**The Six Versions of The Shop on Main Street**

1.

A renowned work of Ladislav Grosman (1921–1981) is his **Obchod na korze** (1965; The Shop on Main Street). Grosman himself came from a Slovak Jewish family, went through various labor camps during the war and eventually escaped before being transported to the extermination camp and thus had to hide out editor and screenwriter, publishing in both Slovak and Czech.

His novel The Shop on Main Street was made world-famous by the film directed by Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, apart from other things winning the American Academy Award for the best foreign film in 1965. The screenplay and film were based on Grosman’s short story *Past* (1962, *The Trap*) which was written in Slovak and published in Czech translation in the Prague journal *Plamen*. Arnošt Lustig, a well-known Czech writer, referred Kadár and Klos to this work. The novel The Shop on Main Street was then created immediately after the screenplay (which Grosman cooperated on) and simultaneously with the film. Grosman’s literary screenplay was published for the first time in the revue *Divadlo* in April 1964. For the second time, it was edited in a rather different version, posthumoustly in 1998. The novel was published for the first time as a serial story in the Prague magazine *Mladý svět* from August to December 1964. It was edited in the publishing house Mladá fronta in 1965. The film premiered on 8 October, 1965.

2.

Therefore, there are six different versions of this work: first, the short story translated from Slovak into Czech (only 20 standard pages), second, the serial story written in Czech (about 80 pages), third, the screenplay in an older variant written in Czech (published in Divadlo, about 90 pages), fourth, the screenplay in a later variant written also in Czech, published 1998 (about 100 pages), fifth the novel in Czech (about 100 pages), and sixth the film spoken in Slovak and partly in a mixture of Slovak-Polish-Yiddish (128 minutes).

By comparison with the film and the novel, the plot of the original short story is much briefer and simpler. They are only three plot situations in the short story *Trap*. The first: Kolkocký and his wife’s visit to Brtko’s house (Chapter II in the book). The second: Brtko’s “taking over” Rozálie Lautmanová’s button shop and his agreement with Kucharský (Chapter IV in the book, Kuchár in the film). The third: the final situation when the Jewish community is being rounded up to be deported, Brtko accidentally kills Mrs. Lautmanová and then hangs himself (the second half of Chapter X in the book). The only figure from the short story that was not used in the novel or the film: the Slovak Fascist “guardsman” Karolko. The guardsman Peter Čarný plays his role to a certain extent and the love affair suggested between Brtko’s wife Evelína and Karolko is present in her relationship to Čarný. However, many later characters don’t yet appear in the short story, such as Uncle Piti báči, the tobacconist Balko, the barber Katz and other Jews etc. In The Trap, the small town looks almost empty, while in the novel and film the town is full of people and colorful events. The narrator’s comments play an important role in the short story. For instance, it is said at the beginning of the plot: “Brtko doesn’t feel that there was a trap set for him” (Grosman, 1962, p. 67). Still the serial story begins with the narrator’s comment: “The plot of our story is fictional. […] Let us add that it happens in a picturesque valley” (Grosman, 1964a, p. 13). Later, in the novel and film, such statements can’t be found so often. And the action is more immediate, without any intervention from the narrator. The main character Tono Brtko is more indecisive and naïve in the later versions. He has clownish, grotesque features, along with his dog and Chaplinesque hat. The imaginative

scenes at the end are also new. Thus, for instance, when Brtko visits the shop of Mrs. Lautmanová for the first time and meets Kucharský, Kucharský attempts to explain to him that the store is worthless. In the short story, Brtko rejects it: “I will arrange my own business. I’ll do what I want. […] I could inform on you. And I will, too!” (Grosman, 1962, p. 71). In the novel Brtko argues in a similar way: “What do you want? […] you’ve no business hanging round this place at all. I could inform on you, that I could. And I will, too” (Grosman 1970, p. 49).1

In the film Brtko responds differently: “Fuck it. Really, I like it. I’ll go to the office house and say, they can shove the shop up their ass.” Something else that is new in the screenplay, novel and film is a comic change of name. The half-deaf Mrs. Lautmanová doesn’t hear Brtko’s name well and thinks his name is “Krtko” or “Krtek” (“Mole”).„Co chcete? […] Nemáte tady co dělat. Mohl bych vás udat. Just vás udám“ (Grosman, 1966, p. 54).

