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Memory and Forgetting: Gendered Counter Narratives of Silence in the Relations Between Israeli Zionism and the Shoah

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Introduction[1]

Forgetting, according to Renan (1990: 11), is a crucial factor in the process of creating a nation. This means that in the process of nation-building, subversive, or deviant 'counter-narratives' (Bhabha, 1994) often have to be silenced. One result is a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and estrangement from the building blocks of the nationalist project, for those who subvert what Renan calls the 'soul' or 'spiritual principle' of the nation through deviating from or deconstructing the accepted national 'rich legacy of memories' (Renan, 1990: 19), even if they themselves are fully committed to that very project. Nation-imagining not only silences the stranger, who Bauman (1991) theorises as the 'ambivalent third'. It is also, I would argue, a masculine construction, although women are the nation's (often unacknowledged) biological reproducers as well as its symbolic tropes (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

In *Modernity and the Holocaust,* Zygmunt Bauman (1989) locates the Shoah as a consequence, rather than an aberration of modernity. He argues that the Shoah, 'born and executed in our modern rational society, at the high stage of our civilisation and at the peak of human cultural achievement' (Bauman, 1989: x) is relevant to the main themes of sociological inquiry, and takes sociology to task for not applying sociological analyses to studying the Shoah.

The state of Israel, alongside other Jewish self-appointed spokespersons, which denounced attempts to dissolve the uniquely Jewish character of the Shoah in the misery of an indistinct 'humanity', has consistently employed the Shoah as a discursive instrument of political legitimacy. At the same time, the imagined Zionist community, like other 19th century European nationalisms, constructed itself as 'new', and 'awakening from sleep' in relation to its ancient (Judaic) roots (Anderson, 1991: 194-7):

Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' has been discussed in relation to the specificities of Israeli-Zionist nationalism in the recent Hebrew edition of the text (Anderson, trans. Daor, 1999). In his postscript, Azmi Bishara (1999: 244-61) differentiates between nation and nationalism and argues that rational thinkers should not struggle against nationalism, but work towards its re-formulating on a more democratic basis. Despite the fact that the Jewish-Israeli nation was constructed on contested terms and at the price of a bloody conflict with the indigenous Palestinians, it has succeeded in

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[1] Versions of this paper was presented at the Mediterranean Programme, Robert Schumann Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Firenze, Italy on 11 May 2000 and in the 'Gender, Place and Memory in the Modern Jewish Experience' conference in Bar Ilan University, January 2-4, 2001. I am indebted to Valérie Amiraux, scientific coordinator of the Mediterranean Programme and to seminar participants, and to participants in the Bar Ilan conference for their useful comments. Special thanks to Dr Orna Blumen of the Department of Human Resources, University of Haifa, for her helpful comments on an earlier draft.

> creating historical conditions which enable the modern man to imagine his belongingness to the desired Hebrew national community. But… in order to justify the existence of a Hebrew nation-state, [Zionist nationalism] continues to posit a unified national historical existence on the land, in order to substantiate what is termed 'a historical right', the only right that justifies sovereignty. Archaeology and historiography, myths and symbols, poetry and literature, education, and above all – political rhetoric, are all mobilised to construct this historical right (Bishara, 1999: 260).

Arguing for a separation between Israeli nationhood and Jewish religion, Bishara imagines an egalitarian community which he calls 'the Israeli nation', a limited common Israeliness based on citizenship, language, economy and even common fate, rather than on an all-inclusive 'Jewish nation' whose spatial and temporal boundaries encompass several continents and several centuries, in parallel with those of the Jewish religion. This separation between Israeli and Jew is problematic if we remember, on the one hand, the inevitable link between Jewish and Israeli memory, but on the other, the negation of Judaism by early Zionism.

Israeli statist and pre-statist Zionism saw itself as separate from and in opposition to the Jewish diaspora, and in particular to the passivity implied in the discourse of Jewish victims allegedly going to their death 'like lambs to the slaughter' [2] during the Shoah. Israelis met Shoah survivors upon their return from the Nazi hell with silence, and an inability, or unwillingness to listen to their horrific experiences, which bruised their newly constructed national identity. Negating the diaspora meant also having to conceal it from collective memory, or forget it; this silencing was part of a process of constructing memory, but also of gendering that memory, as I argue in this paper. Indeed, Anderson's 'imagined communities' theory has been criticised for its gender-blindness and for ignoring the ways in which nationalisms are imagined by and for men (Parker et al, 1992), and in which women, as 'ethnic subjects' (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989), are the 'border guards' of national collectivities.

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[2] The term was arguably first coined by poet and partisan Abba Kovner in December 1941 when he called on his comrades in the Vilna Ghetto in a pamphlet not to go to their death 'like lambs to the slaughter', although the term had been in use prior to Kovner's pamphlet, signifying national trauma (Segev, 1991: 98).

Elsewhere (Lentin, 2000) I present an argument – based on an analysis of personal narratives of nine Israeli daughters of Shoah survivors who are writers or filmmakers – about the gendering of the relationship between Israelis and the Shoah. My argument is fore grounded by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and it posits Shoah survivors as Israel's stigmatised archetypal Others, returning to haunt Israelis with testimonies of diasporicity Israelis had hoped to forget. I argue that the relationship between Israelis and Shoah survivors denotes a feminisation of stigma, drawing on Goffman's (1968) theory of stigma as an instrument used by 'normal' society for social grading, defining itself and its 'normality' in turn. Stigma, according to Bauman (1991: 67), is a convenient weapon in the defence against the unwelcome ambiguity of strangers, the 'ambivalent third' in the binary opposition 'friends' versus 'enemies'. Israeli society, privileging militarism and discourses of 'national security' (Sharoni, 1992; see also Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari, 1999) albeit premised on a dominance-oriented masculine structure (Connell, 1994: 158), constructed itself as 'friend' as opposed to the Palestinian-Arab 'enemy'. Negating the Jewish *golah* (exile), Israel stigmatised Shoah survivors, necessarily cast as ambivalent strangers who disrupted what Bauman would call the 'cosy antagonism' of the Israeli 'friends' versus the Arab 'enemies', by not conforming to the active, fighting masculine 'new Hebrew' stereotype, reinforcing instead 'old' Jewish values which threatened this newly constructed norm. The 'new Hebrew' hegemonic masculinity used mechanisms of forgetting and commemoration as nation-imagining discourses which stigmatised Shoah survivors, and at the same time contributed to its own dominance and to the survivors' subordinate position.

My argument about the feminisation of that stigma derives from the internalisation of the stereotypical 'masculine' construction of the 'new Hebrews' and the emasculation of diaspora Jews. In constructing what it means to be 'Israeli', post-Shoah Israeli society, anxious about its own fitness for the role of authority, assumed masculine norms and adopted a stigmatising classification system of dominance and subordination. This system divided between the masculine 'normals' - Israeli-born or those who could 'pass' as Israeli-born (one classic example is the writer Dan Ben Amotz, who, until he was much older, did not disclose his diaspora origins, posing instead as the archetypal Israeli-born *sabra* (Dankner, 1992) – and the 'feminine' stigmatised - newly arrived Shoah survivors (and later, although this is beyond the scope of this paper, Jewish immigrants from Arab and North African countries).

