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In Pursuit of Jewish Paradigms of Memory: Constituting Carriers of Jewish Memory in a Support Group for Children of Holocaust Survivors¹

Whether searching for culture specific core paradigms, or examining contemporary, evolving praxis, scholars of Jewish history and culture have focused on collective memory and commemoration as central to Jewish ethos and practice.² Through the continuous reenactment of historical archetypal scenarios, or traditional religious and or cultural matrices of commemoration, Jewish “memory work”³ has been described as creating a fusion of past and present where the past is continuously made present and the present made meaningful.

When evaluating the Jewish, cultural trope of remembrance, the literature presents two related processes. The first form of remembrance calls upon the Jew to recall ritually and liturgically and to reenact God’s covenant with his people and recite the archetypal narratives of God’s actions and man’s responses.⁴ Subsequent historical events are homologized with mythic, prototypical events and scenarios providing both meaningful, causal explanations and proscribing normative behavior.⁵ Ritual and liturgical practices of remembrance are transmitted from generation to generation to guarantee the perpetuation of memory. The second form of remembrance relates to the moral imperative to remember and commemorate those who

1 I would like to thank Harvey Goldberg, Don Handelman, Jackie Feldman and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this manuscript. I would also like to express my deep appreciation of the support group participants and staff.

2 Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London, 1982); Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick and London, 1994); Joelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937–1962*, trans. Catherine du Peloux Menage (Cambridge, 1992); Sylvie Anne Goldberg, *Crossing the Jabbok: Illness and Death in Ashkenazi Judaism in Sixteenth through Nineteenth-Century Prague*, trans. Carol Cosman (Berkeley, Calif, 1996); James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988).

3 Irwin-Zarecka 189–190.

4 Yerushalmi 10–12, 40–44.

5 Yerushalmi 50, 79. Young 35.

have perished, be they communal martyrs or personal loved ones.⁶ Both forms of memory are related in that they are traditionally essential in the Jews' attempt to hasten the process of redemption of the dead and the living in the face of personal and collective loss and hardship. Both tropes also function continuously to loop Jewish collective and individual history back upon itself.⁷ The act of remembrance may thus be seen as a Jewish root paradigm, while the sequences of action designated for its observance and transmission have become a valorized, key, cultural scenario.⁸

In his pivotal work, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Yerushalmi asserts that religious ceremony, liturgy and recitals of commemoration function as "channels of memory," preserving the archetypal paradigms and sequences essential to the survival of Jewish memory. With the decline of traditional religious observance, Yerushalmi warns, the past would no longer be personally and collectively "reactualized" or made present, nor would it be transmitted from generation to generation.⁹ Critiquing Yerushalmi, scholars such as Lucette Valensi claim that memory is subject to cultural "re-negotiation" and adaptation where local and contemporary "policies of memory" evolve in particular cultural contexts.¹⁰ Echoing Valensi, Joelle Bahloul asserts that Jewish memory production is dependent upon contingent symbolic and social processes.¹¹ Despite their critiques, modern theorists have failed to abandon totally the concept of traditional, archetypal blueprints, preferring a theoretical compromise where newly evolving "policies" or rituals of memory remain organized along, or "grafted" upon traditional paradigms.¹² Novel mechanisms are thus said to evoke cultural metacodes and tropes essentially promoting the preservation and transmission of memory and prototypical Jewish scenarios while instilling the moral imperative of personal and collective commemoration.

In light of Yerushalmi's dire predictions for the future of Jewish memory, the question remains as to whether contemporary "policies of memory" or adapted "channels of memory,"¹³ do in fact perform the functions of traditional ritual and liturgical memory work in the preservation of a uniquely Jewish

6 Goldberg 38–40; Yerushalmi 50; N. Wachtel, "Remember and Never Forget," *Between Memory and History*, eds. Marie-Noelle Bourguet, Lucette Valensi and Nathan Wachtel (London, 1986) 101–28.

7 Young 19; Yerushalmi 42.

8 Sherry Ortner, "Patterns of History: Cultural Schemas in the Foundings of Sherpa Religious Institutions," *Culture Through Time: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Emiko-Ohnuk Tierney (Stanford, CA, 1990) 60.

9 Yerushalmi 44.

10 Lucette Valensi, "From Sacred History to Historical Memory and Back: The Jewish Past," *Between Memory and History*, eds. Marie-Noelle Bourguet, Lucette Valensi and N. Wachtel (London, 1986) 85.

11 Bahloul 125.

12 Ibid. 125; Valensi 82–85; Young 19.

13 See note 9, above.

memory. Do novel mechanisms perpetuate a Jewish mnemonic text that resonates with Jewish metacodes and Jewish paradigms of memory?

Holocaust representation and commemoration presents an especially complex and ethically loaded case of contemporary memory work. At first glance, key Jewish paradigms of personal and collective commemoration and inter-generational transmission of the catastrophic past have been the hallmark of Holocaust remembrance. Survivors and second hand, vicarious witnesses alike have appealed to the archetypal Jewish catastrophe of the destruction of the Temple or *Churban* as a metaphor and cultural prism through which to grapple with the enormity of the event.¹⁴ Scholars have also depicted Holocaust testimonies as contemporary “rituals of memory”, a novel genre which nonetheless resonates with traditional Jewish tropes and paradigms.¹⁵

However, upon further examination one might claim that the Holocaust presents a qualitative leap beyond traditional Jewish memory, both in commemorative content and form. Rather than merely marking the final, albeit most extreme recurrence of the archetypal destruction, the Holocaust, represented as the sublime catastrophe, beyond representation and comparison, appears to have emerged as the archetypal catastrophe.¹⁶ Despite the use of the metaphor of *churban*, the Holocaust, as a new, sublime, master-narrative, has in many ways displaced preceding catastrophes and thus may no longer function to make the pre-Holocaust past, present.¹⁷

As far as commemorative content is concerned, in sharp contrast to traditional Jewish memory work which willingly sacrifices the factual details of catastrophic events in favor of the symmetrical patterns of Jewish history,¹⁸ Holocaust testimony thrives on detailed, eyewitness accounts that authentically document events which would otherwise be beyond belief. The form taken by Holocaust memory marks perhaps the most extreme deviation from traditional memory work, as therapeutic discourse and practice have culturally framed the central agents of Holocaust memory work – survivors and their descendants—as trauma victims and their testimony as working through, in search of closure.¹⁹ Even the witness must experience

14 David G. Roskies, *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past* (Bloomington, 1999) 180.

15 Bahloul 125–126; Valensi 79; Young 15–20; Wachtel 128.

16 On the sublime, see Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY, 1998) 32–40.

17 Saul Friedländer, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”* (Cambridge, MA, 1992) 3. Although post-Holocaust catastrophes forever walk a fine line between tentative universalization and ritualistic references to the limits of representation, they nevertheless situate the Holocaust as modernity’s formative traumatic event, ushering in a qualitatively new era and temporal continuum. See Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York, 1995) 28–35, 255–256.

18 Yerushalmi 44.

19 Although Holocaust studies have emerged as an academic discipline in its own right and Holocaust representation and commemoration has evolved into a major social discourse

the traumatic event vicariously, to allow for authentic Holocaust “post-memory” and collective healing.²⁰ The scholarly field of Holocaust studies has also adopted psychological trauma-related epistemological frames and conceptualizations, with which to explore both the survivor experience and even the scholar’s crisis of representation.²¹ Echoing contemporary, cultural, discursive trends of individualism, self-mastery and healing, the focal points of Holocaust memory work are no longer the event, the archetypical collective narrative, or the perpetually present memory but rather the individual, emotionally-burdened carrier of memory, the personal narrative and the transformation of traumatic memory into a documented and historicized personal past.²²

Returning to Yerushalmi’s forewarnings regarding Jewish memory, one may ask whether therapeutically framed “policies of Holocaust memory”²³ and the traumatized survivor as a “channel of memory,” can in fact perform the functions of traditional ritual and liturgical memory work in the preservation of a uniquely Jewish memory. Do these novel practices perpetuate a Jewish mnemonic text that resonates with Jewish paradigms of memory?

In order to grapple with the above questions, the memory work of psychosocial support groups for children of Holocaust survivors is examined.

and practice world wide, strikingly few sociological or anthropological studies have attempted to describe, interpret, or deconstruct the psychological discourse embedded within therapeutic and self help environments, or within literary and popular cultural depictions of survivor generations. See Carol A. Kidron, “Surviving a Distant Past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity,” *Ethos* 31 (4) (2003): 513–544. Both the epistemology of transmitted post traumatic stress syndrome and the discourse regarding the burdened child as a “memorial candle” have framed first, second and third generation identities and praxis, providing the cultural habitat from within which these identities have emerged. See Dina Wardi, *Memorial Candles*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (London, 1992) 172–206. For an anthropological critique of school trips to Poland, see Jackie Feldman, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity* (Oxford, 2008). For a gendered, post-Zionist critique of Israeli Holocaust Discourse, see Ronit Lentin, *Israel and the Daughters of the Shoah: Reoccupying the Territories of Silence* (New York, 2000).

20 Froma I. Zeitlin, “The Vicarious Witness: Belated Memory and Authorial Presence in Recent Holocaust Literature,” *History and Memory* 10 (1998): 5–42; Marianne Hirsch, “Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Post Memory,” *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (New Brunswick, NJ, 2001) 215–246.

