Translating Czernowitz: The "Non-Place" of East Central Europe

Leslie Morris
University of Minnesota

"'Czernowitz really exists, and not simply as a topos of a literary world'" (Menninghaus 345).[1] This proclamation by historian Karl Schlögel serves as both the point of departure and the point of contention for this essay: the opposition that he establishes demands further examination of the relationship between real and imaginary literary and geographical spaces, and between text and memory. I will address the rhetorical and textual re-creations of Czernowitz as "place" on contemporary maps of Jewish mourning and, specifically, in the work of the Czernowitz-born poet Rose Ausländer.

Czernowitz poses an interesting problem for contemporary literary and cultural theory that seeks to map the fault lines between literary text, cultural and historical memory, and geographical and textual sites of memory. This legendary Jewish city, once part of the Habsburg Empire and now in Ukraine, is present as a textual site of memory, embodying the absence of Jewish culture in east Central Europe. Yet at the same time it is, paradoxically, off the map of the new wave of Jewish tourism in Eastern Europe.[2] Marked in Paul Celan's *Meridian* speech by a "nervous" finger on a map of a place that no longer exists—hence a "non-place"—Czernowitz carries the trace and the echo of a largely literary and textual past.[3] By examining the layers of repetition and echo in the evocation of Czernowitz as place within the "non-place" of east Central Europe, this essay sets out to define several new "tasks" for the literary "translation" of a place whose contours and boundaries have shifted in time, a place that is both heavily remembered and, at the same time, forgotten.

Rather than inscribe the city into its historical and geographical "real," as Schlögel urges, as a means of countering the literary "real" of a topos, I turn to Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, a pivotal text about the interplay between city spaces and poetic spaces, in order to explore the contours of Czernowitz as city, text, place, and non-place. Drawing on Calvino, I situate Czernowitz as a "non-place" that embodies the "redundant," because it repeats itself and, in the repetition, creates the echo of memory so that "the city can begin to exist" (Calvino 19). It is the repetition of the trope, the memory, and the idea of Czernowitz in contemporary German-Jewish discourse about loss and mourning, and particularly in Rose Ausländer's poetry that is the focus here.

Thus my point of departure is a provocation: namely, that Czernowitz has emerged in popular and literary discourse about vanished Jewish life in the former Habsburg lands as an "invisible" city. Like Calvino's exploration of the imaginary spaces of the city, Czernowitz comes into being within a textuality that has shaped and constructed its meaning in the years since 1945-1989. It is a city that, as is the case with the cities in Calvino's text, exists in the imaginary, as a repetition of signs. To see Czernowitz as part of a system of signs is not to argue that it is solely imaginary, since it did, of course, truly exist—as the capital of the Bukowina and the city revered as both the "Paris of the east" and "little Vienna," the city in the Bukowina with the largest Jewish population before the war, and the renowned site of the first and most significant congress on Yiddish, in 1908.[4] And it still exists; one can, with whatever difficulty, go there, even if the *there* is now part of Ukraine and not Romania or the former Habsburg Empire.

Axiomatic for a remembrance of east Central European spaces as the "Atlantis" of eastern European Jewish experience, Czernowitz has become an "idealized cipher for the absence that lies at the heart of the fervor of memorialization of past Jewish life," as Winfried Menninghaus has recently noted (348). Menninghaus' critique is of the renewed nostalgia for Czernowitz, in which the city is celebrated as a multilingual, multicultural land of "books and thinkers," as both Paul Celan and Rose Ausländer famously characterized it. Arguing that Czernowitz thus serves as a German fantasy of an imagined Hapsburg past, Menninghaus calls attention to the ways

in which nostalgia for the golden age of Czernowitz demands at the same time a repression of the memory of the pernicious anti-Semitism in the Bukowina that flourished, and continues to spread today (345).[5]

The repetition of Czernowitz within contemporary discourse about the absence of Jewishness in east Central Europe does more than simply recall another, more glorious historical era. The panegyric to Czernowitz is part of the project of commemoration in the post-Holocaust landscape of Europe, in which Czernowitz is revived as a center of humanism and, more significantly, German *Kultur*. Parallel to this reconstruction of Czernowitz as site of German *Kultur* and *Bildung*, the more diffuse spaces of the camps are reviled as its very negation. In this way Czernowitz indeed serves as a cipher within contemporary German-Jewish discourse not only for a literary trope that returns again and again, but more significantly for the absence that underlies the zeal to commemorate past Jewish life.

