

Georgiana Tudor

## Diasporic Voices in *The Messiah of Stockholm* by Cynthia Ozick

**Abstract:** This study is analysing the condition of the stranger, characterizing the protagonist of the novel *The Messiah of Stockholm* by Cynthia Ozick, in relation to Jacques Derrida's study *Of Hospitality*, his complex relationship of care with Mrs Eklund as well as the changing of the reader's position regarding the access to the inner life of Lars Andemining. There will be a highlight on the mixture of different cultural voices, on the condition of the immigrant, and, last but not least, on a relationship of care that is not fully sincere, even though it succeeds. Furthermore, we would argue that the novel accomplishes the function of *seductively sabotaging* the readers into the complexity of human relationships in diaspora, through different voices.

**Keywords:** Cynthia Ozick; *The Messiah of Stockholm*; Diasporic Voice; Aesthetics of Care; Hospitality; Seductively Sabotage.

### GEORGIANA TUDOR

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
georgianatudor.art@yahoo.com

DOI: 10.24193/cechinox.2023.45.13

Cynthia Ozick's novel has longed been discussed in relation to problems of identity and emigration, but a quick observation could be made by reading the book: it is full of dialogue. This can be traced even in her open appetite towards Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, namely, towards theatre and voice as a literary technique. The diversity of diasporic voices in the novel has the general feature that the vulnerability of the immigrants is hidden in the new society to the point that even between them, they hide their true past and identity. In this context, the protagonist Lars Andemining fabricates an entirely fictional identity. In order to do this, he learns a new language, he gathers cultural information about his imaginary identity until he becomes delusional about reality. He feels the urgency to talk about his fictional identity so that he can believe in it but has only one person whom he can trust, another immigrant. Between forgery and truth about the inner self, the vulnerability of the immigrant's problematization turns into a complex labyrinth of voices that have even renounced to hide their roots and trauma in order to adapt or, straightforwardly, to survive in the new society. From the making up of a name out of the dictionary and the

invention of a literary genealogy to false identity papers and the formidable ease of change, the novel is written with a special attention to faces, to accent and to resemblance as a unique form of establishing a genealogy when: "Your mother's a cloud, your father's a fog"<sup>1</sup>. To that end, the community of diaspora does not form on the ground of a shared culture or language, but on a shared lie about themselves.

There is a huge creative similarity between Jaques Derrida's and Cynthia Ozick's thinking. His complex method of presenting an issue without taking a position is similar to the problematization of traumatic diaspora in the novel. Moreover, Derrida's essay *Of Hospitality* can shed interesting light on the condition of the foreigner in relation with the characters of Ozick's novel.

We could argue that *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987) is still a relevant novel nowadays. It "can *seductively sabotage* our attachments to dominant— comfortable and reductive— narratives about the past"<sup>2</sup> as listening to the diasporic voices in novel is far from being comfortable either from the point of view of the country of settlement or of the diasporic one.

First of all, to talk about immigration is to talk about borders. Different countries have different cultures. To differentiate means putting borders between distinct objects in order to identify and classify them. If countries are circled by physical borders as a convention of territoriality, cultures present a set of fluctuant characteristics that are more or less strict, depending on the level of communal traditionality. Actually, characteristics generated by culture represent borders which create the spoken diversity of religion, politics,

understanding, belief, way of life, greeting, showing respect to others, gastronomy and so on...

Physical borders are, to a certain extent, easy to keep: countries use war in order to move the border's line five meters east or west. On the contrary, to control the abstract but visible borders of cultures seems to be like pushing water uphill with a rake. Cultures represent natural complex baffling structures which have their own way of ever-changing life and of interfering with other cultures. In most cases, cultural phenomena can be provoked, cared after, but cannot be fully controlled, to say nothing of the unexpected primitive way in which, sometimes, such processes appear. More than that, every culture is a mix of various microcultures or micro-communities along with their foreign adopted characteristics, resulting in a hybridization of cultural voices<sup>3</sup>.

That is why, when it comes to the cultural phenomenon of intensive immigration, it doesn't really matter what perspective one is looking through. Mass immigration has brought a new type of challenge both for countries eager to welcome cheap labour force and for immigrants in search of better life conditions. Travelling and crossing borders has been enhanced by technology, which naturally facilitates this process.