21 Saul Friedländer, “Trauma, Transference and Working Through in Writing the History of Shoah,” *History and Memory* 14 (1) (1992): 39–59; Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory and Trauma* (Ithaca, 1994) 59, 210.

22 On trauma and narrative, see Ruth Leys, “Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet and the Question of Memory,” *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (New York: Routledge, 1996) 103–145; Cathy Caruth, “Recapturing the Past: Introduction,” *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, 1995) 151–157.

23 See note 9, above.

An ethnographic account of support group narrative will be investigated as potentially representing a contemporary policy of memory and mnemonic practice. The professional policies motivating the establishment of second generation support groups and published group-facilitator evaluations of group meetings will also be presented. The primary goal of the support group will be seen as being to provide psychosocial support to individuals potentially suffering from the psychological syndrome known as intergenerationally transmitted Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The channels or mechanisms of memory are clearly psycho-therapeutic, consistent with theories and practice of talk therapy and biographic re-narration prevalent in support group environments. This paper sets out to explore whether the support group's psychological channels function nonetheless as "contingent symbolic social processes" grafted upon a Jewish ontological infrastructure of Jewish memory.²⁴ In other words, whether person centered support group narration and secularly framed interpretations of traumatic memory do in fact evoke Jewish key values, scenarios and mandates for the ultimate perpetuation of a uniquely Jewish memory of the Holocaust. Before moving on to support group memory work, theoretical ground will be laid with an overview of Jewish paradigms of memory.

PARADIGMS OF JEWISH MEMORY: A JEWISH KEY SCENARIO

Remembrance and reenactment of the past are key tropes in traditional Jewish culture. Central to the "Jewish grammar" of memory,²⁵ is the recollection and recital of key sequences and biblical founding myths which structure Jewish conceptions of time and the causality of history.²⁶ Yerushalmi describes Jewish history as a dialectic sequence of divine actions and human responses unfolding through time.²⁷ The prototypical scenario unfolds from man's sin to God's punishment in the form of the *Churban* or destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem, proceeding to long exile, followed by a promised return to the land of Israel and ultimate redemption of all sins.²⁸ The biblical sequence reveals a causal, ontologic of becoming, where the past offers fundamental explanations for the present and the future.²⁹ The present is made meaningful having been situated in an unfolding scenario, subsumed into a sense of continuity, destiny and the hope of redemption, as "the actors change but

24 Bahloul 125.

25 Young 89.

26 Yerushalmi 8-9; Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards and Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge, 1990) 226-231.

27 Yerushalmi 3.

28 Ibid. 36.

29 Handelman 223.

the scenario essentially stays the same."³⁰ Homologies of the sequence fuse the present with the past, so that potential ruptures in the continuum may be controlled, allowing for unhampered progress toward redemption.³¹

Commemorative reenactment and transmission of memory were key mechanisms in the internalization and perpetuation of the sequence and the meanings it entailed. On the basic level of faith and observance, the Jew is commanded to remember continually his/her past, be it God's covenant with the forefathers, the aggression of Amalek or the exodus from Egypt.³² Memory should serve not just as an act of faith but also as an ongoing attempt to reduce all history to the original schematic template to guarantee redemption.

CARRIERS OF JEWISH MEMORY: THE INDIVIDUAL WITNESS AS THE EMBODIMENT OF MEMORY

Biblical history and other Jewish canonical texts portray the individual as a microcosmic carrier of collective memory. All present and future generations were witness to the covenant at Sinai, as is written, "I make this covenant with its sanctions *not with you alone but with those standing here with us* this day before the Lord our God and also with those who are not with us here this day."³³ Having witnessed the event, present generations become carriers of memory while the covenant with those not physically present at Sinai appears contingent upon the imperative of the transmission of memory. On a metaphysical level however, future generations are nonetheless virtually present and accountable, implying both the power of transmission to fuse time and space and the moral responsibility of witnesses removed.

The Passover Seder ritual frames the construction of what one may call the empathic Jewish witness. The staged reenactment of the exodus requires that "in each and every generation... **each** person [should] regard himself as though **he** emerged from Egypt."³⁴ The participant must imagine virtual presence in the past as if he/she were there, although historically removed from the event. It is the yearly practice of reenactment that allows each generation to internalize the scenario of exile and redemption and embody the rhythm, images and sensations fusing the past and present. Although it may be asserted that traditional Jewish ritual calls upon the participant to re-acknowledge the covenant emergent at key founding events rather than

30 Yerushalmi 37.

31 Ibid.; Handelman.

32 Amalek was a tribe that brutally attacked the Israelites soon after their exodus from Egypt. The biblical tale became the archetypal traumatic massacre allowing for homologies of later enemies throughout Jewish history to that archetypal massacre. See Yerushalmi. 5.

33 Deut. 29:13–14, in Yerushalmi 10.

34 Reuven P. Bulka, *The Haggadah Connection* (Southfield, 2005) 140–142.

to experience personally actual presence at the founding moments of that covenant, ritual components within the Seder ceremony (such as reclining, eating bitter herbs and spilling a little wine) nevertheless point to a sensory engagement and embodied enactment of the past. From an anthropological perspective, a collective ritual that provides embodied enactment of past, cosmological, founding events simulate the phenomenological experience of virtual presence in the past, allowing in turn for embodied memory and the status (and obligation) of virtual witnessing.³⁵

In *Leviticus*, bearing witness moves from the realm of first hand or vicarious experience to that of transmitted knowledge.³⁶ Young cites the interpretive reading of the biblical text in the Talmudic Tractate *Sanhedrin*, outlining the obligation of a witness to report an unjust event, whether he/she has actually seen it or only has knowledge of it.³⁷ Once again, the concept of the witness has broadened to include second hand witnesses, those who have had indirect access to knowledge that requires testimony. As such, the lineage of witnesses removed from direct experience of the event is awarded the ontologically privileged status of eyewitness,³⁸ while the authority and authenticity of their transmitted memory is validated.³⁹

THE CHILD AS CARRIER OF THE PARENTAL PAST

The cultural trope of remembrance also subsumes the importance of commemorating the personal and collective dead. Filial obligation to perpetuate the memory of a deceased parent is one of the hallmarks of Jewish commemorative practice. Judaism prescribes stringent conditions under which a child must commemorate deceased parents, guaranteeing that they maintain their parent's place on the continuum leading to redemption.

35 According to Kapferer (1997) and Handelman (2004), the concept of virtuality must be revised to entail not merely the performance or re-presentation of a cosmic founding experience (as commemoration of the past) but also a very real, atemporal presence of the founding event that in turn evokes the powerful creative forces and metaphysical and therapeutic benefits of the founding event. Bruce Kapferer, *The Feast of the Sorcerer: Practices of Consciousness and Power* (Chicago, 1997) 176–81; Don Handelman, "Introduction: Why Ritual in its Own Right?" *Social Analysis* 48 (2004) 1–32. It is important to note however that in Judaism, liturgical recitation of narratives relating to founding events or the reenactment of virtual presence in past founding events are insufficient, as verbalized commitment and observance of commandments (as in the case of the post-desert generation entering the Holy Land) are required. See also David G. Roskies, *The Jewish Search For a Usable Past* (Bloomington, 1999) 1 (I thank an anonymous reviewer for this comment).

36 *Leviticus* 5:1, in Young 18.

37 Talmud: Tractate *Sanhedrin*, 20a.

38 Young 21.

39 It should be noted that despite Young's discussion of the knowledgeable witness, from a legal standpoint, only an eyewitness may provide legally binding testimony.

The liturgical texts of *Kaddish* (sanctification of God's name) and *Azkarat Neshamot* (memorial for souls), periodically recited throughout the child's lifetime, embed specific cultural tropes of memory framing and define their role as rememberer as well as their attitude towards the deceased parent. Although it contains no direct reference to the dead, the *Kaddish* has become a central prayer of mourning, due to its implicit reference to the redemption and resurrection of the dead.⁴⁰ The *Azkarat Neshamot* liturgy also includes the redemption of the parent (and other family members), this time however calling for the living "to buy back" the sins of the deceased. The relative vows to give charity or to perform righteous deeds, in order to redeem the deceased's sins and thereby guarantee their peaceful repose in Heaven, a process referred to in the *Midrash* as "ransoming the dead."⁴¹ The trope of "paying for the dead" may perhaps entail a double meaning embedded in the dictum "the fathers ate sour grapes and the teeth of the sons were set on edge."⁴² Paying implies not only the road to redemption but filial suffering for the "sins of the fathers" (Exodus, 20:5).⁴³ Implying personal liability, the child's present may be causally explained by the sins of his forefathers, so that while redeeming his parents through prayer and good deeds, he is in fact also redeeming himself.⁴⁴ Finally, filial commemoration of the dead also serves to seal the rupture in the universe caused by death.⁴⁵

40 Goldberg 39. In Ashkenazi Jewish tradition, the *Kaddish* is particularly associated with the role of the male child, whose recital of the prayer for his parents is intended to ease their admittance to the world to come. The obligation to redeem one's parents' sins has its roots in *Midrashic* literature (homiletic interpretation of the scriptures) and popular literature of the Middle Ages. Goldberg cites the *Aggadah* (legend associated with passages in the scriptures) concerning the sinner's soul who was condemned to carry a mule's burden to the end of time because his son did not recite *Kaddish* for him. The anecdote recounts how Rabbi Akiva discovers the sinner's alienated son and returns him to the path of the righteous, whereupon the son recites the *Kaddish*, transporting his father from Hell to Paradise (ibid. 40).

