

The Jewish “Other” in Ivo Andrić’s *The Bridge on the Drina*

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Abstract

This article analyzes the representation of Jewish characters in Ivo Andrić’s novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. The analysis progresses chronologically through the novel, taking note of the increased frequency and length of the Jewish characterizations that reflect the community’s evolution, growing freedoms, and increased visibility in Višegrad, Bosnia between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. The author pays particular attention to the lone Jewish female character in the novel, Lotte, whose Otherness—as a Jew, an impoverished widow, a woman, and a foreigner—is utilized by Andrić to portray actions, choices, and behaviours that are outside the norm for a woman of her era. The trajectory of Lotte’s character, a steady rise and a steep downfall precipitated by the First World War, serves as an important metaphor for many of the novel’s central themes: secularization, modernization, migration, and the ultimate fallibility of imperial rule.

Keywords

Bosnia, Drina, Ivo Andrić, Jewish, Lotte, Other, women

Résumé

Cet article analyse la représentation des personnages juifs dans le roman d’Ivo Andrić, *Le Pont sur la Drina*. L’analyse progresse chronologiquement à travers le roman, en prenant note de l’augmentation de la fréquence et de la longueur des caractérisations juives qui reflètent l’évolution de la communauté, les libertés croissantes et la visibilité accrue à Višegrad, en Bosnie, entre le XVIIe et le XXe siècle. L’auteur accorde une attention particulière au seul personnage féminin juif du roman, Lotika, dont l’altérité—en tant que juive, veuve pauvre, femme et étrangère—est utilisée par Andrić pour dépeindre des actions, des choix et des comportements qui sont hors norme pour une femme de son époque. La trajectoire du personnage de Lotika, une montée continue et une chute abrupte précipitée par la Première Guerre mondiale, sert de métaphore importante pour plusieurs des thèmes centraux du roman : la sécularisation, la modernisation, la migration et la faillibilité ultime du pouvoir impérial.

Mots-clés

Autre, Bosnie, Drina, femmes, Ivo Andrić, juif, Lotika

What is a bridge? A point of entry and an escape route. A means of getting from point A to point B. A charming architectural detail, a mundane thoroughfare, and a destination. A connector and a divider. While the world around them may be in a state of constant flux, bridges are the ceaseless, stalwart observers of history. This is the case in Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina*, an epic tale spanning four centuries in the town of Višegrad, Bosnia. The Mehmet Paša Sokolović Bridge, the only constant throughout the narrative, is arguably the central character in the novel. As remarked by Nicholas Moravcevic, "[t]his work does not tell the story of a particular person, or even a group of people, for its characters number into the hundreds, and many of them simply disappear from the reader's view with no further information. Central to the action is an object, the famous old bridge; or rather two objects: the bridge and the river, forever linked in time" (314). We are thus offered glimpses into the lives and tales of many of the town's inhabitants, but the narrator does not linger for long on any one individual or group. At the beginning of the novel, the town finds itself on the border between two empires, at a so-called meeting point between East and West, coloured by a multitude of nationalities, religions, languages, and cultures.

While the omniscient narrator touches upon the lives of a wide variety of individuals, this article will take particular interest in how the Jewish characters are portrayed throughout the novel. As with all of the other characters, the Jews are equally minor and sparsely interspersed throughout the text. Over the course of the novel, Andrić slowly builds upon his representation of Jewish characters living in Višegrad. His initial portraits are brief and sparing, becoming more frequent, more detailed, and more fulsome. In exploring these depictions, this article will argue that this narrative progression reflects the Jews' burgeoning freedoms—religious, ideological, and economic—as Višegrad transitions from Ottoman to Austro-Hungarian rule. Particular

attention will be paid to Lotte, the local hotel manager, as she is the most contemporary Jewish character in the novel, as well as being one of the most particular in the entire work.<sup>9</sup> Her representation raises many interesting questions. Why does Andrić choose a widowed Ashkenazi Jewish migrant from Galicia as a focal point in this work? Why is she one of very few characters—and a female one at that—depicted repeatedly and in such detail? Why is she given permission to lead a life outside of prescribed norms? Andrić clearly establishes all of his Jewish characters as Others in Višegrad, but none more so than Lotte. In establishing Lotte as a supreme Other—as a Jew, an impoverished widow, a woman, and a foreigner—Andrić has the liberty of using her character to portray actions, choices, and behaviours that are outside the norm. As a result, Lotte serves as an important metaphor for many of the novel’s central themes: secularization, modernization, migration, and the ultimate fallibility of imperial rule.

