

WE ARE ALL ON THE ROAD FROM AUSCHWITZ1 – THE SECOND GENERATION AS TRAVELERS IN TIME AND SPACE

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“Of course, there’s no need to keep repeating how lucky you are, so I shall say it only once. Luck, chance, and freak are the stones with which every road from Auschwitz is paved. There are no other roads from Auschwitz, but those of improbability”², in those words Göran Rosenberg describes the fate of his late father. A survivor who did not survive.

The subject of this article centers around the issues of migration, exile, postmemory of the Holocaust, and the aftermath of March’68. As a research material, I have chosen two memoirs written by the authors born to families of Polish Jews: *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*³ by a Swedish journalist Göran Rosenberg and *Zapiski z wygnania* (Notes from the exile)⁴ by an American entrepreneur Sabina Baral.

My aim is to analyze the narratives of the books by tracing the journeys of memory that Rosenberg and Baral decided to undertake. In *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*, Göran Rosenberg recalls the story of his father, a Holocaust survivor from the ghetto of Lodz (Poland), who tried to start a new life in a small town in Sweden. Howev-

¹ From the interview with Göran Rosenberg. <http://channel.louisiana.dk>

² Rosenberg, Göran. *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*. Granta Books 2017, ebook edition, pp. 87

³ Rosenberg, Göran. *Krótki przystanek w drodze z Auschwitz [A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz]*. Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne 2014.

⁴ Baral, Sabina. *Zapiski z wygnania [Notes from the exile]*. Kraków, Budapeszt: Wydawnictwo Austeria 2018. All fragments from Baral’s book were translated by Jagoda Mytych.

er, surviving the survival, even in a welfare state, turned out impossible. After his father's suicidal death, Rosenberg took his journey back in time – returning to his childhood and his father as perceived through a child's eyes and also in space – tracing postmemory and traveling all way back through the archipelago of concentration and labor camps.

Sabina Baral's parents also survived the Holocaust in Poland, but they did not leave the country in search of a better future or to escape the painful past. Instead, they were forced to leave as the aftermath of the antisemitic campaign of March 1968. Living now in the US, Baral decided to describe her experiences and a double trauma inflicted upon her parents. While in Poland, she considers herself only “a visitor.”

The memory of the second generation

Both of the authors are representatives of “the second generation.” Also, both of their publications share the quality of being literature of postmemory. The term *postmemory* was proposed by the American researcher, Marianne Hirsch, primarily to describe the memory of the second and the third generations of the survivors and witnesses of historical and collective traumas, mainly the Holocaust. It embraces not only sometimes turbulent relations within a trauma-affected family but also an imposed relationship to these painful experiences shared by the next generations. Postmemory first appeared in the early 1990s in a text by Hirsch dedicated to Art Spiegelman's famous graphic novel “Maus”⁵ and immediately gained wide recognition in the field of the humanities.

Since then, it has expanded beyond its original meaning and now describes the „relationship that later generations or distant contemporary witnesses bear to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of others — to experiences they ‚remember‘ or know only by means of stories, images, and behaviors.”⁶ Considering war atrocities that became a common part of 20th century human experience, the term

⁵ Spiegelman, Art. “Maus: A Survivor's Tale”. New York: Pantheon, 1986 and “Maus: A Survivor's Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began. New York: Pantheon, 1991. Hirsch's review covering both parts was published as: “Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory”, *Discourse*, Vol. 15, No 2, Special Issue: The Emotions, Gender, and the Politics of Subjectivity (Winter 1992–93) pp. 3–29.

⁶ Hirsch, Marianne. „The Generation of Postmemory”. *Poetics Today* 2008, Vol. 29, Issue 1, pp.106.

was more than needed, and today is still widely used to describe the experiences of generations, that are indirectly affected by these traumas and whose memory of tragic events consists of the scattered fragments of relations of unspoken suffering passed on by the older generations and whose postmemory is shaped by their sense of belatedness and disconnection⁷.

„(...) the power of mourning and memory, and the depth of the rift dividing their parents' lives, impart to them something that is akin to memory. Searching for a term that would convey its temporal and qualitative difference from surviving memory, I have chosen to call this secondary, or second-generation, memory 'postmemory' (...) Holocaust postmemory, however, attempts to bridge more than just a temporal divide. The children of exiled survivors, although they have not themselves lived through the trauma of banishment and the destruction of home, remain always marginal or exiled, always in the diaspora. 'Home' is always elsewhere, even for those who return to Vienna, Berlin, Paris, or Cracow, because the cities to which they return are no longer those in which their parents had lived as Jews before the genocide, but are instead the cities where the genocide *happened* and from which they and their memory have been expelled (...) This condition of exile from the space of identity, this diasporic experience, is characteristic of postmemory”⁸, explains Hirsch.