41 The *Midrash* reads "forgive your people, those who live ransom the dead so that the living may pay for the dead." The prayer is recited on the Sabbath so that the dead may sojourn in paradise on the Sabbath rather than return to *Gehenna* (ibid. 126).

42 Yerushalmi 62.

43 Young 59.

44 The recital of *Kaddish* not only reflects on the moral integrity of the son but also "preserves the mourner from the danger of the divine decree." Goldberg 125.

45 Ibid. 118. Although during the mourning period the liminal (anthropological term for a cultural state of being between two cosmological realms or on the border between two social roles as in Victor Turner's analysis of ritual states of liminality. See Victor Turner, "Liminality and communitas," *A reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, ed. Michael Lambek [Oxford and New York, 2002] 358-374.) child is also thought to be endangered by the rupture, after the initial period of mourning, ritual commemoration reunites the previously liminal dead and the mourners "with the cosmogony of Israel." Recalling Handelman's etymological interpretation of re-membering the collective dead, death, be it on an individual or communal scale, destabilizes the religious continuum, which ontologically structures and directs all of Jewish time, ritual practice and history. Perhaps this may shed

THE COMMUNITY AS CARRIER OF MEMORY

Jewish ritual also entails the remembrance of communal martyrs as the collective, as a community of memory commemorates those who perished in acts of persecution. Shared suffering becomes the cementing force in collective Jewish identity as countless generations appeal to archetypal sequences of events in pursuit of coherence and understanding.⁴⁶ Communal massacres have been homologized to the prototypical scheme of destruction and made comprehensible by transposing events into the gaps of a schematic sequence (sin-exile-redemption). Again, one forgoes historical detail in order to maintain a visceral portrayal of the archetypal communal experience of suffering and martyrdom.⁴⁷ The traditional channels of communal memory are *Kinot*, *Slichot*, and *Memorbicher*. The *Kinot* (lamentations) and *Slichot* (prayers for forgiveness) narrate the key loci of Jewish history, namely the exodus and the dialectic of destruction and exile. As in the Passover *Seder* ritual, the first personal singular is used to evoke identification and re-actualization as the community recites the names of martyred individuals and communities. The *memorbuch*, or book of remembrance, was a compilation of prayers and necrologies of members of the local community lost in catastrophic events.⁴⁸

These individual and communal carriers of collective Jewish memory, and the texts which frame and define the metacodes of that memory, appear to have preserved the general categories of memory and commemoration. We now move on to the ethnographic case of support group sessions to determine to what degree contingent psychotherapeutic policies and secular channels of memory constitute contemporary carriers of Jewish memory, thereby sustaining root Jewish paradigms of memory.⁴⁹

light upon the verse in the memorial liturgy *El malei rachamim* (All merciful God) which asks God to "bind the dead in the bundle of life." The prayer not only requests that their memory be kept alive among the living but also that they may be repositioned within the all encompassing and liturgically restored continuum. Handelman 223. The Ashkenazi tradition of naming children after deceased grandparents or other forbears, is perhaps one of the most common forms of eternalizing the past. The fact that the child is considered homologized with the dead is alluded to in warnings in the *Kabbalah* literature about the use of the names of morally questionable or ill fated individuals, as their fate may be carried over to their namesakes. Thus tradition telescopes time by homologizing people as well as events.

46 Irwin-Zarecka 176; Yerushalmi 37; Goldberg 125.

47 The observance of *Purim Sheni* (an extra day added to the one day festival of Purim in walled cities) is another example of celebration of victories over antisemitic enemies using the schematic sequence of the archetypal *Purim* scenario. Yerushalmi, 37–39.

48 Goldberg.

49 For a discussion of the concept of secular ritual vs. religious ritual see Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff, "Introduction: Secular Ritual: Forms and Meaning," *Secular Ritual*, eds. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff (Amsterdam, 1977) 3–24.

THE SUPPORT GROUP: CONSTITUTING CARRIERS OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY

The emergence of support groups based second generation memory work must be understood within the broader cultural context of Jewish, Israeli Holocaust memory. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the causal link between Holocaust suffering and national sovereignty gave birth to the nation's grand narrative referred to as "Holocaust and Redemption" or "Holocaust and Revival." Grafted upon the religious Jewish grand narrative of exile leading to diasporic suffering followed by messianic redemption, the modern day, secular narrative positioned the Holocaust as the climax of centuries of diasporic suffering and the State as the great redeemer. National redemption/revival however was to be dependent upon the physical prowess and fighting spirit of the Israeli or "New Jew" culturally constituted as the antithesis of the passive Diaspora Jew, as epitomized by Holocaust victims.⁵⁰ Throughout the first two decades of statehood, the above narrative and the embedded critique of the survivors shaped the contours of public and private Holocaust commemoration. Public commemoration focused primarily upon a small minority of valiant partisan fighters, while personal tales of survivor suffering were relegated to the private domain. Survivors and their children however avoided potentially painful references to their horrific and stigmatized Holocaust past, leading to what has been referred to in the literature as a "conspiracy of silence."⁵¹ It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that the myth of the "New Jew" was destabilized, allowing for renewed interest in the diasporic past. Changing concepts of selfhood and victimhood also paved the way for new-found empathy with survivor suffering. Thousands of survivors broke their silence by offering public testimony to the horrors, taking center stage in the growing number of public and private commemorative practices.

At the height of these changes, children of survivors, then in their twenties and thirties, experienced what has been described as a "coming out

50 Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional, Cultural, and Political Needs: Civil Religion in Israel," *Religion and Politics*, ed. Myron J. Aronoff (Berkeley, CA, 1984) 47–62.

51 Recent historical studies have attempted to present a more comprehensive presentation of complex realities in the early period of Israeli statehood. In these studies, the survivor is depicted as both more involved and vocal in the public domain of the first decades of the state than originally documented. Those who were silent are said to have chosen silence as the only way to build a new future, or as free agents adopting the "New Hebrew" discourse of their homeland (Dalia Ofer, "The Strength of Remembrance: Commemorating the Holocaust During the First Decade of Israel," *Jewish Social Studies* 6 [2000]: 24–55. In addition, in depth interviews with children of survivors highlight the presence of non-verbal and fragmentary knowledge of the Holocaust in the survivor home. Carol A. Kidron, "Toward an Ethnography of Silence: The Lived Presence of the Past in the Everyday Life of Holocaust Trauma Survivors and their Descendants in Israel," *Current anthropology* 50 (1) (2003): 5–31. These results also call for a reconceptualization of the so called "conspiracy of silence."

of the closet", on both the private and public fronts. Referred to as second generation Holocaust survivors, descendants began to ask parents about their Holocaust past, proudly to attend public commemorative events and to participate in diverse forms of therapeutic and non-therapeutic frameworks where they could explore their common past.⁵²

Psychosocial support groups emerged as a major site of both first and second generation memory work. In what may be termed contemporary communities of memory⁵³ contingent and secular psychological therapeutic practices allow for the re-presentation of the ruptured and silenced past in the present. Clinical psychiatrist Dr. Haim Dasberg, defines the *raison d'être* of support group services as creating a "framework for mutual support" and "memory processing." The group framework allows survivors and their children to receive treatment for psychosocial problems stemming from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and intergenerational transmission of the effects of PTSD to descendant generations.⁵⁴ Extending beyond the survivor family target population, however, the mission of many such survivor organizations is also "to raise awareness and consciousness of the psychosocial needs of survivor families among the general and professional communities and to promote and promulgate the study of professional issues relating to the problem of Holocaust survivors."⁵⁵

The above outline implies that the personal and collective Jewish past has emerged from its repressed silence and that contemporary generations are willing and ready to explore that past. Survivor organizations appear to be playing the role of professional guide back into that past, a role serving not only the needs of the individual survivors and their families but clearly aimed at the collective as a potential source of extended support and as knowledgeable witnesses. An attempt will be made to ascertain whether, despite the psychological, discursive form and content of group memory

52 Alan L. Berger, *Children of Job: American Second-Generation Witnesses to the Holocaust* (Albany, 1997) 1–12.

53 On the concept of support groups as contemporary communities of memory see Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey, Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (New Yorks, 1994), passim, particularly 11–15; Carol Cain, "Personal Stories: Identity Acquisition and Self-Understanding in Alcoholics Anonymous," *Ethos* 19 (1991): 210–252; Maria G. Swora, "Commemoration and the Healing of Memories in Alcoholics Anonymous," *Ethos* 29 (2001): 58–77.

54 Haim Dasberg, "Amcha; The National Israeli Center for Psycho-social Support of Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation: Raisons d'Etre," *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 1–9; Haim Dasberg, "Characteristics and Needs of Israeli Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation" (paper presented at the Institute on Working with Holocaust Survivors and Second Generation, Jerusalem, July 3–4, 6, 1994).

