

Jewish Text in Howard Fast’s Novel “Torquemada”

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Abstract. The present study aims to identify the specifics of the Jewish text in Howard Fast’s iconic novel *Torquemada*. The study is based on the semiotic definition of the text. The Jewish theme in the oeuvre of Fast, a writer of Jewish origin, occupies a significant place. The specific construction of the Jewish theme allows one to highlight the boundaries of a certain Jewish text in the author’s work, which was clearly formed during the period of ideological and national quest. The novel *Torquemada* occupies a special place in the Jewish text of Fast. The Jewish text of the novel *Torquemada* is represented by a multi-level model. At the anthological level, the Jewish text of the novel can be correlated with the ideological quests of the author, Howard Fast. However, at the same time, it is an allegoric narrative about the fate of the Jews of the 20th century and the tragedy of the Holocaust. The events of the 15th century are the allegory of the events of the 20th century, and the times of the Spanish Inquisition are associated with the tragedy of the Jews of Europe.

Keywords: Jewish; Christian; stranger; inquisitor; expulsion.

Introduction

The oeuvre of the American writer Howard Fast is an authentic and contractual phenomenon in 20th-century literature. The author’s contradictions are primarily due to the ideological views and shifts in the very goalposts. Behind the brief biographical description of “the author of numerous historical novels” lies the authentic author’s model that reveals the shift in his political, social, ethical and cultural paradigms. Fast goes through a difficult

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path of ideological quest. The fate of Fast is one of the possible models of the fate of a person from a family of Jewish emigrants: his mother came from a British Jewish family, and his father was a Jewish emigrant from Ukraine (before coming to America, his last name was Fastovsky). For young Fast, the ethnic component is not decisive; the social factor turns out to be more relevant: from his youth, he was forced to change several jobs to make his living. That is why Fast's early novels are characterised by a social sound, and the central concept in understanding the world is given to the concept of freedom, precisely in its socio-economic understanding. Fast's turn to the Jewish text happens in stages and is largely determined by the events of World War II and the Holocaust. In 1941, his novel *Haym Salomon, Son of Liberty*, was published; in the novel, the idea of the struggle for freedom and independence is woven into the context of the Jewish theme. This is the beginning of Fast's Jewish text, but in this novel, the Jewish theme appears as the background line of the historical narrative. In 1943, Fast joined the Communist Party, and in 1953, he broke with the communist ideas (Fast, 2011). Moreover, it is precisely this moment that becomes a turning point in the understanding of the Jewish theme. The rejection of ideology marks the beginning of Fast's multifaceted Jewish text. The novel *Torquemada* (1966).

The novel *Torquemada* occupies a special place in the "Jewish text" created by Fast. In many ways, this is a unique text from the point of view of historical material, which forms the outline of the narrative. Fast's Jewish text is characterised by an appeal to two global periods in the history of Jews. First of all, this is a biblical story ("My Glorious Brothers", "The Jews: Story of a People", "Moses, Prince of Egypt", "Agrippa's Daughter"). On the other hand, Fast is interested in the history of the Jewish diaspora in America ("Haym Salomon, Son of Liberty", "The Outsider"). The novel *Torquemada* describes the events of the turn of the 15th – 16th centuries in Spain during the time of the Grand Inquisitor Thomas Torquemada. The name Torquemada evokes a very specific set of negative associations related both to the general trends of the Medieval Inquisition and the cruel persecution of Jews. In the structure of the opposition "one's own – someone else's", a version of this opposition is actualised – "Christianity – Judaism", but the conflict stated in the novel is much broader than the religious one.

Nevertheless, the religious component is updated. Spain of the 15th – 16th centuries was a stronghold of Catholicism, a model Christian country; moreover, the historical cross-section that forms the storyline of the novel is focused on the issue of the struggle for the purity of faith. It is the 15th century that became significant in the history of the Jews of Spain; since, in 1492, through the efforts of Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition, the Jews were expelled from Spain, ending the golden period of the Jewish diaspora (Sephardim) in Spain (Perez, 2007, p. 149).