While the opening chapters of Andrić’s fictional Višegrad are populated with Muslims and Christians of various stripes, no Jews are mentioned. This absence speaks to the Otherness of this “closed community” whose members’ “way of life, as well as their foreign tongue, set them apart from their neighbours” (Gorup, “Review” 206). From a chronological standpoint, about two hundred years have elapsed by the time Elias Levi is introduced in “the second half of the eighteenth century” (Andrić 84). He is “known as Hadži Liacho, the Jewish rabbi well known far beyond the town for his sound judgment and open nature” (85). Until the narrative lands on Lotte in the late-nineteenth century, all of the Jews that are depicted by the narrator are of Sephardic origin, illustrating Bosnia’s particular Jewish history. According to Fran Markowitz, when the “Jews [were] expelled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century [they] were greeted with tolerance and granted refuge when they arrived in Ottoman Bosnia” (112). As was true in most

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<sup>9</sup> In other editions of the novel, this character is named Lotika. In the English translation used for this paper, the character’s name has been translated to Lotte.

European countries, the Jews were not typically permitted to assimilate or granted the same freedoms as other citizens. The Sephardic community in Višegrad would have been no exception, particularly while the town was under Ottoman rule.

It is perhaps no accident that the rabbi's appearance coincides with a "great flood" (Andrić 84). It is of note that this first Jewish character is not represented independently, but rather alongside a host of other religious representatives. This narrative choice symbolizes the limited agency and freedom of the Jewish community, hemmed in on all sides by the other more populous and powerful religious communities in Višegrad.<sup>10</sup> With this particular tale of the town's history, Andrić is drawing a seemingly overt parallel to the biblical story of Noah and the Ark. In doing so, the author connects this tale to a long history of oral storytelling, religion, tradition, and patriarchy, all of which are embodied by Hadži Liacho's rabbinical character, as well as the other religious figures in the scene. The scriptural reference additionally serves to underscore the common roots shared by the three major religions represented in Višegrad, meaningfully brought together during the flood. For the first time, "Turks, Christians and Jews mingled together" (85). As noted by Radmila Gorup, "[c]rises and disasters tend to reduce socio-cultural differences and change cultural practices. The existential threat by natural elements, not ideology, makes the contact between different ethnic groups possible" ("Boundaries and Crossings" 6). Where normally these religious communities would remain quite segregated, an "act of God" forces them to unite, blurring the boundaries between their constructed identities. This is reinforced when the gathered men "from all three faiths" are described as "wet, pale, with clenched jaws, but outwardly calm" (Andrić 85). This "transient island in the flood of time" (86), a short-lived mirage of peaceful coexistence, evaporates once the narrator describes Hadži Liacho as "red-faced and smiling, with riotous tufts of white hair snowing from under his

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<sup>10</sup> Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians.

unusually shallow fez” (88). The rabbi is the only character of the group singled out by the narrator and described in such detail, so that he is set apart, his “unusually shallow fez” marking him as strange and Other. This description serves as a reminder that these men have only been brought together due to the extraordinary circumstances of the flood; they will all return to their respective corners once the flood waters have receded. As the rain subsides, the image of the town “without a bridge” and with only the *kapia* visible “above the surface of the troubled waters” (89) not only emphasizes the submersion of the “transient island” but also foreshadows the waning dominance of the Ottoman Empire and the advent of modernity.<sup>11</sup>

