

อคติทางเพศและเชื้อชาติที่นำเสนอผ่านตัวละครหญิงชาวยิวในเรื่อง เดอะ ชอล ของ ซินเทีย โอซิค

สารนิพนธ์

ของ

นางสาวสุภาวดี เทียมโคกกรวด

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

ตุลาคม 2546

ลิขสิทธิ์เป็นของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

RACIAL AND GENDER PREJUDICE PRESENTED THROUGH THE JEWISH FEMALE  
CHARACTERS IN CYNTHIA OZICK' S " THE SHAWL "

A MASTER'S PROJECT

BY

MISS SUPARVADEE TIAMKOKKRUD

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts degree in English

at Srinakharinwirot University

October 2003

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อคติทางเพศและเชื้อชาติที่นำเสนอผ่านตัวละครหญิงชาวยิวในเรื่อง เดอะ โซล ของ ซินเทีย โอซิค

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จุดประสงค์หลักในการวิจัยครั้งนี้ คือ การศึกษาอคติทางเพศและเชื้อชาติผ่านตัวละครหญิงชาวยิวในเรื่อง เดอะ ไชล ของ ซินเทีย โอซิค โดยใช้ทฤษฎีทางด้านเชื้อชาติ ที่ประยุกต์มาจากทฤษฎีวิวัฒนาการ ของ ชาร์ล ดาร์วิน และ ทฤษฎีทางด้านสตรี ของ ไอดา เฮร์ธาโด ในการวิเคราะห์

จากผลการวิเคราะห์ ได้ข้อสรุปดังนี้ ตัวละครหญิงชาวยิวเป็นเป้าหมายหลักของนาซีในการทำลายล้างแบบชีววิทยา โดยนาซีมีความเชื่อว่า เชื้อชาติอารยัน เป็นชนชาติที่อยู่เหนือสุด และชนชาติยิวเป็นชนชาติที่ด้อยกว่า โดยมุ่งเป้าหมายไปที่ผู้หญิง เนื่องจากผู้หญิงคือผู้สร้างสังคมและประชาชน ดังนั้น นาซีจึงดำเนินการจับกุมและคุมขังผู้หญิงยิว โดยผู้หญิงชาวยิวได้รับการปฏิบัติอย่างมิใช่มนุษย์โดยทหารเยอรมันในค่ายกักกัน โดยตัวละครหญิงชาวยิวในเรื่องได้รับความทุกข์ทรมานทางด้านร่างกายและจิตใจอันมีผลสืบเนื่องมาจากอคติทางเพศและเชื้อชาติ

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RACIAL AND GENDER PREJUDICE PRESENTED THROUGH THE JEWISH FEMALE

CHARACTERS IN CYNTHIA OZICK' S " THE SHAWL "

AN ABSTRACT

BY

MISS SUPARVADEE TIAMKOKKRUD

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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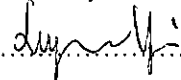
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The purpose of this study is to analyze racial and gender prejudice presented through the Jewish female characters in Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl." The analysis of this study is based on racial theories in line with Social Darwinism Theory and the feminist theory of Aida Hurtado to understand the causes of racial and gender prejudice.

The result of the study indicates that the Jewish female characters are the target group of biological extermination by the Nazi in World War II. In the view of the Nazi, Aryans are superiors, and Jews are inferiors. The Jew contaminate the blood of pure Germans. Moreover, the Nazi believe that women are the main reproducers of Jewish people and community. To annihilate the Jew completely, the Jewish female characters are captured and treated inhumanly by German soldiers in the concentration camp. The Jewish female characters face physical and mental suffering because of racial and gender prejudice.

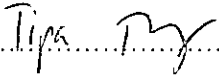
The Master's Project Advisor and Oral Defense Committee have approved this Master's Project as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University.

Master's Project Advisor

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(Dr. Supaporn Yimwilai)

Chair of the Master of Arts Degree in English

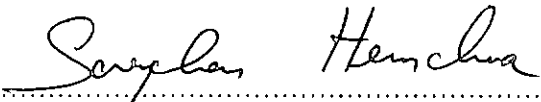
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(Assistant Professor Dr. Tipa Thep-Ackrapong)

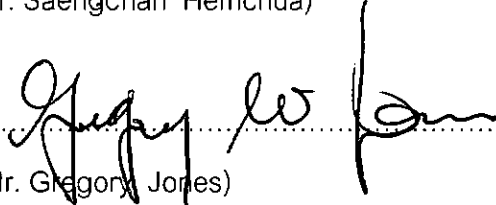
Oral Defense Committee

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(Dr. Saengchan Hemchua)

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(Mr. Gregory Jones)

The Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Arts degree in English of Srinakharinwirot University.

.....Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

(Assoc. Prof. Supha Panjaroen)

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

During World War II, the Holocaust was a horrible event depicting the violence of war and racism. It was the most tragic period for Jews and more generally for modern mankind. The Holocaust was started by the Nazi in Germany on Jan 30, 1933 and ended on May 8, 1945 (Yahil 1). The leader of the Nazi was Adolf Hitler. He commanded the German to exterminate Jews as part of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish problem.' To that end, the German established huge "concentration camps" or death camps all throughout Europe (Shefer-Vanson 7). Jews were then sent there in cattle trains. Their heads were shaved, and their arms were tattooed with numbers. On arrival, the clothes of Jews were stripped off, their belongings confiscated, and they were then made to work in the most inhumane conditions before being gassed in special chambers.