Literary studies that seek to remap the fault lines between historical and cultural memory of the Holocaust must do more than simply (re)inscribe Czernowitz onto the tombstone of vanished Jewish culture and Jewish cities—Czernowitz, Vilna, Kovno, Kiev, Lodz.[6] Instead, I propose that we rethink the former and the present spaces of east central Europe by turning to models of urban space developed by theorists such as Edward Soja, Marc Augé, and Italo Calvino. Soja's analyses of Los Angeles, Augé's conception of the non-places of supermodernity, and Calvino's evocation of the "invisible" city facilitate a critical move away from merely elegiac and nostalgic recreations of Jewish cities that no longer exist as Jewish cities, to new ways of imagining these "lost cities" of east Central Europe as places suffused with memory, history, narrative, as places that demand an ongoing reflection about Jewish presence and absence in east Central Europe today. Within the contemporary rhetoric of mourning, a metonymic slide creates the litany of disaster stretching from Auschwitz to Vilna, Kovno, Lodz, Czernowitz; the recreated and reimagined spaces of east Central Europe create a tabula rasa of "authentic" Jewish experience, distilled through the putative lens of "history" to provide a landing pad for the tourist—in the case of Czernowitz, a virtual and largely literary tourist—eager to consume these spaces.

Furthermore, despite the fact that Czernowitz occupies as much space in the imaginary as these other tourist destinations, it is vital to move beyond an easy critique of the commodification and even "Disneyfication" of east Central Europe.[7] For the problem is in fact more complex and interesting—a problem of representing visual versus urban culture, of memory, and, finally, of disciplinary position. A critical task of literary studies is to read the literary into public spaces of memory and to rethink the interrelationship of text (urban space and literary text), ruin (literary ruin and architectural ruin), and memory. In this way, we can begin to break down the status of Czernowitz as a merely literary topos.

Czernowitz's currency today as the topos of a vanished world, as an elegiac place of memory, is due in large part to the critical reception of Paul Celan and, to a lesser but not insignifcant degree, Rose Ausländer. The latter was born Rosalie Scherzer in 1901 in Czernowitz and immigrated in 1921 to New York, where she later married Ignaz Ausländer. In 1931 she returned to Czernowitz, where she survived the war in the ghetto. In 1946 she returned to New York and stayed until going to Germany in 1965, where she died in 1988. Significantly, the popular and critical reception of Ausländer has placed more emphasis on her association with Celan than Celan scholarship places on his ties to Ausländer. They knew each other in Czernowitz before the war through a mutual friend and mentor, Alfred Margul-Sperber, and there is documentation that Celan attended the reading of Ausländer's first volume of poems, *Der Regenbogen*, in 1939. Many believe that one of the poems in that volume was the source of the celebrated first line, "Black milk of morning," in Celan's most famous poem, "Death Fugue."[8] Yet despite her many years in New York, Ausländer scholarship has placed the poet within a Czernowitz that is largely a postwar imagining of what was—pace Schlögel—not an imaginary space but what has become a space, a topos, of the literary.[9] Thus Czernowitz anchors Ausländer to her fellow Czernowitz poet Celan, despite the fact that those to whom she cites greatest debt are the American poets she met and corresponded with in New York after the war: Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, and e. e. cummings (see Morris's afterword in Ausländer's *The Forbidden Tree* [221-25]).

Ausländer scholarship has tended to approach the theme of

rupture and loss in her poems solely in biographical terms, focusing on the profound alienation, poverty, and loneliness experienced by the poet during her years in New York, her longing for *Heimat* and for her native language. At the end of the poem "Age," from 1980, for example, she expresses, with characteristic sparseness, the affinity between poetry and loss:

> I look for my dead friend
> in dreams
> Writing
> hurts (*Gesammelte Werke* 6:67)