About a century later, as the Austro-Hungarian Empire takes control of Višegrad and other lands formerly under Ottoman rule, we are introduced to the rabbi David Levi, Hadži Liacho’s grandson. His character embodies the passing of time, tradition, and the transition between empires. In parallel to the aforementioned flood scene, the religious figures of the town are once again assembled, but under different circumstances. Rather than an act of God, these men are brought together by an act of imperialism. The newly appointed Austro-Hungarian rulers have ordered the “recognized notables” of the town to gather and greet an “Austrian commandant ... on the *kapia*” (141). David Levi is included in this group, having inherited his grandfather’s “name, position and property but nothing of his spirit and serenity” (145). This is the second time that a Jewish character is represented in the text, once again alongside other religious leaders of the town. In contrast to the previous scene, *all* of the religious leaders are described in detail, with the young rabbi saved for last. The transition from one description to the next could be likened to a narrative diminuendo, from most powerful and flattering to least. The rabbi, “[t]he fourth of the ‘notables,’” (145) is described in a particularly unflattering light:

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<sup>11</sup> A *kapia* is a Turkish phrase for an outdoor meeting place, usually located at a public intersection or bridge.

He was pale and puny, with dark velvety eyes and melancholy expression. He was inconceivably timid and silent. He had only recently become rabbi and had married not long before. In order to seem bigger and more important he wore a wide rich suit of heavy cloth and his face was overgrown with beard and whiskers, but beneath all this one could discern a weak sickly body and the childish oval of his face peered out fearfully from the black sparse beard. He suffered terribly whenever he had to appear in public and take his part in discussions and decisions, always feeling himself to be weak and undeveloped. (145)

This description speaks to a young man who has inherited traditions and responsibilities that he is not mature enough for or particularly interested in taking on. He is expected to do so, dresses the part, and goes through the motions of playing the role of rabbi and patriarch. His character represents a weakening of religious authority and tradition that can be connected to the new Austro-Hungarian rulers. The Austrians deplored “the Oriental backwardness and savagery of the Balkans” and entered “Bosnia with a civilizing mission” (Gorup, “Boundaries and Crossings” 6). This perspective is reinforced with the arrival of the Austrian colonel; neither he nor his entourage “paid the least attention to the ‘notables’ who remained alone on the *kapia*” (Andrić 149). This encounter represents a confrontation between tradition and modernity—and between the pre-constructed notions of Orient and Occident—illustrating how the religious leaders are losing their power and relevance as a new age begins to take shape. Once the colonel has left, the rabbi is described hurrying off “with tiny steps in order to get home as soon as possible and feel again the warmth and protection of the family circle in which his mother and his wife lived” (150). This final image of the young rabbi represents how one community amongst many is desperately trying to hold on to waning traditions and ways of life. As Ali

Gunes notes, it is clear that with the arrival of the Austrians, “the ‘sweet tranquillity [*sic*]’ and traditional stability of life and identity [will] shift, crumble and dissolve” (105). Aside from the fact that he is a Jew, David Levi is represented as an Other in his inability to occupy his prescribed role in society. His lack of manliness, his failures as a patriarch, and his desire to remain within a traditionally feminine, domestic sphere add additional layers of Otherness to his character. Finally, the image of a young religious patriarch scurrying towards the insular safety of home and hearth speaks to the growing power and emancipation of women.

The span of time separating the description of Jewish characters gets shorter and shorter as the novel progresses. One can read the increasing frequency and length of these descriptions as symbolic of the growing freedoms and increased visibility of the Jewish community in Višegrad and in Europe. Andrić’s narrative structure is a visual representation of the Jewish community’s evolution. The third Jewish character portrayed in the novel is Bukus Gaon, “the eldest son of the pious, poor and honest barber, Avram Gaon” (Andrić 172). In contrast to the two rabbis who have been depicted thus far, Bukus Gaon is the first secular (at least insofar as he is not a religious figure), explicitly poor, and possibly uneducated Jewish character represented in the novel. At a time when class and wealth distinctions are beginning to more markedly etch themselves upon Višegrad society, Bukus Gaon’s poverty, in addition to his Jewish identity, both mark him as an Other. His character ultimately represents the early consequences of modernity as it takes hold in Višegrad, as well as the resulting collapse of religious traditions and values centred on family and community.