Cyrus Sulzberger, who wrote the book World War II, stated that by the time the war had ended, the Nazi had succeeded in killing six million Jews. In addition, many Jewish women were raped by German soldiers. All Jewish mothers were separated from their children. When Jewish women were pregnant, they were forced to have an

abortion. The pictures of horror expressed in the following dedications must never be forgotten:

To the Jewish mothers who were murdered while they were pregnant. Some of them were holding little hands of children or carrying infants in their arms on the way to be gassed. To the righteous gentile mothers and the nuns in the convent who were hiding and protecting the children in their care. Or as fighters in the resistance: in ghettos, forests, partisan units. And to the lives of those few who survived and bravely carried on (Yahil 100).

In this dedication, the struggles and suffering of Jewish mothers are caused by the Nazi in the concentration camps. From our perspective of the twenty first century, it seems inconceivable that the Nazi could do such things as separating Jewish mothers from their children, and killing those children later. Some Jewish mother tried to hide and protect their children in their care, and some tried to resist.

However, the discussion of the literary works is not the same as a discussion in history. Holocaust literature and fiction focuses on the human perspective of the horror of World War II; it is not intended as an objective outline of historical events but rather an exploration of the human dimension of one of the darkest chapters in human history, using literary conventions and traditions.

In Thailand, there is only one thesis about the Holocaust. It was written by Panpa-nga Chulanont from Chulalongkorn University. Her purpose is to study the

causes of the massacre of Jews during World War II. ~~She concludes that the destruction of Jews in Europe was the result of complex historical differences and tensions among races and religions, and that these problems were further exacerbated by economic crises. However, Panpa-nga Chulanont does not focus on women in the Holocaust. In fact, there are only a few works on women in the Holocaust.~~

In literature, woman are often presented as a symbol of weakness, but interestingly in holocaust literature, Jewish women are often presented as strong characters who carried an inhuman burden of sexual victimization, experiencing pregnancy and childbirth in the most horrific circumstances: rape, abortion, the killing of newborns, and shattering separation from their children and loved ones.

One of these writings is Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl," a story of a mother who tries to conceal and protect her daughter under her shawl from German soldiers. The setting is a death march to a concentration camp. The German soldiers do find her daughter, and they cruelly kill the child in front of her mother.

There are two reasons that , the researcher, chooses this text for my study. First, "The Shawl" is a short story written to present the images of the Jewish women. Second, it explores with great sensitivity both the mental and physical suffering of these women in the Holocaust, and it presents, in stark and horrible details, the horrors in the concentration camps. In fact, "The Shawl" is not entirely fictional. The author's inspration was clearly drawn from the numerous historical reports.

In order to analyze "The Shawl," the researcher applies the racial theories in line with Social Darwinism theory and the feminist theory of Aida Hurtado to analyze this text.

First, in World War II, the Nazi pervasively used the racial theories in line with Social Darwinism to persuade Germans that they needed to get rid of Jews. Darwin's theory, explaining how adaptation is maintained in a changing world, was used as an intellectual backdrop to this. It was believed that the best adapted survive, and the least well adapted die out. According to this idea "survival of the fittest," the Aryan race (another pillar of the Nazis mythology) had a right to dominate and even to exterminate lower races. Jews were the lowest, and Germans, as the strongest and fittest, were destined to rule, while weak Jews, not to mention other races, were doomed to extinction.

Second, I employ a feminist theory of Aida Hurtado to analyze the gender prejudice against women. In the Western male traditions, women has less status than men. To keep this tradition, the Nazi believed that colored women such as Jews and other members of lower races could and should be dominated and oppressed by white men. In "The Shawl," Jewish female characters are killed and tormented by German soldiers in order to better maintain the social engineering practices.

In conclusion, in "The Shawl," during World War II, racial and gender prejudice affects Jewish women. They must endure horrible physical and mental suffering. "The Shawl" presents the suffering and struggles of Jewish women in that war, and does so

through Jewish female characters. It is an inspirational work not only because it examines the Nazi vision of racial and gender prejudice, but also because it wonderfully demonstrates the triumph of feminine courage, love and perseverance. It is inspirational to all who read it.

## Purposes of the Study

This study is designed:

1. To analyze racial prejudice during World War II through the eyes Jewish female characters in "The Shawl."
2. To analyze gender prejudice in World War II through the Jewish female characters who are oppressed by German soldiers.

## Procedures

The procedures of this study consist of:

1. Studying related literature
  - 1.1 The criticisms and the articles related to the study of Jewish women and the Holocaust are studied.
  - 1.2 Discussion of selected literature related to Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl" is used for analyzing the text.
2. Analyzing the text
  - 2.1 The title of the story is analyzed.
  - 2.2 The text is analyzed based on the racial theories in line with Social Darwinism theory and the feminist theory of Aida Hurtado.
  - 2.3 The physical suffering of Jewish female characters in "The Shawl" is analyzed.

2.4 The mental suffering of Jewish female characters in "The Shawl" is analyzed.

2.5 The language of 'The Shawl' is analyzed to show the horrible conditions that Jewish female characters are caught in.

### **The Benefits of the Study**

1. This study helps the reader to understand the horror of war, caused by the racial and gender prejudice that occurred during World War II.
2. This study can be guidelines for further studies in the topic of racial and gender prejudice.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this part, there are three sections. The first section is a discussion of research that is related to Holocaust literature. The second section is a study of theories of race. The last section is a discussion of feminist theories related to the Holocaust.