Israeli sociology has addressed survivors' experiences and the experiences of their children only minimally (with the exception of e.g. Boldo, 1983; Yuchtman-Ya'ar and Menachem, 1989; Kemp and Herzog, 1999). Sociology is also conspicuously absent from Israeli studies of the relationship between Israel and the Shoah, in comparison with history (e.g. Segev, 1991; Zuckermann, 1993; Yablonka, 1994; Hacohen, 1994; Zertal, 1996; Grodzinsky, 1998) and psychology (see Wardi, 1990, for a comprehensive survey). Sociology is also absent from Israeli studies linking Shoah and gender (by comparison with studies conducted by Israeli and other historians and literary scholars, e.g., Ringelheim, 1997; 1998; Ofer and Weitzman, 1999; Baumel, 1999; Fuchs, 1999).

As far as I can ascertain, the question as to why Israeli sociology has not studied the Shoah or the Israeli legacy of the Shoah has not been addressed as yet. This, however, has been studied in relation to geography: Arnon Golan (1997) argues that Israeli geography failed to study the Shoah because of its inability to confront the break that the Shoah denoted between humanism and rational Western modernism on the one hand, and Israeli geography's focus on the Zionist metanarrative, which links the Jewish nation to its land via the appropriation of the Erez-Israeli space by the Zionist ethos, on the other:

> The central role of the Zionist modernisation process, and the construction of a new Jewish world on the ruins of the old Jewish world destroyed by the Nazis, made it possible [for Israeli geography] to neglect the study of the trauma of the Shoah (Golan, 1997: 41).

In line with Bauman's argument that 'the Holocaust has more to say about the state of sociology than sociology in its present shape is able to add to our knowledge of the Holocaust' (Bauman, 1989: 3), Golan suggests that 'studying the geography of the Shoah can begin a process of deconstructing Israeli geography. Researching the spatial processes of the Shoah period would necessitate… the study of the Eastern and Central European Jewish space… and on the other hand, [bring about] a broader, deeper and more equitable understanding of the components of the pre-state Erez Israeli Jewish space' (Golan, 1997: 46). Similarly, I would argue that studying the Shoah and the relationship between Shoah survivors and Israeli society (whether via survivor and 'second-generation' personal narratives or not) in Israeli sociology would deepen our understanding of processes of marginalisation and exclusion, in relation, amongst other things, to constructions of silence and memory, as will be argued in this paper, and add to what has been termed 'postzionist sociology' (Silberstein, 1999: 112; an enterprise undertaken by, among others, Ram, 1993; 1995).

In this paper, I link theories of stangerhood (Simmel, 1908 [1971]; Bauman, 1991), nation building and constructions of silence and memory with the gendering of Zionist narratives. I will argue that the Shoah was fem(m)inised (with double m, after Boyarin, 1997a; 1997b) – in that victims and survivors were seen not 'as women' but as the stereotypical *femmes* in the femme-butch lesbian pair – in opposition to the masculinisation of Israeli Zionism. I will also argue that survivors were silenced, stigmatised and fem(m)inised in the process of Israeli constructions of memory and forgetting. The imperative to remember the Shoah (albeit according to a Zionist script) was a centrepiece of the Israeli narration of nation-state. I therefore propose a link between the discursive silencing of Shoah survivors with other silences, particularly surrounding the dispossession of the Palestinians. Memory and forgetting, or, as Dan Ben Amotz said about his novel *To Remember, to Forget* (Ben Amotz, 1968), *the need to remember in order to be able to forget*, has been a central imperative of the relationship between Israel and the Shoah. In recent years, however, other voices calling upon Israelis *to forget in order to be able to remember* are beginning to be heard. I engender the discussion by arguing that Jewish memory is male memory and that the way the Shoah was commemorated and 'memorised' in Israeli society has played into the masculinisation of the Israeli subjectivity, but also of Israeli memory.

Furthermore, I argue, borrowing from Boyarin's analysis of the 'invention of the Jewish man' (1997) and his call on post-coloniality to theorise Zionism, that by constructing itself as 'masculine' and conversely, the Jewish diaspora and the memory of that diaspora (and by extension, of the Shoah) as 'fem(m)inine', the Zionist narrative silenced the survivors and distanced them discursively from the story of the Israeli nation, an alienation still evident in the writing of daughters of the 'second generation' as I demonstrate. I conclude by arguing that while most written testimonies by Shoah survivors are linear, compliant, arguably masculine narratives, the stories of their children, particularly their daughters, can be read as deviant, [3] non-linear, and therefore fem(m)inine, providing potent 'counter narratives' to the Zionist narration of nation.

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[3] I am indebted to Brid O'Farrell (2000) for the idea of deviant versus compliant Shoah texts.

Friends – Enemies – Strangers

Despite the strong messages sent by Zionist discourses of '*HaIvri Hachadash* (new Hebrew *man*)' as the opposite of his diaspora ancestors and the facsimile of his European Christian neighbours, Israeli Jews were descendants of dispersed, exilic world Jewry, identified as weak, passive, incapable of self-government and therefore seen, as are the 'natives' in a colonised territory, as everything the dominant majority, or the coloniser, is 'not' (c.f. Memmi, 1967). Zionist nationalism was deeply rooted in biblical Judaism, but at the same time sought to re-imagine an ancient religious community as a new political and cultural construct.

In his introduction to the Hebrew edition of *Imagined Communities*, Tsur points to Zionism's colonial dimension. Zionism adopted the colonial gaze toward the 'native' and this influenced not only its relations with the indigenous Palestinians, but also with Jewish immigrants from Arab countries. According to Tsur, Anderson's description of Zionism as 're-imagined' denotes 're-birth' and the re-construction of the recent (European, diasporic) past as having an older Hebrew (rather than Jewish) origin. Re-imagining Zionist nationalism in a binary mode of European-Jewish-diasporic versus biblical-Hebrew, as well as its derogatory colonial gaze stood in contrast with European theories of nationalism, which sought to construct one *united* nation (Tsur, 1999: 15-20).

While postcolonial theories were effectively used to theorise Zionism as a settler-colonial movement (see for examaple Ram, 1993; Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995), they have rarely been employed to analyse the position of *Jews* as opposed to Palestinians. As Boyarin argues (1997a: 279), Herzlian Zionism as well as being seen as the solution to the 'Jewish question', was based on European Jews giving up their primitive distinctiveness and becoming as 'civilised' as their Aryan neighbours. In the process they would show 'manly' virtues, and engage in duelling and soldiering. Zionism can thus be theorised both as a de-colonisation process (Jews freeing themselves from the Euro-Aryan yoke) and a re-colonisation process (in relation to the land, and to the indigenous Palestinians).

However, this call on post-coloniality, which presumes a division between colony and empire, does not sit comfortably with theories of either diaspora or gender. On the one hand, we have to ask in relation to the negation of the Jewish diaspora implied in narratives of the newly constructed Israeli nation, where does homeland begin and diaspora end? Do constructions of Israel as 'home' – the old Biblical, as well as the new political home – totally negate Ashkenazi Israelis' European actual homes, as is implied by Zionism's discursive negation of the diaspora? On the other hand, such theorisation takes into account neither the hegemonic masculinity of the Israeli state nor the ensuing feminisation of the colonised, the Other, the stranger (c.f. Nandy, 1983), in this instance the Jewish diaspora and the Shoah and its survivors, by Israeli Zionism.

Bauman's (1991) theorising ambivalence as an inevitable existential condition of modernity offers a useful intervention in analysing the relations between Israelis and Shoah survivors. Unlike enemies, strangers – a synthesis of wandering-detachment and attachment, and a union of closeness and remoteness (Simmel, 1971: 143-7) – by their very existence, threaten sociation itself. This is exemplified in writings by Erez Israeli (*Yishuv*) representatives to the post-war displaced persons camps (e.g., Grodzinsky, 1998) about the survivors they found in those camps (whom they described variably as 'human dust' or defective 'human material'), and by descriptions of the survivors' first years in Palestine and then Israel (see Segev, 1991; Yablonka, 1994).