The act of seeking the dead friend in the unconscious world of dreams is enacted in the eternal present, in a time that the poet, at the start of the poem, describes as "these hard days" in which "the anemones shine in vain." This joining of the elegiac impulse to remember the dead friend with the recognition of the pain of writing has come down, of course, from Virgil through Milton, Spenser, Shakespeare, Shelley, and Tennyson and, more recently, Derrida's collection of writings for friends who have died, in which nearly every essay begins with a reflection on the sheer difficulty of writing about, or for, the dead friend. Similarly, the poem "Age" links poetry and loss by suggesting the futility of writing, the purposelessness of rendering mourning, grief, and melancholy into text, as the poetic "I" seeks the dead friend again and again in a timeless unconscious. Like many of Ausländer's most evocative poems, this one challenges the viability of writing and the acts of mourning and creating text. The poet's assertion that "Writing / hurts" could, in fact, serve as a coda for the entire oeuvre, a coda that is met, at the same time, with a nearly constant, perhaps even obsessive, need to confront this pain that ensues from the attempts at, and often the failures of, mourning and grief. The recognition of the intimate link between loss and the pain of writing constitutes the rupture of writing.

This link between writing and loss is also clear in Ausländer's textual re-creations of Czernowitz and the Bukowina. In order to move away from an elegiac critical response to the elegiac mode of Ausländer's Czernowitz poems, I draw on the work of Marc Augé to conceptualize Czernowitz as "non-place," situating the former

Habsburg "Jewish" city as a textualized space that exists apart from the historical, "anthropological" narratives that have created its status as "idealized cipher." Augé locates as the "real [sic] non-places of supermodernity" those marked by the "invasion of space by text," spaces such as the supermarket, the highway, and the airport lounge, in which words and texts dominate—"No smoking"; "You are now entering the Beaujolais region"—as their "instructions for use" (96). Augé defines the "non-place" as situated in "supermodernity," spaces that are neither "anthropological" (e.g., places of identity and social relations) nor historically situated, but instead places of solitude, "lieux de memoires," where the traveler exists outside of relations and identity (78). While Augé's analysis of the "non-place" does not address the Jewish spaces of east Central Europe, his attempt to think about "place" as distinct from its historical, or "anthropological," layers becomes an interesting way of conceptualizing the discourses about Czernowitz. For Augé the "non-place" comes into existence through the interplay between place and text; similarly Czernowitz, as cipher for debates about Jewishness in Eastern Europe, takes on the status of a non-place.

Furthermore, the relationship between text and place that marks Augé's conception of supermodernity and the non-place is central to the project of "translating Czernowitz." Variously approached in terms of language, style and aesthetics, conceptual art and performance, or cultural contact and politics, "translation" both enables and complicates notions of language, culture, and text. First, to "translate Czernowitz" is to locate Czernowitz as textualized space—not to conceptualize it solely as geographical or historical place, but as the "non-place" identified by Augé. Second, to "translate Czernowitz" is to be concerned with the act of moving between interior poetic spaces and geographical spaces of dispersion, with the tension between poetic utterance and assertion and negation of place, and the relationship between sound and echo. In other words, the task is to "translate" paradigms of diaspora thought into a poetics of diaspora, seeing in the interplay between the once "Jewish" city of Czernowitz and the vanished traces of this Jewishness not a nostalgic or elegiac recuperation of loss, but rather the forever provisional, indeterminate nature of "Jewish" text that exists as part of a system of translation that carries the echoes, dispersed, of previous texts.

To return to the premise of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Czernow-itz exists as text, as a system of signs that has signified in various ways in different historical periods; as a system of signs, it invites the project of translation on multiple levels. On the most obvious and "literal" level, to speak of "translating Czernowitz" thus refers not only to the multiple languages that were part of the Bukowina, but also to the translation of texts by its major poets, most notably Paul Celan, Rose Ausländer, Dan Pagis, Aharon Appelfeld, Elieser Starnberg, Alfred Margul-Sperber, Alfred Gong, Alfred Kittner, and Itsik Manger. Significant too is the fact that many of these poets were also noted translators, and translation played a formative role in their own poetic work. Celan, although legendary for his own un-translatability, translated Giuseppe Ungaretti, Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Marianne Moore, Osip Mandelstam, and Fernando Pessoa.[10] Rose Ausländer translated not only the work of the Yiddish poet Itsik Manger, her fellow Czernowitzer who went to New York, she also, significantly, translated her own poems—many of the English poems she wrote in New York in the 1940s into Ger-man, and German poems into English.