The methodological basis of the study is the semiotic approach and the understanding of the text as a set of signs put forward by Yuri Lotman, which expanded the understanding of the text as such (Lotman, 2002). The concept of "text" can be attributed to any type of art (theatrical production as a text), as well as to a phenomenon of social order (the way of life of a certain culture as a text). Thus, we understand text as a certain set of signs

perceived as a system. In our case, we can talk about the double presence of the text: the text of Fast's novel as such and the Jewish text as an object of study. Text has an internal organisation primarily determined by clear boundaries (beginning-end) (Lotman, 2002, p. 17). In our case, the initial boundary of the text can be considered the very title of the novel: the Jewish is not stated linguistically, however, an important reference to historical memory arises. Further, the Jewish concept is set as a core theme that determines at the levels of the worldview, the character system, and the author's ideology – the text develops and comes to its culminating resolution, which coincides with the plot line.

Taking into account the three levels of the description of culture that were singled out by Y. Lotman (Lotman, 2002, p. 33), the following elements of analysis were identified:

1. Linguistic units semantically related to the Jewish theme: words with the root Jew, indications of cultic realia and objects (synagogue);
2. Textual environment of linguistic units: situations, context, system of points of view, specificity of narrative;
3. The place of these units in the artistic world of the novel as a system (in this case, for example, the synagogue becomes part of the spatial model of the novel, being defined as *topos*).

Finally, the specificity of the Jewish text in the novel *Torquemada* is determined by typological contexts: the general understanding of the Jewish text with all possible elements in its historical and ontological understanding, the tradition of conveying the Jewish theme in literature and specifically in the literature of the United States, and, finally, the context of Fast's oeuvre and the Jewish concept of his work.

A semiotic understanding of the text is proposed by literary critic and representative of the semiotic school V. Toporov in his monographic study "The Petersburg Text of Russian Literature" (Toporov, 2003, p. 23). By analogy with the Petersburg text and relying on the methodology by Toporov, other urban texts are identified – spatial texts. The general methodology makes it possible to consider cultural and national texts (Italian text of a certain national literature) and literary texts (Shakespearean text). The Jewish text as a type of cultural-national text is discussed in detail in the monograph by E. Vasiljeva, "The Jewish Text of Latvian Literature" (Vasiljeva, 2018, p. 280). In the modelling of the Jewish text, the opposition "one's own – someone else's," where it is the Jew (who, because of his status, becomes the model "stranger" with all the attributes inherent to him) is fundamental. The theoretically based category of the stranger was defined in 1908 by Georg Simmel in his work *Excursus on the Stranger* (Simmel, 2008, pp. 9–14). Simmel defines a stranger as a transient subject and his mobility (moving in space, coming into someone else's space) that contrasts with the static nature of the culture into which he enters. For Simmel, the spatial and temporal parameters of a stranger are important in relation to the culture into which he is included, though to which he is opposed: he comes from the outside and, at a certain stage, is included both in the spatial model (he is inside, but at the same time remains a stranger, and therefore is often perceived as a hostile element) and into a temporary one (he appears in the culture not from the very beginning, and therefore he does not exist at the time of the formation of the culture

itself, and the moment of his appearance is difficult to fix, which strengthens the factor of threat). According to Simmel, it is the category of "stranger" that obviously overlaps with the Jewish cultural model within another culture. Jewish people are people who were constantly in a state of diaspora until 1948; they exist within different cultural models precisely as the stranger, the "strange" element.

The attention to Torquemada is not accidental – Fast is far from the idea of creating a textbook image of Torquemada that would inspire fear. Torquemada becomes the embodiment of the idea of faith raised to the absolute. For the politician Fast, the concept of the idea as such is important. A kind of opposition is formed by the opposition between an idea, as something abstract, and human life, as a certain value. In the novel, Torquemada turns out to be the embodiment of an idea; for him, human life is of no value. He takes the absolutely Christian postulate about the immortality of the soul to the point of absurdity: "An act of faith, Torquemada said. "A woman is being burned at the stake. I thought of it when I walked through the streets of Segovia this morning. They looked at me and they said, there is Torquemada who burns men and women at the stake. God help me if I burn their bodies. Their souls lie naked and clean." (Fast, 1966, p. 12). The image of Torquemada can be read on two levels, both related to the Jewish text that Fast is modelling.