The time may distance us from traumatic events, but postmemory does not age. We can observe that it is „alive” in literature and media and even a sort of „revival” of historical traumas can also be noticed within the media discourse, as subsequent generations of creators — especially writers, reporters and documentary makers — are searching for their roots and reaching out to family traumas. Sometimes for the first time.

„It was the one story in my life that I really needed to tell although I didn't have the material for the book for a long time,” Rosenberg states in a video interview that was recorded during the promotion of his book in Denmark.

The material that was out of his reach materialized in the form of „yellowing bundle of handwritten letters dating from the winter and spring of 1946” that his parents had written to each other after the

⁷ See also Henri Raczymow definition of „memory shot through with holes” – Raczymow Henri, „Memory Shot through with Holes”, translated by Alan Astro, *Yale French Studies* 85 (1994): pp. 98–105.

⁸ Hirsch, Marianne. „Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile”, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Creativity and Exile: European/American Perspectives II (Winter, 1996), pp. 662.

war, before they were finally and miraculously reunited in Sweden. The letters helped to shed some light on the shadows of the Auschwitz experience that, in opposition to his vital ambition and new projects, followed David Rosenberg and led to his tragic death. As long as they could be controlled, trauma and emotions of sorrow and misery were hidden from little Göran. Although he might not know what concentration camps meant and were for his parents, he could sense the Holocaust virus running in his family.

„Early one morning in May, I hear you calling unfamiliar names in your sleep. I don't remember the names, but your voice frightens me, It's not your usual voice. It's a child voice, wailing helplessly through the wall between the living room and the bedroom where you both sleep [...] It's only much later that I see the shadows dogging your every step, threatening to plunge you into darkness if you drop the pace even slightly. It's much later that I'm able to reconcile the voice in the night with the voice that so lightheartedly and playfully gives softly resonant names to components of my world”, he describes how the ambition to start a new life and anxiety caused by the difficult past were competing fiercely within his father's mind.

Although postmemory is strongly connected with the Holocaust studies, it might be, as suggested by Hirsch⁹, a useful theoretical framework to discuss any historical trauma that affects and keeps haunting younger and younger generations. Over 20 years later, Polish Jews had to face yet another one: political and social incidents known as the March Events.

In March 1968, student protests against the policies of the communist administration escalated into a mass youth rebellion. The regime responded with brutal repressions and an antisemitic propagandistic campaign that triggered purges in the party apparatus. The outcome of March Events was stifling of all intellectual activity and forced emigration of at least 13,000 Polish Jews. Among them was Sabina Baral, a teenage girl who, many years later, decides to write about the historical moment that changed her life. In the climate of a hate campaign, defamation and harassment, going to exile was the only chance to save dignity, but it also meant emotional costs beyond measure.

⁹ „I have developed this notion in relations to children of Holocaust survivors, but I think it may usefully describe the second-generation memory of other cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences.” Hirsch, Marianne. „Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile”, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Creativity and Exile: European/American Perspectives II (Winter, 1996), pp. 659–686.

Contrary to Rosenberg waiting for the material that could initiate his writing, Sabina Baral had no chance to use her diary as such a source. When she and her parents decided to leave Poland, taking any handwritten document was forbidden, and she failed to smuggle the diary. Again, the Jews had to decide what to take with them and what to leave behind. Among many restrictions and rules, Baral mentioned the one that was not official but felt crucial – to forget Poland as there would not be a chance of coming back.

With extreme pain, she writes about her parents being once again deprived of their place:

They came out from forests, from the holes in the ground, from wardrobes, cellars and attics, they came out half-dead from camps, returned from Siberia and from Kazakhstan to h o m e, to P o l a n d. And then, for the next twenty-three years, they have not left, although it was possible several times. They wanted to live here, where their parents were born and where, we, their children were born. After the wartime gehenna, after the years of suffering and fear, after all, they decided once more that Poland was their country. And in 1968 Poland threw these people out.¹⁰

Travelers in time and space

“I wrote this book for myself, for you and as a warning. It’s a part of my life, but not only. It’s my Yizkor”¹¹. It is how Sabina Baral starts her memoir about March 68 and the enforced exile. Yizkor („Remember”) comes from the opening line of the Jewish prayer for the dead parents and is also the general theme of the prayer: the duty to keep the memory alive. After the Holocaust, the meaning of Yizkor expanded, and now it refers to memorial books commemorating a Jewish community destroyed during the Holocaust. „The memorial books are the fruit of the impulse to write a testament for future generations. They constitute an unprecedented, truly popular labor to record in writing as much as possible of a destroyed world”¹², stated Jonathan Boyarin and Jack Kugelmass, who collected translated sections from Polish memorial books.