This union of closeness and remoteness – the stranger-survivor was close to the Israeli 'us' in relation to similarities of nationality and post-Shoah nationalist justification, and at the same time remote from that 'us' – objectified the survivors. They were politically and discursively used by the Zionist leadership for the purpose of building a nation and achieving an independent state. This is argued by Zertal (1996) in relation to the illegal immigration prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, and by Grodzinsky (1998) in relation to the 'zionisation' of the Shoah by emissaries from the state-in-becoming to the displaced persons camps.

In order to construct the Israeli Zionist narrative, the memory of the Shoah – which Israelis were unable to ignore – had to be mobilised, and nationalised. However, since in Judaic patriarchy, memory itself is masculinised, the nationalisation of memory has gendered implications. Rachel Adler (1991) argues that Judaism consistently estranges and excludes its most intimate other – Jewish women. The rift between masculinity and femininity is embedded in Judaic language and psyche – evidenced for example by the two stories of the creation, the first, in Genesis 1, 'male and female he created them', depicting the creation of humanity; and the second, in Genesis 2, 'the Lord God built the rib into a woman and brought her to the man', depicting the creation of patriarchy. This rift is acutely obvious in relation to the Hebrew word for memory – '*zikaron*' – which derives from the same root as the word for male – '*zakhar*'. According to Adler,

> in a patriarchy, the only memory is male memory, because the only members are male members. They are the rememberers and the remembered, the recipients and transmitters of tradition, law, ritual, story, and experience (Adler, 1991: 45).

By contrast, *zakhar* names his woman *nekeva*, from the Hebrew *nekev* – hole: 'the pierced one, the one whose boundaries are penetrated by the invading male… In naming, patriarchal man points at the other as the permeable one. He portrays himself as sealed and impenetrable' (Adler, 1991: 46). The nationalisation of memory in relation to the Shoah can thus be seen as the pouring of (male) memory into what he (*sic*) sees as a void, a hole, a fertile ground.

Inevitably, in the process of constructing memories, silences had to be constructed. Survivors were tutored in self-silencing during the Shoah, which was an event that 'had no witness' because the Nazis did all they could to wipe out not only the Jews, but also their memory (Young, 1990). The Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld, who survived as a child in the ghettos and forests of Transnistria, writes about this self-silencing:

> Not surprisingly, speaking is difficult: during the war people didn't speak [...] Anyone who was in the ghetto, in the camp and the forests, knows silence, bodily [...]. Only after the war did the words return. People began asking and wondering, and people who were not there asked for explanations [...] (but) words cannot cope with large catastrophes... We often surround big catastrophes with words in order to defend ourselves. My first written words were sort of desperate attempts to find the silence which surrounded me during the war and to return me to myself. With my blind senses I understood that within this silence rests my soul (Appelfeld, 1999: 95, 96, 97).

But survivors were also silenced by pre-state and early state Zionist narratives which privileged heroic myths constructed around the partisans and ghetto fighters, and around Erez Israeli youth. Interestingly, the word for heroism in Hebrew – *gevurah* – derives from the same root as the word for man – *gever* – which might explain the conflation of Shoah and *gevurah* – Shoah and heroism – in the Israeli Shoah commemoration trajectory, which privileged the few armed ghetto uprisings above the victimhood of the millions. The only heroism Israelis valued was armed resistance, but survivors felt that merely surviving was heroic. However, by linking Shoah and *gevurah*, the Israeli state also separated them. According to the writer Haim Guri, one of the pre-state independence fighters who documented the Eichmann trial in his book *The Glass Cage: The Jerusalem Trial,* 'we were ashamed of the Shoah as of a horrible, visible handicap, while adopting the *gevurah* with pride, as something which has allowed us to carry our heads high' (Guri, 1963: 247).

Silences were related to fears, guilt and shame, and to the failure of the Zionist leadership to save Europe's Jews (cf. Porat, 1986; Grodzinsky, 1998). Past conflicts, catastrophes and genocides are not only remembered, but also 'memorised' through a multiplicity of discourses, from one generation to the next, playing their prescribed role in the ways collective memory shapes the colletivity's 'story'. But silence, or forgetting a collectivity's calamitous past, although crucial to the creation of nation, can be conveyed only through language – and the choice *which* stories to tell – even if language expresses only the inability, reluctance or refusal to speak or to listen.

According to Passerini (1992: 2), memory – linguistically expressed in spoken exchanges, oral history, survivors' testimonies and other textually mediated discourses – is the tool that gives meaning to our lives. Passerini emphasises that what is required is not merely a simple and spontaneous memory, nor memory that stems from a need for vengeance, but a memory of a memory. We can remember only because someone else had remembered before us. Memory also depends on the ideological frameworks that shaped and dictated our access to that memory. Feelings of guilt and complicity impact on memory in different ways. The issue is further complicated when the victims of oppression become its agents, and endeavour to justify oppression by 'memorising' events transmitted through national or collective memory.

Let me give some examples on how the memory of the Shoah was mobilised in relation to Israeli discourses of war and oppression of the 'other'. In *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk about the Six-Day War*, published after the 1967 war which was depicted by the media as invoking a fear of 'annihilation', Israeli-born soldiers – educated to believe that Israel was the only safe place for Jews, the only guarantee against another Shoah – employed Shoah discourses to describe their anxieties: 'suddenly, there was talk about Munich, about the Shoah, about the Jewish people left to its own fate' (*The Seventh Day*, 1970: 20).

During the 1987-1993 Palestinian intifada, the Shoah was often invoked to justify the Israeli Defence Forces' oppressive measures against the Palestinian insurgents. Segev (1991: 381) reports IDF soldiers initiating units aimed at liquidating Palestinians which they dubbed 'the Mengele unit' or 'the Auschwitz regiment'.

During the Gulf War the 'Auschwitz code' – which resurfaces whenever there is a need to enshrine the Shoah as the ideological legitimisation of the existence of the state – was forcibly activated by, among other things, comparing Saddam Hussein to Hitler by Israeli politicians and media. The media also highlighted the irony of the state of Shoah survivors being threatened by German-manufactured Iraqi gas (Zuckermann, 1993).

According to Young (1993), there is an inevitable partnership between a nation and its memorial monuments, and between figurative language and the memory of the past. Depending on where and by whom Shoah memorials are being constructed, these sites 'remember' the past according to national myths, ideals and political needs. The Shoah was 'memorised' and commemorated differently in Israel than elsewhere due to the negation of *galut* – exile – diaspora, and used by Israeli society to define itself and strengthen its self-image as other-than the (Jewish) diaspora. A host of contradictions is implied in the ongoing existential debate between Israeli and Jew. On the one hand Israeli society needed to 'memorise' and commemorate the Shoah in order to create a sense of continuity with the Jewish past and thus 'justify' its existence. On the other, it needed to distinguish between itself and the diaspora, and therefore the Shoah.

