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Counting as one

Moral encounters and criteria of affinity in a Polish Jewish congregation

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The resurgence and transformation of Poland's Jewish communal institutions and religious life in the last twenty years has inspired debate concerning the criteria for being and becoming Jewish. The voices in that discussion come not only from different generations, but also from different geographies of Jewish life. Drawing on fieldwork in a contemporary Jewish congregation in Poland, this article discusses ethics in the context of different rationalities of affinity. Poland's "Jewish revival" confronted values and affects grounded in intergenerational experiences of the post-Holocaust era with categories of belonging and religious conversion enabled by new laws, transnational programs of education and socialization, and the impact of religious leaders from abroad. The apparent incommensurability of these standpoints, and the taxing attempts at their reconciliation, invite us to reconceptualize the notion of moral tradition.

Keywords: affinity, ethics, morality, Jews, Judaism, Poland

Counting for a *minyan*

For full-fledged collective prayers to be held in an Orthodox Jewish synagogue, the quorum of a minimum of ten adult men must be present (with "adult" traditionally meaning older than thirteen).[1] Such a quorum is called, in Hebrew, a *minyan*, "a

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count." It is the litmus test of the viability of a religious congregation, as without a *minyan* there is no collective Jewish religious life. In fact, from the perspective of normative Jewish tradition, it is the *minyan* that establishes a congregation, and per se normatively distinguishes a congregation, engaged in collective rituals, from a motley crew of worshipers praying alongside each other (Millgram 1971). "Counting for a *minyan*" (Polish: *liczenie do minianu*) has been, for several decades, one of the characteristic and common predicaments of Polish Jewish religious life, despite its apparent "renewal" after the end of communism. In Polish Jewish vernacular discourse, which one can hear at synagogues or public debates, counting for a *minyan* has become an idiom expressing the constant challenge of sustaining religious practices—one of the tenets of the new reality often contrasted with the obligatory secularism of a main Jewish organization in the communist era. Who is counted for a *minyan* is also a clearly observable expression of the denominational identity of a congregation. In Orthodox synagogues only men are counted for this quorum, while in Conservative and Progressive movements *minyan* is established by the presence of ten worshipers regardless of their gender.[2] "Counting for a *minyan*" is, therefore, a practice at the beginning of synagogue service, at the brink of a quorum, and a metaphor that captures many of the taxing attempts at negotiating belonging in one of the main Polish Jewish congregations, which has been one of the primary focal points of my ethnographic research on Poland's "Jewish revival" and its consequences (Lorenz 2013).

This transformation of Polish Jewish life created two conditions that together make ethics across borders an inevitable, if challenging, quandary: collectively shared recognition of commonality and connectedness and, in parallel, the notable disparity in moral views and judgments concerning the boundaries of that affinity (Mair and Evans, introduction to this collection). I will discuss this quandary and the attempts to overcome it in the context of the meeting of two ethical registers, one grounded in the Judaic normative tradition and another informed by vernacular affects and values.

To allow an understanding of why attempts to reach a *minyan* are so taxing, and why they can inform the debates in the anthropology of ethics to which this collection is dedicated, I need to begin with a necessarily brief introduction to the twentieth-century history of those Polish Jews who stayed and lived in Poland after the Holocaust, which the reader can supplement by referring to a sizable body of scholarship on the topic (e.g., Schatz 1991; Engel 1995, 1998; Wolak 2004; Waszkiewicz 2007; Fleming 2010; Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska 2014). My article also introduces the much less known globalized context of the "Jewish revival" in Poland and Eastern Europe, shaped and supported by global Jewish charities and religious and political projects. In this instance, my discussion here can be further contextualized by my other writings, discussions in Poland's Jewish press, and several studies which have explored or touched on the influence of Jewish charities on "revivals"

2.   There exists another intermediary practice that has emerged in the last decade when adherence to otherwise Orthodox practice is combined with egalitarian or "partnership" *minyan*, when ten men and ten women are necessary to establish the quorum. To my knowledge such a method of counting for a *minyan* in an Orthodox synagogue has not yet been implemented in Poland.

or claims to Jewishness elsewhere, and in particular in Eastern Europe after 1989 (e.g., Golbert 2001; Weiner 2003; Aviv and Shneer 2005; Hofman 2006; Kadlčik, Paziński, and Szwarcman-Czarnota 2010; Kelner 2010; Egorova and Perwez 2013; Lorenz 2013).

The Holocaust did not mark the end of the Jewish presence in Poland, despite the annihilation of over ninety percent of Polish Jewry. Many among the three hundred thousand Jewish survivors sought every opportunity to leave Poland, a place that had become a graveyard for their families, friends, and communities. Yet, at the end of the Second World War, more than a hundred thousand Jews settled in Lower Silesia, a territory seized from the German Third Reich and incorporated into Southwest Poland (e.g., Engel 1995). Many among these settlers were repatriated from the Soviet Union, to which they had escaped or been deported, either way saving their lives from the advancing Nazi German armies and the Holocaust. Many immigrants to Wrocław, the regional capital formerly known as Breslau, were non-Jewish Poles from Eastern Galicia, the part of prewar Poland incorporated at the same time into the Soviet Union. Lower Silesia was initially envisioned as a place of Jewish settlement where a fraction of prewar life could be recreated in the socialist spirit of solidarity and hope for a more tolerant Poland (Egit 1991; Cohn 2011). The infamous pogrom in Kielce in 1946, rampant postwar anti-Semitism, and the anti-Jewish campaign of 1968 shattered this illusion and forced tens of thousands of Jews leave the country (e.g., Schatz 1991; Engel 1998; Stola 2000; Gross 2006; Tych and Adamczyk-Grabowska 2014). Others chose to keep any Jewish affiliation secret while some continued their involvement in Jewish organizations. Jewish communal life continued on mostly around clubs of the completely secular TSKŻ, "Sociocultural Association of Jews in Poland" (Towarzystwo Społeczno-kulturalne Żydów w Polsce), which was supportive of the communist government, and to a lesser extent the religious "Congregations of Mosaic Faith" (Kongregacje Wyznania Mojżeszowego). Jewish organizations were gradually dwindling, as Polish Jews were emigrating, intermarrying, and choosing strategies of identification that in one way or another helped them escape prejudice and stigmatization (Grabski 1997; Waszkiewicz 2007; Grabski and Stankowski 2014).