55 The organization's activities thus include workshops for professionals and volunteers from the general public, consultation to government and grass-root agencies and documentation of survivor testimonies (see Dasberg, as above).

work, the journey into the past and the discoveries made on that journey, are in fact organized according to traditional Jewish paradigms and tropes as outlined above. Before moving on to support group memory work we will examine the psychological illness construct Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its offshoot, intergenerational transmission of the effects of PTSD, as the discursive frame of the policies and channels of support group memory work.

PTSD AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION: BRINGING THE TRAUMATIC PAST INTO THE PRESENT

According to the PTSD paradigm, Holocaust survivors may suffer from a multitude of emotional and behavioral problems. The documented symptoms include chronic depression, repression of traumatic memories and incomplete mourning resulting in emotional hardening or numbness.⁵⁶ These symptoms may impair parenting; the survivor may be incapable of affect and intimacy, and be over protective of the child.⁵⁷ The parent is said to overburden the child with the role of “memorial candle” for lost loved ones. The child is often named after deceased relatives and lives in their shadow.⁵⁸ Also taking on the role of surrogate, the child may be expected vicariously to re-experience the parent’s lost childhood or youth.

Although non-clinical studies have failed to show evidence of psychopathology or the transmission of severe emotional problems, clinical studies have concluded that the second generation do suffer from the emotional/behavioral effects of parental PTSD.⁵⁹ The emergent, second

56 Harvey Barocas and Carol Barocas, “Manifestations of Concentration Camp Effects on the Second Generation,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 130 (1973): 820–821; Sharon S. Schwartz, Bruce P. Dohrenwend, and Itzhak Levav, “Evidence from Children of Holocaust Survivors,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35 (1994), 385–402; Eva Fogelman, “Intergenerational Group Therapy: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Offspring of Survivors,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 75 (4) (1998): 621–640.

57 Vicki Halik, Doreen A. Rosenthal and Philippa E. Pattison, “Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust: Patterns of Engagement in the Mother-Daughter Relationship,” *Family Process* 29 (1990): 325–339.

58 Wardi, *Memorial Candles*, passim.

59 Abraham Sagi-Schwartz et al., “Attachment and Traumatic Stress in Female Holocaust Child Survivors and Their Daughters”, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 160 (2003), 1086–1092. In contrast to clinical studies, the majority of non-clinical studies have found no significant differences between second generation and control groups. Having found no evidence of psychopathology or severe emotional problems, recent studies have tested for alternative attachment behavior and representations. Once again, evidence of maladaptive behavior has not been found. These findings have brought about a shift in terminology in clinical studies from “transmission of trauma” (or secondary traumatization) to “intergenerational effects of trauma”. See Yael Danieli, “Introduction: History and Conceptual Foundations,” *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*, ed. Yael Danieli (New York,

generation psychosocial profile includes the repression of emotions, difficulties with intimacy, fear of separation from significant others, a symbiotic, overly enmeshed childhood/adult relationship with parents and failure to separate and individuate.⁶⁰ Beyond the above transmitted emotional effects of Holocaust trauma, the process of transmission is said to engender over identification and empathy between parent and child. According to Shoshan, the child, longing for unfamiliar figures and chapters in the survivor's life, imagines actually being with the parent in their war experiences. Inheriting their parents' memories, they relive the survivor's trauma vicariously.⁶¹

According to Kidron, the transmitted PTSD construct, as a causal explanation for maladaptive, second generation emotional patterns and the related concepts of symbiosis, identification and fantasies of actually being in the Holocaust, transforms the children of survivors previously existentially removed from the Holocaust experience *per se*, into survivors themselves. By virtue of an embodied syndrome and memories, these offspring earn the legitimate status of authentic, wounded survivors.⁶²

The psychoanalytic literature prescribes talk therapy and psychodynamic support group therapy as treatment for PTSD and the transmitted effects of PTSD. The survivor and descendant are called upon to re-explore the repressed past and complete unfinished mourning within a therapeutic framework.⁶³ Children of survivors are encouraged to undergo the same therapeutic process, not only as their parents' surrogates or messengers, but rather as Fogelman explains, as part of their own need "to master and express feelings on the subject and to mourn and memorialize deceased family members whose faces and characteristics they never knew."⁶⁴

Despite this call to return to the past, second generation memory work faces a number of obstacles. Facilitators themselves admit that children of

1998) 1–17. Despite this shift in the literature, one may note a contradictory trajectory in psychological diagnostic categories and in the public domain. Just as the above literature has attempted to de-pathologize children of Holocaust survivors, the revised Diagnostic Manual has extended its etiological definition of PTSD to include potential transmission of trauma to those emotionally close to direct trauma victims (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM IV* [Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994]).

60 Felice Zilberfein, "Children of Holocaust Survivors: Separation Obstacles, Attachments and Anxiety," *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 413–422.

61 Children of survivors thus aim to redeem their parent's suffering not only to rescue their parents from the "horrifying black hole" but to create a more coherent, historical and personal foundation for their own emotional well being. Tamar Shoshan, "Mourning and Longing From Generation to Generation," *Sichot* 3 (3) (1989): 193–198 (Hebrew).

62 Kidron, 532–538.

63 Haim Dasberg, "The Unfinished Story of Trauma as a Paradigm for Psychotherapists: A Review and Some Empirical Findings on Paradigms and Prejudices," *Israel Journal of Psychiatry Related Science* 29 (1) (1992): 44–60.

64 Fogelman 621.

survivors are not always aware of their unique identity, failing to make the causal connection between present psychosocial problems and the family's distant past.⁶⁵ According to facilitators, the solution lies in the communal context of group memory work which allows the descendant to make the link between their present problems and the Holocaust-related past. The support group structures group narration in a way that encourages individual children of survivors to narrate fragments of memory in order to piece together one coherent and communally binding Holocaust story.⁶⁶ Only then will the second generation constitute themselves as carriers of Holocaust memory thereby making the past eternally present.

THE CASE STUDY: METHODOLOGY AND FIELD DESCRIPTION

As the daughter of survivors myself, I began attending support group sessions for children of survivors following the referral of a second generation friend who had set out to explore the long term effects of the Holocaust on her own life. Following in her footsteps, I participated fully in group discussion for a number of months, at which point I decided to expand the boundaries of a very personal and at times painful journey, taking on a professional role as ethnographer. The name of the organization, its location, and the names of group facilitators and participants will be withheld for purposes of confidentiality.

The ethnographic research entailed eight monthly support group sessions. An average of ten to fifteen children of survivors participated in these sessions. Ranging in age between thirty five and forty eight, the majority of participants were born in Israel to Holocaust survivors from Eastern and Western Europe who had emigrated to Israel in the late 1940's or early 1950's. Between two to three participants were children of European survivors who emigrated to North America, but subsequently emigrated to Israel in the 1970s and 1980's. As is typical of the socioeconomic status of most children of survivors⁶⁷ the participants were middle / upper middle class and the great majority had completed some form of higher education. Gender breakdown favored women participants 3:1. Approximately one third of those attending were veteran participants, two had attended for a number of years. As the sessions were open to the general public, one or at times two non-descendants attended the sessions.

Support group sessions were lead by two facilitators; a psychologist and a social worker. One of the facilitators would begin each session by

65 Johanna Gottesfeld, Elisheva Van der Hall and Yvonna Tauber, "An Alternative Model of Group Work with Second Generation Holocaust Survivors," *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 391-399.

66 Ibid. 398.

67 E. Yuchtman-Yaar and G. Menachem, "Socio-economic achievement of Holocaust survivors in Israel: the first and second generation," *Contemporary Jewry* 13 (1992): 95-123.

introducing herself and her colleague and continue with a basic description of the support group as follows: the group was open to anyone interested, and did not require regular attendance. Participants could speak or just listen, as they saw fit. If anyone felt that the session dredged up difficult feelings, they could approach the facilitators at the end of the session or make an appointment for a private discussion of the problem. After outlining the basic ground rules, the facilitator would then recount an agenda topic in monologue form. Topics included fear of separation, intimacy-related problems, guilt, and belonging. Upon hearing the agenda, group participants would narrate childhood stories and/or present problems relating to the agenda. Participants were asked not to introduce themselves. Almost all participants attended regularly. Notes were taken during and immediately after the session.

THE CAUSAL SCENARIO: A COLLECTIVE RITE OF NARRATING THE PAST

The support group facilitator opened each session by presenting the monthly agenda in monologue form. Each agenda outlined one topic or symptom in the second generation psychosocial profile. Although never directly referring to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or its transmission, all agendas followed the core narrative sequence of the key scenario of intergenerationally transmitted PTSD and emergent second generation profile as follows:

- A) Holocaust survivor parents suffered traumatic experiences resulting in some form of maladjusted interpersonal relations or behavior.
- B) Traumatized parents raised their children to conceive of those relations or behavior in a maladaptive way, transmitting to them the effects of trauma.
- C) Consequently children of survivors behave maladaptively in their daily lives and may transmit the behavior to their own children.