Rachel Manekin observes that in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Jewish communities “enjoyed equality before the law, and freedom of movement, domicile, assembly, religion, expression, occupation, and association, as well as access to public offices. Although in practice

the extent of these rights in their application to Jews was sometimes limited” (4). In theory, the laws of the new empire led to a distinct improvement when compared to the Jews’ quality of life under Ottoman rule. At this point in the story, Višegrad is in the midst of some important transformations. Physically, many changes begin to take place, and the inhabitants observe “[t]his continual need of the newcomers to build and rebuild, to dig and to put back again, to put up and modify” (Andrić 158). In contrast to the *laissez-faire* Ottoman approach, the Austro-Hungarians are rapidly modernizing and developing the town and its environs according to Western notions of progress. In addition to these physical changes, there are important behavioural and psychological changes manifesting themselves amongst the town’s inhabitants. For example, Jews are noticeably more visible in public, which seems to reflect a change in mindset in response to the more tolerant policies of the new ruling powers. It is “noticed that now Serbs and Jews came more freely and in greater numbers to the *kapia* and at all times of day, paying no heed as they once had done to the habits and privileges of the Turks. Otherwise all went on as before” (159). Up until this point, the two characters mentioned above, Hadži Liacho and David Levi, are described in public scenes alongside other religious figures. They are never really represented within their own communities, alongside other Jews. The first time a *group* of Jews is described in a public setting is in the following scene:

It was a Saturday. As always on Saturdays, the Višegrad Jews, merchants with their male children, were gathered on the *kapia*. At leisure and in the formal dress, with satin trousers and woolen waistcoats, with dull red shallow fezzes on their heads, they strictly observed the Sabbath Day ... they sat on the *kapia*, carrying on loud and lively conversations in Spanish, only using Serbian when they wanted to swear. (172)

In terms of Jewish representation in the novel, this scene depicts an important transition. The “dull red shallow fezzes” are no longer described as “unusual,” as had been the case with Hadži Liacho. Moreover, their “dullness” speaks to their use and the longstanding presence of the Sephardic Jewish community in Višegrad. The Jews are openly gathering in public, easily identifiable in terms of dress, language, traditions, and religion. Thus, not only are the Jews—and their fezzes—a much more common sight, they now seem to be perceived as slightly less Other by the narrator and the general populace.

The aforementioned Bukus Gaon belongs to the group of Spanish-speaking Jews on the *kapia*. In direct contravention of the Sabbath rules, he retrieves a Hungarian ducat wedged in a crack on the bridge; he simply cannot resist the lure and promise of its golden sheen. This seemingly simple act sets off a series of unfortunate events, representing an important shift in values amongst all of the communities of Višegrad. Prior to the arrival of the Austrians, “life used to be very simple, though narrow, for the people and the daily activities they carried out in Višegrad; nothing else concerned them very much beyond their families in the small world of their town; they were happy and secure; what they had was enough for them ‘within definite limits, without looking much ahead or too far into the past’ and future” (Gunes 105). The moment that Bukus Gaon retrieves the ducat from the bridge signals the beginning of a new capitalist age, one where the inhabitants of Višegrad begin to consider life beyond their immediate surroundings and old belief systems, entertaining the possibilities of “more.” Such is the case of Bukus Gaon, who proceeds to quadruple his wealth in a game of cards. With his newfound wealth, “his glowing imagination opened far and glorious prospects which threw a glittering sheen over his poverty and swept away the whole town down to its foundations” (Andrić 174). Where David Levi reluctantly and resignedly carried on the responsibilities and

traditions he inherited from his grandfather, Bukus Gaon is part of a new generation that exercises its freedom of choice. He chooses to reject religion, tradition, family, and responsibility in search of a better life. In the modern, secular world introduced by the Austro-Hungarian rulers, values and priorities have significantly shifted. Where all the members of this small town would once have lived contentedly within their means and prioritized religion, family, and community, the new order favours individualism, profit, and the pursuit of upward social mobility. Bukus Gaon embodies this new approach to life, becoming “a gambler and a vagabond” (174) and disappearing from the town in pursuit of his wildest dreams. His father “Old Gaon shriveled up from shame and grief for his eldest son, and the whole Jewish community felt the misfortune as if it had been its own” (174). Old Gaon mourns the loss of his heir apparent, the son that would have carried on the traditions and responsibilities of the family. The “whole Jewish community” feels this misfortune, for it is a reflection of how the community as an entity is losing touch with its ancient roots, its traditions, and its values when faced with the onslaught of modernity.