In his monograph *Howard Fast: Life and Literature in the Left Lane*, Gerald Sorin mentions a certain biographical parallel in the novel *Torquemada*. The novel was written at a time when Fast left the Communist Party and broke off his relations with the Soviet Union, having realised the true state of affairs in the country and the true face of Stalin's personality cult. Fast understood that communist ideas were nothing but ideas elevated to absolute ideas for the sake of which masses of people are sacrificed. Torquemada is the embodiment of true cruelty in the name of an idea. Here, fanatical faith and religiosity become an analogue, a literary image of the Soviet ideology.

Moreover, anti-Semitism is a component of this ideology. In this sense, Alvero de Rafel becomes a kind of alter ego of the author himself. It should be stated that Fast never hid his Jewishness. But it was precisely after his break with the Soviet Union that Soviet ideologists began to use precisely the anti-Semitic code.

The biographical parallel makes it possible to consider the special functionality of the Jewish text (Lotman, 2002, p. 27). The novel *Torquemada* is not just a narrative about the history of Spain during the reign of Torquemada. The syntagmatics of the "Jewish text" goes beyond the descriptive function. This is a story about the tragic fate of Jewry as a whole.

1. Markers of the Jewish Text

Many researchers consider the novel *Torquemada* by Fast one of his best works. Nevertheless, until now, no one has engaged in literary analysis of this novel. Fast does not set himself the task of presenting the history of the Spanish Inquisition – the novel is demonstrably small in volume (especially in comparison with other voluminous works by the writer), and it presents a limited set of characters, which contributes to the rapid

development of action from climax to denouement. The storyline of the novel is set as the story of the formation of the Grand Inquisitor: the Dominican monk Thomas de Torquemada begins the persecution of the Jews, although he also has Jewish blood in his veins. In parallel to this historical line, the personal line of the de Rafels family, which is in close and friendly relations with the inquisitor, is developing. The Spanish nobleman Alvero de Rafel tries to confront his friend Torquemada and himself since the family secret is Alvero's Jewish origin. The gradual and agonising realisation of the impossibility of disentangling from the ties with the ancestors starts dominating in Alvaro's character, and simultaneously, it becomes the dominant concept of the human being portrayed by Howard Fast. This is manifested on a personal level (the story of Alvaro's daughter Caterina) and a social one (the connection between the Spanish aristocracy and Jewish culture).

1.1 Boundaries of the Jewish Text

The Jewish text has a plot-forming function in the novel dedicated to the great inquisitor Torquemada.

In semiotic terms, the title of the novel is accentuated. As mentioned above, the title that establishes the semiotic boundary of the Jewish text. Thus, in the centre/center of the artistic world of the novel, there is the figure of the. Torquemada becomes a kind of symbol, a symbol of the death of Spain. The definition of the function of Torquemada in the artistic world of the novel goes back to the definition of the symbol by Lotman:

A symbol, as commonly understood, involves the idea of a content which in its turn serves as expression level for another content, one which is as a rule more highly valued in that culture. <...> We believe that this latter circumstance is especially important for the ability to 'be a symbol'. (Lotman, 1990, p. 103)

The symbol is based on a combination of a proper name (Torquemada) and an official position (inquisitor). The structure of this sign-symbol (text) is modelled as a contrast between the personal and the abstract-religious. Torquemada transforms confessor to inquisitor. Torquemada as a symbol displaces other themes, being present everywhere: in the title – in the literal and figurative sense, in all event nodes – replaces the royal couple, desolates Alvaro's house, and destroys the synagogue. Torquemada displaces Spain, becoming a symbol of its death. According to the author, the reason for the death of Great Spain lies in the tragic fate of the Jews of Spain – the history of their greatness (the golden age of the Sephardim) and their expulsion.

Thus, the uppermost original boundary of the Jewish text is the title of the novel. The given boundary determines the specificity of the text itself. In the case of Fast's novel, the text is determined not only by the Jewish theme itself (the linguistic component) but by an implicitly given historical background – the history of Spain, which, as its tragic component, includes the history of persecution and expulsion of the Jews. The Jewish

text is present in the structure of the novel in the same way that the Jewish origin is a characteristic of the Spanish aristocracy.