When comparing later written versions of *The Shop on Main Street* (above versions two, three, four and five above), it can be found that the serial story (version two) was probably older than both screenplay versions (three and four). At the beginning of the story, the author describes a small town as well as a joiner and carpenter Brtko passing with his dog through its streets. This passage only takes two standard pages in the serial story,

in variants three, four and five it takes about ten pages. In the film, this beginning takes 12 minutes, and there are new motifs in the plot: an idyllic Sunday promenade on the square with a band playing music and also a jail with prisoners walking in the yard (a parallel to the careless citizens walking on the square) and a German military transport train. Unlike all other previous versions, in the film Brtko meets Kuchár while he is walking around the town. Both look at the new building on the square and laugh at it ironically.

Nevertheless, versions two (in *Mladý svět*) and three (in *Divadlo*) are very similar. The second variant of the screenplay (version four) is modified in style and in some places extended, compared with previous versions. For

example, Brtko’s last meeting with his wife Evelína ending with him knocking her down and beating her (see below). In version four a mention about Evelína’s love affair with the guardman Čarný is added.

“The courtship with Čarný Peter developed by chance […] causing her to become unprecedently benevolent. […] She didn’t care why Brtko didn’t come for diner. She hid his key to the workshop so he wouldn’t appear at an undesirable time […]. On Thursday, she even pleaded for Brtko to take his dog to work. “He is sad without you. […]” The thing was that Essenc couldn’t stand Čarný, and when he got closer to home Essenc started barking loudly […]” (Grosman et al., 1998, p. 86)

„Známost s Čarným Petrem, navázaná náhodou […] obměkčila Evelynu k nevídané blahosklonnosti. […] Nezajímalo ji, proč nepřichází Brtko na obědy, klíč od dílny schovala, aby se zde neobjevil v nežádoucí

dobu […]. Ve čtvrtek se dokonce přimluvila za to, aby Brtko vzal psa s sebou do práce. „Je mu bez tebe smutno. […]“ Esenc totiž nesnášel Čarného a prozrazoval jeho blízkost pronikavým […] štěkotem.“

This relationship between Evelína and Čarný doesn’t exist in the film. Čarný is “only” a dangerous fascist and informer here. “Nothing excapes me! Not even Kuchár. […] We’ll liquidate the lot! Jews, Bolsheviks, Plutocrats and Freemasons. […] Those who are not with us — are against us!”

As far as style and language, we can find some Slovak words that don’t belong to literary Czech in Grosman’s original text. In the later versions the number of Slovak words decreases. For instance „Nechal Brtka na chodbě“

instead of „Nechal Brtku na chodbě“. On the other hand, the later versions are more dinstinctive and expressive. So we can find „fiškál“ instead of „advokát“, „zalarmuju“ instead of literary „zalarmuji“ or „šteláže“ instead of „police“ which would be more neutral.

3.

The geographical setting of the story is an unspecified provincial city in Eastern Slovakia. The author took this image from his hometown Humenné,the film was shot in nearby Sabinov. The temporal setting is the summer of 1942 when the first wave of Jewish transports from Slovakia was organized. The narrator in the serial story tells it literally. Likewise a caption at the beginning of the film states:

“The Slovak government was the first to accept voluntarily the Nuremberg Laws after Germany. It is the year 1942.”

On the contrary, the novel doesn’t have any precise historical date. The main figure is a small man who is not overly interested in politics or in public events — rather naïve Tono Brtko, a joiner and carpenter. The film mainly emphasizes his childishness. While previous versions suggest a gloomy ending to the story (Brtko imagines a coffin, he sees a wheelbarrow with black wings in his dream, he takes a razor in the barber shop and presses it to his neck) in the film Brtko finds a horseshoe, a sign of fortune. He is more careless and engaging. So for instance, in previous versions Brtko drinks himself into oblivion, vomits on the floor in the room and is beaten by his wife during Kolkotský’s visit. This scene isn’t in the film either. Brtko instinctively resents the Slovak Fascists and the war and keeps himself away from this ruling group.