The 1989 political shift from real socialism to liberal democracy prompted new legislation on ethnic and religious minorities. This allowed for the establishment of Poland's "Jewish Religious Communities" and called for redefining legal regulations concerning membership in the face of decades of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, often Catholic Poles. The arrival of the rabbi-emissaries sent by international Jewish charities and the establishment of a new religious infrastructure introduced conversion as a possible means of becoming Jewish. In the last twenty-five years, Polish Jewish institutions have become embedded in a global context shaped predominantly by the two largest centres of Jewish life in the contemporary world: Israel and the American Jewish diaspora (Lorenz 2013, 2016; cf. Weiner 2003; Hofman 2006).[3]

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3. The globalized transformation of Polish Jewish communal life, and legislative changes concerning minorities, coincided with a rise in Jewish cultural production predominantly organized by non-Jewish Poles for non-Jewish Poles and tourists. The latter is a viable and fascinating topic and has been the subject of outstanding scholarship

Polish Jews, and the other global actors mentioned above, found common ground based on the sense of shared collective identity. Nonetheless, this rapid transformation also created the institutional space for encounters between old and new understandings and moralities pertaining to being and becoming Jewish, which are difficult to reconcile. My intention here is not to focus in detail on all the communal boundaries in Polish Jewish religious congregations, or to discuss the extent to which this collectivity fits the anthropological and sociological models of a "community." I have engaged in this debate elsewhere, and so have my predecessors writing on contemporary Polish Jews (Gudonis 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Rosenson 2003; Lorenz 2013, 2016). My intention here is to focus strictly on the ethical dimension of boundary making and of attempts to cross those boundaries. I will begin by introducing questions concerning moral tradition, which I will then critically investigate by discussing two ethnographic vignettes from my research in Poland. The first, the analysis of which will be preceded by a brief overview of the Wrocław Jewish congregation, illustrates the moral dimension of a feud over recognition of claims to Jewish affiliation. The second vignette exemplifies how this dispute was situationally suspended in the face of paramount ethical obligations.

Rethinking the notion of "moral tradition"

The worshipers coming to the Wrocław synagogue at the time of my fieldwork, with the exception of a few individuals in their late eighties or nineties who since then have already passed to *Olam HaBa* (the Afterlife), had scarcely any knowledge of philosophical and theological discussions on Jewish ethics. Nonetheless, this article touches, from a bottom-up perspective, the very core of the debate present in modern Judaism and Jewish moral philosophy (Silver 1970; Spero 1983; Novak 1992).

The first question of that debate is: What might constitute Jewish ethics? This question invites us to consider a problem of a more general nature, key to the anthropological debate in this collection: What are the moral traditions, the "borders," that may be crossed in ethical encounters? Is the notion of a "Jewish" (and, by extension, "Christian" or "Islamic") moral tradition conceptually accurate, and does speaking within the nominally same moral and cultural tradition guarantee consensus or even communication of moral standpoints? Michael Lambek (this collection) returns to his ethnography on the Indian Ocean island of Mayotte, and makes an argument that the ethical practices and performances he describes, the "judicial" practices in his particular rendering of Aristotle's phronesis, can escape the frames of traditions, understood as "long and ongoing series of conversations or disciplinary practices constructed in a certain manner and carrying their own prejudices" (Lambek, this collection; see also *Nichomachean ethics* 1144a; Hardie 1980: 236). Lambek renders traditions of thought and practice, and, by extension, of ethics, as heterogeneous and overlapping, while often incommensurable, and

(e.g., Lehrer 2013; Waligórska 2013). Nonetheless, this cultural renaissance has little to do with the specific topic of this article and the two phenomena should not be equated, let alone mistaken for one another.

as created by the accretion of disputes, interactions, material instances when ethics become objectified in writings, stories, and codices. This understanding of tradition can be applied to *halakhah*—the normative Jewish tradition—and its own set of ethical obligations, prohibitions, and historically accrued debates. Lambek's propositions, explicated in the context of medieval Christian literature and theology by John Marenbon (this collection), suggest that it is precisely those instances where ethics crosses borders which reveal the limits of philosophical theories, like Alasdair MacIntyre's (1988, 2007), that inadequately account for the hybrid and elusive nature of moral traditions. Critically investigating the boundaries of a moral tradition is the first of the key problems I will discuss. In the theological and philosophical perspective, "Jewish moral tradition" cannot, for example, be envisioned as separate from Greek ethical thought in particular, which became an intellectual inspiration and conceptual reference in medieval Jewish ethics, the prime example of which is Maimonides' *Eight chapters*, informed by the practical philosophy of Aristotle (Zank 2005; see also Cohen 2004). How do such convergences, commonalities, and divisions play out in real-life moral accounts and practices and in the need to reconcile ethical differences?

Second, do ethics that could be attributable to the Jewish moral tradition exist outside the *halakhah* as well as secular Jewish philosophy? This part of my inquiry is directed at the heterogeneity of what constitutes "Jewish moral tradition" and the possibility of ethics across borders, when moralities are not of a different cultural provenance, but of a different nature, grounded on the one hand in theology and on the other in affects. Already in Aristotle, the formation of ethical subjects involves habituation of emotional dispositions, as much as the formation of virtues and of the practical rationality needed to realize them (MacIntyre 2007). The relationship between emotions and morals, however, came to prominence in the works of the Earl of Shaftesbury (Anthony Ashley-Cooper), Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and perhaps most notably in the arguments of David Hume that moral judgments and dispositions are predominantly grounded not in reason, but in sentiments and passions (Nussbaum 2001; Cohon 2008; Throop 2012). This understanding of morals, in which reasoning was supplanted by natural sentiments like desire and empathy, understood to drive human acts and judgments, met with staunch criticism, particularly from the deontological and rationalist perspective of Immanuel Kant, who was, nevertheless, considerably influenced by Hume (Guyer 2010). While the latter's radical moral sentimentalism has found few proponents, the acknowledgment of the role of emotions in ethical reasoning cannot, and should not, be overlooked (Justin and Jacobson 2000; Prinz 2006). As much as an anthropological theory of ethics may be grounded in deontology and in virtue ethics, acknowledgment of the role of affect may help us to forge a more encompassing understanding of moral encounters across borders. Moral conflicts can originate not (only) in differences between "discourses" or "cultures," but (also) between the different lived experiences of people nominally identifying themselves with the same religious and ethnic collectivity. Moralities, according to Jarrett Zigon (2009), can take the form of institutional regulations, written laws, conventions of moral conduct, and "public discourse." Another "aspect" of morality he identifies are the "embodied dispositions in one's everyday way of being in the world" (ibid.: 260), which will be of particular significance in relation to the following discussion.