In the novel, Alvaro's departure is the lower boundary of the Jewish text. At the plot-forming level, the Jewish theme ends with the burning of the synagogue with the death of Caterina in it. Nevertheless, Fast does not consider the death of the Jews as the fact of the end of the history of the Jews. The author of the historical novel Fast turns to the history of the Jewish people in different periods of his literary career. In the context of the Jewish text of the entire Fast's oeuvre, the novel *Torquemada* is not the conclusive one. Thus, the lower boundary of the Jewish text of the novel *Torquemada* has an open configuration. The lower boundary sets the symbol of the exodus of the Jews from Spain: Alvaro, who has lost everything, leaves both his house, in which his wife accuses him of being a "dirty Jew," and his servant with whom he buried his daughter, in fact, according to the Jewish rites. He draws a clear line between his Spanish past and his frightening future.

1.2 Linguistic Markers of the Jewish Text

As the plotline unfolds, the Jewish text becomes increasingly frequent. First of all, this can be seen at the lexical level. In the relatively short novel, the word "Jew" is mentioned 101 times, and the word "Jewish" is mentioned 30 times. There is an indicative increase in frequency: in the first chapters of the novel, lexical markers of the Jewish text are absent; later on (the road and the visit to the royal couple), they appear sporadically and finally become recurrent, repeating and emphasising within specific chapters.

The first declarative mention occurs precisely during the royal audience in Segovia. "He is a Jew" – this is the characterisation given by the King to Columbus. In the episode which contains the presentation of Columbus's idea, all the characters involved demonstrate their attitude towards Jewry: Columbus is possibly Jewish, the king hates Jews and therefore considers Columbus's statements to be heresy. Torquemada has a milder attitude towards the stated idea of the earth as a sphere, but he sees a devilish force in Jews; on the way back from Seville, the iconic scene of the rescue of Rabbi Mendoza takes place, after which Alvero begins to feel fear towards his friend Torquemada since he became interested in his origin. Further, the theme of Jews is discussed by the Rafel spouses. Finally, a semantically significant conversation occurs between the merchants in the Alvero house, during which the Jewish theme is stated as universal, relating to the whole destiny of Europe, especially Spain, during the Inquisition. The meeting of the merchants is devoted to the possibility of issuing funds to the queen to equip Columbus's expedition.

Jews are the centre/center of Europe's financial model. The Amsterdam Jew, Abraham Benalaf, was an intermediary in issuing a loan to the Duke of Sforitz. Abraham's financial affairs are controlled by the Jews of Europe. Jewish geographers calculated the distance around the world. However, the fate of the Jews of Europe differs significantly from their position in Spain. In understanding the Dutch merchant Van Sitten, Spain that gave Europe Jews. Moreover, it was in Europe that they remained Jews. In Spain, Jews occupied high

positions, turning into nobility: “Is there a Spanish nobleman who cannot find a little bit of Jewish blood, if not in his mother and father, in his grandparents’; if not in his grandparents, in his great-grandparents?” (Fast, 1966, pp. 40–41). The aristocracy of Spain is declared to be marked by Jewishness. On the one hand, the Jewish world of the novel is stated to have a minimum of portrait characters. On the other hand, the context of events and dialogues makes it clear that almost all the characters in the novel are directly related to Jewry, although not everyone knows about it or tries to hide his or her origin.

Notably, that in most cases, the noun “Jew” is mentioned without an accompanying adjective. The absence of explanatory characteristics becomes a sign of declarativeness, groundlessness of hatred, and denial. The word “Jew” becomes a kind of stigma. With a minimum number of adjectives in the text, a group of adjectives (defined as geographical adjectives) related to the word “Jew” is formed: Amsterdam Jews, Jews of Europe, Milanese and Parisian Jews, Jews-geographers, and finally, Spanish Jews. This group of adjectives contributes to the creation of the image of Jewish dispersion, presence in other cultures, and assimilation with them. There is an illusion that the Jewish world has become part of the European world. And here, Van Sitten’s words about the impossibility of crossing the border of another culture and the need to remain Jews play a key role. The words predict the downfall of the Jews of Spain, who became part of Spanish culture and forgot about their Jewish origins: a Jew who steps beyond the boundaries of Jewish culture will be destroyed or expelled from another culture; a Jew will always remain a stranger, from whom they will try to rid themselves at the critical moment in history.

