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**German-Jewish Women Writers in Exile:
Metaphors of Loss and Persecution
in the Works of Margarete Kollisch,
Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, and Vera Lachmann**

For centuries Jewish life in the diaspora has been to a large extent life under siege, life marked by persecution, discrimination, prejudice. From the 19th century on, a socio-political process called emancipation affected the Jewish population in the Central European countries, and during the early 20th century the integration of secular Jews into bourgeois society had reached a point which was sometimes even described as a symbiosis. However, this symbiosis was short-lived. It was wiped out by the murderous terror unleashed by the Nazi regime in Germany and in German-occupied countries during World War Two. Of course Nazi measures of persecution did not just start with World War Two: they had already been put into effect before (so-called Nuremberg Laws), and were finally raised to the level of an all-out genocide. For a long time, these crimes against humanity were classified as war crimes, although they had nothing to do with warfare and had not been committed on the battlefield. The suffering of the victims and the loss of Jewish life during this period (1933-45) have been rendered by the term Holocaust, and since Claude Lanzman's film documentation, they are commemorated as Shoah. Yet there have been (and still are) survivors of the Holocaust—a small group even survived in Nazi Germany (some of them right in the belly of the beast, the capital Berlin) with the help of non-Jewish sympathizers. Most survivors, however, could save their lives only by fleeing abroad, by accepting an existence in exile, often in one country after another. About 200,000 Jewish refugees came to the United States between 1941 and 1945, mainly members of the assimilated middle and upper bourgeois class,

who had the necessary financial means and personal connections to arrange an escape.¹

The uprootedness of a life in exile was different for men and women. Recent exile and women's studies have shown that it was often the wife who contributed the essential part to the livelihood of the family, particularly in such situations where the husband's profession was not immediately applicable in the new country. This was foremost the case for professions like law, journalism, writing—professions that depend on the word, on language. It was also not unusual for a woman with an academic education to take up manual labor just to make ends meet, or to retrain for a different profession that provided an immediate income. All of those obstacles have to be taken into consideration when one tries to evaluate the fate and the achievements of women in exile.²

The three women whose lives and literary works are to be discussed here belong to approximately the same generation: they are of similar social background; they all were exposed to Nazi persecution; they wound up in America, continued to write poetry in German, and each published almost the same number of volumes.³

Margarete Kollisch (maiden name: Moller) is the oldest of the three. She was born on December 9, 1893, in Vienna and studied modern languages at the university in her native city. Later she worked as a teacher, translator, and journalist. In 1923 she married the architect Otto Kollisch. The couple had two sons and one daughter. After Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany, the Kollisch family emigrated in 1939 to the United States. The children first went on a *Kindertransport* to England and were reunited with their parents in New York in 1940. For 25 years Margarete Kollisch worked as a physical therapist in New York. She also gave lessons in German and French. Her literary activities included readings in cultural institutes and on radio programs, as well as contributions to magazines and anthologies. In 1969 she received from York College of City University the medal for foreign language poetry. Her oeuvre consists mainly of the three volumes *Wege und Einkehr: Ausgewählte Gedichte* (Vienna: Bergland Verlag, n.d. [1960]); *Unverlorene Zeit: Ausgewählte Gedichte und Betrachtungen*, Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsanstalt, 1971; and the posthumously published collection, *Rückblendung: Gedichte und Prosa*, Vienna: Bergland Verlag, 1981. Margarete Kollisch died at the age of 85 on October 11, 1979, in New York.⁴

Each of her three books is basically a poetry collection enhanced by a small prose sampler. If one takes a look at their publication dates, it is not difficult to figure out that these volumes appeared at intervals of roughly ten years. At the publication of her first book, the author was already over 65 years old. However, the reason for this late literary career cannot lie in the

assumption that the author was a literary late bloomer, since her material had already been included in a 1930 anthology called *Badener Auslese* (Baden near Vienna). At that time, she had also published in newspapers. The reason for the long interruption and/or reduction of her literary output has to be seen in her emigration and its consequences, i.e., in the fact that she had to adopt a new profession and to adjust herself to a new social and economic environment. It seems that a room of one's own, as Virginia Woolf had postulated it for the female author, was sorely missed by Margarete Kollisch and other women writing at that time in exile. We may wonder how exile and new living conditions are reflected in their work. What has been left of their biographic and literary background, what continuity, what transformation took place? Which themes, which stylistic patterns recur?

