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PLANT MOTIFS ON JEWISH OSSURARIES AND SARCOPHAGI IN PALESTINE IN THE LATE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD: THEIR IDENTIFICATION, SOCIOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Cynthia Crewe *

This paper attempts to identify the whole range of plant motifs found on Jewish ossuaries. It outlines briefly the nature of the ossuary, its context within the tomb, and the religious, ideological and sociological implications of its use. In light of evidence of the non-funerary use of many similar motifs, the abundant use of plant imagery in biblical and apocryphal texts, and possible external influences on the development of Jewish funerary art, it is argued that, through a process of acculturation, a 'type of symbolism', which is not necessarily religious (that is, related to a system of beliefs about God), may be inherent in the motifs.

The full 90 page illustrated text can be found only online.

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[1]

FEMININE IMAGES IN THE WRITINGS OF AMOS OZ

Dvir Abramovich*

This essay explores the portrayal of female protagonists in several novels and short stories by Israel's most celebrated author Amos Oz. Employing feminist theory, the article argues that often in the Oz canon, the manner by which women characters are depicted can be read as antifeminist and misogynous. By embracing an oppositional reading which goes against the grain of conventional interpretation, the paper seeks to show that the adumbration of the female in an array of Oz texts is closely associated with a pervasive patriarchal praxis that focuses solely on their sexuality. The familiar image of the woman that is uncovered in this analysis demonstrates that in their multiple configurations, Oz's female principals are driven by libidinal impulses and that such characterization permeates the author's gender constructs. The article contends that Oz underlines in many of his plots the erotic dimension so much so that it becomes the mainstay for the heroines' actions and behaviour.

In the introduction to *The New Feminist Criticism* (1985) we read: 'Whether concerned with the literary representation of sexual difference, with the ways that literary genres have been shaped by masculine or feminine values... feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis.' Intriguingly and lamentably, however, the fiction of Israel's greatest living author and two time Nobel Prize nominee Amos Oz, has been relatively speaking shielded from the piercing eye of feminist discussion and excluded from the ongoing dialogue between literature and gender hermeneutics. Despite the critical surfeit regarding his letters which normally zeroes in on the political and social dimensions of his writings, feminist reappraisal of Oz's canon is still in its embryonic stage.

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¹ Elaine Showalter, *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 3.

[2] This article has been informed by a methodological thematic feminist approach to re-examine several of the Amos Oz texts. At heart, the locus of this examination has been to re-evaluate the author's narratives through Feminist lenses, to predominantly re-enter its fictional dimensions and strategies with the particular objective aim of uncovering misogynous presumptions and distorted images of women. In the questions raised herein we have attempted to deconstruct patriarchal ideologies and their commensurate forms of ideas, values and syntax that for so long have served to transfer cultural and social antifeminist representations of women into textual discourse. It should be noted that a separate essay evaluating Oz's depiction of the mother figure – a key topos in his corpus – is forthcoming.

Our primary concern in this essay is to become a 'resisting reader', thereby adopting an oppositional reading stance which on the one hand encourages interpretation against the grain of fabricated truisms, and, on the other, inevitably leads to the exposition of deforming stereotypes and oppressing misrepresentations that permeate the author's constructions of female characters. In other words, we have engaged in unveiling the beliefs and implicit assumptions that determine the delineation of the female, as well as the underlying premises that disturbingly identify womanliness with an array of sexist attitudes that offensively degrade its female psyche and sexuality.

The main inspiration for this pure content and form investigation has been the pivotal literary analysis that originated with Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Milett, critics who saw literature as reflective of collective subjugating male fantasies. As a result, the structure and philosophical agenda of the essay is dominated by the theory of gender binarism and imagery myths, its underpinnings first stated by De Beauvoir in her treatise *The Second Sex* (1949), and eloquently summed up by Pam Morris:

De Beauvoir points out that a concept of 'otherness' is necessary for organizing human thought. We can acquire a sense of self – of 'me' – only in opposition to what is 'not me' – what is other... [and] 'woman' functions as the other in the same way which allows men to construct a positive self-identity as masculine.

[3] And because what is other does not have identity in its own right, it often acts as an empty space to be ascribed whatever meanings the dominant group chooses. Thus women are frail not strong, emotional not rational, yielding not virile, so that masculinity can be defined as those positive qualities... by seeing women as other to themselves, as not-men, men can read into 'femininity' whatever qualities are needed to construct their sense of the masculine. So, a mythicised 'Woman' becomes the imaginary location of male dreams, idealizations and fears.²

In the ideologically masculist world of literature, the mainstay of gender polarities, and one of the most persistent cultural models to oppress women, has been the employment of the female form to function solely as a sexual object in male-oriented narratives. Of the panoply of misogynous myths to occupy the site of fiction, the myth that equates femininity with sexuality, and which declaims that women are promiscuous, morally lax and lascivious is the most central to feminist issues of representation.

To put it differently, the social construction of gender is still driven by a patriarchal conceptual apparatus which articulates androcentric stereotypes in the portrayal of female protagonists. Thus, female characters are infantilised and devalued, as well as distinguished from men, by having their entire being generically defined purely in the sexual realm. Greer underscores the importance of this phenomenon when she writes 'The universal sway of the feminine stereotype is the single most important factor in male and female woman-hatred.'

The claim being made here is that in Amos Oz's writings, the female characters, in their various permutations, tend to be subsumed and driven by their libidinal needs, to the extent that their whole being is propelled by the desire for sexual activity. Writing in 1976, critic Mordechai Avishay pointed to Oz's penchant in adumbrating his women protagonists as people who are ruled and controlled by their sexual yearning and are innately lustful: 'Oz emphasises in all of his stories the erotic element so much so that in some cases it becomes the main reason for their actions and

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² Pam Morris, *Literature and Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 14.

³ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1970), 261.

[4] determines the internal content of the situations in the narratives... the meaning here is not of love, as real love does not exist here; and not an healthy eroticism, but one that has much of the sick and perverse.' In alliance with Avishay, though not commenting on Oz's work, Hays shrewdly argues that the sex-coding of women operates on the 'smug assumption that a woman's biological difference sets her apart, that she is essentially inferior.' 5

Oz takes this point *ne plus ultra* in the novel *To Know A Woman* (1989) in which the character of Annamarie, the central hero's neighbour, is reduced and made to exist solely for the sexual pleasure and usefulness of the male protagonist, Yoel. Indeed, she is merely a presence in the book and not a veritable, three-dimensional protagonist. Thus, when she is initially introduced to the reader, it is only through Yoel's gaze on her body that we see her:

Annamarie... a petite, attractive woman, with childlike laughing blue eyes and cheeky pointed breasts. Hi she said cheerily when she noticed Yoel eyeing her body over the hedge... The woman came over to the hedge, her nipples squinting under a light cotton blouse.⁶

On his first visit to the home of Annamarie and her brother, Ralph, Yoel again experiences sensations of desire upon seeing her breasts, comparing them to those of an animal: 'In his mind he imagined his own wide, ugly hands, roughly clasping those breasts and putting an end to their convulsions, like catching warm chicks.' Soon after, the brother leaves the room, as if by pre-arrangement with his sister, and Yoel and Annamarie make love. Consequently, Yoel, seeing that it is late, informs his hosts that it is time for bed, and takes his leave, urged by the two to visit again. From then onwards, a perverse *ménage à trois* forms: When Yoel wishes for sexual contact, he calls upon Annamarie and Ralph. After some superfluous talk and dinner, Ralph escorts Yoel to his sister's bed; Ralph, the voyeur, whom it is implied also sleeps with his sister, often stays to watch the two. What is one to make of these two scenes?

⁴ Mordechai Avishay, 'Yetzarim Vetanim' [Jackals and Desires] *Maariv* (11 June 1976), 1-3.

⁵ H.R Hays, *The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil* (New York: Putnam, 1964), 17.

⁶ Amos Oz, *To Know A Woman* (London: Vintage, 1992), 28-29. Hebrew original 1989.

⁷ Ibid., 112.

[5] [H]e allowed Ralph to take him to the bedroom. There, by the vague green underwater light, he saw Annamarie sleeping on her back like a baby, with her arms spread out by her sides and hair spread out on the pillow... Ralph began to undress him in a firm yet gentle way... unzipping his trousers, easing them down, pulling the underpants too, and then, with his arm round Yoel's shoulder like a swimming instructor leading a hesitant pupil to water, taking him to the bed and raising the blanket... covering the two of them, whispering good night and withdrawing.⁸

And:

[T]he overgrown farmer took Yoel's broad, ugly hands, which were brown like bread with garden soil under the fingernails, between his own pink abundantly freckled hands, and placed each of them slowly and gently on one of his sister's breasts, so accurately that Yoel could feel the stiffened nipple in the exact centre of his hand. Annamarie laughed softly.⁹

Earlier, Annamarie, infuriated by Yoel's treatment, asks whether he just sees her as a kitten. In the end, following Yoel's refusal to become anything more than a partner in bed, Annamarie ceases to be Yoel's sex toy, deciding to instead return to the United States. Later, Yoel wonders if it was so difficult to regard his 'mistress' with some respect, if it was impossible to merge erotic desire with consideration. It is noteworthy, that Oz has said that his purpose in writing the book was to present a man who attempts to discover and coexist in harmony with certain feminine elements within him, and to come to terms with the women who surround him. Nonetheless, one could argue that the portrayal of Annamarie betrays a completely different attitude.

Women's diminution to one of the sum of her parts and supposed sexual incontinence is dramatised in the encounter between the male protagonist Yonatan Lifshitz and [6]Michal, the soldier girl in A Perfect Peace (1982). 11 On a personal odyssey through the desert, Yonatan, a Kibbutz member who has fled his marriage and home,

⁸ Ibid., 188-189.

⁹ Ibid., 228.

¹⁰ Eleanor Wachtel, 'Amos Oz', *Queens Quarterly* 98:2 (Summer 1991), 429.

¹¹ Amos Oz, *A Perfect Peace* (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1982.

stumbles upon a military base, where he notices Michal. Immediately after she provides him with food and shelter, she relents to his superfluous advances and engages him in the most sensuous sex he has ever had. This chance tryst provides for three pages full of animalistic coupling (bordering on the pornographic) which for all their prosaic description and reflection of very common male fantasies, contain no psychological perspicuity about Michal nor the reasons she agrees to intercourse with this stranger. Clearly, she is an amalgam drawn from popular myths about the sybaritic nature of women. Later, the old man who provides guidance for Yonatan in the desert, compresses into a few sentences a woman's 'real worth':

Who was it? little Yvonne? Michal? Rafa'ella? Well, it's no business of mine. Between their legs they've all, heh, heh, got the same honeypot... You just happen to be down here and while away you are spending your nights shtupping Michal... As long as you get to the honeypot, bozhe moy, and have a stick to stir with it. Excellent! To fuck and live. 12

In the same book, the two girls with whom Eitan, the Kibbutz member, lives, are only mentioned when Azariah, a fellow Kibbutz member, refers to them as whores, denoting their status in the tale as ornaments for the men. 13 In another sequence Yonatan's wife, Rimona, whom Yonatan views as a frigid, placid mechanised doll is handed over to the newcomer Azariah by Yonathan, who moves into their house and into Rimona's bed; chattel-like, she sleeps with both men, ultimately impregnated by either one of the two. Importantly, this question is never resolved.

Indeed, it is of note that the issue of paternity appears elsewhere, underlying the facile notion that women are not to be trusted due to their sexual moral weakness. Examples of this include: Hava Lifshitz of A Perfect Peace and Ilana Brandsetter of Black Box [7] (1987), 14 who both refuse, the former continuously, and the other initially, to disclose the identity of their child's father.

¹² Ibid., 327, 331.

¹³ Ibid., 361.

¹⁴ Amos Oz, *Black Box* (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1987.

The projection of the female as object is also manifested in the delineation of the divorced wife of the nameless male protagonist of 'Tikkun Haolam' (Putting the World To Right, 1965). Although separated, and in spite of his hatred for her, he continues to visit her in the city as he still craves for the fruit of her body, knowing that she will oblige. At the end of the intercourse, she serves him coffee and he leaves. Towards the end of the story, when she informs him that she will no longer attend to his needs, as she is to be married, he departs angrily and picks up a city prostitute with whom he spends the night. Thus, unfortunately, it is a whore and an empty vessel in the shape of a kept-woman who represent femininity in the text.