While much scholarly work has been devoted to examining the task of the translator in the post-Benjamin age, my approach situ-ates the discussion within a Jewish context, grappling with the ques-tion of what it means to "translate" Jewish memory and to create Jewish text. The centrality of translation as trope and as practice in contemporary critical discourse has significant consequences for the translation of Jewish memory in Germany and east Central Eu-rope and in Czernowitz in particular. It is not simply the literary act of moving from one language to another or the cultural transmis-sion that results from moving among texts; rather, "translation" is mediation between aesthetic forms, i.e. movement between text and image. The translation of Jewish memory, which includes translat-ing Czernowitz, considers translation as one layer in the palimpsest of memory texts. Thus it fundamentally rethinks the status of the Jewish city and the Jewish writer, creating a diasporic notion of text that is rooted not in the relationship between language and place or language and national origin, but rather between language in its multiple forms and the non-place defined by this proliferation of textuality.

Thus the task of "translating Czernowitz" is one that partici-
pates, inescapably, in the project of writing and thinking elegiacally:
literary translation is elegiac in that the struggle between copy and
original contains within it the search (and the lament) for the ir-
retrievable original. Furthermore, translatability in the larger sense
depends on a notion of legibility, a reading of texts that either forg-
es from the illegible and indeterminate a more rooted and legible
"copy" or grapples with the illegibility of both copy and original.

These questions about textuality, translation, repetition, and
legibility are especially salient in the work of Rose Ausländer. On the
surface her poems seem eminently accessible and citable, often re-
ducible—and for this reason popular—to epigram-like statements
that would seem to capture the "experience" of Jews in east Central
Europe before and during the war, thus contrasting starkly with the
tantalizing obscurity of Celan. Yet present in these poems is also a
stuttering, a repetition, an echo of her own previous poems. Fur-
thermore, since she translated some of them back and forth between
German and English, the question of "original" language arises; the
repetitions, translations, and re-translations of her own poems call
to mind Walter Benjamin's reflections on the unstable relationship
between original and translation and, perhaps even more, his proc-
lamation in the *Arcades Project* that "the text is the thunder that con-
tinues to roll" (*Gesammelte Schriften* 5:570). Translation is a form of
poetic repetition—"the thunder that continues to roll"— recreat-
ing in the various languages iterations of the once-original and thus
evoking the absence and loss of the "first" text. Similarly, the differ-
ent modes of repetition in Ausländer's poetry lead to the fundamen-
tal paradox that defines her oeuvre: the poet reflects, over and over
again—she wrote more than 2600 poems—on the central dilemma
regarding silence, language, and writing after Auschwitz. She creates
new iterations and "translations" of the poet's role, generating an
echo of her poems and translations and creating the "more exalted
language" Benjamin identified as the mark of the translated text (*Il-
luminations* 75).

Ausländer's poem "Jerusalem," written first in English in 1953
and later translated by her into German, serves as a good example
of Benjamin's notion of this "more exalted language." It is also in-
dicative of the way Ausländer worked, as there are at least five extant

versions of the poem. The first, "original" version is as follows:

> I have never been in Jerusalem
> When I hang my blue-white scarf toward east,
> Jerusalem comes to me
> with the Temple and Solomon's Song
>
> I am 5000 years young
> In the arena I was introduced to lions
> embraced by one
> Rats were my companions
> in the ghetto
>
> *
>
> At the moment another style prevails
>
> *
>
> My scarf is a swing
> when I close my eyes toward east:
> On the hill
> Jersualem
> 5000 years young
> in orange aroma
> swings to me
>
> Of the same age
> We are
> having a game in the air (*Forbidden Tree* 97)

A German inflection creeps into the first line of the poem with the use of the preposition "in," as the more standard English would read "I have never been to Jerusalem." This faint grammatical twist does more than simply reveal a poet not fully at home in the English language: the non-standard use of the preposition wounds the English, creating an abrasion on the body of the text and thus marking it as not natural or whole, but rather as a text subject to rupture, to

a "breaking in" of language. Neither a translation nor a text in the poet's mother tongue, this version of the "Jerusalem" poem occupies a liminal space between original text and translated text, signaling Ausländer's status as a poet who crosses borders—literally and figuratively—and does not, and perhaps cannot, occupy any sort of unified or coherent national or linguistic subject position.