Six major subjects can be traced through the poetry of Margarete Kollisch: childhood, dreams, philosophy, language, Old and New World, and women's perspectives. The childhood theme connects the poetic ego with a paradise lost that existed long before the emigration, even before World War One. Sometimes childhood memories appear in a dreamlike atmosphere, in a vision of how things were and how they should be. Certainly this dichotomy invites thoughts of a philosophical nature, leads to poems which would be called *Gedankenlyrik* in German. The tendency towards philosophical observations and conclusions is inherent to many poems by Margarete Kollisch. It places her poetry in a tradition which was established in France by the *moralistes*.

Her critical approach also questions the very substance of the poem: language and artistic form. Language, of course, is not only the stuff that poems are made of; for an immigrant, there are also the language of the old and the language of the new country. Both languages are clearly connected to two different worlds and two different experiences. If the poetic voice of the poem evokes the days of childhood, it is only of artistic consequence that this excursion on memory lane, this *recherche du temps perdu* occurs in that linguistic medium prevalent at that stage in the author's life.

On the other hand, there were exile authors who did not feel such close ties to their mother tongue and who managed with professional success the transition from one language to another. Margarete Kollisch's own daughter Eva is one of them.⁵ So why stick to the language of the old order that also had become the language of the persecutors and perpetrators? Recall the explanation which Thomas Mann gave when he urged the continuation of German instruction in America: not to allow the Nazi regime to pass itself off as the representative of German culture and German language. This means for Margarete Kollisch and other exile authors: the insistence on German as the language of their literary production may also be considered an act of resistance, certainly not an act of blindness or unwillingness to take notice

of the new environment. On the contrary, the new geographic and social reality was not spared from critical scrutiny (although a conciliatory tone often prevailed).

Margarete Kollisch did not subscribe to any specific theory of feminism. However, most of her poems rely on experiences and concerns relevant to a woman's existence. In this broad sense, most of her poems are examples of women's literature. Four theme groups can be recognized: female consciousness and self-consciousness; social commitment; motherhood; love poetry.

It often happens in her poetry that encounters with nature and landscape provide metaphors of loss, nostalgia, exile existence—a literary approach that Margarete Kollisch shares with Vera Lachmann. Of course, the self-reflection of the individual voice (poetic ego) placed into a natural setting is an old and essential feature of Romanticism, especially in German literature. Indicative of Margarete Kollisch's poetry is not only the adherence to the language of the pre-exile period, but also to the literary esthetics of that time. Most of the Kollisch poems are obliged to rhyme and traditional strophe form. Free verse as used in contemporary American and also German poetry is almost an exception for these émigré authors (only Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss has published a volume in *vers libre*—her last one). This choice of style allows only one conclusion: namely that the esthetic conservatism practiced by these women is not the result of lack of talent but originates from a specific writing intention—it bridges the painful gap caused by expulsion and exile and connects with a period untouched by barbarism and persecution. In other words: the literature of these women reestablishes a cultural continuity that had been brutally interrupted. Their writing becomes a creative act to overcome exile and Holocaust; it makes an attempt to resist the erosion of time and life. By revitalizing a tradition that was cut off from the flow of life, this literature pleads for survival; it clearly supports the idea of life. The commitment to life, however, is also deeply rooted in Jewish religion and accounts for the Jewish dimension of this poetry.

A sensation of being adrift between past and present, between the mountainous landscape of Semmering, Lower Austria, and that of New Hampshire, i.e., between the natural environment experienced before exile and then again later in life, is the subject of a poetic retrospective appropriately titled "Rückblendung (zwischen Semmering und New Hampshire)" in Margarete Kollisch's last poetry collection (9). Nature—as so often—provides the scenario for an emotional self-scrutiny making the speaker aware of her "unhealed wounds."