A less frequent group consists of adjectives that carry negative connotations: dirty and cursed. The adjective “Jewish” is most often combined with the modifier “blood”. Specifically, this phrase becomes the formula for Jewish belonging and the Jewish past of Spain. Associatively the formula traces back to one of the most common anti-Semitic myths about blood libel (associations with blood are most frequent). Simultaneously, this brings the Jewish question into a racial-biological context, allowing the author to draw historical parallels with the events of the 20th century.

The phrase “Jewish curse” is the next significant one as it appeals to the preceding combination “cursed Jew”. The phrase has several layers of coding. On the plot level, it is associated with Alvaro’s mysterious locket (the locket hides a Jewish curse). On a symbolic level, it is linked to ambivalent concepts: the perception of Jews as a people cursed by God, a diabolical principle (Torquemada’s viewpoint), and the perception of the tragedy of the Jewish fate (the author’s viewpoint).

2. The Jewish text and the artistic world of the novel

2.1 The system of characters

The marked Jewish world of the novel is declared primarily at the level of the character system. Jewish images are few; however, Rabbi Benjamin Mendoza is assigned a central role in the problem issues. The remaining Jewish characters – the rabbi’s wife and the synagogue parishioners (Jewish men) perform a background function.

Several studies have been devoted to Jewish characters in literature (Kaiserman, 2018). As one of the supporting examples of the methodology for considering Jewish images, the study by Anet Riensch-Campbell can be mentioned – studying images of Jews in literature, she proposed a statistical method for tabulating the leading components of the image: appearance, tradition, and mental attitude (Reinsch-Cempbell, 2008). These three components will be considered through a system of points of view: the view and the assessment of different characters. This is precisely the peculiarity of the novel's narrative structure: it is significant for the author to set several evaluative, usually oppositional, points of view. The specificity of Fast's narrative illustrates G. Genette's theoretical views on understanding point of view: the identification in the narrative structure of the narrator and the focalizer (Genette, 1972, pp. 206–207).

The climax of the novel is the episode of Alvero's rescue of Rabbi Mendoza. In every sense, the rescue scene marks a milestone in the characters' attitude to their role in history and towards Jews. Spatially, the scene is designated as taking place in the suburbs of Segovia, on the road during the return of Alvero, Torquemada and Julio from Seville after visiting the royal palace. The beginning of the scene is set in the tradition of adventure novels: horsemen from afar see how three "cutthroats" (Fast, 1966, p. 29) are beating a man dressed in a black robe. Noble Alvero, without hesitation, stands up for the victim. His daughter's fiancé, Juan, wants to demonstrate his bravery in front of Torquemada; thus, he pursues the attackers. The author takes Juan out from the main ideological action symbolically indicated by a triangle – Rabbi Mendoza stretched out on the ground, Alvero – dismounting towards him and looking at everything from his horse, Torquemada – remaining astride.

At the moment of salvation, Alvero is sure he is saving a priest, but Torquemada knows from the very beginning that it is a rabbi. Representatives of Christianity and Judaism met and clashed. But, in this scene, the leading point of view is Alvero's – it is to him that the author transfers the right of narration, and it is for Alvero that this moment becomes a turning point – he allows fear into himself. Rabbi Mendoza is, in fact, the only named character who is clearly marked as belonging to the Jewish world: even when asked if he is wounded, Mendoza answers: "I am a Jew" (Fast, 1966, p. 30). A living Jew, a rabbi who does not hide his origins, becomes the opposition to the inquisitor Torquemada: the author puts them against each other, and even though Torquemada takes a top-down position, the rabbi boldly looks him in the eye. They both know each other and know everything about those around them. In particular, they know the fact that almost all of them have Jewish roots: in reality, all the participants in this episode are connected with Judaism. Torquemada hates his association with the Jews and atones for his Jewishness by violently fighting Judaism and the Jews. Juan is afraid of his Jewishness and is ready to betray Alvero in the name of his salvation (significantly the scene of Julio's betrayal is built on the model of the renunciation of the Apostle Peter). Alvero goes through the painful path of realising his Jewishness and the impossibility of renouncing the memory of his father, which is symbolised by the mysterious mezuzah cylinder that he wears together with the cross. The rabbi and the inquisitor will demonstrate their attitude towards human

life in one episode. Mendoza, through his behavior/behavior, implements the basic tenet of Judaism about the value of human life. Inquisitor Torquemada violates the Christian commandment “thou shalt not kill” by denying humanity in the Jew: “His name is Benjamin Mendoza. He is rabbi at the synagogue, at the devil’s handyman. Better, if you had let him die, Alvero.” (Fast, 1966, p. 30).