An immigrant is the representative of a culture which enters a new culture, carrying his/ her own cultural baggage with diverse levels of strictness. From a geometrical point of view, we have a Square I (Immigrant and his culture) and a Square B (representatives and their dominant culture of the country that received the immigrant). Now comes the interesting part of

our geometric problem. Square I is made of a multitude of little dynamic squares which, in the most fortunate case, you can call a moving cube. In general, it is a multifaceted multi-angled geometric form which can be assimilated with a dynamic polyhedron<sup>4</sup>. Next, our dynamic polyhedron I has to move through a multitude of little polyhedrons B in the huge polyhedron B. Some may disagree with the tendency to geometrize, but I reckon a schema of a dynamic complexity is useful for this argumentation as it could provide an insightful way of understanding the complex relationships between the voices engaged in the process of immigration.

Regardless of anyone's efforts, the natural process is that our polyhedrons will hit each other until they reach to form a new huge polyhedron, which is a natural culture. But B is afraid of mixing with I and I doesn't want to dissolve into B, they have their own inertia of being and till forming a new more or less indistinctive culture, hitting borders is natural. Multiculturalism and "unity in diversity" are valid as long as both I and B are willing to compromise, to communicate, to engage in reciprocal relationships, to give voice to one another. This attenuates the shock wave created by the hitting borders. You cannot take square I and put it in square B and expect it to fit in perfectly as in a puzzle. Wanted or not, intensive immigration transforms cultures, which is a perfectly natural process, as are the people who live within two or more cultures finding their voice in the tension between them.

Cynthia Ozick's characters have often been thought to fit in only one side of the line of the tension "as forces in the culture wars"<sup>5</sup>, but Miriam Sivan has demonstrated

that "Her characters often struggle not with not belonging to either the Old World or the New, but with belonging too well to both. They do not make clean cuts between thought systems and live in the grey zone of overlap. Full of uncertainty and unease, this liminal space is not always a comfortable place to inhabit."<sup>6</sup> Lars Andemining, the protagonist of *The Messiah of Stockholm*, passes from a state of almost vegetation or social absence to one of extremely powerful distress as he begins to search for proofs of his imaginary identity, thus starting to deconstruct his illusion with the apparently, actual, but, interested good care of Ms Eklund. However, "Ozick's characters struggle, but not with choosing one set of intellectual and philosophical constructs over another. They struggle to find a comfortable place where they can live with both (or more) worlds. There is give here, there is take, there is loss, but there is also great gain."<sup>7</sup>

To clarify, Lars Andemining is a journalist, a literary reviewer on the Monday editions of the newspaper *Morgontörn*. A first instance of communication and tension between the different cultural voices should be rendered from this very beginning. He writes about Central and Eastern European authors such as Thomas Mann, Kafka, Musil, Broch, Canneti, Kundera, Danilo Kiš, Hrabel, Gombrowicz, Camus, Pasternak and Maeterlink.

His inclination is more than mocked and bullied by the colleagues at the editorial office, it is seen as a sign of "the deterioration of the Swedish temperament. The decay of Europe. Litter in the downtown Stockholm."<sup>8</sup> All provoked by the massive immigration of Poles and Turks in the town. Another voice says that Danilo

Kiš would be of interest to Swedish people only when Yugoslavia moved in the place of Norway.

Moreover, Lars Andemining receives a series of appellatives regarding his literary taste, namely, "Prince of indecipherable"<sup>9</sup>, "Monday Faust"<sup>10</sup>, "the Messiah of Stockholm"<sup>11</sup>, to say nothing of the fact that towards the end of the novel, when Lars learns to adapt to Swedish society, the narrator adopts the point of view of his colleagues and notes that "He has finished with all those grotesqueries."<sup>12</sup> Equally, his literary taste has an identitarian value as long as he believes himself to be the son of Bruno Schulz<sup>13</sup>, the writer killed in the streets by the Nazis in Drohobycz, Austro-Polish-Ukrainian town. For him, identity is a "personal project"<sup>14</sup>. Thus, he tries to recover as many identitarian cultural voices as possible from the proximity of his long-gone murdered father.

