

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PLAYING FOR THE “CENTER:” “MARGINAL MODERNISM”
 IN SH. AN-SKY’S “DER DYBUK” AND ZORA NEALE
 HURSTON’S POLK COUNTY

Rachel Leah Jablon, Master of Arts, 2004

Thesis directed by: Professor Miriam Isaacs
 Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies

Both Sh. An-sky’s “Der Dybuk” and Zora Neale Hurston’s Polk County epitomize the concept of “marginal modernism.” Marginal literature is literature written by a member of a community that is in some way disenfranchised from the dominant, mainstream society in which the community resides—and in a language other than that which is used by the dominant, mainstream society. It often articulates the needs, desires, values, and nuances of the community. Marginality, in certain ways, is the ultimate indicator of modernism, in that the margin challenges the conventions established by the center, just as modernist literature challenges literary conventions. An-sky’s and Hurston’s styles, techniques, and goals match those of the modernist movements of their times and locations: An-sky’s the Russian revolutions of the early 1900s and Hurston’s the African American arts movement of the Harlem Renaissance.

PLAYING FOR THE “CENTER:” “MARGINAL MODERNISM” IN SH. AN-SKY'S
“DER DYBUK” AND ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S POLK COUNTY

by

Rachel Leah Jablon

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2004

Advisory Committee:

Professor Miriam Isaacs, Chair
Professor Sheila Jelen
Professor Barry Lee Pearson

©Copyright by
Rachel Leah Jablon
2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: The Language of Marginal Modernism	1
Section 1: Centering the Marginal: Putting the Plays in Cultural Perspective	22
Section 2: Collaborations of Culture; Or, How An-sky and Hurston Made Ends Meet....	30
Section 3: An-sky’s and Hurston’s Marginal Languages	47
Section 4: The Language of the Supernatural: Marginal and Modernist.....	61
Conclusion: An-sky and Hurston as Marginal Modernists.....	78
Appendix A: Summary of “Der Dybuk”	90
Appendix B: Summary of Polk County	92
Works Cited	94

Writing from a marginal position can—perhaps must—destabilize the norm of the literary and linguistic system by marking the unmarked, charging the neutral, colorizing the colorless, particularizing the universal.

—Chana Kronfeld, On the Margins of Modernism 72

...Modernism pluralizes...

—Malcolm Bradbury, “The Cities of Modernism” 99

For theater is not only the most public of the arts, in that its existence is dependent on the presence of spectators; it also demands a recognition in public of the worlds it represents.

—Helene Keyssar, The Curtain and the Veil 2

INTRODUCTION: THE LANGUAGE OF MARGINAL MODERNISM

Sh. An-sky (b.1863-d.1920),¹ the Russian Yiddish Jewish playwright, set out to preserve traditional Yiddish culture in his play, “Tzvishtn Tzvey Veltn (Der Dybuk). A Dramatische Legende in Fier Akten,”² or “Between Two Worlds (The Dybuk). A

¹ Although An-sky’s birth name is Shloyme-Zanvil Rapoport, this thesis maintains the use of his *nom de plume* and includes a discussion, in the first section, of the various names he used throughout his life.

² Words that are particular to a non-English language will be italicized. References to An-sky, as a writer and playwright, will be denoted with an Anglicized, transliterated spelling and form of his name, although the play will be referred to as “Der Dybuk.” Yiddish transliterations will follow the YIVO transliteration guide, as provided by Uriel Weinreich, though some will reflect commonly accepted spellings.

Dramatic Legend in Four Acts,” written between 1914 and 1919. He based the play on the collections of folklore that resulted from his ethnographic expeditions to the small Jewish towns of Eastern Europe. Caught in a Russian world of transition from tradition to industrialization, he wrote the play first in Russian, then in Yiddish, and then again in Yiddish from a Hebrew version when the original Russian and Yiddish versions were lost during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. An-sky never lived to see the play on stage; a Jewish theater company in Warsaw, Poland finally played it as a tribute to An-sky one month after his death in 1920. Similarly, African American playwright Zora Neale Hurston (b. 1891-d. 1960), with European American co-writer Dorothy Waring,³ sought to convey a candid picture of African American life in the southern United States in Polk County: A Comedy of Negro Life on a Sawmill Camp with Authentic Negro Music in Three Acts, written in 1944. Hurston wrote the play in the form of English that she heard spoken by the African Americans whom she recorded throughout her career as an anthropologist—hereafter known as “African American English”—though Waring advocated for a more stereotypical rendering of African American speech patterns. Like An-sky and “Der Dybuk,” neither of these collaborators lived to see Polk County produced. Only after the Library of Congress partnered with the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. in 1997 to research and plan a production of the play did it ever come to the stage.

³ Hurston, more than Waring, will be the focus of discussions related to their play, which will be referred to as “Polk County.” Evidence suggests that Hurston contributed more to the creative aspects of their collaboration, while Waring probably contributed more financially (Rosenberg 16). However, the significance of their relationship will not go ignored.

Despite the fact that the playwrights never saw the theatrical fruits of their labors, their respective plays provide abundant avenues through which to gain a better understanding of the cultural, social, and political dynamics surrounding their respective cultures, particularly as the plays depict them. For these playwrights, researching their own cultural roots and expressing their findings in ways that would be meaningful to their audiences are perhaps the most salient components of their respective plays, but there are several other aspects of their playwrighting experiences and the plays' thematic contexts that elucidate the plays' significance to Yiddish and African American cultural studies. A comparison of the two plays and their playwrights, however, may seem puzzling at first glance: how and what does the comparison of them contribute to the discourses on ethnic marginality, social change, theater, and folk belief? Why and how do An-sky and Hurston use the focal points and contexts of audience education, spoken language, and the supernatural? Are An-sky's and Hurston's experiences and playwrighting techniques too disparate to learn from a comparison of them? In attempting to answer these questions, and others, An-sky's and Hurston's plays, each in their own ways, emerge as exemplars of the notion of "marginal modernism." In considering Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's work on "minor" literatures and Chana Kronfeld's critique of their work, An-sky's and Hurston's respective plays articulate not just a sense of cultural marginality or disenfranchisement, but also a sense of the tensions surrounding their uses of literal and metaphorical languages. The marginality of, as well as the tensions unearthed by, the plays indicate that "Der Dybuk" and Polk County could be considered "modernist" with respect to the dominant literary traditions with which An-sky and Hurston contend as playwrights. This thesis addresses these concerns, amongst

others, by exploring the playwrights' relationships to their plays and the worlds around them.

Deleuze and Guattari define "minor literature" in "What is a Minor Literature?" as having three chief characteristics. The three pertain to geopolitics, social action, and collective voice, viewing individual minor writers as representatives of their minor communities. They are restated as follows:

- The language of the literature is not or cannot be associated with a particular geopolitical location—the language is "deterritorialized." Rather, the literature makes use of the normative language of a given dominant society. Deleuze and Guattari cite English and German as such languages—in comparison to African American English and Yiddish, for example—that supersede any societally subordinated languages (Deleuze and Guattari 16-17).
- The literature's main goal is to engage its readers in social activism and political awareness. Whereas major literature serves to string together individual thematic concerns into one larger concern without an overt political charge, minor literature makes political each individual thematic concern (17).
- The literature represents a collectivized consciousness of the minority group. Deleuze and Guattari believe that "talent isn't abundant in a minor literature" (17), so the words of the select few who are gifted enough to write represent the values of the whole (17-18). The

experiences of a particular member of the minority group are not as important as that of the collective.

These three characteristics force minor literature into being viewed from the perspective of the “major” literature. Because minor literature makes use of the major language, the major political conditions, and the major’s perceptions of the minor, minor literature must, according to Deleuze and Guattari, defer to the major. In this way, minor literature emerges from the shadows cast by major literature, usually not outwardly challenging the conventions established by it and the major society that creates it. Minor literature, in order to be recognized, must uphold the values and views of the major society, although the mere existence of minor literature indicates a challenge—if even subversive—in and of itself. The use of the language of the major society, the call for “political immediacy” (18), and the coherence of the members of the minor group undercuts the authority that the major has: in a paradoxical manner, as Deleuze and Guattari construct it, the minor almost becomes the major, the trend to pay attention to, to guard against (26). In their words, “[t]here is nothing major or revolutionary except [*sic*] the minor” (26). The relationship between these two literatures is clearly cyclical and disruptive, while at the same liberating: disruptive for the major who wishes to maintain the *status quo* and liberating for the minor who wishes to have a means of expression. An-sky and Hurston, and their work in “Der Dybuk” and Polk County, certainly exemplify this relationship if the plays and their respective themes are posited as “minor” and their audiences as “major.”

Kronfeld’s contributions to discussions of minor literature entail the critique of Deleuze and Guattari’s. Her assessments are twofold. First, she justifiably claims that

Deleuze and Guattari ignore literature that is not only written by a minor group, but is also written in the group's minor language. She writes in On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics that

[a]ll too often the selective modeling of minor literature...on a Euro-American geopolitics and linguistics effectively leaves all that is not English, French, or German (or “deterritorialized” versions thereof) outside our purview. This exclusion is not merely a result of some bad choice of examples but is logically entailed by the explicitly articulated principles of the most detailed theories of minor writing to date [Deleuze and Guattari's, for example]. Only if we construct the major through the minor, not—as current wisdom has it—the minor through the major, can we begin to discern the regionalism, contextual diversity, and interdependence of even the most highly canonical forms of modernism....

(5)

Kronfeld points out the stark omission of minor literatures written in minor languages from Deleuze and Guattari's critique, and she argues that the pair focuses too much on the significance of the major group's perceptions of the minor, rather than how the minor group sees the major. By reversing the roles, Kronfeld seems to hope that the minor will live up to its full revolutionary potential—as Deleuze and Guattari view it—and upset contemporary views of the major as dominant and the minor as subservient (6). To complicate Deleuze and Guattari's insufficient treatment of literature written by socially and politically subordinate groups, Kronfeld labels these groups “marginal,” instead of “minor,” and the dominant groups “centered,” instead of “major” (2, 9, 30). In other

words, Kronfeld distinguishes between minority and marginality by challenging issues of language and modernism, issues that Deleuze and Guattari all but overlook in their work. Authors of marginal literature, for example, make use of minor languages to express themselves, while writers of minor literature rely on major languages.

The passage also demonstrates the second point that Kronfeld brings to the heart of this discussion: her marriage of minor—or at this point, marginal—literature with modernism. Kronfeld’s contribution to the discourse on modernism via her book renders the relationship between marginal literature and modernism obvious and almost inevitable. To illustrate the point, Kronfeld offers that

Modernism is famous for its affinity for the marginal, the exile, the “other.” Yet the representative examples of marginality typically are those writers who have become the most canonical high modernists. The “narrative of unsettlement, homelessness, solitude and [*sic*] impoverished independence” (Williams, 1989:34) may indeed have been cast in minor, discordant tones, but those tones were composed in the major key of the most commonly read European languages: English, French, German. (2)

Kronfeld describes modernism—for the purposes of literary analysis—as being the literary trend that allows writers who believe that they have no home or place in society to express themselves. The feelings of alienation are due to changing national and cultural borders, shifts in political control, or deviation from socially acceptable standards. Modernism shakes up conventional forms of literary expression, to the extent that the most modernist—the most different—becomes conventionalized, much in the

way Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature becomes so trendy, and thus favored, that it transforms into major literature. Furthermore,

[m]odernism at large is obsessed with the marginal as exemplary in its choices of stylistic and intertextual models, in its selections of paragons, and in its thematics....[It] combines this general tendency with the intrinsic heritage of valorizing the eccentric or lowly. It has inherited a whole gallery of exemplary marginal archetypes and themes" (Kronfeld 71),

such as concealment, displacement, wandering, homelessness, and deliverance. Because marginalized groups fall under similar criteria, as do their literary productions (7), the relationship between the marginal and the modernist is inextricable, though the literature's historicity certainly plays a role in the relationship. Under these conditions, marginal literature is by default modernist, and vice versa. The images and themes that Kronfeld discusses appear in "Der Dybuk" and Polk County in ways that enable modernist readings of the plays, even though, at first glance, the two plays appear entirely disparate. Issues of modernism and marginality saturate the plays.

Officially, "modernism" as a movement achieved its exigence during the period of political, social, and cultural upheaval that occurred from 1890 until 1930 (Bradbury and McFarlane 19-21), all over the world, though these historical boundaries are tentative, permeable, and dependant on the precise geographical location. World wars, improved technologies, and industrialization (26) led to a "break-up, a devolution,...a dissolution" (Read qtd. in Bradbury and McFarlane 20) of the conventional "sensibility" of the particular period that preceded modernism, depending on the geographical

location. “Tied up with definitions of...situations which are subject to change” (Bradbury and McFarlane 22), modernism allowed artists to create art according to their individual understandings of the worlds around them. Because An-sky’s and Hurston’s worlds are presumably different—An-sky’s is pre-Bolshevik Revolution Russia, and Hurston’s is the relatively segregated United States—their relationships to modernism are also different. According to Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, the proliferation of modernism occurred in different ways in different places; thus, the variations in An-sky’s and Hurston’s respective modernist approaches are attributable to the ways in which modernism affected their cultures: a “multiple nationality,...from Russia to the United States, one notes the emergence of artistic phenomena, explosions of consciousness, generational conflicts....” (“A Geography of Modernism”). Though the next section relates the cultural atmospheres in which An-sky and Hurston wrote their plays, this brief review of modernism aids in understanding the framework of this thesis.

For example, Eugene Lampert implies in “Modernism in Russia 1893-1917” that the years of Russia’s modernist movement coincide with the development of An-sky’s literary and ethnographic careers. Modernism marked Russia, particularly in St. Petersburg and Moscow (136), with an accelerated growth of the middle class, or vice versa, as a result of political discontent and global competition for industrialization. Certainly, An-sky, as well as the theatrical mentor he found in Constantin Stanislavski,⁴ drew influence from the

⁴ In the case of Stanislavski’s name, much like other transliterated proper nouns, the spelling varies. This discussion employs the spelling offered by J.J. Robbins, the translator of Stanislavski’s autobiography. However, if other sources spell his name differently, quotations from those sources will indicate as such.

extraordinary display of artistic, literary and [*sic*] intellectual talent, lively and eloquent; [along with the] fresh cosmopolitanism, and intense concern for aesthetic and spiritual values, [most of which then] crystallized into fastidious prejudice and evasion, into a whimsical and uncompassionate view of the human situation, a readiness to sacrifice truth to aesthetic satisfaction or metaphysical comforts... (136).

A close look at just how An-sky sacrifices truth to aesthetic satisfaction follows in the later discussion of revisions he made to “Der Dybuk” at the suggestion of Stanislavski. Furthermore, Lampert accounts for the onset of Russian modernism in 1893 as the publication of Dimitri Merezhkovskii’s On the Origins of the Decline of Russian Literature and on New Currents in It (137), which, summarizes Lampert, articulates Merezhkovskii’s call for a literature endowed with “cerebral ecstasies of the flesh and equally cerebral invocations of the spirit, reading significance into trivia, insisting on some buried treasure of meaning, some abysmal [and] terrifying profundity...” (137). “Der Dybuk” surely applies the aesthetic introduced by Merezhkovskii and his cohorts, as the dialogue of the characters often probes concerns of spiritual growth, physical satisfaction, and knowledge of truth.⁵ Moreover, a sense of the ability, or lack thereof, to control one’s surroundings through revolution—in whatever shape or context it might take—developed during the unsuccessful revolution of 1905 (140). Because “the limits of caution” (140) went ignored and the “audacity” (140) of the revolutionaries proved unwieldy, the modernists argued against “heroic deeds [in favor of] deep, slow, patient, interminable endeavor[s]” (142). An-sky incorporates such notions in “Der Dybuk” by

⁵ Summaries of “Der Dybuk” and Polk County can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

exaggerating the negative effects of his characters' attempts to alter their environments: although Khonen and Sender do all that they can to get what they want, the play concludes with the tragic death of their lover and daughter, respectively, Leah.

Similarly, or perhaps not at all, Hurston absorbed the modernism of New York City, which took a different shape and occurred in a different time from the modernism An-sky encountered in Russia. Eric Homberger, in "Chicago and New York: Two Versions of American Modernism," describes New York and Chicago as hubs of American modernist development, beginning as early as 1888 and ending in 1919, with New York's modernist peak in 1912 (157). Homberger suggests that the period of industrialization that followed the United States' Civil War and preceded the American involvement in the First World War endeared millions of Americans and immigrants to the economic and cultural offerings of New York. Though the period during which Hurston's writing career flourished—the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s—is later than the modernist period about which Homberger writes, Hurston garners all of its influences. For Houston A. Baker, Jr., the Harlem Renaissance, in fact, "marks a readily identifiable 'modern' moment in Afro-American intellectual history" (9); accordingly, by integrating Homberger's and Baker's conceptualizations of New York's modernist movement, Hurston surfaces as a modernist writer. Although she wrote Polk County even later—approximately ten years after the Harlem Renaissance diminished in its influence—Hurston maintains the modernist writing styles, techniques, and themes that she employed earlier. For instance, after the influx of African American migrants from the southern states to the North during these times—mostly to fill the jobs left vacant by soldiers deployed for World War I (C. Vann Woodward qtd. in Baker 75; J. Saunders

Redding ctd. in Baker 75-76)—Hurston approached the “new audience[s]” (Hombberger 158) with the modernist “critical sense of their inheritance, a ‘usable past’...” (158). Especially in Polk County, in which her *modus operandi* is to focus on a Northern African American woman who returns to her roots in the South for cultural edification, Hurston expresses a need to recognize the past as a means to make progress. Noticeably, the African American presence in Chicago and New York is absent from Hombberger’s essay, but Hurston’s work, particularly Polk County, nonetheless embodies the ambition for liberation (154), individualism (155), and immateriality (157) espoused by the modernism of those cities.

Engaging the two plays in a comparative analysis of their modernist and marginal qualities necessitate more definitions of certain key terms. “Literature,” “center,” “margin,” “language,” and “supernatural” are but some of the vocabulary used herein whose definitions depend on subjectivity, which is to say that individual interpretations of individual situations often affect the meanings of the terms. For example, although Deleuze and Guattari and Kronfeld maintain consistent uses of the term “literature” to encompass such written expression as novels, short stories, or poems, this discussion employs the term to describe any form of communication that expresses a sentiment, such as the plays under discussion. Deleuze and Guattari’s and Kronfeld’s theories of marginality and modernism that counter the conventional system of literary criticism consequently warrant a definition of literature that counters the conventional conceptualization of “literature:” instead of just novels or poetry, “literature” entails music, visual and spoken art, dance, and, of course, theater. The three theorists beg the question: if a marginal writer does not adhere to the literary conventions of the “center,”

but rather expresses herself in a format or style that is indicative of the “margin” from which she comes, then is her form of expression any less “literary” than the center’s literature? While the center may argue that yes, her form of expression is less literary and does not constitute literature, the margin—the artist herself, even—may argue that her art is just as much literature as any literature that she challenges. For the sake of argument, then, “literature” will from here on implicate any form of expression created in any way by an artist or perceived in any way by an audience, though sometimes the boundaries between artist and audience blur (Goffman 80-82). In this way, “Der Dybuk” and Polk County can be considered from two vantage points: one as the text of the play, the actual words—dialogue, stage directions, and other matter that composes the script—written by An-sky and Hurston; the other as the performance, the dramatization or interpretation of the written words. Each of these forms provides insights that the other would not; so taken together, both forms clarify the works by providing more complete pictures of them.