In the second part of the novel, the inquisitor and the rabbi will again engage in a single combat – at the request of the tortured Alvero, Torquemada goes to Mendoza’s house to bring him to a meeting with Alvero. And again, there is a confrontation between them and a simultaneous mirror reflection in each other. During this meeting, Mendoza says that Rabbi Torquemada served in Barcelona a hundred years ago.

In his attitude towards Jews, Alvero is guided by the principles of the Christian faith – he sees in them a neighbor/neighbor, first of all, a person, which is why he is ready to defend them: “That gives him no right to act against the Jews,” Alvero said, “or to destroy the synagogue. <...> The Inquisition can take action against heretics, backsliders, blasphemers, but not against Jews.” (Fast, 1966, p. 51).

At the same time, declaring Christian principles, he comes to a painful realisation of his Jewishness, passing through the main test – the test of fear. While maintaining his nobility and realising that it is impossible to abandon himself, he nevertheless, like Juan, commits betrayals, leaving his friend Van Sitten, without help, doomed to torture by the Inquisition. But standing in front of the Inquisition table, Alvero also realises the essence of fear, and this awareness is associated with one of the concepts of Judaism, the fear of God. Outside the context of Judaism, this postulate is usually interpreted literally – a person should experience fear of the Almighty. Judaism interprets this fear philosophically – fear of God is a kind of defensive reaction; that saves you from fear of other people. In response to Torquemada’s treacherous question about whether he fears God, Alvero says: “I fear only what threatens me.” (Fast, 1966, p. 97).

Realising himself as a Christian, before the table of the Inquisition, Alvero actually declares the central postulate of Judaism about the value of human life:

“As a heretic? As a Jew? How have you found yourself, Alvero?”

“As a human being.” (Fast, 1966, pp. 99–100).

It is in the interrogation scene, in the narrative structure of which the author’s point of view coincides with the one of Alvero – he (Alvero) rethinks the essence of the medallion, because of which he is accused of heresy: if previously it was just a sign of memory, now it becomes a sign of pride. Alvero, before being tortured, says what Rabbi Mendoza will tell him in his cell in response to a request to make him a Jew: “Think about what I said to you. If you came to me and said, “Make me a man”, then what could I say to you? What you are, God made you, and you are no more and no less.” (Fast, 1966, p. 123).

Alvero’s daughter Catherine is going through her own path in realising Jewishness. Catherine takes the knowledge that she has Jewish blood as a given.

"I feel no different," Catherine said. "An hour ago I did not know that part of me was Jewish <...>. Now I know it. I feel no different. No different at all. <...> I am a Jew and a Christian and still it seems to make no difference." (Fast, 1966, p. 79).

Catherine clearly defines the fusion of Christian and Jewish and removes the opposition declared by Torquemada. Until the moment when she learns about her Jewish origin, her attitude towards Jews is ambivalent – the perception of Jews as fiends of hell is alien to her: "I don't hate them Are they so very evil?" (Fast, 1966, p. 56).

Caterina attempts to reconcile Christianity and Judaism within herself. In fact, she is one of many Spanish nobility. However, Caterina's duality, for Fast, becomes a symbol of naivety. Caterina's actions are unconscious: she takes a cylinder, adopts Judaism, and heads for the synagogue. By modelling the Jewish text at the level of the character system, Fast demonstrates the impossibility of genuine belonging to the two worlds.

2.2 Spatial Model of the Novel

The space of the novel is the space of Spain. The artistic world of Fast's historical novel is built as an unfolded spatial model comprising specific topoi: Alvaro's house, the road to Segovia, the royal palace, Torquemada's castle, the dungeons of the Inquisition, the central square, and the synagogue. In essence, a unified Spain no longer exists. The state marker of the space is the royal palace, within the walls of which the Jewish theme is articulated for the first time. And it is articulated precisely in a negative tone – the king hates and fears the Jews. This neurotic state of fear represents the fear of all of Spain.