“Am I a parrot, to raise my arm and call To guard?” he asks.

But he is not active and brave enough to fight against the regime. He wants “to survive and stay out of trouble” (Hames, 2005, p. 38). He likes walking his dog and chatting with his neighbors. He seems to be a ridiculous and grotesque figure resembling Charles Chaplin, especially in the film adaptation (Přádná, Škapová, Cieslar, 2002, pp. 239–240). In the serial story and both variants of the scrrenplay as well in the film (not in the novel), Tono Brtko admires himself in the mirror and says: “I look just like Chaplin.” This is also alluded to in the scene where the drunken Tono parodies Hitler:

„He held two fingers on his upper lip and shouted: “The Führer is

going to speak! Silence for the Führer!” Then he barked rapidly: “Vanvilich, veinen, veinsinige!” He followed it up with eyes rolling ecstatically and convulsive jerks of his body, imitating Adolf making a speech; the onlookers watched in awe and admiration. Angry scraps of incomprehensible words were spewed from his

lips: “Undzunach, undendredfuhr, brotrot, glukvernichtamalherrgott beidevollenpolendrunknicht, ibeljubel firends, hinaus, fermeshausmaschinen lassen hipheil, hipheil, hipheil!” […] Kolkocký was so moved by what he had heard that he shot his arm out in the Hitler salute as the orator concluded, and shouted in all seriousness: “Sieg Heil!” “Geil! Geil!” Tono repeated mocklingly, and jumped down to the floor. (Grosman, 1970, pp. 31–32)

[…] položil si dva prsty pod nos a zvolal: „Mluví Vůdce! Vůdce hovoří!“ A štěkavě zařval: „Vanvilich, vajnen, vajnsinige!“ Pak už s extaticky vyvalenýma očima a v křečovitých gestech napodobil řečnícího Adolfa a strhl k němému obdivu hodovníky. Vyrážel ze sebe zlostné útržky nesrozumitelných slov: „Undcunach, undendrajfír, brotrot, glükfernichtamál hergotbajdenfolenpolendrunknicht, íbeljúbel firnajshinaus, fermežausmašíren lasen hiphajl, hiphajl, hiphajl!“ […] Kolkocký byl tak silně unesen tím, co slyšel, že téměř současně s řečníkem vymrštil ruku k pozdravu a docela vážně zakřičel: „Zíghajl!“ „Gajl! Gajl“ opakoval Tono a seskočil se stolu

na podlahu. (Grosman, 1966, pp. 38–39)

Brtko’s brother-in-law, Markus Kolkocký, is the leader of the local Hlinka Guard (the Slovak Fascist organization) and Brtko’s simple wife Evelína is very greedy and pushy. Therefore, Brtko involuntarily becomes the so-called Aryanizer. He acquires a small, worthless and insolvent haberdashery store on the main street belonging to the old Jewish widow Rozálie Lautmanová.

The personalities of both main characters, Brtko and Mrs. Lautmanová, are the opposite of what would be expected. Because Brtko is a good person at heart and does not like conflicts, he helps the old Jewess to serve customers. He pretends to be her shop assistent, while at home he makes out he is a strict and ruthless Aryanizer:

“‘It’s a lot of hard work, Aryanizing a shop, Eveline, I can tell you that…’” (Grosman, 1970, p. 54)

4.

According to Annette Insdorf (Indelible Shadows) as well as Alena Smiešková, Tono Brtko’s identity is ambiguous, he has a dual personality. On the one hand, he is an Aryan controller, on the other hand, a helper and friend of the Jews. For that reason, in the film, “Tono is often seen in mirrors or reflected in windows” (Insdorf, 2003, p. 165; also Smiešková, 2008, p. 50).