“Center,” of course, is defined for the purposes of this thesis as the dominant, mainstream society by whose standards all members of the society-at-large believe themselves to be judged, even if there is no identifiable process of standardization, and “margin” is a term used herein to denote the community disenfranchised by the perceived center. Mikhaïl Bakhtin, to complicate these definitions of “center” and “margin,” does not view such a binary opposition (ctd. in Holquist, Introduction xvii-xix). Instead, according to Michael Holquist in his introduction to The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, Bakhtin offers “centripetal forces”—those that “strive to make things cohere” (xvii)—and “centrifugal forces”—those that “seek to keep things apart” (xviii)—as

terminology that refrains from precisely distinguishing between two tenuous configurations that obtain their powers, or lack thereof, just as tenuously. Rather, “Bakhtin’s sense of a duel between more implicated forces...stresses the fragility and ineluctably historical nature” of social dynamics (xvii). In other words, the unifying drive of centripetal forces is equivalent to the dominating aspects of the center, while the goal of separating parallels the margin’s desire to be recognized for its differences from the center. In contrast to Deleuze and Guattari and Kronfeld, however, and perhaps counterintuitively, Holquist explains that

centrifugal forces are clearly more powerful and ubiquitous—theirs is the reality of actual articulation [of standards, expectations, and assumptions]. They are always *in praesentia*; they determine the way we actually experience [such articulation, especially] as we use it—and are used by it—in the dense particularity of our everyday lives. Unifying centripetal forces are less powerful... (xix)

because societies are inherently diverse; challenging the “social and historical heteroglossia” (Bakhtin 272) of a given society creates a greater divide among the society’s populations, because threats to the existence of differences often incites those holding the differences to insist upon them. Heteroglossia, as Bakhtin’s formulation of a means of expression to which only contexts of time and place, not the text itself, give significance, represents the “colli[sion] of centripetal and centrifugal forces” (Holquist, “Heteroglossia” 428); rather, heteroglossia signifies the conflicts that arise when centers and margins encounter each other. Following such complex and confusing discourses on the perceived “center”-“margin,” “major”-“minor,” dominant-disenfranchised

dichotomies, that a variety of factors—such as social and cultural circumstances—confounds this discussion stands to reason; undoubtedly, An-sky and Hurston faced such complications in their careers. However, adopting the definitions of “center” and “margin” introduced at the beginning of this paragraph should ease the difficulty of locating the playwrights within their respective societies as cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic minorities, in, of course, the socio-political sense of the term “minority.”

After incorporating Bakhtin’s notions of social dynamics, continuing with a definition of “language” makes sense. His treatise, “Discourse in the Novel,” focuses on issues of language, which he generally defines as “verbal art” (260*n*.1). He later clarifies this explanation because the concept of “verbal art,” he believes, does not do justice to the overarching idea that language is, in fact, “any communication system employing signs that are ordered in a particular manner” (Jurij Lotman *ctd.* in Holquist, “Language” 430). He articulates eight varieties of “language,” of the various ways in which people communicate, all of which entail a sense of distinction between unifying and separating qualities (Bakhtin *ctd.* in Holquist, “Language” 430). For example, Bakhtin’s “national language” could be considered on par with Deleuze and Guattari’s “major language:” “the traditional linguistics unities (English, Russian, French, etc.) with their coherent grammatical and semantic systems” (Holquist, “Language” 430). However, Bakhtin’s “alien/other/another’s language” and “social language” certainly compare to Kronfeld’s “marginal language.” Bakhtin proffers an awareness of the social, political, and cultural nuances of systems of communication that render “language” not just verbalized, but also ritualized, practiced, and discursive, depending on the contexts of the environments in which and purposes for which the language is employed.

In this way, ideas of “literal” and “metaphorical” language—“literal” in the sense that “language” satisfies the common understanding of verbalization and “metaphorical” in the sense that “language” indicates any code that maintains a performer and audience relationship—contribute to an understanding of “Der Dybuk” and Polk County as both modernist and marginal. While Deleuze and Guattari and Kronfeld allow for literal uses of language—the languages in which An-sky and Hurston wrote the plays and the languages spoken by the characters—the metaphorical uses—depicted through behavioral codes, religious and spiritual practices, and social dynamics—are just as important. Of course, the environments in which An-sky and Hurston researched and worked all but dictated the languages the playwrights use, both for commercial and ethical reasons (Dauber), suggesting the confrontations that occur when centers meet margins. As an illustration of such a clash, Deleuze and Guattari focus on the writing of major and minor literature in German, English, and French, in spite of a writer’s desire or capability to write in another, marginal language; Kronfeld acknowledges the anxiety caused by the desire to write in one language and the compulsion to write in another. She thus focuses on the writing of marginal literature in Hebrew and Yiddish, but unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s construction, in spite of a writer’s desire or capability to write in a centered language. An-sky’s and Hurston’s uses of language epitomize what lies at the heart of this debate, which is loyalty to the margins and manipulation of the centers.

But what Kronfeld fails to address in her book is the idea of a metaphorical language. Again, a metaphorical language is a system of expression that transcends verbalization, relying on other signs, values, and relationships in order to communicate. Such a system may take the shape of a belief system, stemming from the archetypes and

themes mentioned by Kronfeld above, or a profession-specific discourse, as Bakhtin articulates (Holquist, “Language” 430). Often, the differences between centered and marginal literatures contribute to the importance of the belief systems or discourses to the two groups because they accentuate archetypal and thematic differences. When tensions arise between belief systems or between discourses, marginal literature urges political and social activist immediacy. By introducing in their plays certain “metaphorical languages” that are marginal in relation to the centers’ expectations for appropriate performances of identity, such as belief in the supernatural and the enactment of self-governance, the playwrights challenge the centered discourses of religion, politics, and racism, to name a few. In a Bakhtinian sense, the centers and the margins—through the languages and discourses with which they communicate—engage in a sort of “contest” (Holquist, Introduction xxix), with the winner projecting its literal and metaphorical voices over the voices of the other. An-sky’s and Hurston’s works certainly evoke such a struggle for recognition, if not merely the potential to be recognized.

Both An-sky and Hurston make conscious decisions to write in marginal languages about marginal cultures, although both are extraordinarily proficient in navigating the worlds of their respective centers. For An-sky, a Russian socialist audience served as his center, while the Yiddish-speaking, Jewish community of “Der Dybuk” functioned as his margin. For Hurston, a European American audience, particularly of the northern United States, was her center, and the African American community portrayed in Polk County was her margin. Although An-sky first wrote his play in Russian—the language of the center—it became most famous in its Yiddish version—a minor language about a minor culture juxtaposed against the major Russian of

the time. Hurston fought Waring to make use of the minor African American English in their play as a way to prevent the portrayal of inaccurately rendered African American English. Because European Americans often projected their negative biases on the African American language and culture they witnessed, and because Waring enjoyed such exoticizing portrayals (Waring ctd. in Rosenberg 83; Boyd 374), Hurston made every effort to invalidate the negativity.

Although the use of the terms used for the marginal and centered groups perceived by the playwrights may seem problematic because of their vagueness or imprecision, or because of the lack of consensus about the appropriateness of the terms, this thesis maintains their use as a means of differentiation and polarization of the four groups in question. “Russian,” usually followed by “-centered” and sometimes by “socialist,” refers to An-sky’s dominant group, which spoke Russian as its main, accepted language. He actively strove to deny his Jewish heritage in favor of this identity, for he believed that he would reach cultural superiority and success by transforming into what he thought the center wanted him to be. Conversely, the culture that he fled comes under the moniker of “Jewish,” although in An-sky’s time, there were many different ways to identify this way. Usually, when referring to the traditionally Jewish, Yiddish-speaking small towns, like the ones in which An-sky was born and are the settings for “Der Dybuk,” “Yiddish Jewish” or “Jewish, Yiddish-speaking” will be used. Similarly, “European American” seems far too ubiquitous a term to describe Hurston’s center, which she calls “white.” This thesis uses the term as a way to parallel “African American,” the term used to describe Hurston’s margin and her own cultural background. While Franz Boas and Dorothy Waring, Hurston’s chief professional and academic

influences from the center, are both European American, the differences between the two are significant enough to mention here: as a Jewish German who emigrated to the United States, he struggled as a marginalized person, a struggle that Waring may not have had to deal with, though there is some speculation that she may have been Jewish, too.⁶ At any rate, “European American” connotes the dominant society, as a whole, with which Hurston, as an African American, contended in the writing, financing, and publishing of Polk County.

In addition to dealing with such language and cultural issues, both playwrights comment on the major social constructions of the religions of their respective cultures. They introduce elements of nontraditional religious belief—belief in the supernatural—as a means to further differentiate the minor Yiddish and African American cultures from the major Russian and European American cultures. Belief in “the supernatural” entails belief in paranormal phenomena, occurrences in the physical world that are inexplicable by supposedly rational and scientific reasoning. The manifestations of supernatural occurrences—or “supernature,” a term used to avoid repetitiveness that denotes the noun form of what the adjectival “supernatural” describes—are expressive of a “pervasive force” (9) that is inherent in cultures’ belief systems. In other words, cultures conceive of the divine or preternatural forces that allow for supernatural phenomena as ever-present

⁶ Waring’s biography of Samuel Dickstein, a Jewish Polish immigrant to the United States who became a very successful Democratic Senator for New York, intimates that maybe she was Jewish. Her references to Judaism throughout the book suggest that Waring had experience with the religion and culture. Though if Waring were in fact Jewish, she too would be marginal, Hurston’s relationship with her depended on Waring’s centered life and connections to the theater world.

in their lives, though they may be intangible. Certainly in the cases of “Der Dybuk” and Polk County, the idea of supernatural, if not called that by the plays’ characters, maintains this level of pervasiveness. Whitmore writes,

...there is inherent in [hu]mankind an interest in the things beyond mortal life and experience, which comes to apprehend, in this extra-human realm, a group of forces which may intervene with incalculable effect in human affairs. Furthermore, these powers are conceived to be by no means inherently friendly to [humans];... (11).

In this way, this thesis employs the terms “supernatural”—usually in combination with “occurrences,” “phenomena,” or “belief”—and “supernature” to refer to the events or situations of the plays that the characters believe to be irrational or unexplainable, with regards to their communities’ senses of “truth,” “science,” or “human will.” Confusion arises, however, when the communities account for certain phenomena as supernatural and others as natural: where do they draw the lines between the two realms of understanding? Is distinguishing between the supernatural and the natural possible, in light of An-sky’s characters’ saturated, everyday relationships to a divine being, or Hurston’s characters’ persistent dismissal of supernature’s effectiveness? The answers to these questions root themselves in cultural history, acceptable standards of belief established by each community, and the “symbolic power” (Bourdieu 168-169) offered to believers.

By differentiating between the margins and the centers, An-sky and Hurston depicted perfectly valid practices that would have been considered invalid, if considered at all, by the dominant societies-at-large. Disproving the legitimacy of disenfranchising

the marginal communities destabilizes the hold of the centers over the margins.

Therefore, Yiddish destabilizes Russian, and African American English destabilizes the European American perception of African American English. In the same way, then, the kabalistic mysticism at the root of “Der Dybuk” destabilizes traditional Judaism, and hoodoo destabilizes conventional Christianity in Polk County. The Kabbalah and hoodoo epitomize the respective Jewish and African American senses of mysticism and belief in the supernatural. These forms of folk religion are so widely practiced, however, that they employ their own systems of conventions, partially described by Sol Gittleman and Cheryl Wall, respectively. Gittleman defines the Kabbalah as, “stress[ing] simple faith in God, a direct communication of the individual with the Supreme Being,...[and] an elaborate, often eccentric system of astrology, hocus-pocus, and even erotica” (23); Wall defines hoodoo as a “system of magic, divination, and herbalism” (Women of the Harlem Renaissance 228n.58). In both plays, these forms of supernatural belief reflect in everyday life. Although the characters may be surprised by certain turns of events, they are not surprised by the mysticism or hoodoo that caused the events to happen. There is a profound absence of hoodoo in Polk County that “Der Dybuk” does not have of Kabbala and mysticism: Hurston’s pithy use of the supernatural seems contrary to her professed respect for it, while An-sky’s abundant use of supernatural images correlates with his goals and motivations for writing the play. But the point remains: opposing the center with the margin is provisional; what may be the center at one moment, may turn into the margin at another, and vice versa. An-sky and Hurston demonstrate the possibility of oscillation between the two social groups by differentiating one from the other, challenging them, and then reconstructing them.

SECTION 1: CENTERING THE MARGINAL: PUTTING THE PLAYS IN CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1912, An-sky, who had previously disavowed his Jewish identity, spearheaded a mission to learn about and document the folklore of Eastern Europe's vast Jewish communities, a segment of Eastern European society that could not be more marginal to the centered Russian socialists who had given up religion and tradition in order to achieve revolution and globally competitive industrialization (Lampert 134-135). The forty-nine-year-old Russian writer set out from St. Petersburg, Russia into the settlements of the "Yiddish-speaking 'folk,' of the old-timers who still lived in remote towns and villages—*shtetlekh*—[who] preserv[ed] the old folkways in unadulterated form" (Roskies, Introduction xix). He and his assistants asked questions and recorded their informants' answers. For at least two years, An-sky gathered responses to his 3,000-question survey; he collected photographs, stories, songs, expressions, documents, and objects. Seemingly inspired by these cultural artifacts, An-sky reevaluated his relationship to Judaism (xxiv). Moreover, he incorporated the collected material into his works, especially in "Der Dybuk." The play became An-sky's *chef d'œuvre*, presenting to Russian and Russian-influenced Jewish audiences depictions of the cultural practices and beliefs that he and his team recorded. An-sky's play about marginal people speaks to his centered Russian audience by rooting the play's themes and images in the ethnographic work that he conducted: the Russian version of the play conveys the differences between Yiddish and Russian cultures, but the Yiddish version intensifies the learning experience—even for audience members who do not understand—by exposing the Yiddish "soul" (Stanislavski 400). In this way, the play satisfies the construction of marginal modernist literature: An-

sky coheres the experiences and the identities of the people whom he interviewed into one voice that speaks to a greater audience.

Approximately fifteen years later and almost 4,300 miles away (“Distance Calculator”), the Barnard College- and Columbia University-trained Hurston returned to her roots in Eatonville, Florida. Her goal was, like An-sky’s, to gather the folklore of “unadulterated,” marginal communities in order to preserve it and introduce it to audiences who might not otherwise be familiar with it. From 1927 to 1929 (Cheryl A. Wall, “Notes on the Text” 981), Hurston traveled by car throughout the southern United States, focusing on her “native village” (Hurston, “Mules and Men” 9) in Florida, in order to collect folk material. Unlike An-sky, who led a team of ethnographers in order to interview veritable strangers, Hurston embarked alone, seeking out childhood friends and acquaintances in order to facilitate her participation in and observation of the sessions during which they swapped stories (10) and played music. As with An-sky, though, Hurston used the folk material detailed during her expeditions as fodder for her literary works. Polk County, co-written with Waring in 1944, demonstrates her affinity for African American history, folksong, and belief, just as “Der Dybuk” demonstrates An-sky’s interest in Yiddish history, folklore, and mysticism. Polk County, however, fits the modernist schema in different ways, namely because Hurston’s treatment of folk religious beliefs is not as prominent as An-sky’s.

Although both An-sky and Hurston fit their respective plays into a marginally modernist framework—which essentially advocates for marginal groups in the face of dominant societies—they do not share similar approaches to raising social awareness or outlooks on what being “marginal” actually means. For example, before An-sky set out

to preserve images of *shtetl* life, he considered the aspects of Ashkenazic Judaism—along with its *yiddishkayt* markers, such as the language, the belief system, and the community infrastructure (An-sky ctd. in Petrovsky-Shtern, “‘We are Too Late’” 11)—that he recorded to be distasteful. An-sky was born and raised in Vitebsk, Russia, a hub of Chasidic Judaism in the nineteenth century. He grew up in a devoutly Jewish, Yiddish-speaking household, but he broke from this very traditional, very marginal lifestyle to embrace more Russian-centered trends of nationalism and socialism (Roskies, Introduction xii-xvii). In addition to establishing a commune to support other Jewish men who left their *shtetlekh* for more conventionally Russian lifestyles (xii), An-sky changed his name several times: born Shloyme-Zanvil Rapoport, he Russified his name to “Solomon Aronovich” and then adopted “Semyon Akimovich,” a name bestowed upon him by the Russians with whom he worked. Later, he published under “S.A. An-sky,” offering two conflicting explanations of the origins of “An-sky,” one suggesting that he wished to pay tribute to his mother, Anna, and another claiming a friend of his made it up (xv-xvi). Some time during these name changes, the establishment of the Jewish Labor Bund, the militantly Marxist organization founded in 1897 that attracted An-sky by its revolutionary modernist “internationalism” (Roskies, Introduction xvii; Kronfeld 2), pulled An-sky back into Jewish communities, awakening his Jewish sense of self, albeit a secular, cultural, and historical sense rather than religious. After reading other works by Yiddish writers who did not abide by Jewish religious law, An-sky chose to reenlist Yiddish as his *mame-loshn*, or mother tongue. From this point on, An-sky’s identity as a Yiddish -speaking Jew flourished, and he devoted himself to bringing marginal Jewish

folklife to the forefront of centered Russian social, political, and literary discourses (Roskies, Introduction xix).