The following excerpt, from the opening monologue of the session on the topic of separation, illustrates this sequence:

The subject of the session today is separation. [A] Our parents experienced separation from their families... and from pre-war life in a traumatic way. For them, **separation was death**. [B] They therefore **raised us with a different attitude** regarding... separation. The question is, could they separate from us without seeing it as death? Could they ever allow us to **really** separate from them? [C] How does this affect our lives today? How do we separate from our family and friends? Are we allowing our children to separate from us or are we **afraid that separation is as traumatic for us as it was for our parents?**

(lettering and parenthesis, My emphasis)

The group then began narrating personal experiences relating to the agenda topic of “separation.” Learning to re-biograph their lives, the psychological causal sequence provided the schematic blueprint with which participants could learn to structure their stories and essentially define themselves as second generation. One participant told his story, beginning with how difficult it is for him, as a new immigrant to Israel, to have left aging parents abroad. The story begins with a present problem (Stage C), yet moves back in time to narrate events in his childhood filling in the slots of the scenario. He describes a tightly knit family in which “one was expected to stay close to home since they were always afraid something would happen to us. We always checked in... two or three times a day, so they would know we were okay” (Stage B). The narrator then searched in the distant past for Holocaust memories as the silenced, founding event: “My parents never spoke much of the war, but... **now I do remember** my mother telling me about the last time she saw her parents before they were taken away” (Stage A). Linking back from the past to the present, the participant concludes “I guess that’s why it’s so hard for me when my kids insist on staying here, when I realize I have to go back home to ... my parents” (Stage C re-interpreted).

The scenario, as template, provided a causal interpretive frame with which to re-narrate one’s life story, “setting up” events in accordance with the key psychological scenario “to unfold along predictable lines.”⁶⁸ Learning to rebiograph their lives, the above psychological causal sequence of intergenerationally transmitted separation related problems provided the schematic template with which participants learned to “emplot” their personal stories.⁶⁹ By facilitating memory retrieval, the scenario also allowed for a return to the traumatic past and in the process it explained and made meaningful past separation related childhood events and present crises now causally explained by Holocaust trauma. The scenario, as a cultural, mnemonic tool, may thus be said to “symbolically mediate” the past in the present functioning as a key mechanism in second generation memory work. Having accessed past traumatic events, and emplotted them as personally constitutive, support group participants could then redefine themselves as individuals suffering from the intergenerational effects of Holocaust trauma and reflexively negotiate the identity attributes of the second generation Holocaust descendant profile.

It is interesting to note the temporal order of the above narrative. Like many participants, this descendant begins by narrating his life story from the present to the past, and as such inverts the causal explanation, moving from effect to cause. In order to account for this inversion, one might consider the nature of second generation memory work. The second generation

68 Ortner 60.

69 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, 1983) 31–33.

join the group with little concrete recollections of their emotionally complex childhood (Stage B) and even less knowledge of family Holocaust experiences (Stage A). As Muller-Paisner reports, "the group may act as a memory organizer in helping to reconstruct the narrative by piecing together what is known and unknown."⁷⁰ Participants thus often begin at the most generalizable and accessible point in the sequence: present problems (Stage C) and work backwards to childhood problems and historical survivor trauma, following the sequenced template of the scenario. The intermediate period of childhood (B) must then be pieced together and storied to create a link between the maladjusted second generation present profile as effect (C) and survivor suffering (A) as cause. The power of the scenario lies in its ability to trigger fragments of childhood memory (B) by moving from the familiar present back to the forgotten past, with the aid of a logical, causal explanation. Although little is known of parental Holocaust suffering (Stage A), it is presented by the empowered facilitators as the group's common founding, constitutive event. Thus, once triggered, childhood events may in turn trigger more personal memories of fragmented, parental tales of trauma and survival (A). Memory work culminates full circle, as it began, with the reinterpretation of present descendant problems (C) now causally explained and made meaningful by historical trauma.

A diverse range of personal experiences and problems may be homologized to the second generation key scenario. Almost everyone could recall and narrate a separation story. Whether it was leaving home for the first time, or leaving Israel, or their own children leaving home, the pattern was the same. The details of each individual story would become blurred or "forgotten" in the process of collective remembering.⁷¹ What did remain was the recurring pattern of the scenario, emphasizing the consequent identity, the difference between the second generation and other non-second generation participants in the group, and the overall burden of transmitted Holocaust scars rather than the details of the personal narrative. Filling in the scenario slots created a rhythm of repeated patterns of events so that even those who had come to the group with only a sense of present problems, now sensed that their individual, fragmented pieces of information had been pieced together to create one collective Holocaust story. That story belonged to the community of memory that had constructed it in the group narrative process.⁷²

Those who believed that their childhood fit the scenario but did not feel presently burdened, would now follow the logic of the causal, generalized

70 Muller-Paisner, Vera "The Influence of Traumatic Memory in the Second Generation: Myth or Reality?" *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 319–327.

71 Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis, 1992) 1–8.

72 Wuthnow 289–317.

scenario, convinced that if their parents had been in the Holocaust and had in fact raised them differently, then they too would suffer from the second generation profile and would inevitably transmit the disorder to their children. However, the desired goal was not a rebiographed past, or a causally explained present, but rather the coherent, sequenced whole which created an authentic link to the past as a narrative pedigree of a unique, Holocaust survivor lineage. As Gottesfeld et al., explain, support groups meet “to clarify their fragmented knowledge and to compare their own experiences . . . offering a sense of collectivity and community which has been so fundamentally missing from their lives.”⁷³ The scenario, or sequenced blueprint was the lowest common denominator which could subsume all individual fragmented stories into one second generation story so that all stories became one. The group offered one story that was sufficiently generalizable to usher all present back into their pasts, where according to Gottesfeld et al., despite initial “hostility” they would “welcome that past” and “be soothed and strengthened by it”.⁷⁴ The group would return to their present problems equipped with new meaning and a newly emergent, Holocaust related identity.

THE SECOND HAND WITNESS AS THE EMBODIMENT OF MEMORY

As stated above, the theory of the transmission of PTSD may be seen as a contemporary mnemonic tool which transforms the children of survivors into carriers embodying the memory of the Holocaust. Having suffered the effects of the disorder, transmitted directly from the survivor parent, the second generation becomes a “*Galed*” (memorial cairn or heap of testimony), a living testament to the suffering and permanent scars of the Holocaust. As one group facilitator asserts, the second generation “embody death in life” so that they must “come to terms with death” if they are ever “to find meaning in life.”⁷⁵ As a living extension of the parent-victim, the child metonymically stands for past reality and may be seen as the last authentic trace of its horrors. As one second generation group participant poignantly confessed,

My father died this past month. I don't know how to deal with it. There has always been the Holocaust in the shadows, as some sort of void in our lives. Now that he is gone and my mother has Alzheimer's ... now it's just me ... I have to carry it ... that void ... all alone. No matter what I do, nothing will fill it up.

73 Gottesfeld et al. 392–393.

74 Ibid., Ibid.

75 Rhona Strauss, “Group Therapy and the Second Generation of Holocaust Survivors,” *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 407.

If however the contemporary witness is to function as a ritual carrier of memory, rather than a mere icon, that “void” must be “filled” with memories, memories of the death they apparently embody. Support group therapists as “memory intermediaries”⁷⁶ assist in individual and group memory work, helping to piece together fragmented memory. Yet those reconstructed memories must be defined as essentially belonging to the second generation both as having been there and embodying those memories. Thus a group facilitator defines the status and authenticity of second generation memories as follows:

Second hand memories of trauma are often repressed, yet when recalled there is a sense that they have been acquired in bulk, in an unintegrated fashion. Second generation children of Holocaust survivors have a before-the-war notion laced into their conversations although they had not yet been born ... memories as vital as if they were backdrops to everyday life.⁷⁷

The memories, although repressed, are described as belonging to the second generation personal storehouse of memories, as expressed in the enigmatic and paradoxical concept of “second hand memories.” They are not first hand experiences but nonetheless take on a liminal position as inherited, “vital backdrops” to their lives. Within the support group, they may be accessed and adopted as integral parts of Holocaust descendant identity where participants are taught to maintain the blurred distinction between parental memories and transmitted, embodied “second hand memories.” For example, in an attempt to explain causally the second generation fear of aggression and passive behavior as a consequence of the descendant’s vicarious experience of Holocaust violence, one facilitator describes the processes of transmission and embodiment of the violent Holocaust past. She explains “although we had not physically experienced that violence, we lived our parents’ past memories and memories are contagious. We don’t have to live them ourselves.” The above excerpt recalls the Jewish metaphysical concept of the co-presence of past, present and future generations at archetypal events such as when the Israelites received the Torah from God at Mount Sinai. Resonating with the same sense of virtual presence, contemporality and potential embodiment of the past, another facilitator asserts, the second generation “absorb their parents’ trauma that they experience as though it had actually happened to them.”⁷⁸

76 Irwin-Zarecka 176.

77 Muller-Paisner 321.

78 Strauss 410.

THE EMPATHIC WITNESS

Convinced of the authenticity of “second hand memories,” and the embodiment of those memories, the support group begins to excavate latent recollections. Those memories must however be given new life, reactualized in the scenario-based narrative process. Like the ritual and liturgical recitals in traditional Jewish commemorative memory work, the second generation reenacts their memories in order to become literate and empathic conduits of memory. Support group facilitators are blatantly open about the orchestration of ritual reenactment of “second hand memories.” Facilitator Rhona Strauss ushers her participants into the past “so that they themselves may experience parental trauma.” Each event, be it the absence of a participant, or the up and coming completion of the series of sessions, is interpreted as somehow resonating with Holocaust trauma. Strauss clearly states, “through reenactment and interpretations, we tried to make sense of their [second generation] experiences.” She describes reenactment as follows: “The session gathered momentum as members experienced anxiety and helplessness about their immanent departure—this echoed an experience from the ghettos and camps—the sense of helplessness.” Describing a later stage in the same session Strauss continues: “They were aware of the long journey they had endured and survived. In fact we had all survived.”⁷⁹

The process of narrating childhood stories, and the parental Holocaust story as a constitutive event in accordance with the scenario of transmitted PTSD may also be seen as ritual reenactment. As outlined above, the participants must learn to tell their stories by reciting them session after session, in the proper sequence of events. With the help of the group, the slots in the scenario are filled in, as are personal voids while participants round off the edges of personal details that deviate from the emergent common denominator.⁸⁰ Finally, the reconstructed, collective story becomes a virtual reality, allowing participants to internalize the scenario as a group identity.