#### Related Research

In this part, there are two selected theses that are related to Holocaust literature. First, there is a Thai thesis which was written by Panpa-nga Chulanont. She studies ten texts: All But My Life, Dear God, Have You Ever Gone Hungry?, I Have Lived a Thousand Years Growing up in the Holocaust, Jacob the Liar, Life is beautiful, Man's Search for Meaning, Night, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Cage and The Shawl. All of the ten texts are literary works related to the Jewish holocaust literature. She analyzes the causes of massacre of Jews during World War II using the historical background and literary criticisms. Finally, she concludes that the destruction of Jews is the result of differences among races, religions and economic crises. The second thesis is written by Cappell. He argues that previous studies of Jewish American fiction have ignored to group writers based on theological and spiritual concerns. He attempts to group Jewish

American authors based on theological and spiritual concerns. He selects the work of contemporary Jewish American feminist novelists: Rebecca Goldstein, Allegra Goodman, Cynthia Ozick, and Henry Roth. Finally, he finds that previous studies of Jewish American fiction should not group writers based on ethnic origins and sociological constructs. He suggests the studies of Jewish American fiction should point out theories and spirits of writers.

Both of two theses are related to the Jewish literature, but the authors focus on different issues. While Panpa-nga Chulanont focuses on the destruction of Jews presented in the Jewish holocaust literature, Cappell emphasizes studies the classification of Jewish American fiction based on theological and spiritual concerns. However, both of them do not pay attention to racial and gender prejudice in the holocaust literature.

## Theories of Race

Charles Darwin's theories are well-known as explanations of species development in the world. However, Charles Darwin's theories are distorted to explain the Holocaust in World War II.

Ospovat explains that in the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin, nature selects the best-adapted organism to survive, and it rids of the least well adapted. Darwin's theory of natural selection states that better adapted members of species are

more likely to survive, and thereby pass on to their offspring those traits that enabled them to survive. This theory is often over-simplified as " Social Darwinism." According to Social Darwism, the German were classified as the strongest because of their large population, and Jews were as the weakest because they did not have their own land, and there were a small number of them in Germany. Therefore, the strong German were destined to rule while the weak Jew were doomed to extinction.

In fact, the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin explain the evolution of species in the world. In a perverse way, the Nazis blended their racial theories in line with the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin to justify their treatment of Jews.

### **Feminist Theories**

Joan Ringelheim states that the Holocaust is gender neutral. The Nazi "Final Solution" against the Jewish population was a total genocide. Every woman, man and child defined as "Jew" was to be killed. Every Jew was equally a victim in the genocide of the Holocaust. During the Holocaust, Jewish women were more than fifty percent of the Jewish population deported and murdered by the Nazi. They stood in their own lines and were killed. Men could not stand up for Jewish women. Jewish women and men experienced unrelieved suffering during the Holocaust. Their lives were endangered as Jewish women, mothers, and caretakers of children. In addition, the Holocaust produced a set of experiences, responses and memories for Jewish women.

Inbar Raveh and Rotem Wagner attempt to characterize how female writers portray the horrors of World War II in a fiction. The characteristics of women's Holocaust narratives are distinctive from men's. Women's Holocaust narrative is the object of literary scholarship and not of historical research. Gender distinctions can show the life of an individual in a historical and social context. Victims of the Holocaust were chosen according to their race or political beliefs, but not by age or sex. However, one of the steps the German employed to isolate and destroy their victims is separating men from women, the old from the young, and the sick from the healthy. The gender-specific elements in the discussion of women in the Holocaust are expressed at social-political, biological and experiential level. On the social-political level, Jewish women were as a social group or organization. The biological issues are pregnancy, birth, motherhood and sexual harassment. The experiential issues are behaviors and experiences of women during the period of the Holocaust.

Moreover, Lillian Kremer shows her ideas related to Women's Holocaust writing that gender pervades both Holocaust experiences and their expressions. The Jewish female writers have all imaginatively reinterpreted their memories in novelistic efforts. Imagination and fictionalization are always important for creative writing. Historic study and creative writing inform real experience and knowledge about the Holocaust readers, and the art will keep the Holocaust memory alive. Moreover, an important aspect of gender suffering was the fact that the Nazi's racial doctrines made the destruction of

Jewish mothers a specific objective in the extermination of the Jewish race. Mothers and children became specific targets for brutal elimination. Bearing children was a crime in a concentration camp. The sexual segregation of the camp system and the Nazi collocation of women and children contributed to a more familial sense of suffering on the part of women.

Aida Hurtado states that the main idea of feminist study is the importance of experience in gaining understanding of knowledge. Although there are a variety of feminist methods, and various points of views on what is the components of feminist studies, valuing women's experience of social reality is the most important. In Western male traditions, the acquisition of knowledge is based on others' experience with very little disclosure on the writer, but a feminist theory makes the narrator and the generator central to understand female experiences.

Moreover, Hurtado emphasizes the social hierarchy of Western male traditions. In Western male traditions, White men are classified as the highest rank of society, but color women, such as Jewish females are classified as the lowest rank of society.

The researcher applies the theories discussed above to analyze gender prejudice in "The Shawl."