Silencing survivors' Shoah experiences was linked to the silencing (or forgetting) initiated by early statist Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, of the 'true story' of the pre-state violent return to Zion. This entailed silencing the expulsion of Palestinians and the dispossession of their lands during and after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. With the years, this silence deepened and was broken only in the 1980s with new 'postzionist' histories of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g. Morris, 1987; Pappe, 1994). Using newly available archival material, these 'new historians' produced alternative academic accounts of the history of Zionism and the state of Israel by illuminating the silenced facts of the 1948 expulsions and the 1950s murder of thousands of so-called 'infiltrators', Palestinian refugees stealing the borders in an attempt to return to their villages. A recurring theme in the writings of these postzionist historians was, according to Silberstein:

> The need to open spaces for the voices of those who have been designated as the Other in Israeli society, including diaspora Jews, Jews of Middle Eastern origin, Palestinian Arabs and women. Thus, postzionists may be said to be engaged in a 'space clearing gesture' (Appiah, 1992: 145), clearing space both for previously silenced voices and for alternatives to the dominant Zionist discourse (Silberstein, 1999: 3-4).

A similar silencing to that of the Palestinian experience, born out of the refusal to consider a different narrative to that of the 'state generation' – who Laor calls 'those narcissistic and diaspora-negating *sabras'* [4] – also enveloped Shoah survivors as they began arriving. And the monopoly on memory, appropriated by the Israeli state – 'first there was history and later a nation was "written" to fit this history' (Laor, 1994: B6) – assisted the 'state generation' in nationalising the memory of the Shoah. This nationalisation meant that 'the inconceivable horrific events... were conceived so that the nation and the state became their lawful owners... at its worst in the projection of the murder of the six millions onto the Arab-Israeli conflict' (Wasserman, 1986: 6-7).

'Zionising' the Shoah affected naming the catastrophe – the choice of the Hebrew word 'Shoah' over the Yiddish word *'khurbn'* denoted another rift between diaspora and new homeland. [5] It also shaped the trajectory of official Israeli Shoah commemoration. Survivors had to do with the nationalised memory of the Shoah to represent their suffering, using the only language to hand. By silencing the survivors, whose experiences Israelis were often unable, and/or unwilling to hear, and nationalising the memory of the Shoah, Israel confiscated the Jewish nature of the Shoah, subordinating it to Zionist goals. Writer and survivor Ruth Bondi writes about this unwillingness to know in her memoirs:

> The number on my arm, exposed during the long summer months, lays bare my life, people know about me more than I know about them... they don't hesitate to ask, in the bus, in the shops, on the beach, if I had met their relatives in the camps, and how come I stayed alive when they were murdered. Before long I concluded (I wrote about it in November 1950) that Israelis prefer not to hear about the Shoah (Bondi, 1997: 43-4).

Writer and daughter of survivors Nava Semel describes the process thus: 'Memory was ceremonial and channelled to one purpose only – exchanging the diaspora identity that had betrayed us, for a fighter identity... The intimate memory was abandoned'.

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[4] The term *sabra* (named after a desert cactus originating in South America, imported to Palestine some 200 years ago) is used to denote Jews born in Palestine (later Israel) since the 1930s. According to Almog (1997) it is a cultural, rather than biological (born in 'the land') term. Ironically, the Palestinians also describes themselves as *sabras* and the cactus appears often in Palestinian literary and visual art works (e.g. Khalifa, 1978).

[5] The English word 'holocaust', deriving from the Greek *holocauston*, meaning 'whole burnt', denotes a sense of Jewish calvary, which is why I prefer the term Shoah, meaning calamity. On the complexities of naming see Segev, 1991; Lentin, 2000: 125-7.

Writer Rivka Keren, also a daughter of survivors, likens the Israelis' inability to engage with her work to racism:

> Their arrogance, their denial of all that business of 'there' and the Shoah and the different heritage, implies something so elitist, no, worse than that. It's cruel… they are denying Judaism as Judaism… It's not only in literature or art. This roughness, this prejudice, a certain racist attitude towards anyone who is not from here and not from now. [6]

The discursive struggle between Israeli and Jew continues. Uri Ram (1999) quotes former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, after the 1996 elections which he lost to the Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu, as saying 'the Israelis lost the election to "all those who don't have an Israeli mentality", that is the Jews' (Ben Simon, 1997: 13). Ram posits the struggle between Israeliness as a civic-political identity ('postzionism') and Jewishness as an ethno-cultural identity ('neo-Zionism'). It is, he suggests, a 'struggle for the collective memory and the collective map' (Ram, 1999: 349).

An aspect of the binary opposition between Israeli and Jew is the difference between the defenceless Jewish diaspora during the Shoah and the military prowess of contemporary Israeli Jews. In a speech by former Prime Minister Netanyahu in Auschwitz in April 1998, he linked nationalism, power and, implicitly, masculinity:

> (During the Shoah) the Jewish nation did not have any power… neither militarily nor politically. (But now) the Jewish people have a home, a flag, an army… the lesson of the Holocaust is that the existence and rebirth of the Jewish people is dependent on Jewish sovereignty, a Jewish army, and the power of the Jewish faith (Horowitz, 1998: 10).

However, the imperative to remember the Shoah so we can forget it and get on with the business of living is gradually being replaced by the call to forget so that we can remember the Shoah in a way that does not subordinate it to narrow nationalistic messages. During the 1987-1993 intifada, the Israeli historian Yehuda Elkana, himself deported to Auschwitz as a child of ten, wrote an article calling on Israelis to forget the Shoah, which he linked to the excesses of the occupation. According to Elkana, the Israelis' treatment of the Palestinians is motivated by 'a deep existential anxiety, fed by a particular interpretation of the Shoah and by a willingness to believe that the whole world is against us and that we are the eternal victim'. Elkana concluded by saying: 'it may be important for the wide world to remember (the Shoah)... We, on the other hand, must forget' (Elkana, 1988: 13). Elkana's daring was not merely in positing a link between the Shoah and Israeli occupation, but in his call to de-link the establishment of the state from the Shoah and to stop justifying the occupation by employing Shoah discourses.

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[6] Nava Semel, Rivka Keren as well as Savyon Liebrecht are some of the narrators of the study this paper is based on (Lentin, 2000) as are Lea Aini and Batia Gur, whose work I discuss later. Quotes are taken from the interviews I conducted with them.

Re-reading Elkana's article eleven years later, Ram cites Elkana as differentiating between two kinds of collective memory and two kinds of collective relations to the past – democratic and fascistic:

> If we want freedom and peace, Elkana states, we must forget, side with the living, build our future, instead of dealing with symbols, ceremonies and the lessons of the Shoah morning, noon and night... The debate on remembering and forgetting must affect memory and forgetting themselves. In the 1990s the conflict between Zionism, postzionism and neo-Zionism as to who controls collective memory and forgetting is central to Israel's political culture (Ram, 1999: 356-7).

Gendering the Zionist Narrative

If, as Shapira (1992: 21) argues, European Zionism was born out of disappointment with nineteenth century dreams of progress and of Jewish assimilation into European societies, then the deep insult of having been rejected, the anger and the resultant shame, were central building blocks of early Zionism. Having accepted their stigmatised position, Jews internalised antisemitic stereotypes, which Zionism in turn applied to diaspora Judaism. The silences imposed on the survivors, like the construction of Zionist memory, were gendered: the diaspora was universally depicted as cowardly, powerless and submissive, and the Erez Israeli *Yishuv* (pre-state settlement) as brave, powerful and uncompromising. Shapira (1992: 239) seems the only Israeli historian who engenders the dichotomy between diaspora and *Yishuv* by assigning the diaspora a feminine image and the *Yishuv* a masculine image.