Clearly, An-sky did not like or appreciate his Jewish background until later in his life. His choices of vocation and literary themes indicate as much; as a counselor to wayward Jews, a socialist activist who advocated the empowerment of “proletariat and the landless or land-hungry peasants (Lampert 142) philosophy of the Bolshevik movement, and a journalist for Russian-language newspapers, for instance, An-sky adopted the “assimilationist...and secularist” (Neugroschel, “Ansky’s The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination” xii) rejection of being Jewish. Judaism—its languages, religion, culture, and traditions—did not figure greatly in his post-Vitebsk life until he learned that Jewish culture could, in fact, co-exist with secularism. Moreover, even though An-sky experienced a tentativeness in coming to terms with his identity and goals in life that “manifested [from] many of the conflicting tendencies of late 19th century Russian Jewish life” (Hoberman 23), he had a unique opportunity to represent the struggle that many Jews faced in Eastern Europe at the time and, for that matter, all over the world, regardless of time. He “...made the subject of competing loyalties into the substance of his fiction, drama, essays and [*sic*] memoirs. The divided life of...Ansky offered a key to the evolution of...[Jewish identity]—and of Jewish literature—in modern times” (Roskies, Introduction xi). From this perspective, An-sky addresses each of the three traits of minor literature. First, his journey from Vitebsk to St. Petersburg and to many other places throughout Eastern Europe correlates with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of deterritorialized people. He traveled in order to find his *niche*, and when he was unable to find it, he developed an appreciation for a multi-faceted identity.

Second, every time he published, his readers knew to expect a political or social message. Third, his experiences in defining himself and his marginal community in light of the domination exerted by the center were shared by many others in his community; in this way, he voices the shared concerns of the collective, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it. That his life story and works unite these qualities in Yiddish and in ways that express the position of his marginal community in centered society conveys the marginal modernism that accordingly pervades “Der Dybuk.”

In contrast, Hurston seems to have always taken great pride in her African American heritage. She never repudiated her marginal African American identity, and, in fact, Cheryl Wall writes that “Hurston claim[ed] her color gladly” (Women of the Harlem Renaissance 25). Of course, denying this part of herself is inherently more difficult than—if not impossible in comparison to—An-sky denying the Jewish part of himself; Hurston’s “reddish light brown” (Hacker ctd. in Washington 7) skin tone is certainly a sign of Hurston’s marginalized differences from her centered society. Furthermore, Hurston challenged the center on another count: gender. As a woman, she faced sexism from within African American communities, let alone European American (Marsh-Lockett 3-4, 5, 6). In this way, she typifies Louise O’Brien’s notion of the way in which marginal women of African descent must live in centered European societies (O’Brien 95-96, 106): there is a sense of “twinned forces” of oppression with regards to gender and race. Though she confronted these two forms of subjugation, Hurston’s immersion in African American life did not cease when she left Eatonville. She attended all-African American schools, including the preparatory school of Morgan State College, and she geared her research towards the anthropological study of “my people” (Hurston, “Dust

Tracks on a Road” 9, 719). Early on in her academic and writing careers, Hurston applied her enthusiasm and dedication to ethnographic and cultural research, an enthusiasm and dedication that An-sky acquired toward the end of his. Indeed, Franz Boas, Hurston’s mentor and the “father of American anthropology” (Hill xvii), writes that Hurston displayed a rare “charm of a loveable personality and of a revealing style which makes [her] work an unusual contribution to our knowledge of the true inner life of the Negro” (3).

Hurston, like An-sky, typifies a marginally modernist writer, although she does so from the start of her career, as opposed to having an epiphany later on. She supported African American artistry, which boomed during the peak of Hurston’s writing career (D. Lewis, Introduction xv-xvi), and she was a prolific writer of essays, novels, short stories, and plays that fulfill W.E.B. DuBois’ call to for art that is “by, about, for, and near African American people” (ctd. in Marsh-Lockett 8). She clearly attempted to put the marginal African American culture she researched in the spotlight, so to speak, of the centered European American consciousness. With the “superficial and stereotypical images of African Americans on the American stage” (7) in mind, Hurston created works that ask questions and provide insights. Like An-sky, Hurston employed the language that the specific marginal community spoke as a means to give it a literary voice. The egregious disenfranchisement of African Americans in the United States and the need to raise awareness of the conditions in which they lived, much like the conditions in which An-sky’s Yiddish-speaking Jews lived, allow Polk County to shine as a marginally modernist African American play. Hurston encapsulates DuBois’ charge by focusing her

energies on calling attention to the situations of African American culture through her writing, and she does so with integrity to her research and herself.

Both playwrights see their respective works as agents of change on behalf of their marginalized communities. An-sky seeks to bring awareness of the conditions in which Yiddish Jewish communities live to his Russian audiences, as well as to secular, assimilated Jewish audiences, while Hurston seeks to educate European Americans about the African American culture they disparaged for so long. For them, drama was a viable form of expression that combined art and literature in order to represent the marginal cultures to wide audiences of people who are not members of the cultural group represented (Hatch 15-37). Of course, however, neither An-sky nor Hurston could regulate their respective audiences; perhaps other socialist Jews who knew An-sky in his anti-Chasidic days would come to his play, just as other African Americans who had the means would come see Hurston's play. In this respect, An-sky and Hurston acted upon another aspect of marginal modernism that Deleuze and Guattari seem to overlook: marginally modernist literature brings a message not only to the people in the center, but also to the people still in the margins. Both An-sky and Hurston incorporate messages into their respective plays that would be relevant to the Yiddish Jewish and African American audiences. With this dual intention—to expose non-Jewish and non-African American audiences to unfamiliar cultural terrain and also to offer Jewish and African American audiences stories to which they can relate—An-sky and Hurston make use of their marginality to elicit social awareness.

“Der Dybuk” and Polk County are successful tools for effecting change. The plays attempt to bring accurate portrayals of life in *shtetlekh* and sawmills, respectively,

by presenting to their centered audience aspects of the folk cultures that the playwrights researched. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern maintains in “‘We are Too Late:’ Ansky and the Paradigms of No Return” that An-sky’s literary choices for “Der Dybuk” “would perhaps dismiss anti-hasidic [*sic*] prejudice [held by Russian audiences,] affirming the kinship of Hasidic lore with Russian [culture]” (21); certainly, the same claim applies to Hurston’s endeavor in Polk County, but for anti-African American prejudice held by European American audiences. Because An-sky and Hurston contended with their own demons (4-5) in the processes of writing their respective plays, they were able to determine what holes existed in the centers’ perceptions of the margins, and to fill them. An-sky grappled with reconciling his Jewish identity with his socialist leanings, and Hurston struggled with a European American co-writer who wanted to portray European American perceptions of African American life. They devised storylines, plots, settings, and characters to carry out their goals of revolutionizing the relationships between the centers and the margins. Once An-sky realized and acted upon his loyalty to the Jewish component of his identity, he saw in “...the Judaism of the present...a continuous development from the past” (Meyer, The Origins of the Modern Jew 182). He “consciously utilized [Jewish tradition] for the sake of the future” (182). Because “Hurston’s plays...capture in writing that drama she saw in life” (Burton viii), she was able to bring “life” to the stage. In these ways, An-sky and Hurston brought to light the concerns and perspectives of their marginal communities, both to their respective centered Russian and European American audiences and to their respective marginal Jewish and African American audiences who may have distanced themselves from their marginality, much like An-sky tried to do and Hurston refused to do.

SECTION 2: COLLABORATIONS OF CULTURE; OR, HOW AN-SKY AND HURSTON MADE ENDS MEET

An interesting aspect of the ways in which the two playwrights worked to center their marginal cultures is the degree to which they collaborated with people who were part of the society in the center. An-sky relied on his relationship with Stanislavski, “the great Russian director of the Moscow Art Theatre [*sic*]” (Engel 8); Hurston relied on hers with both Boas, her mentor at Columbia University, and Waring, wife of theatrical producer Stephen Kelen-d’Oxylion. Their respective collaborations inform this discussion and expansion of the notion of “marginal modernism,” because, in a sense, Stanislavski’s, Boas’, and Waring’s involvements in An-sky’s and Hurston’s respective plays, though Waring’s more so than Boas’, reveal the “appropriation [and manipulation] of the minor [the margin] by the major canonical system [the center]” (Kronfeld 4). An-sky looked to Stanislavski for advice on how to make his play more accessible to non-Jewish, non-Yiddish-speaking audiences, while Hurston accepted Boas’ academic and intellectual mentorship and yielded to Waring’s association with the project in the hopes that Waring would bring financial and production security. Perhaps, An-sky’s relationship with Stanislavski is most like Hurston’s relationship with Boas: both collaborations led to veritable success, though An-sky’s was theatrical and Hurston’s was academic. However, comparing Stanislavski and Waring may also serve a fruitful purpose: these two respective collaborators affected the creative aspects of the plays, while Boas served as an educational resource to Hurston. A major difference between An-sky’s and Hurston’s collaborations is that An-sky’s, for the most part, was successful in achieving his goals for the play, while Hurston’s had mixed effects on her work.

Stanislavski, born like An-sky in 1863, served as a theatrical mentor to An-sky in the process of crafting “Der Dybuk.” As the director of many Russian performing arts organizations, including the Moscow Art Theater, he was one of the most influential theater professionals in the world, and his legacy endures. He grew up in a well-bred and refined family, one with a large estate near Moscow (Stanislavski 23), with several home theaters (23, 58-65, 116). Stanislavski’s lavish lifestyle included such pastimes as organized hunting for sport (15), concerts conducted by pre-eminent musicians (8-9), balls (22), tea times (39), and Italian opera (32). He and his family were Russian Orthodox (Laurence Senelick qtd. in Schuler), and they lived centered lives, in that they enjoyed the freedoms afforded by being wealthy and influential Russians. In fact, his background as an “aristocrat” (Stanislavski 20) provided him with a Russian education (55-56), involvement in Russian politics (76), and socialization with Russian dignitaries (14, 77, 104, 130, 141, 144, 150, 547), all described throughout his autobiography, My Life in Art. Indeed, his uncle and cousin recommended that “[i]n order to create a position [in society] for [him]self, ...it [wa]s necessary for [him] to occupy [him]self with some sort of social work....” (78), indicating that Stanislavski’s family valued elevated social status and that they had the means to enjoy it. After participating on committees pertaining to the Russian penal system, education, and social welfare, the Russian Musical Society and Conservatory offered Stanislavski a directorship in approximately 1885 (76-77), around the time that An-sky moved away from his Yiddish roots and began to publish in Russian (Roskies, Introduction xiv). In other words, while Stanislavski lived, worked, and breathed in the Russian center, An-sky strove to reach it.

Logically, then, any relationship between Stanislavski and An-sky should have taken shape in the Russian center, not in the Yiddish margin. Yet, through an ironic twist of mentorship, their relationship concentrated on the margin: An-sky turned back to the marginal Yiddish in 1901 (Roskies, Introduction xvii), and Stanislavski began producing Jewish-themed plays, albeit sparsely, in 1895 (Stanislavski 226). Although information about their first meeting is scarce, S. Morris Engel, Joachim Neugroschel, David G. Roskies, Mikhol Krutikov, and J. Hoberman note that An-sky showed the original Russian version of “Der Dybuk” to Stanislavski (8; “Ansky’s The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination” xiii; Introduction xxvi; 22), in order to solicit feedback and a possible production commitment. In response, Stanislavski suggested, in addition to two other recommendations, that he add a character (Engel 8; Hoberman 24), an astoundingly significant suggestion. After reflecting on the suggestion, An-sky wrote to his childhood friend and Jewish socialist-in-arms Khaim Zhitlovsky that the character of the Messenger “...was not in my original version. It was [Konstantin] Stanislavsky who advised or rather told me to add him, and I thereby automatically broadened my overall conception,... [brackets are Neugroschel’s]” (Ansky, “From ‘A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky’” 1). The other two changes that Stanislavski suggested include, first, that he rewrite the play in Yiddish and have a Yiddish theater company perform it, rather than a Russian troupe (Engel 8); and second, that he remove the narrative of a father admonishing his daughter that framed the play (Petrovsky-Shtern, Personal interview).⁷ The Yiddish version that follows this advice is the focus of this discussion.

⁷ This last recommendation serves to conform An-sky’s play to Russian dramatic conventions, providing signals of An-sky’s aspiration to join the Russian center and the center’s manipulation of the margin. An

What is the importance of Stanislavski's involvement in An-sky's portrayal of his Jewish culture? The anecdotes about the Messenger figure and using Yiddish and a Jewish theater company, may suggest that An sky was a bit apprehensive about how his play might be received by a Russian audience, although he submitted this version to the censorship committee for official approval.⁸ He needed encouragement from someone who knew Russian audiences inside and out. Stanislavski's advice may have been the impetus An-sky needed to infuse the play with the ethnographic lore that he attempted to capture in the play. By recommending the Messenger and Yiddish, Stanislavski may have envisioned a play even more ethnographically sound—based on Stanislavski's belief that the closer art is to reality, the more "ethnographical" it is (Stanislavski 400, 401)—than An-sky first drafted. This goal is consistent with Stanislavski's method of directing. About his work on Lev Tolstoy's The Power of Darkness, Stanislavski writes that he pushed his players to learn as much as they could about the people and their community that they would portray in the play (400-407). A superficial evaluation by visiting a similar community led them unsuccessfully portray the cultural nuances that they endeavored to wanted; they missed, as Stanislavski describes, a sense of the community's spirituality. To compensate, they researched and learned as much as

interesting study would examine the conventions of Russian theater and Yiddish theater to see to which of each An-sky adheres.

⁸ Petrovsky-Shtern points out that the Russian play registered with St. Petersburg Censorship Committee, also described by Mikhol Krutikov, predates the Hebrew and Yiddish versions, suggesting that An-sky prematurely sought official approval (Personal interview). Stanislavski's recommendations, then, disrupted An-sky's original plans for his play's debut and posterity.

possible about the buildings, natural geography, clothes, dishes, furniture, and life cycle events of those being portrayed. In this way, they internalized as much as possible about the ways of life of their characters. Perhaps, to this end, Stanislavski encouraged An-sky to make use of Yiddish and the Messenger: if An-sky stood to depict *shtetl* life in the nineteenth century, he should depict it to its fullest extent.

An-sky may have fallen victim to the “classist appropriation of the marginal” (Kronfeld 225). As mentioned previously, Stanislavski directed and produced Jewish-themed plays, namely Uriel Acosta in 1895, which played several years prior to his involvement in “Der Dybuk.” Perhaps, Stanislavski believed that he knew Yiddish and Jewish culture well and therefore suggested to An-sky what he would want to see in a play about Yiddish-speaking Jews. Stanislavski may have thought himself familiar with marginal Jewish communities and projected his perceptions through theater.

Accordingly, Stanislavski—as a part of the Russian center—may have appropriated certain cultural markers of Jewish life and in turn offered them back to An-sky in order to reify the images that the center held of Jews. An-sky responds to Stanislavski by following his suggestions, although he admits to Zhitlovsky that the Messenger is the “only nonrealistic element” (Ansky, “From ‘A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky’” 1) of the play. Two possible reasons for considering the Messenger “nonrealistic” suggest themselves. First, An-sky may have found no ethnographic evidence of a figure like the Messenger; in contrast, “Leah’s dialogue or visions” (1) are realistic because he did find evidence of these phenomena. Second, the Messenger was to have an ethereal persona, as An-sky “deliberately limned [him] with mystical features” (1). Either way, the

character of the Messenger is perhaps the most famous of the characters in “Der Dybuk,” providing an omniscient feel to the play and appealing to a wide array of audiences.

A notable component of the advisor-advisee relationship between Stanislavski and An-sky is that An-sky expected the Moscow Art Theater to debut the play, and in Russian at that. According to Roskies, “The Moscow Art Theater’s premiere performance of The Dybbuk [probably to have been done with the Russian version, even though Stanislavski may have believed An-sky’s Russian skills to be “third- or fourth-rate” (Petrovsky-Shtern, Personal interview)]...was cancelled due to Stanislavski’s illness and the political upheaval in Russia” (Introduction xi). Instead, another theater group debuted the play—also probably in Yiddish—as a tribute to An-sky’s death in 1920, though which theater group in particular is debatable. Engel claims that the play premiered “...at the Elyseum Theatre [*sic*] in Warsaw on December 9, 1920—which marked the end of the traditional thirty-day period of mourning that followed Ansky’s death on November 9...” (8), while Roskies asserts that “[t]he Vilna Troupe honored his memory by finally staging The Dybbuk” (Introduction xxii). Hoberman attempts to clarify the situation:

Ansky, an anti-Bolshevik socialist who had fled the Soviet Union for war-torn Vilna in 1918, died in Warsaw two years later at the age of fifty-seven. The Dybbuk, never produced during his lifetime, was first performed by the Vilna Troupe (then in residence in Warsaw) as a memorial on December 9, 1920. Although originally intended only for a short run, the play proved so astonishingly popular that it became the mainstay of the Vilna repertoire. Contemporary accounts report that

trolley conductors approaching the Elizeum Theater in central Warsaw would call out “Dybbuk stop!” (24)

An-sky obviously could not foresee Stanislavski’s illness, the political unrest, or his own death, so maybe he abided by Stanislavski’s suggestions in the hopes of having Stanislavski produce his play. An-sky certainly had bucked the many systems within which he lived—the traditional Jewish life of Vitebsk, the anti-Jewishness of the mining communities where he worked and lived, and the anti-Jewish political movements that affected him so much—but he likely did not want to upset Stanislavski for fear his play would never appear on stage. An-sky incorporated the idea of the Messenger with the expectation that Stanislavski would produce it. An-sky did not live to see any production of the play.

Hurston’s relationship with Boas is somewhat similar to An-sky’s with Stanislavski. She first met Boas as an undergraduate student—the only African American student there at the time—at Barnard College. Her interest in anthropological research led her to work with Boas. Their first project together entailed measuring “the skulls of passersby to disprove theories of racial inferiority” (Cheryl A. Wall, “Chronology” 964). As her academic advisor, Boas, a German Jew who came to the United States to lecture at Columbia University in 1896, taught Hurston that social and environmental factors influence culture, rather than biology or genetic history. He rejected the prevailing race theories of the 1920s and 1930s, which argued for a hierarchy of races based on perceived biological or physical differences. He thereby established himself as a “cultural relativist” (Hill 6). This perspective offered Hurston the academic framework that informed her anthropological research. Instead of seeing African

American communities as inferior to European American communities because of a genetic predilection to substandard ways of life, Hurston used cultural relativism to redefine the standards by which society hierarchizes the cultural groups that compose it. Boas told Hurston “to seek ‘essentially new’ material—namely ‘methods of dancing, habitual movements in telling tales, or in ordinary conversation’” (Hill xxviii) that would achieve her goal of presenting a non-ranked African American culture to an audience that would previously have reviled it.

