IDENTITY AND BELONGING IN THE NOVELS OF DORON RABINOVICI[1]

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Abstract

This essay analyses how the different types of memory may influence the process of identity formation. It shall be argued that not only memories formed upon the subject's experiences play a key role in this process; intermediated, received narratives from the past, memories transmitted either symbolically or by elder members of the group, or, what has been meanwhile termed as "postmemory", also play an important part in the development of an individual's identitary map. This theoretical framework will be illustrated with the novelistic work of Austrian Israeli-born historian, writer and political activist Doron Rabinovici (*1961). As a representative of the so-called "second generation" of Holocaust writers, a generation of individuals who did not experience the nazi genocide violence, but who had to form their identities under the shadow of such a brutal past, Rabinovici addresses essential topics such as the intergenerational transmission of memory and guilt within survivor families, identity formation of second generation individuals (Jews and non-Jews) and the question of simultaneously belonging to different social, historical and linguistic contexts.

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Resumo

O presente artigo propõe uma reflexão sobre o modo como os diferentes tipos de memória influem no processo de formação de identidade de um indivíduo. Não serão apenas as memórias construídas a partir das experiências do sujeito que desempenham um papel fundamental neste processo; as narrativas intermediadas, as narrativas recebidas do passado – i.e., as memórias transmitidas quer através de elementos simbólicos quer através dos membros mais velhos do grupo –, em suma, as narrativas que entretanto passámos a designar de "pós-memória", influenciam igualmente e de forma expressiva o desenvolvimento do mapa identitário de um indivíduo. Este enquadramento teórico será ilustrado através da obra novelística do historiador, escritor e ativista político austríaco de origem judaica Doron Rabinovici (*1961). Enquanto representante da chamada "segunda geração" de escritores do Holocausto, uma geração que não experienciou a violência genocida nazi, mas que formou a sua identidade sob a sombra de um passado tão brutal, Rabinovici aborda temas tão essenciais como a transmissão intergeracional da memória e da culpa manifestada no seio de famílias de sobreviventes, a formação identitária de indivíduos de segunda geração (judeus e não-judeus) e a questão de, em simultâneo, se pertencer a contextos sociais, históricos e linguísticos tão distantes.

Key words: (Post) memory, Identity, transgenerational after-effects of the Holocaust, Austria, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*

Palavras-chave: (Pós)-memória, Identidade, efeitos transgeracionais do Holocausto, Áustria, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*

The Holocaust, more than any other historical or cultural factor, seems to be the pivotal moment in post-war Jewish identity. According to Matt Bunzl, "it became the central aspect in Jewish self-perception" (Bunzl, 2000: 156), and not only for Israelis of Jewish confession, but also for many other members of the

Jewish Diaspora who continue to review themselves in the suffering of the Holocaust victims and keep on preserving the memory of all who perished. This Diaspora feels integrated in a global community of victims and assumes the "cult of the victim" as a unifying element, which bonds them around a common historical event and provides them with the sense of belonging to a group that share a marking collective memory.

The Austrian reality, nonetheless, assumes specific characteristics which produced a different pattern as far as the Jewish identity self-reconstruction is concerned. In Germany the crimes perpetrated during the nazi regime have been leading to intense public discussions since the end of the war up until the present moment. This process of examining the past started immediately in 1945 with the Nurnberg Trials and carried on in the sixties, firstly, when former SS Lieutenant Colonel Adolf Eichmann was captured and convicted to death in Israel (1961), shortly after, when the criminals of the most emblematic concentration camp were judged in the Auschwitz Trials (1963-1965) and, finally, when during the 1968 contestation movements, the younger generation inquired their parents about their participation and guilt for the nazi crimes (Schneider, 2001: 327). On a more social level, the broadcasting of Marvin Chomsky's TV-series *The Holocaust* (1979) also played an important role as far as a broader consciousness of this past is concerned.