Rückblendung

(zwischen Semmering und New Hampshire)

In der alten Heimat grünster Grüne
stillesteht mein Atem auf Sekunden,
tropft mein Lebenssaft aus ungeheilten Wunden,
der verbrauchten Tage letzte Sühne.

Warum irrt mein Blick aus grünster Grüne
zu dem jungen Tann an Straßenrändern,
der mir Hoffnung gab in unbekanntem Ländern,
den ich herzuzaubern mich erkühne?

Wie sich Grün mit Grün in eins verblendet,
Moos und Farn und dunkelndes Gezweige,
weiß nicht, ob ich abwärts, ob ich aufwärts steige,
immer noch der Lichtung zugewendet.

Retrospection⁶

(between Semmering and New Hampshire)

In the old homeland's greenest green
for seconds my breath stands still,
the essence of my life drips from unhealed wounds,
the last expiation of used up days.

Why does my glance wander from greenest green
to the young firs along the roadside,
to the trees that gave me hope in unknown countries,
trees that I dare to bring here with a magic wand?

As one green blends into another,
moss and fern and darkening branches,
I don't know if I'm climbing downward or upward,
still turned toward the clearing.

It has to be pointed out that the literary concept of these authors does not present the only attempt at writing poetry after the Holocaust. Their approach stands in contrast, for example, to the work of Paul Celan, another survivor, who during his writing career challenged language and literature and broke away from conventional forms of poetry. He not only engaged in

bold metaphors but continuously tried to transcend the linguistic material, to deconstruct conventional language, sometimes at the risk of opaqueness and obscurity. In his first published poetry collection, *Der Sand aus den Urnen* (Vienna: Verlag A. SEXTL, 1948), Celan raises the question “Und duldest du, Mutter, wie einst, ach, daheim / den leisen, den deutschen, den schmerzlichen Reim?” (from the poem “Nähe der Gräber”).⁷

The experience of life and life lost has also been a major theme in the poetry of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss. She was born on October 14, 1899, in Berlin-Schöneberg, where she later became a teacher of physical education and owner of an orthopedic institute. In 1920 she married the dentist, Dr. Herbert Blumenthal. Interested in poetry and Jewish thought since her school days, she finally solicited via correspondence with Rainer Maria Rilke an extensive explanation of his ideas on Judaism (the letters by the leading German poet were included in the volume, *Briefe aus Muzot* [Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1935]).⁸ Under her maiden name Ilse Weiss, she published her first poetry volume, *Gesicht und Maske* in 1929 at Horen-Verlag in Berlin-Grunewald. In the 1930s, she also gave poetry readings at radio stations and published poems in the press. With her family she left Germany in 1937 for a brief stay in England. From there, the émigrés went to Holland which was invaded by Nazi Germany in May 1940. Under German occupation, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss and members of her family were sent to Westerbork, a sort of transit camp, where they stayed in 1943-44. However, Ilse's son Peter had been arrested in the street and brought to the Austrian death camp Mauthausen from which he did not return. In September of 1944, the family members in Westerbork were transported to Theresienstadt (Terezin). From there, Herbert Blumenthal was taken to the infamous Auschwitz death camp. He did not survive. Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, her daughter, and her mother were liberated in Theresienstadt by Soviet troops in 1945. The survivors spent the early postwar years in Holland (Haarlem and Amsterdam) and left for New York in 1947. Of course, life in America was not without challenges for the newcomers: at the beginning of her stay, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss had to earn her income from factory work. However, she took up a worldwide correspondence with authors such as Paul Celan, Nelly Sachs, Hermann Hesse, and the Zionist leader Robert Weltsch. She finally returned to a life of letters by publishing articles and poems, by giving lectures at cultural institutions and universities, and by working for almost 20 years as a librarian at the Leo Baeck Institute in Manhattan. Her first poetry volume after the war, *Das Schlüsselwunder*, appeared in 1954 at Werner Classen Verlag in Zurich. In 1957, the relatively small collection *Mahnmal: Gedichte aus dem KZ* came out at C. Wegner in Hamburg (Mainzer Reihe, Band 8) and in 1960 at Luchterhand Verlag in Darmstadt. Her last book, *Ohnesarg: Gedichte und*

ein dokumentarischer Bericht, was published in 1984 at Postskriptum Verlag in Hannover. About Germany and the German language, this survivor once said in an interview: "The German language has remained my homeland, Germany itself I have wiped out. I'm sorry to say so, but what I went through and what I saw is insurmountable." Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss died at the age of 87 on August 10, 1987, in Greenwich, Connecticut.⁹