In addition to their academic collaboration, Hurston and Boas collaborated for the good of Hurston’s well being. Because of his interactions with her and intercessions on her behalf, Hurston obtained funding for her research, loans for personal expenses, and job opportunities (Kaplan 83, 95, 96-97, 327; Cheryl A. Wall, “Chronology” 965; Hill xix). For example, in 1933, Hurston applied to the Rosenwald Foundation to fund her PhD in Anthropology; she would continue her education under Boas, but this time at Columbia rather than Barnard. After accepting her and committing an offer of \$3,000 for two years of graduate study and fieldwork, the Rosenwald Foundation suddenly withdrew its offer, citing serious concerns with Hurston’s proposed plan. Without any real understanding of why the Rosenwald Foundation rescinded Hurston’s award,

Franz Boas tried to intervene. He backed Hurston’s research plan, and she enrolled at Columbia, as planned. In January, Embree [the Rosenwald Foundation director] reiterated to Boas that so long as “you and your associates at Columbia are willing to assume direction of her work, we are willing to provide her with modest support for a two-year period.” Boas wrote back immediately that “we all believe in the ability of Miss Hurston

and are willing to undertake a rather detailed direction of her studies.”

(Kaplan 167-168)

Although the Rosenwald Foundation decreased Hurston’s stipend substantially—to \$700 for one semester—Boas was the key to Hurston keeping the award at all. He also served as a reference for a car loan in 1927 (Kaplan 95*n*.2) and promised jobs to Hurston if she produced good work. In a 1926 letter to Annie Nathan Meyer, one of her sponsors, Hurston writes “...I have a Job [*sic*] for the Summer [*sic*] and that makes me happy. Dr. Boas says if I make good, there are more jobs in store for me...” (Kaplan 83). Boas helped Hurston throughout her education by mentoring, advising, and defending her.

Indeed, Hurston continuously relied on Boas for academic and financial support. Without Boas as a mentor, her career would not have had the impact that it did. Almost all of her works, based on her anthropological research, was subject to the approval of Boas’ critical eye. She solicited his opinions on her books so as to legitimize them to her publishers and reading market. For instance, on December 4, 1933, when Hurston asked Columbia University anthropologist Ruth Benedict for an advance review of her novel, Jonah’s Gourd Vine, she also suggested that Benedict ask Boas, but only if Boas would be gentle in his criticism: “I’d love one from Dr. Boas also if he could be approached without massacre to my person.” (Kaplan 283). Moreover, in reference to “Mules and Men,” Hurston’s influential collection of the folklore she collected throughout Eatonville, Florida and the American south, she all but begs Boas—in a letter dated August 20, 1934—to write the introduction:

So please consider all this and do not refuse Mr. Lippincott’s request to write the introduction to Mules and Men. And then in addition, I feel that

the persons who have the most information on a subject should teach the public. Who knows more about folk-lore than you and Dr. Benedict? Therefore the stuff published in America should pass under your eye. You see some of the preposterous stuff put out by various persons on various folk-subjects. This is not said merely to get you to write the introduction to my book. No. But an enormous amount of loose writing is being done. (Kaplan 308-309)

Boas obliged, but he wrote the forward instead of the introduction. Carla Kaplan points out that the forward contains patronizing and condescending language, emphasizing Hurston's personality, rather than her academic prowess (51; Boas 3), which implies, perhaps, a disjuncture between Hurston's goals for herself and Boas' confidence in her ability to reach those goals. This tension between the marginalized Hurston and the centered Boas indicates two components of Hurston's career: the first is that Hurston needed Boas' support to give her credibility in the field of anthropology—whether proof of credibility surfaces through scholarship opportunities, job offers, or publishing options—regardless of the ramifications of his condescension or obligations to him. Hurston's relationship with Boas furthers the idea that Hurston, as an African American woman, navigated and manipulated the male-dominated European American center.⁹ She

⁹ Though Boas was a Jewish German immigrant, and though his theories on race and ethnicity defied the politically dominant theories he vehemently detested, he represented the dominant European American culture for Hurston because of his assimilationist aspirations. Claudia Roth Pierpont briefly describes Boas' home-life:

knew when and how to ask for what she needed, even if she might get slightly hurt by the end result. She received her education from the top anthropologists at one of the top universities in the United States, and she published several groundbreaking books, so, conceivably, her collaboration with Boas is a success, much like An-sky's with Stanislavski.

Hurston's collaboration with Waring, however, presents a very different picture. While this relationship is arguably unsuccessful, an important similarity exists between the An-sky-Stanislavski relationship and the Hurston-Waring relationship, in that they are both speculative. Not much is known about Hurston's collaboration with Waring, and not as much is known about Waring as about Stanislavski. While many sources about An-sky and "Der Dybuk" mention Stanislavski, even though Stanislavski's autobiography excludes An-sky altogether, very few sources about Hurston mention Waring. Furthermore, even though she authored American Defender: The Biography of Honorable Samuel Dickstein,¹⁰ her name is obscure. However, the two facts about Waring already mentioned encapsulate her working relationship with Hurston:

- Waring's husband was producer Stephen Kelen-d'Oxylion; and

The [five] children spoke German and English, practiced no religion, and were unconditionally American...Boas himself belonged to no religious organization...Near the end of his life, Boas observed that "my ideals have developed because I am what I am and have lived where I have lived." But, however personal the origins of his thinking, his intellectual program was based on an unswerving German Enlightenment belief...in the common humanity of all. (par. 39)

¹⁰ Robert Speller printed just 135 copies of American Defender, each signed by Waring and Dickstein.

- Waring wanted Hurston to portray the characters in stereotypical, superficial, and subservient ways (Robert Hemenway ctd. in 83; Hill 186).

Hurston hoped Kelen-d'Oxylion would eventually produce the play (Rosenberg 16), certainly a position of importance to Hurston. He prefaces the play with a brief statement of the play's length: "POLK COUNTY is the conventional length play. If it appears longer, it is because, to facilitate reading, double spacing has been used." Although the disclaimer is inaccurate, as the play runs approximately four hours rather than the standard two (Bass, par. 12), he follows it with his name, address, and phone number (Hurston and Waring). The disclaimer indicates his direct involvement in the potential production of the play, though evidence of Hurston's reliance on him, especially because he did not follow the project through to production, is tenuous. Upon publication of Polk County, then, Hurston appears to proceed as planned; however, Hurston, who dies in 1960, does not live to see the play produced. What went wrong?

Perhaps what went wrong is the tension that pervaded Hurston's relationship with Waring: Waring preferred to portray African Americans as "happy dark[ies]" (Washington 7), while Hurston would have none of that condescension and belittlement. Rachel A. Rosenberg cites Robert Hemenway's mid-1970s interview with Waring, wherein she reveals her preference to "Gershwinize" the characters (Waring ctd. in Rosenberg 83; Hill 186), so named because of George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward's 1940s folk opera Porgy and Bess, which characterized African American characters as patrifocal, with great value attributed to a "manliness" that evidences itself through murder, sex, and the submission of women. Additionally, the opera portrays New York,

the center of the artistic and intellectual explosion of the Harlem Renaissance, as the pinnacle of sophistication and as the “proper destination for those who would prove themselves true men” (Rosenberg 92). While Waring supported this representation of African American life, Hurston dismissed it as ethnocentric, elitist, racist, and ignorant. Instead, she chose to portray the sawmill camp of the play as matrifocal and with humaneness, as demonstrated by the senses of community and spirituality that suffuse the play. Much to Waring’s apparent consternation, Hurston “specifically rejected New York as a final destination” (92) of African American enlightenment, thereby contradicting the images found in Porgy and Bess. That Waring would advocate for such an uninformed portrayal, as well as a portrayal so contradictory to Hurston’s goals, suggests her attempt to impose her own European American, centered vision of African American life on Hurston’s audiences.

Fortunately, Hurston fought Waring’s tendency to manipulate the representation of marginal African American communities. In fact, Hurston took Waring’s name off of the script, probably in retaliation of Waring’s Eurocentricity. Waring’s bias accentuated for Hurston her uselessness to the project. Valerie Boyd describes the nature of Hurston and Waring collaboration:

Lodging at Harlem’s Hotel Theresa, [Hurston] spent several weeks there working with Dorothy Waring, a white woman, on a musical play to be called “Polk County.” The comedy...was to incorporate elements of [several of Hurston’s earlier works:] “High John de Conqueror,” Mules and Men, and Mule Bone. Since all of this was Zora’s material, it’s

unclear why she felt the need to collaborate on the project with Waring, author of a minor book from 1935, American Defender.... (373-374)

Boyd continues to express Waring's negligibility by reporting that "[o]ne version of the play, dated March 25, 1944, listed only Hurston as author. A later version added Waring's name—but the play itself seemed to be virtually all Zora" (374). Even though Hurston was strong enough in her creative, political, and intellectual convictions to all but reject Waring as an effective collaborator, she still maintained a working relationship with her. Why? Perhaps, she maintained a working relationship with Waring as a way to maintain ties to her husband, and thus his professional and financial support. Perhaps, she relied on her association with Waring, and her husband, to substantiate her legitimacy and talent in the eyes of potential audiences. Perhaps, she collaborated with Waring merely to uphold, or to give the impression that she upheld, the convention of the time of having European American patronage of African American artists (D. Lewis, Introduction xv).

This aspect of Hurston's writing process is exactly the kind of appropriation and manipulation against which Deleuze and Guattari and Kronfeld warn. Throughout the time period in which Hurston completed the bulk of her projects—the Harlem Renaissance, African American artists worked under European American financial sponsors, or "patrons." In fact, practically all of Hurston's academic and professional work depended on the financial support of her patrons. Polk County, apparently, was no different: the Hurston-Waring collaborative effort seems to adhere to the model provided by other relationships that Hurston had with European Americans, such as Annie Nathan Meyer (Hurston, "Dust Tracks on a Road" 683), Charlotte Osgood Mason (688), and

Fannie Hurst (683, 734-738).¹¹ These women, like other patrons, contributed the “...white capital and influence [that] were crucial [to “Harlem’s cultural birth” (D. Lewis, When Harlem was in Vogue 98)], and [thus,] the white presence...hovered over the New Negro world of art and literature like a benevolent censor, politely but pervasively setting the outer limits of its creative boundaries....” (98). The center—European Americans—“helps” the margin—African Americans—by contributing financially to the margin’s endeavors, but it also controls the margin by determining what it will finance and how much. In this way, the center gains the ability to regulate the degree to which the margin produces work that is “revolutionary,” which in turn creates an environment that safeguards the center’s power.

Hurston, however, struggled against this power dynamic while working with Waring. She had a purposeful vision of how and why to represent African Americans, and she resisted pandering to the images that European Americans—as well as some of the intellectual, elitist African Americans whom Hurston labeled the “Niggerati” of the Harlem Renaissance (D. Lewis, Introduction xvii)—held of lower class, rural African Americans. According to Carol P. Marsh-Lockett, Hurston, like the other African American female playwrights featured by Marsh-Lockett, “decenter[ed] or destabilize[d] prevailing white notions of the African American through an indifference to the power of white America” (5), but this claim is insufficient. Hurston was not just indifferent; she was needy. She needed to compromise with Waring on certain issues, such as authorship

¹¹ Hurston spells Hurst’s given name in two different ways throughout “Dust Tracks on a Road:” “Fannie” first appears on page 683 of the autobiography, while “Fanny” first appears on page 734. This discussion employs the first spelling merely because Hurston used it first.

of the play, in order to ensure the financial and production support from Kelen-d'Oxylion. Unfortunately, despite Hurston's efforts to maintain a semblance of collaboration, Kelen-d'Oxylion dropped the project (Boyd 370), although why is enigmatic; most explanations, including this one, of Hurston, Waring, and Kelen-d'Oxylion's relationship are speculative and based on known cultural, historical, and political contexts of the Harlem Renaissance.

Through these relationships, An-sky and Hurston immersed themselves in the social politics of their respective times: both playwrights endeavored to have their respective plays produced and seen by as many audiences as possible. If Stanislavski could give An-sky the Moscow Art Theater, and Waring could give Hurston her husband's financial backing, then the two playwrights could tolerate—at the very least—the suggestions that they made. An-sky ostensibly took to Stanislavski's suggestions more agreeably than Hurston took to Waring's, as indicated by the facts that the *Messenger* prevails as a central figure in Yiddish drama and Waring almost lost her position as co-author. An-sky and Hurston, as marginal writers, encountered the centers of their respective societies and dealt with their respective demands in the ways they saw fit. Whether by An-sky's acceptance of Stanislavski's suggestions or Hurston's rejection of Waring's, they fought to maintain integrity to their marginal respective Yiddish-speaking and African American communities. Unfortunately, and possibly through no fault of her own, Hurston's play did not enjoy the same successes and reception as An-sky's, although Polk County may eventually become one of the hallmarks of her repertory, demonstrated by the recent interest in the work. Ultimately, by attempting to

work with the respective Russian and African American centers, An-sky and Hurston staved off the potential exploitation and manipulation of their visions.

SECTION 3: AN-SKY'S AND HURSTON'S MARGINAL LANGUAGES

The contents, as well as the contexts, of “Der Dybuk” and Polk County lend themselves to marginal modernist readings. This section explores the texts of the plays in relation to the “languages” contained therein. Both An-sky and Hurston made decisions, even if those decisions were influenced by their collaborators, about the spoken languages used to write the plays and how best to emphasize the differences of their respective cultures with their potential audiences. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines “language” as

...**1a**:the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a community **b**...**(2)**: a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings **(3)**: the suggestion by objects, actions, or conditions of associated ideas or feelings...**(5)**: a formal system of signs and symbols...including rules for the formation and transformation of admissible expressions...

The decisions that the playwrights made about which languages to use in their plays pertain not just to language in the sense expressed by **1a** above, but also a combination of **1b(2)**, **(3)**, and **(5)**. In other words, this discussion expands the usual conceptions of language, especially in the way that Deleuze and Guattari use the term, to allow for other systems of communication that An-sky and Hurston use. Therefore, in addition to examining the languages in which the playwrights wrote their plays, and the languages in which the characters speak—the “literal languages”—an analysis of the various belief systems and value systems in the plays is also useful and indispensable. The latter

“languages” are what Kronfeld discusses as essential to “nonverbal modernisms” (9), or the “metaphorical languages” discussed in the Introduction, in that they, as components of marginal cultures, serve to distinguish the margin from the center. Stephen Greenblatt offers that “in any culture there is a general symbolic economy made up of the myriad signs that excite human desire, fear, and aggression...” (230). In this way, “Der Dybuk” and Polk County are laden with both verbal and nonverbal modernisms, languages and systems, which accentuate the deterritorialized, depoliticized, and deuniversalized experiences of the marginal groups that the plays portray.

In terms of the literal language component of this section, An-sky’s play has a complicated linguistic history, even more than the complications brought on by Stanislavski’s recommendation to rewrite the play in Yiddish. Indeed, as his biography and his relationship with Stanislavski reveal, An-sky depended on the Russian center to lead him back to his marginal Jewish identity (Roskies, Introduction xxix), in whatever ways An-sky conceived of it. He gave readings of “Der Dybuk” in both Russian and Yiddish, after following Stanislavski’s advice, but when he fled Russia in 1918, he left without any of the manuscripts (Roskies, Introduction xi; Krutikov). The Russian version was somehow confiscated—and preserved—by the St. Petersburg Censor Committee (Krutikov), and the Yiddish version was effectively destroyed when the “Bolsheviks impounded the treasures of the Jewish Ethnographic Museum [that An-sky founded]” (Roskies, Introduction xi). Add to the mix a Hebrew version, another language of marginal Jewish communities: Khayim Nakhman Bialik translated the Yiddish version of “Der Dybuk” into Hebrew before the Yiddish version was lost, and An-sky was able to translate this Hebrew version back into Yiddish (Engel 8; Roskies, Notes 212n.11;

Neugroschel, “Ansky’s The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination” xiv). Thus, the Yiddish version that persists today is what Neugroschel calls a “second-degree translation” (xiv). Even so, Krutikov reports that the newly found Russian version includes several differences from the Yiddish, including thematic and structural differences, so the Yiddish version is all but a new play. Petrovsky-Shtern accounts for these differences by reporting that Bialik disliked An-sky’s Russian language skills, as well as the play itself, and thus embellished the plot and dialogue (Personal interview). This intricacy notwithstanding, or maybe because of it, “Der Dybuk” has become a mainstay of Yiddish theater, a “quintessential work of Jewish modernism” (Hoberman 21).

Two aspects of this linguistic history are particularly interesting: first, An-sky wrote the play in Yiddish only after Stanislavski directed him to do so, as discussed above; second, by writing and performing “Der Dybuk” in the marginal language of Yiddish, An-sky alienated Russians, the very audience to which he attempted to appeal. Roskies offers that the “The Dybbuk, like almost everything else [written by An-sky], was originally intended for a Russian audience” (xxix), an audience that did not understand Yiddish. Moreover, the Yiddish that An-sky employs in “Der Dybuk” is an obsolete form of Yiddish, one that is “highly stylized, . . . cadenced, learned (that is to say, super-Hebraicized)” (Roskies xxvi). For example, after Sender, the father of female protagonist Leah, enters the *shul*—literally, “school,” but in Yiddish-speaking traditional Jewish communities, the *shul* is a place of religious and spiritual learning—into announce the marriage contract that he just signed on behalf of his daughter, he admonishes, “*Pore edem! Ikh vel aleyh shtelen tikun, un a faynem tikun....*” (An-sky 36)—“Dummies! I

myself will set up the drink, and a fine drink....”¹² Sender uses idiomatic expressions from Hebrew—“*pore edem*,” and “*tikun*”—in order to condescend to his audience—the men to whom he speaks—for they are not as worldly or wealthy as he. Sender calls the *batlonim*, or idlers, and the other men in the *shul* “savages” because they question Sender’s celebratory intentions. As a way to prove his point, Sender offers them a drink, although the word he uses—*tikun*—suggests a better quality of alcoholic beverage than what the men may expect. “*Tikun*” comes from the Hebrew root for “heal”—*tav-kuf-nun*—which intimates the “healing” nature of potent alcohol, hence the idiom. Even though the Yiddish used in this situation correlates to the character traits possessed by Sender—in that the language reflects Sender’s pretentiousness and elitist attitude—it is still a rather elevated Yiddish because An-sky could have used the more colloquial “*shnaps*” or “*moshke*,” which An-sky uses elsewhere in the play (17).