According to Ringelheim, Kremer, and Raveh and Wagher, their studies and ideas of Jewish women and the Holocaust follow the feminist theory of Hurtado. The

researcher concludes that they all agree Jewish women are a specific objective in the extermination of Jewish race.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN ANALYSIS OF MAGDA

This chapter discusses the racial and gender prejudice experienced by Magda, one of the main Jewish female characters in "The Shawl." During World War II, Jewish children were the victims of biological extermination. Between 1939 and 1945, two million and two hundred thousand of Jewish children were oppressed inhumanly in the concentration camps (Hrabar 5). The Nazi perpetrated this horror. To gain insight into the horror of racial and gender prejudice, the researcher examines the racial theories that the Nazi adopted, which were grossly over-simplified interpretations of the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin. Moreover, Ozick uses effective and powerful language to show the tortuous pictures of Magda in the concentration camps.

Magda is the youngest Jewish female character in "The Shawl." She was born in a concentration camp where her captured Jewish mother is abused. In fact, Magda has the German blood as Ozick describes the body of Magda: "the face, very round, a pocket mirror of a face: but it was met Rosa's bleak complexion, dark like cholera, it was another kind of face altogether, eyes blue as air, smooth feathers of hair nearly as yellow as the Star sewn into Rosa's coat. You could think she was of *their* babies" (1). From this description, she may have German father. Readers of "The Shawl" are not sure

whether her mother is raped by German soldiers or has a German boyfriend or husband.

The word *their* in the quotation refers to German soldiers. Although Magda has the blood of German, Magda must be killed because her mother is Jewish. Therefore, to save the life of Magda, she is hidden in her mother's shawl. In the eyes of German soldiers, Magda is the "other," and the word *their* can show this clearly. Moreover, in the Bible, there are statements about the identification of distinctive human groups, and their association with differences in physical appearance. In addition, when Europeans explored the Western Hemisphere, they discovered people who acted and looked differently. Accordingly, Europeans categorized them as other groups, which was fundamental to a racialized social structure. If they found people who are similar to them, these people were considered as the same family. Therefore, they use *our* or *we* to present their own group and *their* and *they* to refer to other groups (Omi and Winant 62). Similarly, Rosa, the mother of Magda, is Jewish. She is a colored woman.

Although Magda has a German father, she is classified as Jew. Therefore, Magda belongs to the persecuted race.

Moreover, Magda is treated inhumanly by German soldiers. First, as a young child, she should receive enough food and warmth. On the other hand, she has never eaten nutritious food. She always feels hungry; she sucks the shawl of her mother instead of food as Ozick portrays, "There was not enough milk; sometimes Magda

sucked air" (2). As a result, Magda's development is very slow. The lack of nutritious food reveals itself through her body: " But Magda lived to walk. She lived that long, but she did not walk very well, partly because she was only fifteen months old, and partly because the spindles of her legs could not hold up her fat belly. It was fat with air, full, and round" (2). Malnourished, she cannot walk because her legs do not have energy to carry her body.

Second, Magda lives in the atmosphere of fear. The weather surrounding her is very horribly cold, "Afterward Stella said: 'I was cold' " (3). Magda can survive by the shawl.

*Why did German soldiers treat Jewish children inhumanly? We can relate the*

actions of German soldiers directly to the ideology of the Nazi. By the end of 1934, Hitler was in absolute control of Germany. The Nazi claimed Jews corrupted pure German culture. They portrayed Jews as evil, and Germans as hardworking, courageous, and honest. Jews (who were represented in finance, commerce, the press, literature, theater, and the arts) had weakened Germany's economy and culture, the Nazi claimed. Second, the Nazi also over-simplified the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin to be their racial theories for justifying their treatment of Jews. From the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin, the Nazi manipulated the theory of natural selection and perfect adaption. These tools persuaded Germans to view Jews as sub-human. Darwin's theory of natural selection states that members of species who better

adapted were more likely to survive, and thereby passed on to their offspring those traits that enabled them to survive. This theory was often over-simplified as "survival of the fittest." According to Hitler, Germans, as the strongest and fittest, were destined to rule, while the inferior races, like Jews, were doomed to extinction. Third, Hitler's racial theories and nationalism drew on Germany's past. In the Christian tradition of anti-Semitism, Jews had to be responsible for the death of Jesus, and this belief also played a role in the reluctance to regard Jews as equal members of society. The extreme bigotry of the Nazi towards Jews resulted in a belief that Jewish people must be exterminated (Gilbert 280).

To annihilate the blood of pure Jews, Jewish babies or children must die. Magda is an object of this racial hatred. Therefore, her mother uses the shawl to conceal Magda from German soldiers. If they discover Magda, they will kill her. Accordingly, her mother is afraid that Germans will find her, "Rosa knew Magda was going to die very soon;..." (2). During World War II, Jewish children perished in gas chambers in the camps. They were murdered in all concentration camps. In the camp, Jewish children were in the depths of misery and humiliation because they were hungry, weak and ragged. One policy of the Nazi was starving children to death. Jewish children were beaten, tortured, executed and murdered on a massive scale. It was genocide. Jewish children, separated from their parents, died of cold and hunger. Often, small children were killed because they were too young to work in the camps

(Hrabar 154). Magda is a representation of all Jewish children exterminated during the Holocaust.