Daniel Boyarin (1997a) further (en)genders Zionism by arguing that the ideal Jewish male as the countertype of 'manliness' was not imposed on the Jews by non-Jews, but was rather an assertive historical product of Jewish culture and a chosen strategy of survival which needed an image against which to define itself and produce a 'goy', a hyper male. Boyarin sees Zionism as anti-

Jewish, if not overtly antisemitic. [7] Both Theodor Herzl and Sigmund Freud saw Zionism as essentially masculine, anxious to re-make the 'new Jewish male' in the image of Anglo-Saxon white masculinity and the antithesis of what they saw as Diaspora Jewish passivity. Freud, like Zionist ideologues such as Max Nordau, who posited the 'new Hebrews' as 'muscle Jewry' (Nordau, 1900), saw Zionism as a mode of repressing and overcoming his own Jewish (and, as Boyarin argues, homosexual) effeminacy. In this light, Zionism 'is truly the most profound sort of assimilationism, one in which Jews become like all nations, that is, like Aryans, but remain Jews in name' (Boyarin, 1997a: 276). In other words, Boyarin theorises Zionism as a cure for the disease of Jewish gendering: 'Freud, like Nordau, had... internalised the negative and pathologising interpretation of Jewish manhood of the antisemites and thus saw Zionism as the solution' (277).

Theorising the diaspora people 'as a woman', Boyarin proposes the fem(m)inisation of Jewish men, with double m, not as 'women', but rather as a cultural construction of the female as *femme* in the lesbian femme-butch pair (Boyarin, 1997b: 307). Thus Zionism, in its insistence on re-constructing 'new Hebrew' masculinity as other-than-diaspora-Jewish, represents the ills of European Jewish life in identical terms to those of Aryan thinkers (Boyarin, 1997a: 298). Ultimately, Boyarin finds both Freud's and Herzl's solutions flawed in their political effects – on women, gay men, Jews and Palestinians. Although his own solution to the 'Jewish problem' negates the repudiation of Jewish male 'femininity,' Boyarin fails to explicitly link between the fem(m)inisation of the diaspora and the stigmatisation of survivors, which, I would argue, implies survivors' fem(m)inisation, not 'as women' but rather as the stereotypical *femme*-stranger-ambivalent third in the Zionist binary of (male Israeli) friend versus (male Arab) enemy.

Seeking to theorise Jewish males as 'giving re-birth,' as in the Genesis story of the sacrifice of Isaac, Brod (1998: 51-2) argues that when the Zionists came to Israel to give birth to the new state, the presence of prior inhabitants (nor, I would add, their diasporic Jewish past) did not seem to have hindered their vision. Ultimately, Brod argues, masculinity was the Achilles heel of Zionism, and he posits a 'feminist Zionism' not simply as egalitarian Zionism, but 'as a Zionism that would have at the centre of its vision a consciousness of the other people already on the land when modern Zionism began the work of giving birth to the state of Israel'.

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[7] Eilam (2000) extends the debate by arguing that Zionism was Judaism's counter-movement. Positing 'the end of Judaism' Eilam theorises Zionism as a universalist-humanist movement in opposition to the particularism of Judaism, an arguable interpretation.

An illustration of the gendering of the relationship between Israel and the Shoah is the popular 1945 text 'My sister on the beach' by Yitzhak Sadeh, the legendary commander of the pre-state army, the *Palmach*, one of the most widely read poetic-journalistic pieces of the 1940s, which was published several times in *Palmach* journals and became a regular text in youth movement activities (Almog, 1997: 143). This is the story of an encounter between a young female Shoah survivor, sexually mutilated by Nazi officers, and a group of pre-state male soldiers. It is worth reproducing in its entirety (the translation is mine):

> Darkness. On wet sand my sister stands before me: dirty, dishevelled, matted hair. Her feet bare and her head lowered. She stands and sobs.
> I know: she is tattooed: 'for officers only'.
> And my sister sobs and says:
> Friend, why am I here? Why was I brought here? Do I deserve to have young and healthy men endanger their lives for me? No, there is no place for me in the world. I don't deserve to live.
> I hug my sister; I hug her shoulders and say to her:
> There is a place in the world for you, my sister. A special place. Here, in our land, you must live, my sister. Here you have our love. You are black but comely my sister. You are black, because your torture has scorched you, but you are comely, comely beyond all beauty, holy beyond all that is holy.
> Darkness. On wet sand my sister stands before me: dirty, dishevelled, matted hair. Her feet bare and her head lowered.
> I know: the evil have tortured her and made her sterile. And she sobs and says: Friend, why am I here? Why was I brought here? Do I deserve to have young and healthy men endanger their lives for me? There is no place for me in the world. I don't deserve to live...
> I hug my sister, hug her shoulders and say to her:
> There is a place in the world for you, my sister: a special place. Here, in our land. And you must live, my sister. Your feet walked the tortured path, and tonight you have come home, and here is your place. We love you, my sister. You carry all the splendour of motherhood, all the beauty of femininity. To you is our love; you shall be our sister, our bride, our mother.
> Before my sisters I kneel down, bow down, kiss the dust of their feet. And when I get up, I straighten my body, lift my head and I feel and know:
> For these sisters of mine - I'll be strong.
> For these sisters of mine - I'll be brave.
> For these sisters of mine - I'll even be cruel.
> For you, everything – everything. (Sadeh, 1945: 725)

Several writers (e.g., Elon, 1971; Almog, 1997) cite Sadeh's account, but only Anita Shapira (1992: 451-2) and Idith Zertal (1996a: 490-6) appear to give it a gendered reading. Shapira argues that representing the Shoah as a young woman taken to prostitution was not accidental. Prostitution represented the height of humiliation and impotence of Jewish men during the Shoah. Although Sadeh no doubt wished to legitimise the survivors, his story perpetuated the gendering of both diaspora and *Yishuv*. The female survivor's inferiority vis-à-vis the male *sabras* is evident.

Zertal takes it a step further and argues that Sadeh's 'sermon', published at the height of the postwar illegal immigration, does not illustrate what Sadeh allegedly meant, that is the glorification of the Zionist absorption myth, according to which the survivors were received lovingly and unconditionally by the Erez Israelis. Instead it confirms the stigma of exile and the stigmatisation of the survivors themselves, and the very reasons for their survival. The text is presented as a series of binary oppositions between a group of male *Palmach* soldiers versus a single female stranger; a group of 'young and healthy' men versus a 'dirty, dishevelled' woman; male power in the plural versus female weakness in the singular. In short: the strong, rooted, brave Erez Israeli Zionism versus the defeated, desperate, death-wishing diaspora. 'Zionism as an organised discourse of masculinity and power built on the Jewish catastrophe' (Zertal, 1996a: 492).