To explain the above-mentioned tension between different cultural voices, the concept of hospitality can be of use. A striking event is that Andemining's literary taste is perceived as a threat for Swedish culture and civilization, but this happens only in the context of him being tolerated by his colleagues, who are in a continuous competition for popularity, rendering him as a part of their community. Nelson, the boss of the newspaper welcomed Lars and did not disapprove of his different style, which is an act of hospitality toward the orphan with supposed immigrant parents. Thus, "a foreigner can be a parricide only when he is in some sense within the family."<sup>15</sup>

On the one hand, Gunnarr and Anders, his editorial office colleagues, perceive the newspaper *Morgontörn* as a medium dedicated only for Swedish culture

and Swedish people's interest, for instance, Norway or United States. Hardly do they accept the theoretical freedom of press, at least not when it comes from a stranger. On the other hand, they sympathise with Lars Andemining, because he does not represent a real competition for popularity and readers, his "grotesqueries" do not appeal to Stockholm readers. The newspaper becomes a place of hospitality as every communication and information media<sup>16</sup> does, where there are several masters of the "house" besides the boss, who see a potential good reviewer in Lars. The representatives of Swedish culture feel a bit threatened with the changes inherent in importing new cultural content. The peril of the Central and Eastern European cultures and writers is based on a famous interpretation that Nazism and Communism were possible because their cultural environment prepared them beforehand.

In the light of this situation, Lars' reply contains both *blindness* and *madness*<sup>17</sup>. For instance, he does not react to the comments of his colleagues; he has a transcendental expectation for a promised meeting with the Librarian of the Academy, which was to him "more sacred (...) than any cathedral"<sup>18</sup>. Then, his blindness mixes with madness when he feels that Mrs Heidi Eklund, who has a bookstore of foreign literature, would be the right person to reveal "what he knew about himself"<sup>19</sup>, namely, the fact that he is the son of the author of *Cinnamon Shops*. From a monologue with a fictional other, the protagonist engages in a dialogue with Mrs Eklund, where the ethics of care could be applied with all their fragilities. Firstly, he is thought to be a crazy man. Nevertheless, the condition of the immigrant becomes more and more

clear from this first collision with the reality of communication with another immigrant. After the shock of being rejected, he presents himself as a refugee, born in Poland, without knowing his native language. Mrs Eklund has the courage<sup>20</sup> to enter into a relationship of care with the delusional, dreamlike and magical Lars Andemining. She assumes a responsibility to nurture and protect Lars from his own insanity. Moreover, she acknowledges that “not all relationships are worth nurturing and protecting; on the contrary, some need discouraging and transforming.”<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, Mrs Eklund uses an Aristotelian method to help him define his own voice by putting his quality of being a refugee into the category of the other refugees in Stockholm. Actually, Andemining<sup>22</sup> acknowledges his lack of a personal voice, because “it was his father’s own voice he was after”<sup>23</sup>, a voice of identity, a voice of comfort, a voice of inheritance, a voice of the self<sup>24</sup>, a voice of a companionship, a voice of sociability, a voice of affirmation. When she loses patience with his imaginary identity, she chooses to call him mad in another language, namely German, her native language<sup>25</sup>. Her use of a foreign language with Lars has a double meaning: on one hand, she cares about his state of mind as not to provoke too strong a distress, while on the other hand, she escapes from her usual Swedish adopted identity when she is put in the position of a host.<sup>26</sup> The tendency to impose her own native language prevails.

Furthermore, Derrida’s remark that when someone presents himself *as though* a foreigner (a refugee), he uses a fiction – an abstract word – and becomes a foreigner in effect only by the strangeness of his

language<sup>27</sup> sheds another light upon Lars’ insistence to learn Polish. When he is confronted with the reality of communicating his phantasm to Mrs Eklund, his most logical instinct becomes imperative: the need to find material support in the form of a foreign language.

The next step in the relationship of care is that of pity, expressed by Mrs Eklund when it transpires that he might be an orphan. Then her method changes because she starts to accept part of his story while also starting to attack his weak points. His Bovarism made Lars gather from books different cultural voices to outline his father’s fate, but all these seem to shatter when faced with the logical pragmatism of the old Heidi, who draws the conclusion that he is a stranger, lunatic, a pretending Pole who cannot read a word of Polish. Her next caring step is to assign him to the category of refugees that sometime enjoy the freedom of presenting an identity<sup>28</sup> that cannot be proved and indulge themselves in different *personae*. It’s as if she were saying to him that “you are among immigrants, you do not need to pretend before me.” This also could be both an exaggeration meant to wake up Lars’s sense of truth and a bias against her fellow immigrants, with a comic accent:

Another refugee impostor. It’s nothing new, believe me! Half my customers have made themselves up. Fabricators. Every Pole of a certain age who walks in here, male or female, used to be a famous professor in Warsaw. Every Hungarian was once ambassador to Argentina. The French are the worst. I’ve never had one of those in my shop who didn’t turn out to be just the one

who got Sartre started on the Talmud. By now I've counted twenty-five female teachers of Talmud – poor Mlle. de Beauvoir.<sup>29</sup>

From this point on, she starts to develop an interesting method of negating his delusional identity, while providing him with the material needs to be what he pretends and to put him in the situation of mirroring himself in others. For this reason, Mrs Heidi Eklund is receptive and recommends him a lady from Cracow, coming from the nobiliary family of Radziwill, who gives Polish lessons. However, she warns him not to “call her Doctor, unless she makes you call her Princess”<sup>30</sup>. She intends to put him in contact with someone whose relationships depend on the correct use of her appellatives in order to make him acknowledge that his name cannot be simply invented out of a dictionary, because it has a societal value<sup>31</sup>.

The bookshop of foreign literatures and languages is a place that invites marginals and minorities such as “freaks, gypsies and nomads”. Grounded in the experience of Mrs Eklund, the business itself runs on human oddity. Although the presupposition of such a place would be for the locals to come to know new languages and cultures, we have already discussed the reticence of Swedish culture from that historical period as presented in the novel; the place becomes a home for the refugees as the mother-tongue seemed to be the ultimate home of the foreigner<sup>32</sup>.

It is interesting that Lars perceives the relationship of care with Mrs Eklund as captivity, even though he cannot say which of the two is the one held prisoner. A relationship, a sympathy, an affect, the pleasure

of communication, the responsibility of interaction with the other seem to be forms of captivities for those who are not linked to anything else other than their imagination. During their meetings, Mrs Eklund acquaints him with the norms of the Swedish society and more pragmatic worldviews, while Lars acknowledges that she does not necessarily believe him, but accepts that he believes that Bruno Schulz is his father<sup>33</sup>. In time, Mrs Eklund becomes a partner in gathering information about the life of the writer and provokes him to face different voices inscribed in reality, for instance, in the letters of Bruno, or to go to London to meet one of the women in Bruno's life, such as Jozefina, the Catholic fiancée, one of the few still alive, who could potentially be his mother.

But he resists such a confrontation. Lars Andemining reduces his obsession into more and more tangible objects until he remains stuck on finding the lost manuscript of *The Messiah*. Recollecting the details of the death of Bruno, the two reach a conflictual context as Mrs Eklund suddenly decides to ask for proofs that the writer is really his father. Apart from knowing his voice, his mind<sup>34</sup> and a vision he cannot communicate, Lars has no arguments and asks to be trusted. However, when he realises that she is another refugee who teaches him how to be a Swede, he promises not to come back. As Mihaela Mihai observes:

Caring is neither straightforward, nor risk-free. Crucially, it involves vigilance over the ever-present twin dangers of contamination and rejection. On the one hand, contamination defuses the power of caring to transform its object: caring requires

a form of commitment that, while emotionally anchored, remains lucid and avoids falling into both uncritical sentimentality and intransigent invocations of an alternative, exclusionary “truth.” On the other hand, rejection ranges from dismissal to stigmatization, marginalization, and ostracism. Caring can also involve frustration, conflict, and getting hurt.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, as a care agent<sup>36</sup>, Mrs Eklund is emotionally vulnerable and at moments of distress she shows impatience with the imaginary identity of Lars. Her native characteristics, such as language or specific gestures, come to light only when she loses her temper as an effect of the tension in which she found her place as an immigrant. While the relationship of care is suspended, Lars finds himself at ease in departing from his care agent, but it becomes more and more difficult to write his usual reviews in his personal style. During this time, Eklund Heidi together with her husband develop a trap play for Lars, similar to the play directed by Hamlet, in order to catch his father’s murderer by provoking a reaction through exposing him to the performance of his own acts. Their motives could be both medical, because Dr Eklund has expertise in psychology, and economic, because the same Dr Eklund is also a forger who makes documents for people escaping from totalitarian regime countries of Europe. Again, a non-Kantian moral tension between an illegal act and a humanitarian purpose<sup>37</sup>.

To clarify this, the setup consists in a confrontation with a mirror situation similar with Lars, but presented as a real one with proofs and guarantees. Elsa Waz is

presented as Adela<sup>38</sup>, the daughter of Bruno Schulz, who brings the manuscript of the *Messiah* and is looking for someone who knows Polish and for the works of the writer in order to verify the originality of the text. Naturally, Mrs Eklund recommends Lars Andemining, who has not learned the language for a long time, more in view of his special relationship with the *voice* of the writer.