The sexual marginalising of the female characters is also evident in *Black Box*. Boaz, ruler of his harem in Zikhron, dominates the gaggle of ethnically diverse girls whom he keeps for their labour and loin, and who grace the pages of the narrative to merely serve as inferior mistresses, but nothing more, 'Right now I'm with those two chicks, making them work and giving them a good time, eating, working a little, fucking...'¹⁶

The girls who frequent Ephraim's room in 'Mr Levi' (1976)¹⁷ are construed in a similar manner, evading the prying eyes of his father and Uri the child-narrator, self-appointed to guard his residence from the train of female worshippers. Furthermore, we are told that, while the other male characters – Uri and Mr Nehamkin – would succeed in fending off one admirer, the young women's persistent efforts would pay off and they would eventually manage to pierce his defence and satisfy their cravings by spending the night with Efraim.

Given that the novella is set in an historically vital period – the twilight of the British Mandate in 1940s Palestine and the preparation for the 1948 War of Independence, with almost all of the male characters invariably involved in the Underground or other [8] national matters, it is significant that the women are excluded from any public activity, occupying the plot's pages as simply distractions / attractions for the men, and are propelled by their physical needs. Thus Ruhama, whom Uri describes as lipless (and indeed she is silenced by the author), explains the indispensable urge she

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¹⁵ Amos Oz, 'Tikkun Haolam' [Putting the World to Right] in *Artzot Hatan* [The Lands of the Jackal] (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1965).

¹⁶ Amos Oz, *Black Box*, 140.

¹⁷ Amos Oz, 'Mr Levi' in *The Hill of Evil Counsel* (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1976.

is naturally shackled to as a female: '[Y]ou don't understand anything. He does need it and how. Everybody does... You'll grow up yourself soon, and then you'll need it, too. You'll be dying for it. And then you won't be such a little hero.' 18

Sure enough, the dark side of female sexuality is showcased in another novella, *The Hill of Evil Counsel* (1976)¹⁹ in the form of the two menacing baby-sitters, Madame Yabrova and Lybuov Binyamina. Taking advantage of the opportunity to give vent to their disturbed and abnormal sexual predilections when asked by the Kipnis family to watch Hillel, they lull the small boy into a false sense of security and molest him, deriving a sick pleasure from their sinister violation of his innocence:

Hands were pulling at his gym shorts. His organ which was taut like a thin pencil, was being touched with something like warm sticky jam... Then the slender pencil began to sneeze convulsively between the fingers of the musical women. The boy stifled a moan. Madame Yabrova let out a low, fleshy laugh. And Lyubov Binyamina suddenly panted like a dog.²⁰

Another example of the phallocentric propaganda that subjugates and undermines women is the constant negative reference to their promiscuity and voracious erotic appetite, which is possibly the nastiest of the anti-feminist lexicon. From the outset, Ilana of *Black Box* is established as the scorned embodiment of this vilified stereotype. In her letters to her ex-husband, Alex, she vaunts of her adulterous exploits as the quintessential raving nymphomaniac, detailing her betrayals with his friends, army superiors, pupils, driver, the electrician and the plumber.²¹ In her own words a 'born harlot', ²² she is also described, among other things, as a whore by her [9]son, ²³ Rahab by former husband Alex, ²⁴ and a dilapidated old car by his lawyer, Zakheim: 'It looks as though the gent is keeping her well serviced: she looks pretty good for her mileage, especially bearing in mind how many times she's changed hands.' ²⁵ It is not

¹⁸ Ibid., 96.

¹⁹ Amos Oz, 'The Hill of Evil Counsel' in *The Hill of Evil Counsel* (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1976.

²⁰ Ibid., 48-49.

²¹ Amos Oz, *Black Box*, 42-44.

²² Ibid., 41.

²³ Ibid., 2.

²⁴ Ibid., 89.

²⁵ Ibid., 57.

surprising that Goodman sums Ilana up as 'all id'.²⁶ It is Alex, however, when explaining his doomed attraction to Ilana and women's overpowering sexual allure, who captures in a paragraph the essence of one of the book's themes:

You recognised an insect that was out of its mind at the smell of a female in heat. I didn't have a chance. You are stronger than I am, in the same ratio as the sun is stronger than snow. Have you ever heard of carnivorous plants? They are female plants that can exude a scent of sexual juices over a great distance, and the poor insect is drawn from miles away into the jaws that are going to close around it. It's all over Ilana. Checkmate.²⁷ (my italics)

Later, Alex reformulates this misogynous equation, rolling into one utterance, a familiar, historically rooted misogynous discourse, 'You have the womb – you have the advantage.' Literary scholar Yosef Oren finds that the common denominator linking Ilana and her son Boaz is their belief in the hedonistic ideal, especially Ilana, who preaches to her ex-husband Alex about utilising the present to pleasure the body, justifying her many episodes of infidelity.

Batya Pinski of 'A Hollow Stone' (1965)²⁹ is another illustration of an unchaste libertine who bestowed her sexual favours on a litany of men for reasons which the author never explains. After being widowed, we are told, she began to see Zeiger, a relationship viewed by the Kibbutz members with favour. Then, however, the situation unexpectedly deteriorated, as scoldingly reported by the narrator: 'Zeiger was the first, but he was not the last. Within a matter of weeks, news had spread of various peripheral characters finding their way to Batya Pinski's room at night. She [10]did not even turn her nose at refugees, or at eccentrics like Matityahu Damakov.'³⁰ Moreover, it is implied, that for this reason, her daughter Ditza, within a year or two, became a carbon copy of her mother, entertaining soldiers and visitors to the kibbutz, often running away to pioneering settlements and encampments in the desert.

²⁶ Ibid., 36.

²⁷ Ibid., 91.

²⁸ Ibid.,101.

²⁹ Amos Oz, 'A Hollow Stone' in *Where the Jackals Howl* (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1965.

³⁰ Ibid., 161.

Bruria, the excessively wanton girlfriend of Itche, the deified commander of the short story 'The Trappist Monastery' (1965)³¹ is explicitly locked into the confining parameters of a plot pattern that locates its umbilical motif as women's capricious sexual appetite. It shows Bruria having intercourse with two men on the same night, Nahum the medical orderly and Rosenthal the operations officer, while Itche is out on a reprisal mission. As the story begins we read of Itche's treatment of Bruria:

She would say 'You're disgusting, stop that', but these words always came from her lips warm and moist, as if she were really saying, 'More, more!' And he loved to insult her and even to humiliate her in the presence of the entire battalion... He used to scold Bruria, telling her to leave him alone, stop running after him all day, and come to him only at night... In the end she always came back to Itche, chastened, moaning and servile, almost begging for punishment.³²

Since the narrative partly deals with an Israeli counter-raid in response to intense provocation from the Jordanian side – a quintessentially military situation – Oz could have provided some insight into the experience of a woman in this milieu, but interest instead turns to her virtues as a largely derogated stereotyped sexual creature.³³ The enactment of the sex-scene between her and Nahum symbolises how the author subordinates content to archetype, 'She stretched out her hands to her sides as if awaiting crucifixion and said, "At least get it over with quickly." As it turned out, these words were not necessary.'34 Later that night, Nahum finds Bruria, again, as a pathetically exploited figure, 'There he saw Bruria, leaning against the wall. The buttons of her blouse were open, one breast protruded from her brassiere, and [11] Rosenthal... was holding the nipple between two fingers... She stood there as if asleep on her feet or as if all was lost and there was no purpose left.'35 Itche, on the other hand, is valorised in mythical and biblical terms by the narrator and fellow

³¹ Amos Oz, 'The Trappist Monastery' in Where the Jackals Howl (London: Vintage, 1993). Hebrew original 1965.

³² Ibid., 89.

³³ Esther Fuchs, 'The Beast Within: Women in Amos Oz's Early Fiction', *Modern Judaism* 4:3 (1984),

³⁴ Amos Oz, 'The Trappist Monastery', 96-97. ³⁵ Ibid., 98.

soldiers, variously described as 'king'³⁶ and 'spiritual brother of the warriors of King David.'³⁷ Tellingly, the nodal point of the plot revolves around a journey Nahum and Itche take to find Bruria, whom Itche falsely believes has left with another solider, namely, Rosenthal. In essence, Bruria serves as the catalyst for the character exploration of the two men that follows during the trip. The sense of locking the women into inferior and mainly sexual types make itself felt everywhere.

In the 1976 revised edition, the soldier girls' role in the preparation for the assault raid is restricted to providing the commando unit with cartons of sweets. ³⁸ At the same time, Itche mockingly reminds the girls not to forget to make ready 'lollipops on a stick' when the triumphant battalion returns. Elsewhere, the theme of women as sexual objects continues. We are told that Rosenthal, the operations officer would translate for Bruria the contents of pornographic magazines; Nahum, the medical orderly is caught cutting nude pictures of women and the general duty men would spend hours in the shower hut peeping through the holes they had punched in the partition between the men's and women's showers. As a whole, while the male characters are explored and eventually evolve, Bruria remains a thinly sketched prototypical patriarchal conception of a woman who is controlled by her anatomy and whose entire being connotes unbridled passion.

The fantasy-based image of the young, sometimes maiden, nubile and sexually immature girl who seduces older men is splendidly demonstrated in *Where the Jackals Howl* (1965) and *Elsewhere Perhaps* (1966).³⁹ The fragmentation of persona is much emphasised in the introductory segment to the sixteen year old Galila in *Where The Jackals Howl*, where she is shown via a series of descriptions in the shower. It does disclose the author's disinterest in the character's intellect, and his preoccupation with her physiognomy. What follows next is Galila's visit to Matityahu [12]Damakov's room, an idiosyncratic loner, who is as old as her father or maybe older, to collect some canvasses and paint he promised her. Once in the room, Damakov reveals to Galila that he is her real father. The young siren, however, is undeterred by this sudden revelation, and dismisses his claim as untrue so as to enable

³⁶ Ibid., 89.

³⁷ Ibid., 90.

³⁸ Ibid., 76.

³⁹ Amos Oz, *Elsewhere Perhaps* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,1973). Hebrew original 1966.

the consummation of their mutual and raging desire. Consequently, she urges him to give release to his wants, 'I'm not yours, I'm sure of it because I'm blond, I'm not yours or Leon's either, I'm blond and it's all right! Come on.'40 The final bathetic sequence sees the two retreating from the copulation, intimating that Galila decides against this possible incestuous affair when she remembers her mother's face and is overcome by a pang of conscience.

It is in *Elsewhere Perhaps* that this theme is expanded and crystallised to take in the conquest of a middle-aged man by a virginal adolescent nymph, whom Miriam Arad has described as 'temptation incarnate'. The story fails to clarify why on the one hand the sixteen year old Noga rejects her teenage boyfriend, Rami, but on the other is drawn to the sweaty, hirsute middle-aged Ezra. In that context, the only clue to Noga's motives is a cryptic statement by her that Ezra's suffering has corrupted him, and that she must therefore purify him. The exploitative soft core sequence that details Noga's enticement of the older man (in the stable, no less) and the subsequent intercourse that takes place, overtly inverts the situation to present Noga as the wilful, experienced *femme fatale*, and Ezra as the naive, resisting victim:

Ezra took hold of her thin arm and tried to take her to her room. Noga wouldn't let him. She fought back. She stood rooted to the spot. Perplexed, he paused and looked at her, desperately tired... Noga clung to the man's powerful body. He tried to prize her loose. She gripped his clothes with her nails. Delicious kisses on his hairy, sweat-matted chest. Backward she dragged him step by tiny step into the thick darkness of the myrtle bushes. Who taught her tongue to lick his salty neck so tenderly? or her fingers to play so cleverly on the back of his neck... Her body awoke and filled with sweet gushes... Her breaths came in [13] pants, her mouth stretched wide open, her tiny teeth dug again and again into the blind flesh.⁴²

It is significant that narratively, apart from the presence of the sexual objectification of women, the Oz diegesis is punctuated with scenes that contain physical and verbal

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⁴⁰ Amos Oz, Where the Jackals Howl, 19.