It is called *Verganheitsbewältigung*[2] this process of confrontation and attempt to integrate and overcome the nation's National-Socialist past, a process that would continue throughout the eighties with the Historians' Debate (1986), whose main issue was the singularity, the exceptional character of the Holocaust vs. a demand for its normalization (Augstein *et al.*, 1987). It restarted in the nineties as a consequence of the controversial book written by the North-American second-generation Jewish historian Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), where it was argued that the Holocaust happened in Germany because Germans are endogenously an anti-Semitic social group, who perceived

[2] Term that describes the processes of dealing or coming to terms with the past.

the massacre of millions as a "national project". While Goldhagen's study found significant acceptance amongst the public in general, the academic community, especially in Germany, considered it a deficient analysis, filled with inaccuracies (Wippermann, 1997: 99). Raul Hilberg, for example, considered it lacked factual content and logical rigour (Kamber, 2000: 157) and many other scholars criticised its aesthetics of violence, emphatic language and style, its "pornographic" approach and excess of emotional identification through forms of insensitivity, shock and voyeurism (Dean, 2004: 45).

Two years later, the confrontation with the past was again under the spotlight when prominent German writer Martin Walser affirmed during a public speech that the media had been manipulating Auschwitz and that normalization should be claimed; as a response to those statements, the President of the Jewish Community, Ignatz Bubis, accused Walser of intellectual nationalism and concealed anti-Semitism (Schirrmacher, 1999).

Later on, the inauguration of the Berlin Holocaust Memorial, in 2005, was again the motivation for a series of disputes and discussions. It was accused of being the "monumentalization of shame" (Gay, 2003: 155) and even considered an attempt of Germany's self-redemption for the perpetrated crimes (Knischewski / Spittler, 2005: 32). Despite the initial conciliatory intention, this discussion proved in the end that the Holocaust is still a neuralgic spot and that the German national-socialist past is far from being resolved [3].

In opposition to Germany, where the discussion about the crimes perpetrated during the twelve years of nazi dictatorship started in the immediate post-war, in Austria the National-Socialist past was handled as taboo and, therefore, kept in silence. In fact, Austria suppressed this episode from its historical conscience for a long period of time and kept the collaboration with the nazi regime under the false myth that Austrians were also victims:

> *Unlike Germany's near obsession with its Nazi past, Austria's relationship to its wartime history has remained decorously submerged,*

3 For a more extensive reading on the subject, see Simões, 2009: 61-72.

politely out of sight. Indeed, the post war identity of Austria had been based upon the self-serving myth that the country was Hitler's first victim. (Young, 1999: 7)

The reality is that after the *Stunde Null* [zero hours] Austria and Germany took quite different roads. After the constitution of the Second Republic, on April 27, 1945 – at the same time as Germany was being held responsible for crimes of genocide –, Austria assumed a completely different position and constructed a collective identity based on the idea of being the primary victim of the nazis. And, in point of fact, this was actually an attribute formally stated in the Moscow Declaration of November 1, 1943 that considered Austria the first free country to be stricken by Adolf Hitler's hegemonic policy when it was annexed in March 1938. The denial of guilt and the myth of the victim proved to be quite convenient, both for the elite and the majority of the population as well. In fact, Austrian intellectuals seem to have not scrutinized the facts of the past, but rather denied any connection with the perpetrated crimes, either personalizing historical responsibility in the figure of Adolf Hitler, or generally transferring sole responsibility to the Germans.

This perception, this imagined national narrative would last several decades. The failed process of the Austrian *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* would finally meet a new direction after 1986, when an unexpected revelation generated a major political scandal and led to an in-depth reflection about Austria's co-participation in the nazi crimes. The crystallized official narrative that Austria was Hitler's first victim started then to be questioned as a consequence of the so-called "Waldheim affair": during his election campaign, Kurt Waldheim, Austrian president from 1986 to 1992, had to face massive accusations related to his participation in the nazi regime as an SS-officer[4]. Waldheim then claimed he had only "fulfilled his duty" (Uhl, 2001: 30-46).

4 Of particular relevance is the circumstance that 1986 campaign was also accompanied by increasing right-wing populism, represented by ÖFP's leader Jörg Haider (Austrian Freedom Party), whose explicit racist and anti-Semitic speeches

The *Lebenslüge* [lie of a lifetime], the seven years of active collaboration with Hitler's regime, had been, therefore, concealed, recharacterized and transformed into a national myth. As historian Günter Bischof affirms, the founding fathers of Austria's Second Republic *invented* another version of history (*apud* Knight, 2001: 130).