This loftier form of Yiddish satisfies two of An-sky’s possible objectives, both of which Deleuze and Guattari address as goals of minor literature. First, the Yiddish spoken by his characters is one that demonstrates An-sky’s affinity for “ethnopoetry” (Roskies xxii; Hoberman 23). In order to uphold the integrity of the communities that he researched, An-sky uses a form of their language that indicates the spiritual component of

¹² Though this translation indicates the loftiness and awkwardness of An-sky’s Yiddish, the three translations consulted for this thesis translate the line differently. Neugroschel’s: “C’mon now! I’m going to be treating you to a drink, and a fine drink....” (Ansky, “The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds [A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts]” 19); Golda Werman’s (included in Roskies’ anthology): “You fool! I will provide the drinks myself, and good liquor, too....” (Ansky, “The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds: A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts” 18); and Engel’s: “Dummy! The refreshments are on me!...” (The Dybbuk 72). The variations are due to the idioms and, quite possibly, to the intricate style of An-sky’s Yiddish.

their lives. Roskies believes that An-sky introduced the term “ethnopoetry” into the field of folklore studies, and he interprets the term to mean that Jewish folklore—through language—shows the “spiritual struggles” (xxiii) inherent to “Jewish cultural renewal” (xxii). This sense of spirituality was quite common for Russian modernists (Lampert 137-139). The Yiddish spoken by the characters in “Der Dybuk” was not just difficult for non-Yiddish speakers to understand, but also for Yiddish speakers unfamiliar with the cadences, verbiage, and allusions (xxvi; Neugroschel, “Ansky’s The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination” xv). An-sky wanted to maintain this elevated form of speech in order to accentuate the differences between marginal Yiddish culture and centered Russian. According to Deleuze and Guattari, such pointedly distinct language “*stops being representative [of Yiddish shtetl life] in order to now move toward its extremities or its limits*” (italics Deleuze and Guattari’s) (23). Because An-sky aimed to educate his centered audiences about the plight of the marginal Jewish communities around them, the language he uses may be excessively stylized for the purpose of ensuring that these audiences acknowledged the differences.

Second, and this point overlaps with the spiritual intonations of An-sky’s ethnopoetics, the Hebrew-infused Yiddish hints at the sanctity of the action of the play and culture it represents. Hebrew, as the Jewish *loyshen-koydesh*, or holy language, is the language typically reserved for expressions of Jewish religiosity or spirituality: reading from the liturgy, life cycle events, studying, and other religious and spiritual experiences. The plot of “Der Dybuk” includes many depictions of such experiences—Talmudic learning, kabalistic evocations, blessings over candles, for instance—and the stylized Yiddish sustains the sense of spirituality that is so fundamental to the play. This form of

the language is what Deleuze and Guattari call a “mythic language” (23). It is a marginal language that expresses a sense of a culture that no other language is able to express, although he tried with Russian in the original version. These languages—the mythic and any other—maintain ambiguous distinctions, in that “[o]ne language can fill a certain function for one material and another function for another material” (24). An-sky incorporates the Hebraicized Yiddish as a way to illustrate both the “mythic” aspects of Jewish spirituality and the significance of Hebrew in Yiddish life.

Another element of marginality that emerges through An-sky’s language choices for “Der Dybuk” relates to the issue of translation, as the play went through many incarnations: Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew, and back to Yiddish, among all of the other languages into which the play has been translated. Neugroschel considers this issue, particularly in light of his own role in translating the play. His evaluation of the process in which he engaged is applicable to the process in which An-sky engaged, though in an almost opposite way. He writes:

By translating Ansky into English, a non-Jewish language, we assimilate the author into a Gentile world. Translation tends to be more curatorial,...[It is] imperialistic in that it wrench[es] a text from another culture, a foreign context [the margin], and shove[s] it into its new home [the center]. We take from the “other,” giving little in return.

Transferring a text from a Jewish to a non-Jewish language presents an unusual problem. In European cultures, language and ethnicity belong to the fundament of identity while religion is part of the superstructure. But for Jews, religion has usually been the overall basis, and any other cultural

expression, including language, has been built on religion... (“Ansky’s
The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination” xii)

An-sky’s Russian original succumbs to the “imperialism” that Neugroschel describes. He took the material that he gathered during the ethnographic expeditions, material that he gathered while speaking Yiddish, and he translated it into Russian for the benefit of audiences in the center, possibly including Stanislavski. The experiences and beliefs of the people he interviewed were then seen in the context of Russian socialism, rather than Jewish custom. As Neugroschel outlines in the second half of the quotation, and Roskies intimates in his discussion of An-sky’s use of ethnopoetry, the language of the play must reflect the characters portrayed: their culture, their belief system, the “inner physique of [their] soul” (Stanislavski 400). In the Russian version, perhaps Stanislavski noticed an element of the characters’ culture missing and thus encouraged the translation into the culture’s language; maybe he sensed a lack of the “mythic language” that would distinguish the characters’ culture from his own. The Hebrew version, then, provides similar concerns: while Hebrew is certainly a language of importance to Yiddish-speakers, it is not the direct language of the culture portrayed in “Der Dybuk,” particularly as the Hebrew that Bialik used in his version is different from the Biblical or Talmudic Hebrew that An-sky’s characters use (Kronfeld 68). Neugroschel’s concerns about translation, then, apply to Bialik’s translation into Hebrew, even if it is an integral component of Yiddish and Yiddish culture. In these ways, An-sky’s relationships to the various languages—centered or marginal—of the play are just as complicated as his relationships to the languages in general: Yiddish is his first language, he spent most of

his adult life speaking Russian, and his religious education afforded him knowledge of Hebrew. The history of “Der Dybuk” reflects this multilingualism.

Hurston, too, dealt with issues of multilingualism as an influence in her playwrighting. Polk County maintains a consistent use of African American English, the language of her marginal culture, as the language of the drama and of what is played on stage. While all of the dialogue is written in African American English, standard American English—the language of the European American center—is the language of the stage directions.¹³ The juxtaposition of the two forms of English in the text of her play demonstrates Hurston’s adeptness at manipulating the art form such that she could depict accurate images of African American life while addressing the concerns of critics who argued that the language would detract from the play’s aesthetic appeal. For Hurston, the important part of her play surrounds the depictions on stage, rather than the script, so her choice to use standard American English for all but the dialogue does not detract from the overall impetus of Polk County. Leo Hamalian and James V. Hatch, in their seminal work on African American drama, claim that Hurston “spearheaded the movement to translate and adapt the Afro-American oral tradition into received forms of literature. Through the ingenious use of blues, folklore, street language, toasts, jive, signifying, and the dozens,...” (186), she portrayed African American culture with dignity and respect, unlike the stereotypical portrayals—the “primitivism” (Hill 74-75, 146)—that Waring wished to see on stage.

¹³ As is the case with “Der Dybuk,” a further look into the theatrical conventions of European American and African American drama would provide more insight into the dynamics of Hurston’s relationship with her center and margin.

Both the African American English and the standard American English featured by Hurston are lyrical in their rhythms and swollen with cultural significance. The word choice and the combinations of words make Hurston's expression unique and representative of southern African American working class life. In Social Rituals and the Verbal Art of Zora Neale Hurston, Lynda Marion Hill agrees; she cites Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross in the following explanation of the way in which Hurston uses language to convey that "inner physique of the soul" that Stanislavski liked so much, which evokes the same sentiment as Boas' "true inner life:"

If "everyday life harbors the texture of social change" and if "to perceive it at all is to recognize the necessity of its conscious transformation," then African-American language is a cultural process, as well as the means through which a primary text—behavior called everyday-life drama—is enacted. Hurston writes: "His very words are action words. His interpretation of the English language is in terms of pictures. One act described in terms of another"...Language becomes a vehicle for transforming meaning, for translating behavior into words and converting everyday-life drama into written texts which are also performances. Rather than translating everyday-life into expository prose, Hurston's language converts everyday-life drama into signs that extend the spatial and temporal boundaries of prose, multiplying the dimensions through which a reader enters the text and understands its meaning." (qtd. in Hill 9)

For example, Hurston's "Scene and Setting" of Polk County includes a lush and vivid description of the sawmill camp surroundings. She writes, "The woods surround everything. Bull alligators can be heard booming like huge bass drums from the lake at night. Variagated [*sic*] chorus of frogs, big owls, and now and then the cry of a panther..." (I).¹⁴ Just from this two-sentence excerpt of the three-page description, readers attain enough stimuli to devise the kind of spatial and temporal boundaries about which Hill writes. Through the sounds that the animals make, Hurston paints a picture of the environment in which her characters live, work, and love, enabling her audience to gain insight into the culture of the community. Even though this description, for the most part, is written in standard American English, the language conjures images of African American life on the sawmill, in that the language describes the natural surroundings and the sounds that the sawmill workers hear on a daily basis.

Similarly, Hill emphasizes that "Hurston translates spoken language, already rich in metaphors, into graphically drawn word-pictures of daily life..." (xxii), which also elicits the understanding of the marginal African American life that Hurston wanted to portray. Hurston relies mostly on punctuation, spelling, and cadence to distinguish African American English from standard American English, which some of the characters attempt to emulate, parody, or outright reject throughout the play. She "...recognized many ways in which black people used English according to class, region,

¹⁴ Hurston's pagination of Polk County is as follows: "Scene and Setting" fills pages I to VIII, while subsequent pages adhere to an X-Y-Z format, where X is the act number, Y the scene, and Z the page, which starts from 1 at the for each scene. Thus, "2-3-3" indicates that the citation comes from the third page of the third scene of the second act.

and social strata” (Hatch 19), and she also uses the various speech patterns to show the depth of the marginality of the community of Polk County. For example, the sawmill camp maintains a sheltered marginal existence, in that there are very few influences from the center; the African Americans who live there rarely come into contact with European Americans, save for the Quarter Boss, Mr. Pringle. Remarkably, even this character expresses himself in the same language as the others. The first startling juxtaposition between the two languages occurs when female protagonist Leafy Lee makes her entrance: Leafy arrives from New York looking clean and well-dressed, enough for the others to think she may be a schoolteacher (Hurstons and Waring 1-2-6). She asks for directions using language that is fairly close to standard American English. The other characters—Laura B., Dicey Long, Maudella, and Bunch—perceive her speech to be indicative of a higher social status (Burton xxi), and they attempt to impress her by affecting their own speech to sound similar:

LEAFY. (Exhibiting a small piece of white paper.) Can you tell me
where I can find Miss Bunch?

LAURA B. (Undertone) She colored. Hear her put that handle to
Bunch’s name.

MISS BUNCH. (To Leafy) Who was it you wanted to see?

LEAFY. (Approaching Laura’s porch, setting down her bag and wiping
her face.) Miss Bunch. They told me at the office that she could let
me have a room.

LAURA B. Oh, then you expecting to stay here a while? (Catching
herself) Oh, where is my manners today? Wont [*sic*] you come up on

the porch and have some set down? Its [*sic*] sort of hot out there today. (Hurstun and Waring 1-2-4)

In this brief interchange, Laura B. clarifies the differences between the languages: at first, she skips certain auxiliary verbs, such as the “is” that is missing from “She colored,” but then her self-consciousness prompts her to enunciate and refine, *per se*, her speech. Interestingly, as Leafy grows more comfortable in her surroundings, she adapts to the form of speech around her: she verbally spars with her nemesis, Dicey, and the other characters express their pride in her transformation (2-3-11).

Through Leafy’s character, and even Mr. Pringle’s to an extent, Hurstun illustrates the significance of marginal communities—the power they can have over themselves and also over their centers. Because Leafy undergoes the change from outsider to insider, and Mr. Pringle seems also to have been affected by the culture of the sawmill camp, Hurstun suggests that the community’s status as marginalized does not debilitate its members, but rather that it empowers them to set their own boundaries, collective identities, and criteria for membership. She brings this sense of marginality, one that espouses “[t]he marginal as exemplary” (Kronfeld 71-78), to both her European American audiences, who are her primary audiences, and her African American audiences. While Polk County may instill a sense of pride, and perhaps even nostalgia, in the African Americans who view the play, Hurstun hoped that the European Americans would learn that their centered, dominant outlooks do not necessarily dictate societal conventions. By replicating the African American English she heard from her informants and adhering so closely to the ethnographic research that she conducted in Polk County, Florida, Hurstun effectively “parod[ies] the myth of exotic primitivism” (C. Wall,

Women of the Harlem Renaissance 29), in that she removes levels of condescension and derision from her portrayals of African American life, and she replaces it with empathy and pride.

Furthermore, by showing these audiences the ways in which the sawmill community of Polk County functions, Hurston reveals that language transcends verbal expression; as Hill quotes Hurston as stating above, an African American's "...words are action words..." This statement means that the marginal language spoken by the characters in the play conveys their behaviors, values, beliefs, and worldviews in ways that a centered language does or would not. Marginal speakers of a centered language potentially experience alienation because the language represents the very institution of centrality with which marginalized communities conflict (Bourdieu 45). Since theater does not rely solely on spoken language, but also on action (Schechner 281), Hurston's use of the interconnectedness of language and activity brings to the stage as complete a picture of culture as possible. "Her language," according to Hill, "suggests that performances, including activities such as migrant farming and railroad labor, give substance to the beliefs, ideas, and desires of individual black people and their communities" (xxiv). As mentioned earlier, Hurston's goals include educating her audiences about these communities: their traditions, their spirituality, and their social structures. An-sky, of course, shared this objective, but on behalf of Yiddish-speaking Jewish communities. Through the use of the marginal African American English, Hurston—and, for that matter, An-sky, by using Yiddish—engages in political advocacy (Hill 8-9) for African Americans, especially those from the American south. In this way, Hurston—and of course An-sky—contends with Deleuze and Guattari's second principle

of minor literature: to tie a “political immediacy” (18) to the text. Still, because Polk County did not make its debut until roughly fifty-five years after Hurston completed the script (Bass, par. 6), perhaps the time lapse deflated the sense of immediacy. Holly Bass’ review of the Arena Stage’s 2001-2002 world premiere of the play cautions that certain plot conventions of 1930s and 1940s theater that Hurston included in Polk County now seem anachronistic, but the underlying themes of resilience, spiritual strength, and community still resonate.

SECTION 4: THE LANGUAGE OF THE SUPERNATURAL: MARGINAL AND MODERNIST

As a system of nonverbal communication, the supernatural accomplishes through the correlation of signs what spoken languages are unable to do. It supplies a foundation on which An-sky and Hurston base their plays, though An-sky more so than Hurston. Serving as a metaphorical language, belief in the supernatural is a method of “articulating an alternative value system” (Hill 187-188), one that provides answers to questions that the physical world does not (Walker, Introduction 2; Hamilton 43). This contrast—between the physical world and the supernatural world—often surfaces as juxtapositions between rationality and irrationality, science and fantasy, adherence to social standards and deviation from them, observance of accepted religious practices and subversion of them. In this light, supernatural belief functions as a disenfranchised marginal belief system, while commonly accepted establishments of science, philosophy, and religion function as the disenfranchising center. Hurston, in fact, addresses this issue when she writes in “Mules and Men” that

[n]obody knows for sure how many thousands in America are warmed by the fire of hoodoo, because the worship is bound in secrecy. It is not the accepted theology of the Nation and so believers conceal their faith. Brother from Sister, husband from wife. Nobody can say where it begins or ends. Mouths don't empty themselves unless the ears are sympathetic and knowing. (178)

Here, she indicates that hoodoo, as the form of supernatural belief that is, in this case, particular to African American culture, is indeed marginal and is an alternative to the

conventional Christianity that encompasses the dominant society within which African Americans live, and to which most African Americans adhere (Long 24). Polk County certainly depicts this unmentionable nature of conjuration, but “Der Dybuk” takes a different tactic: An-sky is frank about the way in which the *shtetl* communities rely on the supernatural. Maybe the Jews whom An-sky interviewed lived so separately from their dominant Russian compatriots that they felt free to observe and practice Judaism-with-mysticism without fear of being any more ostracized than they already were.

Charles Edward Whitmore writes in The Supernatural in Tragedy that “supernatural manifestations are very apt to occur in connection with tragedy” (3). “Der Dybuk,” in which the two protagonists—Khonen and Leah—find happiness only through death, leaving loved ones and plans for the future behind in the natural world, epitomizes such a tragedy, as does Polk County. The irony to the tragic component of Polk County, however, rests in the fact that for the protagonists—Leafy, Lonnie, Big Sweet, and My Honey—the play ends well; for the plays antagonists—Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie—no experience could be more tragic as the failure of their attempts to poach the love of their unrequited love interests or avenge the wrongs committed against them. Corresponding to Whitmore’s exploration of the supernatural’s function in tragic drama, those characters that enact supernatural powers are often the ones to incur the tragedy (13-14). Because “[i]n tragedy, the [protagonists are] most often thwarted in [their] attempts to deny or destroy the boundaries of [their] world” (Keyssar 139-140), the characters turn to supernature to aid them in their transcendence of the boundaries. Whether the boundaries are of life and death or of spirituality and hedonism, An-sky’s characters cull their

supernatural abilities to effect the changes they want. Whether the boundaries are of love and hate or justice and vendetta, Hurston's engage in conjuration to achieve their goals.

By relating the supernatural as a belief system and the marginal cultures that propagate it, James McClenon's arguments take on special significance. He claims that belief in the supernatural is culturally specific (107), that different cultures evoke supernature in different ways, that the ways are contingent upon cultural outlooks, collective identities, and shared histories. In concurrence with this idea, Barbara Walker asserts that

...the events and phenomena reported or described within a group give us evidence of a particular way of perceiving the world. It provides insight into cultural identity and a greater awareness of the breadth and quality of human experiences[, as well as] what is meaningful to a group, what gives it cohesion and animation,...cultural nuance... (4)

Moreover, Bonnie Winsbro writes that "[o]ne difference recognized by many ethnic writers as distinguishing their group from the dominant culture is the difference in beliefs about the supernatural" (10). For Winsbro, ethnic writers experience marginalization by virtue of their identification as "ethnic;" this status closely correlates to Deleuze and Guattari's three criteria of minor writing, in that, in most cases, to be considered an "ethnic writer," the writer must be of a culture other than that of the dominant group. By exploring the supernatural as a language that is deterritorialized, that transcends the boundaries of the customary religions with which it partners (4), An-sky and Hurston impress their marginalized statuses upon dominant audiences; their uses of the supernatural serves to accentuate the differences between the margins and the centers.

Although supernatural belief blurs the lines between the spiritual world and the physical world, it solidifies the lines between the margin and the center (“Boundaries and Belief” 184). Hurston, perhaps more so than An-sky, lives up to this claim: Polk County incorporates aspects of the culture that dominates the African American community of the Lofton Lumber Company, as shown through Mr. Pringle’s authoritative interventions and Leafy’s introduction of pastor-officiated wedding ceremonies. Yet, An-sky all but isolates his characters to the two *shtetlekh* of Brinitz and Miropolye such that the characters experience no outside influences.