⁴¹ Miriam Arad, 'Devil in the Kibbutz', *Jerusalem Post Book Reviews* (28 October 1966), 21.

violence against its female protagonists. Oz's stories heave with emotionally disturbing instances where permutations of violence are integrated as an ingrained literary strategy, stressing the acceptability of men's odious attitude towards the brutalisation of women's bodies. Ruthven explains why critics must not overlook this type of material: 'Male aggression against the female is capable of being displaced... into art forms, where it reproduces women as objects of sadistic humiliation. The persistent strain of misogyny in literature is therefore a matter of concern to anybody who views symbolic aggression as existing in the same continuum as acts of physical violence'. ⁴³

Physical violence is very much in evidence in the novel *A Perfect Peace*. Yonathan's use of physical force against his wife, Rimona is manifested in several violent episodes which dramatise the seething anger towards Rimona accumulating inside of him. A striking evidence of this is proffered in the description of his endeavours to stimulate and arouse her frigid body, endeavours which involve a mix of tenderness and physical asperity:

The patient, bitter beating against her, the more and more desperate search everywhere for some opening, with kisses, with caresses, with cajolery, with silence, with *cruelty*... like a savage, like an ape, gently... obscenely, violently... his hands with sudden fury grasping, shaking her shoulders, shaking her back, her whole body, as if it were a watch that stopped ticking, *even cuffing her face* with the back of his hand, one time even with his fist. (my italics)⁴⁴

Further, his rage is codified in the brutal imagery he chooses to express his sexual frustration and his yearning to shatter her torpid demeanour: 'Once and for all to grab [14]the bread knife and plunge it into her soft skin, into her vein and arteries, and down deeper yet, to open her up, to rampage through the dark lymph of her and the fat and the cartilage, to the innermost nooks and crannies, to the marrow of her bones, to carve her till she screamed.' Disturbingly, the scenes of battery are reported in a non-judgmental, neutral manner, without being challenged either by the omniscient

⁴⁵ Ibid., 61-62.

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⁴³ K.K. Ruthven, Feminist Literary Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 83-84.

⁴⁴ Amos Oz, *A Perfect Peace*, 60-61.

narrator or by the victim herself. This has the effect of alienating the reader from Rimona and leading him or her to either cast the blame on the heroine for submitting to the beating, or to assume that male violence against women is an acceptable part of marriage. Quite apart from Yonathan's deplorable actions, what is even more unsettling is that nowhere in the novel does Yonathan express a modicum of remorse or regret for his actions.

Black Box confirms and reinforces the male insanity that women respect and desire violence, that they are, as patriarchal codes of ideologies maintain, innately sadomasochistic. The novel taps a sexual machismo that articulates male prejudices about domestic violence and promotes the insidious retrograde fare about women's supposed masochistic nature. Milett sums up this entrenched common myth as: 'Masochism is female; femininity is masochistic.' Oz estranges the reader from the story's victim, Ilana Brandsetter, by intellectually eroticising the violence and by skirting along the edge of quintessential sexist discourse – he simply grounds his female character in morally defective Freudian and cultural conventions. Scutt explains these conventions: 'The Freudian concept of femininity, embodying an unconscious need for punishment and neurotic self-injury, is often used to explain domestic violence: why do women remain? because they love it, it is said.' Susan Faludi found that the 80s backlash saw a clamouring by the male psychiatric fraternity to re-introduce the quaint 'masochistic personality disorder' that classified Masochism as an inborn female trait. Masochistic personality disorder' that classified

Formally, *Black Box* is structured as a series of stratagems to embed in the text the notion that Ilana, a battered wife, derived a sexual kick from the physical and verbal [15]humiliation dished out by her ex-husband Gideon. This is heightened by her reawakened yearning for his vituperative brand of abuse that permeates the fabric of the plot, and which explains her renewal of the relationship, seven years after its dissolution. As Goodman quite rightly points out: 'Ilana cannot do without her

⁴⁶ Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971), 194.

⁴⁷ Jocelyne, A. Scutt, Even in the Best of Homes: Violence in the Family (Victoria: McClough Publishing, 1990), 194.

⁴⁸ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Woman* (New York: Crown Books, 1991), 356-358.

husband's brand of defilement; she knows that in reinstating her connection with him she is asking for abasement.'49

What is demonstrably clear is that the novel triangulates sexual politics by intermingling love, sex and violence, and creating an enmeshment between those three elements. Moreover, Ilana and Gideon are intended to be representative of masculine and feminine binarisms – the symbolic and parabolic ingredients are borne out by the structure of the narrative.⁵⁰

The correspondence between the two reveals the violence perpetrated by Gideon. This is for instance how he reacted upon discovering Ilana's infidelity:

[Y]ou were overwhelmed with lunatic glee... you punched me until by a battering cross-examination you dragged out of me every detail, every jot and shudder, and without undressing me you fucked me standing up as though knifing me, and during and after you didn't stop interrogating me more and more and again you mounted me on the kitchen table and your teeth dug into my shoulder and you slapped me with the back of your hand, like punishing an unruly horse.⁵¹

If this isn't shocking enough, in another disturbing scene, Gideon relates another of his assaults, which this time includes his small son Boaz:

And how I came home one night and found a green lighter, not mine, on the kitchen table and started to punch you and suddenly he appeared in the kitchen in his spaceman pyjamas and asked me quietly to stop because you were [16] weaker. When I said to him, 'get into bed,' and went on hitting you, he picked up a little potted cactus and threw it at me, and it hit me on the cheek and I let go of you and grabbed hold of him in a frenzy and beat his golden head

⁴⁹ Walter Goodman, "Black Box" Explores the Crash of a Marriage', *New York Times* (22 April 1988), 36

⁵⁰ Avraham Balaban, *El halashon Vmimena: Lashon u-metziut bi-yetzirat Amos Oz* [Towards Language and Beyond: Language and Reality in the Prose of Amos Oz] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988), 175. ⁵¹ Amos Oz, *Black Box*, 163.

over and over again against the wall. I had my pistol in my pocket and I could have fired at the two of you that night and then put a bullet in myself.⁵²

Despite, but more particularly, because of Gideon's abuse, Ilana is compulsively drawn to her former husband and re-establishes their torturous association. The explicit link between Gideon's cruelty to Ilana and her love for him is made obvious by her attraction to his sadistic brand of contempt for her: 'I loved you not despite your cruelty; I loved the dragon itself... You have never had anything, and you will never have, besides your torture dungeons. Which my flesh longs for. Your tropical hell.'53

Oddly, she asks, why, as long as she was content to remain in the marriage, despite the deplorable episodes of violence, did he abandon her? And although she speaks of their incurable love, it never manifests itself in the text. On the contrary, their 'relationship is not based on affinity between equals, and there is no room in it for mutual understanding or intimacy achieved through openness and empathy.'54 In this context, Oz makes no attempt to explain why Ilana, a victim of domestic violence, several times driven to attempt suicide, seeks an emotional bond with her abuser.

To be sure, the novel through the various plot devices, unabashedly and surely implies that Ilana is indeed masochistic. This impression is further emphasized by the perverse pleasure Ilana takes in degrading herself before Gideon, grovelling at his feet like a submissive slave-girl: 'But you were and remain my husband. My Lord and Master. Forever. You are the lord of my hatred and... Ruler of my hair and my throat and the soles of my feet. Sovereign of my breasts my belly my private parts my womb. Like a slave girl I am in thrall to you... Alec, I'm still prepared to lick your boots as much as you like. I'll do anything you ask of me... I'll be your wife and your [17] servant.' 55 Ilana's self hate and inexplicable yearning for humiliation is

⁵³ Ibid., 65, 84.

⁵² Ibid., 66.

⁵⁴ Avraham Balaban, *El halashon Vmimena*, 162.

constantly reaffirmed and amplified through the author's focus on her present husband, Michel Sommo, who is gentle and kind – the antithesis of Gideon. 56

The representation of violence against female protagonists in the Oz cannon encompasses within its prism manifold ventilations, and often, only becomes apparent as one scratches the surfaces of the author's works to examine the seemingly insignificant deportment, thoughts and observations of secondary characters. The reason is that masculine hostility is frequently veiled as innocuous ruminations by a male character. Rogers, in her feminist manifesto on literary representation, states this premise nicely when she writes: 'I include among the manifestations of misogyny in literature not only direct expressions of hatred, fear, or contempt of womankind, but such indirect expressions as misogynistic speeches by dramatic characters... and condemnations of one woman or type of woman which spread implicitly or explicitly, to the whole sex.'57 And although the subtext of anger and aggression towards women to be discussed is often only alluded to, it does affirm the presence of the consistent theme of hostility towards women interwoven within the several sub-narratives.

Rami Rimon of the novel Elsewhere Perhaps is a young man frustrated by his girlfriend, Noga Harish, who refuses to acquiesce to his sexual desires. He ponders the reason for his failure and concludes that 'he must press harder than he has pressed so far. It is well known that women admire strength. "The more you beat them, the better they be," the proverb says. He curses his weakness. He certainly won't get anywhere by talking.⁵⁸ Earlier, during a flirtatious interlude with Noga, he makes up his mind to 'conquer' her by force, but relents to her rebuffs. Still, in a chapter titled 'Force', we are told of his new-found determination to 'beat a new path to his friends heart, a simple, straightforward path.'59 As a result, sometime later, while in Noga's room, he brutishly grabs hold of her, squeezing her ribs and kneading her breasts, so much so that he extracts a painful moan from the young woman. Undeterred by her [18] pleas to stop he persists, he is foiled from forcing himself on Noga by the

⁵⁶ Efraim Tzoref, *Nof Haadam Besipurey Amos Oz* [The Human Landscape in the Stories of Amos Oz] (Jerusalem: Tzur Ot, 1988), 125.

Katherine M. Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1966), xii-xiii.

Amos Oz, Elsewhere Perhaps, 81.

⁵⁹ Ibid.. 91.

appearance of another Kibbutz member, Ezra Berger. Later, Rami muses, 'Women understand only one language, brute force.'60

Another reference to violence towards women is made in *A Perfect Peace* through a crime committed by an eccentric character named Bolognesi. His crime: murdering his brother's fiancé by chopping her head off with an axe. Ezra Berger of *Elsewhere Perhaps*, whose motto is 'A plague on all women,'61 discloses his revulsion for the opposite sex when he echoes a biblical pronouncement, "I find woman more bitter than death," the preacher said, and he knew what he was talking about.'62 Another character, Mitya, of *The Hill Of Evil Counsel* speaks about doing harm to women:

[Y]our generation, whose souls have not been perverted by exile, have an obligation to make children by force by the women of the Fellahin. They wear long dark dresses down to their ankles, but underneath their dresses they have nothing on at all. They must be conquered and mounted by main force. With holy zeal... *We must spill fresh blood, dark, warm blood.* (my italics)

Whilst it is tempting to believe simplistically that these outbursts are inconsequent, they do exemplify the undercurrents of historically rooted misogynous codes of behaviour, interspersed within the stories – codes that reflect a litany of anti-woman rhetoric and attitudes. Sadly, the patriarchal legacy of violence that animates several of Oz's plots and which is inextricably enmeshed in the configuration of female subjugation, has been, for the most part, ignored by the Israeli literary establishment. As this essay sought to demonstrate, the female characters in the Oz corpus are enclosed in dogma-fettered wrappings that abstract them as the recto and verso of a limiting model of sexuality.

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⁶¹ Ibid., 59.

⁶² Ibid., 59.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 168.

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[1]

'WE ARE ALL GERMAN JEWS': EXPLORING THE PROMINENCE OF JEWS IN THE NEW LEFT

Phillip Mendes*

Jews were disproportionately involved in the 1960s student movement known as the New Left. Drawing on research data from primarily the USA and Australia, we explore some of the key factors that contributed to this prominence including the significant number of Jewish students at key universities, the impact of left-wing family backgrounds on many Jewish students, and the general influence of Jewish cultural values and experiences. We argue that Jewish student radicals incorporated the whole spectrum of Jewish identity from those who either rejected or expressed ambivalence about their Jewishness to those whose radical and Jewish commitments were closely aligned. We also explain why the Jewish contribution to the New Left had so little impact on mainstream Jewish political culture.