On the whole, it took more than four decades to the political, juridical and public recognition of Austrian Jews as Holocaust victims; forty years after the first legal actions against nazi criminals and the payment of compensations to the victims residing in Germany. This change in the perception of history had a double effect: on the one hand, the consolidated image of the victim that Austrians had of themselves was substituted by the image of the aggressor, particularly an aggressor that concealed its accountability; on the other hand, the Austrian Jewish community had, at last, the right to their role as *unique* victims and to the opportunity to affirmatively redefine their identity as members of a global community of victims.

These developments fostered the rebirth of Jewish political and intellectual intervention. Initially through journalistic essays and opinion articles and later through literary discourse, a group of young intellectuals were called to comment on both Waldheim's election and Jörg Haider's populist and anti-Semitic speeches. Doron Rabinovici, Robert Schindel, Ruth Beckermann and Robert Menasse, amongst others, are important names in this process of confrontation with the past. Through their writing this group of young intellectuals aims at framing the specificities of this generation's complex identity issues such as, for example, the intergenerational transference of memory and guilt (omni)present in Jewish family relationships. Furthermore, they do not aim at representing the Holocaust, as that function belongs solely to the first generation; As Helen Schruff afirms, for the second generation "die Ereignisse der Shoah sind wie Fäden, um die der Stoff der Geschichten gewebt wird, dieser

manifestly demonstrated that, despite the Holocaust, it was (still) possible to advocate such ideas in the Austrian political field.

Stoff ist wiederum von den Nachwirkungen der Shoah gefärbt"[5] (Schruff, 2000:111).

On the whole, the Holocaust has left long lasting scars and, as a result, it is an indisputable identitary landmark in Jewish self-perception both for survivors as for their descendents as well. In effect, it is not only experienced events that play a key role in a subject's identity formation. As a matter of fact, occurrences or facts prior to the subject's birth may also integrate one's identity. These past events can be transmitted either through the process of "communicative memory" - when the knowledge of those events is inter-generationally passed on, which happens every time elder family members describe what they have actually witnessed or been involved in -, or through the process of "cultural memory", which happens when events are learnt through symbolic means such as material representations (books, films, images, libraries, museums, etc) or symbolic practices (traditions, celebrations, rituals, etc) (Assmann 1999: 50-52; Assmann 2006: 51-58).

"Second generation" individuals do not really bear a true memory of the events of the Holocaust; instead, they have a form of secondary memory, an intermediated, second-hand memory which, indirectly, also belongs to them. Referring himself to these post-Holocaust artists, American academic James E. Young considers this is a generation that has been building an image of the past essentially upon what he calls a "received history", which he describes as follows:

> *Their experience of the past is photographs, films, books, testimonies, etc. a mediated experience, the afterlife of memory represented in history's after-images: the impressions retained in the mind's eye of a vivid sensation long after the original, external cause has been removed. (Young, 2000: 3)*

The representation of the past by post-Holocaust generations has also led to a new category of memory, which Marianne Hirsch coined as "postmemory":

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[5] [The events of the Holocaust are like threads, which the fabric of History is woven with, and this fabric is again coloured by the after-effects of the Shoah].

> *Postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. (Hirsch, 2008: 103)*

Postmemory, which is *distinguished from memory by generational distance* and from history by deep personal connection, is essentially constituted upon memories caused by the stories and images that circulate from one generation to the next; it is indeed a very particular form of memory, where the connection of the subject to his/her object would be mediated by others, by the real memory bearers. In this sense, the narrative is elaborated not having as foundation the recalling of events lived or witnessed by its author, but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. Moreover, postmemory characterizes as well the experience of those who grew up dominated by the storytelling of circumstances that occurred prior to their birth and these stories are, in reality, the stories of the former generation, frequently their parents, to whom those traumatic events where never understood, nor overcome (Hirsch, 1997: 92).

In this essay I intend to focus on the work of Israeli-born Austrian Jewish writer, essayist and historian Doron Rabinovici (*1961). Rabinovici is son of Holocaust survivors and moved from Tel Aviv to Vienna in the mid-sixties when he was still an infant. His Jewish descent, the difficulties of second generation Jews in coping with their parents' trauma, as well as Austria's historical and social context, have undoubtedly influenced his work both as historian and as writer.