Even more significantly, the poem also presents a Jewish poetic subject who has not been to (or in) Jerusalem, which is presented not only as a place, but even more as the location of Jewishness and Jewish identity. The repetition of the poem—through the multiple drafts, versions, and translations—is what calls the place, Jerusalem, into being and what binds the poet to that place. Jerusalem and "the east," spaces of the imaginary for the poet, emerge through the many iterations of the text. Jerusalem, imagined when the poetic subject closes her eyes "toward east," becomes the imaginary space that lies east of the eastern *Heimat* of the Bukowina. Czernowitz, alluded to in the poem with the line "Rats were my companions / in the ghetto," is present in the poem as the site of the other "east." Drawing on the persistent trope of longing for the east found in Jewish poetry from the twelfth-century poet Judah Halevi to the Bukowina-born Israeli poet Dan Pagis, Ausländer links the longed-for east of the Bukowina to the east of Jerusalem.[11] In this way she creates metonymic substitutions of east Central Europe for "mizrach"—the east toward which Jews in the Diaspora face in prayer, and the direction of all longing for Zion, captured emblematically in Halevi's "My heart is in the East." Ausländer's Jerusalem, a place of refracted easternness, is not an unproblematic or unreflective place; rather, it functions here as the non-place, conjured through text, in which the poet can only express a fragile, provisional, and always uncertain Jewish identity.

The second version of the English poem (in the *Nachlass*) contains changes that are important for the subsequent publication of the poem in German (found in her *Gesammelte Werke* 4:77). While the first version continues after the first line, "When I hang my blue/ white scarf toward east, / Jerusalem comes to me," the third line in the second version becomes "Jersusalem *swings* to me." The verb "swings" is more elusive than "comes," suggesting that Jerusalem is also in the air, ethereal, not fixed or static. A dialogic relation-

ship thus emerges between the lyrical I and the land of Israel.[12] The reciprocity between the autobiographical and the poetic becomes even more marked in the German version of the poem, in which the declarative first line from the English version ("I have never been in Jerusalem") is omitted. Instead, the German version begins with the English version's second line, since in the intervening years between writing the poem in English and translating it into German Ausländer did in fact make a trip to Israel. Finally, the poem "Jerusalem," in its many drafts and versions, serves as a reminder of the ways in which translation and repetition point to the ever-provisional status of language in Ausländer's work, where the poetic landscape is characterized by translation and by the echo of both what the poet hears and sees and what she cannot grasp or experience: "I have never been in Jerusalem." Jerusalem is the cipher for the Czernowitz that is both a source of nostalgic longing and a site of absence and emptiness.

The displacement of Jewish longing from Czernowitz to Jerusalem and the displacement enacted through translation in the "Jerusalem" poems suggest, at times, contradictory meanings of each place. At the same time that Jerusalem is the place of Jewish identity and longing, it remains elusive, a place of the imaginary that "swings," that is conjured through closing the eyes and through aroma. Similarly, the multiple meanings of Czernowitz for Ausländer bear closer scrutiny. The Yiddish Czernowitz poet Itsik Manger, in exile in London, wrote to Rose Ausländer in English in 1947: "My dear Roisele, I am very glad that you got rid of our 'beloved' country" (Ausländer, *Nachlass*). Placing the word "beloved" in quotation marks, Manger adds a note of irony that undercuts any possible nostalgia for their *Heimat*; even more significantly, he conceptualizes this *Heimat* as a place the writer can, through exile, "get rid of." Yet while Manger's critical assessment of their homeland serves as counterpoint to the nostalgic, sentimental re-creations of Czernowitz and the Bukowina that were to come later, scholarship on Ausländer has tended to forge a more univocal relationship between the poet and her place of birth. In fact, her poetry has become central to the nostalgic impulse identified by Menninghaus among others, in which German critics create a Jewish fairyland from the ruins of the now absent Jewish culture in Czernowitz.