My voice in the debate presented in this collection is informed by an ethics of affiliation which has two aspects. The first has to do with contentious moral judgments over claims to Jewishness, which serve as a differentiating regime coexistent with other formal and informal criteria of "rightful" affiliation and accepted affinity, primarily in conversation with the theoretical propositions of Joel Robbins (2004, 2007) and Jarrett Zigon (2007, 2009). The second aspect, in considering the possibility of ethics across boundaries and ways of managing incommensurability of moral standpoints and sentiments, involves a discussion of ethical practices that situationally transcend vernacular, halakhic, and institutional criteria of commonality and connectedness without structurally resolving their relative incommensurability into a lasting consensus.

A feud in the synagogue

From August 2009 to September 2010, I was doing ethnographic fieldwork at and around the Jewish Religious Community (JRC) in the Lower Silesian city of Wrocław, an institution in charge of local synagogues and cemeteries engaged primarily in the organization of religious life and social care for Wrocław's Jews.[4] The JRC also organized Jewish education for children and courses preparing for conversion to Judaism. After economic trouble and political crisis culminated in 2006, this semi-independent body was formally degraded to a local branch of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, and lost a degree of political and financial independence, but remained the central institutional organizer of local Jewish sociality and religiosity. As an institution and the node of local Jewish sociality and religiosity, the JRC anchored my study, yet my research followed individuals and forms of Polish Jewish collective life and self-understanding that emerged in a rapid transformation commonly referred to as Poland's "Jewish renewal" or "revival." Consequently, apart from participant observation and unstructured interviews at the JRC, my research also involved traveling across Poland and conducting research as far as Israel and the United Kingdom. I was following my research participants and visiting places, people, translocal events, and programs in religious and secular Jewish education. I supplemented my qualitative research by charting the microhistory of the Wrocław congregation, and analyzing narratives about the Polish Jewish past and present, including visions of Polish Jewry in the wake of the crumbling of the Polish People's Republic twenty years earlier.

The number of the congregation members oscillated at around three hundred, fluctuating with each newcomer or an elderly member passing away. The life of

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4. The reader should be aware that my omission of particular details about my research participants, who are not public figures, and who are not directly relevant for the case described here, is a deliberate writing strategy arising from an ethical obligation. I should also note that minor personal biographical details have been changed for the sake of anonymity. The acceptance of such self-imposed limits on representation is, in every case, not easy for an anthropologist, but inevitable in the light of concerns I occasionally encountered, and which, for the sake of space, cannot be fully addressed here (see Lorenz 2013).

the congregation centered on several places on Włodkowica Street, all belonging to the JRC: the small *shul* (Yiddish for "synagogue") used for weekly prayers, the kosher canteen, the Jewish Youth Club "Sof Haderech," and the grand White Stork Synagogue managed by an external cultural foundation, but nonetheless temporarily reappropriated by the JRC during major Jewish holidays. Although the JRC had only had an Orthodox rabbi and service, very few people were religious in the sense of either subscribing to the laws of *kashrut*, ritual purity, or taking part in religious prayers other than at major events. To formally accept a candidate for membership, the Wrocław JRC required documents certifying one's Jewish ethnic ancestry or religious conversion to Judaism. Each application based on such "proofs" required the recommendation of two JRC members. In Orthodox Judaism, to which the Wrocław JRC officially adhered, one is Jewish only by being born to a Jewish mother or by undergoing an Orthodox conversion. The institutional criteria of the Polish Union of JRCs and per se in the Wrocław JRC required the candidate for membership either to be of "Jewish descent," which in practice meant having at least one Jewish grandparent, or to undergo conversion, not necessarily Orthodox (see Lorenz 2016). Prior to 1997, the criteria of this formal affiliation reflected those of Orthodox Judaism, but were made to be more lenient to reflect the fact that nearly all potential new members came from intermarried families and few were born to Jewish mothers.

At that time, the rabbi of the Wrocław community was Yitzchak Rapoport, an emissary of "Shavei Israel" (Hebrew for "Israel Returns"). Born in Sweden in 1977 to a Polish Jewish mother, who among thousands of people was coerced to emigrate from Poland in 1968 in the anti-Semitic campaign orchestrated by the communist government, he finished his rabbinical studies in Jerusalem, served as the rabbi of Oslo, and later moved back to Israel. Shavei Israel, which sent him to Poland, was an Israel-based organization engaged in providing support for a number of Jewish groups around the world, many of which claim ancient affiliations with the Lost Tribes of Israel or ancestors who have been subject to forced conversions, such as the Portuguese and Spanish *conversos* or *marranos* (cf. Egorova and Perwez 2013; Shavei Israel 2015). Since 2006, Shavei Israel has also emerged as a key Jewish charity organization supporting religious life in Poland's JRCs. The organization's agenda stressed that very aspect of Polish Jewish experience: of Poland as the home to a collectivity of "hidden Jews," that is, people who came from families that disavowed any Jewish affiliation in the communist period or in the wake of the Holocaust (Freund 2008; Shavei Israel 2015).

The two ethnographic examples presented here take place in a similar spot in the fragmented life of the congregation at the time of my research: the small *shul*, which used to be the main location of communal religious practice every Shabbat (i.e., on Friday evenings and Saturdays) and during Jewish religious holidays. It was simply a recently refurbished room in a U-shaped and century-old complex of buildings that enveloped the square before the White Stork Synagogue, a neoclassical beige structure that served most of the time as a tourist attraction and a Jewish museum. The contrast at that time between the majestic White Stork and the small *shul* was strikingly symptomatic of the ambivalence in the "revival," as the number of newcomers and converts could hardly offset the passing away of the elderly members or the disappearance of those who were emigrating or drifting away from Jewish

social activities and communal affiliation. The bulk of the Shabbat congregants were locals numbering, on different occasions, from a few individuals to around twenty, including prospective converts without Jewish ancestry. Occasionally, the synagogue had visitors such as expats, foreign tourists, and guests from Jewish congregations in other Polish cities. Among the regular attendees were also men and women who had come to the congregation without documents that would certify their claims to Jewishness. Instead, they brought stories of sudden family revelations, unsettling premonitions, or tales about an inexplicable sense of closeness. It was the presence of these individuals that provoked the feud over affiliation, the ethical dimension of which I will discuss here.