¹⁰ Baral, Sabina. *Zapiski z wygnania* [Notes from the exile], pp. 69.

¹¹ Eadem, *Zapiski z wygnania* [Notes from the exile].

¹² Boyarin, Jonathan, and Jack Kugelmass, *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1998).

The survivors wrote them in any language they knew. In the beginning, as a spontaneous initiative, and later it developed into the movement with more than 2000 Yizkor books published in the result. To fulfill the call of remembering means to travel in time and to honor the memory of the forefathers. All postmemory books, in this sense, carry the Yizkor mission within themselves. For Hirsch, they can „serve as models and inspirations for other acts of remembrance by children of exiled survivors” but also „they provide the paradigm for a diasporic aesthetics of postmemory.”

The last chapter of Baral’s book – „The Past Never Dies,” presents a speech that the author delivered in the City Hall of Wrocław on occasion of the reunion meeting with her colleagues from the Jewish secondary school (Sholem Aleichem’s VII High School)¹³. Many of them – 35 out of 36 – shared her migration fate. In the speech, she honored the „shadows of our parents,” retold the story of her childhood in Poland but above all asked Poles whether they were aware of what happened in March’68 and if they remembered their neighbors.

Rosenberg’s personal project was mainly thought of as a way to discover his father’s story in its whole, also traumatic, truth. The author wanted to understand why a Swedish industrial town Södertälje was for him: „a place with all horizons open. For you [meaning his father], a place with all horizons closed. For you, a brief stop on the road from Auschwitz”.¹⁴ Rosenberg addressing his father in a second person is a rhetorical device used by the author throughout the book. As a result the book is dialogical in a sense, and the meanings of facts and places are being negotiated.

Although all roads from Auschwitz are improbable, the author wants to find the one that most probably led his father to Sweden. The time travel starts in Łódź, a Polish city with its infamous ghetto. Just before its liquidation, David Rosenberg was deported first to Auschwitz and then to several other camps („camp archipelagos”).

Yes, but by what road did you come from Auschwitz? I insist.
I seize every opportunity to ask about the road from Auschwitz,

¹³ Sabina Baral’s speech during the reunion of her classmates and meeting with the mayor of Wrocław [Spotkanie Prezydenta Wrocławia z absolwentami VII Liceum Ogólnokształcącego im. Szolem Aleichema – rocznik 1965 w Ratuszu w dniu 8 września 2010 r]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05v7_JuDXu4

¹⁴ Rosenberg, Göran. *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*. Granta Books 2017, ebook edition, pp. 268.

since every road from Auschwitz is an individual miracle unto itself, as distinct from the road to Auschwitz, which is a collective hell shared by each and every one. The road from Auschwitz follows the most shifting routes, veers off to the most unpredictable destinations, and comes through the most unexpected places. Those who are on the road from Auschwitz are all exceptions, just as every road from Auschwitz is an exception. And since the few who reach the end of the road alive have rarely traveled the same road, it's all too easy for the roads from Auschwitz to sink into oblivion.¹⁵

In these words, Göran Rosenberg explains his willingness to go on the memory journey. Guided by letters his father wrote to his mother in 1946, Rosenberg retraces his father's journey across northern Germany in late-1944 and early-1945. The whole text can also be read like a letter from the journey addressed to his late father.

Vehicles as symbols

Baral was raised in Poland and, together with her parents, forced to leave the country when she was a teenager. On the other hand, Göran grew up in Sweden and tried to recreate the way of his father's transportation and later migration.

In both cruel cases – exile and transportation – are done by trains. It seems like in the postmemory literature train forever will be the symbol of anxiety and uncertainty. Baral describes the migration from Poland as “the journey into the unknown without the right to come back.” The Jews were leaving Poland as stateless people who had non-passport, which implicated the lack of the place where they belong to:

On 20 December a pride of the Polish State Railways the train called ‘Chopin,’ chugged off the last stage of our Polish life, trailing the line Katowice-Vienna, and fulfilling the composer's fate of exile and emigration. The journey lasted for a mere few hours but was consequential. We left home irretrievably. It has taken a lot of time until we were able to give this name to another place¹⁶.

