a white apron, next to her is my father in a *yarmulka* and my brother Jehuda, who was two years older than me in a sailor's hat. Behind stands our cook Pepcia – a very important person in the household. The girls on the right are the daughters of my father's sister: the older was called Paulina, or Pepa, the other's name was Mirele, just like mine. She was called Mila, and I was Misia. The little girl in the apron is me. I was three or four years old at the time.

When I remember my family, I always have the funeral of my great grandfather Zachariasz before my eyes. He died on *Shavout*⁹², when no vehicles can be used, so the procession had to walk 12 kilometres from Lagiewniki to the Jewish cemetery in Plaszow. The coffin was carried by four Jews, dressed typically for the Hasidim-in fur *shtraimels* (hats) and silk coats - and the weather was extremely hot that day. It was said that the fact that my great grandfather had died on a holy day, was a sign that he had been an honest and just Jew to whom God would give a kind welcome” Emilia Leibel⁹³.

⁹² According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997) *Shavout* means Pentecost and it commemorates the reciting of the Torah on Mt. Sinai.

⁹³ Source: *And I Still See Their Faces* (1998:20). I will refer to Mrs. Leibel as Pani Misia. Pani translates to Miss and Misia is a diminutive form of Emilia. As she became more comfortable with me she insisted that I call her Pani Misia.



Photograph 15: Mrs. Leibel's Family during World War I. Reproduced with permission of the owner.



Photograph 16: Emilia Leibel in her home. Taken by the author.

I was fortunate enough to hear the story of Mrs. Leibel's photo from the author herself in her home over tea. This was a unique situation, given the context of the Holocaust, in which most of those in the remaining photos had perished. Much of the evidence of their life was also destroyed. Many photographs vanished. Those that remained, once the most prized and intimate possessions, were now depersonalized signifiers of a lost time. I was introduced to Pani Misia's "lost Family" through the above photograph. She told me about her cousins Pepa and Mila, the only survivors. Pepa and her eleven year-old daughter lived through the camps, and as soon as the war was over they joined Mila, who had been living in Palestine since the mid-1930's. It was Mila who took the above photograph to Palestine with her and after the war she made enlargements for the family survivors. The only other prewar photo in Pani Misia's possession is one of her beloved husband and herself on an outing in the countryside. She had received it from cousin Mila as well upon one of her visits to Israel.

Mrs. Leibel's account was also part of a recent publication of the Shalom Foundation⁹⁴ titled: *And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews*. This incredible visual record presents nearly five hundred photographs of Polish Jews before the Holocaust. All of the images were sent to the Shalom Foundation after an appeal on Polish national television in 1994. Some of them were accompanied by personal stories, poems and postcards. The photographs recall the names of those sent to the death camps,

⁹⁴ "The Shalom Foundation is an American-Polish-Israeli initiative formed in 1988. Although it is based in Poland, its board members are scattered all over the world. Once they were students of the I.L Peretz School in Lodz. They are linked not only by personal friendship but also by home-inculcated love and a sense of duty towards their nation, its tradition, history and culture. The symbolic goal of the foundation is to "save memory from oblivion". The most important achievements of the foundation include: the creation of a Jewish Song competition, the publication of books including *We the Polish Jews* by Julian Tuwim, *Songs of Mordechai Gebirtig* translated by Jerzy Ficowski as well as the anthology titled: *Jewish Children Accuse*, the inauguration of the small stage of the Jewish Theatre, the collection of academic works on Polish-Jewish relations, the opening of a Sunday school where the young generation of Polish Jews learns Jewish culture and tradition" (Tencer, 1998: jacket).

shot in the streets, and turned in for profit. According to Golda Tencer, the chief initiator of the exhibit and an actress of the Esther Rachel Kaminska State Jewish Theatre in Warsaw:

“Artefacts and appurtenances have survived. What a philosopher once called ‘the tears of things’. Tears not just shed for a mug with a broken handle, a crooked fence in a Galician town, wanderer’s shoes, the cap of a village peddler. Rather a lament for a lost world which now returns only in photographs. Bringing to life those who were changed into the Great Statistic, making them present amongst us, asking: How was it possible?, waiting for an answer under the heavens that shine through the shingles of the roof. In this heaven there are motionless clouds. The wind, since it has also been photographed, brings with it the echo of the voices. Voices that were silenced, long, long ago⁹⁵”.

Photographs can provide us with windows to times passed. They constitute particular instruments of remembrance and act as “ghostly remnants perched at the edge between memory and forgetting” (Hirsch, 1997:22). For Jewish people, whose family histories have been marked by the horrors of the Holocaust, the existing photographs can provide a sense of continuity, a connection between the generations, between memory and post-memory (Hirsh, 1997: 22). Photos can also act as signifiers of loss. They offer historical evidence which is ready for interpretation. They set a scene for recollection. “Memories evoked by a photograph do not simply spring out of the image itself, but are generated in an intertext of discourses that shift between the past and present, spectator and image and between all these and cultural contexts and historical moments” (Kuhn, 1996: 473).

⁹⁵ Source: *And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews*, (1998: introduction).

Kazimierz in photographs

Throughout my fieldwork in the quarter of Kazimierz I encountered countless photographs. During interviews, my interlocutors often referred to pictures in order to make their accounts more lively and real for me. In the case of the elderly Polish Jews I interviewed, there were even a few prewar photos of their family and friends. They were fragile with age and experience. Just like their owners, they survived the war against all odds. Most of the people I interviewed knew that I enjoyed photography and was genuinely interested in all of its forms. Some even asked me to bring in my photos of the quarter so that they could view them. This was especially gratifying for me with the elderly group. They were pleased to see the changes taking place in the quarter and viewed most of them as positive. Even though two of my elderly interlocutors resided in the area and frequented their regular places, they did not explore anymore, mostly because of health-related issues. Often however they provided me with personalized narratives about particular spots and sent me to capture others which I may have missed.

Photo albums such as Roman Vishniac's *A Vanished World*, Alter Kacyzne's *Poylin*, Stanisław Markowski's *Krakowski Kazimierz: Dzielnica Żydowska*, as well as other publications which depict the quarter of Kazimierz were often referred to during our interviews. Viewing these provided me with another dimension in my experience of the quarter. Some time into my fieldwork I found that many of the prewar images of the quarter and its residents had in fact become an important part of the Kazimierz material culture. In general, they were used to advertise the quarter and its Jewish character. They could be encountered in tourist spots in Krakow and Kazimierz. They promoted the latest exhibits, lectures and concerts. The images had become iconic representations of the

place. However problematic their appropriation⁹⁶, they were taking an active part in the symbolic reconstruction of the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz.

Photographs of Kazimierz

The narrated collection of photographs which I am about to present documents contemporary Kazimierz. After a careful viewing of the two hundred photographs taken by the participants, I selected twenty-five to be displayed in this chapter. Out of the entire photo assortment I was able to pick out four distinct categories for the chosen twenty-five. During the selection process, the aesthetic qualities of the photo were mostly outweighed by the richness of the data accompanying them. Places, people and traces were themes most often encountered in all of the photos. I have designed them to be categories as such. Hence, the first category presents *Places*. The second category depicts *People* and the third category displays *Traces*. The fourth category is a compilation of the previous three. It includes *Places, People* and *Traces*. It treats one's *Personal Links to the Quarter* and I have named it as such.

All of the authors of the photographs either reside or work in the quarter. Most of them are involved in the recent Jewish revival with varying degrees of commitment. Their multilayered identities are reflected in the photographs and the narratives which accompany them. As artists, restaurateurs, tour guides, shop owners, and volunteers, they are also of different age, gender, and ethnic background. This diversity allows for a great variety of perspectives to surface in the photographs and their descriptions. Each person's life experiences are invested into the photos. Taken over one month's period on average, each visual narrative accomplishes a certain objective. Some accounts tend to focus on

⁹⁶ I discuss one such case on page 66.

the personally significant, others on the contested, and others still on the historically relevant.

PLACES - is the first category to be presented in this chapter. It includes the holy, the contested, the abandoned, the ruined, the kitschy, the renovated, and the desecrated. All of the places photographed are within the bounds of Kazimierz. Some of them are recognized as tourist attractions while others have never received any acclaim.

Holy Place (see photograph 1a): “The air around the *Remuh* synagogue is magical. Look at the beautiful gate, proportionate and wise with age. This is my favourite place in the entire quarter. One can feel calm here. I have taken many photos of the gate of *Remuh* and I always find a warm, almost pink light emanating from it. It is a place where one feels holiness. It is hard to explain”.

(Anna⁹⁷ recorded in the author’s home on February 4th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Contested Place (see photograph 2a): “Some sort of organization, I forget which exactly, wanted to establish two parks in Krakow. One in Solvay named after John Paul II, and another here by the Vistula River, on the outskirts of the quarter of Kazimierz named after the Polish Jews. The Krakow municipal government, which clearly leans to the right, believed it was necessary to consult this idea with the general public first. The idea of a park named after Polish Jews was scrapped immediately because some people believed that it would be too close for comfort to Skalka, which is a holy place for Catholics. I find this affair ridiculous and upsetting. At the end of it all someone put up a cross with this caption: ‘A symbol which will have its opponents’. One of the buildings behind the cross was recently returned to the Jewish community. It once housed a Torah school for girls, a revolutionary idea initiated by Sara Szeringer in 1917”.

(Wiktor recorded in the author’s home on March 29th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

⁹⁷ All of the names of the participants of the photo survey have been changed.

Abandoned Place (see photograph 3a): “Here is the corner of *Weglowa* and *Krakowska* Streets, from the perspective of *Krakowska*. You see a ruin of an inn from the first half of the nineteenth century. Built on a huge scale with a great court. It was probably the biggest inn in Krakow. I did some work there. I was helping my friends with a report about the unearthed polychromes inside the inn. On the first floor there were many of them on the walls, amongst them a Holy Ark in a beautiful architectural structure with columns, pillars and drapes. It has been standing in this state for ten years now. The building is tangled up in ownership issues. I do not know what will become of it.”

(Rafal recorded in the author’s home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Abandoned Place (see photograph 4a): “This is at the corner of *Szeroka* and *Miodowa*. The well-preserved wall of the *Remuh* cemetery and next to it a wooden fence that is falling apart covered by layers of old posters and graffiti. This fence guards Mr. Nissenbaum’s lot. I should say a park because it is now completely overgrown with wild bushes. We have the sacred and the ordinary right next to each other. The wobbly fence next to the wall of the oldest Jewish cemetery, embodies a rather vivid confrontation of history and our very grey present in Poland”.

(Jerzy recorded in the author’s home on February 14th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Renovated Place (see photograph 5a): “The name of this hotel is Eden. It exemplifies a well-preserved building. Until recently these buildings were in a state of complete ruin. They were going to collapse very soon. Allen Haberberg bought them and renovated them thoroughly. There is even a *mikveh* in the cellars. This is important for the Orthodox”.

(Slawek recorded in one of the quarter’s shops on March 28th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Kitschy Place (see photograph 6a): “Ariel café-restaurant is the embodiment of kitsch in Kazimierz. Look at the lions and the *Chanukah* lamp that is lit all year round. Supposedly the owners mean well, but I can really see how this could bother Jewish visitors. Someone from the outside is capitalizing on their symbols. It bothers me aesthetically for the most part”.

