

Title: The Question of "Being" in Leo Lipski's Prose Author: Andrzej Brylak, University of Illinois at Chicago

Abstract:

Throughout the several decades following World War II and the Holocaust, Israel remained a vibrant center of Polish literature and culture. Polish-language bookstores, journals, newspapers, and most importantly, a significant number of authors writing in Polish contributed to the creation of what we may consider an autonomous branch of Polish writing - Polish literature in Israel. In my paper I would like to analyze the short story "Piotruś" by the most prominent representative of Polish literature in Israel Leo Lipski. The main question for my reading of "Piotruś" is that of Being. The ontology of "Piotruś" is what truly distinguishes this piece as Lipski among the Polish writers of his time goes the furthest in de-subjectifying the subject of his prose. In my analysis I will use the concept of *Homo Sacer* as developed by Giorgio Agamben and the ancient Greek distinction between bare life (*zoe*) and a qualified one (*bios*). Finally, I would like to place my analysis of the ontological questions posed by Lipski's work in the historical context of the emerging state of Israel, post-Holocaust condition and the dynamic between Polish and Jewish identities.