Although the interpretive frame and techniques of reenactment may be traced to psychoanalytic epistemologies, they may nonetheless be seen as what Bahloul refers to as “contingent symbolic and social processes,”⁸¹ evoking the same desired response elicited by traditional Jewish rituals of commemoration. As in the Passover *Seder* ritual, the participants connect to the past and narrate a sequenced scenario commemorating that past, in order to experience the feeling of virtually having been there.

79 Ibid. 407–410.

80 For further examples of support group narration and the troubleshooting process whereby facilitators and veteran members provide a model for properly narrated scenarios and correct deviations from the scenario, see Kidron.

81 Bahloul 125.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE "KNOWLEDGEABLE WITNESS"

Beyond the construction of an embodied and empathic witness, support group narrative texts also frame and define the moral imperative of second generation testimony. Children of survivors may be seen to have first hand knowledge of survivor experiences so that their obligation to return to the past extends beyond a desire to work through and heal personal and familial wounds. Recalling the Talmud's "knowledgeable witness," the descendant must report the unjust event of which they have knowledge, providing Holocaust testimony for communal remembrance.

Facilitator Muller-Paisner attempts to illustrate the link between the child of survivor's "second hand memories" and what she terms "second hand bearing of witness" with the following story. In his testimony, a survivor recounts how he had witnessed the deportation of the town ritual slaughterer (*shochet*) and had realized that there would be no one to testify and remember what had happened to this one individual. "He vowed at that moment to remember the *shochet*." Fifty years later, he recalls his promise, realizing that in fact he was getting older and "a panic suddenly came over him as he realized that the memory of that man **was in his mind alone**. Who would remember after he was gone? With a sense of great urgency he called for his **oldest son** and explained that **he must promise to remember**." Muller-Paisner continues: "While leading a support group and being a second generation member myself, I could identify with the son **who had agreed to remember a memory which was not his own**."⁸² This powerful excerpt depicts the almost inextricable connection between the second generation's second hand memory and their moral imperative to testify and commemorate those memories, lest they be lost for eternity. Memory and testimony appear to be almost synonymous concepts for the survivor and for the second generation facilitator leading the group.

This connection is made by another facilitator, this time however, relating directly to the content of the testimony of the "second hand witness." Rhona Strauss describes her group as follows:

There were those who recognized their identity as the second generation of Holocaust survivors **with a need to testify, not to the trauma of the Holocaust itself, but rather to their own experience of living in its shadows**.⁸³ (My emphasis)

Interestingly, the second generation, first hand childhood experiences, existentially removed from the Holocaust event, are nonetheless granted the status of Holocaust related testimonial material. One might venture to say that by referring to postwar, second generation stories as testimony,

82 Paisner 321.

83 Strauss 403.

one is again constructing the metonymic relationship between the survivor victim-parent and the wounded child which in turn authenticates the future collective role of second generation ritual carriers of memory.

The moral imperative to testify was clearly expressed in the support group session on the topic of "belonging." The opening monologue or agenda began: "Our parents were uprooted from their families, their homes, their lives...and never regained a sense of belonging. Did they transmit this lack of belonging to us?" Later in the session a number of participants expressed their ignorance regarding their parents' Holocaust past or as they put it, "the gap in their parent's history" and their hesitation to discuss Holocaust memories with their parents because of a fear that reference to the traumatic past might hurt them. The facilitator quickly responded "it is important that you get information from your parents, **to transmit is to live and to be silent is to kill.** They were uprooted and if our family and **past is like a tree, if we transmit the tree lives and if we don't it dies.**" (My emphasis)

The facilitator uses powerful, viscerally jarring, traditional Jewish root metaphors of the Tree of Life to instill the imperative of returning to the past, bridging the void of silence and transmitting testimony. Although the psychological literature cited above has presented the process of working through and completing unfinished business as personally healing,⁸⁴ here the aim is clearly stated to be transmission. The initial and more conventional therapeutic imperatives of accessing the participant's silenced story or even group narration or testimony to the traumatic past are not sufficient. Rather he/she must comply with an emergent, future scenario of transmission of the story to future generations. This text is all the more telling when considering the fact that within the therapeutic setting, the term transmission previously evoked associations with intergenerational transmission of PTSD; the derogatory, stigmatic process of familial contagion and contraction of a psychosocial disorder for which one required therapeutic support. Despite the personal emotional price, one was being called upon to continue the transmission of the Holocaust heritage, and as will be seen below, perhaps even the transmission of the disorder. Transmission of the familial story and/or the concomitant disorder, would guarantee the preservation of the lineage of survivors once or twice removed, as metonymic traces or carriers of wounded memory.

Returning to the original agenda scenario of belonging (and following the facilitator's link between the agenda topic and the transmission metaphor), if our parents were irrevocably uprooted, our sense of renewed belonging also depends upon replanting the past and transmitting that past to our children and to the collective. Resolution and closure of the catastrophic Jewish, personal, familial and collective rupture paradoxically entails continued transmission of wounded traumatic memory. As seen above, the imperatives

84 Dasberg 45.

of testimony and transmission are brought home by weaving traditional Jewish tropes within the more contemporary psychological scenario of intergenerationally transmitted effects of PTSD. As Ortner notes, cultural scenarios frame experience in a collectively meaningful way by embedding “cultural bits” or what she defines as “a distilled hegemonic selection . . . of cultural practices . . . by virtue of their presentation in cultural stories, myth, legend, folk tale, histories.”⁸⁵ In this way core Jewish practices, beliefs and meaning worlds, condensed within the above metaphors, validate the psychological key scenario of transmitted PTSD as a contemporary, cultural founding myth and thus sanctifies the arduous emotional journey of the second generation.

Irwin-Zarecka describes the process in which memory projects a secure presence for the past in the present by interweaving traditional layers of meaning with contemporary ones. In what she terms a “memory infrastructure” a “sedimentation of meaning” is built up over time so that certain abandoned pieces of memory are retrieved while others are not.⁸⁶ At the group’s March session, the agenda topic was “guilt” but the facilitator added one seemingly unrelated issue to the agenda at the end of her monologue:

Passover is approaching. This is a time when families get together to celebrate. Survivor families are small families and we remember big families who are now lost to us. It is very difficult for us. We read the *Hagadah*, which talks about telling others what had happened. In the silence of our houses we cannot ask questions about what happened.

These words provide an encapsulated picture of the group’s infrastructure of memory, in which Jewish contemporary and traditional meanings are sedimented. The contemporary, second generation, key scenario of “guilt” is grafted upon the traditional Jewish scenario of the transmission of the tale of the Exodus from Egypt. In this way, Jewish paradigmatic imperatives of intergenerational transmission of prototypic events, grounded in concrete ritual space and time such as the Passover Seder, are used to evoke and sanctify the contemporary practice of Holocaust narration and transmission. By adding the subject of breaking Holocaust silence to the session before Passover and directly linking it to the upcoming Passover ritual, the still abstract, emergent second generation scenario is concretized and grounded by association with the traditional ritual event. Thus recalling Sahlins’ structure of conjuncture,⁸⁷ the new, symbolic process of constituting carriers of Holocaust memory is authenticated and grafted upon the traditional one, acquiring its meaning and legitimacy through the traditional cultural

85 Ortner 63.

86 Irwin-Zarecka 90.

87 Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985) xiv.

schema. Reference to small, silent families once again valorizes the support group as site of memory and the second generation community of memory as an alternative channel of memory. As such, the support group provides a necessary outlet for recital of previously silenced archetypal sequences and fulfillment of personal and communal imperatives of generational transmission.

THE CHILD AS REDEEMER: BEARING THE BURDEN OF MEMORY

The above references to the descendant's obligation to testify appear to evoke the Jewish paradigm of the child's role in the commemoration of the parental past. It is yet to be seen, however, if second generation participants accept that obligation. One must evaluate the group narrative to determine if the second generation accepts this valorized "moral practice."⁸⁸ Once again, group dialogue will be examined for embedded Jewish paradigms and metacodes defining the parent-child relationship and the mission of remembrance.