It is significant that the royal line simultaneously holds two parallel meetings: the queen presents Columbus's project to Alvero, and the king appoints Torquemada as the Grand Inquisitor. The author makes the reader a witness to the first meeting; however, these are the consequences of the meeting between the king and Torquemada that become decisive in the further storyline directly related to the Jewish text. The royal power in the person of Ferdinand transfers the right to resolve all issues to the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is represented by a few topoi: there is no church itself, there is the castle of Torquemada, there is a courtroom, a torture room, a dungeon, and an area for auto-da-fé. The space not only replaced the church; in the artistic world of the novel, Torquemada displaces the space of the church. Instead of the topos of the church, the author creates the omnipresent topos of Torquemada. He has driven out the church, he will drive out the Jews, he will destroy Spain.

Thomas de Torquemada holds in himself all the possible contexts of perception of the Jewish world: the attitude of the state, the attitude of the church and the attitude of a particular person. The king gives him the right to decide the fate of the Jews of Spain, and he takes on this matter, being obsessed with faith and his personal assessments. It is Torquemada who, in his statements, declares the Jews the main cause of the death of Spain: "Has it never occurred to you that if Spain is dying, it is the Jew who chokes the

life out of Spain?” (Fast, 1966, p. 58). But simultaneously, he sees a threat to the Christian church: “So long as there are Jews, Christians will Judaize.” (Fast, 1964, p. 64).

Torquemada’s statements are unambiguous and stereotypical. If the process of transforming Torquemada the priest into Torquemada the Grand Inquisitor takes a lot of time and is associated with painful reflections, then the definition of Jews as evil is unambiguous: Jews are a cursed people, God’s mercy does not extend to them, they have no hope of salvation, everything that Jews touch becomes dirty. Torquemada is simply obsessed with his anger and hatred.

However, in this unambiguous hatred of Torquemada, an important nuance related to the specifics of the situation in Spain and to the biography of Torquemada himself appears. A special status in his thoughts about the destructiveness of Judaism and the Jewish world is occupied by the Jews who converted to Christianity:

“<...> in all the time between creation and now, God has only forgotten the Jew. <...> But the Jew who becomes a Christian – this Jew God remembers. For this Jew has an immortal soul and there is no immortal soul on this earth that God has ever forgotten.” (Fast, 1986, pp. 85–86).

These words can be perceived as a standard sermon and another justification for the auto-da-fé. However, behind the words, there lies Torquemada’s personal motives: Jewish blood also flows in his veins, and he is the Jew who has acquired an immortal soul. Torquemada is afraid to admit this to others and to himself. Actually, this is where the main reason for his hatred of Jews lies – he is afraid that his Jewish origin will be revealed. That is why he zealously searches for evidence of the Jewishness of others and factors that indicate that they are secretly preaching Judaism. This is what causes the death of the Dutch merchant Van Sitten and the torture of Alvero de Rafel himself.

The personal attitude towards Jews becomes the official attitude of the Catholic Church since it is the Grand Inquisitor who is vested with the highest power. In one episode, a Catholic monk appears in the city square and, on behalf of the church, confidently preaches the official assessment of the Jew:

“These are the signatures of the devil, “the monk read from the parchment scroll he held. His voice resonant and confident he cried out, “Open your eyes lest the sin be upon you, and by this shall ye know the Christian who is a Jew at heart, Jew in secret, a Jew by night and in the darkness. By these things he will be recognised. <...> “Ah now there is opportunity for you. Always on the Passover the opportunity is greater. On the day of the Passover you watch him, you follow him, you notice him. Tempt him, offer him bread and see whether he puts the bread in his mouth. See whether he will touch the bread. Pres the bread into his hand and see whether he drops it way you would drop a hot coal.” (Fast, 1966, pp. 109–110).

This quote contains both a declaration of hatred and a guide to action. The Jew is declared not just a stranger but a dangerous stranger; he is an enemy who must be destroyed. This hatred of someone else allows one to abolish Christian truths: someone else’s must be tempted, and someone else’s must be destroyed.