At this point in the novel, only Sephardic male Jewish characters have been described by the narrator. According to Jonna Rock, it is “with the occupation of Bosnia by Austro-Hungarian armies (1878) that Ashkenazi Jews” begin to arrive (“Sarajevo and the Sarajevo Sephardim” 894). The narrator notes that, “[b]esides the Spanish speaking Jews, the Sephardi, who had been living in the town for hundreds of years ... there now came the Galician Jews, the Ashkenazi” (Andrić 201). This influx of Galician Jews brings us Lotte, arguably the most significant character in the entire novel. As the history of Višegrad enters into the late-nineteenth century, she is the first and only female Jewish character represented in any detail. Part of a large, German-speaking Ashkenazi Jewish family, she is culturally and linguistically distinct from the

Sephardic Jews that have thus far been depicted and, by contrast, have been settled in Bosnia for hundreds of years. Though all descended from common Jewish origins, the distinctness of these communities often led to their segregation, in a sense recreating—on a smaller scale—a separation between East and West. As already touched upon, the greater frequency and length of the description of Jewish characters in the novel, particularly in Lotte’s case, serve as a visual and narrative representation of the Jewish community’s growing freedom and presence in Višegrad. This notion is supported by the large influx of Jews from other regions of the empire. In Lotte’s case, nearly two entire chapters are dedicated to her arc, so that she is given a far more three-dimensional depiction compared to the other characters (Jewish or not) in the novel. Lotte resists easy categorization, for she is a multifaceted character that takes on a multitude of roles and traits. She is only able to do so because, as already mentioned, she is a supreme Other—as a Jew, an impoverished widow, a woman, and a foreigner. It is only because she has been Othered on so many different levels that the life and history of Višegrad can be projected onto her. Her trajectory mirrors that of the town and the empire; it is an allegory for all of the dying empires of the early twentieth century.

When Lotte is first introduced, she is described as “the real proprietress” of Zahler’s hotel, “a young and very pretty widow with a free tongue and a masculine energy” (203). This is an important period in Višegrad, when “money starts circulating among a greater number of people when compared with the past” and the people “achieve a new perception of life as being ‘wider, more luxurious and freer’” (Gunes 106). Concurrently, as Vladimir Biti notes, “[l]eisure is replaced by feverish activity that becomes an end in itself, spawning devastating consequences” (162). Lotte personifies this new era, while also portraying the evolution of

gender roles in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the proprietress of the hotel, she occupies a traditionally male sphere, adding to which:

She controlled the destinies of a whole dozen Jewish families, entered into the minutest details of their lives, arranged their marrying and giving in marriage, sent healing to the sick, warned and admonished the work-shy and spendthrift and praised the thrifty and industrious. She ... incited all of them to a more understanding, better and more dignified way of life and at the same time made this more possible and easier for them. (Andrić 206-207)

As the breadwinner and decision-maker for her entire family, she takes on the role of a patriarch. Further enhancing this image, Lotte is only ever depicted working, reviewing her profit margins, and corresponding with her family. Her “personal life stays in the background and appears empty and without love” (Gorup, “Women in Andrić’s Writing” 170). In her introduction above, she is overtly described as having a “free tongue and a masculine energy” (Andrić 203), but there are many other examples that characterize her in similar terms, including: “quick intelligence and masculine heart” (204); “like a torero with a bull” (204); “more cunning than a woman has and more strength than any man could muster” (210); and “[s]he was the ‘man’ of that household and ‘Aunt Lotte’ to the whole township” (307). The way in which she is described suggests that the narrative voice is male, for what we encounter here is an overtly male gaze, and a rather pejorative bent to the “unfeminine” ways in which she behaves. When a woman’s behaviour is likened to that of a man, this usually serves to foreshadow a steep, impending downfall, as a punishment for lack of conformity.