Acceptance of the identity and functional role of the second generation memory carrier begins with the acceptance and internalization of the scenario. This acceptance may be reflected, firstly in the ability and willingness of the participants to create a fit between the monthly agenda's key scenario and their accounts of their individual relationship with their parents and secondly, in statements regarding the inevitability of the transmitted disorder and resultant second generation profile. As Gottesfeld et al note, "group participants come to understand how their personalities were affected as they come to appreciate the role their parents traumatization and style of coping had played in forming their own individual identities."⁸⁹ The following agenda text and consequent dialogue between participants reflects internalization and acceptance of the causal scenario of intergenerational transmission, and the conscious/reflexive transmission to a third generation:

Agenda: Today we will talk about guilt. Our parents may have felt guilty about survival when they lost their families. They felt guilty about starting new lives, being happy, having new families. They transmitted this sense of guilt to us. Because of their sense of loss, they had impossible expectations of our performance but our performance could not make up for their loss and we always felt guilty about that. If we are happy after what they went through, we feel guilty, and if we have problems we feel guilty because it cannot compare to their suffering and we only embitter their lives when we must

88 Michael Lambek, "The Past Imperfect: Remembering as a Moral Practice," *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (New York, 1996) 235-254.

89 Gottesfeld et al. 399.

make up for their past. Our guilt is extended to others in our lives. We can never do enough or succeed. But our main problem remains our link to our parents, where we can never meet their and our own expectations.

Participant #1: My mother is ill and I have to divide my time between my family and taking care of her. I feel I can never do enough for them. I always feel guilty when I enjoy myself. I should be with them. When I am with them I am neglecting my family and feel guilty. When I was growing up, my parents were so strong, they were survivors **but I was always somehow strong for them, taking care of them.** Even then I never could do enough. **After everything they went through, I just couldn't make it better.** I want my kids to help and **learn to take on the responsibility** I had, but then if I press them they will experience the **burden I carried, I will transmit the problem to them as third generation just as it was transmitted to me. There is just no getting away from it,** no matter what I do I will feel guilty.

Participant #2: My dad has been trying to get me to go back to Australia. The pressure is unbelievable. My husband doesn't want to go back and can't understand since he is third generation. He does not realize how close we are in the family, and **how important it is that we take care of one another.** My parents lost everything and unlike my husband's family, **there is no one left but the three of us.** I feel so guilty being far away. But unlike you (pointing to participant #1) I **want** my kids to learn to feel guilty, I always ask them if they called or wrote their grandparents. Maybe I am **creating the third generation but I think that attitude is important.**

Participant #3: I am older than the rest of you [a child survivor with gatekeeper status in the group] and I can tell you there is no point in feeling guilty, **because it won't help. We must just carry our burden and accept the inevitable.**

(My emphasis)

The above texts make it clear that the participants have accepted the causal connection between first generation Holocaust trauma and their inter-personal dilemmas and their resultant sense of obligation to take care of their parents. Their suffering is expressed and accepted as inevitable, as is the transmission of some aspects of the Holocaust related emotional disorder to the next generation.

I would assert that the narration of the scenario of intergenerational transmission and the acceptance of its inevitability may be seen as a contemporary reworking of the Jewish tropes of filial obligation and the imperative of the redemption of forefathers. As outlined above, the concept that redemption may be achieved by paying for the sins of the fathers implies two levels of meaning. Firstly, echoing the biblical verse "the fathers ate sour grapes and the teeth of the sons will be set on edge,"⁹⁰ past historical events

90 Jeremiah 31:29.

surrounding the first generation's "*Churban*" or catastrophe, is accepted as inevitably causing suffering in the child's generation. Resonating with the traditional concept of filial liability, the child will pay by carrying the burden of emotional scars and of memory that have spilled over into their present. Secondly, Holocaust descendants are not merely suffering passively but thanks to group talk therapy, they may ransom the sins of the fathers by looping back to their familial past and rebiographing their lives along the causal sequence of the transmitted PTSD scenario and in the process narratively constitute themselves as wounded survivors, who must testify to heal both themselves and their parents. It is the key psychological scenario, as intergenerational blueprint, which points not only to the causal link between past and present but defines future testimony and even transmission as a redemptive, mnemonic practice in the future. In accordance with the precepts of psychological therapy and praxis, the very act of narration or testimony may redeem and ransom the past by ending the silence which has aggravated both their parents' and their own trauma related symptoms.⁹¹

The voicing of Holocaust related events also fulfills another Jewish imperative, namely closure of the rupture in the Jewish temporal continuum created by the personal and collective repression of Holocaust memories.⁹² Emotional embodiment and transmission of those memories bridge the silence left by their still living parents. Using new forms of psychological therapeutic narration, the dead victims of the Holocaust, insufficiently mourned by their children,⁹³ are re-membered and memorialized by their grandchildren, the second generation. Both victims and silenced survivors are returned first to the new temporal scenario or continuum constituted in the support group and subsequently to the embedded traditional scenario of exile and redemption through commemoration.

Perhaps most importantly, by creating a third generation in some cases, as seen above, purposely taught to carry the burden, survivor parents' "sins of silence" are apparently redeemed as they will be re-membered by future generations. The conscious creation of a third generation is reflected in the following text:

I have come to terms with my burden and my **responsibility to preserve their memories**, even if it means I have this **split personality, their past and my present**. I know it isn't fair to **turn them into a third generation** but my children will have to **learn to carry this burden** of mine, for **all those** who died and **can no longer tell their story**. (My emphasis)

In the above narration, the second generation participant once again appears to come to terms with the inevitable burden and eloquently describes the

91 Leys 123.

92 Yerushalmi 93–95.

93 Wachtel 110.

co-presence of the traumatic past and present within the descendant self. Referring to the descendant's mnemonic moral mission, she asserts that the second generation and their children must sustain and carry the weight of co-temporality "for all those who died." By transmitting the past to the third generation, they fulfill the key biblical and liturgical dicta: "Impress them [the commandments] upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home" (Deuteronomy 6:19) and "Tell your sons [about the Exodus]" (Passover *Seder* liturgy). Enigmatically, in the process, they also constitute third hand witnesses who by virtue of the emotional and mnemonic traces of the Holocaust past may feel as if they themselves had been in Egypt or at Mount Sinai, and as such may take upon themselves the collective role of carriers of Holocaust memory.

It would appear from the above narrative excerpts that the psychologically framed support group scenario and participant dialogue not only embeds key Jewish metaphors, scenarios and tropes but also serves as a mechanism to proscribe Jewish commemorative practices of remembrance, testimony, intergenerational transmission of memory. The question remains however as to whether the nexus of psychological and Jewish memory work actually enables redemption as described in the psychological literature and support group *raison d'être*. Are second generation support group participants redeemed and healed of their psychological burden, or paradoxically, does Jewish commemoration and redemption of the Holocaust past imply a perpetual burden?

REDEMPTION: RECOVERY OR PERPETUAL MNEMONIC BURDEN?

If one were to re-examine the memory-identity work of the second generation descendant as a unitary process, an enigmatic paradox may be seen to emerge. The commemorative mandate of Holocaust descendant identity work, embedded within the emergent future scenario of transmission to a burdened third generation, appears at odds with the conventional therapeutic agenda of memory work.⁹⁴ Rather than providing a normalized, re-authored narrative,⁹⁵ coping mechanisms,⁹⁶ or narrative integration of trauma,⁹⁷ the

94 Ian Hacking, "Memory Sciences, Memory Politics," *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (New York, 1996) 67–88.

95 Robert A. Neimeyer, "Social Constructionism in the Counseling Context," *Counseling Psychology Quarterly* 11 (1998): 147.

96 Wuthnow 282–288.

97 Michael G. Kenny, "Trauma, Time, Illness, and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Traumatic Memory," *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (New York, 1996) 151–171.

descendant support group resurrects and narratively performs and exercises a latent, trauma-related, psychologically maladaptive life, going as far as to revitalize it with abundant, retrieved, personal and collective content. The literature on trauma recovery too,⁹⁸ encourages victims to reconstruct and narrate the traumatic past and thereby give testimony in the service of the collective good. The moral act of public testimony is, moreover, described by trauma researchers as individually healing, as the witness may in fact achieve integration of the traumatic past.⁹⁹ In the present case study however, the second generation continues to suffer the wounds of the apparently irrevocable psychosocial profile even after narration, testimony and transmission of memory.

As reflected in the facilitator's metaphor of the uprooted tree, replanting and life is dependent upon perpetual knowledge, embodiment and transmission of the wounded past, not upon personal psychological recovery. If the Jewish obligation to carry the burden of memory and ultimate redemption is dependent upon remembrance enabled by renarrating the past in accordance with a key scenario that makes continued symptoms and transmission of those symptoms inevitable, is there room for psychological recovery?¹⁰⁰

Facilitators have grappled with the above contradiction as follows: "our parents' trauma often made possible a very basic paradox: that of being an extension of our parents and heritage and yet sole owners of our unique existence."¹⁰¹ When attempting to balance the needs of parental heritage with the needs of the separate self, it would appear that group policy has chosen the heritage, while molding a separate, second generation identity, liberated ironically through the active agency of constructing a perpetual loop to the past in which one will be entrapped. Thus one facilitator asserts, "the aim of the group was to help members achieve a sense of their own separate identity and come to terms with their loss...finally they had to give up their search for an ideal self and to accept that it was futile to revoke the outcome of the Holocaust."¹⁰²

The above paradox is most clearly illustrated in the final support group session of the series entitled: "where do we go from here?"

The topic for today's session is "where do we go from here?" We spoke of separation last time and today we are separating from the group; it is our last session, so we must ask **what is next, where do we go from here?** If we look back at the year and sessions we

98 Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, 1992).