A closer examination of Ausländer's Czernowitz and Bukowina poems shows how she participates in an elegiac re-creation of Czernowitz and the Bukowina more generally, while at the same time undercutting this nostalgia. In the poem "Czernowitz Before the Second World War," for instance, Czernowitz is evoked as a

> Peaceful Hill-City
> surrounded by beech forests . . .
>
> . . . Four languages
> in accord with each other
> spoiled the air
>
> Until the bombs fell
> the city breathed
> happily (*Gesammelte Werke* 6:348)

In the poem "Bukowina III" the Bukowina is invoked with the first line, "Green Mother / Bukowina / butterflies in your hair" and the poem also contains the lines

> Four languages
> Four-language songs
>
> People
> who understand each other (4:130)

At least seven of the poems contain the refrain "four languages" and the image of a harmonious mix of languages and people. Another poem, "Bukowina II," opens with the invocation "landscape / that invented me" and goes on the describe the Bukowina as "water-armed" and "forest-haired" (4:72). Ausländer thus inverts the images to suggest that it is the "green mother Bukowina" that produced and invented her. While expressing the received idea of Czernowitz as a center of multicultural humanism, she also conceptualizes it in a specular relationship to herself: she came into the world in Czernowitz, and Czernowitz continually comes into her. This specularity is expressed as well in a famous prose fragment from 1971 in

response to the question "Why do I write? "Perhaps because I came into the world in Czernowitz, and because the world in Czernowitz came into me. That particular landscape. The particular people, fairy tales, and myths were in the air, one inhaled them. Czernowitz, with its four languages, was a city of muses that housed many artists, poets, and lovers of art, literature, and philosophy" (3:285).

The nostalgic undercurrent in this often-cited fragment about Czernowitz is undercut in several of her poems from the 1970s, written after her return to Germany. In a poem from her 1974 volume *Without a Visa* that begins "I too was born in Arcadia," Ausländer creates a palimpsest of the classical trope "et in Arcadia ego" from Virgil's *Eclogues*, the first line of Schiller's poem "Resignation," and Goethe's inscription on the frontispiece to his *Italian Journey*. However, despite Ausländer's conscious use of this line to signal the insertion of her poetic voice into a longer trajectory of elegiac writing, she departs from the tradition of pastoral poetry or even memento mori art by inscribing the "Motherwords" she finds blooming in this Arcadia into another landscape, one decidedly less Arcadian, a bleak landscape populated by the nameless and "nothingness":

> I too lost
> my name
> among the nameless
>
> I too
> asked Nothingness
> about Being (3:135)[13]

The repetition of the word "too" signals Ausländer's participation in the world of poets and also signals that the memory invoked is not just her own historical memory, but also intertextual memory, through Virgil, Goethe, Schiller. The voice of resignation, heavy with the voices of poets past, at the beginning of the poem is also a voice of postmemory, joining personal loss to earlier texts so that elegies to earlier lost Arcadias are also elegies to Czernowitz and the Bukowina.[14]

However, in the poem "The Inheritance," from the 1975 volume *Other Signs*, the Bukowina is evoked as a memory in this "Aus-

trian-less time," where the act of thinking about "das Buchenland" produces only the fragmented and anti-nostalgic stanza "uproot-ed Word / birds vanished without a trace" ("Entwurzeltes Wort / verschollene Vögel"; 3:224). Yet the "Buchenland" remains a place that the poet can summon from memory and call into text, how-ever broken the metaphors she uses. The sudden, singular use of the German "Buchenland" at the beginning of the poem ("I think about the Buchenland") marks an abrupt change from the other Bukowi-na poems, in which she calls the region the "Bukowina," adding a note of nostalgia as she attempts to realign the place with its former position as part of the Habsburg Empire. In "The Inheritance" the possibility of text as ruin emerges for the first time in the series of poems; here text is "uprooted word," and metaphor and image have "vanished without a trace," replacing poetic invocation ("O green Mother Bukowina!") and nostalgic rewriting of history found in the earlier poems.