Rosa Mayreder, a contemporary Austrian feminist, quotes Nietzsche when she writes that “[m]an makes himself an image of woman, and woman shapes herself to this image” (188).

There are many instances in which Lotte “shapes herself” to the male gazes that assail her day in and day out, usually to achieve her own mercenary ends. At the outset, she is described as “young and very pretty” (Andrić 203) embodying the “idea” of “something beautiful that gives meaning to man’s life” (Gorup, “Women in Andrić’s Writing” 156). At the hotel, she is “at everyone’s beck and call, always amiable, always the same and always bold and discreet. Well built, plump, with ivory-white skin, black hair and smouldering eyes” (Andrić 204). The narrative hones in on her appearance, for this is where Lotte’s value lies in a traditional, patriarchal society: in her attractiveness and her ability to attend to male needs. She is additionally described as “a glittering, expensive and cold *fatamorgana* who played with their senses” (204) and as

that untiring and cold woman of chilled passions, quick intelligence and masculine heart [who] tamed every fury, silenced every demand of uncontrolled men by the inexplicable play of her perfect body, her great cunning and her no less great daring, and always succeeded in maintaining the necessary distance between herself and them, which only served to inflame their desires and increase her own value. (204)

Lotte repeatedly appropriates the male gaze, knowing precisely how to manipulate her male patrons using her feminine charms, while never compromising her own integrity. It is worth paying particular attention to the parallel drawn between Lotte and a “*fatamorgana*,” which can be interpreted as a reference to a femme fatale, mirage, or sorceress. The latter interpretation would be a particularly negative and common descriptor used for women who do not conform to societal norms. A few pages earlier the same term is used: “when the nineteenth century spread out before the eyes of millions of men its many-sided and deceptive prosperity and created its *fatamorgana* of comfort, security and happiness for all and everyone at reasonable prices and

even on credit terms” (198). The double usage of this term is no mere coincidence, and serves to once again foreshadow Lotte’s downfall. Just as she projects a false image that taps into male desire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire projects an illusory promise of boundless prosperity and mobility that taps into the myth of progress.

It is precisely this myth of progress and modernity that is essential to understanding Lotte’s rise and fall. In her feverish devotion to work and family, cooped up in the hotel or her office, she loses sight of the changing world around her. She falls out of step, doggedly devoted to her own belief system, and ultimately pays the price for it. Aside from physical attractiveness, the only value that a woman can offer in society is by way of marriage and reproduction. Mayreder explains how

woman is only a means to an end: first, for man’s gratification; secondly, for the reproduction of man, who is in himself the final end of all the contrivances of Nature as well as of the State. No intrinsic worth as a self-sufficient personality, or a self-justified individuality, is granted to woman. She is of value only to the extent in which she serves as a means, and the only condition which morally and practically justifies the existence of woman, is marriage. (184)

As a childless widow with no demonstrated interest in remarrying, Lotte does not fit into the mold of her time, nor would she possess much “intrinsic worth.” Rather than trying to attain a higher social status for herself through marriage and child-rearing, she selflessly aims to do so for her extended family. Unlike the earlier depictions of the Sephardic characters in the novel, there is nothing overtly “Jewish” about Lotte, but she is described as such and is thus Othered. This would seem to suggest that her Jewishness is an inescapable facet of her identity, whether it is overtly expressed or not. Aside from her gender, the only trait that openly distinguishes her as