Whereas the main purpose of her writings after World War Two was the creation of a literary monument commemorating the suffering of the Holocaust victims, the one and only book published by Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss before the Nazi regime was a poetic introspection which addressed many questions relevant to modern feminism (it came out the same year as Virginia Woolf's classic essay *A Room of One's Own*.) As the title *Gesicht und Maske* indicates, the author offers possibilities of self-identification, embarks on a search for the true fact and the mask of the feminine ego. Often with great emotional gestures, the author describes stages of a feminine existence, e.g., the plight for female autonomy, the mother-daughter conflict, the inflation of feelings, forms of solidarity with other women, be it Sappho or be it a prostitute.

Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss started relatively early after World War Two to express her suffering and her personal loss in poetic terms. One of those texts, "Heimkehr aus dem Konzentrations-Lager," was published in the German-Jewish newspaper *Aufbau* of October 19, 1945 (page 3). It is an elegy, a song of mourning dedicated to her son and her husband. Actually, all of her literary production after 1945 is committed to bearing witness. By giving testimony about inhumanity, she tries to save humanity; by writing about death, she tries to regain life. In as much as her literary work consists of poetry about the Holocaust, it is at the same time poetry in support of life and, thereby, in a deep sense Jewish poetry. Whereas her first postwar collection *Das Schlüsselwunder* is based on the experience of death camps and survival, the following volume *Mahnmal* explicitly depicts the reality of those camps with documentary intention. Her fourth book of poems *Ohnesarg* (foreword by Günter Kunert) reflects upon the present time which is inseparable from the suffering during an inhumane past. The poetry is combined with an autobiographic prose report about camp life in Holland. Clearly the author sought with her last volume to be stylistically on the level with contemporary poetry, without relinquishing the burden of the past. Thereby, she tried to adjust the precept of remembrance to the changing conditions of writing poetry. The following text is indicative of her new requiem style (64):

Übersicht

Nachkommen wir,
Betreuer der Aschenhelden
In Augensärge gebettet
Gezimmert aus Seufzer und Gram.

Tränen, die Heimatlosen
Im Armenhaushalt des Herzens,
Tränken die Scheiterhaufen
Und der Wegweiser Labyrinth.

Legt das Gedächtnis in Ketten.
Legt Damals und Niemals in Ketten. –
Die Ketten schmelzen wie Wachs.

Overview¹⁰

Survivors we are,
Caregivers of ash heroes
Bedded into eye coffins
Made of sighs and grief.

Tears, the homeless
In the poorhouse of the heart
Drench the stake
And the labyrinth of signposts.

Put memory into chains.
Put the then and the never into chains. –
The chains melt like wax.

It is remarkable that despite the author's existential upheaval and traumatic experience, her literary taste and her esthetic preferences remained relatively intact. The result of her creative approach is for the most part of her oeuvre a stylized form of realism controlled by rhyme and imagery. She continued her writing as a sort of retrospection and introspection after the liberation. If one takes into consideration that the intention of the Holocaust was nothing less than the annihilation of Jewish life, the adherence to traditional esthetic forms has to be read as an act of protest and resistance, as a proof that the attempt at total destruction failed—a destruction which was at the same time

aimed at memory and tradition. Under those circumstances, the option for poetic traditionalism, which Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss and the other women have taken, becomes a celebration of continuity, i.e., a celebration of life and survival, as dismal and depressing the content of the poems may be. Such an artistic approach would also eclipse Theodor W. Adorno's often-quoted verdict about poetry after Auschwitz. Because of a remark he had made in his essay collection *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (1951), the illustrious philosopher was often quoted as claiming that writing poetry after Auschwitz was barbaric. He later retracted or rather explained this dictum in *Negative Dialektik* and other works.