With the minimalism of the marked Jewish images, the synagogue becomes a kind of character of the Jewish world. Fast gives general portrait characteristics of his heroes. He gives the same portrait characteristic to the synagogue – the interior of the synagogue is described in detail: the hall, the benches, the place for women, the place from which the rabbi reads the parchment – the Torah scrolls. There is an overlap between Catherine's and the author's points of view since the space of the synagogue is given through Catherine's eyes, but the author is endowed with knowledge about the purpose of individual places. It is the synagogue that turns out to be the spatial sign that conveys multiple points of view. For Alvaro, the synagogue is just a building. For Rabbi Mendoza, this is life, a shrine, a place protected by God. Torquemada amazingly combines these two points of view: for him, the synagogue is both an ancient building and the ancient people themselves. But if Alvaro is neutral in relation to the shrine, for Mendoza, it is the meaning of life and faith; Torquemada transfers all his hatred to the Jews to the symbolic space of the synagogue for him. That is why it is so important for him to destroy the synagogue, to burn it, and to organise a symbolic act of auto-da-fé. The burning synagogue is the personification of the destroyed Jewish world. But at the same time, this is an auto-da-fé over all of Spain, from which Alvaro will make his tragic exodus.

Conclusion

The Jewish text in Fast's novel *Torquemada* represents a multi-level system. The author does not declare his model point of view but demonstrates many views and many readings. Historical reading allows for considering the victory of Torquemada – this is the well-known story of the expulsion of Jews from Spain. At the event level of the novel, Torquemada's victory is secured by the fact of the death of Catherine and the statement that the house of the de Rafels is a dead house. The novel builds a unique spatial model of Spain. All individual loci of space are imbued with hatred of Jews: the royal palace with the king spewing hatred, the house of Alvero, in which the mistress of the house, Maria, is filled with arrogant hatred of any Jew, the auto-da-fé square, where a monk broadcasts to the city the signs by which one can recognise a Jew, roads, through which stinking soldiers of the Inquisition move in search of victims, a monastery ruled by the Grand Inquisitor. However, at the same time, the entire space of Spain, with its ancient history, is associated with the Jewish world. This Jewish world existed here in two forms – the old Jewish quarter with its adherence to tradition and the high aristocratic culture of the golden age of Spain. The model of the Jewish text clearly demonstrates the inclusion of the Jewish component in the history of Spain: Jews were a component of Spanish culture, and Jews became its integral component. But giving up one's roots is impossible. Telling the history of Spain during the time of Torquemada, Fast effectively draws a parallel with the history of Germany in the 20th century. The German Jewish community was a typical example of the Western European Jewish community: secularization, mixed marriages, and defining themselves as Germans of Jewish origin. The German Jews perceived themselves as part of the German society. The Nuremberg race laws of 1935 turned their worldview

upside down: from full-fledged citizens, they turned into outcasts. Racial theory and its reflection in laws determined Jewish identity in all generations. There is an awareness of the impossibility of leaving Jewry. The historical parallel with the events of Spanish history is unconditional: at the climax of history, with the advent of an authoritarian personality, Jewry becomes a marker, a curse, a cause of rejection and expulsion. From Fast's point of view, examples from history indicate the impossibility of escaping or renouncing Jewry.

At the anthological level, the Jewish text of the novel can be correlated with the ideological quests of the author, Fast. But at the same time, it is an allegoric narrative about the fate of the Jews of the 20th century and the tragedy of the Holocaust. The events of the 15th century are an allegory of the events of the 20th century and the times of the Spanish Inquisition are associated with the tragedy of the Jews of Europe. As a war correspondent during World War II, Fast personally discovers the reality of the tragedy of the Holocaust, which becomes one of the reasons for him to turn to the Jewish themes. And in the case of an anthological reading of the novel *Torquemada*, the Jewish text of the novel acquires additional connotations. The old Jewish quarter of Segovia is an Eastern European Jewish community that has maintained its tradition. The Spanish nobility, with Jewish roots, is the Jewish community of Western Europe that chose assimilation. The Inquisition is the ideology of the Third Reich and its final solution to the Jewish question, which left no hope of salvation for either Orthodox or secular Jews. The burning synagogue is a symbol of the fire of the Holocaust. In the work of Fast, it is the novel *Torquemada* which concentrates all the vectors of the author's Jewish text.

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