Lars receives with delay the message that he was looked for by Mrs Eklund regarding his sister. When Lars reaches the bookstore, he finds it impossible to have a sister because this cannot be anything but a fraud. He becomes as circumspect as Heidi was to him. He prefers to deny that there is any daughter or any manuscript of the *Messiah*. In this way, he starts to distance himself from his obsession and phantasmatic identity. By denying her, he also denies his imaginary voice. Lars begins to suspect that Dr Eklund does not exist. The girl gave no contacts, so they have to wait for her to return. Meantime, an exposure occurs. Sven Strömberg, a poet and a contributor at the newspaper, proves to have simply translated the poems of Robert Frost, the American poet, and published them as his own. In a state of collapse at the editorial office, Lars feels the need to cheer up the atmosphere, and announces the finding of the manuscript of *The Messiah*. The scene is narrated in the hieratic, comic, ironic, but still solemn tone of an announcing of a Second Coming. Both Bruno Schulz and *Messiah* are projections of the self for Lars Andemining, who is looking unconsciously for his own voice.

He hesitates to consider the veridical nature of the manuscript. One day, he receives the visit of his “sister”. He is very

circumspect but enters the conversation. Adela gives her credentials, her story: she was born in Brazil, her Polish mother ran there pregnant at fifteen in the middle of the war, they lived in São Paulo, Amsterdam, Budapest, Brussels, Warsaw. She continues by showing him the pages and telling the story of the manuscript. She has logical and detailed answers for all his inquisitive questions; however, he cannot believe any of it and deconstructs all her arguments. Their final exchange focuses on who is the real son or daughter of Bruno Schulz. The situation explodes and she runs away, leaving Lars in a delusional state of mind. In the afternoon, he discovers that she left her beret on his bed and takes it to the bookshop.

There, Lars Andemining meets Dr Olle Eklund and, for the first time, he acknowledges that he does not know the identity of his mother or of his father. His visions of Bruno disappeared, and he resists the temptation to come back to illusion even when Mrs Eklund claims that he is the son of the author of *Cinnamon Shops*, of *Sanatorium* and of *The Messiah*. He even feels betrayed that his secret is exposed and that he has lost his visions. Soon, Adela turns up and the theatrical scene is complete with the four characters. The discussion goes on and a confrontation of the stories of the two makes Lars capitulate. He has only a wish, while she has a palpitant story to tell. After examining the handwriting of the manuscript, Dr Eklund concludes that the text is authentic, written by the very hand of Bruno Schulz. To everyone's awe, Lars takes the pages and reads them carefully in a state of amnesia, to get acquainted with these new inflexions of his father's voice.

The pages depicted Drohobycz as the place where all the idols of the world

gathered, but religion disappeared, and the people were atheist. "They were, to tell the truth, almost too enchanting, too seductive – which is probably why they started to bow to one another, and at length even to sacrifice to one another."<sup>39</sup> The apparition of the Messiah lasts only a second until falling into pieces. His appearance resembles a golem, an indefinite form or organism, a book and, finally, turns into a small bird, while the idols seem letters of an unknown alphabet. Afterwards Lars attends an ironic, comical, silly and sinister discussion about what it is to be done with the manuscript, because it should belong to the world, to universal culture.

They wonder how the announcement should be made so that everyone may believe it. When they ask Lars to write in his column about the discovery of the new manuscript, because he has the means to bring the renewed voice of Bruno Schulz into the world in his Mondays reviews, they come to ask for a verdict from his voice. Instead, he forces Dr Eklund to admit that he also is a refugee impostor who made up his name<sup>40</sup> in order to win the confidence of Swedish people. After infinite persuasion attempts, Lars comes up with an unexpected accusation: Adela could be the daughter of Dr Eklund and the doctor is the forger of the manuscript. He revolts and refuses the role they assign to him, to pass the forgery for an original, and finally takes the papers and lights them up with a match from Dr Eklund's pipe. Under those circumstances, Lars becomes one of the most established reviewers at the newspaper, showing an extremely cynical attitude.