The disproportionate historical contribution of Jews to the political Left has been well documented. Both as individual theorists and activists of the stature of Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Blum and Emma Goldman, and as organised mass labour movements in, for example, revolutionary Russia and early-mid twentieth century Warsaw, Amsterdam, Paris, Toronto, New York and London, Jews have been conspicuous for their socialist and communist affiliations (Wistrich 1976, 1).

This Jewish alliance with the Left reflected a number of complex historical and political factors including the class oppression of Jews who were mostly poor and working-class, the ethnic/national oppression of Jews by various European right-wing governments and movements, and the defence of Jewish claims to equality by most left-wing European parties [2] and movements (Mendes 1999, 483-488). It is therefore

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not surprising that Jewish students played a disproportionate role in the 1960s radical student movement known as the New Left.

This essay will largely confine itself to an analysis of this phenomenon in the United States, Australia and France given the availability of empirical data on Jewish involvement in the New Left in these countries. However, some brief reference will also be made to the limited documentation of this phenomenon in other countries in order to demonstrate the breadth of the Jewish contribution to the New Left.

United States

The American New Left arguably comprised two distinct periods. The first was the early 1960s when students travelled to the southern states to support the emerging civil rights movement. Then in the mid 1960s the movement switched to the northern campuses to address issues of student rights, free speech, and above all opposition to the Vietnam War (Liebman 1979, 67-68, 540-541).

Jewish activists came from a range of backgrounds. Most of those who joined the New Left in the early-to-mid 1960s appear to have been largely assimilated third generation Jews from Old Left backgrounds, although some had participated in labor Zionist groups. Conversely, those Jews who entered the New Left after the mid 1960s appear to have had a stronger Jewish identity. Both groups seem to have grown up in a culture that validated the questioning of accepted ideas and authority (Liebman 1979, 542; Zeitz 2007, 171).

It has been estimated that roughly one third to one half of committed New Left activists in the USA were Jewish, including key leaders such as Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. Twenty three percent of Jewish students surveyed identified as leftist compared to four percent of Protestant students and two percent of Catholic students (Glazer 1969a, 112; Heineman 2001, 64).

[3] Jews were prominent in the struggle for black civil rights, and in the anti-Vietnam War campaigns. Jews made up approximately two-thirds of the white Freedom Riders that went South in 1961. In 1964 they represented from one-half to two-thirds of the

volunteers who flooded Mississippi to help register black voters. And two of the three civil rights workers, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, murdered by the Ku Klux Klan were Jewish.

At Berkeley in 1964, about one-third of the Free Speech Movement (FSM) demonstrators were Jewish as were over half of the movement's steering committee including Bettina Aptheker, Suzanne Goldberg, Steve Weisman, and Jack Weinberg, who coined the famous phrase 'You can't trust anybody over thirty'. Jewish students lit candles during the sit-in at the University administration building to mark the festival of *Chanukah*, and also sang *Hatikvah* (Aptheker 2006, 128-163; Whitfield 1983, 141). In 1965 at the University of Chicago, 45 per cent of the protestors against the university's collaboration with the Selective Service System were Jews. At Columbia University in 1968 one-third of the protestors were of Jewish origin, and three of the four student demonstrators killed at Kent State in 1970 were Jewish (Liebman 1979, 68).

Jews comprised a large proportion of the leaders and activists within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Some of the key leaders included the founder Al Haber, Todd Gitlin, Richard Flacks, Steve Max, Bob Ross, Mike Spiegel, Mike Klonsky, and Mark Rudd. Approximately 30 to 50 per cent of the SDS membership in the early-mid 1960s were Jewish. At one point in the late 1960s, SDS presidents on the campuses of Columbia University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Wisconsin (Madison), North Western University, and Michigan University were all Jews. Jewish participation in SDS was particularly high at Pennsylvania University and the State University of New York. There was also a number of Jews in the violent Weatherman group (Caute 1988, 388-389; Cohen 1980, 21; Heineman 1993, 83-123; Heineman 2001, 64; Liebman 1979, 67; Rothman & Lichter 1982, 23-24, 81).

Jews contributed significantly to the theoretical underpinning of the New Left. From 30 to 50 per cent of the founders and editorial boards of such New Left journals as *Studies on the Left, New University Thought*, and *Root and Branch* (later *Ramparts*) were of Jewish origin. [4]Radical academic bodies such as the Caucus for a New Politics and the Union of Radical Political Economists were overwhelmingly Jewish. A number of the key intellectual gurus of the New Left such as Paul Goodman, Noam

Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Herbert Marcuse were also Jewish (Franks 1991, 26; Heineman 2001, 81-82; Liebman 1979, 541; Muller 2002, 341-343; Sachar 1993, 804-805).

Australia

The Australian New Left started somewhat later than the American New Left, and did not really become a mass movement until 1967. Some of the student campaigns addressed issues of censorship, racism and university discipline, but the key issue was overwhelmingly opposition to conscription and the Vietnam War (Mendes 1993, 25-34).

In contrast to the American scene, the Australian new leftists were overwhelmingly first generation Jews whose parents had entered Australia as immigrants or refugees shortly prior to or following World War Two. Most had participated in Jewish youth groups as children, and appear to have had a strong Jewish cultural, although not particularly religious, upbringing (Mendes 1993, 39-44).

Jewish students were involved in significant numbers, both as leaders and as activists in anti-Vietnam War campaigns at Monash and Melbourne Universities and the wider Vietnam Moratorium Movement. At Monash University, it has been estimated that about 20 per cent of left-wing activists were Jewish, of whom 83 per cent were members of the hardline Left (Carroll 1970). A number of the leaders of the Maoist-influenced Monash Labor Club including Albert Langer and Dave Nadel were of Jewish background. Jews were also prominent in the New Left Club which had informal links with the Communist Party of Australia.

Similarly at Melbourne University, Jewish students were prominent in the two key left-wing organisations, the Labor Club and Students for a Democratic Society. Labor Club leaders Doug Kirsner and Bernie Grinberg earned particular notoriety in 1967 for raising money for [5]the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF). Younger Jewish students were also prominent in the secondary schools' student underground movement (Mendes 1993, 35-38).

Jewish students also made a significant contribution to the New Left movement in Sydney. A number of Jewish students including Jim Spigelman were prominent in the 1965 Freedom Ride in support of Aboriginal rights, and many Jews were active in the anti-Vietnam War movement (Mendes 1993, 145-46).

France

The French New Left became most famous for the student riots of May 1968 which targeted concerns about the university system (Caute 1988, 183-227). Many of the Jewish activists seem to have come from immigrant and refugee backgrounds including parents who had spent the war in Nazi or Soviet camps. A number had grown up in Communist youth groups, but some had also participated in left Zionist organisations such as Hashomer Hatzair (Berman 1996, 30-31; 2005, 207).

Jews appear to have constituted between one-third and one-half of the key radical leaders including prominent figures such as Alain Krivine, Alain Geismar, Pierre Goldman, Benny Levy, Andre Glucksmann and the famous Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Eleven of the twelve members of the political bureau of the trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire were Jewish comprising ten Ashkenazi Jews plus Daniel Bensaid who was a North African Jew by birth. This led another member to joke that the only reason the group didn't speak Yiddish at its meetings was because Bensaid would not be able to understand.

Overall it has been estimated that about three-quarters of the members of Trotskyist groups in the Paris area were identifiably Jewish. Jews were also very well represented in general among those who occupied the universities and engaged in a number of other radical activities, such as confrontation with the authorities and with the police (Berman 1996, 30-34; Cohen 1980, 49- 52; Friedlander 1990, 34-37, 124-131; Judaken 2006, 215-216; Memmi 1968).

[6]Other Countries

In Britain, a significant proportion of prominent New Left activists including Radical Student Alliance leader, David Adelstein, were Jewish. Jews were involved in

particularly large numbers in the two main Trotskyist groups, the International Marxist Group and the International Socialists. A number of key intellectual influences on the New Left such as Ralph Miliband, Raphael Samuel and Hyman Levy were also Jewish (Cohen 1980, 37-40; Chun 1993, 22-23).

Less specific details are available concerning the role of Jews in the Italian New Left. However, it would appear that many Jews were prominent in the range of far Left Italian groups, both at university and at high school level (Nissan 2009). In Argentina, a large number of young Jews were sympathetic to and/or active participants in the New Left (Cohen 1980, 56-58, 73). Jewish activists also appear to have played a key role in the Canadian New Left (Finkel 2003, 201).

As a qualification, it should be noted that such activists always constituted only a small minority of the larger Jewish student community. Most Jewish students in the USA, Australia and elsewhere do not appear to have been either left-wing or politically active (Glazer 1969a, 112; Liebman 1979, 540; Mendes 1993, 105; Porter & Dreier 1973, xx). Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that Jewish students were over-represented within the New Left.

Why were so many Jews involved in the New Left?

The first and most obvious factor is the high number of Jews attending the universities that were at the forefront of student activism (Cohen 1980, 3). For example, it has been estimated that Jews comprised about five per cent of American university students in 1969 – that being about 325,000 out of a total population of 6,700,000 students. In addition, they constituted a higher proportion of the enrolments of some of the elite colleges, and were often concentrated in the humanities and social science schools which were most receptive to New Left views (Glazer 1969a, 112; 1971, 57; Unger 1975, 128). Similarly in Australia, it has been estimated [7]that about 900-1000 Jews attended Monash University out of a total student population which grew from 4283 in 1965 to 9542 in 1969 (Mendes 1993, 161).

These figures suggest that Jewish students were well placed to participate in student politics. But they do not explain in isolation why so many Jews became involved in

radical Left rather than moderate Left or conservative politics. And in most cases, Jews still seem to have been over-represented as activists and leaders in the New Left even when compared to their percentage of total university populations.

A further explanatory factor is that many of the radical Jewish students came from left-wing family backgrounds. This argument is often referred to as the 'red diaper baby' thesis whereby it is assumed left-wing political views are directly handed from one generation to another (Kaplan & Shapiro 1998; Liebman 1979, 551-553; Mehnert 1976, 301). This argument appears to have some validity given that many of the Jewish student radicals surveyed in an international study had grown up in families with overt left-wing affiliations, and most believed that their parents agreed with or at least sympathized in part with their activism (Cohen 1980, 180). Studies of American Jewish radicals reveal similar findings. Heineman (2001, 69-70) and Klatch (1999, 40-41) both cite a significant number of student radicals who had grown up in highly politicized left-wing family environments, whilst Schultz (2001, 4-5) suggested that many of the Jewish women involved in the civil rights movements came from families with strong social justice beliefs. Zeitz (2007, 202-205) notes with specific reference to student activism at Columbia University that a group of several hundred parents of SDS activists – many of the most vocal being Jewish – organized a meeting in May 1968 to defend the student takeover of campus buildings, and condemn the response of the university administration. Similarly, an Australian study based on indepth interviews with 28 leading Jewish student radicals from Monash and Melbourne universities found that 22 came from overtly left-wing family backgrounds. They included ten students whose parents had been Communist Party members or supporters, seven who had left-wing sympathies, four who were Labour Zionists, and one from the Jewish Labour Bund. The other six described their family as 'small 1 liberals' or apolitical or centrist. None came from conservative or right-wing backgrounds. Half of these 28 activists identified the left-wing views of their parents as a prime political influence (Mendes 1993, 39-41). And a study of a /8/number of the leading French Jewish radicals (Berman 1996, 30-31) confirmed that most grew up in Communist or left-wing homes which were often influenced by earlier parental participation in the anti-Nazi resistance.

An associated factor is that Jewish parents – even when not leftist themselves – were far more likely to be tolerant of radical activism (Glazer 1969b, 129; Heineman 1992, 81-82; Whitfield 2001, 227-228). For example, SDS leader Mark Rudd's parents publicly expressed pride in his politics whilst clarifying that they did not agree with all his views. In contrast, radicals from non-Jewish backgrounds were often involved in major political conflict with their families (Liebman 1973, 164-165; Rothman & Lichter 1982, 82-83). However, the 'red diaper baby' thesis has one major weakness which is that it fails to specifically account for the significant minority of Jewish student radicals who were not influenced by left-wing parents (Cohen 1980, 180-181).