As systems of communication, as “metaphorical languages” and “ritual discourses” (Bourdieu 115), belief in and implementation of the supernatural uphold conventions, patterns, and signs (Holquist, “Language” 430) Regardless of the presence of elements of dominant society in the plays, An-sky and Hurston both use supernature to particularize the Yiddish and African American cultures about which they respectively wrote. Their plays feature a variety of forms of supernatural phenomena, including apparitions, out-of-body and near-death experiences, extrasensory perceptions, precognitive dreams, and contact with the dead (McClenon 107). Walker adds to this list by offering that, among other examples, interactions with conjurers, use of objects that affect change through superstitions, superstitions that curse or heal, and certain places reserved for sanctified meditation and worship are also key components of supernatural belief (Introduction 2-3). An-sky’s and Hurston’s integrations of these supernatural phenomena into their respective works support the assertions pertaining to cultural specificity. McClenon, as well as David J. Hufford, explains that particular cultures ascribe different significances to experiences that they may share, or, rather, the cultures

may respond differently to similar occurrences depending on their cultural perspectives (McClenon 107; Hufford 19). For example, Khonen in “Der Dybuk” considers Leah’s wedding to Menasheh worthy of a spiritual intervention, as does Polk County’s Dicey of My Honey’s wedding to Leafy, Ella Wall of Lonnie Price’s relationship with Big Sweet, and Nunkie of Big Sweet for getting him into legal trouble; yet, they attempt their interventions in different ways: Khonen via his restless spirit, and Dicey through a curse. In these ways, the plays show that the supernatural—Kabalah and Jewish mysticism in “Der Dybuk” and hoodoo in Polk County—exists for the communities portrayed, but it may culminate in different ways.

One of the factors of supernature that features differently in An-sky’s play and Hurston’s play is that of belief. Walker argues that the supernatural cannot occur or exist unless people believe in its possibility (1). Conversely, if people do not believe in the supernatural, or do not believe in the effectiveness of a particular event that is deemed as supernatural, then the supernatural does not exist for those people. The point here is that all of the characters in “Der Dybuk” believe wholeheartedly in the supernatural; they rush the possessed Leah off to Miropolye to meet with Reb Azriel’ke (An-sky 71), who eventually exorcises Khonen’s *dybuk* from her body and the community (100-105). There is no doubt in their minds that a spirit possesses Leah’s body, nor is there doubt about what to do about it. Polk County sits on the opposite end of the belief spectrum, in that none of the characters, save for Dicey and her conjure woman, Ella, believe in the power of conjure. In the very last scene of the play, Dicey throws a curse on Leafy and My Honey’s wedding party (Hurston and Waring 3-3-6). She wants the curse to cause the characters to freeze so that they cannot move. Their lack of ability to move would

allow her to attack them and steal My Honey away. Unfortunately for Dicey, the characters do not believe that the curse is effective, and they therefore run her and Ella off the grounds of the sawmill (3-3-7). In these two situations, belief is the key to the success of the supernatural interventions: Winsbro suggests that because the characters in “Der Dybuk” “believe in the existence of powers different from—and perhaps even greater than—[their] own, whether those powers are held by...[Khonen] or by [Reb Azriel’ke] or by some supernatural force” (187), they achieve powers of their own to manipulate and negotiate their environments. Inversely, because the characters in Polk County do not believe in such phenomena, Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie’s mere attempts are “rendered powerless” (187); for someone like Hurston, who believed in the power of supernature, this nullification of Ella’s supernatural strength seems contradictory.

Another factor that materializes in the two plays is the establishment of borders between Jewish mysticism and traditional Judaism and between hoodoo and conventional Christianity. The two playwrights treat these borders differently: An-sky blurs the boundaries of belief; the practice of Kabbalah appears part and parcel of traditional Jewish practices, such as religious learning, prayer services, and life cycle events. Hurston, however, keeps hoodoo extraordinarily separate from the conventional Christian events, and even those events devoid of religious subtexts, that take place in the play. The way in which Hurston dedicates Act 3, Scene 2 to a hoodoo ritual led by Ella illustrates this point; the curtain ascends and descends, literally bounding the ritual within the scene, for when the curtain rises at the start of the next scene, there is no indication of what just took place in the scene before. While the scene may be representative of the kinds of hoodoo rituals that Hurston encountered in her research (Hurston, “Tell My Horse” 475;

Hurston, “Mules and Men” 222; Long 26), its appearance in the play seems disjointed.

Hurston writes in the prefatory description of the sawmill that the women are

[r]ough, fighting, drinking, loving, reckless, but at times a flash of religion comes to the top when they are very troubled or scared. Then, for a short while, a Spiritual will well up out of them and be much-felt for the moment. Small churches have a hit-and-miss existence on the camps. They feel the need of a preacher for funerals. He is more often a man of the same stripe who reformed. (Hurston and Waring III)

Perhaps, then, because Hurston designs the sawmill as relatively unspiritual in conventionally Christian ways, instances of hoodoo would be few and far between; this sense of marginality—through religious and spiritual systems—would not necessarily exist if there were no center to challenge.

In stark contrast to the ways in which Hurston incorporates “the old, old mysticism of the world in African terms” (Hurston, “Tell My Horse” 376), An-sky forthrightly expresses how much Jewish mysticism is a part of Jewish life. He argues that the mysticism in “Der Dybuk” is wholly realistic, or, rather, that the “play...is a realistic drama about mystics” (Ansky, “From ‘A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky’” 1), which suggests that he depicted in his play the manifestations of supernatural belief that he found in his research. Neugroschel agrees with An-sky’s assessment that mysticism and traditional Jewish life go hand-in-hand: “[t]he polarity of the rational and irrational...does not exist for Jews, at least not in the way [Jews] regard existence as rational and practical on the one hand and fantastic and irrational on the other” (Foreword ix). Therefore, the way in which the characters treat spirits—such as when Frade

cautions Leah about summoning the spirits that surround them on Leah's wedding day (An-sky 47)—is ordinary or acceptable behavior, although to an audience that is unfamiliar with such beliefs or practices, the entire play may seem quite extraordinary. Indeed, this potential disconnect between the audience and the beliefs portrayed in the play is An-sky's point of entry into the world of Russian theater: he reportedly told the board members of the Jewish Ethnographic Expedition that “[Ch]asidic tales and legends were the best possible means of acquainting non-Jews with the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of Jewish culture” (ctd. in Roskies, Introduction xxv). Perhaps, through this particularly Jewish marginal “para- and extra-linguistic [form of] communication” (Hill xxi) of Jewish mysticism, An-sky shows universal themes to which non-Jews, such as the play's Russian audience, relate. On the one hand, An-sky employs the Kabbalah and mysticism to distinguish the marginal Judaism that he researched from the centered Russian audiences because of their nuanced and esoteric contributions to Jewish culture. On the other hand, An-sky uses them to bring these two communities closer together by attracting an unfamiliar audience to that which they do not know. Once the audience enters the world of “Der Dybuk,” it stays to learn and bridge its own culture with the culture depicted in the play.

The plotlines of “Der Dybuk” and Polk County share certain aspects of their respective portrayals of the supernatural. For example, both plays focus on the weddings or unions of the protagonists: Leah and Khonen in “Der Dybuk” and Leafy and My Honey and Big Sweet and Lonnie in Polk County. Because Leah's father destroys all hopes of Leah and Khonen getting married by betrothing her to Menasheh, and Leafy's arrival at the Lofton Lumber Company signals a definitive end to My Honey's

availability as a potential husband for Dicey at the same time that Big Sweet and Lonnie affirm their commitment to each other, the rebuffed characters—Khonen, Dicey, and Ella—take matters into their own hands. Khonen essentially kills himself through the exertion of communing with God; his ecstasy transforms him from a physical being to a spiritual one. Though Khonen exalts at his accomplishment of unlocking the secrets of Jewish mysticism, his spirit is homeless, without a place to rest (An-sky 52), therefore becoming a *dybuk*, possessing Leah's body as a way to prevent her marriage to Menasheh. Similarly, Dicey and Ella scheme to thwart Leafy and My Honey's wedding and to take Lonnie away from Big Sweet. She consults with Ella, and they throw a curse on the wedding party. Khonen's plan is successful, because his possession of Leah results in her death, which calls off the wedding plans, at least until Khonen's *dybuk* finds rest; in this way, Leah joins with Khonen (An-sky 104-105) forever. In contrast, Dicey's plan is unsuccessful, because the curse she throws does not work, and Leafy and My Honey marry as planned. Again, what renders Dicey's curse a failure is the fact that no one in the community believes in its effectiveness. When Big Sweet enters the woods where Hurston sets the wedding festivities, she encounters a "tableau" of people who are frozen in their positions (Hurston and Waring 3-3-7). "[H]er cry and movement bring everybody alive" (3-3-7), providing an antidote for the curse that Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie think is infallible, and the characters simply write off the trio as psychologically incapacitated.

Another similarity between the two plays is the method of conjuration that Khonen and Dicey employ. Both take to speaking with some otherworldly figure that they envision will help them. Khonen cries out to the "*tzveyfakhig-oysgedrikten shem!!!*"

(An-sky 37), the “twice-uttered name” of God that beckons the devil (An-sky 13) and such ecstasy for Khonen that he collapses on the floor. Dacey, too, calls upon the malevolent forces around her. When Hurston begins to reveal the presence of supernatural belief in the sawmill camp, Dacey calls out, in a language that seems foreign to her community, “[s]o come on, Evil! Be thou now my good!” (3-1-5). In both plays, the summons take the form of vocalized expressions, and both summons are of forces that considered immoral or unjust. Khonen clearly terrifies his companions as he rambles on about his visions and asceticism (An-sky 21-27), and Dacey repulses most of the other members of her community through her relentless jealousy and absurd—so the characters think—confidence in the supernatural (Hurston and Waring 1-1-20). Furthermore, both characters achieve ecstatic states: Khonen through his zeal for Kabbalah and mysticism (An-sky 21-23), as well as his fasting, ritual bathing, and mortifications (An-sky 37); and Dacey through the hoodoo dance performed in the woods of Act 3, Scene 2. Hurston describes the frenzy of the dance and the exaltation of the climax (Hurston and Waring 3-2-2), all in preparation for the curse that comes in the next scene. R.A. Knox’ discussion of ecstatic conjuration suggests that these two characters—alienated from their societies as they are—“seek to strengthen and legitimize their authority” (qtd. in I. Lewis 29) by communing with the spirit world. They both need some way to right the wrongs they believe have been committed against them. Because they believe that there is no earthly way to rectify their respective situations, they depend on the supernatural to help them.

Though “Der Dybuk” and Polk County share certain characteristics related to their respective playwrights’ use of the supernatural, there are some differences. One is that An-sky fills “Der Dybuk” with instances of supernatural invocation. Indeed, An-sky

conveys the aforementioned sense of supernature's role in explaining the physically and rationally inexplicable. Khonen's possession of Leah epitomizes this notion. At the start of the wedding ceremony, as the characters stand beneath the *khupah*, Leah goes into a fit of convulsions, beseeching the martyred couple that is buried in the courtyard to save her (An-sky 60-61). She calls her father, Sender, a "murderer" (Ansky, "The *Dybbuk*, or Between Two Worlds [A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts]" 31), and the Messenger decrees that Leah has been possessed by a *dybuk*. Her family and friends are unable to fathom the possibility that Leah does not want to marry Menasheh and that she grieves for her *besharter* (An-sky 61), or soul mate, Khonen. Their belief in the supernatural, in the possibility of spiritual possession, satisfies their need for an acceptable explanation: Leah voicing her opinions, desires, and concerns would be unacceptable to this community. The audience learns throughout the play that Khonen's spirit is the *dybuk*, and he accuses Sender of causing his death, as well as Leah's pending death that concludes the play. However, an alternate interpretation of the scene, one without supernatural overtones, suggests that Leah feared that her marriage to Menasheh would result in misery, loneliness, and unbearable living conditions, thereby implying that her father—through the betrothal that he orchestrated—murdered her chances of being happy. Because, however, her community ignores the existence of this explanation, denying its viability, Leah must either be crazy (61) or possessed. The latter, apparently, is easier for the community to deal with, so Sender prepares Leah for a rabbinical court and, ultimately, an exorcism. In this way, the supernatural—in this case, Jewish mysticism—offers a reason for a seemingly unreasonable event.

Another example, besides the prevalence of the supernatural in “Der Dybuk,” that sets An-sky’s play apart from Hurston’s is the character of the Messenger. An ethereal, ever-present figure, the Messenger serves as the harbinger of good or bad news, though usually bad. He reminds the other characters of the powers of God and the danger of ignoring them. Appearing out of nowhere, much to the surprise of many of the other characters, the Messenger usually provides commentary on the present situation such that the others fear or question his identity. In fact, the Messenger’s voice speaks the lines that open and close the play. Before the curtain rises, his soft, mystical voice chants:

Makhmes vos, makhmes vos

iz di neshoma

fun heckhster hoykh

arob in tifsten grunt?

—dos falen trogt

dem oyfkumen in zikh... (An-sky 7),

or,

Why, why

did the soul

from the highest height

fall to the deepest depth?

—the fall allows for

the ascension...

From the content of the speech, the speaker clearly forebodes the potential demise—and resurrection—of the characters. The connotations of the language he uses—from the

Hebrew-inflected “*makhmes vos, makhmes vos*” to the reference to the soul—indicates a preternatural, divinely-inspired, or mystical situation will ensue. Every line given by the Messenger renders the same interpretation, such as when he explains to the other characters in the synagogue how to “conjure up the Devil” (Ansky, “The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds (A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts)” 7), as described above. He, with his knowledge of the spiritual world that exists beyond the realm of understanding for all of the characters except Khonen and the rabbinical court in Miropolye, elucidates and prophesies the events of the play. The Messenger serves as the ultimate conduit between Khonen’s world of mysticism and Sender’s world of reason, translating the worlds into terms that both Khonen and Sender can understand.

Taking a different perspective on the effectiveness of supernatural as a facilitator of change, Polk County all but rejects the supernatural as a viable belief system, which is quite different from both “Der Dybuk” and Hurston’s other works. The few characters expressing any belief in the supernatural do so with an intention to affect change in their lives, much as Khonen and Sender do, but they are so ineffective that their beliefs are relatively futile. Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie are the only three identifiable characters, out of a cast of no less than thirty, with interests in hoodoo. Each feels scorned by their love interests and foils: Dicey by My Honey, who loves Leafy instead of her; Ella by Lonnie, who loves Big Sweet instead of her; and Nunkie by Big Sweet, who shook him down for illegal gambling. Sustaining Cheryl Wall’s claim that “[p]sychologically, hoodoo empowered all of its adherents; it allowed them to perceive themselves as actors in the world, not the passive reactors the dominant society held them to be” (Women of the Harlem Renaissance 172), the trio attempts to kill Leafy and Big Sweet in order to get

what they want. Hill writes that “Dicey...seeks to resolve her problems through Hoodoo...” (188) because her “bitter sensibility” (187) precludes any other options for her. She has a very negative self-image, decrying her physical appearance in at least one monologue in the play (Hurston and Waring 3-1-2), and the rest of the characters do not endeavor to assuage her concerns. Her feelings of rejection culminate in her going to the “Voodoo-man” (3-1-2) and Ella for help. In addition to the fact that the curse does not achieve the goals that Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie have, Dicey meets further rejection by the community because of their skepticism about her belief in the supernatural (Hurston and Waring 3-3-8).

Hurston’s incorporation of hoodoo is quite enigmatic; as an initiate into at least three hoodoo societies (Hurston, “Mules and Men” 195, 196, 203), she emerges as an advocate for this aspect of African American culture. Yet, the play sparsely depicts hoodoo activities, and the activities that the play does depict face cynicism and indifference. A possible explanation for this ambivalence lies in the tenet of secrecy surrounding hoodoo practices. Hurston gives just a taste of what hoodoo could do for the African American community of the sawmill; maybe she intended to maintain the confidentiality of hoodoo practitioners. She even disguises hoodoo by using the term “Voodoo” instead (Hurston and Waring 3-1-2, 3-1-7). By way of explanation, Hurston offers in “Mules and Men” that hoodoo is “pronounced by the whites” (176) as “Voodoo.” In this way, Hurston either conforms to centered practices of appropriating marginal culture and guiding it to be whatever the center wants it to be, or she patronizes the center by giving it what it wants. On the other hand, she veils hoodoo in mystery: there are no real explanations of Dicey’s “regalia” and “Mojo” (Hurston and Waring 3-1-

2), just as the stage directions for the hoodoo dance do not provide any reasoning for the items that the dancers use (3-2-1). Nunkie gives a few details about the purpose of the dance:

I sure hopes we git her good tonight. Ella Wall say it will. She say they dont [*sic*] last when she hold that kind of dance on 'em. (Animated)
Lord, if it work like she say! We dance on 'em and they all stand there in they tracks and cant move. Just like statutes [*sic*]! (Happy anticipation)
And whilst they standing there and cant [*sic*] move at all, we go in on 'em with our knives and ruin 'em! (3-1-7)

This explanation of process and motive still does not reveal the intricate workings of the dance, but Hurston's observations of such dances while studying with hoodoo doctor Kitty Brown in New Orleans clarify the trio's goals:

...the hoodoo dance is done for a specific purpose. It is always a case of death-to-the-enemy that calls forth a dance.... Promptly on the stroke of ten Death mounted his black draped throne and assumed his regal crown, Death being represented by a rudely carved wooden statue, bust length. A box was draped in black sateen... The [black] candles were set upside down and lighted on the alter, three to the left of Death, three to the right, and three before him. ("Mules and Men" 222-224)

Evidently, Hurston has the knowledge and the wherewithal to portray hoodoo with some sense of the belief system's importance to African American culture. She provides almost enough details of the hoodoo invoked by Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie for her audience

to grasp that such a belief system exists, but she does not reveal any secrets. Perhaps, that was Hurston's goal.

Although references to supernature pervade "Der Dybuk" and Polk County, An-sky's treatment of the supernatural is easier to understand than Hurston's. Though both playwrights demonstrate that belief in the supernatural is a part of the lives of their characters—and thereby the cultures portrayed—An-sky uses supernatural imagery much more than Hurston does. "Der Dybuk" illustrates the significance of the Kabbalah and other forms of Jewish mysticism in Yiddish life, and Hurston highlights hoodoo rituals, but she diminishes their impact by having her characters deny their potency. The scenes in which mysticism emerges as a topic or focal point in "Der Dybuk" are too numerous to count, while hoodoo appears in approximately three scenes in Polk County. While both playwrights undoubtedly use the supernatural phenomena that occur in the plays to underscore the distinctions between the Yiddish and African American margins and the Russian and European American respective centers, Hurston's sporadic use causes confusion about her possible goals and motivations. Maybe Hurston's own words help elucidate her possible motivations: "We [African Americans] smile and tell him or her [a European American] something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing" ("Mules and Men" 10). An-sky wanted to use the supernatural to educate his Russian center about the state of Russian Jewish life; he calls attention to it, and he relies on his ethnographic research to infuse as much accuracy in his portrayal as possible. Hurston, on the other hand, did not want to expose too much about the communities she researched; therefore, she curtailed her representation of the supernatural and played up other aspects of the material she

collected, such as songs and stories. In this way, Hurston controls what the center sees of the margin.