Although scholarship on Rose Ausländer has tended to cast her unequivocally as a Holocaust poet whose origin in Czernow-itz is "proof" of her legible Jewishness, "The Inheritance" suggests that even within the apparently seamless construction of Jewish-ness in her poems, there exists an indeterminacy of Jewish history and Jewish identity vis-à-vis the Bukowina. In other words if—for contemporary German-Jewish discourse—Czernowitz is an ideal-ized cipher for the absence underlying the fervor of memorializa-tion of past Jewish life, these moments evoking the brokenness and fragmentation of place and text in Ausländer's poems require a new reading/translation of the interrelationship of text, city, and ruin. As "The Inheritance" suggests the indeterminacy of place and of read-ing, it challenges the legibility of Jewishness in the former spaces of east Central Europe.

Both Rose Ausländer's poetry and the place of her birth, Cz-ernowitz, need to be "translated" beyond the paradigms that have created the critical impasses Menninghaus so acutely identifies; that is, the challenge of her poetry is similar to the challenge of "reading" and "translating" Czernowitz, in that both demand that we move past easy critiques of disneyfications and the quaint recapturing of vanquished Jewish life to a fuller consideration of the relationships of memory, loss, space, and text. The critical task in reading a poet

such as Ausländer is to read allusively when the text does not automatically yield allusion, when it is rooted still in mimetic notions of the referent and of representability. In many of Ausländer's poems the allusive, the unspoken and the not-quite-spoken, the elliptical, hover, as seen in the lines from the poem "Age," in which the difficulty of writing is proclaimed at the end of a poem that paradoxically enacts writing. Ausländer's iconic status as both Holocaust and exile poet needs to be reexamined; similarly, her immense body of work poses a problem for the literary scholar in that many of her poems are deceptively simple and often quite banal expressions of loss and hope. The critic must resurrect questions of valuation that have long since been buried to read into the banality of countless lines of poetry an indeterminacy of meaning. The banality of Ausländer's poetry expresses the banality of grief: the echoes and repetitions, and the centrality of translation within the oeuvre provide points of entry to rethink the relationship between poetry and banality amid the shifting configurations of the meaning of Czernowitz.

Notes

1 "'Czernowitz gibt es wirklich, nicht bloß als Topos einer literarischen Welt." For a lengthy exploration of Czernowitz as topos, see Andrei Corbea-Hoisie. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

2 See synagogue tours of eastern Europe such as "Totally Jewish Tours," which include Prague, Krakow, Warsaw, and Budapest, but not Czernowitz or, for example, Vilna or Kovno.

3 The *Meridian* speech was written on the occasion of Paul Celan receiving the Georg Büchner Prize in Darmstadt, October 22, 1960. It has had a significant influence on contemporary poetics and poetic theory not only in Germany, but also in Francophone and Anglophone literary circles. It stands as the axiomatic text about place and the poetic text, in its exploration of the absence that now marks the spaces of east central Europe. The term "non-place" is drawn from Marc Augé.

4 In 1910 the population of Czernowitz was 30% Jewish; in 1930, it was more than 35%.

5 Menninghaus stresses the history of the Bukowina as a misreading that is simultaneously a repression of the rise (or rather return) of anti-Semitism that accompanied the disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy, as the Jews became vilified by the Romanians, the ethnic Germans from Swabia, and the Ukrainians.

6 Similarly, Wolfgang Koepp's 1999 documentary film *Herr Zwilling und Frau Zuckermann* highlights the difficulties of representing a vanished, vanquished place such as Czernowitz. On the one hand, the various attempts to move into the spaces of eastern Europe have been critical in reshaping the geographical contours of memory, addressing head-on the absence of Jewish culture in what were once its thriving capitals. On the other hand, this has resulted, perhaps inevitably, in a fetishization of the absent culture, replacing the critical discourse about absence with simple tourism (Prague and Krakow as cities on the synagogue tour attest to this).

7 In *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Larry Wolf develops the notion of Eastern Europe as "idea," arguing that the "shadow" of the "Iron Curtain" persists, despite its absence, because the idea of Eastern Europe remains. This is particularly interesting when considering the substantive differences between Czernowitz and cities such as Prague and Krakow that have now become Jewish tourist destination sites

8 See Braun 133. Although John Felstiner acknowledges that the image of "black milk" occurs in Ausländer's 1939 volume, he states that "there's no way of knowing" where Celan came up with the image of "schwarze Milch," and also suggests as possible source a passage from Lamentations (Felstiner 34).