By putting words into the young woman's mouth, Sadeh indicates Zionism's attitude to the survivors, despite expressions such as 'we love you' and 'before my sisters I kneel down'. The young woman is 'dirty, dishevelled', her body is tattooed, she has been made sterile. Sadeh makes her say: 'there is no place for me in the world. I don't deserve to live...' implying that he, the Erez Israeli Sadeh, believes that the survivors as a totality, represented here by the lone young woman, not only do not deserve to live, they also do not deserve to have 'young and healthy' Erez Israeli men endanger their lives for them. Furthermore, Sadeh presents the young woman as tainted: 'the evil have tortured her and made her sterile'. But upon her arrival on the Erez Israeli beach, the refugee Jewish woman, who survived the Shoah, is (discursively) tainted once again:

> Sadeh's sub-text, in accordance with the popular Erez Israeli discourse of those days, implies that the woman remained alive, survived the Shoah... because she did not maintain her purity, because her [Jewish] body was used by [Nazi] officers... The woman who comes from the Shoah is condemned by Erez Israeli justice, and is tainted by Sadeh's masculine judgement... [although] if she kept the purity of her feminine body, her Jewish body, she would have caused its death... The deep layer of the text is Erez Israel's moral judgement which would become Israeli society's dominant discourse about the survivors...The survivors committed a moral sin, through which they survived. But even those who did not survive are not exempt, since they went, as we all know, 'like lambs to the slaughter'. (Zertal, 1996a: 495-6)

Zertal uses Sadeh's text to argue that deep down, the Erez Israeli subjects were terrified of the defeated diaspora objects they were carrying (literally) on their shoulders from the ships to the Erez Israeli beaches. She uses Freud's 1919 article *Das Unheimlich* (Freud, 1958) in which he deals with the very brittle boundary between the *heimlich* (belonging or pertaining to home, familiar) and the *unheimlich* (strange, unfamiliar, dark, threatening, uncanny). If the meaning of the un-familiar is derived from its opposite, the familiar, the real threat is in the familiar, but repressed, which, as it resurfaces from the unconscious, becomes potentially terrifying. Zertal argues that the encounter between Erez Israel and the post-Shoah diaspora is indeed 'the return of the diaspora as Zionism's unconscious' (Zertal, 1996a: 499): stigma as reflecting upon both the normals and the stigmatised.

Zertal, however, does not tell us about Freud's intention when he differentiates between the *unheimlich* and the *heimlich*: the process by which what is familiar becomes strange is situated as the male's relation to the female body (Doane, 1987: 289). The uncanny for Freud is the return of the repressed, and what is repressed is a certain vision of the female body as the signifier of castration; but it can also be seen as a desire to return to the womb. Femininity, according to Felman, is uncanny not as the opposite of masculinity, but as 'that which subverts the very opposition of masculinity and femininity ... Femininity inhabits masculinity, inhabits it as otherness, as its own disruption' (Felman, 1993: 65). Or, as Boyarin would argue, femininity not as 'woman', but rather as the stereotypical *femme* role, the disruption of conventional gendered dichotomies.

Sadeh's narrative, focusing on the tainting of the diaspora female body returning to haunt the Erez Israeli men, who themselves had at some recent past come from that very same diaspora they were now negating, can be read as a gendered tale of the male terror of the female unfamiliar, uncanny body, which, perhaps, is also a diaspora mother's *familiar*, yet rejected womb. Erez Israeli masculinity is disrupted by diasporic femininity: it finds itself discursively castrated and emasculated by the murder and tainting of the feminine diaspora, whose 'dirty, dishevelled' and sexually mutilated daughter it is forced to literally carry to the safety of its shores, all the while constructing the myths of its unconditional love and acceptance for those tainted, shaming, passive Shoah survivors.

Deviant Counter-narratives

Homi Bhabha (1994), emphasising the constantly changing and contested nature of the boundaries of the nation and its narratives, posits the counter-narratives emerging from the nation's margins, from cultural and national hybrids. These narratives slot, albeit none too smoothly, into the inter-national space of the stranger, between 'enemies' and 'friends':

> Counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalising boundaries – both actual and conceptual – disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities. (Bhabha, 1994: 149)

The performative possibilities of these neither-nor narratives, which disrupt the national narrative, in this case the Zionist inversion of the weak, passive 'Jewish' diaspora, and the re-invention of the 'new Jew' as masculine and heroic, provide a 'liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourse of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples…' a double-writing, or 'dissemi-nation' which posits a cultural liminality *within the nation* (Bhabha, 1994: 148).

The accounts by Israeli children, and particularly daughters of Shoah survivors, which construct an anti-heroic antagonist possibility to the heroic Zionist narration of nation, are such counter-narratives. [8] More than anything else, the narratives of these daughters are characterised by silence – the self-silencing of their survivor parents, and the silencing of their parents' Shoah experiences by Israeli society. Almost all the narrators of my study began their narratives by speaking about silence:

> 'Essentially, I belong to the category of silence families. The basic fact was known, and I don't know how it was known, but it was the fact that my mother survived Auschwitz. Details, there were never any verbal, direct mention of the experience of the Shoah. It was a sort of knowledge, a basic knowledge, you can say. An infallible axiom at home' (Nava Semel, Lentin, 2000: 33).
> 'My home was a silent home. They didn't really talk about the Shoah at all' (Savyon Liebrecht, Lentin, 2000: 74);

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[8] I have chosen to work with narratives by daughters of survivors rather than with narratives by both sons and daughters because of the gendered resonance of their works for me, as fiction writer and daughter of a family of survivors. This, despite the importance of key cultural works such as the *Ashes and Dust* album by rock musicians Yehuda Poliker and Yaacov Gilead, both sons of survivors, documented in Orna Ben Dor's film *Because of That War* (1988). See also Nitza Gonen's film, *The Second Generation,* 1994, in which she interviews several male and female artists who are children of survivors.

> 'My mother never talked at all, but my father would say from time to time things like "you don't know, you don't know what I experienced" and so on. And then I would say, "yes, what, what, for instance?" and they would not tell' (Batya Gur, Lentin, 2000: 75).
> 'It wasn't spoken about, nothing said, nothing mentioned, it was taboo',(Rivka Keren, Lentin, 2000: 78).

Interestingly, Palestinians daughters of the dispossessed of 1948 also report self-silencing regarding the nakba, their own 'Shoah'. Palestinian psychologist Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian writes thus about her parents' articulations of the pain of dispossession; her account could have been written by an Israeli daughter of Shoah survivors:

> To remain a Palestinian in the state of Israel, to survive the oppression of the Jewish state meant that we needed to preserve our history by embedding it in our songs, dances and rituals. It meant hiding it in the manner in which we dress and walk, for this is our unspeakable and prohibited tortured history... My mother was the one who spoke the unspeakable when my father tried by all means to hide the horror – perhaps out of shame – perhaps out of fear of losing more – losing us – or perhaps out of the strength and power of the powerless (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, forthcoming).

However, despite the hurt, despite the stigmatisation and silencing, daughter-writers speak of their deep need to write and deal, consciously or unconsciously, with the presence of the Shoah in their lives. Since the mid-1980s, creative work by children of survivors, as well as more recent auto/biographical accounts by authors who had written fiction located around the Shoah, such as Aharon Appelfeld from whose *A Story of a Life* (1999) I quoted earlier, have been described by the narrators in my study (Lentin, 2000) as 'breaking the conspiracy of silence'. Nava Semel likens the compulsion to turn her mother's experiences into stories to 'forced labour':

> Writing is not a question of choice. One should rather liken it to forced labour, when you, the writer, doesn't know who is the obstinate entity who is pushing your hand onto the paper, demanding that you make contact with the materials of your life...' (Semel, 1986: 44).

But there is more. Writing about the difference between male and female auto/biographies, Gergen and Gergen (1993: 195-6) argue that male auto/biographies tend to follow the classical lines of fundamental Western 'monomyths' – the sagas of a hero who triumphs over myriad impediments. A monomyth is a heroic trajectory from a preparatory youth, through an induction period of adulthood to a period of achievement and/or salvation in old age. However, such self presentation of being engaged in battle towards a climactic victory does not fit the lives of most women, who are usually cast in stable, passive or service roles, as maidens, mothers or witches. In contrast to men's linear chronologies, women's tales are often multiple, ambivalent and recursive. Whereas men's stories tend to be goal-oriented, women's are more complex, weaving together trajectories of achievement with family obligations, love, children and friendships. Where men rarely reveal personal traumas, self-doubt and self-destructiveness, women's often do. Whereas men's stories obey the main traits of idealised auto/biographies, women's stories are often *deviant*.