(Tomas recorded in the Judaica Foundation on March 17th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Ruined Place (see photograph 7a): “Here we have a photo of a ruin on *Kupa* Street. Ten years ago I was writing a report about the building before renovations were to begin. As you know they have only renovated the building on the corner. While in the archives I discovered really interesting anecdotes about the tenants from those buildings, dating back a hundred and some years. In apartment # 6 for example, some Ryfka is getting water on her head and into her bed, because the roof is leaking. She cannot sleep like this any longer, the records state. The owner cannot do anything because he is away with his family at a spa. Gutter is spilling over into the foyer, someone’s furniture is blocking the entrance into the building and poor Ryfka is in the midst of all this. I always think of her when I walk by the ruin”.

(Rafal recorded in the author’s home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Desecrated Place (see photograph 8a): “This is the *Tempel*. As you have probably seen, it has been renovated both inside and outside. Unfortunately someone felt the need to dishonour this place of worship. You can see “Judenraus” and other obscenities on the left side of the entrance. This is really hurtful. How does one deal with it? Should one paint it over as soon as it appears, which will mostly likely result in even more graffiti, or should one leave it as is and hope that other people take notice and react... This reminds me, I am often annoyed with the amount of cars parked right in front of the *Tempel*. Sometimes it is even hard to get to the entrance. I do not see this being done in front of churches. Are people are just being negligent or is it more?”

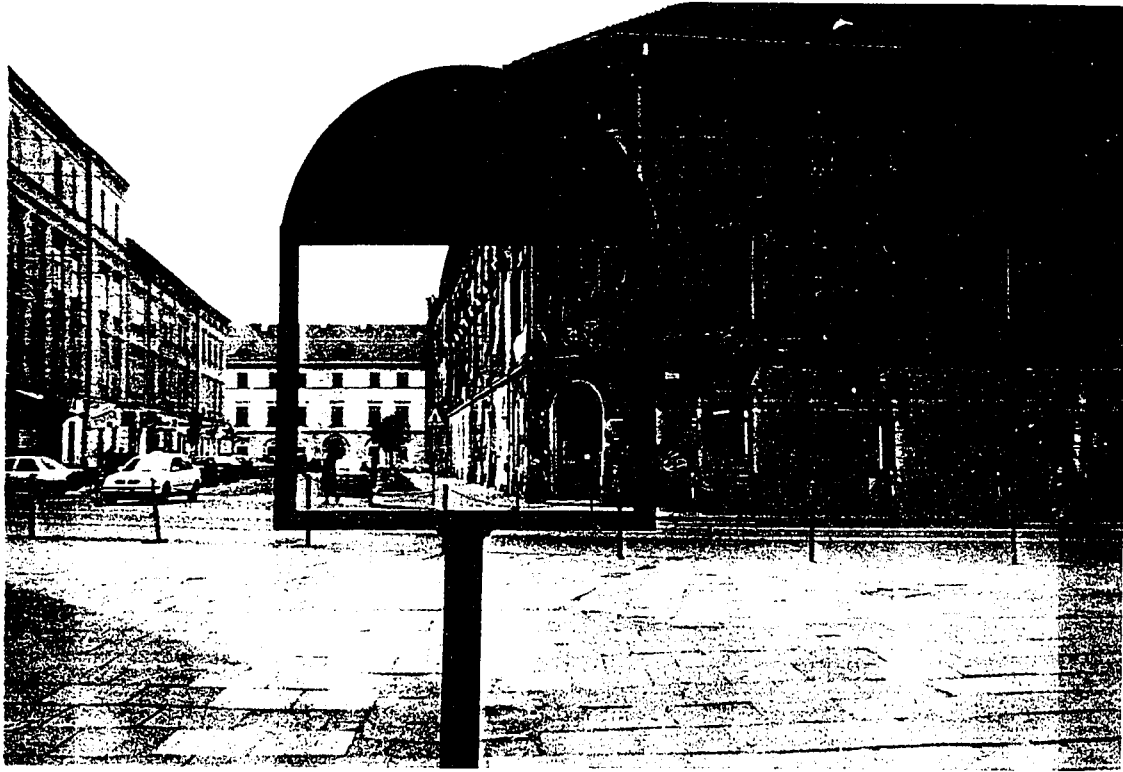
(Wiktor recorded in the author’s home on March 29th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)



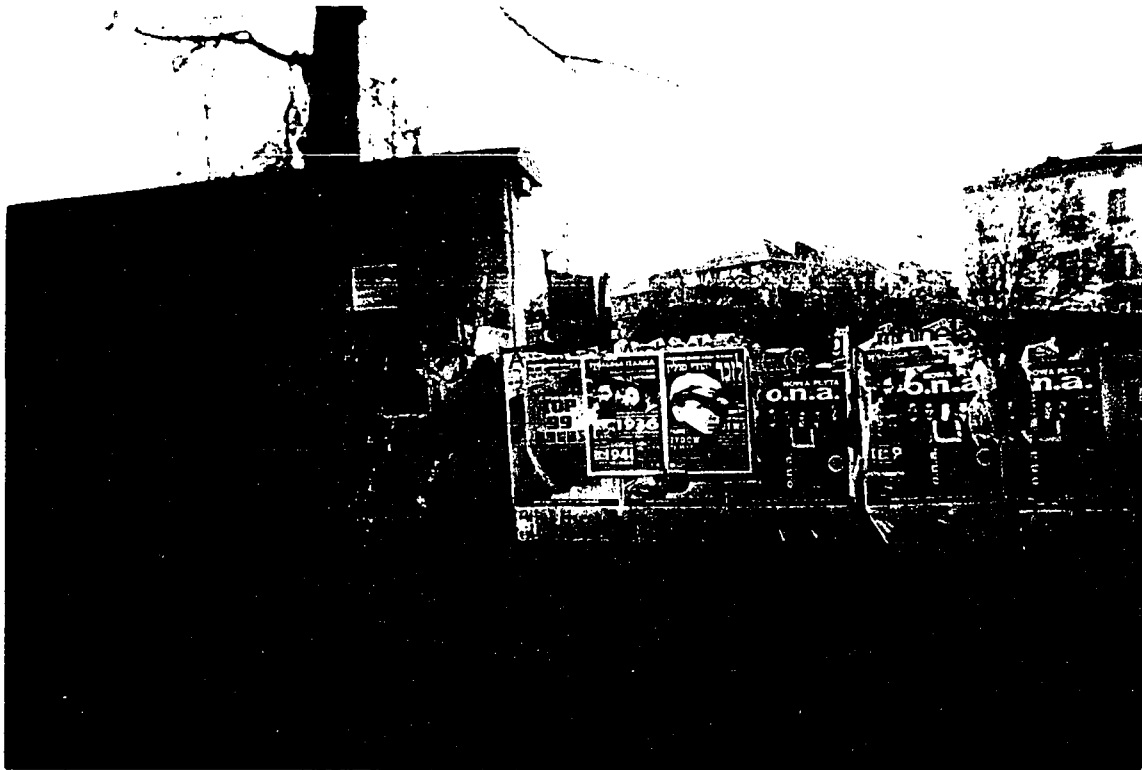
Photograph 1a: **Holy Place**. Taken by Anna, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 2a: **Contested Place**. Taken by Wiktor, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 3a: **Abandoned Place**. Taken by Rafal, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 4a: **Abandoned Place**. Taken by Jerzy, one of the photo-survey participants.

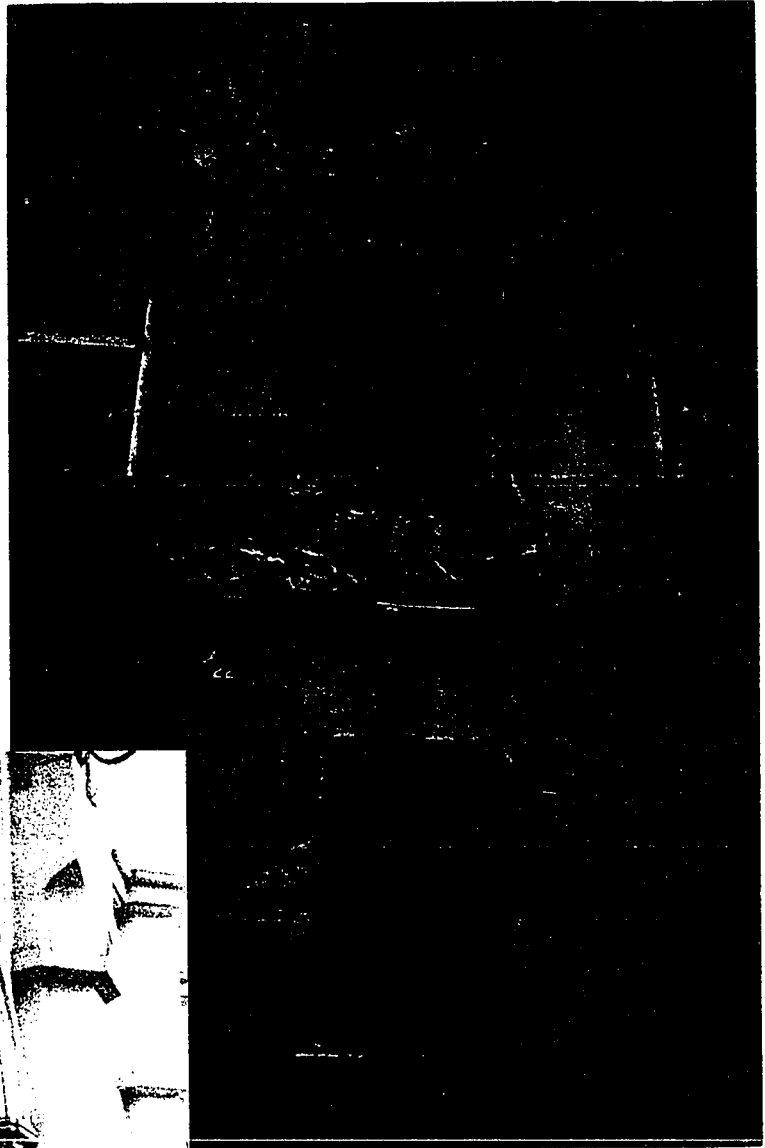


Photograph 5a: **Renovated Place**. Taken by Slawek, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 6a: **Kitschy Place**. Taken by Tomas, one of the photo-survey participants.

Photograph 7a: **Ruined Place.** Taken by Rafal, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 8a: **Desecrated Place.** Taken by Wiktor, one of the photo-survey participants.

PEOPLE – From the visual record of the participants I can conclude that people constitute an important aspect of the quarter. The category of people is broad as it includes living representatives of the quarter, its prewar and postwar residents as well as visitors, which does not exclusively indicate tourists. I think that this category might have been more elaborate had the participants been equipped with better cameras. I had heard from a few about photos of people they wanted to take but were unable without a flash.

Representative of Kazimierz (see photograph 9a): “Leopold Kozlowski is standing on *Szeroka* Street here, you can see the *Remuh* complex in the background. He is an accomplished composer, conductor, pianist and *klezmer* musician and a direct descendant of the brilliant clarinetist, Naftule Brandwein who brought *klezmer* music to the United States. Koziol as we call him is known as the last Klezmer of Galicia. He is the last connection with the continuing tradition. He played with Itzhak Perlman in a PBS film about Kazimierz titled **In the Fiddler’s House**”.

(Anna recorded in the author’s home on February 4th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Representative of Kazimierz (see photograph 10a): “There is no Krakow without Henryk Halkowski and no Henryk Halkowski without Krakow. Long life to them both. Grigori Kanovich, an eminent Russian Lithuanian Jewish novelist once said that and I agree with him completely. I have no better words”.