After all, Kolkocký gives him a cigarette case with a mirror inside as a present. Brtko is overcome with joy over the present like a child. Rozálie Lautmanová hopes the good old days of local community spirit still continue when no problems existed between Jews and Slovaks. The almost 80 year old Jewish woman doesn’t perceive the outside world any more. She doesn’t know that Jews are being persecuted. She knows nothing about the Aryanization of Jewish property, doesn’t recognize that Brtko is coming to be the owner of her small shop. She doesn’t have any idea about the transports and concentration camps. She is near-deaf, lives in isolation

and is turned to her past. Her naivete is emphasized by the white color of her hair and her nightgown in the film. She can’t understand that times have changed and the shop is no longer hers. The results are comic misunderstandings during Tono Brtko’s attempts to explain the situation.

“Mrs. Lautman!” […] “I’ve been made your Aryanizer. That means, you see, that I’m your Aryan and you’re my Jewess. […]

“The young gentleman is so amusing,” she said kindly. “What has the young gentleman brought me this morning?” […] “Is the young gentleman from Taxes and Excise, perhaps?” (Grosman, 1970, pp. 46–47)

„Paní Lautmanová!“ […] „Ustanovili mě arizátorem vaší živnosti. To znamená, paní, že jsem ten váš árijec a vy jste moje židovka.“ […]

„Mladý pán má humor,“ řekla vlídně. „Co pěkného mi přinesl mladý pán?“ […] „Není mladý pán exekutor?“ (Grosman, 1966, pp. 50–51)

According to the critic Ľubica Mistríková, Mrs. Lautmanová’s deafness is an analogy of Brtko’s behavior when he pretends to not hear his wife as she is speaking to him (Mistríková, 2004, p. 101). Insdorf expresses her opinion, that Lautmanová’s “deafness is symbolic of the Jewish victims who are either unable to or refuse to comprehend what is happening to them” (Insdorf, 2003, p. 165).

In *The Shop on Main Street*, for a long time the story seems to present the idyllic life of a small town. A group of Slovak dragoons ride through the street on horseback. “The people on the sidewalks stood still, and the windows blossomed with women’s fair-haired and dark heads and smiling girlish faces” (Grosman, 1970, p. 11)3 as if there isn’t a war. Also the colourful local market is held regularly. The fire-brigade band led by a robust Balko gives its concerts on the main square. On Sundays people go to church and walk on the promenade. The town crier, uncle Piti, in uniform with drum announces bizarre news, such as a paying of “the dog tax within ten days; dog owners ignoring this order will be punished” (ibid., p. 68).

Jews poke at Kolkocký, the leader of the Hlinka Guard, and make fun of Aryanization.

“The widow Rosalie Lautman, our fellow in the faith, has lived a blameless life to the ripe old age of seventy-eight and found such favor in the eyes of the Lord that He has sent her the kindest Aryanizer He could find on this earth. An Aryanizer who will not only help her in the shop but will turn fireman should the place go up in flames, which God forbid.” (ibid., p. 86)

„Naše souvěrkyně a vdova, milá paní Lautmanová, které bylo dopřáno v bezúhonném životě svém dosáhnout úctyhodného věku sedmdesáti osmi let, našla přízeň v očích Hospodina, jenž jí umožnil chytit

nejspravedlivějšího arizátora na zeměkouli. Arizátora, který jí bude nejen pomocníkem v kvelbu, ale i hasičem, kdyby se tam nedejbůh šnelzídr převrhl a krám vzplanul plamenem.“ (Grosman 1966, p. 100)

The Jewish Mutual Aid Society supports Tono Brtko financially, because Mrs. Lautman’s shop doesn’t bring anything in. Evelína is happy believing the money was profit from the shop. Tono repairs Lautmanová’s old furniture while Rosálie cooks for him. Both of them are satisfied, Tono escapes his annoying wife, and the old lady finds a helper and a friend. Tono befriends a little neighbour’s boy, Danko Eliáš, and teaches him carpentry.

Danko plays an important role, especially in the film. Before his death, Tono sees the boy, who has escaped the transport and was being hidden. Danko means Daniel, which is a symbolic name. Daniel was a Jewish prophet who was protected by an angel from the lions’ den. Also Danko is saved at the end of story.