Lars Andemining (Lazarus Baruch) passes from an imaginary father to a symbol

of self-development through the caring of Heidi Eklund. He comes to accept the void of not knowing his origins, a void that he kept around him for so many years, and, finally, he takes up his role in the social drama by radically refusing any form of imposture. Most importantly, he finds his voice, his vocation by taking the reviewer activity seriously<sup>41</sup>. Paradoxically, when he finds his voice, the reader is no longer allowed to hear it because, as Giddens notes, "Self-identity is no longer integrated with the day-to-day routines in which the person is involved."<sup>42</sup> In the new atmosphere of the newspaper that tries to keep up with the new media technologies, Lars, who finds his place in the very act of writing, becomes more and more comfortable and productive. Thus, the nurturing project of the care agent, Mrs Eklund, succeeds even though she caught herself in the trap of pervertibility to use the vulnerability of the other in her own interest.

Through the complexity of the relationships depicted in the novel, their fragility and the grey place of diaspora interactions both with the citizens of the country they settled in and with the other immigrants, a specific way of caring takes shape, that of a setup, of a performance, having in view to integrate foreigners in the new country. To let communities of immigrants theatricalize their own environment within the limits of the law seemed to be a successful way to slowly integrate them into the new environment and let them adapt to their own rhythm. This would happen without imposing on them duties and social norms that they do not understand yet. Similar with the project of the cities of refugee discussed by Derrida in *On Cosmopolitanism*, this method may seem utopian

or a form of marginalization, but countries and cities that adopted it in history have proved that over the course of two or three generations, multi-ethnicity becomes a natural way of living. The difference of the foreigner, the voice of the foreigner must be accepted in order for the communication to start.

Anthropological studies show that foreigners and citizens of other countries have always been exposed to prejudices, a phenomenon that has been partially corrected since its massification in the last seventy years. Colonial and postcolonial studies, minority studies and, last but not least, care studies have contributed to this ongoing change. A specific trend in theoretical studies mitigates for understanding and acknowledging figures of complexity<sup>43</sup>. If Mihaela Mihai argues that certain artworks could play the role of *caring refuseniks*<sup>44</sup> that *seductively sabotage* readers into rendering more complex and plural views of the past. This article argues that complex artworks such as the novel *The Messiah of Stockholm* by Cynthia Ozick could *seductively sabotage* readers into more complex understanding of and relating to the others, the foreigners, the minorities, showing that the place where different voices enters into communication is not only a place of dialogue, but also of discovering the voice of the other with tensions that are inherent, that have to be continuously negotiated or lived in.

To sum up, this study has analysed the protagonist's condition of stranger in relation to Jacques Derrida's study *Of Hospitality*, his complex relationship of care with Mrs Eklund, as well as the reader's changing position regarding access to the inner life of Lars Andemining. Emphasis has been laid on the mixture of different cultural

voices, on the condition of the immigrant and, last but not least, on a relationship of care that is not fully sincere, even though it succeeds. Furthermore, we argue that the novel accomplishes the function of *seductively sabotaging* the readers into the complexity of human relationships in the diaspora, through different voices.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barker, Chris, and Dariusz Galasinski, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity*, London, Sage, 2001.
- Conradi, Elisabeth, "Redoing Care: Societal Transformation through Critical Practice," in *Ethics and Social Welfare*, Vol. 9.2, pp. 113-129, 2005, DOI: 10.1080/17496535.2015.1005553.
- Derrida, Jaques, *Of Hospitality*, Translated by Rachel Bowlby, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Derrida, Jaques, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Translated by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, New York, Routledge, 2005.
- Derrida, Jaques, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, Translated by David B. Allison, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973.
- Dummett, Michael, *On immigration and refugees*, London, Routledge, 2001.
- Forchieri, Sofia, "Remembering Complicity and Resistance: A Review of Mihaela Mihai's Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance," in *Comparative Literature and Culture*, Volume 24.5, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.4400>.
- Giddens, Anthony, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991.
- Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Silent Language*, New York, Doubleday, 1959.
- Kauvar, Elaine M., *Cynthia Ozick's Fiction. Tradition and Invention*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Mihai, Mihaela, *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2022.
- Ozick, Cynthia, *The Messiah of Stockholm*, London, Atlantic Books, 2013.
- Quayson, Ato, and Girish Daswany (eds.), *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, Chichester, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2013.
- Schulz, Bruno, *The Fiction of Bruno Schulz*, translated by Celina Wieniewska, London, Picador, 2011.
- Sivan, Miriam, *Belonging too well: Portraits of Identity in Cynthia Ozick's Fiction*, Albany, The State University of New York Press, 2009.
- Vosman, Frans, and Andries Baart, Jaco Hoffman (Eds.), *The Ethics of Care: the State of the Art*, Leuven, Peeters, 2020.