Furthermore, Ozick uses evocative words to portray Magda's tortuous existence. According to David Graddol, humans use language to talk about the world, and language is fundamental to gain knowledge from texts. In addition, words can have an influence on readers when they read them. This idea is clearly seen in "The Shawl," for example, in the beginning of the story, Ozick describes Magda in the shawl, "Magda wound up in the shawl" (1). According to Cobuild English Dictionary, the phrase "wound up" means the stressful feelings like tension, anger or nervousness. Due to the negative meaning of this word, it suggests that Magda lives in an unpleasant place. Moreover, the phrase "wound up" also supports the meaning of the next sentence, "Such a good child, she gave up screaming, and sucked now only for the taste of the drying nipple itself " (1). Due to the horrendous conditions in the concentration camp, Magda lives nervously inside the shawl. Furthermore, if her mother wants Magda to stay in the world, she must make her daughter keep quiet. Silence is a symbol of oppression (Cameron 7). To be buried in silence means to have no power: "she had been buried away deep inside the magic shawl,..." (2).

Moreover, Ozick employs powerful words to describe the pictures of starvation in the camps. For example, a phrase "the taste of the drying nipple itself " presents the starvation in the camps. Magda does not suck milk from her nipples of her mother

because her mother does not have enough milk to give her. To relieve a severe hunger, Magda sucks the corner of the shawl instead of milk: "so Magda took the corner of the shawl and milked it instead." (2). Because of her hunger, she cannot take a rest and always "held her eyes open every moment, forgetting how to blink or nap,..." (2). To show the horror of starvation, Ozick put the words "the spindles of legs," fat belly," the little thighs," and "little pencil legs" to describe the malnutrition of Magda. Magda is very terribly thin. The image of her legs is like chicken legs concealed by thin skin. Above the little legs of Magda, there is her bloated belly, "with air, full and round." (1). The two images of Magda's body convey the horror of starvation and evoke pity for Magda to readers.

At the end of the story, Ozick tells readers indirectly about the cruelty of German soldiers when Magda is burned by the electrified fence. Ozick writes, "And the moment Magda's feathers around head and her pencil legs and balloonish belly and zigzag arms splashed against the fence,..." (4). It seems that the electrified fence will tear the body of Magda into little pieces. The balloonish belly is burned until it almost breaks. The fat belly of Magda is like a balloon, which has thin skin when it is full of gas. Probably, when a balloon touches the frame of fire, it will explode. In addition, a phrase "zigzag arms splashed against the fence" portrays Magda's pain clearly. Her arms jerk violently against the fence. From the powerful and effective words used to describe the

torment of Magda, readers sympathize with Magda and are aware of racial and gender prejudice.

In addition, the word, "the shawl," is the most important symbol of the story. According to Jonh Paul De Cecco, words can be regarded as symbols. Symbolism is the practice of investing things with a symbolic meaning or character. It singles out for special inquiry the ways in which symbols help us and hinder us in reflecting on things (De Cecco 141). The "shawl" symbolizes the place of food and warmth of Magda. She learns to suck the corner of the shawl as milk. By contrast, it can lead to Magda's death. In this way, the shawl is the symbol of life and death. In the story, there is the only one shawl to warm the three Jewish female characters from the horribly cold weather in the concentration camp. Moreover, an article "the," which is in front of the word "shawl," is used to emphazise that there is the only one shawl in the story (Hewings 114). Therefore, the shawl is necessary for Magda to live, "The shawl was Magda's own baby, her pet, her little sister" (3). She sleeps silently in the shawl. When it is taken by Stella, Magda screams. Magda is only a little girl and naturally does not have the ability to control her anger and desire. Due to the youth, children do not have self-control (Hurlock 16). From her childish behavior, she screams loudly until German soldiers find her and kill her horribly by them. In this way, the shawl also symbolizes the desire of Magda to have food and warmth.



## CHAPTER 4

### AN ANALYSIS OF ROSA AND STELLA

This chapter discusses racial and gender prejudice presented through the two Jewish female characters: Rosa and Stella. For the Nazi, Jewish women were important enemies because they could reproduce Jews into the world. Therefore, to eliminate Jews completely, Jewish women and female adolescents were the target group of the biological extermination. Due to this idea, German soldiers oppressed Jewish women and female adolescents inhumanly in the concentration camps to destroy the reproductive systems in Jewish women and female adolescents. Rosa and Stella are the representatives of this horrible condition.

#### Rosa

In the first half of the twentieth century, the idea of eugenics had influences on politics and sciences in Western societies, especially in German. Eugenics is the study of hereditary improvement of a breed or race, especially of human beings. The Nazi adapted the view of eugenics to their own racist ideology. The idea of eugenic racism is based on a genetic understanding of race, and race, in this view, is regarded as the unity of procreation, preservation, and development. The main purpose of eugenic racism is to define group cohesion biologically (Kuhl 71). The Nazi used eugenics and

race science to eliminate Jews. They believed that Aryans were more superior to other races. Because Jews had inferior genes, the blood of Jews should not be transferred to the next generation. Their tactics focused on Jewish women because they believed that the future of the nation depended exclusively on the reproductive powers of women who could have more children (Yava-Davis 28). The Nazi believed that the nation would have power because of population growth and purity. Accordingly, they were afraid of Jews building a nation, so they treated Jewish women inhumanly in the concentration camps in order that Jewish women were not able to reproduce Jewish children. This idea is also shown in "The Shawl."