The old woman did not feel so lonely any more, while the carpenter had found his refuge at last […]. In her starched white apron and laceedged cap she looked neat and fresh when she poked her head into the living room. […] The sound of the music reached her as she stood in the kitchen stirring the dinner, and through the open door the smell of cooking passed into the living room. (Grosman, 1970, p. 90)

Stařena se už necítila tak opuštěna a truhlář po delší době našel u ní útulek […]. Vypadala svěže, když v bílé škrobené zástěře a v šátku vroubeném zoubkovitou krajkou nahlédla do pokoje. […] přes pootevřené dveře vnikala do kuchyně hudba a odtud do pokoje vůně oběda. (Grosman, 1966, pp. 101–103)

The music which was mentioned was a Yiddish song that sounds almost identical in versions two, three and four:

Ofn ojven sict a mejdl

tumba tumba tumbala

ind zi nét a vajse klédl

tumba tumba tumbala

In version five, the novel, which was more strictly censored, to suppress everything “Jewish”, the song is not in Yiddish but translated into Czech.

Dívka s copy na pícce

tumba tumba tumbala

šije bílý šat

(Grosman, 1966, p. 103)

Naturally, the film returns to the Yiddish again.

5.

But this lovely idyllic and relaxed mood comes to an end in the last chapter of the novel. This change is symbolized by a monstrous monolith of “Victory”, for Brtko a “Babylonian tower” erected in the middle of the main street by the new power. The Jews from the city and neighbouring regions receive summons and are lined up for transport. At the moment Brtko learns about the transport, the melody of Kaddish, a Jewish prayer, known as a part of the mourning rituals, begins to play in the film for the first time. Brtko’s friend Kucharský/Kuchár, who is involved in the resistance, is labelled as a “White Jew” (someone who helps and protects Jews). He is brutally beaten, arrested and deported. In the film, Kuchár is dumped into the street with that sign “White Jew”. He is tied up and left in the square for public ridicule.

Brtko visits the Jewish barber Mr. Katz in his shop. He is packing his tools and says to Brtko:

“I’ve been cutting hair here for forty years. Enough hair to fill a barn. The’ve rubber — stamped me. Taken my property.”

Brtko: “I don’t understand. You’re a wise man, Mr. Katz. How has this all happened so suddenly.”

“I’m not wise and this is not sudden. […] But I know one thing. When the law persecutes the innocent, that’s the end of it. Of the lawmakers, too.”

“Mr. Katz, you’re really going?”

“What do you expect? Have you seen the guards in the streets? Do you want me to join forces with old Blau and Grannie Lautmann against the troops? Will you join us, Mr. Brtko?”

This is the film version. The last sentence that demonstrates the responsibility of “common” Slovak people for the persecutions of Jews is not in the second version.

Moreover, Brtko’s wife Evelína isn’t satisfied with the money that Tono Brtko brings in. She knows the Jews should be transported and she wants more Jewish jewelry and gold.

“Where’s her gold? Diamonds? What have you done with it? Where’s your Jewess hidden it? Go on, tell me!”

“Shut your mouth!”

“They’re all going to be transported tomorrow, anyway.” […]

He seized her and shook her wildly. […]

After this scene, the desperate Brtko leaves for the pub. From now on, his dual existence cannot continue. In the pub he’s drinking wine with old “Uncle Piti”, the town crier, and they decide to save Mrs. Lautmanová and shelter her. However, Čarný, the Fascist, starts shadowing Brtko, who finds himself under increasing pressure, paralyzed with alcohol and overcome by a terrible fear. The next morning Kolkotský manages the gathering of the Jews in the square close to Brtko’s shop. The idyllic square becomes an “appelplatz“ (Šmatlák, 2008, p. 89).

Rozálie Lautmanová was forgotten due to a bureaucratic error. (In the film, she doesn’t wear a Jewish star, unlike other Jews in the town.) Nevertheless, Brtko assumes that this is really just a clever move on the part of his hated brother-in-law who will then also designate him a Jew lover and exponent and thus permanently get rid of him. Thus he convinces the old lady to go out to the square and join the deportees in transport. He argues that is the law:

“Mrs. Lautman! The world is run this way now… there are special laws for Jews” (Grosman, 1970, p. 117).