(Slawek recorded in one of the quarter’s shops on March 28th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Postwar residents (see photograph 11a): “You probably know that Kazimierz had a really bad reputation until fairly recently. People from outside the quarter rarely came here. The locals formed almost a village out of the quarter. They are the ones who populated Kazimierz after the war was over and they are still here today.”

(Slawek recorded in one of the quarter’s shops on March 28th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Visitors (see photograph 12a): “These are Hasidic Jews from New York City. They have come to pray at *Remuh*'s grave. They usually arrive in big groups. One such group resided in the Eden hotel for the weekend. One could hear their singing all around Kazimierz. It was so vigorous”.

(Wiktor recorded in the author's home on March 29th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Visitors (see photograph 13a): “Here is the marketplace which takes over the entire New Square (otherwise known as Jewish) every Sunday. When I came to Krakow to start my university education I soon found that the Sunday market in Kazimierz was a good place to buy original clothes. Residents of Krakow have long recognized Kazimierz as a place where one can find odd and curious things. Now for example, there are many antique shops here and second-hand clothing shops. The huge second-hand clothing industry is definitely a reflection of hard times in Poland”.

(Ola recorded in the Judaica Foundation on March 19th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Prewar resident (see photograph 14a): “This is a tablet commemorating Mordechai Gebirtig, the carpenter poet of Kazimierz. It was mounted a few years back on the building in which he resided, on *Berka Joselewicza* Street. Two years ago there was an exhibit dedicated to Gebirtig, during the Jewish Culture Festival. And now I am learning Yiddish from his texts. His poetry is so beautiful. Right now we are reading a poem written in the form of a conversation between a boy and a girl. Raisele is the girl who lives in Kazimierz and the boy loves her. He stands under her window and waits for her while he eats peanuts and whistles from time to time. She gets upset and tells him not to whistle; only goys do that. And he promises to stop and that he will be a pious man, and a loyal husband. And she in turn tells him that she will make a little bag for his *tefillin* (phylacteries). Supposedly there was a Raisele here before the war. She was a Kazimierz beauty with many admirers. She perished here with her mother. Another photo I should have taken is around *Janowa Wola* Street in Podgorze. It is the spot where Gebirtig was brutally killed by an SS man”.

(Anna recorded in the author's home on February 4th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)



Photograph 9a: **Representative of Kazimierz.** Taken by Anna, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 10a: **Representative of Kazimierz.** Taken by Slawek, one of the photo-survey participants.

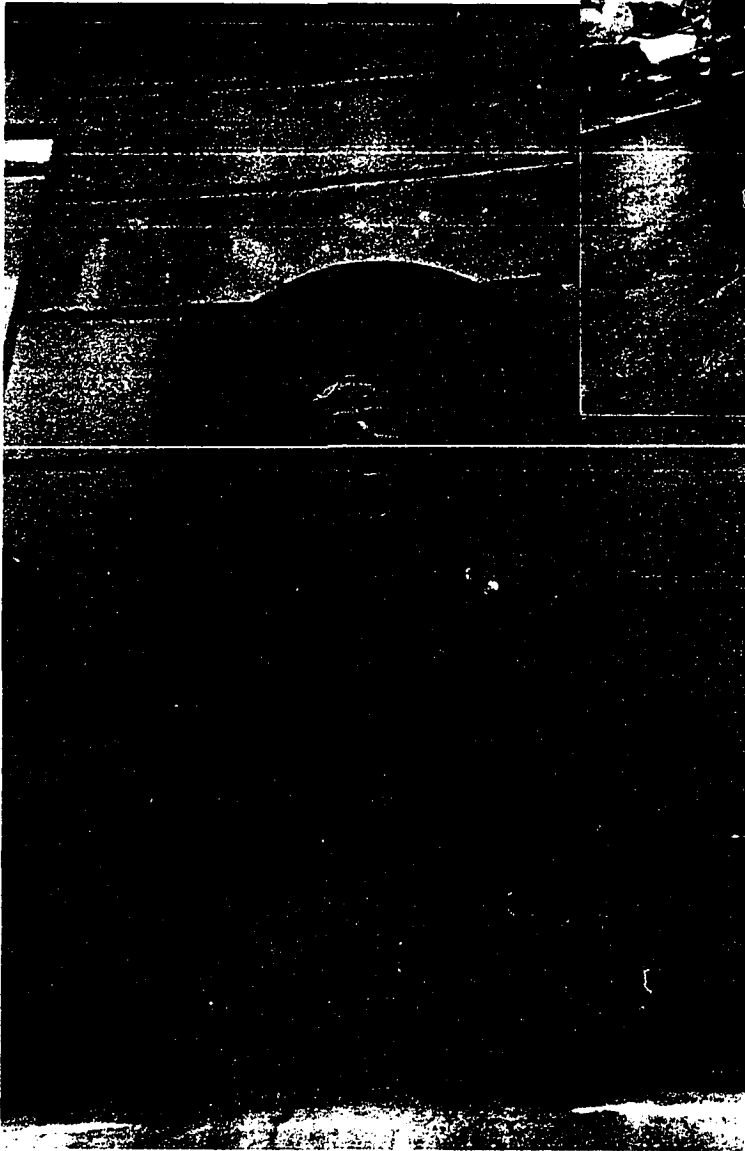
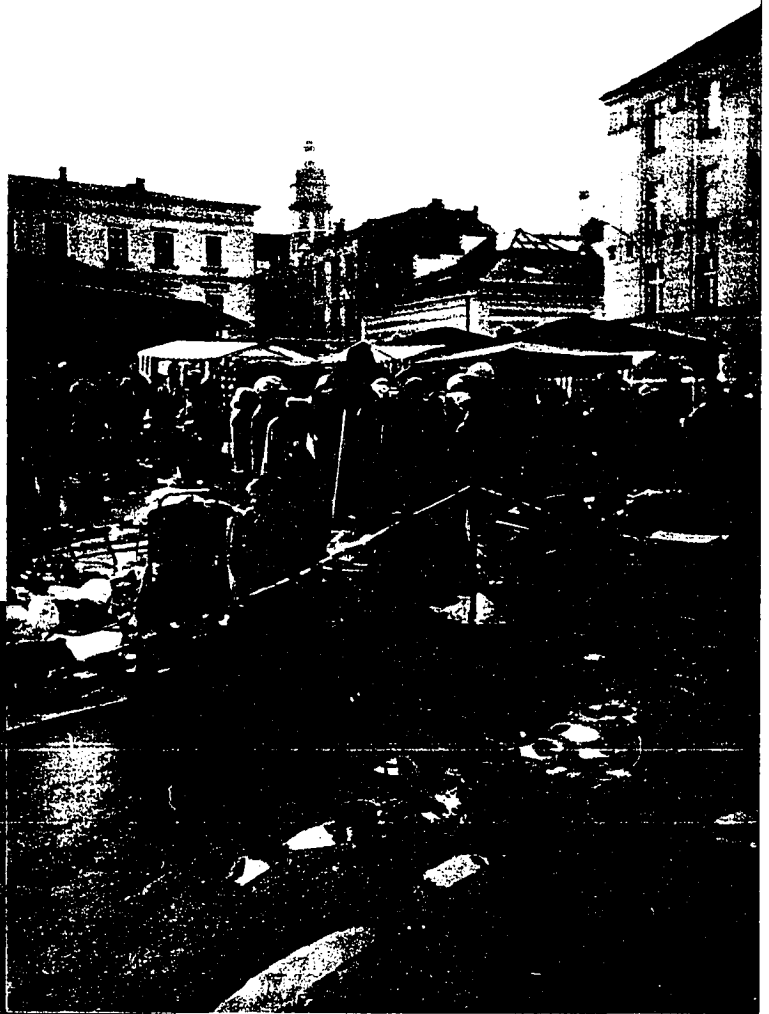


Photograph 11a: Postwar residents. Taken by Slawek, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 12a: Visitors. Taken by Wiktor, one of the photo-survey participants.

Photograph 13a: **Visitors.** Taken by Ola, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 14a: **Prewar Resident.** Taken by Anna, one of the photo-survey participants.

TRACES - The traces of Jewish life in Kazimierz and beyond are portrayed here. They are represented by signs, symbols, displacements and absences. The assignment of depicting what constitutes Kazimierz was not to be bound by physical borders of the quarter. The displacements and absences show examples of traces of Jewish life in Poland outside of Kazimierz.

Symbols (see photographs 15a): “Here we have an imprint of two hands on a boarded up window of a building that is dying on *Lewkowa* Street. The hands are placed similarly to those on the *mazzevah* in the following picture. They are meant to be viewed side by side. It is a bit of a free association but I see those hands symbolizing evidence of one’s existence as well as a place of the dead, such as the cemetery”.

(Jerzy recorded in the author’s home on February 14th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Signs (see photograph 16a): “This reads *fleish*, which means meat. I can identify that much already thanks to Przemek Piekarski, my Yiddish teacher. It is on *Bozego Ciala* Street. There was another one nearby. I was surprised to see it gone when I looked for it to take a photo. There must be yet another sign is on *Jakuba* Street”.

(Anna recorded in the author’s home on February 4th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Signs (see photograph 17a): “An advertisement for a hatmaker, *Kapelusznik* – Dawid something. His last name was visible a few years back. Soon enough nothing will be left of these material traces. Years and renovations are the main culprits, I think”.

(Jerzy recorded in the author’s home on February 14th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Displacements (see photograph 18a): “Here is a courtyard of the firefighters depot in which one can find three *mazzevahs* from the Jewish cemetery in Olkusz. Probably the only material traces left of the Jewish population of Olkusz. There are many towns like Olkusz. The mine opened up, new people populated the town, the past died. Just like in Wolbrom, my ‘adopted’ little town, where I live with my family. People don’t know much about the town’s past. In most cases its not that they don’t want to – maybe the

need to question was not cultivated in them. For instance, I found a small road, # 75, where a synagogue once stood on an old Austrian plan. Now it is only a matter of how, when, where, and what...There used to be a Jewish cemetery there neighbouring with an Evangelical one. The Jewish one was destroyed by Germans in the 1940's and the Evangelical by Poles, after the war. Probably if one were to dig in the archives, one could find other traces too. On the *mazzevaks* in the firefighters depot we see books and a broken off tree. Quite symbolic, I think”.

