

Placelessness, Hybridity and Cultural Heritage:

The identity crisis of Jewish immigrants from Germany to Palestine in the 1930s in the Israeli Documentary *The Flat*

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Abstract

In the 1930s, after the Nazis came to power in Germany, tens of thousands of Jews immigrated to the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine (pre-state Israel). The hybrid identity, which is an integral part of many immigrants' life, was much more tangled for them: many of them kept on missing their former homeland and culture, while simultaneously despising Germany, that became in charge of murdering six million Jews in the Holocaust. The talk will analyze the complex identity of these Jews, who had to immigrate from Germany, but could not really detach themselves from their homeland that betrayed them, as reflected in the film *The Flat* (Arnon Goldfinger, 2011). In the film, Arnon the director, tries to cope with a family secret regarding the friendship between his grandparents, Kurt and Gerda Tuchler, who immigrated from Germany to Palestine in the 1930s, and the Von Mildensteins, a Nazi couple, before and after the Holocaust.

The analysis of the film will show how they've imported samples of their old world, they've loved so much, to their new world, which was filled with hatred towards Germany and Germans. In this environment, they've kept their memories alive inside their homes, through objects and cultural practices. The analysis of the film will unfold their silence as a defence mechanism, designed to protect their "forbidden" attraction to the old homeland and their relationship with the Nazi couple. The talk will also highlight the representation of the heritage of immigration: the way the objects, and the cultural practices were transferred to the second and third generation, but the feeling of placelessness that the grandparents had experienced had changed over the generations.

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