But then he regrets this and tries to save her. At first, Rozálie Lautmanová does not understand anything. In the film she even believes the police will protect her from Brtko. But then she realizes what is happening and is scared. Tono Brtko tries to hide her in a backroom by force and accidentally kills her while shoving her into her hiding place. He goes completely crazy andcommits suicide by hanging himself.

5.

The novel depicts the drama of a person who is roped into a dilemma, an oppressive, irresolvable position through no fault of his own. “Alone he has no chance of winning, but if there were many Brtkos and they found greater courage within themselves, perhaps the world would be different” (Mistríkova, 2004, p. 101). A part of the text depicts not only dramatic and grotesque but also imaginative scenes. The last night before their death, Tono Brtko dreams Rozálie and he are walking on the main street promenade. Both of them are youthful, happy and carefree.

A shattering gleam rent the air, and, in the flickering mirror, lit as though by sunshine, Rosalie Lautman moved as nonchalantly as if she had lived through this moment a hundred times before. She was

dressed in her best with a snow-white bonnet on her head and glass beads at her throat; in the bright light she looked youthful. […] Rosalie stepped right out of the mirror into the square, calling Brtko with a coquettish wave of her hand to follow her out through the door. […] she seemed satisfied with his elegance. […] “I feel as though I’m dreaming, don’t you?” Brtko kissed the hand she held out to him. Arm in arm they promenaded Main Street… (Grosman, 1970, p. 108)

Pronikavá záře rozechvěla povětří a v tomto kmitavém, jakoby sluncem ozářeném zrcadle chovala se Rozálie Lautmanová s takovou okouzlující nenuceností, jako by tuto chvíli již stokrát prožila. Vystrojila se k této příležitosti do svátečního. Hlavu jí zdobil sněhobílý čepec, na krku skleněné korále, vypadala mladě v tolikerém jasu. […] zdálo se, že je spokojena, jak se její pomocník vyparádil. […] „Připadá mi to jako ve snu, tobě ne?“ řekl Brtko a políbil podanou ruku. Zavěsil se do ní a procházeli se promenádou… (Grosman, 1966, pp. 124–125)

In this dream sequence, the idyllic mood returns, at least in Tono Brtko’s mind. In the novel, this scene precedes the final situation in the shop, the death of Lautmanová and the suicide of Brtko. At the end, it is only briefly noted, “so it’s quite possible they are both up there now, promenading along the Main Street of heaven” (Grosman, 1970, p. 122).

 In the film, his vision repeats twice. The second time it is a long scene at the very end of the film. Brtko finds out he killed the old lady. He is completely confused. The camera follows his roving look. Elmar Klos compared the camera to the eye of God (Lukeš, 2011, p. 192). We can see a short shot of Rosálie’s picture in Sunday clothes. After Brtko takes his own life, the door of the shop opens. Rosálie and Tono appear, both gracefully dressed in white, Rosálie in her Sunday clothes from the picture, and Tono in her husband’s clothes. They smile at each other. They slowly walk down Main Street, they almost float and dance across the square. The fire brigade brass band is playing a waltz, the bandleader bows. It suggests relaxed, idyllic moments, like in Heaven. At this moment, Brtko addresses Mrs. Lautmanová using the informalform „ty“ while he was on formal terms with her in his real life. Therefore, these two characters are so close to each other and happy only in his dream. The harsh and absurd reality around them separates them and leads both of them to death.

The film is a “tragicomic mixture of reality and fantasy” (Hames, 2005, p. 39). According to Kadár and Klos, it should be a comedy with the classic structure of an ancient tragedy (Interview with A. J. Liehm; Liehm, 1974, p. 390). “While presenting the fate of individuals, it in fact portrays a prototype. For the lot of the Jews one can substitute the lot of anyone in this world” (Kadár, 1966, p. 18). The style of the black-and-white film is rather traditional, without experiments. The colour shifts from light to darker tones and then to bright white at the end. Unlike Grosman’s novel, the film presents important new motifs: storks over the town (which repeats several times), the city prison and military trains. As well as the motifs of „…je docela možné, že teď se už oba bezstarostně procházejí po tom nebeském korze“ (Grosman, 1966, p. 142).