¹⁵ Rosenberg, Göran. *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*, pp. 82.

¹⁶ Baral, Sabina. *Zapiski z wygnania* [Notes from the exile], pp. 26.

The border in Zebrzydowice between Poland and Czechoslovakia has become a demarcation line between Baral's current life and the unknown future. However, at least there was the future: something David Rosenberg could not be sure of while getting on a train to Auschwitz.

„(...) in a letter to the young woman who is to be my mother, you write of 'the nightmarish night in the railroad car on the way to hell.' That's all you write about the start of your journey".¹⁷ Göran Rosenberg did not mention the correlation between trains and anxiety directly, but he often stressed the fact that in Sweden, the Rosenberg family lived next to the railway station and the passing trains had some impact on their lives.

„My first proper memory of the station outside the kitchen window is of trains that never stop as they clatter endlessly through the nights – caravans of freight cars, open or covered, screeching and whining like an overburdened chain gang on a punishment march. I remember them because they're the first things to wake me as the windowpanes rattle and the rail joints hammer against the wheels, and the crackling flashes from the double locomotives cut through the curtains and the putrid smell of chemicals and decay rolls down from the platform and into our beds and our dreams"¹⁸.

The memory that somehow echoed his father „nightmarish night in the railroad car."

In the chapter „Road", Rosenberg describes his effort to trace the exact route that his father had to travel by transportation trains. The travel condition is not among the difficulties anymore but the disappearing of the road and the infrastructure itself are.

„In front of me I have a list of names of places no one remembers any more or at least doesn't remember them the way you must have remembered then when, much later, you try to forget them. Much later, I follow in your tracks on your road from Auschwitz"¹⁹; with the help of Dr. Karl Liedke who created a special map of David Rosenberg's journey, the author can see in his own eyes the places that left a mark on his father live: Braunschweig (Brunszwik) and Ravenbruck. „It's

¹⁷ Rosenberg, Göran. *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*, pp. 79.

¹⁸ Rosenberg, Göran. *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*, pp. 15.

¹⁹ Eadem, pp. 83.

useless as a driving map, but it's the only map in existence that shows your road from Auschwitz."

Rosenberg is on this road by car, and, somehow, ironically, he had been photographed by the German traffic monitoring camera and fined because of „ violations of the public order." The author did not try to mask his ambiguous feelings. „I have no intention of denying anything; the pictorial evidence is inconvertible, but I do react slightly to the German legal terminology for my crime, where *widrig* in my language (*vidrig*) means 'repulsive.' This is not proportionate to the crime, in my view. Particularly not to be a crime committed on this road, which is the road from Auschwitz to the town of Ludwigslust, in which the park between the palace and the city church is filled with the victims of Wöbbelin"²⁰, he makes his argument referring to another satellite camp that was located nearby.

Means of transport plays an important role in the narration of two books. The trains symbolize the traumatic past. Cars on the other hand, are the symbols of new projects and means of communication in the new world that accepted – or is in the middle of the process of accepting – Jewish immigrants.

„The simple truth is that a car is a luxury, just yesterday unthinkable [...] but in the new life in the new world, so many things that were unthinkable only yesterday are not any more"²¹, Rosenberg refers to a 1955 black Volkswagen, „registration number B 40011, and it's the latest model, with a small black window and semaphore arms for directional signalling", the car bought by his father. „The car becomes a part of the Project in the same way as the plans for a self-built house in Vibergen and citizenship. On May 7, 1954, the two of you becomes Swedish citizens"²².

This quotation, naming the Rosenbergs' life priorities, shows that purchasing a car was almost equal to acquiring the title to become a citizen.

While in the United States, Baral also considered a car as a necessary attribute to adopt her family into an American lifestyle. That is why all her efforts centered around buying the vehicle. The marron

²⁰ Eadem, pp. 84.

²¹ Ibidem, pp.196.

²² Ibidem, pp. 196.

Mercury Cougar was almost new when the author finally bought it; she was „really happy thinking it won't break down anytime soon. „ Many years later, Sabina Baral, now as a wealthy American citizen, would discover another mean of transport: a plane. Her new journeys will not be forced nor humiliating: „I have flown around the world many times. Because of work, for pleasure but mostly out of curiosity”. She now shares her life between San Francisco and Stockholm – the city where her husband migrated to in 1969 and developed his career as a scholar.