Vera Lachmann is another woman whose life was permanently affected by the Holocaust and whose poetry deals with this experience in her own distinctive way. The author of three volumes published at Castrum Peregrini in Amsterdam was born in Berlin on June 23, 1904, and belonged—like the two aforementioned women—to the well-established and assimilated, urban Jewish bourgeoisie. Her father was the architect Louis Lachmann, and through her mother Caroline, she was related to the banker family Warburg.

Her teacher Helene (Hella) Herrmann introduced her to the culture and literature of ancient Greece, as well as to German literature including the works of Stefan George. Vera Lachmann took up German and classical studies and received her Ph.D. in 1930 from the University of Berlin for her thesis on the origin of the Icelandic Harthar saga. During the 1930s, she made the acquaintance of Edith Landmann (1877-1951) in Basel. This connection became important for Vera Lachmann's life since the Landmann family was friends with Stefan George and members of his circle (the first poem of Vera Lachmann's first collection is dedicated to Edith Landmann).

When under the Nazi regime Jewish children were excluded from attending public schools, Vera Lachmann founded in Berlin-Grunewald a private school for these young students. She also helped many of them find shelter abroad, thereby saving their lives. Another woman from the George circle who became important in Vera Lachmann's life was Renata von Scheliha (1901-67). She was also a scholar of classical studies and a friend of Edith Landmann. While still in Germany, Renata von Scheliha, who immigrated to the United States after World War Two, was able to give the younger friend Vera moral support in times of distress and despair.

Vera Lachmann came to the United States in 1939 via Sweden where she had been instrumental in rescuing the later Nobel Prize winner Nelly Sachs whom she knew from her time in Berlin. Other participants of the rescue operation were Selma Lagerlöf, Gisela Warburg, Gudrun Dähnert, and Hermann Weigand and his wife. While living in the German capital, Vera Lachmann was also friends with Gertrud Kolmar. However, Ilse Blumenthal-

Weiss and Vera Lachmann did not get to know each other before they lived in New York.

From 1944 until 1970 Vera Lachman ran a summer school for boys called Camp Catawba located in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Former students still have fond memories of this institution that mixed typical leisure activities with an introduction into the classics. The poet-scholar taught classical philology at Brooklyn College (1949-74) and was later also an adjunct at Hunter College and New York University. In her apartment in Greenwich Village she also gave free tutoring in Greek, Latin, and German.

During Vera Lachmann's lifetime three volumes of her poetry—all dedicated to her friend, the composer Tui St. George Tucker (1924-2004)—were published at Stichting Castrum Peregrini in Amsterdam: *Golden tanzt das Licht im Glas* (1969), *Namen werden Inseln* (1975), and *Halmdiamanten* (1982). The poems of these collections are accompanied by a prose translation into English by Spencer Holst. A collection of Vera Lachmann's various writings on the classics was published by Charles A. Miller: *Homer's Sun Still Shines: Ancient Greece in Essays, Poems and Translations* (New Market, Virginia: Trackaday, 2004).¹¹

A brief explanation of *Castrum Peregrini* may be in place here: This highly sophisticated cultural and literary magazine was founded in 1951 by Wolfgang Frommel at Herengracht 401 in Amsterdam, the address of a Dutch painter and supporter of the refugees, Gisèle d'Ailly-van Waterschoot van der Gracht. It is this building not far away from Anne Frank's hiding place at Prinsengracht 267 where Frommel and friends, all admirers of Stefan George and his poetry, had survived the war and Nazi occupation by dedicating themselves to art and literature. The legal owner of the magazine was a foundation by the same name that occasionally also published books. The magazine ceased publication in 2007, but the foundation still exists. The building that houses the archives serves today as a cultural center. Because of their connection with the George circle, Vera Lachmann, as well as Edith Landmann and Renata von Scheliha, published at Castrum Peregrini.