(Rafal recorded in the author's home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

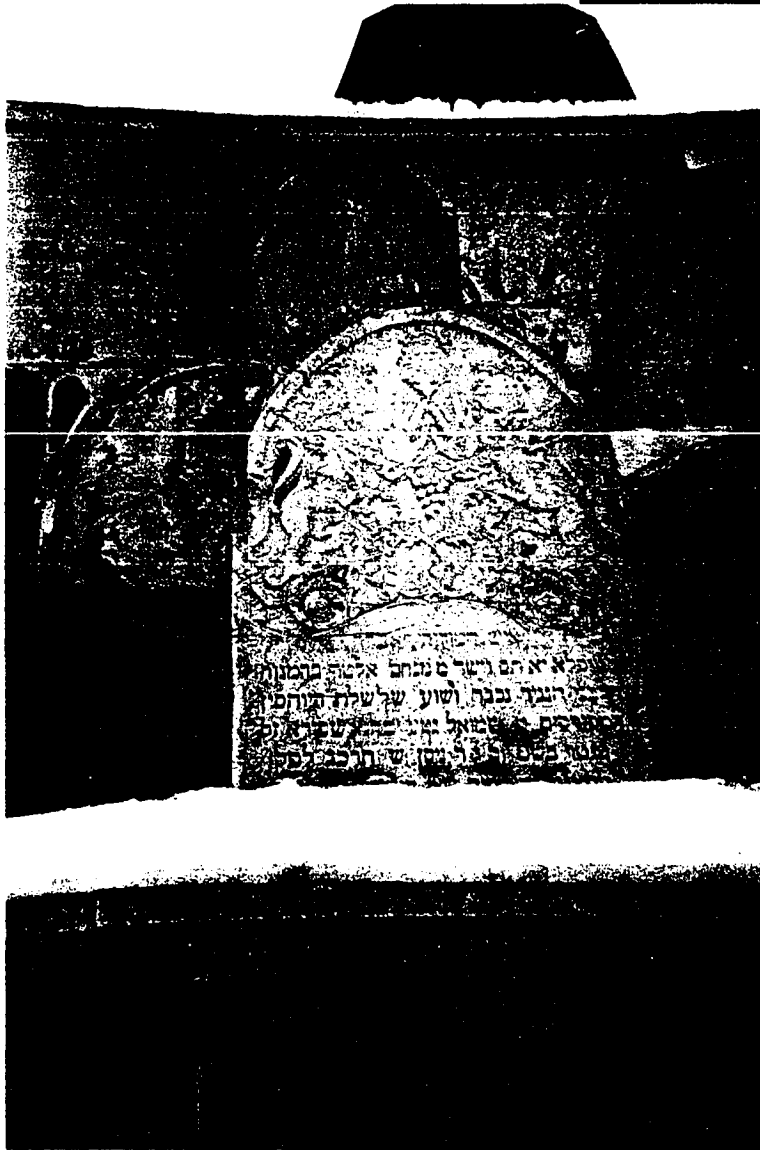
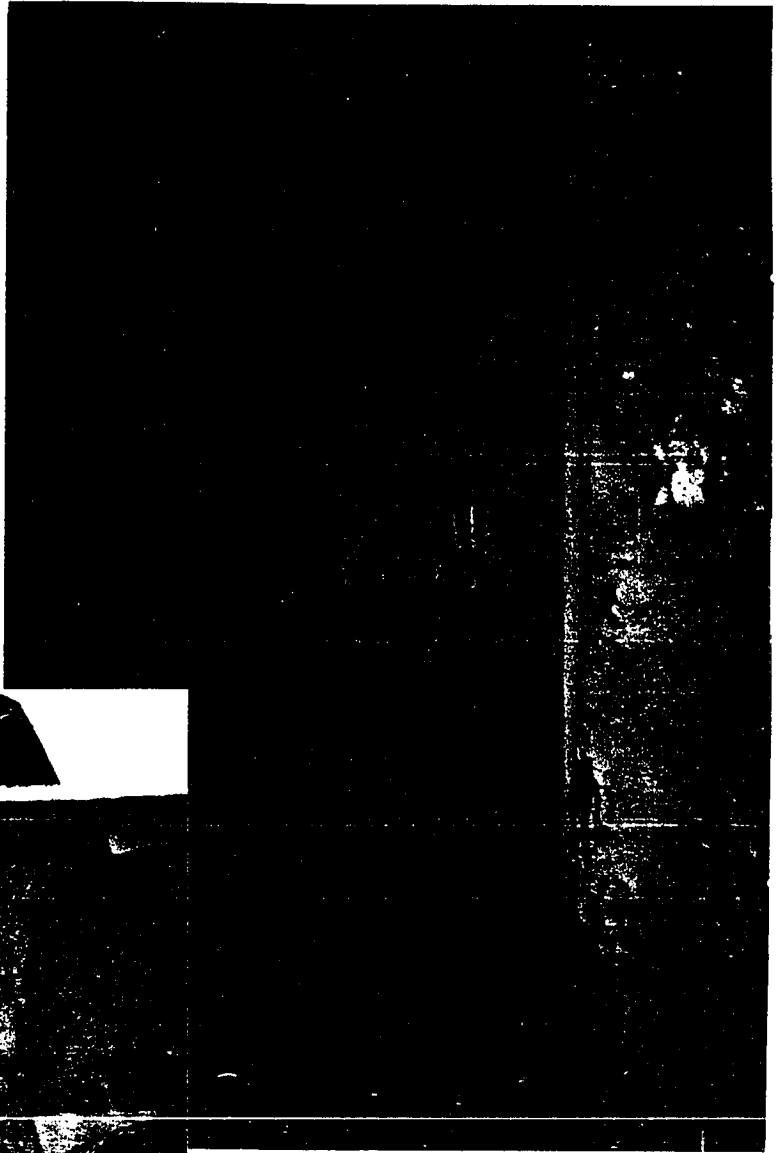
Absences (see photograph 19a): “Here we have *Paulinska* Street or a fragment of it. There is a big gap in between the buildings, from the interwar years. You see how in one fragment the plaster is lighter in a very regular, almost rectangular shape. There used to be a very interesting advertisement of hats here, a Jewish hat maker whose name I don't remember anymore. My friend was hired privately to take it down and prepare it for export. He certainly has more information. I don't remember the exact text of this commercial; it was faint already when it was taken off the wall. Anyhow a couple years ago it was taken off to go to the Washington National Holocaust Museum. The gate of the Tarnow cemetery should be there too along with a wagon and a barrack from Auschwitz. All 'authentic', and all in an American museum. I find that very strange. There are very few tangible traces left with all of the renovations going on in Kazimierz. You hear many people panicking about it. This advertisement transfer being done is a singular example. Next-door the same kind of advertisement is being demolished during a private renovation. Many things are not treated as relics of the past. An advertising sign is just a sign, especially if on a building from the 1930's. Almost no one pays attention to such minor details even if they are Jewish. At the same time however, commercial signs are being reconstructed in the city square, on the walls of the Clothiers Hall. They are more than a century old”.

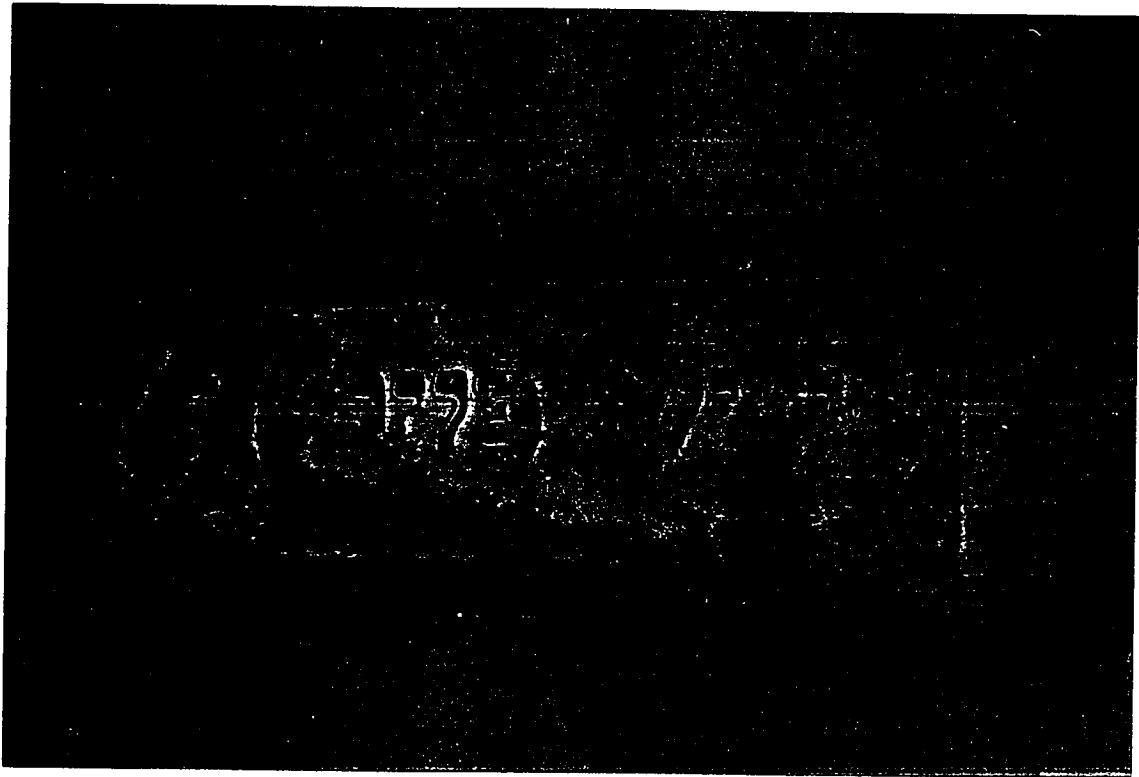
(Rafal recorded in the author's home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Absences (see photograph 20a): “Here is a shadow of a synagogue. It was demolished after the war. The Jews of Olkusz were all killed in 1942. Part of the town’s population murdered right in Olkusz and about five thousand taken to Auschwitz. Before 1942 they were put in a ghetto on the east side of the town. There was a red sandstone quarry there. The 16th century stone synagogue outlasted its Jewish community only to be demolished in the early 1950’s. Some bureaucrat decided it need not be there. For some forty odd years, the square on which the synagogue stood for four hundred years is empty. Nothing else stands here. Just garbage. You can still see the marks from the building’s foundations”.

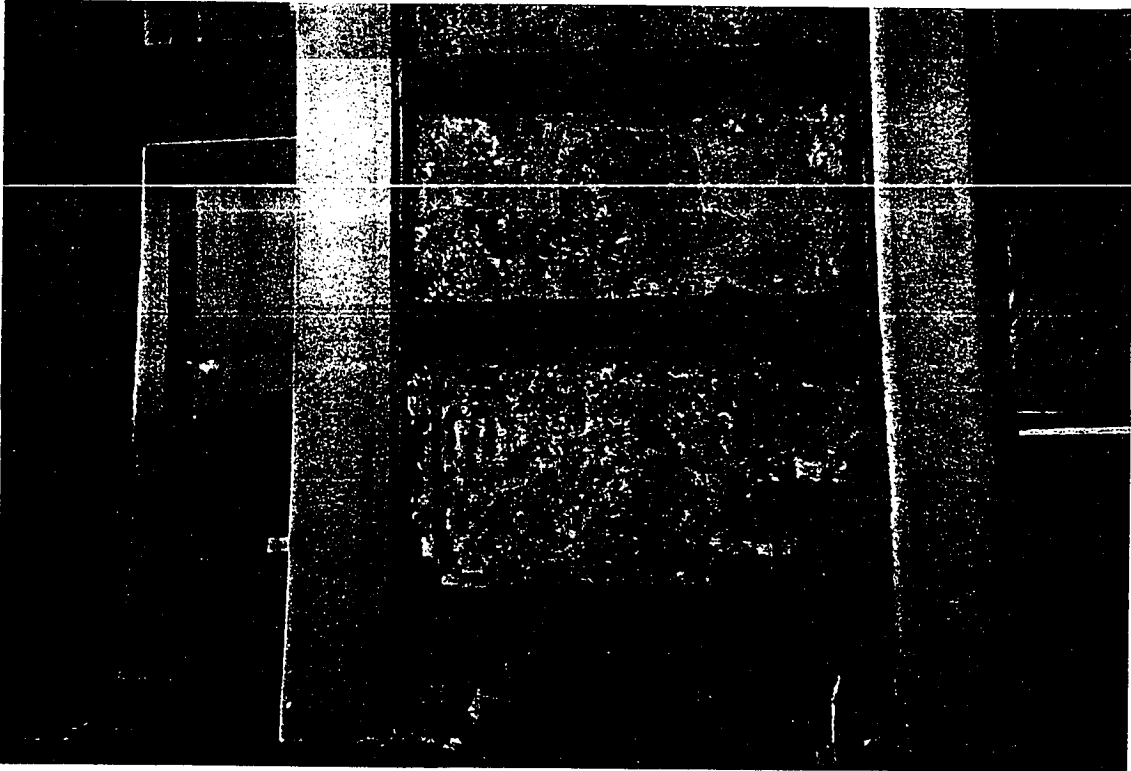
(Rafal recorded in the author’s home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Photographs 15a: **Symbols.** Taken by Jerzy,
one of the photo-survey participants.