A third factor which arguably complemented the influence of families was a progressive interpretation of Jewish cultural values and experiences based on a synthesis of universalistic social justice beliefs with secular Jewish values and morality. These cultural influences would have included the historical tradition of Jewish radicalism, and particularly the established Jewish leftist sub-culture and institutional frameworks which reinforced the left-wing values of many families. Many of the Jewish New Leftists had attended left-wing youth groups, schools and summer camps which encouraged their activism (Liebman 1979, 542-545, 555-559; Naison 2002, 31).

Another influence would have been the atmosphere of critical and intellectual inquiry predominating in many Jewish homes, which led Jewish students to be actively concerned with public issues such as the Vietnam War and civil rights, even if they did not come from left-wing backgrounds (Glazer 1969a, 126; Whitfield 2001, 228-229; Zeitz 2007, 39-43, 201). A further influence driving the radicalism of many Jewish students was the impact of the Holocaust (and sometimes personal experiences of anti-Semitism) which generated a passionate abhorrence for racism and injustice (Klatch 1999, 56-57; Mendes 2003, 41; Schultz 2001, 181-190). According to Mark Rudd: 'World War II and the Holocaust were our [9] fixed reference points. We often talked about the moral imperative not to be Good Germans. We saw American racism as akin to German racism towards the Jews.' (Rudd 2008, 4).

How Jewish were the New Left Jews?

Historically, considerable debate has ensued regarding the extent to which leading Jewish radicals and radical Jewish movements were influenced by specifically Jewish concerns and consciousness. Most commentators agree that Jewish involvement in the Left can best be understood as reflecting a spectrum of Jewish influences and identity ranging from so-called 'non-Jewish Jews' whose Jewishness was virtually irrelevant to their radicalism to those whose activism was driven by specifically Jewish factors and beliefs (Cohen 1980, 9; Schatz 1988, 36). This spectrum can also arguably be applied to Jewish involvement in the New Left.

On the one hand, many commentators argue that Jewish involvement in the American New Left did not reflect – at least consciously – any specifically Jewish motivations (Finkel 2003, 201; Kaye/Kantrowitz 1996, 105-108; Porter & Dreier 1973, xxii-xxiv; Strickland 1988, 50). A number of students interviewed in the USA expressed a specific rejection of Jewish identity, and were highly critical of the insularity of much of the organized Jewish community and its exclusive emphasis on Jewish suffering (Feuer 1969, 427-429). SDS leader Mark Rudd later acknowledged: 'I don't remember a single conversation in which we discussed the fact that so many of us were Jewish. This glaring lack alone might serve as a clue to what we were up to: by being radicals, we thought we could escape our Jewishness.' (Rudd 2008, 4).

This distancing from Judaism was also apparent in the life stories of the two murdered civil rights workers, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. Neither specifically identified as Jews, neither received Jewish funerals, and twenty years after their death Goodman's mother commented that it had never occurred to her that her son had gone south as a Jew (Friedman 1995, 188-189).

[10]But others argue that their radical politics were driven by particular visions of Jewishness and the Jewish historical experience based on a heritage of marginalisation and oppression. Many Jewish SDS activists had grown up in secular households, but still identified culturally with Judaism, and believed that progressive Jewish values had significantly influenced their politics. Family experiences of the

Holocaust often sharpened their opposition to racism and oppression of all kinds (Bershtel & Graubard 1992, 240; Klatch 1999, 52-57; Schultz 2001, 4-5).

For example, leading SDS radical Michael Lerner (1969, 478) argued that Jewish tradition could provide a guide for 'a revolutionary overthrow both of the present corrupt Jewish community and the larger bourgeois society of which it is a part.' Lerner claimed that the ideas of the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible), Yehudah Halevi and A. J. Heschel would inform the struggle against 'the institutions of racist, imperialist, capitalist America' and in favour of 'justice, peace and brotherhood'. Such interpretations of Jewish tradition, however, remain contentious given that the Bible can just as easily be utilized to justify conservative and oppressive perspectives (Marqusee 2008, 221).

Some of the Jewish-identifying radicals created specifically Jewish New Left groups such as the Radical Jewish Union, Jews for Urban Justice, and the Radical Zionist Alliance in order to better integrate their political and ethnic/cultural identities. This included critiquing the internal dynamics of Jewish community institutions as reflected in Arthur Waskow's famous 1969 'Freedom Seder' which attacked alleged Jewish collaboration with exploitative and unjust social and economic structures and practices (Isaacs 1974, 93-94; Staub 2002, 153-193). Another motivating factor was the concern to defend the State of Israel's existence against the increasing anti-Zionism emanating from sections of the New Left. The emergence of the 'black power' movement may also have made it easier for radicals to openly express their ethnic as well as political affiliations (Bershtel & Graubard 1992, 244-248; Liebman 1979, 576-587; Porter & Dreier 1973, xxiv-xxv).

The Australian radicals also encompassed a range of Jewish influences. Thirteen of the 28 interviewees identified strongly as Jews at the time of their radical activities, and believed that their Jewishness had exercised a strong influence on their political beliefs. Two of the [11] interviewees expressed ambivalence regarding their Jewish identity, and were concerned to maintain a balance between their nationalist and universalistic values. The other thirteen interviewees claimed to have little or no Jewish identity (Mendes 1993, 42-43).

Similar diversity can be found amongst the French Jewish radicals. Benbassa (1999, 190) argues that most of the leading activists separated their radicalism and their Jewish identity, but nevertheless still acknowledged their Jewish backgrounds. Some such as Pierre Goldman did posit a direct link between their Jewishness and their radicalism. Others recognized the key influence of the Holocaust on the development of their political militancy.

What was the key difference between Jewish involvement in the New Left and the Old Left?

The 'Jewish question' was a prominent dividing factor in left-right political debates in the first half of the twentieth century. In general, secular working-class groups on the Left tended to defend Jewish civil and political rights, whilst right-wing groups were more likely to oppose Jewish equality. As a result, Jews from both working-class and middle-class backgrounds became involved in disproportionate numbers in left-wing political groups and parties. This support reflected both class and ethnic considerations. Poverty and anti-Semitism influenced Jews to join a movement which promised to end capitalist and racial oppression. Many Jews in the 1930s joined the Left specifically to oppose Nazism and anti-Semitism (Mendes 1999, 486).

In contrast, few Jews had specific class or ethnic considerations for joining the New Left. Most of the New Left Jewish radicals appear to have come from relatively affluent backgrounds, and were not motivated by material self-interest (Isaacs 1974, 104; Whitfield 2001, 222). In addition, there was rarely any specific Jewish concern or interest such as the threat of anti-Semitism that pushed them into seeking involvement with the Left. In fact, Jewish issues were largely invisible on the left during this period (Liebman 1979, 560-561). Jewish involvement in the New Left reflected solely universalistic concerns related to Black equality or opposition to the Vietnam War. To be sure, some Jewish radicals in the post-1967 [12]period were involved in defending Israel or critiquing Soviet anti-Semitism (Mendes 1993, 119-126), but these issues were generally not the factors which drove them to join the New Left per se.

Another significant difference between Jewish involvement in the Old Left and the New Left was that the latter rarely provoked any anti-Jewish backlash. The equation of Jews with Communism had been a central component of anti-Semitic agendas in the first half of the twentieth century, and was often used – most notably in Hitler's program of ideological genocide – to provoke murderous and irrational violence against Jews (Gerrits 1995, 49-50; Gerrits 2009). Consequently, a number of Jewish leaders expressed fears that the prominence of Jews in the New Left would provoke renewed anti-Jewish prejudice (Cohen 1980, ix; Glazer 1971, 57; Hertzberg 1997, 355; Memmi 1968, 28; Mendes 1993, 102; Porter & Dreier 1973, xix).

However, these concerns appear to have been unwarranted. There was no organized campaign to discredit Jews by associating them with New Left radicalism, or alternatively to discredit the New Left by stereotyping it as Jewish (Cohen 1980, x) At worst, there were a few isolated and relatively insignificant instances of anti-Semitism. For example, some SDS groups and individuals in the USA received anti-Semitic phone calls or experienced anti-Semitic comments during protests, and there were some euphemistic references to East Coast intellectuals and New York agitators undermining the moral and economic fabric of society (Aptheker 2006, 145-146, 167; Balser 1977, 17; Cohen 1980, x; Heineman 2001, 135; Naison 2002, 70; Sachar 1993, 806-807).

Similarly in Australia, there was a handful of implicit references to the Jewish origins of some of the leading radicals in parliament and the media, and some occasional instances of hate mail to the New Left student groups (Mendes 1993, 109-110). The best known anti-Semitic statement was the reference in France by the Gaullist and Communist media to the prominent New Left radical Danny Cohn-Bendit as a 'German Jew'. This statement only served to provoke the famous response, on the part of many young radical students in Paris, that they were all 'German Jews'. Some of De Gaulle's supporters replied: 'Cohn-Bendit to Dachau' (Judaken 2006, 220-221; Memmi 1968, 28).

[13] The relative absence of anti-Semitism seems to have reflected a number of factors. One was almost certainly that many in the general public were not even aware of the Jewish background of many of the radical leaders. And even those who were

aware tended either not to stereotype Jews and/or to recognize that the minority of radical Jews involved were not necessarily representative of the whole Jewish community. A second associated factor was that the radicals were not campaigning about any specifically Jewish issues that would have focused attention on Jews *per se*. A third factor was probably the general decline in anti-Semitism since World War Two, and the particular discrediting of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that had driven the Holocaust (Cohen 1980, 200).

The Aftermath

The disproportionate Jewish contribution to the New Left had remarkably little long-term influence on mainstream Jewish political culture. This was because there was arguably no specific Jewish political context to their involvement in this universalistic movement. In contrast to the Old Left, there was no alignment between New Left activities and Jewish interests. And even though many Jews appear to have been influenced by progressive interpretations of Jewish values and experiences into participating in the New Left, there was generally little or nothing about their radical agenda that distinguished them from other New Left activists.

To be sure, a minority of Jewish radicals appear to have been passionately concerned with defending Zionism and Israel. But most of these Jewish activists appear gradually to have prioritized their Jewish rather than radical affiliations. Many simply gave up on left-wing politics. Others immigrated to Israel to pursue their beliefs in a more congenial environment. Some began to theorize a specifically Jewish religious and value base for their radical beliefs based on linking traditional Jewish texts such as the teachings of the biblical prophets with contemporary social concerns which would later be reflected in publications such as *Tikkun* Magazine (Liebman 1979, 568-580; Mendes 1993, 111-122; Rose et al. 2008).

[14]But overall, the New Left appears to have been seen by most Jews as either irrelevant or openly unsympathetic to their interests. In particular, the perceived anti-Zionism (and at times overt anti-Semitism) of the New Left from 1967 onwards only served to alienate the majority of Jews including the vast majority of Jewish students who were not involved in its activities, and to confirm their commitment to nationalist,

rather than internationalist solutions (Cohen 1984, 38-56; Glazer 1969a, 129-130; Liebman 1979, 562; Mendes 1993, 102-103).

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[1]

THE USE OF HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY BY JEWS FOR JESUS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Elliot Cohen*

The primary concern of this paper is a video entitled 'Survivor Stories: Hope from an Unlikely Source', published by the controversial organisation Jews for Jesus (JFJ) in 2001, which consists of several historical and evangelical testimonies from Holocaust survivors who are now Messianic Jewish believers and spokespeople for the JFJ movement. In analysing the presentation and language used and its relations to questions of identity, we will adopt a discursive approach that is transdisciplinary, extending beyond social psychology into literary theory and theological reflection, which is designed to avoid the reductionist tendencies that are found in many standard anti-missionary tracts and materials concerning the JFJ and other Messianic Jewish movements. We will inevitably touch upon issues relating to Jewish identity more generally in our attempt to locate the use of the Holocaust testimony of members of the JFJ within wider Jewish and academic discourse concerning the Holocaust. The primary focus will be the utilisation of such material for evangelical or missionary purposes.

The purpose of this paper will be to perform a narrative inquiry into the use of Holocaust testimony by Jews for Jesus (JFJ). When referring to 'narrative' throughout this paper I shall be conveying two meanings. The first meaning concerns narrative as the literal form of storytelling, specifically as a Jewish folk art. In this way we might observe a particular style of narrative that possesses certain features that may be recognised as a 'Jewish story.' The second meaning concerns narrative as understood within the discipline of what has come to be known as Narrative Psychology. This particular approach, or analytical method, focuses on the various ways that one's

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¹ For powerful examples of Jewish storytelling the reader might consult E. Wiesel, *Souls on Fire:* Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), S. Zeitlin, Because God Loves Stories: An Anthology of Jewish Story Telling (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1997), and S. Zevin, A Treasury of Chasidic Tales (New York: Artscroll Judaica Classics, 1992).