As mentioned before, Doron Rabinovici is also an historian. In 2000, after more than a decade of political activism struggling against anti-Semitism and racism, he published his doctoral thesis under the title *Instanzen der Ohnmacht* [Authorities of Powerlessness] . Here he analyses the concrete situation of A ustrian Jews who worked in the Judenräte[6] after the occupation and annexation of Austria into nazi Germany in 1938, often accused of having betrayed their

6 The Jewish Councils were administrative sections supervised by the nazis, created with the purpose of organizing and managing the gathering and subsequent deportation of Jews to labour and concentration camps.

own people. In the following years he would publish other essays and historical studies, all centred on Jewish existence and their situation in contemporary society. Although the Holocaust and his Jewishness play a vital role in Doron Rabinovici's personal history and therefore in his identity, the complex and controversial Austrian social and political developments over the last two decades are also another central piece of his self-perception.

As said, Rabinovici's particular interest in Austrian political developments goes back to 1986. In fact, he admits it was Waldheim who brought him into politics and made him criticize some of Austria's political issues in both his fictional and non-fictional texts (*apud* Silvermann 1999, 263; Beilein 2008, 9). At the beginning of 2000 Rabinovici's political activism still persisted; as an answer to the populist and racist speeches of anti-EU Jörg Haider, who colligated with Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel after the 1999 elections, Rabinovici gathered for demonstrations, published and posted several texts against the inclusion of Haider's Freedom Party in the new Austrian government.[7] Currently he is also one of the organizers of the initiative "European Jewish Call for Reason" which, in its official webpage, presents their members as individuals that despite belonging to different geographical and cultural realities, still feel particularly bonded with the Israeli State:

> *We are citizens of European countries, Jews, and involved in the political and social life of our respective countries. Whatever our personal paths, our connection to the state of Israel is part of our identity. We are concerned about the future of the State of Israel to which we are unfailingly committed*[8].

The truth is that Rabinovici belongs to two different contexts, two different identity constellations, which are in so many aspects contradictory. As

[7] See, for example, Rabinovici. 1999a"Keine Koalition mit dem Rassismus". Online: http://sybamb.blogspot.com/2004/08/rabinovici-doron.html (accessed 26th January, 2005).

[8] http://www.jcall.eu/About-us.html (accessed 23rd November, 2011).

the Jewish traumatic past seems to collide with Austria's attitude towards its own past, Rabinovici finds himself in a difficult situation, struggling to move in two different, almost antagonistic worlds. In an interview the author talks about a Jewish-*Self* and an Austrian-*Self* and feels he is trapped in this duplicity, i.e. the conscience that his Jewish cultural and historical identity lives together with the linguistic and social identity of the country he inhabits (Rabinovici, 1999b). The feeling of belonging to a set of traditions and cultural aspects coexists with a feeling of bonding with a country where he speaks and writes in the language of the perpetrators. It is in this ambivalence, in this difficult and problematic existence that he has to search and build his identity – an identity that is inevitably multi-layered, hybrid and fragmented.

These questions are also represented in Rabinovici's novelistic work, which consists so far of the texts *Suche nach M.* (1997), *Ohnehin* (2004) and, more recently, *Andernorts* (2010). Common denominator is the topic of identity constitution of Jewish post-war generations, more specifically, in the context of Austria historical and social developments.

Suche nach M. (Seach for M.) essentially portrays the intergenerational transmission of trauma, memory and guilt within survivor families, where there was a consensual pattern of silence about the traumatic experiences of the past – the so-called "conspiracy of silence", registered in various studies on the psychological after-effects of the Holocaust. Protagonists are Dani Morgenthau and Arieh Scheinowitz, whose parents have both turned their backs to the past and refused to describe it to their children. As Dani observes, "die Vergangenheit des Vaters lag im Dunkel seines Schweigens. Es war, als verberge er sich noch in jenem Versteck am Warschauer Stadtrand"[9] (Rabinovici, 1997: 29). From here one may conclude that silence does not mean that the past is overcome, but rather that there is an incapacity to confront it: "Woran seine

[9] [The father's past rested in the darkness of his silence. It was as if he is still underground in a hiding-place in the Warsaw suburbs.]

Eltern sich nicht erinnern wollten, wovon zu reden sie mieden, konnten sie in allen Deutlichkeit nicht vergessen"[10] (*Idem*: 30).

Particularly critical to this first generation is the fact that they must not only live with their haunted memories of the past, but they need as well to live in a country that had long forgotten its own crimes. In a clear allusion to Austria's National-Socialist past, the narrator ironically adds: "Schuldige durften nicht zu finden sein in einem Land, das allgemeine Unbeflektheit beanspruchte"[11] (*Idem*: 47); in another passage of the novel the same question is again raised "Wer, so fragten einzelne Großväter mit zitterndem Zeigefinger, wäre in der Stadt und in diesem Land denn frei von Schuld?"[12] (*Idem*: 182).