CONCLUSION: AN-SKY AND HURSTON AS MARGINAL MODERNISTS

Bradbury and McFarlane characterize modernist literature as

liv[ing] amidst the tools of modern relativism, skepticism, and hope for secular change; but they balance on the sensibility of transition, often holding in suspension the forces that persist from the past and those that grow from the novel present. (49)

The many of components of this characterization—ideas of change, transition, disillusionment, history, power dynamics, and instability—all relate to Sh. An-sky and Zora Neale Hurston and their works as playwrights. They both experience encounters with expectations that they may or may not wish to meet. They both utilize the political, social, cultural, and religious flux of the marginal communities they portray on stage. They both stake much of their work on the pertinence of history and the past to progress, especially progress towards enfranchisement. An-sky's and Hurston's use of their mainstream, dominant societies; their marginal communities; the cultural value systems imbued within their marginal communities; and the various language systems of their marginal communities, as well as of the centered communities enables the playwrights to instill impressions of communality, pride, sensitivity, and appreciation in their audiences, whether centered or marginal. The very idea that modernist literature "suspends forces" summarizes the exigences of "Der Dybuk" and Polk County. Center vs. margin, Bakhtin's "national" vs. "alien" and "social" languages, indoctrinated religion vs. unknown supernature: all of these oppositions surface in the plays, both substantiating them and smudging them.

An-sky and Hurston operate within and beyond the major-minor or centered-marginal dichotomies that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and Chana Kronfeld outline in their works. They navigate through the centered theatrical networks of their societies, playing to their audiences' expectations while teaching them to see beyond them. Helene Keyssar maintains that "[a]ny drama is the servant of two masters—the playwright whose vision it makes public and the public whose way of seeing the world must be met and moved" (207). The idea of moving their audiences, particularly those from the Russian and European American centers, is the key to An-sky's and Hurston's projects of developing their respective plays as didactic tools. An-sky's overarching goal is to endear his Russian audiences to Yiddish Jewish life (Roskies, Introduction xxv); he uses Yiddish as the spoken language of the play and Jewish mysticism as the *shtetl's* value system to differentiate between the characters' marginality and the audiences' centeredness. Hurston's goal is to present her research to a European American audience to open their minds to what life is like for working class African Americans (Hurston, "Dust Tracks on a Road" 713-714; Hurston ctd. in Kaplan 15); African American English is the language that her characters speak, and hoodoo, songs, and stories are the means through which they "re-create" (C. Wall, Women of the Harlem Renaissance 159) the cultural expressions Hurston noted in her research.

"Der Dybuk" and Polk County are about the role of the individual within a centered society and a marginal collective. Walker articulates that an individual often feels kinship with others who share similar experiences, but the individual faces rejection and "disavowal" if her experiences are different (4). Whether Khonen wishes to marry Leah, which is contrary to the ideal situation upheld by the community of Leah marrying

Menasheh, or Dicey wants to engage in hoodoo to extort My Honey's love, both characters face ostracism: the people of Brinitz and Miropolye regard Khonen's *dybuk* as a nuisance and hindrance, as do the people of the Lofton Lumber Company regard Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie. Not only do Khonen and his spirit die, but so does Leah, all for the good and safety of their community. Because both of these characters hold different beliefs and values from their community, they experience the very rejection about which Walker writes, so much so that they die, or rather, are killed, in order to keep their community at the *status quo*. Similarly, Dicey and her cohorts flee from the Lofton Lumber Company, never to inflict her hoodoo on the community again. The other characters, unimpressed by the trio's hoodoo antics, run them off, until Lonnie curtails the chase by degrading them. He, Big Sweet, and Laura B. acknowledge the comfort of convention (Hurston and Waring 3-3-8), and without the different Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie, they are free to resume their *status quo* activities.

This tension between the individual and the collective unfolds as a power struggle: who dominates whom? Who has authority? Who must relent? For Rosenberg, these questions are unanswerable insofar as they indicate the complications inherent to the relationships between the margins and the center, the submissive and the dominant.

She argues that the playwrights attempt to answer these questions as a way to

challenge their cultures' constructions of authority for a combination of reasons: to create new alliances, to create texts and performances that promote political messages that depend on representations of...authority, and paradoxically, to advance their own position as individual artists. (2)

In this one excerpt of Rosenberg's dissertation, she undertakes each of Deleuze and Guattari's three characteristics of minor literature, all of which certainly deal with issues of domination, power, and relenting. The formation of alliances relates to the concept of deterritorialization, in that marginal writers must align themselves with someone in order to have a readership. Both An-sky and Hurston believed that allying themselves with their respective dominant societies would reap more benefits than not, and so they consulted with members of those dominant societies—An-sky with Stanislavski and Hurston with Boas and Waring—for various reasons. Some of those reasons worked out, and some did not; regardless, both playwrights' relationships with people having the theatrical resources to produce their respective plays did not help them see their works on stage, a strange coincidence that is not necessarily attributed to their status as marginal playwrights. The politicization of the texts and performances—in that An sky and Hurston strove to alter the perceptions their respective centered audiences held of the marginal communities represented by the plays—connects to the idea of political immediacy. Rosenberg writes of Hurston that she tried “to challenge white representations of black artistry and authenticity” (16), and the same may be argued of An-sky in terms of Russian views of Jewish life. Finally, that An-sky and Hurston promote their own artistic visions counteracts Deleuze and Guattari's condescension and veritable dismissal of minor writers' abilities to stand alone. Deleuze and Guattari write that “precisely because talent isn't abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that 'master' and that could be separated from a collective enunciation” (17). An-sky and Hurston both recognize the marginal writers that preceded or surrounded them—An-sky looks to I.L.

Peretz, Sholem Aleykhem, and other writers (Roskies, Introduction xiv) for inspiration; Hurston engages Langston Hughes (Kaplan 1), Countee Cullen (6), and Alain Locke (2), among others, as colleagues and critics—yet they did not find what they were looking for; each provides a different perspective on the marginality of their respective cultures, one that is innovative and distinct from the other marginal voices around them.

Indeed, “Der Dybuk” and Polk County work well within the marginal modernist framework because of their multi-leveled navigation of their respective centers. An-sky faced marginalization on three counts: by the Russian center from which he hoped to achieve theatrical success and whom he hoped to educate; by the Yiddish-speaking, traditionally Jewish communities that he interviewed, because he long ago renounced his connections to these communities; and by the possibly Yiddish-speaking assimilated Jewish communities who lived, like An-sky, in the midst of the Russian center. He could never be fully accepted by Russian society because he was Jewish; he could never be fully accepted by the *shtetlekh* because he once rejected them; and he could never be fully accepted by the people who wanted to assimilate because he was too interested in *shtetl* life. Roskies writes that An-sky brought to Yiddish literature what no other Yiddish writer at the time even conceived of:

To unravel Ansky’s life and letters from the outside in, following him out to the Russian- and back to the Yiddish-language sphere, one must look to his sketches and stories. Drawing heavily on autobiography, they provide stark and authentic insights into the conflict between generations that strained Jewish society to the breaking point....Ansky was the first in a distinguished line of modern Jewish writers to draw the process of

homecoming against a landscape that was at once psychological and historical. (Roskies, Introduction xxix)

He synthesized the three communities that he believed to dominate him and his identity in some way by extrapolating what each would find commonly significant. For the Russian socialist center, the issues of community, collectivity, and liberation were important; An-sky found those issues in the Yiddish-speaking, traditionally Jewish communities that he researched; and the possibly Yiddish-speaking assimilated Jews could identify with the issues through a sense of nostalgia—“echoes of the past” (Meyer, “Jewish Literature and Culture”)—for their past lifestyles and heritage.

Similarly, Hurston never quite fit into the communities around her. As a woman and an African American, Hurston needed to penetrate many barriers related to sexism and racism that characterize European American society and that surface in African American communities (O’Brien 95-96). Most European Americans did not understand her drive to portray African Americans with integrity to their cultural practices. Furthermore, many also did not understand why Hurston, a woman, would work in capacities other than secretarial or service (Hurston, “Dust Tracks on a Road” 666). Her writings dealt mostly with issues faced by African American women, “including the impact of white concepts of beauty and...black women’s identities” (Rosenberg 16). Polk County is a perfect example of the influences on Hurston’s focus on championing African American women’s conceptions of themselves, in that her collaboration with Waring may have impacted the roles of Leafy, Big Sweet, and Dicey. Leafy and Big Sweet, both light-skinned with long, straight hair (Hurston and Waring IV, 2-1-20) are the two female characters who achieve success through their weddings to the men whom

they love. Dacey, on the other hand, is short, homely, dark-skinned, with kinky hair (IV, 1-1-30, 2-1-3), and she fails at everything she tries. The binaries that the characters represent—beautiful, happy, proper, and successful versus ugly, miserable, deviant, and failed—revolve around centered standards of beauty and social conduct. Hurston “lies in a long line of African American female playwrights whose works disturb the *status quo*...by publicly exposing in a distinct female rhetoric the horrors of racism and sexism in America...” (Marsh-Lockett 5).

Unfortunately, Hurston met similar sexist and racist sentiments within African American communities. O’Brien suggests that men of African descent who suffer domination by people of European descent internalize those dynamics and enact them towards women who are in even lower positions than they (98-99). Because African American men, in the case of Hurston’s life, believe—either consciously or subconsciously—themselves to be powerless or without control of their day-to-day lives, they attempt to control the African American women around them. Hurston experienced such dominance throughout her writing career: for example, her early publishing career depended on Alain Locke’s generosity in publishing her short stories and one act plays in Stylus, Howard University’s literary magazine. He often criticized her openly for being politically inactive (Kaplan 634); perhaps, he was unable to recognize the political commentary situated in her writing. Indeed, she uses Polk County to point out the possible roles that African American women could have within their own communities, rather than the deferential roles Hurston believed to be typically depicted. The protagonists are all women, with My Honey, Lonnie, and Nunkie playing secondary roles to Leafy’s, Big Sweet’s, and Ella’s, and they are strong women with convictions, goals,

and courage to try, even if they do not meet success, like Dicey and Ella. Cheryl Wall offers in Women of the Harlem Renaissance that "...Hurston confronted anew the ways in which women were silenced in the performances she recorded, the ways in which sexism in the African American community stunted female (and male) potential..." (31). Clearly, Hurston exemplifies and gives voice to a doubly marginalized segment of African American communities: African American women.

Hurston's use of the supernatural—hoodoo—aids her in the strengthening of images of African American women. Dicey and Ella take matters into their own hands by conjuring supernatural forces, through the curse and Dicey's sanctified objects, indicating how strong they could be. Of course, this process falls flat when the curse fails, and Dicey and Ella run off. This seeming contradiction—that that which brings strength also brings downfall—certainly leads to curiosity about Hurston's purposes. Cheryl Wall proposes that

[f]or Hurston, hoodoo was an intrinsic part of that 'which the soul lives by'; [*sic*] it was a means by which African-Americans could exert control over their interior lives. Metaphysically decentered and clerically nonhierarchical, hoodoo offered some women a more expansive vision of themselves than Christianity. (Women of the Harlem Renaissance 172)

Dicey and Ella, as the bad characters, could not come out on top of the situations in which they found themselves; Leafy and Big Sweet, the good characters, must prevail; however, Leafy succumbs to the ideas that Cheryl Wall puts forth, in that she submits to Christian powers by being married by a male cleric, rather than the common law

marriage traditionally practiced by the sawmill community. The preacher, though “an old-time darkie,” according to Hurston’s character description, represents the center through his role as authority figure and his adoption of Eurocentric, Christian religiosity. While Hill’s assertion that African Americans modify behaviors “manifested among members of the dominant culture[,]” such as having a preacher-officiated wedding, as a “response...to dominant environmental influences” (8), the women’s marginality glares in the light of Hurston’s own difficulty in reconciling her marginality as an African American, a woman, and a practitioner of hoodoo.

An-sky, too, had difficulty resolving the dilemmas related to cohering the various facets of his identity. Like Hurston, he encouraged the relationship of culturally specific folklore and universal themes, though in “Der Dybuk” he focuses on the intersections of past and the present, tradition and modernity, and the dead and the living. Hoberman offers that “[t]he power of the past is continually made tangible, the living mingling with the dead—manifested as spirits, as hobgoblins, and as monuments” (29), indicating the degree to which An-sky invested in Kabbalah and mysticism as crucial contributors to his messages. Through these themes, he sends the imperative message of the necessity of personal sacrifice for the sake of collective survival (Ansky, “From A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky” 1). The socialism with which Ansky associated implored each individual to work toward the betterment of the collective, and “Der Dybuk,” almost exaggerates this point through the motif of supernature that weaves throughout the play. Indeed, “[f]or all the emphasis on Jewish mysticism, this drama is less religious than tribal” (Hoberman 32), meaning that An-sky does not concern himself with the religiosity of his characters or their beliefs, but instead with the community-aspects of their belief system. He knew

all too well that the unmitigated rejection of Yiddish Jewish life—a rejection that he once encouraged—would begin an annihilation of his past; An-sky believed that supernatural belief holds the key to keeping cultures together, and he portrays such unity when, for instance, the people of Brinitz sustain the same beliefs as the people in Miropolye.

By conveying nostalgia for his roots, for the traditional sensibilities with which he grew up, An-sky depicts not only the marginality of his community, but also his deep appreciation for it, for the way in which his language is marginal, his religion is marginal, his folk is marginal. Cheryl Wall writes about Hurston that “anthropology excited a powerful appeal, because it gave her a profoundly altered view of her past....the cultural relativity of anthropology freed Hurston from the need to defend her subjects’ alleged inferiority. She could discard explanations drawn from racial mythology....” (Women of the Harlem Renaissance 151); the same is applicable to An-sky regarding his ethnographic efforts to record Yiddish Jewish folklore. His ethnographic work gave him, as Hurston’s anthropological research gave her, historical, cultural, social, and political bases for understanding his heritage, even if he once rejected it. As a result of their deeper understanding of their respective communities, An-sky and Hurston turned to theater as the forum through which to communicate their awareness. Nahma Sandrow writes that “the play affirmed [for Ansky and his audiences] that Jewish cultural roots existed and were...beautiful” (219); Hill writes that Polk County served as a means for Hurston to “contribute to the world at large’s understand of African Americans” (55). In other words, theater and other forms of dramatic performance provide glimpses into the values of cultures—marginal or not: their social structures, their ways of life, their

histories and historical developments, and An-sky and Hurston showed these aspects of community through “Der Dybuk” and Polk County.

An-sky and Hurston most definitely satisfy Kronfeld’s ideas of marginal modernism. In fact, Kronfeld may even consider “Der Dybuk” and Polk County to be hyper-marginal and hyper-modernist (5), in that the plays come from and articulate such complicated aspects of identity, community, and power. The relationships between the margins and the centers, as portrayed in the plays, offer models for thinking about ways to bring the two poles closer together. Moreover, the plays insinuate that the distances between the margins and centers are not that great; authority goes to the people who take it—Sender, Khonen, Reb Azriel’ke, Big Sweet, Ella, the preacher; the center influences the margin through interpretation, adaptation, and assimilation; and major languages—spoken or otherwise—point to deficiencies in minor languages. Of course, the inverse of each of these clarifications also works to blend the margins and the centers: submission occurs when people shun their individual power; the margin influences the center; and minor languages point to deficiencies in major languages. In terms of calling attention to these issues, An-sky and Hurston turn to theater, which is

[t]he place where a nation thinks in front of itself. And in that context all sorts of matters assume political importance, for ultimately, there is a close link between the general beliefs of a society, its concept of proper behavior and good manners, its views of sexual morals, and the political climate of a nation. Changes in manners and mores may ultimately change the very temper of politics (Esslin qtd. in Marsh-Lockett 3).

Without An sky's and Hurston's theatrical endeavors, perhaps Yiddish Jewish and African American cultures, respectively, would not have had the same voices for social awareness. The playwrights "...provide...a rationale for the unexplainable; give...direction and purpose to individual lives and enhances the experience of living itself" (Walker 6). Particularly for their marginal cultures, this message seems the most important of them all.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF “DER DYBUK”

The basic storyline revolves around the male protagonist, Khonen, a *yeshivah bukher*-, or dutiful student of Jewish texts-, turned-tragic hero. He dabbles in Jewish mysticism, which entails “belief in direct, intuitive communion with God” (Abrahams 167), and Kabbalah in order to facilitate his ascent to Paradise. Khonen equates obtaining the love and devotion of the female protagonist, Leah, with exaltation. Unfortunately, Leah’s father, Reb Sender of Brinitz, has a much different vision for his daughter’s future, and he betroths her to Menasheh, the son of a wealthy family in a neighboring town. Distraught over the news of losing his beloved to another man, Khonen ultimately causes his own death by calling upon the forces of the devil to help him. In this final moment of Act I, he collapses, dead from the ecstatic exertion of calling the holy name of God twice as a means of conjuration. As Leah, who is also distraught over the death of her true love, is led to the *khupah*, or marriage canopy, she suffers a personality- and life-altering experience, resembling sudden dementia. She convulses, betrays her father’s agreement with Menasheh’s family, and behaves contrary to her free will. The wedding party decides that her unseemly behavior must be due to possession by a *dybuk*, which is then determined to be Khonen’s bitter, obsessive, and restless spirit, looking to avenge his unfulfilled love. The *mishulekh*, or Messenger—a portentous, prophet-like narrator-figure—defines a *dybuk* as a soul of a dead person that roams the world to find a living body through which to purify itself.

As a result of the possession, Sender returns to the city of his *yeshivah*, or school that specializes in the learning of Jewish liturgy and commentary, to consult with Reb Azriel’ke of Miropolye. Together, and in further consultation with other rabbinic

intelligentsia, they determine that Khonen is the son of Nisn, Sender's best friend and study partner. Sender realizes that he broke a promise that he made to Nisn: as young men, they agreed to betroth their future children. Nisn died soon after Khonen's birth, and Sender subsequently forgot about the agreement. He claims, however, that his better judgment told him that Khonen, who moves to Brinitz and eats meals at Sender's house, would be the ideal husband for his daughter, yet, contrary to this instinct, he seeks a wealthy family into which his daughter will marry. Consequently, Khonen, as a *dybuk*, avenges the broken promise by possessing Leah. Reb Azriel'ke, through the decision of the rabbinical court, deems the possession an unfit punishment for Sender's sin, and anathematizes Khonen's spirit from Leah. The exorcism, however, does not solve their problems: as Khonen's soul leaves Leah's body, a wedding march plays, and she deserts the sofa on which she lies in order to "fuse" (104) with Khonen. The play does not make clear, however, if the fusion symbolizes Leah's death, her unification with Khonen, or her marriage to Menasheh, for which Reb Azriel'ke and the others prepare while Leah communes with Khonen, thereby concluding the story with ethereal ambiguity. The play ends just as it begins, with an unseen, ethereal voice making the final speech, although An-sky makes clear in the stage directions that the Messenger recites the lines (105).