[2] identity and social reality is formed, performed, negotiated and re-formed through the telling, retelling and hearing of stories. This inevitably initiates discourses relating to the expression and performance of Jewish identity within the JFJ's testimonies. We will observe how some of the perceived paradoxes and problems associated with being a 'Jew for Jesus' are smoothed over in a 'narrative of the self', whereby disparate and contradictory parts of one's identity are seemingly resolved and unified within the sequential telling of one's tale (within the logic of the narrative). For the purposes of avoiding any grand epistemological claims, whilst also recognising the importance of reflexivity, the author declares himself to be from an Orthodox Jewish background, and currently self-defines as a post-denominational Jew.

The JFJ is an organisation devoted to evangelical outreach, primarily amongst Jewish people; or to quote directly the Jews for Jesus mission statement: 'We exist to make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people world-wide.'4 There is a certain ambiguity in the 'our' of this statement, as it may be construed as indicating either a claim to belong (that is, to be part of the Jewish people) or even an affirmation of ownership as the authentic claimants to the title of the Jewish people. It is partly due to ambiguities of this nature that particular controversies arise. To illustrate further, one may consider the use of the words 'testimony' and 'witness'. One may rarely encounter these terms in daily usage outside legal discourse, yet within a specifically Evangelical Christian context their meaning and purpose is quite specific. In Evangelical Christian discourse to 'give testimony' or to be a 'witness' implies that one has undergone a transformative experience that has led to one's acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's personal lord and saviour and is testifying in the hope that others will be brought to the faith. What I will be addressing throughout this paper is primarily a war of words or, more precisely, the way certain words or phrases are being used, who is using them and for what purpose (or imagined purpose). As Judaism is not (currently) an evangelical faith and does not actively seek

² Examples of Narrative/Discursive approaches within Psychology are exemplified by C. Squire, ed., *Culture in Psychology* (London: Routledge, 2000), D. McAdams, *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self* (New York: William and C. Morrow and Co., 1993), and C. Riesman, *Narrative Analysis* (California: Sage Publications, 1993).

³ S. Hall, D. Held, and T. McGrew, *Modernity and its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 277.

⁴ Jews for Jesus Mission Statement http://www.jewsforjesus.org/about Accessed 03/10/08.

⁵ P. Stromberg, Language and Self-Transformation: A Study of the Christian Conversion Narrative (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-3.

[3]converts, one of the few places one encounters individual Jewish testimonies is in relation to the Holocaust. These testimonies served firstly to record, in the form of witness accounts, the atrocities that occurred, but over time they have borrowed from established literary genres, in particular the Chasidic tale or travel story. The JFJ's use of Holocaust testimony to serve as a contemporary evangelical resource could, arguably, be likened to one of the functions of ancient and medieval Jewish martyrological traditions, but has nevertheless proven offensive to many within the Jewish community.

It may be noted throughout this paper that the controversies arise not simply over what is being said, but who is speaking. The JFJ will address Jewish people as fellow Jews (speaking as if they were insiders, providing an emic perspective), and indeed this is one of the features that distinguishes their evangelical appeals. Outside Orthodox Jewish circles (in contrast to inside, where one's Jewish identity is determined purely by matrilineal descent, that is, whether one's mother was Jewish) there is much debate over the question 'who is a Jew?', which in turn raises the question 'who has the power to define, to recognise and refute Jewish identities?' What is perhaps significant is that the 'Jewish' status of the JFJ has been denied by almost every mainstream denomination of Judaism (such as the Orthodox, the Conservatives, the Reformers, the Reconstructionists, and the Liberals). However, one result of the emergent complexity of modern (or post-modern) definitions of Judaism (ranging from religious, cultural, ethnic to political) has been that groups seeking to enter the Jewish world and identify themselves 'Jewish' now have seemingly more entry points than ever before. Or post-modern or points than ever before.

⁶ A. Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust* (London: Continuum, 2000), 50-80.

⁷ The novelty of the JFJ's evangelical appeals is explored in R. Tucker, *Not Ashamed: The Story of Jews for Jesus* (Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1999), and Y. Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America 1880-2000* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁸ This question is considered from a historical perspective by L. Schiffman, *Who was a Jew: Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives* (New Jersey: Ktav Publishing, 1985), and from more contemporary perspectives in M. Hyman, *Who is a Jew? Conversations, Not Conclusions* (New York: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998).

⁹ E. Lederhendler, *Who Owns Judaism? Public Religion and Private Faith in America and Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ For discussions concerning Jewish identities (religious, cultural, political) the reader might consult J. Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: The Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 1994), J. Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish: Constructing Ambivalent Identities* (London: Routledge, 2000) and E. Benbassa and J. Attias, *The Jews and Their Future: A Conversation on Judaism and Jewish Identities* (Zed Books: New York, 2004).

[4]Despite believing and propagating a theological system that is very similar to mainstream Evangelical Christian Theology, the JFJ movement still maintains that it is both a Jewish and a Christian movement. Terms such as 'Jewish-Christian' have been abandoned in preference of the term 'Messianic Jew', or 'completed Jew'. Consequently in the testimonies of JFJ one will often find that immediately following the acceptance of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God there is an explicit affiliating (or re-affiliating) with the Jewish people. An example of this can be seen in the JFJ testimony of Richard Harvey. 11 The title of his book But I'm Jewish! (1996) is a clear and bold affirmation, which when read as a testimony may appear either ambiguous or confrontational. To a Jewish reader the statement may appear to challenge any who would seek to deny Harvey his Jewish status on account of his acceptance of the New Testament, and specifically the recognition and assertion of Jesus of Nazareth as both Messiah and Divine. To Christian believers/readers the statement may appear somewhat more complex, but is primarily intended to demonstrate that the acceptance of the New Testament does not lead to the loss, or devaluation, of one's Jewish heritage and identity. Likewise on the JFJ founder's (Moishe Rosen) homepage there is a section titled 'Don't call me a converted Jew!' which begins:

Please don't call me a converted Jew! I was born a Jew and I'll die a Jew. Even if I wanted to be anything else, I couldn't because Jewish is what I am and will be irregardless of how I or anyone else feels about it. As it is, I'm pleased to be a Jew and part of a noble people who have brought so much to the rest of the world.

¹¹ R. Harvey, *But I'm Jewish! A Jew For Jesus Tells His Story* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 1996).

[5]It concludes 'So don't call me a converted Jew. I'm a converted sinner and a completed Jew.' Other testimonies follow suit 13 and insist upon retaining their Jewish identity not simply in spite of their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, but because of it. The acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah is consistently presented as being the missing piece to a complete Jewish identity and faith, thus Jews who do not believe in Jesus are consequently perceived and related to as being incomplete Jews.

Counter-missionary organisations such as Operation Judaism in Birmingham (UK), Jews for Judaism (US) and Outreach Judaism (US) consistently argue that the 'Jewishness' of the JFJ serves only as a veneer, or subterfuge, with which to lure in unsuspecting members of Jewish communities into accepting Jesus. ¹⁴ Whether one believes that deception is indeed taking place is dependent on one's ideological position. One example may be seen in the JFJ's avoidance of using the name and title 'Jesus Christ' and preference for the Hebrew name and title *Y'shua Ha Moshiach* (Jesus the Messiah). This intentional Hebraising may be viewed as either camouflaging the overt non-Jewish perception of Jesus (the greatest barrier to a Jew's acceptance) or may be a sincere expression of one's belief in restoring Jesus back to his Jewish roots, and revealing the Jewish origins of the Christian faith. ¹⁵ One may also observe the JFJ's conscious sharing (or occupation) of Jewish time and space in their marking the Jewish festivals and their use of Jewish cultural resources (speech and symbols), which all raise complex and problematic questions pertaining to cultural ownership.

It is perhaps in keeping with this theme of sharing Jewish time and space that the JFJ looked to the Holocaust as an event that, to a large extent, has shaped and defined the modern Jewish experience. But the JFJ's use of the Holocaust to create a platform for evangelising to the Jewish people has been a highly controversial decision. The

¹² Moishe Rosen's homepage http://members.aol.com/mitymo/convert.html Accessed 12/12/06.

¹³ Jews for Jesus http://www.jewsforjesus.org/topics/answers/lifestories Accessed 26/09/08.

¹⁴ For a hostile but focused treatment, see S. Arkush, *To Be A Messianic Jew: A Short Survey of Messianic Judaism and Their Implications* (Birmingham: Operation Judaism, 2000).

¹⁵ For a classic example of this phenomenon, see M. Rosen, *Y'shua: The Jewish Way To Say Jesus* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 1982).

¹⁶ J. Sacks, *Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought After the Holocaust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 25-51.

[6] question that naturally arises is: who owns the Holocaust?¹⁷ This draws one's attention to the various ways the Holocaust may be used by different groups for very different ends:

Holocaust survivors and children of survivors give their amazing true-life accounts, telling how they clung to life amidst unimaginable horrors and loss. Most amazing of all, these 'survivors' did more than survive. Despite the darkness they endured, they found light and hope – from a most unlikely source. ¹⁸

The respect afforded to Holocaust survivors by the Jewish community is something that appears to have been keenly appreciated and consequently used by the JFJ in their evangelism; there is understood to be something different, special, about these testimonies as opposed to other standard JFJ testimonies: 'Before you dismiss my belief, you should know that in addition to being Jewish, I'm also a Holocaust survivor.' The JFJ Holocaust survivors have been allocated their own JFJ web space and literature. It is this fact that the teller is a Holocaust survivor that suggests you ought to listen, even if (especially if) you don't think you'll agree, out of a certain reverence and respect.

The Jewish community is accustomed to listening very carefully to its Holocaust survivors. There has been an established tendency to turn them into the living symbols of Jewish continuity and their experiences have been painstakingly documented and recorded for posterity, with the emphasis that this 'never happens again'. In Oren Baruch Stier's thesis four main methods of memorialising are considered.²⁰ The first is iconic and would include symbols and images that are collectively recognised by Jewish people as specifically pertaining to the Holocaust. One example of this may be the rail tracks that led to the Auschwitz concentration camp; this can be seen in the JFJ's choice of barbed wire as the iconic imagery for their online collection of

¹⁷ J.K. Roth, *Holocaust Politics* (Kentucky: Westminister John Knox Press, 2001), 38-45.

¹⁸ From the video sleeve of *Survivor Stories: Hope From an Unlikely Source* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2001).

¹⁹ Jews for Jesus, Australia http://www.jewsforjesus.org.au/survivor-stories.html Accessed 03/10/08.

²⁰ O. Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

[7]Holocaust testimonies available in several pages designated 'Survivor Stories'.²¹ Other examples may include the pictorial use of a yellow star or the train tracks that led to, or the sign that hung at the entrance of, Auschwitz. Museological remembrance would include memorials such as Yad Vashem in Israel and numerous Holocaust education centres, and their respective Internet sites all ensure that people 'never forget' what happened. Ritual-ceremonial remembrance includes the Jewish annual festival of Yom Hashoah (day of calamity) and the recently created United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January). But of all these forms of memorial it is the actual survivors and their personal stories that consistently can be seen to have the most profound and lasting effect.

In stark contrast to the Evangelical Christian's emphasis on their personal relationship with God, the voice of the individual speaking apart from his/her community may sound out of place in a Jewish context, at worst it may sound divisive and perhaps even destructive. The 'Jewish people' may be understood as being exactly that: a people. And it is within this collective identity that narratives have been formed, reformed and continue to be performed. Of course this idea is to be found within early Rabbinic commentaries: 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6) - this teaches that they are like a single body, a single soul.'22 Further demonstrations of this collectivity may be seen in the way that Jewish people perform prayer. Ideally, Jewish people will pray, not as individuals, but as a community, a kehilla. Jewish law Halacha explicitly states that at least ten men must be present (a minyan) before a daily service can begin. Jewish prayers themselves speak both of and as the people of Israel, and do not generally take the form of individual petitions. The following examples are taken from the Amidah prayer:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, God of Abraham, God of Issac and God of Jacob.²³

Be favourable Hashem, our God, toward your people Israel and their prayer and restore the service to the Holy of Holies of Your Temple.²⁴

²¹ Jews for Jesus: Survivor Stories http://jewsforjesus.org/answers/survivorstories Accessed 18/01/10. ²² Mechilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai cited in J. Sacks, 'Practical Implications of Infinity' in Z.