Rosa is a victim of this idea. She faces both physical and mental suffering in the camp. First, German soldiers give little food to Rosa until her body does not work normally. Because of lacking of nutrients, Rosa "did not menstruate" (2). Naturally, the menstruation is related to the health of a female body. When women receive enough food, the menses will flow normally every month (Encyclopedia Americana 6). Moreover, due to the starvation in the camp, Rosa does not have enough energy to walk. Rosa "did not feel hunger; she felt light, not like someone walking but like someone in a faint, in trance, arrested in a fit, someone who is already a floating angel, alert and seeing everything, but in the air, not there, not touching the road" (1). Rosa uses her soul to walk because she does not have enough food. She is terribly thin until she does not have energy to carry her body.

Second, German soldiers also show their power by raping Rosa. Ozick does not tell us directly, but readers can know from Magda's appearance: "On the road they raised one burden of a leg after another and studied Magda's face. 'Aryan', Stella said, in a voice grown as thin as string;..." (2). Raping destroys self-respect of women as human beings. It can make raped women live in fear, doubt, and oppression, and raped women are led to doubt their own selves, their abilities, and their self-worth. Conversely, a rapist obtains a feeling of power and control (Mauro-Cochrane 21). Like all rapists, German soldiers see Rosa as an object and contempt her as sub-human. By raping Rosa, German soldiers feel that they have more power than Jews. Moreover, according to Hurtado's theory regarding social hierarchy, in the "The Shawl," German soldiers are White men, and they are deemed to be the first class. They have the authority to control the social system and oppress the lower classes, such as Jewish women.

In addition, the sexual assault and the atmosphere of fear around Rosa make her suffer mentally. Rosa is paranoid because she is afraid that German soldiers will attack her and take Magda from her. She does not know when her daughter will be separated from her: "Rosa saw that today Magda was going to die,..." (2).

Unfortunately, Rosa cannot save the life of Magda although she tries to reserve Magda in her shawl. Her daughter is her life. When German soldiers finally find Magda, they kill her in front of Rosa. From this situation, Rosa feels painful because she

cannot protect and take Magda from German soldiers. At the end of the story, she "took Magda's shawl and filled her own mouth with it, stuffed it in and stuffed it in, until she was swallowing up the wolf's screech and tasting the cinnamon and almond depth Magda's saliva; and Rosa drank Magda's shawl until it dried" (4). In the shawl, there is the smell of Magda. It represents the life of Magda. Rosa cannot save the life of Magda, so she cannot fulfill her duty as a mother. Her behavior at the end of the story shows that she attempts to reserve Magda. The actions of Rosa are like female animals that protect their babies from enemies. When enemies attempt to attack babies, and female animals cannot protect their babies from enemies, they will take their babies into their mouths to protect the bodies of babies. Similarly, Rosa cannot take the body of Magda from German soldiers, so she sucks the shawl instead. A mother has the important duty to take care of children and make them grow well and be healthy. By contrast, Rosa cannot fulfill her duty as a mother because of her race and gender. In this way, her motherhood is robbed.

In conclusion, the womanhood and motherhood of Rosa are destroyed because of racial and gender prejudice. To exercise this superiority, the Nazi humiliate and eliminate Jews, justifying these actions with the concepts of eugenic racism, and the target of this campaign is Jewish women. Rosa is one of these victims. She is in pain because she lives among the fearful and oppressive surroundings of the concentration

camp. In this way, Rosa is the representative of Jewish females who were raped and lost their children in World War II.

## Stella

Adolescence is the period of human life in which they develop from being a child to being to a mature adult (Cobuild English Dictionary 24). On average; the period of female adolescents is from 13 to 18 years. In this period, there is the development of primary sex characteristics (Hurlock 28). The primary sex characteristics show that female adolescents have sex organs to produce offspring. From this scientific fact, during the Holocaust, the Nazi had policies to exterminate Jews by treating Jewish female adolescents inhumanly in the concentration camps. When the female reproductive systems are not fertile, women cannot have babies. Moreover, women are the reproducers of national collectivities. They are able to teach children to know their own blood and nationality. In addition, their children absorb what their mothers teach gradually until they grow up (Phoenix and Woollett 17). As the Nazi wanted to destroy Jews, they tried to disturb the reproductive systems of Jewish women particularly in the period of adolescence. Therefore, Jewish female adolescents were treated inhumanly by the Nazi in the concentration camps in order that they were not fertile to reproduce Jewish children. The good example is Stella in "The Shawl."

Stella is a Jewish female adolescent oppressed by German soldiers in the camp. Racial and gender prejudice makes both physical and mental suffering for Stella. The

physical appearance of Stella shows that she is starved by German soldiers, "A thin girl of fourteen, too small, with thin breasts of her own,..." (1). Her knees are "tumors on sticks, her elbows chicken bones" (1). Moreover, the starvation affects her reproductive system: "Stella did not menstruate" (2). Stella's condition reflects the biological extermination perpetrated by the Nazi. In the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust in which six million Jews died, there were no newborn Jewish children in the German Jewish community (Yuval-Davis 30).

Furthermore, Stella suffers dreadfully in the extreme coldness. In the camp, German soldiers do not give any clothes to keep her warm. She must endure the horribly cold weather in the camp, which can be observed from the beginning of the story. "Stella, cold, cold, the coldness of hell" (1). Moreover, Ozick uses a word "hell" to show that Stella lives in the worst place. The concentration camp is the hell of Stella, which there are many devils. The German soldiers who make her suffer in the frozen weather are these devils.