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF POLK COUNTY

Interspersed with approximately thirty musical numbers, the play details life on a sawmill camp in Polk County, Florida. The play opens with Lonnie Price waking up the other workers at the Lofton Lumber Company. The men and women, as they wake, sing, chant, and play games, which sets the tone of the rest of the play. As the camp comes alive, Big Sweet confronts Nunkie about money that he swindled out of Lonnie, her boyfriend. Eventually, the Quarters Boss, Mr. Pringle, intercedes, first by reprimanding Big Sweet for her meanness, and then by taking her side and expels Nunkie from the camp. Dicey then enters, proclaiming her obsessive love for My Honey, who repeatedly tells her that he does not want to be with her, thus laying the foundation for the play because her jealousy and color consciousness lead her to the conjuration that ultimately brings about her demise. When Leafy Lee arrives to the sawmill camp in search of “authentic” blues performances (Hurston and Waring 1-2-11), she spoils Dicey’s plans because My Honey falls in love with Leafy. Big Sweet and Leafy become fast friends, and they soon teach each other about the worlds from which they come, such as Big Sweet’s sexual conquests and Leafy’s “proper” (1-3-2) behavior, which includes the asking for a woman’s “hand” and the pastor-officiated weddings that ensure later. Big Sweet also faces disciplinary action from Mr. Pringle for fights in which she claims she was not involved.

As Leafy and My Honey announce their engagement, trouble ensues for Big Sweet and Lonnie in the forms of Mr. Pringle’s admonishments of her behavior towards other people on the camp and conjure woman Ella Wall’s competition for Lonnie. Big Sweet, Lonnie, and the other characters determine that Ella and Dicey are sabotaging the

couple's happiness by lying to Mr. Pringle and falsely accusing Big Sweet, but they cannot really avenge the sabotage because that would only intensify Big Sweet's problems. Big Sweet and Lonnie proclaim their devotion to and support of each other, stating that their love is too big to encapsulate it in marriage. Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie, meanwhile, continue with their interferences with Big Sweet and Lonnie's and Leafy and My Honey's happiness. They rely on Ella's hoodoo powers to curse the wedding party so that Dicey can take My Honey when no one else can rescue him. Ella begins this plan with a conjure dance, a killing dance (Hurstons, "Mules and Men" 222-224), that takes place secretly in the woods. One hour later, Leafy and My Honey prepare for their wedding; as the preacher enters, Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie raid the party and throw a curse that is to "plant [the characters in their] "tracks" (Hurstons and Waring 3-3-6). Big Sweet approaches, breaking the trance-like shock of the other characters, and the trio flees. After agreeing to let the proper authority of Mr. Pringle punish Dicey, Ella, and Nunkie, Leafy and My Honey finally marry. A rainbow descends at the close of the play, and Leafy, My Honey, Big Sweet, and Lonnie climb on as it carries them off.

WORKS CITED

- Abrahams, Israel. Chapters on Jewish Literature. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1899.
- An-sky, Sh. "Tzvishtn Tzvey Velten (Der Dybuk). A Dramatische Legende in Fier Akten." Gezamelte Shriften: Dramen. Tzveyter Band. Nyu York: Ferlag "An-sky," 1921. 3-109.
- Ansky, S. "From 'A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky.'" The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader. Ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. 1-2.
- . The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds: Translated from the Yiddish with a Biographical and Bibliographical Note and Introduction. Ed. and trans. S. Morris Engel. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1974.
- . "The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds (A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts)." The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader. Ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. 3-52.
- . "The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds: A Dramatic Legend in Four Acts." Trans. Golda Werman. The Dybbuk and Other Writings by S. Ansky. Ed. David G. Roskies. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. 1-49.
- Baker, Houston A., Jr. Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Bakhtin, Mikhaïl Mikhailovich. "Discourse in the Novel." The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981. 259-422.

- Bass, Holly. "Better Late Than Never: After 60 Years, Zora Neale Hurston's Flavorful County Comes to Life." American Theatre. 19.6 (Jul/Aug2002): 50-52.
LexisNexis. July 16, 2003.
- Boas, Franz. Foreword. "Mules and Men." By Zora Neale Hurston. Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: The Library of America, 1995. 3.
- "Boas, Franz." The Columbia Encyclopedia. Sixth ed. 2003. Columbia University Press. March 14, 2004. <www.bartleby.com/65/bo/Boas-Fra.html>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. Language and Symbolic Power. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Boyd, Valerie. Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Bradbury, Malcolm. "The Cities of Modernism." Modernism: 1890-1930. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 96-104.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane. "The Name and Nature of Modernism." Modernism: 1890-1930. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 19-55.
- Burton, Jennifer. Introduction. Zora Neale Hurston, Eulalie Spence, Marita Bouner, and Others: The Prize Plays and Other One-Acts Published in Periodicals. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1996. xix-lx.

- Dauber, Jeremy. "What's in a Ghost Story? Between History and Allegory in a 'A Dybbuk Tale.'" *Jewish Literature and History: An Interdisciplinary Conversation*. Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies. University of Maryland, College Park. April 25, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. "What Is a Minor Literature?" Chapter 3. Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. 16-27.
- "Distance Calculator." Bali and Indonesia on the Net. Indo.com. 2002. June 25, 2003. <www.indo.com/distance/>.
- Engel, S. Morris. Introduction. The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds: Translated from the Yiddish with a Biographical and Bibliographical Note and Introduction. Ed. S. Morris Engel. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1974. 15-29.
- . Preface. The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds: Translated from the Yiddish with a Biographical and Bibliographical Note and Introduction. Ed. S. Morris Engel. Los Angeles: Nash Publishing, 1974. 7-13.
- "A Geography of Modernism." Modernism: 1890-1930. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 95.
- Gittleman, Sol. From Shtetl to Suburbia: The Family in Jewish Literary Imagination. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York: Anchor Books, 1959.

- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Culture." Critical Terms for Literary Study. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. 225-232.
- Hamalian, Leo and James V. Hatch, eds "Zora Neale Hurston." The Roots of African American Drama: An Anthology of Early Plays, 1858-1938. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990. 186-190.
- Hamilton, Virginia. Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales. New York: The Blue Sky Press, 1995.
- Hatch, James V. "Two hundred Years of Black and White Drama." Introduction. The Roots of African American Drama: An Anthology of Early Plays, 1858-1938. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990. 15-37.
- Hill, Lynda Marion. Social Rituals and the Verbal Art of Zora Neale Hurston. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1996.
- Hoberman, J. "Repossessing The Dybbuk: How an Erotic Tale of Demonic Possession Came to be the Quintessential Work of Jewish Modernism." Pakn Treger. Spring 1998. 21-35.
- Holquist, Michael. "Centripetal-Centrifugal." Glossary. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. By Mikhaïl Mikhailovich Bakhtin. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981. 425.
- . Introduction. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. By Mikhaïl Mikhailovich Bakhtin. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981. xv-xxxiv.

- . "Heteroglossia." Glossary. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. By Mikhaïl Mikhailovich Bakhtin. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981. 428.
- . "Language." Glossary. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. By Mikhaïl Mikhailovich Bakhtin. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981. 430-431.
- Homberger, Eric. "Chicago and New York: Two Versions of American Modernism." Modernism: 1890-1930. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 151-161.
- Hufford, David J. "Beings Without Bodies: An Experience-Centered Theory of the Belief in Spirits." Out of the Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural. Ed. Barbara Walker. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995. 11-45.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. "Dust Tracks on a Road." Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: The Library of America, 1995. 557-808.
- . "Mules and Men." Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: The Library of America, 1995. 1-267.
- . "Tell My Horse." Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: The Library of America, 1995. 269-555.
- Hurston, Zora Neale and Dorothy Waring. Polk County: A Comedy of Negro Life on a Sawmill Camp with Authentic Negro Music in Three Acts. New York: Stephen Kelen-d'Oxylion: 1944.

- Kaplan, Carla, coll. and ed. Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters. New York: Doubleday-Random House, Inc., 2002.
- Keyssar, Helene. The Curtain and the Veil: Strategies in Black Drama. New York: Burt Franklin and Co., 1981.
- Kronfeld, Chana. On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Krutikov, Mikhol. "Sh. An-sky un Zayn 'Dybuk': Naye Faktn un Hesherus [Research]." Forverts. Yanuar 3, 2003. 19.
- Lampert, Eugene. "Modernism in Russia 1893-1917." Modernism: 1890-1930. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane. New York: Penguin Books, 1976. 134-150.
- "Language." Miriam Webster Online Dictionary. 2004. February 28, 2004. <www.merriam-webster.com>.
- Lewis, David Levering. Introduction. The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader. Ed. David Levering Lewis. New York: Penguin Books, 1994. xiii-xli. ---. When Harlem was in Vogue. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Lewis, I.M. Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Long, Charles H. "Perspectives for a Study of African-American Religion in the United States." African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture. Eds. Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau. New York: Routledge, 1997. 21-35.

- Marsh-Lockett, Carol P. "Other Scribbling Women: African American Female Dramatists." Critical Introduction. Black Women Playwrights: Visions on the American Stage. Ed. Carol P. Marsh-Lockett. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 3-12.
- Meyer, Michael. "Jewish Literature and Culture in Germany and England." Jewish Literature and History: An Interdisciplinary Conversation. Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies. University of Maryland, College Park. April 25, 2004.
- Meyer, Michael A. The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967.
- McClenon, James. "Supernatural Experience, Folk Belief, and Spiritual Healing." Out of the Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural. Ed. Barbara Walker. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995. 107-121.
- Neugroschel, Joachim. "Ansky's *The Dybbuk* and the Yiddish Imagination." Introduction. The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader. Ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. xi-xix.
- . Foreword. The Great Works of Jewish Fantasy and Occult. Comp. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel. New York: The Overlook Press, 1985. vii-x.
- O'Brien, Louise. "Buchi Emecheta and the 'African Dilemma.'" Journal of Commonwealth Literature. 36.2 (Aug2001): 95-106.
- Petrovsky-Shtern, Yohanan. Personal interview. April 26, 2004.

- . "'We are Too Late:' Ansky and the Paradigm of No Return." Unpublished essay. 2002.
- Pierpont, Claudia Roth. "The Measure of America: How a Rebel Anthropologist Waged War on Racism." The New Yorker. March 8, 2004. LexisNexis. April 17, 2004.
- Rosenberg, Rachel A. "Dramas of Collaboration in Twentieth-Century Women's Theatre and Fiction." Diss. Northwestern University, 1997.
- Roskies, David G. Introduction. The Dybbuk and Other Writings by S. Ansky. Ed. David G. Roskies. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. xi-xxxvi.
- . Notes. The Dybbuk and Other Writings. Ed. David G. Roskies. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. 211-218.
- Sandrow, Nahma. Vagabond Stars: A World History of Yiddish Theater. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- Schechner, Richard. "Drama Performance." Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-centered Handbook. Ed. Richard Bauman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. 272-281.
- Schuler, Catherine. "Stanislavskii." E-mail to the author. March 5, 2004.
- Stanislavski, Constantin. My Life in Art. 1924. Trans. J.J. Robbins. New York: Theatre Arts Book, 1948.
- Walker, Barbara. Introduction. Out of the Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural. Ed. Barbara Walker. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995. 1-7.
- Wall, Cheryl. Women of the Harlem Renaissance. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995.

- Wall, Cheryl A. "Chronology." Hurston: Folklore, Memoir, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1995. 961-980.
- . "Notes on the Texts." Hurston: Folklore, Memories, and Other Writings. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New York: The Library of America, 1995. 981-1001.
- Waring, Dorothy. American Defender: The Biography of Honorable Samuel Dickstein. New York: Robert Speller, 1935.
- Washington, Mary Helen. "Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman Half in Shadow." Introduction. I Love Myself When I am Laughing...and Then Again When I am Looking Mean and Impressive: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader. Ed. Alice Walker. New York: The Feminist Press, 1979. 7-25.
- Weinreich, Uriel. "Pronunciation Table." Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. xxi.
- Whitmore, Charles Edward. The Supernatural in Tragedy. 1915. Mamaroneck, N.J.: Paul P. Appel, 1971.
- Winsbro, Bonnie. "Belief, Ethnicity, and Self-Definition." Introduction. Supernatural Forces: Belief, Difference, and Power in Contemporary Works by Ethnic Women. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993. 3-25.
- . "Boundaries and Belief." Conclusion. Supernatural Forces: Belief, Difference, and Power in Contemporary Works by Ethnic Women. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993. 181-190.

RACHEL LEAH JABLON

2107 Susquehanna Hall
Comparative Literature Program
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

TEL: 301-405-2853
FAX: 301-405-2881
rjablon@umd.edu

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Comparative Literature, University of Maryland, expected May 2006
- M.A., Comparative Literature, University of Maryland, May 2004
- B.A., *Cum Laude*, University of Pennsylvania, May 1999

THESES

- M.A.: "Playing for the 'Center:' 'Marginal Modernism' in Sh. An-sky's 'Der Dybuk' and Zora Neale Hurston's Polk County"
Director: Miriam Isaacs
- Senior Honors: "A Mother's Love: Infanticide and Self-Definition in Toni Morrison's Beloved and Cynthia Ozick's The Shawl"
Director: Kathryn Hellerstein

ACADEMIC HONORS

- The Journal of Popular Culture Award for Best Graduate Student Essay (2004)
- George Wasserman Scholarship (2003)
- Yiddish of Greater Washington Summer Study Scholarship (2003; 2001)
- Best Presentation for Panel, Graduate Research Interaction Day (GRID) 2003

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- "Witnessing as *Shivah*; Memoir as *Yizkor*: The Formulation of Holocaust Survivor Literature as *Gemilut Khasadim*." Forthcoming in The Journal of Popular Culture.
- "Teaching Ethnic American Literary Anthologies." Academic Exchange Quarterly. 7:4 (Winter 2003). 107-111.

Reviews

- “Pesakh Fiszman at the January Café K.” Tsum Punkt—To The Point: Bilingual and Bimonthly Publication of Yiddish of Greater Washington. 5:3 (Feb.-Mar. 2004). 8.
- “Parsons and Company Rock...But Kids are Not Alright in Premiere.” Dance Insider. Ed. Paul Ben-Itzak. September 23, 2002.

Poetry

- “Ponar.” Tsum Punkt—To The Point: Bilingual and Bimonthly Publication of Yiddish of Greater Washington. 5:3 (Feb.-Mar. 2004). 4.
- “Sventsiyan.” Tsum Punkt—To The Point: Bilingual and Bimonthly Publication of Yiddish of Greater Washington. 5:2 (2003).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Witnessing as *Shivah*; Memoir as *Yizkor*: The Formulation of Holocaust Survivor Literature as *Gemilut Khasadim*”
Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association 2004 National Conference; San Antonio, TX (April 7-10, 2004)
Won The Journal of Popular Culture Award for Best Graduate Student Essay
- “Elie Wiesel’s Night as Paradigm: Holocaust Survivor Memoir as *Gemilut Khasadim*”
GRID 2003; University of Maryland; College Park, MD (April 10-11, 2003)
Won “Best Presentation” for Panel
- “Does Norton Have a Preference? A Look at Norton’s Two Ethnic American Anthologies”
Disciplining Knowledge; Rutgers University; New Brunswick, NJ (February 14, 2003)
- “An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Norton’s Ethnic Anthologies”
GRID 2002; University of Maryland; College Park, MD (April 11, 2002)
- “The Academic Imperialism of Norton Anthologies: Canonization and ‘Teaching the Conflicts’”
Expanding the Interdisciplinary Conversation; University of Utah; Salt Lake City, UT (October 26-27, 2002)
- “Supporting Freshman Writing Courses with the Information Literacy Tutorial”
Teaching with Technology; University of Maryland; College Park, MD (April 5, 2002)

READINGS

- Poetry, Prose, and Songs by Yiddish Women Writers
Yiddish of Greater Washington; Rockville, MD (January 20, 2002)

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

- Jewish Literature and History: An Interdisciplinary Conversation
University of Maryland; College Park, MD (April 25-26, 2004)
- From *Bimah* to *Bine*: Spirituality, Performance, and the Jewish Stage
University of Maryland; College Park, MD (May 4, 2003)
Served as Media Technician

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Popular Culture Association
- American Culture Association
- Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society, Sigma Circle
- Phi Sigma Iota International Foreign Language Honor Society, Alpha Xi Chapter
- Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, UMCP Chapter
- Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities (2002)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Comparative Literature Program, University of Maryland, College Park

- 235: Introduction to Literatures of Africa and the African Diaspora
- 214: Film, Form, and Culture

English Department, University of Maryland, College Park

- 101: Introduction to Academic Writing
- 101M Introduction to Academic Writing/Markets and Society Cluster

Hillel at the University of Maryland, College Park

- Yiddish: Introduction to Yiddish Language and Culture

Intergroup Dialogue Program, University of Maryland, College Park

- Muslim Women-Jewish Women Dialogue
- Black-Jewish Dialogue

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AND READ

- Hebrew (fluent)
- Yiddish (conversational)
- French (proficient)

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

- Identity Formation, Cultural Studies, and Performance Studies
- U.S., Ethnic, and African American Literature and Folklore
- Jewish Literature and Folklore
- Theater Criticism
- Film Studies

SAMPLING OF GRADUATE COURSEWORK

- 20th Century African American Literature and Folklore
- Roots Music
- Yiddish Language
- Supernatural in Jewish Literature
- Yiddish Theater, Film, and Culture
- Ethics of Representation and Literature of the Holocaust
- Staging Culture
- Identity and Performance

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Graduate Student Member, Academic Planning Advisory Committee (2003-4)
- Graduate Student Representative, Stamp Student Union Advisory Board (2003-4)
- Graduate Student Senator, University Senate (2003-4)
- Graduate Student Member, Standing Committee on Student Affairs, University Senate (2003-4)
- UMCP Representative, University System of Maryland Student Council (2002-4)
- Graduate Student Member, Standing Committee on Student Conduct, University Senate (2002-4)
- Member, Honor Board, Student Honor Council, Office of Judicial Programs (2001-3)
- Vice President for Legislative Affairs, Graduate Student Government (2001-2)
- Vice President, Comparative Literature Graduate Organization (2001-3)
- Comparative Literature Representative to the Assembly, Graduate Student Government (2000-4)