foreign or Other is that “[s]he spoke incorrectly, for she never learnt Serbian well” (Andrić 204). She is otherwise indistinguishable from her fellow citizens, which may speak to an effort at assimilation. With the introduction of purportedly equal freedoms to all citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, assimilation would have been a more common occurrence from the late-nineteenth century onward. Though it is not explicitly addressed, Galicia would have been a relatively hostile place for Ashkenazi Jews in the late-nineteenth century, which may have spurred their initial migration to Bosnia. Though Lotte would have already been settled in Višegrad for some time, Daniel Unowsky remarks that “[i]n 1898 anti-Jewish violence swept across the western and central districts of Galicia” (5). With much of her extended family still living in this volatile region, her fear of their persecution, as well as their entrenched poverty, may play into her extreme work ethic. As mentioned, Lotte’s truest preoccupation is the well-being and advancement of her extended family. They make up the “second, hidden part of her life which belonged to her alone” (Andrić 206). Lotte is a character made up of many dualities; just as she embodies both male and female characteristics, she additionally represents the interplay between public and private spheres. The latter duality is particularly evident when she escapes the public world of the hotel and secludes herself in the private world of her office, where “she cast[s] aside the smiling mask” and “her face [grows] hard and her glance sharp and sombre” (206). It is within this private space that Lotte allows herself to exist as her true self, no longer playing a role, corresponding “with her very numerous relatives ... all the hordes of Jewish poor from Eastern Galicia, now scattered through Galicia, Austria and Hungary” (206). Lotte’s life’s purpose is in raising “the standard of the whole family” (207) so as to remove them from the clutches of poverty and persecution.

In her devotion to her family, Lotte personifies yet another duality: the push and pull between tradition and modernity. Lotte's values are more closely aligned with the old ways and traditions of Višegrad, associated with Ottoman rule, rather than those associated with modernity and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Lotte's priority is her family, whom she perceives as her true community. She is not wholly a part of Višegrad society, for she always maintains a certain distance, and this is yet another factor that sets her apart. While she does not work towards her own personal gain and advancement, she does participate in and profit from the capitalist mechanisms put in place by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Lotte's work life is very much a by-product of the *fatamorgana* mentioned above. She wholeheartedly believes in—and is completely dependent upon—the nineteenth century myth of progress. She has bought into the notion that accumulation of wealth and social status can guarantee a better outcome or future, namely for her extended family. The “Jewess with the two faces” (207) ultimately fails in this hopeless endeavour; none of the family members for whom she sacrifices herself manage to attain a higher social status, and those that manage to escape the “shameful poverty” (305) of Tarnow do so without looking back or taking “any responsibility for new relatives born and growing up in poverty in Galicia” (305). One can draw a parallel here to Bukus Gaon, who similarly shirks tradition and family in pursuit of his own reckless whims, never looking back. A chasm opens up between Lotte and her family, paralleling that between tradition and modernity, and connoting the final image of the bridge with its “broken arches [yawning] painfully towards one another across the break” (364). Her business is failing and she is without her community and sense of purpose; Lotte is desperately alone, isolated, and out of place. She “felt at every step that the times were out of joint” (300). When she had first arrived in Bosnia, it seemed that “[e]veryone was moving in the same direction as she was; work and family. Everyone was in his

right place and there was a place for everyone. ... Now everything had changed and was topsy-turvy. Men were divided and separated without, it seemed to her, rhyme or reason. ... Life was bursting asunder, was crumbling, was disintegrating” (300). Unbeknownst to Lotte, a new world had come into being outside the walls of her hotel, governed by rules, values, and behaviours that were now foreign to her. Zoran Milutinović captures this state of affairs with perfect clarity and concision:

In these societies everything was connected, one thing locked firmly into another, one thing supporting another, and watched over by everyone. Each individual took care of the whole, and the whole of each individual. ... Each person was closely linked with the fate not only of his relations and those in his household, but also of his neighbours, fellow-believers and fellow-citizens. ... If anyone stepped outside that pattern, following his own instincts and will, it was as though he had committed suicide and, sooner or later, he would inevitably be destroyed. Such was the law of these communities, mentioned even in the Old Testament. It was the law of the classical world as well. Marcus Aurelius wrote somewhere: ‘Whoever avoids the obligations of the social order is an outcast.’

(xxi)

As the “obligations of the social order” are sacrificed in the pursuit of individual gain, a burgeoning disunity characterizes the beginning of the twentieth century, ultimately leading to Lotte’s demise and the fall of the European, Ottoman, and Russian empires.