Future has long shadows

Being on the road from Auschwitz means a real (yet unimaginable), traceable journey for the Holocaust survivors. For the following generations, generations of postmemory, *being on the road from Auschwitz*, often means an inner journey: rediscovering the story about childhood that was broken by invisible trauma or searching for one's identity. However, it is not restricted only to family narratives. *We all* may mean all people living with war trauma or facing new conflicts all over the world. Literary insight into the journeys of the authors' parents creates awareness of what such a traumatic migration looked like and how reaching the next place on the exile map did not mean the end of memory journey. Just like WWII did not stop in 1945.

For Göran's parents, a child was a Project, their hope, and promise to root in the new place in the new times. If the child can adapt to new circumstances, then they can as well, but as we learn from the book: “not all places are of equal potential to start a new life as a Jew.”

“Södertälje isn't the most obvious place to start life anew. At least not for those who want that life to have anything Jewish about it. The prerequisites for Jewish life don't exist in Södertälje. Jewish life demands a basic, minimum number of Jews, and in Södertälje that number is never to be reached. During the brief period when it might have been reached, the Jews in Södertälje have other things to think about than Jewish life, assuming they want to think about Jewish life at all. I sense that being Jewish is not something to make a big show of. Not in a place like this”²³,

²³ Ibidem, pp. 200.

states Rosenberg's account on why the Project might have failed. „Even in Scandinavian Arcadia, suicide seemed the best solution²⁴,” in dramatic words, Paweł Smoleński characterized the situation of Goran's father in an article about Rosenberg's book.

It seems that a better option to start anew as a migrant of Jewish roots would be to go to America. And most of the Jews („the refugee colony of Jewish survivors”) described by the authors chose between Israel and America (*„Jisroel unit Amejrika”*). But even while living in the US, Sabina Baral observed her parents with anxiety; they were already too old to get used to new places. She was the one responsible for adapting the places for them. In both cases, places and languages create barriers for the parents but are accessible for their children. For the latter, the horizons are endless. For the older generation, they are depressively limited and make it harder to run away from the past. (“They had to start their life from scratch with a qualification that the old world was still there as shadows as something that persecuted to follow them during this period”).

Postmemory is like an inherited ticket to a remote place of parents' traumatic memory. It happens that the journeys are more than just metaphorical events, and the next generations need to come to terms not only with memories but also with particular places and spaces.

For both authors, Poland is the starting point in their journey of memory. It's the place where their parents, along with thousands of the Jews, lived before the war. Göran Rosenberg's father eventually took a try and visited Poland but found it as even more impossible to live in that in Sweden: “As for Łódź, the town made the most terrible impression on me, and I had a heavy heart those first days. All I wanted was to fly away, back home again. I haven't felt so forsaken since the war. Like a child²⁵,” he wrote about his short visit in the letter quoted by his son.

Also, for Sabina Baral the bond with Poland is broken.

„I have mixed feelings for Poland. I wish I wish strongly to be able to look at Wrocław and Poland with friendly feelings that are reserved for a place of one's birth and youth. I wish I could feel the sentiment and patriotism. I wish I were happy with the tree that still grows in front of my house in Wrocław. I wish that Poland's great

²⁴ Smoleński, Paweł. Jak łódzcy Żydzi zmaćili szwedzki święty spokój, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 2014, 11 II, [online] https://wyborcza.pl/1,75410,15433787,_Krotki_przystanek_w_drodze_z_Auschwitz___Jak_lodzcy.html 22.01.2020.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 223.

successes were also somehow important to me, that I could keep the bond with Poland and somehow belonged there. I wish I could, but I can't. There was a time I hoped for Poland to reach out to us, that I would find a Polish passport in my mailbox, and the word 'Forgive us' to start with (...). We used to live there, we were a part of the community, and we felt like home there. But they expelled us"²⁶,

Baral writes at the end of her memoir. She also stated that she does not need Poland anymore, but maybe Poles need to hear and understand her story. Especially 40 years after the March Events.

In this sense, in Poland, *we are all on the road from Auschwitz*; still working with our postmemory, still in the middle of doing our historical homework. Both Rosenberg and Baral did it as personal projects and then invited readers on these difficult yet rewarding journeys of memory.