The *shul* was itself a material relic of the former community of the German Jews in Breslau and had served the Polish Jews of Wrocław for more than sixty-five years. The large room was rectangular with a *bimah*, the platform for Torah reading, in the centre, as customary in Orthodox synagogues. In the front was *Aron HaKodesh*, the ark that sheltered the synagogue's Torah scrolls, and in the back a makeshift *babiniec*, as it is called in Polish, the part of the *shul* where women stayed hidden behind a wooden *mechitzah*, or partition wall. Orthodox Rabbi Rapoport had had it installed after his appointment in 2006. As far as personal anonymities and intragroup divisions went, these were difficult to play out in the physical separation between groups of congregants, as was the case in the large Moscow Choral Synagogue described in the study of ethnic conflict among Muscovian Jewry by Sasha Goluboff (2001). Everyone had to manage in a relatively small space, and the congregants usually sat together with their friends or closest acquaintances. The left side was usually occupied by alternating rows of middle-aged Jews, the elderly, and the young newcomers, and the other side by the eldest and most revered synagogue attendees from before the revival era, with a mix of regular older non-Jewish visitors (usually Evangelical Christians) sitting in the last rows along with more occasional guests—who inconspicuously took those seats closest to the entrance.

During the latter part of *Shacharit*, the morning prayer, on one Saturday in October 2009, the *shul* was filled with two dozen congregants. When I arrived and took my usual place on one of wooden benches dating from the prewar German Jewish community, congregants were already trickling in, with everyone having arrived by the time we reached the first main section of the service, the *Shema* prayer, following the customary blessings and psalms. All present uttered "Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One," covering their eyes with a hand to induce concentration upon proclaiming this tenet of the Jewish faith (cf. *Shulchan Aruch: Orach Chaim* 61:5). The service culminated in *Amidah*, the central individual prayer, which was in turn followed by the most tangibly collective part of the *Shacharit* service, namely, Torah reading. Among those gathered were three young men who were to be given special roles—and honor. Two of the chosen were affiliated with families from the JRC, but did not have halakhic status. It was the presence of third one, Stefan, however, that prompted Zygmunt and Czesław, two members of the second generation, to throw in comments about the "gentiles" coming to the synagogue. Besides Stefan, they were also referring to another descendant of "hidden Jews" present at the service. Although they quietened their voices enough not to disturb the service, they still made themselves audible enough to signify their disapproval. As the *shul* was small, it was not difficult to hear their

comments or feel the uneasiness they produced among the gathering. The rabbi paid no heed to these disturbances, as he had not earlier, but asked Stefan to help him wrap the Torah after the service. Another young man was charged with opening and closing of the *Aron HaKodesh* and another with "robing" the Torah, by putting on the "mantle," a cover of velvet fabric, an ornamental breastplate, and a silver crown mounted on the staves of the Torah scroll. The rabbi counted Stefan and others like him for a *minyan*, but I never witnessed him inviting them to the ritual part of the religious service, *aliyah* (Hebrew for "ascension")—that is, being summoned to read a passage from the Torah while standing on the aforementioned *bimah*—in which their participation would have caused an upheaval.[5] Performatively, the rabbi thus enacted Stefan's inclusion into the congregation, yet at the same time he respected to some degree the sensibilities of the discontents.

Stefan has long known that his mother had been found at a railway station as a baby, by a worker who placed her in a Jewish orphanage. There, she spent her childhood and was eventually adopted by the Polish Catholic family of the very same railway man who had found her. Stefan's mother could not remember much beyond a few names of her Jewish friends and a traditional song for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. Shortly before Stefan came of age, his brother went to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and found documents suggesting, but not conclusively certifying, that their mother was Jewish. It was not a secret among the congregants that he was allowed to join the community with the rabbi's support, which ensured that the tentative documents he presented were considered. As such, Stefan, at the time of my research in 2009 and 2010, was still very much a liminal character, focusing many of the longstanding anxieties and feuds over affinity and affiliation that I came to understand only gradually (Lorenz 2013, 2016).

One of the early studies that emerged in the wake of Poland's Jewish revival, by Claire Rosenson (1996), stressed the importance of generational distinctions in how claims to Jewishness were assessed and recognized; and, in general, age generations have been appropriated as a model typology of Polish Jewish identities (e.g., Datner and Melchior 1997; Reszke 2013). While generational distinctions cannot be overlooked, however, they do not neatly translate into idiomatic worldviews or moral standpoints. The divisions are deeply embedded in the disparity between claims to Jewishness enabled by the remaking of Polish Jewish communal institutions and the legacy of otherness, and solidarities and anxieties that cannot solely be attributed to the trauma of the Holocaust or one-off political events, but rather derive from the whole period of postwar Jewish experiences in Poland (Lorenz 2013, 2016). Particularly significant in illuminating the background of these processes have been Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska (1996), Małgorzata Melchior (1990, 2004), and Joanna Wiszniewicz (2004, 2008), who have rendered the extent and depth to which the wartime survivors and their children, called the "second generation," were traumatized by the Holocaust, the March 1968 anti-Jewish campaign, and the precariousness and stigmatization Polish Jews experienced after the war.

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5. Reading the Hebrew alphabet was not of any significance here, as readers could have been and were provided with transliterated copies of a given passage, a common practice in the Wrocław synagogue, as some congregants do not read Hebrew.

The issue of Stefan's claim to Jewishness—and the attitude toward those of the rabbi's protégés without documented "proofs" or familial ties to the collectivity of Wrocław's Jews, alive or dead—was highly divisive at the time of my fieldwork. Members of the generation born after the war, who have lived most of their lives in the communist period, were particularly unsettled by the newcomers as they lacked what the two men mentioned above saw as legitimate claims to join the JRC in either a formal or an informal sense. One of the elderly discontents, Tadeusz, was a retired engineer, who was affiliated for years with the TSKŻ and later on with the resurgent JRC. Distinctive owing to his strong physique and scarred nose, he was a former member of the local boxing club, "Gwardia." He told me that he never shrank from a fight when faced with prejudice, and always played tough when anyone threw an anti-Semitic slur at him. Fighting back, not giving up, and keeping up ties with Jewish peers and his family who emigrated to Israel were as much a part of his life as being completely integrated into Polish life and having a succession of non-Jewish spouses. He considered his Jewishness a matter of birth and nationhood, and hardly a religious affiliation, which was not surprising as his whole generation grew up in times when Jewish religious life was shunned and in constant decline, as in other counties of the communist bloc (cf. Markowitz 1995; Hofman 2006). When I spoke to him about his attitude toward newcomers, he pointed to Jewish family background as an understandable and acceptable motivation, even when this amounted to only having one Jewish grandparent. Jewish affiliation for Tadeusz seemed therefore relegated exclusively to the realm of essentialized ethnicity. He could not comprehend the motivations of those who would take upon themselves an identity that has been experienced for so long as inalienable and stigmatizing, unless they were already "marked" by at least partial Jewish ancestry, as if in the Polish reality he experienced it was something one could run from, but never escape.