In addition, due to the starvation and the terribly cold weather, Stella expresses her mental suffering through her action and thought. At Stella's age, poor nutrition causes stress and strain. Prolonged malnutrition from poor choice of foods invariably leads to emotional disturbances. The emotional disturbances of adolescence are mainly a product of environmental and social factors (Hurlock 46). The fearful and awful environment of the concentration camp causes Stella to express her anger and jealousy

to other people. Stella is "jealous of Magda" (1). Stella wants "to be wrapped in a shawl, hidden away, asleep, rocked by the march, a baby, a round infant in arms" (1). Moreover, she is jealous of Magda because Rosa pays attention to Magda. This situation develops into anger. Then, Stella decides to take the shawl away from Magda.

Finally, the inhuman environment of the concentration camp causes Stella to behave like animals. Stella feels so hungry that she would like to eat the body of Magda. She gazes at Magda "like a young cannibal" (2). According to "Cannibalism," like some animals, humans can become cannibals when face extreme environmental pressures. For example, mice and rats may turn to be cannibals when their colony population rises rapidly, and their naturally high reproductive rate results in a high mortality of young. Dead offspring may be eaten by the hungry and stressed survivors. This behavior is most often observed in animals kept under unnaturally restrict conditions in captivity. Similarly, Stella wants Magda to die because she needs to eat Magda to relieve her hunger. She is waiting for Magda to die, so "she could put her teeth into the little thighs" (2).

Furthermore, the shawl is very important for Stella because it symbolizes her survival. It can save her life in the cold weather. She can continue living in the camp by using the shawl to cover and warm her body. If there were not the shawl, the horribly cold weather in the camp would torment her gradually until she died. In this way, if Magda dies, Stella will have the shawl to warm herself. In order to survive in the

conditions of concentration camps, many Jews turn to behave like animals, and Stella is a good example.

In conclusion, the cause of the tragic condition that Rosa and Stella are forced to live is extreme racial and gender prejudice. Jewish women become victims of biological extermination because the Nazi are afraid that Jewish women will reproduce Jewish children and sustain the Jewish community. By this logic, they have to execute Jewish women. Rosa and Stella are captured and oppressed inhumanly by Germans in the concentration camp until their reproductive system breaks down. More importantly, the aggressive oppression by German soldiers affects their minds. Their instinct for survival is more powerful than morality or mercy. Rosa and Stella are the oppressed victims of racist and gendered prejudice.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Prejudice is an unreasonable dislike of or preference for one group of people or thing over another. Moreover, prejudice refers to irrational hostility toward members of a particular race, religion, or group, which leads to a tragedy (Cobuild English Dictionary 1294). A good example is the Holocaust during World War II, and the thought of the Holocaust is from the Nazi. The policies of the Holocaust by the Nazi are to annihilate the blood of Jews because the Nazi believe that Jews destroy the German society and economy. Aryans, like Germans are superior, and they are responsible for governing the German society. On the other hand, Jews are inferior to Germans, and they are destined to extinction because they make the German society contaminated. As a result, their target groups are Jews, especially Jewish children, Jewish female adolescents and Jewish women.

Ozick's "The Shawl" is a good example to show a horrible condition of biological extermination clearly. In this story, there are three Jewish female characters who are different in age. Magda is a Jewish female child who can grow to be a Jewish woman. Stella is a Jewish adolescent, and Rosa is a Jewish woman. They can reproduce many Jewish children for the Jewish community. To destroy the Jewish community from the

world, the three Jewish female characters are treated inhumanly by German soldiers in a concentration camp to stop the growth of Jewish community. Magda must live silently in the shawl because if German soldiers find Magda, they will kill her. Due to the starvation and the terrible coldness of weather, at the end of the story, Magda dies because of her desire for food and warmth and the inhumane treatment of German soldiers in the concentration camp. Moreover, German soldiers rape Rosa to exercise their power. They do not give enough food and clothes to Rosa until the reproductive system of Rosa works irregularly. In addition, German soldiers make Rosa suffer mentally. They kill her daughter by throwing her to an electrified fence.

Not only do Magda and Rosa face the merciless treatment of German soldiers but also Stella confronts it. German soldiers starve Stella, and they do not give any clothes to her. Stella shows her aggressive and jealous feeling to Magda. Finally, this inhumane treatment changes Stella to behave like an animal.

In addition, to present the horrible events in "The Shawl," Ozick employs words to portray the pictures of three Jewish female characters in the concentration camp, especially the word "the shawl." The shawl symbolizes the life and death of the three Jewish female characters in "The Shawl." It can save and destroy their lives. For Magda, the shawl is the place of warmth and food. In the view of Rosa, it is a memory and life of Magda. On the other hand, the shawl is the symbol of pain and

suffering in the view of Stella. However, the shawl is the most important thing for them to survive in the concentration camp.

Like Kremer's idea, a historical document pays attention to facts, but the art of writing will help the Holocaust memory alive. According to Kremer, in women's writing about the Holocaust, female characters are fully defined protagonists. The horrible conditions in "The Shawl" are an example. Ozick has turned her imaginative effort to the suffering of those who experienced the Holocaust. In addition, Ozick pictures the effects of racial and gender prejudice towards the three Jewish female characters clearly. The historical documents about the Holocaust only tell the facts, but "The Shawl" presents the feelings of Jewish women who are oppressed inhumanly by German soldiers in the concentration camp. In this way, Magda, Rosa and Stella are the representatives of Jewish women in World War II.