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²⁶ Baral, Sabina. *Zapiski z wygnania [Notes from the exile]*, pp. 162–163.

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Streszczenie

Temat artykułu oscyluje wokół zagadnień migracji, wygnania, postpamięci Holocaustu oraz wydarzeń Marca'68. Za materiał badawczy posłużyły dwie powieści autobiograficzne napisane przez autorów wywodzących się z rodzin polskich Żydów: *Krótki przystanek w drodze z Auschwitz* pióra szwedzkiego dziennikarza Görana Rosenberga oraz *Zapiski z wygnania* amerykańskiej przedsiębiorczyny Sabiny Baral. Analiza podąża śladami pamięciowych podróży, na które zdecydowali się autorzy. W *Krótkim przystanku w drodze z Auschwitz*, Rosenberg przedstawia historię życia swojego ocalałego z Holocaustu ojca. Po do-

świadczeniach łódzkiego getta i obozów, David Rosenberg rozpoczął nowe życie w małym szwedzkim mieście. Jednak by przetrwać ocalenie i trwać przy życiu, potrzeba czegoś więcej niż państwa opiekuńczego. Dla Rosenberga seniora proces ten okazuje się niemożliwy. Po samobójczej śmierci ojca, Göran wyruszył w podróż w czasie – wracając do własnego dzieciństwa i znowu patrząc na ojca i jego motywacje oczami dziecka. Wykonując tę postpamięciową pracę odbył także realną w sensie fizycznym podróż przez archipelagi dawnych obozów koncentracyjnych i obozów pracy przymusowej. Rodzice Sabiny Baral również przetrwali Holocaust w Polsce, ale nie opuścili kraju w poszukiwaniu lepszej przyszłości, nie uciekali też przed bolesną przeszłością. Zamiast tego zostali z Polski wygnani po antysemickiej kampanii i wydarzeniach Marca'68. Mieszkająca obecnie w USA Sabina Baral postanowiła przypomnieć podwójną traumę, jaka w odstępnie niewiele ponad 20 lat stała się doświadczeniem jej rodziców, a także zmusiła ją do opuszczenia kraju młodości. Dziś w Polsce czuje, że jest tylko „gościem”. Postpamięć jest jak odziedziczony bilet do odległego miejsca trudnej pamięci rodziców. Zdarza się, że ta podróż jest czymś więcej niż metaforą, a postpokolenia muszą pogodzić się nie tylko z traumatycznymi wspomnieniami, które za pośrednictwem międzypokoleniowej transmisji (Hirsch) stały się ich udziałem, ale także konkretnymi miejscami i przestrzeniami. Zarówno dla Rosenberga, jak i dla Baral, Polska jest punktem wyjścia dla podróży pamięci.

Słowa kluczowe: pamięć, postpamięć, literatura, Holocaust, Marzec 68, drugie pokolenie, emigracja

Abstract

The subject of this article centers around the issues of migration, exile, postmemory of the Holocaust, and the aftermath of March'68. As a research material, I choose two memoirs written by the authors born to families of Polish Jews: *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz* by a Swedish journalist Göran Rosenberg and *Zapiski z wygnania* (the title can be translated into English as [Notes from the exile]) by an American entrepreneur Sabina Baral. I aim to analyze the narratives of the books by tracing the journeys of memory that Rosenberg and Baral decided to undertake. In *A Brief Stop On the Road From Auschwitz*, Göran Rosenberg recalls the story of his father, a Holocaust survivor from the ghetto

of Lodz (Poland), who tried to start a new life in a small town in Sweden. However, surviving the survival, even in a welfare state, turned out impossible. After his father's suicidal death, Rosenberg took his journey back in time – returning to his childhood and his father as perceived in a child's eyes and also in space – tracing postmemory (Hirsch) and traveling all way back through the archipelago of concentration and labor camps. Sabina Baral's parents also survived the Holocaust in Poland, but they did not leave the country in search of a better future or to escape the painful past. Instead, they were forced to leave as the aftermath of the antisemitic campaign of March 1968. Living now in the US, Baral decided to describe her experiences and a double trauma inflicted upon her parents. While in Poland, she considers herself only "a visitor." Postmemory is like an inherited ticket to a remote place of parents' traumatic memory. It happens that the journeys are more than just metaphorical events, and the next generations need to come to terms not only with memories but also with particular places and spaces, and for both authors, Poland is the starting point in their journey of memory.

Keywords: memory, postmemory, literature, the Holocaust, March'68, second generation, exile, migration