The contentious ethics of Jewish affinity

The sentiments and understandings encountered by expat rabbis and other emissaries of foreign NGOs are characteristic of the distinct collective experiences of the Polish Jewish minority from before the Second World War, through the time of the Holocaust and the postwar period, to the present day. Jews retain a persistent ambivalence in Poland's cultural imaginaries, and at least in some circles of Polish society the sense of collective identity and nationhood is defined, constituted, and fortified in imaginative contrast to Jewish otherness (cf. Cała 1992, 2012; Michlic 2006; Tokarska-Bakir 2008; Janion 2009; Jeziorski 2009; Zubrzycki 2011; Lorenz 2013).

Partially, the sense of belonging to the JRC of Wrocław was still related to the legacy of such mutual recognition and trust. These notions of connectedness followed the "blood logic" of biological ancestry, which came to be characteristic of American Jewish post-Holocaust discourse, as Susan Glenn (2002) argues, but also sometimes invoked the sense of habituated "culture" (either referred to as *kultura*, or rendered descriptively) that—as some of my interlocutors believed—could not really be learned otherwise than by growing up in a Jewish family and social environment (for a detailed explanation, see Lorenz 2016). The congregants shared

stories and jokes while in the synagogue, kosher canteen, or during Jewish holiday celebrations, gossiped about failing health, the politics of the JRC, relatedness, vivid romances, tales of deceit and moral shortcomings, sudden deaths, ungrateful children, madness and solitude, departures and returns, the situation in Israel and Polish politics. Above these were narratives of comradeship and animosity going back years, drawn from their own lives and those of the parents and grandparents they knew—people who mattered in one way or another. Abram, an elderly and unwaveringly elegant gentleman, whose whole middle-class Krakowian family perished in the Holocaust, told me how after the war the displaced survivors and returnees from the Soviet Union used to inconspicuously recognize each other by saying *amhu* (Hebrew: "the folk" or literally "his people").[6] If someone answered *amhu*, it meant that he or she could be trusted in the precarious postwar years of violent anti-Semitism. It was precisely that word, as he assured me with a smile, which was uttered when he first met my own grandfather (cf. Lorenz 2013). Abram, like one of the few remaining oldest members of the congregation, was not unnerved by Stefan's claim to Jewishness, although he could not fathom the reason for anyone wanting to become Jewish in Poland and took the whole idea of becoming Jewish with a grain of salt. He was, nonetheless, willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. "Maybe he is in it for real," he told me in 2010, and indeed he seemed to allow Stefan's conduct and engagement to speak for the validity of the latter's claim.

Family ties and the obligation to "keep alive" the tradition of one's ancestors—which was nearly obliterated in the Holocaust and then suppressed by the postwar communist regime—have been stressed already in studies of the narratives of Jewish identity in Poland and in my own research (Gebert 2008; Krajewski 2010; Lorenz 2013; Reszke 2013; Melchior 2014; Rosenson 1996).[7] Consequently, some of the JRC members and sympathizers in their twenties and thirties harbored similar reservations toward newcomers without Jewish families and familial memories. Still, their reservations were more toned down and ambivalent, and understandably so, as the possibility of their own "Jewish becoming" was enabled by the transformation of the criteria of the "revival," which allowed those of partial and nonmatrilineal ancestry to join the JRCs in the first place (Grabski 1997; Lorenz 2013). The attitudes of Rabbi Rapoport (and other foreign rabbis)—like the acceptance of converts—found most support among members of the congregation whose own being and becoming Jewish is warranted by the politics and moralities of affinity forged in the "revival," with its reestablishment of Polish Jewish rabbinical authorities. Some of them were non-Jewish converts or those Jewish-born congregants whose personal choices and biographies used to correspond more to a morality of becoming rather than familiarity, like returnees to Judaism after a period of devout Christian

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6.   Ruth Gay (2002: 9) offers a comparative account of how *amhu* was used as a form of inconspicuous identification in postwar displaced persons camps in Germany (see also Lorenz 2013).

7.   Erica Lehrer (2013) has shown how such commitments can inform the sense of affinity among Poles who identify with Jews, but the crux of the matter here was not only commemoration of a collectivity, but also harboring a relation to concrete and specific family members.

practice. Judgments as to who has the right to be and become Jewish sometimes were held by those also subscribing to a particular objectified ontology of Jewish affinity and becoming, informed by the theology of a particular strain of Judaism or the Israeli Law of Return. Moral valuations and judgments of affiliation were, however, made tangibly in reference to one's own position within the "revival" and the postwar Jewish life that preceded it, one's own sources of legitimacy for identity claims, and one's own personal experiences (cf. Lorenz 2013, 2016). Although, at the time of Rabbi Rapoport, men and women were separated in religious practice by a *mechitzah*, such division did not reflect any gender-based disparities in how Jewish affiliation was thought of and felt.

It is easier to understand the sentiments of Zygmunt, Czesław, or Tadeusz when we take into account that commonality and connectedness grounded in the sense of shared Jewish ancestry, ethnicity, and sociality, or, alternatively, experienced as a stigmatizing mark to be hidden and denied, were, specifically for those born during or after the Holocaust, the primary and often the only form of Jewish affiliation (Lorenz 2013; cf. Melchior 1990, 2004; Datner and Melchior 1997). Likewise, the enabling of becoming is not dissociated from moral sentiments and obligations. Tyson Herberger, who took the post of the Wrocław rabbi in 2013, mentioned in a conversation we had in the spring the following year that he was aware of the gap between the affinity and possibilities of affiliation of those who do not, as he said, fit into the framework of *halakhah*. "My heart is broken and I cry for them, sometimes literally," he said, sitting at a table opposite me in a café just next to the synagogue square, referring not to a halakhic obligation or essentialist notions of connectedness, but to what he felt was morally wrong. Rabbi Herberger found the motives of those who rejected unaffiliated newcomers and converts to be "repugnant," although his choice of harsh words was already coming from his stirred heart, as I could see how aggravated he was by our talking about it. The old-timers understood the rabbis' arguments and accepted their religious authority; I have heard and seen many displays and statements of respect, although these did not necessarily extend to being swayed by either rabbi's arguments (cf. Lorenz 2016). Yet the indignation and disapproval of the elderly belonged to a different ontology of Jewishness, habituated and impossible to isolate from the reminiscences and emotions that shaped it. Neither Yitzchak Rapoport nor Tyson Herberger was ignorant of these boundaries and both used every occasion to explicate what constitutes "proper" attitudes toward converts (Herberger) and newcomers without documents proving their ancestry (Rapoport), as much as their skill in Polish allowed.[8] However, the gap was a question not of a lack of understanding or the deliberate rejection of authoritative discourse, but of different rationalities of affinity (for a more extensive discussion, see Lorenz 2013). Rabbi Tyson explicitly confessed to me of being at a loss as to how to "bridge that gap" between religious recognition