9 While Ausländer did write of Czernowitz and the Bukowina in a series of poems and fragments, Celan did so only in the *Meridian* speech (1960), the Bremen Prize speech (1958), and, most obliquely, in a poem entitled "Eine Gauner-und Ganovenweise gesungen zu Paris empres Pontoise von Paul Celan von Czernowitz bei Sadagora" (he here reverses the usual description of Sadagora bei Czernowitz to Czernowitz bei Sadagora). Otherwise, Celan

distanced himself from the poetry produced in Czernowitz in the interwar years, poetry that was largely anti-modernist and epigonal, of which Ausländer's neo-Romantic first volume of poems, *Der Regenbogen* (1939), was a prime example. Unlike Ausländer, Celan elided the place of his childhood, Czernowitz and the Bukowina, while writing, as many have argued, incessantly about and around Auschwitz, however elliptically.

10 "One might say Celan's own written German is a kind of translation from German's linguistic norms, and that reading even the German text requires a task of translation" (Wolosky 146).

11 Judah Halevi's poem "libi ba'mizrach" begins, "My heart is in the east and I am at the edge of the west" (347). The longing for Zion expressed in the poem, and the formulations of east and west, have become absorbed into the poetic vocabulary of Jewish poetry. Ausländer's formulations of the relationship between home and exile draw on this dialogue in this and other poems.

12 A similarly dialogic, reciprocal relationship between Israel and the I is found in the poem "Israel 11": "Zurück / ins zukünftige / Meinland Deinland" 'Back / to the future / My Land Your Land' (*Gesammelte Werke* 3:244). Maria Klanska argues that Ausländer exhibits an identificatory impulse not only with Jews, but with Israelis, citing the line in which the poetic I "swings" her blue-white scarf"—the national colors of the state of Israel—to the east (154).

13 "Auch ich verlor / meinen Namen / unter Namenlosen // Auch ich / fragte das Nichts / nach dem Sein."

14 I borrow the term "postmemory" from the work of Marianne Hirsch and Andrea Liss. For the elegiac dimension of postmemory, see also Leslie Morris.

Works Cited

Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Trans. John Howe. London: Verso, 1995.

Ausländer, Rose. *The Forbidden Tree. English Poems.* Ed. Helmut Braun. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1994.

—. *Gesammelte Werke.* Ed. Helmut Braun. 8 vols. Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 1984.

—. *Nachlass.* Courtesy of Helmut Braun.

Benjamin, Walter. *Gesammelte Schriften.* Vol. 5. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1972.

—. *Illuminations.* Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968.

Braun, Helmut. *Ich fliege auf der Luftschaukel Europa-Amerika-Europa: Rose Ausländer in Czernowitz und New York.* Üxheim/Eifel: Schriftenreihe der Rose-Ausländer-Gesellschaft, 1994.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities.* Trans. William Weaver. New York: Harvest, 1974.

Celan, Paul. "The Meridian." *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan.* Trans. John Felstiner. New York: Norton, 2001. 401-14.

Corbea-Hoisie, Andrei. *Czernowitzer Geschichten: Über eine städtische Kultur in Mittelosteuropa.* Vienna: Böhlau, 2003.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Work of Mourning.* Eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001.

Felstiner, John. *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1995.

Halevi, Judah. "My Heart is in the East." *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse.* Ed. and trans. T. Carmi. New York: Penguin, 1980.

Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997.

Klanska, Maria. "Zur Identitätsproblematik im Schaffen Rose Ausländers." *Nationale Identität aus germanistischer Perspektive.* Eds. Maria Katarzyna Lasatowicz and Jürgen Joachimsthaler. Opole, 1998. 143-60.

Liss, Andrea. *Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998.

Menninghaus, Winfried. "Czernowitz/Bukowina als Topos deutsch-jüdischer Geschichte." *Merkur* 3/4 (1999): 345-57.

Morris, Leslie. "Postmemory, Postmemoir." *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis 1945-2000.* Eds. L. Morris and Jack Zipes. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 291-306.

Wolf, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994.

Wolosky, Shira. "On (Mis-)Translating Paul Celan." *Poetik der Transformation: Paul Celan—Übersetzer und Übersetzt.* Eds. Alfred Bodenheimer and Shimon Sandbank. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999. 145-53.