Despite the heterogeneities of Shoah accounts, I would like to suggest that men and women Shoah survivors often tend to tell different stories. According to Zvi Dror, who has been documenting Shoah survivors testimonies for many years (Dror, 1984), the testimonies of Israeli male Shoah survivors tend to be more general and factual in the spirit of Israeli hegemonic masculinity: 'the world of occupation is a world of men and it translated itself into the Israeli army, which is governed by a masculine set of rules, while women testify more emotionally'.[9] Nava Semel describes this type of narrative as her father's 'heroic Shoah biography' in contrast with the 'black hole' that was her mother's Shoah story. Mary Lagerwey (1998) argues that Shoah testimonies must be read through the lens of gender, and that women's Auschwitz testimonies, in valorising sisterhood and in having made 'better survivors' (an argument made, and later rejected, by Ringelheim, 1997; 1998), give us a certain degree of comfort. Ultimately, Lagerwey deconstructs this one-dimensional reading in favour of intersecting gender within a more specifically situated reading of survivor testimonies.

Silencing survivors' accounts of suffering and trauma in favour of the heroic story of the 1948 War of Independence could, on one level, be interpreted as separating between the masculine monomyth of Zionism and the deviant stories of the survivors who, in the Israeli memory stakes, did not stand a chance against the early statists' heroic narrative. On another level, another contest was being waged over the years between two classical genres of Israeli survivor narratives. Firstly, there was the *compliant* survivor memoir, the trajectory of which – from pre-Shoah European Jewish existence, through the depths of torture, trauma and despair of the ghetto or the camp – always led to the day of liberation, and beyond it, to the state of Israel. Despite the silencing, or perhaps because of it, Zionist commemoration did make room for these monomyths which, as Dror attests, were mostly the stories of male survivors, but which were also told by women survivors who shared the Zionist trajectory from Shoah (sometimes via *gevurah*) to *tekumah* (redemption in the land of Israel), and who, very understandably, needed some sort of 'happy ending'.

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[9] Personal communication, Kibbutz *Lohamei Hagetaot*, December 1992.

One such example of a compliant narrative by a female Shoah survivor is Rita Sand-Landau's *Red Ran the River*, the story of her experience as a Romanian Jewish girl in the ghettos and camps of Transnistria. The postscript is a typical ending of a compliant Zionist Shoah narrative:

> In these difficult years, people became as strong as steel and their real heroism was that even in the moments of terror, when their fate hung on a limb, they did not stop believing that the enemy would be defeated, that there would be a 'happy end'. Those who survived the defeat of the German powers of darkness, began rehabilitating themselves diligently, and began re-building their lives with great skill. Most immigrated to 'the land' (of Israel) and, together with other immigrants and veterans, built and fortified the Jewish state (Sand-Landau, 1992: 415).

Not all survivor narratives fall into this linear compliant mode. An example of a *deviant* narrative is Charlotte Delbo's *Auschwitz and After,* a multi-genre, non-linear Shoah memoir. Delbo, a French non-Jewish survivor of Auschwitz wrote that 'Auschwitz is so deeply etched on my memory that I cannot forget one moment of it. So you are living with Auschwitz? No, I live next to it. Auschwitz is there, unalterable, precise, but enveloped in the skin of memory, an impermeable skin that isolates it from my present self' (Delbo, 1995: xi). Theorising the inability to proceed from past to present, Laurence Langer developed the notion of 'common memory', as opposed to 'deep memory'. Common memory 'urges us to regard the Auschwitz ordeal as part of a chronology, (freeing) us from the pain of remembering the unthinkable'. Deep memory on the other hand, 'reminds us that the Auschwitz past is not really past and never will be' (Langer, 1995: xi). Examining hundreds of video-taped Shoah testimonies, Langer writes about the reluctance of interviewers to hear the most horrific parts of survivors' accounts, a point also made by Ringelheim (1997).

More relevant to my theme of the masculinisation of memory, however, is the argument that second (and third) generation Shoah narratives – the counter-narratives of the Zionist narration of nation – can be read as *deviant* Shoah texts. They are deviant not only because they demonstrate that 'Auschwitz is not really past and never will be'. Nor are they deviant only because they reminded Israelis that behind the commemoration ceremonies and the newly-acquired collective Israeli memories – built on so much silencing and forgetting – old Jewishness keeps haunting the new Israeliness. They are deviant because in their stories, Israeli daughters of the second generation not only transmit their parents' 'deep memories', but in doing so, they also deconstruct other untouchables of the Zionist psyche such as army service, bereavement, community and belonging.

I will now present three examples from the writings of the narrators of my study and others to illustrate what I mean by deviant second-generation narratives. In Batia Gur's *Stone for Stone* (1998), the sculptor Rachela Avni's son is killed in a training accident during his army service. Avni, who cannot abide by the Israeli Defence Forces' uniform inscription on all soldiers' gravestones – 'died in the course of duty' – positions instead on her son's grave a sculpture she made with the inscription 'Ofer Avni, pure soul, was led by his commanders like a lamb to the slaughter'. Based on a true story, the novel follows Avni relentlessly as she sues the IDF, disrupts the court case and finally shoots herself. Avni challenges the Israeli military system, the bereavement industry and collective culture according to which men-soldiers belong to the nation and must be commemorated/memorised as heroes who 'died in the course of duty', rather than as 'lambs to the slaughter' – like those negated, passive Shoah victims. In her interview with me, Gur spoke of another novel, *Cohabitation* (Gur, 1991), set in a kibbutz, which, she argues, expected Shoah survivor mothers to relinquish their children to communal upbringing. Women colluded with what Gur sees as this 'cruel separation' (between parents and children), developed in *Stone for Stone* into the ultimate separation between mother and child and the mother's inconsolable grief over her dead soldier son:

> Shoah survivors joined kibbutzim and allowed their children to cohabit (in children's homes)... How could they abandon their children... Where were their anxieties... How can you explain that women who arrived from the Shoah join something like this, that demands such conformity?.. [but] for security they were prepared to do anything (Lentin, 2000: 109).

Like Gur's Rachela Avni, Miri, the heroine of Lea Aini's *Sand Tide* (1992), also loses a soldier, this time a husband, who dies in an IDF training accident. As an army widow, Miri also refuses to abide by the IDF commemoration standards and pitches a tent on her husband's gravestone. Organising her narrative as a story Miri tells Yishai, her dead husband, Aini subverts memory by refusing to relegate Miri's grief to the past tense – as far as she is concerned, Yishai is still alive, and she plans to go on living beside him, as if his death did not take place. Thus, Aini not only deviates from the Israeli male trajectory of birth-army-death-state commemoration. She also reminds us that the traumatic past – in her personal case, her Greek-born father's concentration camp experience during the Shoah – is also the present, as she pitches her literary tents on the open,

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ever-fresh burial ground, keeping memory alive and festering, even as Miri finds a job in a dating agency, even as life supposedly goes on.