Posner et al., To Touch the Divine: A Jewish Mysticism Primer (New York: Empire Press, 1989), 75. ²³ N. Scherman, *The Complete Artscroll Siddur* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1994), 99.

[8] The place of the individual is seemingly always to be understood within the context of the whole. As such the actions of an individual Jew are often seen and depicted as affecting the entire Jewish people. In an illustrative parable told by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai:

It is to be compared to people who were in a boat, and one of them took a drill and began to drill a hole beneath himself. His companions said to him: Why are you doing this? He replied: What concern is it of yours? Am I not drilling under myself? They replied: But you will flood the boat for us all.²⁵

As for the one who denies this collective identity and positions him/herself in opposition to it, the consequences can be quite severe. If we consider the liturgy of the Passover festival, the *Haggadah*, we encounter an ancient and unfavourable image of the Jew who rejects this communality in the form of 'the wicked son'. An important ritual of the Passover *seder* requires reciting the questions of 'the four sons'. Each son and each question represent an approach or attitude towards not only the Passover service (*seder*), but towards the Jewish law and the Jewish people. In this ritual performance there is the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask. It reads,

What does the wise son say? 'What are the testimonies, statutes and laws that Hashem our God has commanded you?' You then instruct him in the laws of Pesach, that one may not eat anything after eating the Pesach sacrifice!²⁶

Through the framing of his question it can be seen that the wise son includes himself as being both within and a part of the Jewish community, by virtue of his referring to the laws that *Hashem* 'our God' commanded. One may further reflect on the JFJ's reference to 'our' Jewish people, perhaps initially seeking to share in this communal

²⁴ Ibid., 111.

²⁵ Midrash Rabbah, Leviticus 4:6 cited in J. Sacks, 'Practical Implications of Infinity' in Z. Posner et al, To Touch the Divine: A Jewish Mysticism Primer (New York: Empire Press, 1989), 75-76.

²⁶ J. Elias, *Haggadah: Artscroll Mesorah Series* (New York: Mesorah Publication, 2000), 71.

[9] identity. The wicked son is deemed wicked, seemingly, solely on account of his denial of this communality. Thus,

The wicked son, what does he say? 'What does this service mean to you?' 'To you' (he says) but not to him! Therefore, because he has excluded himself from the community, he has denied the foundation of our faith; consequently you must blunt his teeth and reply to him: 'It is because of this that Hashem did for me when I went out of Egypt'; 'for me' (you say), not for him – had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.²⁷

The distancing from the community expressed in the question of the wicked son and his consequent designation as 'wicked' may serve as a useful additional perspective relating to discussions regarding Judaism's struggle with modernity, a struggle which itself placed such an emphasis on individualism above and beyond any communal identity. Further examples of Judaism's traditional aversion to overt individualism in general, and individualistic narratives in particular, can be seen in Rabbinic discourse, as Green has argued:

Rabbinic literature is largely indifferent to the presentation of distinctive individuality. No document pays homage to a particular rabbi; none celebrates one man's virtue, reflects his thoughts, recounts his deeds... In all of the literature no rabbi emerges as central, dominant, or determinative; none appears to symbolize, guide, or shape rabbinic destiny... the virtual anonymity of person in rabbinic literature reveals a powerful cultural disinclination, perhaps incapacity, to construe rabbinic culture and religion as the work of powerful individuals.²⁸

In effect the voice of the individual may appear not only to threaten communal cohesiveness, but also the divinely decreed spiritual communality of the Jewish people.

²⁷ Ibid., 73.

²⁸ W.S. Green, Storytelling and Holyman: The Case of Ancient Judaism cited in L. Fine Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 78.

[10] However, the individual voices of the Holocaust survivors are not to be heard or understood in the same manner as other individual (or individualistic) voices. These individuals did not choose to separate themselves, but were forcefully separated from their communities and their families. Communities were shattered, fragmented and destroyed, and it is from these shattered fragments that the Holocaust testimonies, the voices of individual survivors speak. It is only after the Holocaust that we encounter this Jewish form of individual Testimony. But in contrast to the JFJ Holocaust testimony its purpose is not salvational. As previously discussed the very term 'testimony' conveys very different meanings when used in either a Jewish or Christian framework. Whereas Christian testimony appears to have its roots in some of the earliest forms of Christian narrative (the Gospels being the personal recollections of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John), it took the Holocaust to produce this particular form of Jewish testimony. In a Christian or Messianic framework 'to give testimony' is to give witness of one's personal experience of salvation. In a post-Holocaust framework Jewish testimony is instead bearing witness to the atrocities one experienced. From a mainstream Jewish perspective, when the JFJ transform Holocaust testimony into a form of salvational testimony, this appears as a spiritually subversive act, altering the very meaning of the Holocaust. And this, of course, raises the vexed question as to whether the Holocaust contained any meaning or message in the first place.

Perhaps the question concerning the Holocaust has less to do with ownership and more to do with the attribution of meaning. This would change the question to 'who has the right to explain or interpret the Holocaust?' Within the domain of Holocaust theology one rarely encounters any certainty as to why or how six million Jews were murdered.²⁹ In the shadow of Auschwitz any and all explanations appear at best inadequate and at worst dangerously close to justifications; for example, divine retribution for straying from the commandments and traditional observance. Whilst all frameworks appear to break apart the temptation to contain the events and interpret

²⁹ Two useful readers of Holocaust Theology include S. Katz, S. Biderman, and G. Greenberg, *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and D. Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

[11] them seems to persist. This is exemplified in the work of Melissa Raphael³⁰ who collected the Holocaust testimonies of female survivors and then, writing from within a feminist theoretical framework, manages to extract fully formed critiques on traditional Jewish patriarchy and the 'masculinization of theology'.³¹ This raises important questions in relation to theoretical frameworks and reflexivity: to what extent does a particular framework or paradigm actually seek to provide an authentic account of what was said and experienced and to what extent does it simply reproduce the underlying theoretical assumptions of the researcher? There is, however, less issue with methodology concerning the JFJ's use of Holocaust Testimony. For while the survivors are also reserved in their judgments on the meaning of the Holocaust, the salvational messages and interpretations, which are an inevitable consequence of their context as evangelical appeals, are clearly articulated by the survivors themselves and are not interpreted by a third party.

While by no means monolithic, JFJ holocaust testimonies do tend to conclude with a common, clear articulation of a formerly illusive hope, meaning and purpose above and beyond the Holocaust via the message of the New Testament. This particular perspective appears especially striking when considered in relation to the wider academic discourse of Holocaust Studies, in which the Holocaust is most commonly related to as a singular event that appears to defy reason and resist meaning.³² Lawrence Langer reflects:

The raw material of oral Holocaust narratives, in the content and manner of the presentation, resists the organising impulse of moral theory and art. Does this keep these narratives closer to their source in the pain of persecution? A kind of un-shielded truth emerges from them, through which we salvage an anatomy of melancholy for the modern spirit – part of our anguish and our fate. For the former victims, the Holocaust is a communal wound that cannot heal. This is the ailing subtext of their testimonies, wailing beneath the convalescent murmur of their surface lives. We have little trouble listening to that surface murmur. When the subtext of their

³⁰ M. Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz* (London: Routledge, 2003).

³¹ S. Katz, S. Biderman, and G. Greenberg, *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 648.

³² S. Bolkosky, Searching for Meaning in the Holocaust (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), ix.

[12] story echoes for us too as a communal wound, then we will have begun to hear their legacy of unheroic memory and grasp the meaning for our time of a diminished self.³³

It is possible that the mainstream Jewish objections towards JFJ holocaust testimonies stem not only from the unlikely (unacceptable) source of the healing, but also from the salvational nature of that healing which would appear to move the JFJ survivors beyond Langer's 'communal wound' and therefore arguably beyond, or away from, their fellow Jewish survivors.

It may be fair to say that both forms of testimony are essentially trying to communicate lived experience. One may also observe that the story requires one to share the experience, a call requiring a response; but whereas in the mainstream Holocaust testimony one may be seen as displaying and sharing a deep, communal wound, in the Christian and Messianic testimony one is in addition undoubtedly sharing one's faith, and emphasising hope and healing.

Holocaust testimony is often understood and related to through the psychological label of trauma. Before the stories are told, or are encouraged to be told, 34 there is often simply silence:

Judaism has its silences, Elie Wiesel once said, but we don't talk about them. After the Holocaust, the *shoah*, there was one of the greatest silences of Jewish history.³⁵

This silence is understood to reflect the incomprehensible magnitude of the traumatic experience that transcends any sense of reality or meaning. The Hebrew word for the Holocaust is *Shoah*, which literally translates as 'catastrophe' or 'utter destruction'. It

³³ L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimony: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993),

³⁴ For two insightful psychological analyses the reader might consult L. Bar-Tur and R. Levy-Shiff, Holocaust Review and Bearing Witness as a Coping Mechanism of an Elderly Holocaust Survivor in T.L. Brink, ed., Holocaust Survivors' Mental Health (New York: The Haworth Press, 1994), and P. Suedfeld, R. Krell, R. Wiebe and G. Steel, 'Coping Strategies in the Narratives of Holocaust Survivors', Anxiety, Stress and Coping 10 (1997), 153-179.

³⁵ J. Sacks, Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought After the Holocaust (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 25.

[13] cannot be spoken about as it is experienced as being beyond the reaches of articulation let alone comprehension.³⁶

There is silence precisely because what occurred resists meaning or containment, be it in the form of a memorial or a spoken testimony. To speak of the events may be seen as trying to share something that cannot (or perhaps should not for sake of the burden) be shared, and to memorialise may consign the event to history, a black and white past of 'yesterday'. Yet the trauma operates very much in the present for the survivor and the sanitised tidiness of the memorial monuments often seems totally at odds with the chaotic nightmarish visions they cannot communicate.³⁷ This is illustrated in the Holocaust testimony of Gena Turgel where she reflects on her return to the former site of the Belsen concentration camp with her husband, Norman:

Norman, too, saw only the original picture of the Belsen camp, a wasteland without trees, flowers or grass. He still saw the walking skeletons, still felt the air of death about the place. Like his fellow soldiers that came to liberate us, he always has that picture of a living hell in front of him, and not the neat-looking memorial park of today.³⁸

Aside from simply serving as historical documents, a collection of witness statements to the Nazi atrocities, the testimonies are also understood as assuming an important therapeutic role for the survivor. To render the inarticulate as articulate may be to render the incomprehensible, partially comprehensible, perhaps more containable and thus hopefully make the trauma more manageable. In this way the Holocaust testimonies may be understood as constituting a form of narrative therapy.³⁹ Yet as a therapeutic tool, narrative therapy may still not (should not attempt to) artificially imbue the Holocaust with meaning, redemptive or otherwise, or even to attempt to render the atrocities comprehensible. As Bolkosky⁴⁰ maintains, the Holocaust resists

³⁶ A. Funkenstein, *The Incomprehensible Catastrophe: Memory and Narrative* in A. Lieblich and R. Josselson, eds., *The Narrative Study of Lives*, vol. 1 (Sage Publications: California, 1993), 21-29.

³⁷ This is a recurrent theme in, for example, O. Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

³⁸ G. Turgel, *I Light A Candle* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1995), 155.

³⁹ For an insightful introduction to narrative therapy the reader might consult M. White and D. Epstom, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1990).

⁴⁰ S. Bolkosky, *Searching for Meaning in the Holocaust* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002).

[14](and must resist) any and all attempts at reductionism;⁴¹ one might then ask does this entail the denial of any possibility of genuine closure for the survivor?