---

## NOTES

1. Cynthia Ozick, *The Messiah of Stockholm*, London, Atlantic Books, 2013, p. 47.
2. Mihaela Mihai, *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2022, p. 9.
3. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. XV.
4. Polyhedron is a solid in three dimensions with flat polygonal faces, straight edges and sharp corners or vertices.
5. Miriam Sivan, *Belonging too well: Portraits of Identity in Cynthia Ozick's Fiction*, Albany, The State University of New York Press, 2009, p. 3.
6. *Ibidem*.

7. *Ibidem*.
8. Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 12.
9. *Ibidem*.
10. *Ibidem*.
11. *Ibidem*, p. 74.
12. *Ibidem*, p. 154.
13. The novel actually is testing Lars Andeminig's ability to "keep a particular narrative going" (in Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. 54), while showing that one's biography or identity cannot be fully fictional and that one's identity must be continually confronted with the world through relationships, interactions and communication.
14. Chris Barker, Dariusz Galasinski, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity*, London, Sage, 2001, pp. 37-38.
15. Jaques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, Standford, Standford University Press, 2000, p. 7.
16. *Ibidem*, p. 57.
17. *Ibidem*, p. 9.
18. Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 16.
19. *Ibidem*, p. 25.
20. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. XIX.
21. Mihaela Mihai, *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance*, Standford, Standford University Press, 2022, p. 60.
22. Lars Andeminig also shares the fact that he invented for himself a name out of the dictionary, namely, Lazarus Baruch.
23. Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 36.
24. He felt as strong affinity with the voice and mind of his father. *Ibidem*, p. 28.
25. *Verrükter* (crazy), p. 27.
26. "He has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host", Jaques Derrida, *op.cit.*, p. 13.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 17.
28. In the end, after the caring relationship, he meditates introspectively similarly that "He had named himself, in secret, Lazarus Baruch. Who was to tell him otherwise, who was to deny him these twinings and entanglings? And, through dictionary divinations and cabalistic displacements: Lars Andeminig. Who was there to prevent it? He had an orphan's terrifying freedom to choose. He could become whatever he wished; no one could prohibit it, he could choose his own history. He could choose and he could relinquish. He was horribly, horribly free." In Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 118.
29. *Ibidem*, p. 29.
30. *Ibidem*.
31. "A proper name is never purely individual." In Derrida, *op.cit.*, p. 23.
32. *Ibidem*, p. 89.
33. Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 34.
34. *Ibidem*, p. 45.
35. Mihaela Mihai, *op.cit.*, p. 62.
36. Elisabeth Conradi, "Redoing Care: Societal Transformation through Critical Practice," in *Ethics and Social Welfare*, Vol. 9.2, pp. 113-129, 2005, DOI: 10.1080/17496535.2015.1005553, p. 118.
37. Derrida discusses that in *Perpetual peace* Kant puts the humanitarian values under the duty to the state and to the social contract, *op.cit.*, p. 71, 141.
38. One of the recurrent characters in Bruno Schulz's stories.
39. Cynthia Ozick, *op.cit.*, p. 126.
40. Originally born Alter Eckstein.
41. Elsa Waz (Adela), on the other hand, offers an interesting parallel: she knows her instable origin and uses false and *imaginary* identities with a strictly utilitarian role, in order to survive the injustices of

history, finally, to do whatever she wants without any kind of remorse exactly like Dr Eklund. She and her mother pursue their relationship only to follow their purpose. They consciously break the social contract but, at the same time, their historical situation cannot be judged morally, the very social contract became abusive and condemned them to death. That is why, Lars's adaptation to the Swedish social contract shows a new kind of hope in a new system.

42. Anthony Giddens, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

43. The entering of the Complexity Theory into cultural studies could be exemplified through the following: Fatima Viera's presentation *Complex Democracy, Complex Utopianism* ("Utopian Imaginaries", 2023 Conference, Utopian Studies Society and Babeş Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters, *Phantasma*. The Center for Imagination Studies); Mihaela Mihai's book *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance* (2022).

44. "Dissenting memory agents who reject reductive national narratives and who nurture (rather than treasonously befouling) a plural space of memory-making" in Mihaela Mihai, *op.cit.*, p. 61.