According to his parents Dani must assume a particular role: on the one hand he must assimilate, be like every other child; on the other hand, he must not forget he is different, that he has a historical and familiar legacy. His personal identity must therefore occupy a secondary position and give place to a very specific social function: neither forget the past, nor dishonor the dead. This demand would lead to profound feelings of guilt and Dani then turns into the mysterious, shrouded figure of Mullemann, a mummy-like character who assumes the guilt for every crime perpetrated in the country. Affected by the transference of his parents' traumas, by his parents' feelings of guilt for having survived, Dani seeks a form of catharsis for the mistakes he feels he might have committed.

In *Ohnehin* (Anyway), the figure of Lew Feiniger, a second-generation Russian Jew, portrayed as the son who has had to fulfil the projections and aspirations of a family that lost everything during the nazi persecution, represents some of these complexities as well. However, the range of presented identities is here much wider; not only first and second generation Jews, but also Gentiles,

[10] [What his parents did not want to remember, what they avoided talking about, they could obviously not forget.]

[11] [Culprits were not to be found in a country that claimed general faultlessness.]

[12] [Who, asked some grandfathers with a trembling finger, would be in the city and in this country free from guilt?]

legal and illegal immigrants, as well as nazi perpetrators and their children are included in the narrative.

Set in the significant year of 1995, it develops in the picturesque Naschmarkt, described as a "world apart, an island in the centre of the metropolis" (Rabinovici, 2004: 8), a world that resembles the mythical Babel where already for centuries not only German, but also Italian, Yiddish, Greek, Turk, Serbian or Polish have been commonly spoken languages. In this polyphonic world the reader meets various characters, who with their international origins transform Vienna into a transnational stage, especially this market, which is pictured as the epicentre of multiculturalism, as a global village. It seems the face of globalization, "the *locus amoenus* of cultural pluralism" (Beilein, 2008: 97) and a model of the broader world market we all live in. In fact, on a superficial glance there seems to be a perfect symbiosis between all those foreign individuals and Vienna itself. It is as if all those (im)migrants were successfully integrated, as if they really fit in or have their place there. This portrait is nonetheless an illusion. In reality that entire multicultural scenario is a deceit and those individuals are in a precarious situation, being left in the margin, elaborating their peripheral identities.

The text starts with a sentence that would be constantly repeated throughout the 10 chapters of the novel: "Einmal muβ Schluβ sein. Genug der Leichenberge, fort mit Krieg und Verbrechen"13 (Rabinovici, 2004:7), complains neurologist Stefan Sandtner, the protagonist, as he watches the news about the Balkan War and the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. One of the axes of the narrative takes place as Sandtner diagnoses Herber Kerber, an 80-year-old former SS officer, Korsakoff syndrome: he believes he is in 1945 and doesn't recognize anybody from the present, not even his children. The acknowledgment of old Kerber's involvement in the nazi genocide makes his daughter Bärbl feel indignation, shame and repulse. In her despair she stages a "private court" (Beilein, 2008: 96) and demands recognition of guilt from her father. As the old

[13] [It has to come to an end sometime. That's enough of piles of corpses, war and crimes.]

man states he was just following orders and that that speech about Holocaust crimes would have to come to an end sometime, Bärbl infuriates and rages at her progenitor.

Bärbl's difficult situation worsens when she meets Stefan's friend Lew Feiniger, a second-generation Russian Jew, portrayed as the son who has had to fulfil the projections and aspirations of a family that lost everything during the nazi persecution. When the daughter of the nazi officer faces the son of the Jewish victim, she cannot avoid discomfort and anxiety. She distances herself from her father's actions and suggests she feels certain identification with him: "Die Kinder von Tätern und Opfern haben ja viele Gemeinsamkeiten"[14] (Rabinovici, 2004: 117). But Lew repudiates such a philo-Semitic approach (Beilein, 2008: 100), loses his temper with what he feels is an attempt of solidarity and refuses any dialogue with such group of people. Lew's reaction essentially demonstrates how reluctant this generation is in accepting that the children of perpetrators could also be victims of the same past – which they can, according to several psychological studies[15]. The denial of this circumstance corroborates the assumption that the memory of the Holocaust is essentially a hereditary memory, whose intensity seems not to fade away among those who actually did not witness it, but grew up haunted by its omnipresence in everyday life.