The last of her poems that Vera Lachmann published during her lifetime is called "Früher Morgen in Catawba (Blowing Rock, North Carolina)." It appeared in *Aufbau*, August 17, 1984. She died five months later on January 18, 1985, at Saint Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan. Her collected papers were deposited at Castrum Peregrini.¹²

It was mainly two sources of inspiration that helped Vera Lachmann overcome the trauma of persecution and expulsion, as documented in her poetry: the culture of ancient Greece and the contact with nature (cf. Camp Catawba). The world of classical studies (art, literature, philosophy, mythology) provided her with strength and equilibrium and also shaped her

relationship to her fellow human beings, especially to women with whom she often maintained a bond of love and friendship and to whom a considerable amount of poems is dedicated. The encounter with nature had a two-fold effect: in one respect, it gave her solace, but since she could not share with beloved people the emotional intensity triggered by such an encounter, it often made her even more conscious of the loss of her loved ones. This process can be witnessed already at the beginning of her first poetry volume, *Golden tanzt das Licht im Glas* (8):

Allein im September

Wie ward mein dunkles Dach zur Morgenstufe
Und scheu genug des Herbstes Fuß zu tragen?
Da glüht das Spargelkraut im Funkentau,
Die tote Tanne wittert schräge Klarheit,
Und Hügelränder halkyonisch glimmen.
War schon der Mensch erschaffen? Drei der Eichen,
Im feurigen Blau erleuchtet, goldbetroffen,
Erwidern nichts. Sie haben dies vergessen.
Ein Dampf verschwebet aus der Wiese Lenden.
Und Vogelhusch und kühler Stein und Farn
Sind wach. Ungläubig horcht das rasche Herz:
Gelächter meiner Toten! Droben! Droben!

Alone in September

How did my dark roof turn into morning's step
And become shy enough to bear the Autumn's foot?
The asparagus weed glows there in the spark-dew,
The dead pine tree scents the slanting clearness,
And hill rims glow halcyon.
Was man created yet? Three of the oaks
Lit up in the fiery blue, gold-startled,
Reply nothing. They have forgotten.
A vapor dissolves from the meadow's loins.
And bird flitting, and cool stone, and fern
Are awake. Unbelieving, the quick heart listens:
Laughter of my dead ones! Above! Above!¹³

The timelessness of nature makes the lyrical subject aware of the human mortality. The immortality of natural phenomena brings to the mind of the

speaking voice the human mortality and awakens the memory of the beloved dead. This is when a feeling of solitude breaks through. The celebration of nature becomes a requiem, nature opens the space of memory, but thereby it also provides a way of overcoming the exile existence.

* * *

Three women, three Holocaust experiences, three poetic *œuvres*: a common formalistic feature of the literary production by Margarete Kollisch, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, and Vera Lachmann is a tendency towards linguistic conventionalism, the continuation of a poetic tradition which existed before the upheaval of persecution and exile—a tradition which hardly found any continuation in German literature after World War Two. Therefore, the writings of these women hold a special position in the spectrum of contemporary literature produced in the German language. Margarete Kollisch's work reflects the poetic search for reunification with the past, as can be seen from motifs such as nature, dream, and childhood. This approach is consequently committed to overcoming the dark abyss caused by Holocaust and exile. Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss placed her literary work after 1945 into the service of bearing witness, but by focusing on the inhumane she tried to save the humane, by writing about death she tried to regain life. Like Margarete Kollisch, Vera Lachmann managed to escape internment in death camps. However, she shares with Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss the inconsolable pain about the loss of loved ones. Whereas in the case of Margarete Kollisch's poetry we find the individual affected by a pain of separation (mainly separation from the past), it is a pain caused by loss that overshadows the individual's existence in the works of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss and Vera Lachmann (*Trennungsschmerz* vs. *Verlustschmerz*). The special circumstances under which the feelings of loss become evident are in Vera Lachmann's poetry made up by the observation of the surrounding nature. The common bond that connects these three women and their poetry is a language that they saved from the rubble of destruction. In their creative enterprise the conservation of language goes together with the conservation of life, and the conservation of life—especially in the face of total destruction—is indeed also a Jewish concept.