Photograph 16a: **Signs**. Taken by Anna, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 17a: **Signs**. Taken by Jerzy, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 18a: **Displacements**. Photograph 19a & 20a: **Absences**. All taken by Rafal, one of the photo-survey participants.

PERSONAL LINKS to the QUARTER – This category incorporates places, people and traces. It provides individual stories of first encountering the quarter of Kazimierz and of familial connections with the place. Also it demonstrates that the quarter allows for one's links with it to be complex and layered with meaning. Not every participant in the photo-survey provided their personal links with the quarter.

Photograph 21a) “Here is a building of the “Wisla Cinema” on *Gazowa* Street. I went there with my wife to see a Clint Eastwood film in the late 1970's. Then the cinema became the theatre of Ewa Demarczyk. Now it houses some kind of a gas institution. Look at the top walls, the shape of the windows, the faint ornaments. It must have been some sort of a prayer house. For me however it will always be “Wisla Cinema”. It was frightening to walk to sometimes. The quarter of Kazimierz was not safe. There were people drinking in the cinema”.

(Rafal recorded in the author's home on December 22nd, 1999. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Photograph 22a) “This is *Isaac's* Synagogue. Its monumental architecture always impressed me. There are many beautiful buildings in the quarter of Kazimierz. I took this particular photo because my affair with the quarter began in this very spot. I came here for the first time to attend Jewish cutouts workshops. So I have a great sentiment for the place. Now I take my Yiddish classes here. There are beautiful polychromes inside; now that I have started writing in Yiddish I really can appreciate the artful writing in the polychromes. Before I just enjoyed them for aesthetic reasons”.

(Anna recorded in the author's home on February 4th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Photograph 23a) “Here is the *Tempel*. It is being renovated with much care. It really stands out now from the grey mass of Kazimierz's buildings. I recently attended a ceremony where a plaque was mounted on one of the buildings behind the *Tempel*, which housed a Jewish orphanage. It commemorated the contributions of Dr. Aleksandrowicz and his family, to whom I am related”.

(Ala recorded in her own home on March 1st, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)

Photograph 24a) “This is where I work. I was born in Kazimierz and I still remember when the Centre for Jewish Culture operated as a woodworking shop. My father’s friend worked there. At one point the building became too dangerous to enter. There are many such places in this area. Now everything is new. Sometimes when I walk around Kazimierz, I don’t recognize the place anymore. I was thinking this when I was taking the photos for you. Many of my friends have died at an early age, some were relocated to other areas of the city. I remember playing soccer by the Remuh, there was an open field there and in wintertime we would set up an ice-skating rink there. A few years ago, someone built a kosher restaurant on that field”.

(Arek recorded at the market on March 14th, 2000. Translated from Polish by the author.)



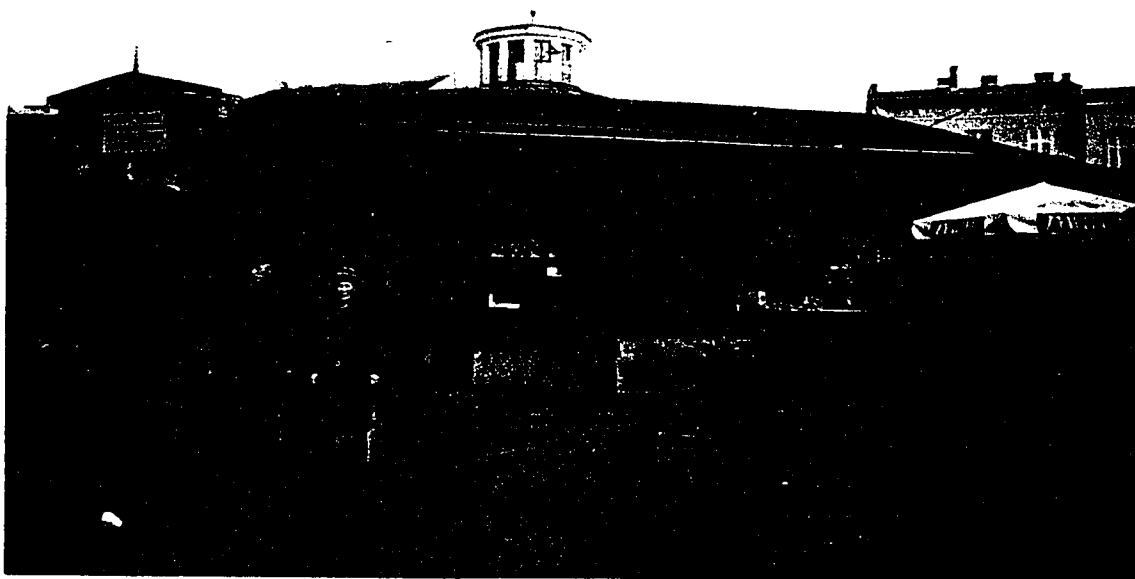
Photograph 21a: **Personal Links to the Quarter.** Taken by Rafal, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 22a: **Personal Links to the Quarter.** Taken by Anna, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 23a: **Personal Links to the Quarter.** Taken by Ala, one of the photo-survey participants.



Photograph 24a: **Personal Links to the Quarter.** Taken by Arek, one of the photo-survey participants.

Analysis

A commemorative structure emerges out of the data. The most general context being the historically specific; that which witnesses to the past in the broadest sense. The description of the **Abandoned place** serves this purpose. It reveals intricate details about the neglected nineteenth century inn on the corner of Weglowa and Krakowska Streets. Through this account the building is situated in the landscape of Kazimierz. Its Holy Ark with columns, pillars and drapes informs us of its Jewish character. The ownership issues troubling the building are as historically relevant as the intricate details on its walls. They inevitably bring the viewer back to the present however.

From the general historical context, which in some degree provides the backdrop for all the photos, we move to the interpretative aspect. Most of the narratives in the collection attempt to unravel some facet of the past. This process is pronounced more in some narratives than in others. The description of **Symbols** can be used to illustrate this point. There are two photos in this subgroup. The author specified for them to be displayed side by side. For him, an imprint of two hands on a boarded up window of a ruined building in Kazimierz brings to mind a similar symbol as can be seen on a *mazzevah* in the Jewish cemetery. The two symbols have nothing in common until the analysis occurs. One is a fairly recent imprint of two hands open for interpretation and the other is part of a prewar tombstone belonging to a *kohen*. One imprint is on a piece of plywood and the other constitutes a part of a monument built after the war out of the desecrated *mazzevahs*. They are linked by the author in their association to Kazimierz. Both of the imprints symbolize traces of one's existence as well as a place of the dead.

The photographed places, people and traces provide a multifaceted record of contemporary Kazimierz. In this very particular 'photo album', certain photographs reoccur⁹⁸ and some themes are reiterated by different authors. The experience of the quarter depicted in the photo-narratives varies from author to author. The same building often evokes different feelings, the same street and symbol can induce varied metaphors. The building on Kupa Street for example, is repeated in three photo accounts. I have placed it in the **Ruined Place** subgroup. For all three photographers this particular building epitomizes the state of dilapidation which in many ways is so characteristic of the quarter. The photo-narratives chosen is accompanied by an anecdote about one of the tenants who was living there one hundred years ago. The author of the photo-account thinks about this tenant named Ryfka and her troubles with her landlord. He always thinks of her when he walks by the ruin.

The last two categories I will discuss are the *People* and the *Personal Links to the Quarter*. They are historically situated and they produce meanings which are personally specific. In the process of memory construction it is ultimately up to the individual to project personal undertones from their own experiences onto the places, the people and the traces. This occurs in the **Prewar resident** subgroup when the photo of a commemorative inscription for Mordechai Gebirtig is narrated. The author of the photo is familiar with the "carpenter poet of Kazimierz" on several levels. She had attended an exhibit dedicated to him two years before and presently is learning Yiddish from his texts. She also felt it necessary to mention where he was killed. The author considered taking a photo of that particular spot.

⁹⁸ I did not include these due to space constraints. Old advertisements, Remuh complex, Szeroka and Kupa Streets, and Tempel are some of the images which reoccurred.

The last account of the above visual record differs completely from the rest. It establishes a personal link with the quarter of Kazimierz which has nothing to do with its Jewish character. The author was born in the quarter after the war. He now works in one of the stands at the marketplace. He mentions sites of Jewish material culture, however he does not perceive them as such. For him Remuh is remembered not because of its famous rabbi but for the field next door where he used to play as a child. This particular story demonstrates that the experiential and kinaesthetic dimensions of the relation between the quarter and those involved in its life can have a multitude of manifestations.

Conclusion

The photo album of Kazimierz constitutes not only a representation of the quarter or of the Jewish material heritage within it; “it is also a statement about time, a trace of the past that assures us of an enduring identity, a sense of continuity in the face of change” (Lowenthal, 1975: 9). According to John Berger (1997: 40), “to interpret a picture is to lend it a past and a future, to insert it, in other words, into a narrative”. The visual record collected by ten photographers fits into the contemporary narrative of Kazimierz. The quarter is transforming rapidly. In this climate, memories and reflections evoked by the material culture of the quarter are generated through an intertext of discourses. These discourses include the historical, the personal, and the political. All of these components can be detected in the descriptions of the photos as they shift between the past and the present. In this process the images figure largely as evidence, a clue necessary for the activity of meaning making to occur (Kuhn, 1996: 473).

I have examined here the numerous ways in which recollecting is triggered by photographs. Photographs constitute a definite part of the material culture of the quarter of Kazimierz. I have encountered them as most prized possessions in people's homes and in the street as posters advertising an art exhibit. I have taken countless photographs myself in order to remember, to record and to compare. I have taken many for purely aesthetic reasons. They were an integral part of my experience of the quarter. The visual-narrative record I provide in this chapter establishes that material culture is a key component in the remembering of Jews in Kazimierz. Next to the material sites and objects, photographs can also act as custodians of a whole range of memories. In addition, the visual narratives demonstrate that photographs can serve as a vehicle for establishing collective memory out of individual experience (Boerdam & Oosterbaan Martinius, 1980: 115). As they represent and mediate one's interaction with the past, photographic representations also help one to be more keenly aware of the present.