The issue of racial and gender prejudice is interesting to be discussed in other novels and short stories that are related to women. On the other hand, in Thailand, the research on racial and gender prejudice presented through women in novels and short stories are rarely studied. In fact, there are many novels and short stories that are relevant to racial and gender prejudice, especially about women. Accordingly, this issue should be activated and paid attention more than in the past. Although racial and gender prejudice in the Holocaust is far away from the experience of Thai people, it shows that racial and gender prejudice of one group can mercilessly destroy the other

group like Jews. When Thai readers read the research on this topic, they understand the feelings of women who are oppressed because of their race and gender. The researcher hopes that this research can motivate the readers to pay more attention to the problems of women reflected in novels and short stories and to help to solve these problems before becoming a big problem like the Holocaust in World War II.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

In this study, there are many important points that I have not discussed on racial and gender prejudice. Therefore, I would like to suggest some interesting topics for further studies as follows:

1. The issue of racial and gender prejudice presented through Jewish male characters in other novels and short stories should be studied.
2. Other works of Ozick should be studied and analyzed to understand her ideas about racial and gender prejudice.
3. There should be a further study of language styles used in presenting the effects of war in novels and short stories.
4. There should be a further study of the effects of war presented through autobiographies because autobiographies are accounts of people's lives, which are from real experiences.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Chronology of the Second World War

1918

Nov 11- World War One ends with German defeat.

1921

July 29- Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist 'Nazi' Party.

1925

July 18- Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" published.

1926

Sept 8- Germany admitted to League of Nations.

1930

Sept 14- Germans elect Nazis making them the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest political party in Germany.

1932

Nov 8- Roosevelt elected President of the United States.

1933

Jan 30- Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

March 12- First concentration camp opened at Oranienburg outside Berlin.

April 1- Nazi boycott of Jewish owned shops.

July 14- Nazi party declared only party in Germany.

Oct 14- Germany quits the League of Nations.

**1935**

March 16- Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles by introducing military conscription.

Sept 15- German Jews stripped of rights by Nuremberg Race Laws.

**1937**

June 11- Soviet leader Stalin begins a purge of Red Army generals.

Nov 5- Hitler reveals war plans during Hossbach Conference.

**1939**

Jan 30- Hitler threatens Jews during Reichstag speech.

Sept 3- Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany.

Sept 10- Canada declares war on Germany; Battle of the Atlantic begins.

**1941**

March 11- President Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act.

June 14- United States freezes German and Italian assets in America.

July 26- Roosevelt freezes Japanese assets in United States and suspends relations.

Aug 14- Roosevelt and Churchill announce the Atlantic Charter.

Sept 1- Nazis order Jews to wear yellow stars.

Sept 3- First experimental use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Sept 29- Nazis murder 33,771 Jews at Kiev.

Dec 7- Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor; Hitler issues the Night and Fog decree.

Dec 8- United States and Britain declare war on Japan.

Dec 11- Germany declares war on the United States.

## 1942

Jan 1- Declaration of the United Nations signed by 26 Allied nations.

Jan 20- SS Leader Heydrich holds the Wannsee Conference to coordinate the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

In June- Mass murder of Jews by gassing begins at Auschwitz.

## 1943

April 19- Waffen SS attacks Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto.

May 16- Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto ends.

June 11- Himmler orders the liquidation of all Jewish ghettos in Poland.

## 1944

May 15- Germans withdraw to the Adolf Hitler Line.

June 6- D-Day landings.

Aug 25- Liberation of Paris.

Oct 14- Allies liberate Athens.

Oct 30- Last use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

1945

Jan 26- Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz.

April 12- Allies liberate Buchenwald and Belsen concentration camps; President Roosevelt dies. Truman becomes President.

April 30- Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

June 5- Allies divide up Germany and Berlin and take over the government.

Aug 6- First atomic bomb dropped, on Hiroshima, Japan.

Aug 9- Second atomic bomb dropped, on Nagasaki, Japan.

Aug 14- Japanese agrees to unconditional surrender.

Sept 2- Japanese signs the surrender agreement.

Oct 24- United Nations is officially born.

## Appendix B. Biography of Cynthia Ozick

Name: Cynthia Ozick

Nationality: USA

Born: 17 April 1928

Education: B.A. New York University (1949)

M.A. Ohio State University (1950)

Works: 1966 Trust-novel

1971 The Pagan Rabbi-short stories

1976 Bloodshed-novellas

1982 Levitation-fictions

1983 Art & Ardor-essays

1983 The Cannibal Galaxy-novel

1987 The Messiah of Stockholm-novel

1988 Metaphor & Memory-essays

1989 The Shawl-short stories

1996 Fame & Folly-essays

1997 The Puttermesser Papers-novel

2000 Quarrel & Quandary-essays

Award: National Endowment for the Arts fellowship (1968)

American Academy of Arts Award for Literature (1973)

VITA

## VITA

Name : Suparvadee Tiamkokkrud

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### Educational Background :

2003 Master of Arts (English) from Srinakharinwirot University

2001 Bachelor of Arts (English) from Mahasarakham University

1997 Certificate of Science (Mathematics and Sciences) from Kanlayanawat

School