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Notes

¹ This article is the revised version of a lecture given on February 17, 2010, at the Max Kade German House of Oberlin College, Ohio. As background material for the history of the

Jews in Germany the following publications have been consulted: Nachum T. Gidal, *Die Juden in Deutschland von der Römerzeit bis zur Weimarer Republik* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1988); Hermann Meier-Cronemeyer and Carolin Hilker-Siebenhaar, eds., *Juden in Berlin 1671-1945: Ein Lesebuch* (Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung Beuermann, 1988); Leo Sievers, *Juden in Deutschland: Die Geschichte einer 2000jährigen Tragödie* (Hamburg: Verlag Gruner + Jahr, 3. Auflage, 1978).

² Gabriele Kreis, *Frauen im Exil: Dichtung und Wirklichkeit* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1988); Edda Ziegler, *Verboten—Verfemt—Vertrieben: Schriftstellerinnen im Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus*. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2010).

³ Cf. Gert Niers, *Frauen schreiben im Exil: Zum Werk der nach Amerika emigrierten Lyrikerinnen Margarete Kollisch, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, Vera Lachmann* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988). Reviewed by Guy Stern in *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 24 (1989): 176-77. Other reviews: by Ruth Schwertfeger in *American Jewish Archives* (Spring/Summer 1990): 88-91, and by Joseph Peter Strelka in *Modern Austrian Literature* 23,2 (1990): 160-62.

⁴ Her collected papers are available at the *German and Jewish Intellectual Emigré Collection* established by John Spalek at SUNY Albany; at the Leo Baeck Institute c/o Center for Jewish History in Manhattan; and at the *Literaturhaus* in Vienna.

⁵ Eva Kollisch, born in 1925 in Vienna and living today in Manhattan, is the author of two books of memoirs, *Girl in Movement* (Thetford, Vermont: Glad Day Books, 2000) and *The Ground Under My Feet* (Maplewood, New Jersey: Hamilton Stone Editions, 2007). Both volumes also came out in a German translation which, however, was not made by the author herself but by a translator under contract with the Viennese publisher. Eva Kollisch did work for many years as a professor of German and Comparative Literature at Sarah Lawrence College in Westchester, New York, but did not choose German as the language of her publications.

⁶ English translation by Gert Niers.

⁷ These two lines which should rhyme also in translation were rendered in English by John Felstiner like this: "And can you bear, Mother, as once on a time, / the gentle, the German, the pain-laden rhyme?" In *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, translated by John Felstiner (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2001), 11.

⁸ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe aus Muzot 1921 bis 1926*, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1937). The copyright of this volume is dated 1935, other editions followed. The letter on pages 72-76 is dated December 28, 1921. It is followed by a postscriptum ("eine kleine Nachschrift") from the next day, pages 77-79. The volume contains two more letters of Rilke to Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss: of January 25, 1922, and of April 25, 1922. It is especially the letters of December 28, 1921, and of April 25, 1922, in which Rilke offers his thoughts about Jews and Judaism. Rilke's opinion of Judaism and the Jewish people as presented in these letters to Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss is different from his references to Karl Kraus which were made in a letter of February 21, 1914, to Sidonie Nadherny von Borutin and in which he applies old-fashioned sentiments of anti-Semitism to discredit Kraus. Cf. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, "Karl Kraus, sein Haß, seine Liebe" in *Nachprüfung: Aufsätze über deutsche Schriftsteller von gestern* (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1977).

⁹ The collected papers of Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss have been deposited at the Leo Baeck Institute c/o Center for Jewish History, New York City. Some of her materials are also at the University of Cincinnati (Blegen Library, Rare Books, German Americana).

¹⁰ English translation by Gert Niers.

¹¹ Charles A. Miller, Professor emeritus of Politics and American Studies at Lake Forest College in Illinois, was a student and counselor in Vera Lachmann's Camp Catwaba and also published a book about this educational institution, *A Catawba Assembly* (New Market, Virginia: Trackaday, 1973).

¹² Another selection of Vera Lachmann's papers and documentation about Camp

Catawba can be found at the Special Collections of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Some materials are deposited at the University of Cincinnati (cf. above).

¹³The translation of this poem was made by Spencer Holst and is quoted from *Golden tanzt das Licht im Glas* (9). However, in this essay the text was typeset according to the line break-up of the original poem in German to make a comparison easier. In the book edition Holst's translations are printed as a prose text (the German original appears on the left-hand page, the English prose version on the opposite right-hand page).