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8. Rapoport was fairly fluent in Polish and Herberger less so, but in any case both rabbis were able to communicate with JRC members. The other two rabbis who worked in Wrocław in the post-1989 period did not speak Polish at all and reportedly had to rely on translators.

and social acceptance of coverts, who at first faced similar issues to that described in the feud above.[9]

In a sense, this conflict between two sets of values and moral sentiments echoes the situation described by Joel Robbins, in an apparently dissimilar context of cultural change. His ethnographic analysis of the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea, following both traditional religious beliefs and charismatic Christianity, was among the first to answer James Laidlaw's call to venture beyond the arguably ossified Durkheimian paradigm which conflates morality with social norms in a determinist fashion, and supplant it with attention to freedom in moral practice (Laidlaw 2002; Robbins 2004, 2007). Instead of seeking to replace the notion of morality as routine and reproduced social norms, and the Durkheimian idea of "all normative social action as having moral content," with individual freedom of ethical conduct and self-formation, Robbins transposes these analytical stand-points onto particular configurations of culturally warranted "value complexes" (Robbins 2007: 311). In the case of the Urapmin, these are grounded in two diffe-rent religious systems: their traditional beliefs and the charismatic Christianity that they adopted in late 1970s. In Robbins' analysis, a "morality of freedom" seems almost an anomaly, a result of cultural changes that "upend previously stable value hierarchies" (ibid.). His study indicates not only that the Urapmin have interna-lized the charismatic Christian morality of individual freedom, but also that this morality has gained dominance over their traditional religion. Still, the conten-tious communitarian demands of the two value systems have not been resolved, but coexist and cause, as Robbins puts it, a "moral torment" of constant disso-nance (Robbins 2004, 2007).

Robbins' theoretical proposals have been countered by Jarrett Zigon (2007, 2009), who draws upon ethnographic research in Russia. Here, ethics as moral rea-soning and reflection comes to the fore most tangibly in a moral crisis. Rather than understanding homeostatic and dynamic aspects of moral conduct as separate value spheres of "reproduction" and "freedom," Zigon argues that the coexistence of multiple moralities among his Muscovite subjects was a constant and ordinary existential condition. As he maintains, "When some event or person intrudes into the everyday life of a person and forces her to consciously reflect upon the appro-priate ethical response" (2007: 262), a "moral breakdown" is produced: an instance of reflexivity to accommodate the problem and return to a habituated state of "mo-rality." Every moral breakdown, however, is supposed to change one's moral dis-positions and feeds into the institutional and public discourses of morality. Zigon argues that his research participants had a number of moral discourses at their disposal, from Russian Orthodox prohibitions to opportunistic morals of survival and advancement in the corporate workplace. They situationally shifted between different moralities in order to act ethically, in their own sense and according to the interpersonal relations and the social context they were in.

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9. Although the question of what constitutes Judaism as a religion is beyond the scope of my article, these nonreligious criteria defining the boundaries of the synagogue con-gregation and its rituals support Talal Asad's (1993) criticism of the narrow under-standing of religion as an autonomous system of meanings and practices.

In the JRC of Wroclaw, the morality of becoming has not become personally internalized alongside the morality of familiarity. Consequently, their encounter did not create socially shared yet individually tormenting dilemmas of choosing between two seemingly incommensurable sets of moral obligations or repertoires of moral discourses pragmatically mobilized in different circumstances when dealing with claims to Jewish affinity. Ancestral ties, affinity, and trust, on the one hand, and newly introduced religious ethics of being and becoming Jewish, on the other, were juxtaposed in the social setting of the JRC, belonging to different registers of experience and reflection and, hence, different rationalities of what constitutes a morally legitimate claim to belong. The moral crisis concerned the collectivity and not individuals and it did not bring about resolution or accommodation that would resolve the teeming feud over belonging, recurrently becoming more heated. The crisis was—as I learned—a part of JRC life long before I began my research, and was confronted by each foreign rabbi who arrived in Wrocław with a vision of how the congregation should treat newcomers. The ethical dimension of the feud and compassion at the *shul* both suggest that we are dealing here not with a confrontation of moral traditions as sets of definable propositions, but with moral sensibilities which, in some aspects, can be divisive and in other aspects can produce ethical acts which bridge over the apparent differences that I elaborated on earlier.

This confrontation was only possible owing to the moral ideal of transnational Jewish solidarity, which fueled the global support for the project of Poland's "Jewish revival" in the first place. The tangible global embedding of Wrocław JRC in a vast international network of solidarities, dependencies, and global ethnoreligious projects spanning Israel and the Jewish diaspora produced, if not a moral crisis, then a continuous moral dissonance within the JRC (Lorenz 2013). Even so, convergences and discrepancies between different understandings of and judgments on claims to Jewish belonging are not necessarily divided along the boundary between the global and the local, even if the moralities of becoming and belonging clearly originate in either scale. An example of that would be the theology of *zera yisroel*, "seed of Israel," espoused by the Shavei Israel, which valorizes conversion of people with non-halakhic Jewish ancestry (Amsalem 2011; Ellenson 2014: 213–20; Tepper 2011; see also Amsalem 2010). It converges with the sensibilities of many members of the JRC, who acknowledge that Jewish affiliation and self-understanding in Poland does not conform to strict halakhic rules of belonging and who morally approve of the conversion of individuals from intermarried families.