As the Austro-Hungarian Empire goes to war, Lotte’s physical and mental breakdowns reflect what is happening in the wider world. Physically, she has been ravaged by time: “[o]f her onetime beauty only traces remained. She had grown thinner and yellow in the face; her hair was without lustre and was growing thin on her scalp, and her teeth, once shining and strong, were

yellow and showed gaps. The glance of her black and still shining eyes was hard and at times sad” (Andrić 299). The war-torn landscape of Europe is reflected in Lotte’s appearance; her decay parallels that of the empires. Her external state is additionally mirrored by the state of her hotel. It was now “completely deserted and closed. Its roof had been damaged by shellfire and the walls pitted with shrapnel” (349). Both Lotte and the hotel are nothing more than dried up shells of abandoned hopes and dreams. Lotte’s physical deterioration is coupled with a mental breakdown, for as E. D. Goy remarks, “war comes as the destruction of her personality” (325). The moment of her demise, when she is truly lost, is when she is described as “a weak old Jewess who could not look after or care for herself, who shivered from reasonless fear and who wept like a child, not knowing how to say of what she was afraid or tell what it was that pained her” (Andrić 350). As the First World War rages on, destroying all semblance of stability and normalcy, Lotte suffers a complete and total nervous breakdown from which she is not likely to recover. Hers is an incredibly tragic end, and “[h]ad her fate not been what or where it was, who knows what this wise and humane woman ... could have been or could have given to the world” (205). Perhaps Lotte dreamed too big or reached too high, but the real tragedy here is that her fate was sealed from the very beginning. No woman of Lotte’s era—particularly one as Othered as she—could have broken through the patriarchal restraints of the time.

Hadži Liacho, David Levi, Bukus Gaon, and Lotte.<sup>12</sup> In telling the stories of these four Jewish characters, Andrić essentially distills the key moments of Višegrad’s history. Hadži Liacho represents the early history of Višegrad under Ottoman rule. The Sephardic Jews are a more or less uniform community, segregated from the rest of the population, keeping to

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<sup>12</sup> One Jewish character, Santo Papo, was not discussed in this paper. His interlude in the book (a momentary appearance on page 218 and a full scene in Chapter XX) is quite brief and his inclusion in this article would not have added much to the discussion. He is another Sephardic Jewish figure, though of the merchant class, unlike the other characters represented. Should this article ever be expanded in future, he will be included.

themselves. David Levi carries on the mantle of his grandfather's legacy, but reluctantly and without much success. His character represents the first cracks in the veneer of tradition and religious authority. With Bukus Gaon, the cracks widen. He is swept up by the myth of progress and its attendant illusions of wealth and power. He abandons his family and his responsibilities to his community in pursuit of a hapless dream. Lastly, there is Lotte, a seemingly secular Ashkenazi Jew from Galicia who does not share the same history, language, or traditions of the established Sephardic community. She embodies every duality within the Austro-Hungarian Empire: male and female, public and private, traditional and modern, communal and individual, and so on and so forth. Her rise and fall, in parallel to the empires of Europe and its environs, is tied to the rapid and massive changes that swept across the continent at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It is the breakdown of community and tradition, and the favouring of the individual over the whole that ultimately lead to the breakdown of the European, Ottoman, and Russian empires in the early twentieth century. Given that Andrić wrote this novel during the Second World War, publishing it in the aftermath, he was fully aware of the fate of the Jews of Europe. When he describes Lotte and her family leaving Višegrad, "like Jewish refugees who had been walking all the roads of the world in search of refuge," (350) he not only signals Lotte's circular return to her humble, impoverished beginnings, but also to the continuous cycle of persecution, tragedy, and migration that characterizes the Jewish diaspora. With this final image, Andrić foreshadows the horrors that are yet to come.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "During World War II, more than 80% of Yugoslav Jews – 82,500 people – were killed ... Due to the extreme loss of speakers during the Holocaust, Judeo-Spanish could not be maintained" (Rock, *Intergenerational Memory* 895).

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