Another example of a deviant text is *Arbeit macht frei in Toitland Europa* (Work Liberates from Europe, the Land of Death), the five-hour theatre presentation by the Acco Alternative Theatre group. The show examines the multi-layered relations between Israelis and the Shoah through, among other things, the diverse meanings of the term 'work' of the title, referring both to the Zionist edict 'work is our life' and to the theatrical 'work which can lead to liberation from the shame of exile, or from Europe, the land of death' (Rokem 1999: 395). The show consists of a series of experiential scenes, with the audience following the actors from a Shoah museum through a musical presentation of what the spectators always thought was 'Israeli folk music' but which turns out to be based on German (Nazi) musical themes. The show continues in a dinner party in which audience members are the guests of a *sabra* army officer and his Shoah survivor wife who argue the rights and wrongs of the Israeli occupation, using gendered fighter-versus-survivor arguments. The final devastating scene is set in a surrealist psychiatric hospital, where actors-survivors lie in foetal positions or flagellate themselves mercilessly in a metaphorical post-Shoah Israel, where survivors' nightmares remain hidden away, a secret hissing whisper.

These subversive narratives deviate from Israeli canonical literary texts. Like Shoah survivors, women too were silenced: until relatively recently, Israeli literature was the domain of male writers. The women who wrote fiction mostly wrote short stories and novellas rather than novels. Only in the 1980s (when my narrators began publishing) did Israeli women's literature begin to introduce the 'missing portrait of the woman author' (Rattok, 1994: 270). Rattok suggests that the price the Israeli woman writer 'paid for her silence was living at the edge of madness, in increasing isolation… Without a supportive environment, some women remain completely silent' (Rattok, 1994: 268). Indeed, as discussed above, silence was central to my narrators' account.

Some survivors' testimonies were published early in the history of the state of Israel, but their children's accounts began appearing only in the mid-1980s. The first explicit second- generation text was Nava Semel's collection of short stories, *A Hat of Glass* (1985) which, when first published, met with complete critical silence. It has since received much critical attention and was re-issued in 1998. In her introduction to the 1998 edition, the literary scholar Nurit Govrin links the change in the level of acceptance of intimate Shoah memories to the ageing of the survivor generation:

> Silence and repression have made room for dialogue… The two generations are ready to embark on a journey together, after which they would find it easier to cope. Significantly, the collective accusations of the survivors as 'lambs to the slaughter' have been replaced by better understandings of the complex, impossible, horrific situations people had to face 'there' (Govrin, 1998: 13).

However, such acceptance was not universal and for some daughters of the second generation, like for some of their protagonists, such as Rachela Avni and Miri, the past and the present intermingle in painful ways. Rivka Keren speaks with much hurt about the Israelis' inability, or unwillingness to accept her non-linear, deviant post-Shoah narratives:

> Just as life isn't linear, but associative, so I feel the need to construct my books… People with linear thought patterns find it very hard to cope with the structure of my books… The reaction was so visceral, so amazingly powerful, that I understood that I did something important… The message is that I'm different and that I'll remain different… but it means a lot of pain. I don't know whether to link it to the Shoah and to my background… it's a fate I carry with me… but what can we do? What can we do that we have the Shoah in our background? (Lentin, 2000: 97-8).

Conclusion

Dan Bar On's work (1999) with Shoah survivors and their children led him to historicize Israeli identity formation in three main stages, from the monolithic to the fractured. In the first stage, the past, Israeli identity was constructed as a monolith, whereby the Zionist 'self' was mobilised to struggle against the threatening 'other', be it the Nazis or the Arabs, but also the Jewish diaspora. Indeed, as Eilam argues, Zionism as an anti-diaspora movement 'wished to return the earthy and stately dimension to the Jewish people' and was therefore 'contrary to the very essence of historical Judaism' which had always been non-territorial and anti-state (Eilam, 2000: 255). In the second stage, the present, the monolith is being increasingly fractured as it is becoming clear that Israeli identity, supposedly preferable to former Jewish identities, is not, after all, either univocal, 'new' or original (the kibbutz, for instance, is increasingly perceived, according to Bar On, as not so different from the Jewish *shtetl*). The third stage, which Bar On envisages as the future, is characterised by a process of dialoguing between the component parts of that fractured and increasingly complex and contested Israeli identity.

Bar On argues that viewing Israeli identity as fractured, contested and conflictual is regarded by some as 'weaker' and 'softer', and this results in an increasing tendency by sections of the population to return to a 'tougher' and more clearly bounded world view, resulting, for example, in the hardening of political and religious attitudes (Bar On, 1999: 3-6). I would like to propose an alternative theorisation of the current process of the fracturing of Israeli identity as gendered, equating monolithic identity with hegemonic masculinity and fractured identity with femininity. Thus Bar On's observation of the current Israeli tendency to return to rigid political attitudes resonates with Nandy's (1983) argument about the re-assumption of rigid gender roles by post colonial male nationalist elites.

David Lloyd (1999), speaking of the Irish famine, argues that the commemoration of trauma does not mourn the dead, but rather those who lived on. According to Lloyd, mourning and rage are attempts to free ourselves from the legacy of the past – commemoration as therapy, reproduction as alignment with modernity. Following Lloyd's claim that mourning does not commemorate the dead, but rather condemns them, I would argue that official Israeli coupling of Shoah and *gevurah* condemned, but also fem(m)inised diaspora Jewish victims and survivors, rather than mourned them, while glorifying, but also masculinising the heroism of the 'new Hebrews'.

Writing about forgetting and about the legacy of silence in Shoah families and of Shoah survivors in Israeli society, daughter-writers have been forging an 'ambivalent third' space, providing 'a place from which to speak both *of*, and *as*, the minority, the exilic, the marginal and the emergent' (Bhabha, 1994: 149). Against the increasingly fractured space they are constructing for their gendered counter-narratives stands the 'Auschwitz code', which is still evoked whenever Israelis feel under threat or want to justify the excesses of the occupation. Two examples: during Passover week in April 2000, as part of the annual pilgrimage to the Jewish settlement in Hebron, settler tour guides argued for the irascibility of Hebron as the Jewish 'city of the forefathers' by stressing the persecution of the Jews throughout history. Herod, Hitler, Titus, Haj Amin el Husseini, Arafat, the Shoah and its deniers, as well as the 1929 massacre of the Jews of Hebron, were all mobilised to argue the legitimisation of the Jewish settlement in Hebron. One of the visitors, a new immigrant from the former Soviet Union, carried a huge flag with the slogan 'stop the Shoah now' (Ben Simon, 2000: B7). In a similar vein, in June 2000 the head of the West Bank and Gaza Jewish Settlers Council said that the decision by the then Prime Minister Ehud Barak to remove Jewish settlements (supposedly to make room for a Palestinian state) 'is not very different from the Nazis expelling Jews from their homes' (Shragai and Alon, 2000: 1).

All this makes me wonder whether – despite the (masculine) occupation and assertion of power – those Israelis who continue to struggle against their diasporic past of which the Shoah was the most poignant expression still see themselves as weak, and therefore 'feminine'. On a more positive note, despite the ongoing invocation of the 'Auschwitz code', there has been a gradual shift in the role of the Shoah in some aspects of Israeli culture and politics in recent years. I would like to be able to argue that Shoah daughters' deviant narratives had a major role to play in that shift. The question must, however, be asked whether these daughters have been the catalysts in forging new understandings of the Shoah and the (Jewish) diaspora, and therefore perhaps of new possibilities for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Or perhaps they, and their deviant narratives, are merely the consequence of the passage of time – a generation – which is allowing for the counter-narratives of strangers to disturb the essentialist, albeit fractured, masculine Zionist imagined community.

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