Managing incommensurability: Personal virtues and acts of compassion

Upon my return to Wrocław in 2013, I lived on the premises of the JRC for several months, curious to see whether and how the congregation and the synagogue have changed with the coming of Rabbi Herberger, the aforementioned Modern Orthodox Rabbi and the second in the line of successors of Rabbi Rapoport. The *mechitzah* was demolished, in line with the relatively more liberal attitude of the new rabbi and the expectations of a large number of congregants. The disparities I had observed earlier did not disappear, however, although they became less pronounced. Kinship and familiarity remained as the informal criteria of viable

relatedness, but time changed how they were applied to those individuals who gained the trust and wide sympathy of people coming to the *shul*. While communal boundaries based on recognized kinship were effectively difficult to transgress, much in this development of familiarity and trust depended on a candidate's moral conduct. In the four years since my first prolonged ethnographic research in Wrocław, Stefan repeatedly acted as a volunteer, actively participated in community life, and showed respect for other congregants, especially elders. As became apparent both from what the elderly told me and from the interactions I witnessed, his ethical behavior and commitment allowed him to integrate with the congregation. By contrast, another young adult, in his early twenties, who arrived at the JRC at roughly the same time, was believed to have acted immorally in his business endeavors and was accused of taking advantage of his informal affiliation with the JRC. Yet another convert was shunned for what were seen by many as the religious fanaticism and hard-line judgmental attitude of a neophyte. It was a process in which one's moral behavior outside the community, social status, and willingness to participate in and contribute to the local communal life were all put on a scale alongside virtues like honesty and dignity.

In the first part of my article I had to introduce the politics of affinity in the JRC and explain the institutional, religious, and vernacular criteria of belonging, which are often informed by notions of moral obligation and transgression. Nevertheless, the ethical aspect of the politics of affinity and affiliation is of particular importance not only because it permeates and solidifies divisions informed by incongruent understandings, religious laws, and inadequate institutional criteria of Jewishness, but also because it enables the transgression or even situational adjournment of communal divides.

While transposing the boundaries of moral convictions and sentiments can be difficult, most JRC members and transnational rabbis have adopted a pragmatic strategy of compromise. This is a necessity in a collectivity so small that the arrival or departure of each socially active member is strongly felt. A tangible ethical *telos* that unites all parties engaged in the small aging JRC is its survival, which hinges on whether new members are brought into its sociality and kept engaged (Lorenz 2013; see Myerhoff 1994 for a similar case in the American Jewish context). All the same, such conflicts can also be temporarily suspended on moral grounds. One example was the *yorzeit*, a yearly commemoration ceremony, for the deceased child of an Orthodox and pious congregation member, who, for the sake of convenience, I will refer to here as Tomasz. The *yorzeit* was yet another *Shacharit* in the small *shul*, this in the midst of spring bloom, four and a half years later. The mourner announced through the Facebook page of the "Forum of Polish Jews" that he would like men who can be counted for an Orthodox *minyan* to come—this means, effectively, adult and presumably undeniably Jewish men who would fulfill the ritual obligation for the collective prayers to be held. This time more was at stake, for the ritual was not solely the fulfillment of a commandment, *mitzvah*, to celebrate Shabbat, but a personal ritual act to commemorate a dear and tragically deceased daughter.

That Saturday, the *shul* was filled with people: the very few remaining representatives of the oldest generation, born before the war; the largely religiously indifferent congregants born in the postwar communist reality, many of whom were already in their sixties; and the group of those who joined in the reality of the

postsocialist "renewal," men and women, halakhically Jewish, with "Jewish roots" and a few whose identity claims were woven more from narratives of self than from actual family ties, let alone religious conversions. I saw familiar faces, including those who stopped coming to the synagogue out of indignation at the presence of converts and resignation at the passing away of figureheads of the prewar Jewish world. This moment did not bring about a solution to the incommensurable moralities of affinity, but situationally it made these discrepancies less relevant in the face of a much more profound ethical responsibility. While Stefan, as I said, had by that time become accepted, not least because of what were perceived as his dedication and ethical conduct toward the elderly, similar conflicts, which I cannot explicate here owing to lack of space, emerged or gained momentum. At that very moment of *yorzeit*, not a single utterance or gesture revealed any of these animosities. These seemed to vanish in the sublime moment of commemoration and respect.

The religious requirement of establishing the congregation of worshipers by gathering a quorum of ten Jewish men was of primary ritual importance for the memorial ceremony organized by the pious father. The overwhelming response to his call fulfilled the ritual requirement that enabled the mourner's Kaddish prayer to be said in the morning synagogue service, but still the effort and presence of the vast majority of men and women who came did not have that ritual significance, but served as a sign of moral support. Tomasz's face and voice expressed genuine gratitude toward every man and woman he approached to wish them "Gut Shabbes!" (Yiddish: good Shabbat) and to personally thank them for coming. This act of kindness and commitment was not on this or any other occasion explicitly attributed to following any set of specifically Jewish precepts, an ethical tradition objectified in writing. Although few among the men present had ever read or even heard of *Pirkei Avos* (or *Avot*), *Ethics of the Fathers*, the classical and renowned ethical treatise in Judaism, this shared act of compassion inadvertently—as much as I could tell—fitted the opinion of Shimon the Righteous that the world, apart from being based on Torah and service to G-d, rests also on fulfillment of "kind deeds" (*Pirkei Avos* 1:2).

It was equally a question of the empathy, compassion, and solidarity of those who came, regardless of their personal animosities and denominational preferences—an ethical act across borders, at least those I have described here, an act of compassion that is common to Judaic and Christian moral traditions, but the goal of establishing this momentary ethical consensus was never explicitly declared, if still enacted in interactions. In that sense it is perhaps impossible to ascertain to what extent this was an act of ethics across borders or a performative reference to an untraceable metaframe of ethics shared across moral traditions and habituated as doxa. At the same time, religious-moral ritual obligations like *yorzeit* require the presence of individuals who are unanimously halakhic, therefore some degree of consensus is required. Thus, the moral dissonance was alleviated by the fact that among the men present there were more than ten Jewish men unanimously recognized as Jewish, in the ritual sense, by all of the congregants. We see here a distinct contrast with Zigon's suggestion—what is clearly a "moral breakdown" for the JRC, to use his term, does not produce a lasting change, but temporary relegation of otherwise incommensurable difference to another plane of significance, an act that allows for the performance of a ritual with gravity unfettered by squabbles over claims to Jewish belonging.