More recently, Rabinovici published his acclaimed novel *Andernorts* [Elsewhere], which would be shortlisted for the German Book Prize 2010. Here again the topics of origin, identity and belonging are crucial for the protagonist, Ethan Rosen, an Israeli social scientist working at a university research centre in Vienna interested in debating the memory of the Shoah.

The first two novels are particularly critical of the attitudes the Austrian government and civil society have assumed throughout the years towards the Jewish and immigrant communities. Quite surprisingly, in the third novel Rabinovici shifts the object of his criticism and satirizes Israel and the Israelis, parting thus himself from the romantic image of someone who lives in the

[14] [The children of perpetrators and victims do have a lot in common.]

[15] See, for example, BERGMANN, Martin S. and Milton E. JUCOVY (eds). 1982. *Generations of the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Diaspora and yearns for the return to the Promised Land. In fact, Rabinovici refuses the idea of Diaspora and considers that all Jews spread throughout the world are evidence of a less mythical phenomenon: the globalization (Kaukoreit, 2004). In the end Rabinovici's novelist work illustrates the idea of identitary duplicity I have sketched before and demonstrates how none of his *Selves* is free from scrutiny.

Simultaneously serious but also filled with humour, *Andernorts* presents, on the one hand, the identitary complexities of a Viennese Jew who lives in a lifelong intellectual journey between cultures. On the other hand, there are quite absurd and hilarious situations such as the desire of a Rabbi from an Orthodox sect to clone the Messiah or the passage about Rosen's return flight from Tel Aviv to Vienna, where he had been for the burial of his fatherly mentor Dov Zedeck, who had fled from Austria in 1930s. As follows, the narrator presents a quite satirical portrait of the Israeli State, marked both by modernity and religiosity:

> *Links neben ihm eine Frau, Mitte Siebzig, mit wachsweiß geschminkten Gesicht, eine Echse mit Krokodilledertasche, das Haar platinblond. […] Sie trug ein karminrotes Damastkostüm mit stumpfgoldenen Knöpfen, eingewebt in den Seidenstoff glänzten Blumengirlanden. Ethan Rosen fühlte sich an chinesische Tapetenmunster in Versailles erinnert*[16]*. […] Der Orthodoxe wippte vor und zurück, federte in den Knien und begann mit einem Headbanging, als gehöre er einer Hard-Rock-Band an, auch wenn seine herum hüpfenden Schläfenlocken eher an die Dreadlocks der Rastafaris erinnerten*[17]*. (Rabinovici, 2010: 13-14; 17)*

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[16] [On his left a woman, in her mid-seventies with a wax-white, made-up face, a lizard with a crocodile handbag, hair platinum blonde. […] She was wearing a carmine red, damask suit with gold buttons; the silk material glittered with the garlands of flowers woven into it. Ethan Rose was reminded of the Chinese wallpaper pattern in Versailles.]

[17] [The Orthodox Jew swung back and forth, bounced with the knees and began a head banging that looked as he belonged to a hard rock band even if his bobbing sheep's curls reminded of a Rastafarian.]

The text does raise some controversial questions as well: Why, while Jews may criticize the way the Holocaust is remembered (*Idem*: 48) and young Jews may visit Holocaust sites and show disrespect (*Idem*: 41), would non-Jews be immediately considered anti-Semitic if they assumed similar positions? Why can't Israel's actions against Palestine be openly condemned? Are Israelis, due to singularity of their past, under no judgment? Why may Israelis straightforwardly assume that all Austrians are (still) nazis (*Idem*:104)? Why must Rosen feel uncomfortable because as a Jew he feels freer in Austria than in his homeland, Israel, where he feels suffocated (*Idem:*100)?

For professional reasons Rosen is always *elsewhere*, moving quickly between different countries and continents; for personal reasons, Rosen is also constantly moving back and forth, between Austria and Israel, the place where his parents established after having survived Auschwitz. His (almost real) *Doppelgänger*, Doron Rabinovici himself, seems to fit in this same profile of a subject built upon a set of multiple identifications, upon various identitary constellations, an inhabitant of two different worlds where, despite the cleavages, he simultaneously belongs to.

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