Following the Holocaust many religious groups believed (and continue to believe) that evangelising the Jewish people is itself a morally questionable activity. This is not only a Jewish sentiment but is also echoed by many Christian groups, including the Christian scholars and clerics within the International Council for Christian and Jews and organisations such as the World Council of Churches, who include within their 'ecumenical considerations' (1979), the proposal that any true 'dialogue' must not contain any proselytising undertones.⁴²

JFJ member Richard Harvey's testimony contains a partial transcript from a BBC Radio Four debate with the Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, who expressed this widely shared Christian attitude, that the Holocaust should necessarily exclude Jews from having to undergo evangelising:

Well, first of all I would want to emphasise that people of a Jewish background who have become Christians are most warmly welcome and are fully member of the Christian church. But I object to Jews for Jesus targeting Jewish people for conversion, because I think that at this stage of the twentieth century, after the Holocaust, we ought to be having a very different set of priorities as Christians. We are all aware now of the tragic history—a tragic history which has been caused by the teaching of contempt by Christians about Judaism—a long history of harassment, persecution and so on. And the overriding priority for the Christian church is to establish a new relationship with Judaism.⁴³

Similarly one could witness the Holocaust being 'used' by Rabbis Marvin Hier⁴⁴ and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach⁴⁵ frequently and consistently during the 'Larry King Live'

⁴¹ For a brief attempt to outline the issue according to several messianic perspectives, see R. Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2009), 91-93.

⁴² World Council of Churches http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/j-crel-e.html Accessed 12/2/02.

⁴³ R. Harvey, *But I'm Jewish! A Jew For Jesus Tells His Story* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 1996), 43-44.

⁴⁴ Dean and Founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

[15] televised debate⁴⁶ to silence and shame their evangelical opposition.⁴⁷ In one example Rabbi Hier speaks in response to the proposition that evangelism emerges out of 'Christian' love for the Jews, and not hatred or persecution.

During the Holocaust we didn't hear those words of love, it's kind of hypocritical now when Jews have just come out of the holocaust, when there are thirteen and a half million Jews in the world, there are five billion people on this planet that there is nobody else to convert but thirteen and a half million people who've just lost one third of the Jewish people in the Holocaust.⁴⁸

Rabbi Boteach also makes explicit the link between evangelism and intolerance in the context of the Holocaust:

Religion has caused so much aggravation, so much suffering. This isn't just an intelligent debate on TV, this is a subject which has led to my people being turned into lampshades, you know?⁴⁹

Seemingly exacerbated by the consistency and frequency of evangelistic activity being linked to the Holocaust, by both Rabbis, following Rabbi Boteach's appeal Larry King responds with a raised voice:

Rabbi, that's an emotional appeal and well done, however, if someone has a sincere belief that Christ is the answer and wants to share that with you, why are you hanging the Holocaust around his neck? He wants to share a belief with you!⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Former Director of the Oxford *L'Chaim* society.

⁴⁶ CNN Larry King Live broadcast on 01/12/00.

⁴⁷ David Brickner, Executive Director of the JFJ and Reverend Albert Mohler, a Southern Baptist minister.

⁴⁸ Rabbi Marvin Hier speaking on CNN *Larry King Live* broadcast on 01/12/00 (Researcher's personal transcription).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

[16] The very mention of the Holocaust seems designed to end the evangelical appeal, and in its place initiate a respectful silence. The missionaries' silence would, ideally (from the perspective of the Rabbis), be one of both shame and remembrance. This appeal works due to the recognition that historically Christianity has been responsible for much of the Jewish people's suffering and that the Holocaust arose against the backdrop of Christian anti-Semitism. What infuriates mainstream Jewish commentators is that Christian anti-Semitism is usually understood as persecution or evangelism by 'outsiders', whereas when the JFJ evangelise 'their Jewish people' they do so as if they were on the inside.

Perceiving and presenting themselves as 'Jewish insiders', the JFJ may (and do) claim the Holocaust as being part of their collective history and identity. As such, whereas a non-Jewish group would almost certainly never dare to use the Holocaust as an evangelical tool, the JFJ have certainly done so. Reporting on an anti-missionary campaign, the Anglo-Jewish newspaper *The Forward* said:

In a dramatic tactical shift, the Christian missionary group Jews for Jesus has masked its proselytising efforts behind the one event considered out-of-bounds by even the most aggressive of evangelists: the Holocaust.⁵¹

In giving Holocaust testimony the JFJ appear to blur the formerly clear boundaries between Jewish holocaust testimony of remembrance and Christian testimony of salvation.

The *Survivor Stories* video uses all the aforementioned forms of memorialising.⁵² There are frequent 'yellow star' and 'barbed wire' motifs, black and white footage of Jews in the camps, there is slow mournful music, Holocaust poetry and testimonials. The footage and format appears no different from other documentaries about the Holocaust such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), or video testimony as might be

⁵¹ Anti-Defamation League Website http://www.adl.org/special_reports/jews4jesus/jews4jesus.asp Accessed 02/12/03.

⁵² O. Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

[17]seen in any Holocaust museum collection. 53 The JFJ Holocaust testimony begins not simply with the recounting of the events leading up to the Holocaust but rather recollections of their Jewish upbringing. This is perhaps significant by virtue of its inclusion, as in many Jewish Holocaust Testimonies the overt declaration of one's Jewish identity and heritage is not deemed necessary; the consequences of that identity are made evident in the testimony. The vivid portrayals and recollections of Jewish daily life in pre-war Germany and Eastern Europe may be instantly familiar to a Jewish audience member, and imbues the speaker with an almost grandparental voice, as their age clearly places them within this particular generation. The JFJ survivors regularly recollect their level of observance or involvement in their synagogue. They speak of the persecution and the camps. They recall the suffering and humiliations that they endured. But gradually the testimony metamorphoses into that of a 'Messianic testimony', as they each, in turn, tell in turn how they found Jesus and were saved. Like the other JFJ testimonies they also emphasise their continued Jewishness.⁵⁴ Once again this is an emphasis on restoration or identity continuation, as opposed to conversion:

I didn't convert, I'm Jewish you see? I found the God of Israel.⁵⁵

I am not losing being a Jew, I'm just adding Jesus as my saviour. I'm still a Jew inside. I always will be. ⁵⁶

The video material is accompanied by additional resources on the JFJ website⁵⁷ which contains web space for additional Holocaust testimonies of survivors, their children, and a link to a page commemorating *Yom Hashoah* (Holocaust memorial day).⁵⁸

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⁵³ For examples the reader might visit the following two websites: Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum Website http://www.ushmm.org/ Accessed 07/10/08, and Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum http://www.yadvashem.org/ Accessed 07/10/08.

⁵⁴ R. Rosen, *Testimonies: Of Jews Who Believe In Jesus* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 1997).

⁵⁵ Rose Price (Holocaust Survivor) speaking in *Survivor Stories: Hope From an Unlikely Source* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2001).

⁵⁶ Bob Kertesz (Holocaust Survivor) speaking in *Survivor Stories: Hope From an Unlikely Source* (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2001).

⁵⁷ Jews for Jesus: Survivor Stories http://www.jewsforjesus.org/answers/survivorstories Accessed 29/10/08.

⁵⁸ Jews for Jesus: *Yom HaShoah* http://jewsforjesus.org/judaica/yomhashoah Accessed 29/10/08.

[18] The familiar question of losing one's Jewish identity through accepting Jesus as the Messiah (and more problematically as God incarnate) is typically negotiated through the JFJ's redefining of what it means to be Jewish. In this manner the moment that most Jewish authorities would recognise and classify as 'conversion' and 'apostasy' is expressed as a renewal and recovery of one's Jewish identity (a 'homecoming') in the JFJ Testimonies and literature. The JFJ Holocaust testimony of Hans Bernd, entitled 'The Journey', exemplifies this perspective:

My journey from Koblenz to England to faith in the Jewish Messiah brought me home. It was with much joy that I was able to finally resolve a hidden conflict of identity, for I discovered once and for all how Jewish it is to believe in Jesus the Jewish Messiah.⁵⁹

The concluding message in Survivor Stories reiterates the central message of the JFJ that one doesn't simply remain a Jew after accepting Jesus, but that one actually becomes more Jewish. The chosen form of this reiteration is a concluding prayer:

God of Abraham, I know that I have sinned against you and I want to turn from my sins. I believe that you provided Y'shua as a once and for all atonement for me. With this prayer, I place my trust in Y'shua as my saviour and my Lord. I thank you for cleansing me of sin, for giving me Your peace and for eternal life. Please help me be faithful in learning to trust and love you more each day.⁶⁰

The explicit appeal to the Jewish lineage can be identified in the naming of God as the 'God of Abraham', the first of the Jewish patriarchs. Likewise the name of Jesus is rendered (restored) in the Hebrew 'Y'shua'. These two features contrast with the otherwise general Christian, individualistic nature of the prayer and the recognition and acceptance of Y'shua's status as 'saviour' and 'Lord'. The prayer is followed by a brief moment of silence and the narrator then announces: 'If you just prayed this prayer Mazel Tov.' The expression 'Mazel Tov' is most typically heard within the

2001).

Jews for Jesus: 'The Journey' Holocaust Testimony Hans http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/11_1/journey_Hans_Bernd Accessed 29/10/08. ⁶⁰ Survivor Stories: Hope From an Unlikely Source (San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions,

[19] synagogue and reserved for moments of great celebration. A Simcha, or time of joyous celebration, and achievement, may include the conclusion of a Bar Mitzvah or a wedding ceremony, both prime examples of Jewish continuity, and the fulfilment of the Jewish commandments. As the word 'Mazel Tov' appears in the centre of the screen it is surrounded by numerous Jewish symbols and accompanied with traditional Israeli folk music. 'Mazel Tov' implies that in accepting Y'shua one is fulfilling a Halakhic obligation and is contributing the continuing legacy of the Jewish people.

Not only does the video attribute the Holocaust with a salvational meaning, but this meaning is perceived by the majority of Jewish people to be an 'insiders' attempt to further harm the Jewish cause (to deplete their numbers through conversion to Christianity). As a Jew, however, one may feel prevented from, or hesitant in, criticising a survivor of the Holocaust. They are seemingly above reproach, and it seems likely that the JFJ are well aware of this. The JFJ have taken a testimony of memory and transformed it (by means of a messianic supplement) into a testimony of faith in *Y'shua*. Through the salvational form of the messianic Holocaust testimony the Holocaust is implicitly (in some cases explicitly) imbued with a salvational meaning. Several of the JFJ Holocaust testimonies in *Survivor Stories* even speak of 'forgiveness' of the Nazis through the grace and power of Jesus, thus including traditional Christian discourses within their testimonies. The reaction to the publication of the video testimony on the part of the international Jewish communities (as expressed through the Anti Defamation League) was one of collective outrage and condemnation:

'Once again, Jews for Jesus is trying to distort Jewish identity as part of their deceptive and offensive campaign to impose Christian beliefs on Jews' said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director and a Holocaust survivor. 'By emphasizing the Holocaust, Jews for Jesus is using the darkest chapter in the history of Judaism - the persecution and annihilation of European Jews - to attempt to mislead survivors and their children about their history and faith. It is impossible for a person who is Jewish to worship Jesus

[20]Christ. That is the fundamental distinction that sets these faith systems apart.'61

The individuals providing the JFJ Holocaust testimonies are thus not directly blamed but are positioned as 'survivors' who have been misled. Not only have they been the victims of the Nazis but they have also been the victims of the JFJ's evangelism and have become unwitting agents in the continued destruction of the Jewish people.

The concluding motifs of a newfound peace and meaning in the person of Jesus Christ, in the JFJ testimonies discussed, may not be seeking to account for, or seek meaning in, the Holocaust. They do, however, appear to be offering a controversial and theologically complex form of closure. The relatively newly emergent field of Holocaust Theology is typified by difficult questions and, most commonly, hesitant, partial answers. Hope and meaning are rare commodities seldom encountered within the various theological reflections and theodical justifications. When that hope is being offered from a movement whose Jewish status is most commonly and adamantly denied, and whose evangelical agenda is so transparent, the resulting outrage and controversy is hardly surprising. The JFJ themselves appear to adopt, momentarily, a more recognisably mainstream Jewish standpoint when they recognise that their particular offering of hope is from an 'unlikely source'.

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⁶¹ Anti Defamation League Website http://www.adl.org/presrele/rel_chstsep_90/3817_90.asp Accessed 5/12/03.

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