Conclusion

“Perhaps Kazimierz survived so that we could not completely forget what once was and is no more. Krakow’s Kazimierz is the best proof that the extraordinary achievements - material as well as spiritual – of the Jewish people on Polish soil are not a myth but a historical reality, proof that should speak to those who do not wish to recognize the presence of the Jews on Polish soil and to those who see Poland only as the land of the Jewish Holocaust. Once Kazimierz seemed to be a token of the Jewish absence. Now one can hear it said that Kazimierz is a place where a lot of money is being made taking advantage of (and abusing) the memory of the Jews murdered in Poland. There are also those here who think that it would be better if Kazimierz remained a district of ruins. Of course this is impossible. Kazimierz must live a contemporary life, but the past of the district imposes on the character of that life to some extent. This life should contain within it enough dignity not to offend those who visit here; otherwise it could be the final waste of the chance we have been granted by the persistence of the Jewish quarter in Krakow’s Kazimierz⁹⁹”.

This thesis investigates the role of material culture in remembering the Jews of Kazimierz. It posits the quarter of Kazimierz to be a site of memory in which different forms of commemoration occur. It also considers the intricate relationships between the landscape of the quarter, material culture and memory construction. It explores the ways in which materiality helps to forge links between past and present. According to Pierre Nora (1989:12) sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*) have become representative of our times since:

“there is no spontaneous memory, therefore we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally. The memory storage of a particular nation or community is limited to artificially created museums, monuments and memorials”.

⁹⁹ Source: H. Halkowski’s “Kazimierz Yesterday and Tomorrow” in S. Kapralski’s (ed.) *The Jews in Poland. Volume II*, (1999: 234).

Throughout my thesis I rely on Nora's notion of *lieux de memoire* to conceptualize the quarter of Kazimierz. As I have already stated, Kazimierz is a living district of Krakow. It is a site of memory which is neither a monument nor a museum. Kazimierz is a place where the memory of Polish Jews is maintained through various initiatives. Some of these initiatives of both Polish and foreign origin include: the Centre for Jewish Culture, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, the Museum of Jewish History and Culture and the annual Festival of Jewish Culture. In the last decade, Kazimierz has become a site of memory of the Polish Jews, "not only of their struggle and death (as in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Auschwitz) but of their everyday lives and religious festivals, of the values that guided their endeavours, their inner world and unique culture" (Halkowski, 1999: 232).

Remembering is an act of alteration because the invisible inscriptions which make up memory become visible only through new circumstances (de Certeau, 1984: 87). The influence of new circumstances is key in the transformation of the quarter of Kazimierz into a site of memory. Poland's recent confrontation with its Jewish past, its adjustment to the laws of the market economy and the still much-awaited advancement into the European Community, are all factors in the recent revitalization of the quarter. Kazimierz has within one decade changed from a neglected and desecrated district into a tourist attraction. The rapid changes spark much hope as well as many fears in its residents, visitors and custodians. Henryk Halkowski (1999:232), who in the fourth chapter of this thesis led the second part of the tour of the quarter, argues:

"Of course it is heartening that restoration of the synagogues of Kazimierz has begun after all these years, at last they will not be appalling ruins. The site of renovated buildings is heartening, as is the fact that Kazimierz is losing its reputation as an unsafe part of

town, and that more and more people are coming to spend time here. Not all the changes seem to be headed in the right direction. (...) Offensive, brazen kitsch—together with the market economy and commercialization—is squeezing into the former Jewish district among the historic synagogues and other buildings remaining from the old days. It is kitsch of two kinds: pseudomodern and pseudotraditional. Thus we can see for example, a metal, blue-painted, glass filled gate with lettering consisting of an incongruous mix of Polish, English and Hebrew, its form somewhat resembling that of the gate leading to the courtyard of the Remuh Synagogue next door but much larger, as if letting it be known that the owner of this restaurant is a person immeasurably more important than some Moses Isserles who lived a long time ago and wrote something or other. Such is the pseudomodern kitsch, and the pseudotraditional kitsch is no better at all. On the other side of the street we see crass white plaster lions, and between them glows something a little reminiscent of a Chanukah menorah (could it be that Chanukah lasts the whole year?), and ugly lettering stylized after who knows what, maybe Art Nouveau, maybe the Hebrew alphabet”.

During my time spent in Kazimierz I heard many foreign and Polish visitors articulate their misgivings about the future of the quarter. They were concerned about it possibly turning into a type of Disneyland-style theme park. Based on some of the less careful and even offensive efforts at reconstructing Jewish material heritage, examples of which are provided in the above quote, I share some of these misgivings. Kazimierz is a residential quarter in which the memory of its Jews is becoming commercialized in some ways. Amongst some genuine efforts at revitalizing Jewish memory in Kazimierz, one can also detect unfortunate by-products of the process. The following quote expresses the reservations some visitors may have about the quarter:

“Klezmer music, played by a five-member band dressed in black, fills the air of a small café on Szeroka street. There are framed pictures of rabbis on the walls, Shabbat candles on every table, a menorah on the piano. There isn’t an empty seat in the house. But no one in the Ariel coffeeshouse is Jewish, besides a visiting reporter and his pair of escorts. Ariel’s fare of Jewish-style cuisine draws a nightly crowd of Polish yuppies. They come to hear Kuzmir, a 2 year-old Klezmer band, play Jewish melodies in the dimly lit rooms that are divided by low slung stone arches, and they order

from a menu that offers “Carp-Jewish style” and vegetarian “Sabbath soup” and “Purim cake” and “Yankel the Innkeeper of Budyczow’s Soup”. The café is located on the edge of a sunny tree-lined square in the heart of Kazimierz, Krakow’s former Jewish ghetto, and its name is displayed out front in large Hebrew letters. Szeroka in fact is awash with Yiddishkeit....

Along Szeroka are pasted posters announcing upcoming Jewish concerts and this summer’s Sixth Annual Jewish Culture Festival, which draws thousands of Poles to a weeks of art exhibitions, calligraphy workshops and klezmer performances. In Krakow, which served as Poland’s capital for hundreds of years and still ranks as the country’s avant-garde cultural centre, Kazimierz is a Jewish Disneyland. Or is it Poland’s movie set, with Poles playing the role of Jews? All the businesses on Szeroka are owned by non-Jews - Catholic Poles. Nearly all the customers, clapping and singing sincerely off key with the klezmer music are Poles. And the musicians are gentiles, too. Poland which for decades after World War II earned a reputation as a country with anti-Semitism without Jews, is fast becoming a place of philo-Semitism *sans* Jews¹⁰⁰.

Although I have been exposed to similar impressions of the quarter throughout my fieldwork, my own experience allows me to conclude that Kazimierz is not a Jewish theme park. I can understand how others arrive at this view because “what stands out most in Kazimierz is devoid of good taste” (Halkowski, 1999:232). Furthermore it must be made clear that those who are involved in the process of the Jewish revival in Kazimierz walk a very thin line. Their activities can possibly encourage a potential essentialization of the Jewish identity. This is quite dangerous as it can produce meanings not originally intended by those involved in the processes of memory reconstruction. Hence, the problematic of essentialization of the Jewish identity in Kazimierz is extremely complex and must be addressed since in the most recent past essentialization of Jewish identity resulted in the Holocaust.

¹⁰⁰ Source: Steve Lipman’s “Notes from a New Poland” in *the Jewish Week* (New York) September 20th 1996.

There are many layers to this quarter however. Understandably, visitors who come in for a day or two lack the time to learn about the less flashy attempts at revitalizing Kazimierz and commemorating its former inhabitants. Some of these efforts include: serious investments into renovating the quarter by the World Monument Fund and Jewish Heritage Council, establishing links with former residents and other Krakow Jews as well as events such as the lectures, exhibits and concerts at the Centre for Jewish Culture (to most of which there are no admission fees).

The Festival of Jewish Culture, which celebrated its 12th edition this year, represents yet another primarily Polish sponsored attempt at commemorating the Jewish civilization of Poland in Kazimierz. I do not explore the Festival in any great detail in this thesis mostly because I was not present in the quarter when it occurred. While I was doing my fieldwork I was however able to interview the Festival organizer, Janusz Makuch, who from the very beginning of the Festival of Jewish Culture in Kazimierz made a point of show-casing mostly Jewish artists. This was done, he told me, in order to avoid the absurdity of a Jewish Disneyland in which, Polish musicians dressed a la Jews entertain the audience with their best version of Klezmer music. Hence, thanks to Makuch's great efforts and wonderful contacts, the Festival in Kazimierz has hosted renowned Jewish musicians from many different countries, some of which include: The Klezmatiks, Dave Krakauer, The Andy Statman Quarter, Benzion Miller, Brave Old World, Uri Caine, The Ben Baruch Choir and Boris Jankielewicz Finkelstein. According to Janusz Makuch:

“The festival is a celebration of life and a commemoration of the dead. Every year I rejoice in the presence of seven to eight thousand people on Szeroka Street during the final concert (which is free and which takes place at the end of the festival- added by the

author) and also in the presence of the Jewish musicians who decided to come to Poland- the biggest Jewish cemetery, with their art and in this way to celebrate the life of the people who perished here. I cannot imagine a better way to express pain than through the joy of life. How can one express silence better than by filling it with voices? How can we experience memory of what has passed without calling out that world.

It is really important for me that a fragment of that life returns here even if it is just for seven or eight days during the festival in all of its exaggeration and intensity. Because of its fullness, beauty and heightened presence we can actually sense the death, the hollowness and the horrific silence. The festival strives to be a celebration of life, as it pays homage to the memory of the life that is here no more. In a country like Poland, a festival was organized by a group of people who were fascinated by Jewish culture but which was not part of their world in any direct sense. It had to be done by Jews. I think that the mystery of this festival is that it is really Jewish. Also the medium that the artists use, the language of music mostly, plays an important role. It is clear and has a universal appeal. The Festival is a form of meditation, like saying the Kaddish. There is no mention of the dead, but which is in their name. I am aware that some people see our festival as a profane celebration on the graves of the dead. I wish they could see it as a commemoration of the centuries of Jewish life in Poland". (Janusz Makuch recorded in the office of the Festival on March 6th, 2000. Translated by the author).

My six-month experience in the quarter convinced me that the materiality of Kazimierz is key in the reconstruction of memories of Jewish Poland. The urban complex of the quarter along with all of its synagogues, *yeshivas* and *mikvehs*, which slowly have been returned to the local Jewish Community serve as evidence that it was once a district of Jewish learning and thought. In contemporary Kazimierz different modes of remembering clash and coexist. According to Michel de Certeau (1984:86) "like those birds that lay their eggs in only other species' nests, memory produces in a place that does not belong to it". During my fieldwork in Kazimierz I found that memory can in fact be an elusive and unprompted entity which needs to be connected to places and things.

In the fifth chapter of this thesis I explore the Agency of Objects and the Souls of Things. According to my observations many of the objects sold in the antique shops of Kazimierz are re-evaluated. They are often retrieved from the heaps of forgotten and neglected items ready to be thrown out or recycled. This proves that their commodity status varies; it is not built into them (Appadurai 1986, Kopytoff 1986, Dant 1999). Moreover, based on my observations of the trade in Judaica, it seems that the history and politics of an object's association with humans largely determines its status (Appadurai 1986, Kopytoff 1986, Dant 1999). Hence, the artefacts in the antique shops of Kazimierz are more often than not linked with the quarter's former inhabitants, even when in actuality they may not be theirs. Almost sixty years after the Holocaust, many visitors still make associations between objects in Kazimierz and the quarter's former Jewish residents.