Conclusions

Members of the JRC, its expat rabbis, emissaries of global Jewish organizations, educators, and frequent visitors affiliated with JRCs elsewhere in Poland all consider and declare themselves part of the same collectivity of Jewish people. As such, they are at least nominally bound to the Jewish ethical and cultural tradition grounded in the Torah and centuries of rabbinical ethical debates. Still, this shared ascription did not alleviate the moral conflict over the possibility of crossing the boundary of belonging that for so long seemed inalienable in the Polish Jewish collective experience. The relatively local, habituated, and historically grounded morality of affinity and affiliation that I have discussed is subject to questioning by the new authorities and implanted discourses of Jewishness. The new morality of individual choice and Jewish becoming was accepted mostly by those who were themselves liminal to the JRC, or, predominantly, by an increasing and visibly growing group of those congregants who were themselves enabled in their Jewish becoming by the new ontologies of Jewishness. The criteria of ascription are not restricted to the moral virtues and vices of newcomers, inasmuch as affiliation with the JRC is hardly the only instance when Jewish ethics comes to the fore. Yet the point when moral valuation meets the negotiation of belonging is particularly suitable for discussing ethics across borders. The encounters in the JRC were not between homeostatic and dynamic moralities, as in the cases analyzed by Zigon and Robbins, but between moralities operating in different emotional and cultural registers. This limited the possibility of cultural translation, of a consensus, owing not to the unwillingness of the participants, but rather to the relative incommensurability of ethics of connectedness grounded, on the one hand, in theology and individualism, and, on the other hand, kinship, shared fate, and familiarity. What seemingly and nominally could be categorized as a single Jewish moral tradition was in fact a heterogeneous arena of ethical dissent created by the rapid juxtaposition of different scales and geographies of being Jewish in the contemporary world.

The paradoxical situation specific to this ethnographic case is that the moral conflict, while informed considerably by practical recognition of the religious authority of the Torah and its interpretations, is not between a particular religious and ethical agenda and local moral values—like the dissonance in Simon Coleman's study of the Word of Life movement between the American Prosperity Christians and the Swedish culture of moderation (this collection; see also Coleman 2000), or between the adopted Pentecostalism and traditional religion of the Urapmin (Robbins 2004, 2007). All parties involved subscribe to the Jewish tradition and a sense of solidarity and shared belonging to the Jewish people. The local congregants recognize rabbis and emissaries as fellow Jews, whether or not they recognize a particular rabbi as a source of knowledge and moral authority. The rabbis were not merely conveyors of ethical precepts, but ethical subjects equally formed by the distinct circumstances of their background, coming of age, education, and life experiences. The new globalized sociality juxtaposed personal idiosyncrasies of moral understanding and affect, fostered by different geographies of Jewish life: Poland, the United States, and Israel. Unlike in the case described by Coleman (this collection), the moral disapproval did not come from beyond the JRC, as the coming rabbis are not actively involved in proselytism among non-Jews and the outside

Polish public has limited knowledge and interest in Jewish religious life. The dissonance emerged within the communal boundaries. Different moralities did not create tormenting incommensurability or complacent juxtaposition within individuals, but coexisted in the sociality and religious practice of the JRC.

For the most part, the members of the JRC did not internalize in any individual sense the old/new halakhic ethics concerning the boundaries of the Jewish people and the possibility of transgression. Consequently, they were neither constantly tormented by their incommensurability, nor shuffling to and fro between them in different life situations, like in the cases described by Robbins and Zigon, respectively. Most JRC members knew the newly introduced rabbinical criteria of claims to Jewish belonging and becoming, and did not challenge their authority. Instead, they relied on their own sentiments and a practical wisdom informed by life experiences in making moral judgments of these claims, just as rabbis relied primarily on the *halakhah*. The possibility of ethical consensus was impeded by the incommensurability of halakhic and vernacular criteria of Jewish belonging in this particular time and place, but also between different moral sentiments harbored in such distant realties of being Jewish as Israel, the United States, and Poland. The trust and the sense of familiarity that gradually shifted the positioning of Stefan, and those newcomers who gained the acceptance of the congregation, are not criteria that can be codified. The moral commitment that gathered congregants and made them set aside feuds and animosities was again hardly traceable—or indeed traced by them—to a definite moral tradition or set of precepts. This prompts us to consider the role of emotions in shaping morality, without necessarily falling into the traps of reductionism and determinism that are bound to characterize any monocausal explanation of this phenomenon. Understanding the ethics of counting for a *minyan*, in a wider metaphorical sense, in the Wrocław synagogue requires us to understand the city's Jewish ethical tradition not just as a religious or philosophical discourse, but as a vernacular and undefined Jewish "tradition" in its own right. These differences in judging the rightful claim to the often precarious and stigmatized collectivity were not ultimately insurmountable, but not commensurable either. Getting accepted or rejected, for some, was in fact an ethical test of time.

Anthropology's contribution to the debate on the possibilities and impossibilities of ethics across borders, especially outside anthropology, may lie in inviting us to think of morality outside the defined understanding of moral traditions as precepts codified in ethical systems, and the production of ethical subjects informed by lived experience and familial memories of alienation and solidarity. The case I presented reveals, however, the ambivalent potential of ethical commitments and acts to foster connectedness despite apparent incommensurability. The *yorzeit* gathering, which effectively, if temporally, allowed the congregation to bridge the divides in an unspoken act of solidarity and compassion, was in accord with the moral values of halakhah, but hardly confined to an exclusively Jewish ethics. The "commensuration" (Mair and Evans, this collection) was a momentary suspension of resilient incommensurability, by the manner of its silencing and not resolution, which seems, instead, to be gradually made by the change of the players in this drama, and by the changing balance in Polish Jewish life between the number of those passing away and that of newcomers.

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En être: enjeux moraux et critères d'affinité dans une congrégation juive polonaise.

Résumé : La résurgence et la transformation des institutions et de la vie religieuse juive en Pologne dans les vingt dernières années donnent lieu à des débats concernant le critère définissant ce que c'est d'être et de devenir juif. Ceux qui participent à ce débat appartiennent non seulement à différentes générations, mais également à différentes géographies de la judéité. En s'appuyant sur un travail de terrain mené dans une congrégation juive polonaise contemporaine, cet article soulève le sujet de l'éthique dans le contexte de principes d'affinité divers. La « renaissance juive » de la Pologne confronte des valeurs et affects fondés sur l'expérience intergénérationnelle de l'époque succédant à la Shoah, ses catégories d'appartenance et de conversion religieuse soutenues par de nouvelles lois, des programmes transnationaux d'éducation et de socialisation, et l'impact de leaders religieux étrangers. L'incommensurabilité apparente de ces perspectives, et les difficultés engendrées par la tentative de les réconcilier nous invite à reconcevoir la notion de tradition morale.

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