Neither director was young. Czech Elmar Klos (1910–1993) began filming before the war, while Slovak Ján Kadár (1918–1976) made his debut in 1945. They worked together for 17 years and shot eight films as a team. Kadár, who was Jewish himself, spent four years in the Hungarian labour camp during the war, from which he managed to escape. Most of his relatives includinghis parents and sister perished in the Holocaust. Kadár didn’t reflect on his Jewish roots until The Shop on Main Street. “In my case undoubtedly there was also the fact that I had never countered any racial discrimination personally, either in my work or in my private life” (Liehm, 1974, p. 406).

In *The Shop on Main Street* Kadár recalled the persecutions and transports of Jews in his youth. “…my work is shaped by the fate of my father, my friends fathers, mothers of those near to me, and by people whom I have known” (ibid.). After Kadár emigrated at the end of the Sixties to the U.S., the film was accused of “Zionism” and was banned in Czechoslovakia ( Juráček, 2003, pp. 745–746). According to Elmar Klos Jr., Slovak high officials opposed permission for filming because they did not want to be reminded of Slovakia’s fascist past. As an example, Klos cited Gustáv Husák, the later General Secretary of the Communist party and President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In contrast, the highest ranking person in Czechoslovakia at that time, Antonín Novotný, the President and the leader of the party, could not stand the Slovaks. Therefore, the film was allowed

and it was not filmed in the Slovakian studio, Koliba, but in the Czech studio, Barrandov. The Slovak review *Slovenské pohľady* expressed a critical attitude towards the film in 1966: stating that the Jews represented an exploitative social group in Slovakia and creators of *The Shop on Main Street* praise them very sentimentally (ille, 1966, p. 144). Elmar Klos who stayed in Czechoslovakia, could not shoot any more movies. Ján Kadár made two English language films with Jewish subjects in the U.S.: *The Angel Levine* (1970) and *Lies My Father Told Me* (1976).

Both leading actors, Jozef Kroner (Brtko) and Ida Kamińska (Lautmanová), were excellent and won international awards (for instance in Cannes). Kroner underlined the farcical aspects of the story. Sixty-five year old Ida Kamińska was the manager, producer and leading actress at the State Jewish Theatre in Warsaw. It was her first important film role. The *Shop on Main Street* where she was speaking both Polish and Yiddish and praying in Hebrew (it evokes a strange feeling), made her famous. She won a nomination for an Academy Award for best actress in a main role for the year 1966. Due to a wave of anti-Semitism in Poland in 1968, she also emigrated in the U.S. Her last movie performance was The Angel Levine directed by Ján Kadár.

7. Conclusion

Ladislav Grosman’s novel *The Shop on Main Street*, made world-known by the film directed by Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos, was created originally as a short story (1962). The second version was published for the first time as a serial story in the Prague magazine Mladý svět in 1964. The screenplay was written by Kadár, Klos and Grosman in the same year (it was edited later in 1998). The film premiered on 8 October, 1965 and the novel was edited simultaneously with it. In later versions, the novel and the film, the action is more immediate, without any intervention from the narrator. The main character Tono Brtko is more indecisive and naïve. He has clownish, grotesque features, along with his dog and Chaplinesque hat. The imaginative scenes at the end are also new. Tono Brtko’s identity is ambiguous, therefore, Tono is often seen in mirrors or reflected in windows. The another main character, an old Jewish widow Rozálie Lautmanová doesn’t perceive the outside world any more. She doesn’t know, that Jews are being persecuted. Her naivete is emphasized by the white color of her hair and her nightgown in the film. Sometimes the story seems to present the idyllic life of a small town. But this relaxed mood comes to an end in the last chapter of the novel as well in the last scenes of the film. The Jews from the city and neighbouring regions are lined up for transport. Tono Brtko is extremely confused, he tries to hide Mr. Lautmanová in a backroom by force and accidentally kills her while shoving her into her hiding place. He goes completely crazy and commits suicide by hanging himself. However, the very final dream sequence restores an idyllic mood again, especially in the film. Therefore *The Shop on Main Street* combines tragic, comic and idyllic components.

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