The concept of 'inalienable wealth' represents objects which are exchanged without ever losing their attachment to the lineage that originally owned them (Weiner 1994). I have found that in the context of Kazimierz anything presumed to be previously owned by Jews qualifies as 'inalienable wealth'. "From the ethnographic perspective however, the inalienable can be said to exist only as much as a given cultural tradition constructs relationships of material culture in that way" (Miller, 2001: 95). This, in relation to the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz is crucial. As the generation of Holocaust survivors passes on, objects which are or appear to originate prior to the Holocaust take over the role of witnesses. Their testimonies in most cases are yet to be constructed. According to Miller, "inalienability comes mainly through the consumption of commodities and the power to extract items from the market and make them social and

personal. This is because it is the person who lies at the core of an local conceptualization of the inalienable” (2001: 195).

The Judaica trade phenomenon in Kazimierz plays a role in the constructing of the quarter into a site of memory. Perhaps the existence and active role of such enterprises as the antique shops, and their displayed objects diversifies Pierre Nora’s conceptualization of *lieux de memoire*. According to Nora (1989:12), spontaneous memory ceased to exist. Perhaps the example of the Judaica trade in the quarter of Kazimierz can contribute to a broader understanding of the interplay between material sites and memory, in accordance with which memory is seen as an anti-museum (de Certeau 1984). In this context, memory is also unstructured by physical boundaries, cluttered with various viewpoints and most of all spontaneous. Memory according to the conception of Michel de Certeau (1984: 87) “is played by circumstances, just as piano is played by a musician and music emerges from it when its keys are touched by the hands. Memory is a sense of the other”.

In my search for memory as the sense of the other I collected a narrated visual record of contemporary Kazimierz. In this record, ten participants expressed through photo-narratives, what the quarter of Kazimierz constitutes for them. I present a selection of this record along with a discussion in the sixth chapter of this thesis. The narratives along with the photos are historically situated and they construct meanings which are personally significant. Emphasis is placed on the historical, the political and the individual aspects of remembering the quarter. Each person records and communicates their memories differently. The categories of photographed people, traces and places of Kazimierz provide a multilayered document of contemporary Kazimierz. They also serve

as evidence of the multiple manifestations of remembering the Jews of Kazimierz and Poland.

The sixth and last ethnographic chapter of this thesis takes the reader on yet another tour of the quarter. I think that this is quite appropriate. First because it is the most common way that Kazimierz is actually experienced by many visitors. Also it provides an alternative to the tour presented in the beginning of this thesis. The tour in the Photo Album of the Quarter of Kazimierz chapter allows the reader to revisit certain places and view them on photographs. It also allows one to realize that certain sites, people and traces bring about diverse memories and are remembered in a multitude of ways, none of which is incorrect.

This thesis points to the need for further research. The impact of the Festival of Jewish Culture in Kazimierz has not been investigated in any detail. It could be interesting to look at it from the perspective of a commemorative performance. In this context the revival of Klezmer music worldwide and particularly in Kazimierz and its relation to the recent Jewish revival in Poland could perhaps provide an interesting field of study. The commercialization of the Jewish past in Kazimierz is another area of study which deserves more attention. Especially that the marketing of the Jewish past includes the opportunity to consume tragedy (Erica Lehrer by personal communication). As Jewish tourists participate in the 'Retracing of the **Schindler's List** Tour', eat 'Jewish-style fish' and buy wood-carved Jewish dolls in traditional Hasidic garb, they must have use for the stereotypical image of their past and culture (Lehrer, 1996: 2). "The renegotiation of identity in post-communist Poland may be entangled with parallel psychological needs of Jewish tourists. Considering areas of symbiosis between Jewish

and Polish memory could perhaps allow one to explore beyond the traditional themes of conflict (1996: 2).

Finally, I think that it would be interesting to explore the quarter of Kazimierz further in a few years, amidst the occurring transformations inside the quarter as well as outside. As Poland and its society sheds more of the communist baggage which prevented any problematic recollection of the past, joins the European Union and makes progress in the ongoing Polish-Jewish dialogue, it would be important to ask whose memory does the presence of such site as Kazimierz serve. In the words of Henryk Halkowski (1999: 231), one of Kazimierz's custodians:

“Urban planners and architects are drawing new lines, schemes, general and detailed plans for the revitalization, the reconstruction of Kazimierz. It seems very important to me to consider first what kind of future we want to see for Kazimierz. For what purpose and for whom should certain changes be made in the area of the former Jewish quarter? For Jews or for Poles? If for Jews, which ones? For the memory of the Jews who lived here once? For the tiny handful of Jews still living in Kazimierz? For the small group of Jews remaining in Poland? For the Jewish tourists from different countries who visit Poland today? And if for the Poles, which ones? For those who live in the quarter today (in an attempt to make them feel somehow connected to the past of this district)? For all of Krakow's citizens? For tourists from different parts of Poland, who could learn something about these Jews, who not so long made up to 25-50 percent of the majority of Polish towns and who now seem more remote than the Babylonians or Phoenicians?”

Appendix

A) MATERIAL CULTURE SURVEY-Administered in 9 antiquarian shops of the quarter in February 2000. I provide the results in *italics*, whenever applicable.

1. What kinds of things are bought/sold/ or deposited for a commission sale?

- a) Furniture, carpets, rugs
- b) Porcelain, ceramics, crystals
- c) Fabrics, draperies
- d) Postcards, maps, drawings, documents
- e) Photographs, albums, journals-diaries
- f) Boxes, coffers
- g) Elements of wardrobe
- h) Others:.....

(The answers to this question did not tell me much. From the results I noticed that everything and anything is bought, sold and traded. This was a beginning question, more or less. When I was administering the survey, I discovered that many people found the above categories too rigid.)

2. Where do most of the purchased objects come from?

- a) Flea markets, like Wroclaw, name others *1 OUT OF 9*
- b) From deposits for a commission sale *4 OUT OF 9*
- c) From regular clients *1 OUT OF 9*
- d) From accidental clients *1 OUT OF 9*
- e) They are new things *2 OUT OF 9*

3. Who are usually the sellers?

- a) Foreigners, specify from where, if at all possible
- b) Residents of Krakow
- c) From elsewhere in Poland

(HERE 9 OUT OF 9 CHOSE RESIDENTS OF KRAKOW.)

4. Who are usually the buyers?

- a) Foreigners, specify form where *2 OUT OF 9*
- b) Krakow residents *4 OUT OF 9*
- c) Rest of Poland *2 OUT OF 9*

(Foreign countries listed: USA, Israel, Germany, France, GB, Holland, Scandinavia.)

5. Do you specialize in any particular historical period, theme, or item?

- a) Furniture, what kind?
- b) Painting, what kind?
- c) Crafts and artisanry, what kind?
- d) Objects of every day use, what kind?
- e) Elements of wardrobe, what kind?
- f) Judaica, what kind?

(I used this question as a way of introducing the topic of Judaica. When I was formulating this survey I wanted for some things to come across as ambiguous as they possibly could. I had been forewarned that anything dealing with Jews or Judaica is a conflictual and therefore would be avoided.)

6. Do you sell/trade/buy Judaica? (9 OUT OF 9 ANSWERED 'YES')

7. If yes, what items can be classified as Judaica?

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS - ALL KINDS OF VARIATIONS ON THE THEME:

- Paintings, silverware, sculpture, ceramics
- Menorahs, Chanukah lamps, and other sacral objects, only pre-1945
- Music, books, crafts
- Paintings done by Jewish artists, jewels and objects of every day use
- Contemporary copies of menorahs
- Documents, postcards, books, photographs, Chanukah lamps, menorahs, objects of every day use
- Sacral objects, pre-1945 and painting by Jewish artists-contemporary mostly

8. Have you noticed that there is an increased need/demand for Judaica?

(8 OUT OF 9 ANSWERED 'YES')

9. What do you think is the cause of this need?

- a) The quarter, the locality of the shop in Kazimierz 5 OUT OF 9
- b) Greater number of tourists looking for souvenirs from Poland 1 OUT OF 9
- c) Greater number of people looking for their roots 1 OUT OF 9

OTHER ANSWERS:

"It is simply a trend. It does not matter". "I find all three categories pertinent"

10. Where do the purchases end up?

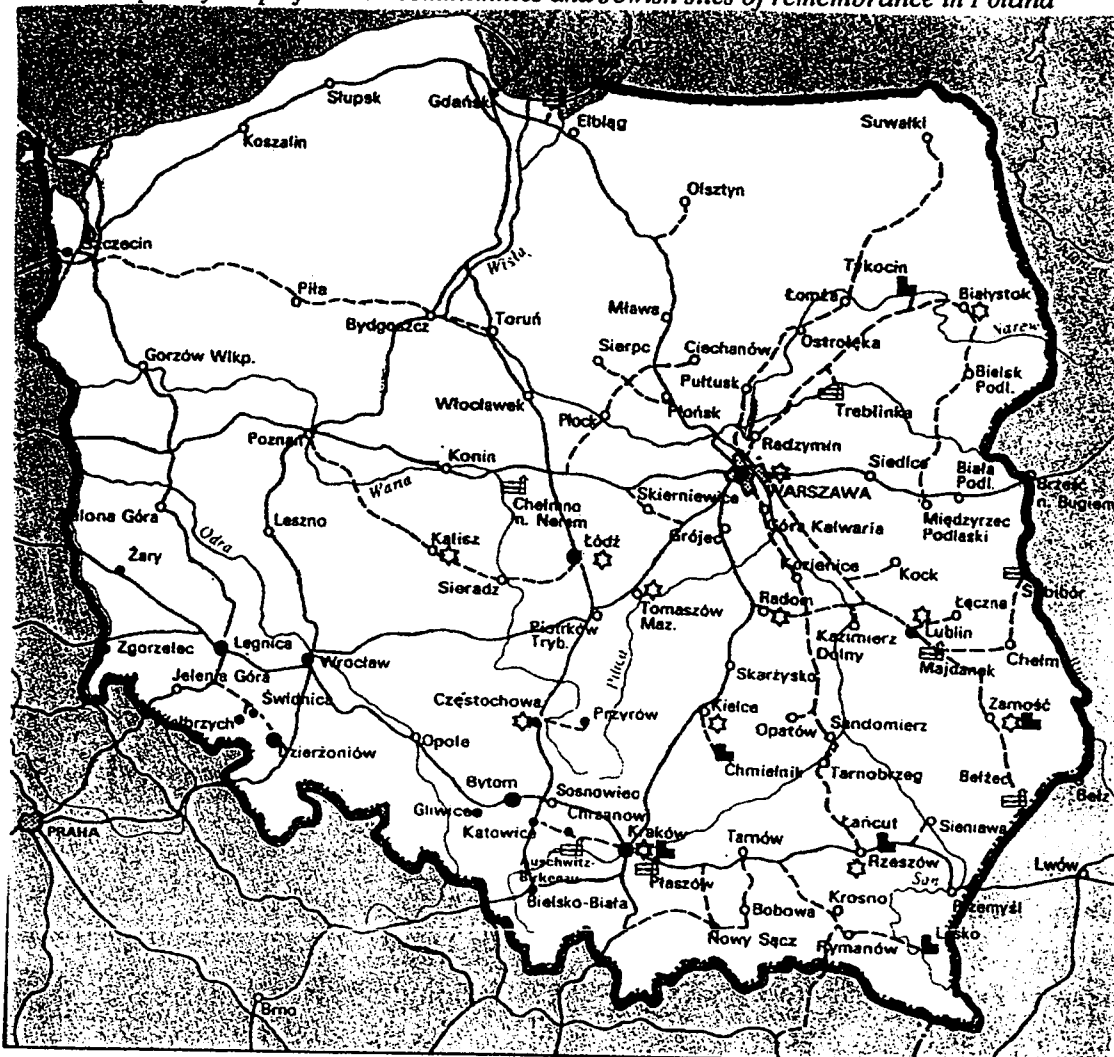
- a) Museums, exhibits within Poland
- b) Private collections and homes in Poland 5 OUT OF 9
- c) Antique bazaars in Poland
- d) They leave Poland 4 OUT OF 9

B) QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. When and how did you encounter the quarter of Kazimierz for the first time? Was it through historical accounts, literature, or by visiting? What did you think then? Has your perception changed over time?
2. Do you think that the atmosphere of this particular place, unique due to its urban complex, its architecture, and synagogues encourages remembering about the Polish Jews? What kind of remembering is it and for whom?
3. There are hardly any monuments or memorial tablets here commemorating its 65 000 inhabitants, (probably none before 1989?) Do you think that they are necessary?
4. At one point Kazimierz became quite popular (for tourists, antiquarians, young artists), when would you say this happened approximately, Do you think that it is just another trend or is there more to it?
5. Do you visit any of the antique shops here? Which ones in particular? Do you ever go to the antique bazaar in front of the market place on Sundays?
6. What do you think about the things that are sold there? Where do they come from?
7. Have you ever attended an organized tour of Kazimierz? Have your children visited the quarter on a school excursion? Do you come here during the Festival in July?
8. Do you go to Podgorze and Plaszow? Do you think that many residents of Krakow are aware of, or care to know more about what happened in these places during the war? Should they be made more visible on tourist maps?
9. Have you ever been to Auschwitz-Birkenau?

C) MAPS

1. Contemporary Map of Jewish communities and Jewish sites of remembrance in Poland¹⁰¹



- Sites of major monuments of Jewish culture
- ☆ Sites of major Ghettos during the German occupation
- ▤ Sites of German death and concentration camps

Contemporary Jewish communities

- synagogues
- prayer houses

¹⁰¹ Source: L. Weinbaum's *Polish Jews: A Postscript to the Final Chapter?*, (1998:42).

2. Post-war Poland¹⁰²



¹⁰² Source: A. Polonsky's *Studies from Polin: From Shtetl to Socialism*, (1993: 560).

3. The German Occupation 1939-1945¹⁰³



¹⁰³ A. Polonsky's *Studies from Polin: From Shtetl to Socialism*, (1993: 559).

Bibliography

Antze Paul and Michael Lambek

1996 *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*
New York: Routledge.

Appadurai Arjun (ed.)

1986 *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*
Cambridge University Press.

Balaban Majer

1991[1931] *Historia Żydów w Krakowie i Na Kazimierzu 1304-1868*
Krakow: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza.

Balaban Majer

1990[1935] *Przewodnik po Żydowskich Zabytkach Krakowa*
Krakow: Krajowa Agencja Wdawnicza.

Barthes Roland

1982 *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*
New York: Noonday Press

Bartov Omer

1993 "Intellectuals on Auschwitz: Memory, History And Truth"
History and Memory: Studies in Representation of the Past 5(1): 87-129.

Baudrillard Jean

1996 *The System of Objects*
London: Verso.

Behar Ruth

1996 *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks your Heart*
Boston: Beacon Press.

Berger John

1997 "Ways of Remembering"
in *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photograph.*
Jessica Evans (ed.), London: Rivers Oram Press.

Bieberstein A.

1985 *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*
Krakow: WL.

- Blatman Daniel
 1997 "Toward a New Jewish and Polish Memory"
East European Jewish Affairs 27(1):57-69.
- Boerdam Japp and Warna Oosterbaan Martinius
 1980 "Family Photographs: a Sociological Approach"
Netherlands Journal of Sociology 16:95-119.
- (de) Certeau Michel
 1984 *The Practice of Everyday Life*
 Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connerton Paul
 1989 *How Societies Remember*
 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dant Tim
 1999 *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles*
 Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Dawidowicz Lucy S.
 1981 *The Holocaust and the Historians*
 Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Davis Natalie Zemon and Randolph Starn
 1989 "Memory and Counter--Memory" Representations 26: 1-7.
- Duda Eugeniusz
 1991 *Krakowskie Judaica*
 Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PTTK "Kraj".
- Esbenshade Richard S.
 1995 "Remembering to Forget: Memory, History and Identity in
 Postwar East-Central Europe" Representations 49:72-95.
- Friedlander Saul
 1993 *Memory, History and the Extermination of Jews of Europe*
 Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis.
- Friesel Evyatar
 1994 "The Holocaust as a Factor in Contemporary Jewish Consciousness"
 in *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*. Jonathan Webber (ed.),
 Washington and London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
- Gedi Noa and Yigal Elam
 1996 "Collective Memory – What is it?" History and Memory 8(1): 30-50.

- Gebert Konstanty
 1994 "The Dialectics of Memory in Poland"
 in *The Art of Memory*. James E. Young (ed.),
 Munich, Germany: Prestel-Verlag.
- Gruber Ruth Ellen
 1999 *Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to East-Central Europe*
 Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Halbwachs Maurice
 1980 *The Collective Memory*
 New York: Harper & Row.
- Halkowski Henryk
 1998 *The Legends from the Jewish Town in Kazimierz near Krakow*
 Krakow: Mercury.
- Hartman Geoffrey H
 1995 "Memory's Touchstones"
Tikkun: Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture and Society 10(6): 54-56.
- Hirsch Marianne
 1997 *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*
 Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Hundert Gershon David (ed.)
 1997 *Polin (10): Jews in Early Modern Poland*.
 London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
- Huyssen Andreas
 1994 "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age"
 in *The Art of Memory*. James E. Young (ed.), Munich, Germany: Prestel-Verlag.
- Irwin-Zarecka Iwona
 1989 *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland*
 New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books.
- Irwin-Zarecka Iwona
 1994 *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory*
 New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books.
- Kane Webb
 2001 "Money is No Object: Materiality, Desire and Modernity
 in an Indonesian Society" in *The Empire of Things.
 Regimes of Value and Material Culture*. Fred R. Myers (ed.),
 School of American Research Press: Santa Fe.

- Kapralski Slawomir (ed.)
 1999 *The Jews in Poland: Volume II.*
 Krakow: The Judaica Foundation.
- Karp Ivan and Steven D. Lavine (eds.)
 1991 *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*
 Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Karp Ivan, Christine Muller Kreamer and Steven D. Lavine (eds.)
 1992 *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*
 Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kirmayer Lawrence J.
 1996 "Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative and Dissociation"
 in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*
 Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds.),
 New York: Routledge.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett Barbara
 1998 *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museum and Heritage*
 Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kugelmass Jack
 1992 "The Rites of the Tribe: American Jewish Tourism in Poland"
 in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture.*
 Ivan Karp, Lavine and Muller-Kreamer (eds.),
 Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kugelmass Jack
 1993 "The Imaging of Self and Other: Photography Books on Hasidim"
Visual Anthropology 6: 303-322.
- Kugelmass Jack
 1994 "Why We Go to Poland – Holocaust Tourism as Secular Ritual"
 in *The Art of Memory.* James E. Young (ed.),
 Munich, Germany: Prestel-Verlag.
- Kugelmass Jack
 1995 "Bloody Memories: Encountering the Past in Contemporary Poland"
Cultural Anthropology 10(3): 279-301.
- Kuhn Annette
 1996 "Remembrance"
 in *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850s to the Present.*
 Liz Heron and Val Williams (eds.), Durham: Duke University Press.

- LaCapra Dominick
 1998 *History and Memory after Auschwitz*
 Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Larson Heidi J.
 1987 "Photography That Listens"
Visual Anthropology 1(4): 415-432.
- Lehrer Erica
 1996 "The Motives of Memory: Commercializing the Jewish Past in Poland"
Journal of the International Institute
- Linenthal Edward T.
 1995 *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to create America's Holocaust Museum*
 New York: Viking Penguin.
- Loeb Lawrence D.
 1977 "Creating Antiques for Fun and Profit: Encounters between
 Iranian Jewish Merchants and Touring Coreligionists"
 in *Hosts & Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*.
 Valene L. Smith (ed.), University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lowenthal David
 1975 "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory"
Geographical Review 65(1):1-36.
- Markowski Stanislaw
 1999 *Krakowski Kazimierz: Dzielnicza Zydowska*
 Krakow: Wydawnictwo AA.
- Miller Daniel (ed.)
 1995 "Consumption and Commodities"
Annual Review of Anthropology 24:141-161.
- Miller Daniel (ed.)
 1998 *Material cultures: Why some things matter?*
 University College London Press.
- Miller Daniel
 2001 "Alienable Gifts and Inalienable Commodities"
 in *The Empire of Things. Regimes of Value and Material Culture*
 Fred R. Myers (ed.), School of American Research Press: Santa Fe
- Myers Fred R. (ed.)
 2001 *The Empire of Things. Regimes of Value and Material Culture*
 School of American Research Press: Santa Fe.

Newbury Darren

1997 "Photography and the Visualization of Working Class Lives in Britain"
Visual Anthropology Review 15(1): 21-44.

Nora Pierre

1989 "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire"
Representations 26: 7-26.

O'Neil Robin

1998 "Belzec-the 'Forgotten' Death Camp"
East European Jewish Affairs 28(2): 49-62.

Pogonowski Iwo Cyprian

1987 *Poland: A Historical Atlas*.
New York: Hippocrene Books Inc.

Polonsky Antony (ed.)

1993 *Studies from Polin: From Shtetl to Socialism*.
London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Rapport Nigel

2000 "The narrative as fieldwork technique. Processual ethnography
for a world in motion" in *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic
Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. Vered Amit (ed.),
London, New York: Routledge.

Riggins Stephen H.

1994 *The Socialness of Things: Essays on the Socio-Semiotics of Objects*
Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Rosenson Claire Ann

1997 *Jewish Identity Construction in Contemporary Poland:
Influences and Alternatives in Ethnic Revival*
Ph. D. dissertation: University of Michigan,
University Microfilms International: Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Rudnicki Szymon

1993 "From Numerus Clausus to Numerus Nullus"
in *Studies from Polin: From Shtetl to Socialism*.
Antony Polonsky (ed.), London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Scharf Rafael F.

1999 *Poland, What Have I to Do with Thee... Essays without Prejudice*.
Krakow: The Judaica Foundation.

- Steinlauf Michael C.
1997 *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*
Syracuse University Press.
- Sontag Susan
1990 *On Photography*
Anchor Press.
- Tencer Golda (ed.)
1998 *And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews*
Shalom Foundation.
- Thomas Nicholas
1991 *Entangled Objects: Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific*
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Vishnac Roman
1983 *A Vanished World*
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Weinbaum Laurence
1998 *Polish Jews: A Postscript to the "Final Chapter"?*
Jerusalem: Institute of the World Jewish Congress.
- Wojak Slawomir (ed.)
1987 *Krakow: A Journey in the Past: Kazimierz.*
Warszawa-Krakow: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Wood Nancy
1994 "Memory's Remains: Les lieux de memoire"
History and Memory 6(1): 94-149.
- Young James E.
1993 *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*
New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Young James E. (ed.)
1994 *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*
Munich, Germany: Prestel-Verlag.
- Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Ltd.
1997 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
Cd-Rom Edition version 1.0
Keter Publishing House Ltd.