99 Ibid. 180–184; Kenny 154–161.

100 Leys 123; Neimeyer, see note 95.

101 M. Weiss and S. Schindler, "Short-term Therapy for the Second Generation of Holocaust Survivors at Amcha Ramat Gan," *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*, ed. John Lemberger (Jerusalem, 1995) 419.

102 Strauss 416.

have discussed the different difficulties and problems we have **in common** as children of survivors...if I sum up the general feelings expressed here we see **we all carry a very heavy burden with us that we cannot get rid of. We carry it in all aspects of our lives and it effects all aspects of our life.** What do we do with it? How do we integrate it into our life? What do we do so that we can continue as separate individuals with our own lives without the burden destroying our lives and **what do we do with our children, the next generation. We want them to know and feel the burden but how can we transmit it to them and still let them separate from us?** (My emphasis)

Deconstructing the agenda text, the facilitator summed up group activities as having clarified what all participants have in common as members of the second generation who had created a sense of common, unique, group identity. The facilitator chose to speak of the most outstanding feature of that common identity, the heavy burden “we all carry.” Implying an all encompassing, master identity, the burden is all pervasive, affecting all aspects of one’s life. Asking what one might do with the burden, the text implies that it is permanent, as it cannot be “[got] rid of.” The facilitator does, however, consider the process of integration of the burden into participant lives, as she asks how integration may take place.

In an attempt to understand this question, we might first explore the meaning of the psychological term integration.¹⁰³ Within psychotherapeutic environments, a latent or blocked, maladaptive identity or repressed trauma may be allowed to surface. After working through one’s problems, or narrating trauma, one’s unearthed identity or traumatic past may be reintegrated and lived with in a less conflictual manner.¹⁰⁴ However, as expressed in the agenda text cited above, for the second generation, attempted integration appears to leave them still trapped within a symbiotic relationship with their parents, essentially unable to separate and individuate completely. If descendants do attempt to separate, they are faced with the irrevocability of their burdensome psychosocial problems. The facilitator thus asks, what may be done to “continue as separate individuals with our own lives without the burden destroying us”? In other words, assuming that one must live with the irrevocable burden, how can one attempt to lead a normal life, as a separate individual, while continuing to suffer from the destructive effects of the psychosocial profile of transmitted PTSD and the burden of memory? This question appears to be rhetorical, as the agenda does not offer any methods of integration that would allow for movement forward into independent selfhood, free of the

103 Lack of integration is linked in the literature to trauma related Dissociative Identity Disorder: see Nanette C. Auerhahn and Dori Laub, “Intergenerational Memory of the Holocaust,” *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York, 1998) 21–41.

104 Dan Bar-On, “Israeli and German Students Encounter the Holocaust through a Group Process: ‘Working Through’ and ‘Partial Relevance’,” *International Journal of Group Tensions* 22 (1992): 81–118.

recursive burden. Whether rhetorical, or aimed to trigger possible suggestions, the question nonetheless implies that even after the support group process of narrating the trauma past and present, the descendant is apparently not healed nor historically redeemed of a destructive emotional legacy.¹⁰⁵

Despite the hardship of life in the shadow of historical trauma, the last issue raised for discussion in the final session, is once again the desired, albeit problematic, transmission of the burden to the next generation. Resonating with Jewish tropes of memory and testimony, the facilitator asks how one may “transmit” the burden to the “next generation” in the lineage because “we want them to know and feel” the burden. Recalling Young and Yerushalmi’s assertions regarding testimony and commemoration, the Jewish witness and rememberer must know and remember the facts and provide testimony but also empathically and viscerally feel and reenact past catastrophes. It is tempting to provide a Jewish interpretation of the usage of both terms to “know” and “feel.” One might venture to say that although all are required to know of the unjust acts of the Holocaust, it is the unique, third generation, ritual carrier who may truly “feel” the scars “as if they had been there” because in a psychological sense they had.¹⁰⁶ The final sentence of the agenda is perhaps most telling, as the facilitator again refers to the eternal, paradoxical trap: knowledge and empathy may entail maladaptive separation issues for the third generation. By transmitting memory to the next generation, children of survivors risk transmission of the psychosocial burden as well. Having reframed intergenerational transmission of historical traumatic memory as a desirable and valorized “moral practice,”¹⁰⁷ children of survivors will testify to the past, yet in the process they will produce a new generation of wounded carriers of Holocaust memory.

In response to the agenda, the participants once again accept, narratively reenact and internalize the future scenario of the irrevocable burden and its transmission and in the process they continue to constitute themselves as carriers of Holocaust memory. Referring to the inevitability of transmission of the effects of trauma, one participant describes the burden as follows:

This is my second series in the group. I just want to say that everything that was said touches a familiar chord. One thing that is really important for me to understand, as a second generation survivor, is **what I am doing to my kids...transmitting** to my children...there must be **patterns of unconscious behavior creating a third generation who will continue to carry the burden.** (My emphasis)

Continuing to suffer the wounds of the profile and the burden of testimony and transmission, the second generation survivor is also conscious of having

105 Herman; Leys 123.

106 Berger 1–11, 65.

107 Lambek 235–254.

created or reproduced the co-presence of testimony and psychological wounds in the third generation as the future carriers of both psychological and mnemonic burdens. This apparent deviation from a conventional, therapeutic agenda raises the question of whether culturally embedded, Jewish commemorative mandates and/or the politics of Holocaust memory, have allowed for the evolution of psychological support group agendas and practices.

From a culturally specific, Jewish, point of view, the fulfillment of socially valorized mnemonic dictates and practices may in fact imply resolution or even redemption if not healing. As ethno-psychologists, Rosenman and Handelsman assert that second generation descendants may have sacrificially accepted a "social mandate" for the good of the collective: "the community was willing to pay the price of some psychologically damaged offspring of survivors . . . arrange[ing] that many members accept a mandate . . . to guard and enhance the group."¹⁰⁸ This analysis points to the fact that the personal price of the transmitted PTSD profile and eternal link to a troubled past, is the sacrifice one makes in the service of one's community. In a "culture of memory"¹⁰⁹ such as Jewish Israeli culture, consumed by commemoration,¹¹⁰ rather than conceived of as sources of suffering alone, Holocaust related scars become the requisite markers of Holocaust descendant authenticity, valorized social status and entitlement to symbolic capital. From the viewpoint of hegemonic "engineers of memory" and descendant "memory workers,"¹¹¹ psychological memory work might not aim for closure and integration, but rather the resurrection, appropriation and channeling of personal traumatic memory to the domain of public commemoration. Thus paradoxically, from a transcultural, psychiatric perspective, in the Jewish-Israeli cultural context, support group practice may have in fact beneficially redeemed, if not psychologically healed, the second generation participants by promoting the constitution of Jewish witnesses.

THE COMMUNITY AS CARRIER: THE SUPPORT GROUP AS A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY

The support group functions as a community of memory on numerous levels. It is the site or locus of memory work, in the sense that its social structure and resultant dynamic, dialogic process facilitates the narration of memory

108 Stanley Rosenman and Irving Handelsman, "Identity as Legacy of the Holocaust: Encountering a Survivor's Narrative," *Journal of Psychohistory* 18 (1990): 36.

109 Michael Schudson, "Lives, Laws and Language: Commemorative Versus Non-commemorative Forms of Effective Public Memory," *Communication Review* 2 (1) (1997): 12.

110 Saul Friedländer, "Memory of the Shoah in Israel," *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James Young (Munich and New York, 1994) 149–157.

111 Irwin-Zarecka 185.

fragments to create a coherent, sequential second generation narrative or key scenario. As clarified above, the support group dialogue is a contemporary, mnemonic device allowing the individual access to a story he/she could not have reconstructed alone. The communally rebiographed sequence then allows the individual to fulfill personal obligations to commemorate his/her previously ruptured personal and familial past. However, once constructed, the sequenced story becomes a narrative of shared suffering, where the story functions as a founding myth and the sessions function as formative events solidifying collective self definition.¹¹² The group is referred to as an extended family which “one may come home to” for collective grief and support.¹¹³ In order to promote group cohesion at the session dealing with belonging, the group facilitator capitalized on the second generation’s sense of difference, even if it meant fostering some of the maladaptive neuroses of the profile:

In Israel today second generation are different than the broader society. They do not necessarily have exterior signs, but they may **carry a secret: that different sense of identity**. For many years it was a secret, we did not realize other people had the same problems and did not always connect it to our second generation identity. That is why this **group can provide a community of belonging** for those who have had a hard time filling the gap of lacking a belonging. **We share a common experience and secret and now we are not alone.** (My emphasis)

The participant’s “secret” of the void is transformed into a common secret around which the individuals may rally into a community of memory. The previously stigmatized “difference” is transformed into a prerequisite for community membership. However, the emergent second generation secret society may be seen as an elite community, membership is not open to everyone. As with most cohesive communities, boundary maintenance tactics prohibiting affiliation of outsiders function both to define identity and to police the boundaries of that identity. Thus by the third session, second generation participants requested that non-second generation participants attending the session be asked to observe only, without actual participation in the story telling process. One second generation participant strikingly attested to an awareness of both identity construction and the importance of boundary maintenance in that process:

if the non-second generation just observe, it is okay with me, but I do not think they should participate. **They don’t have common experiences with us. They are not part of all this. I come here to hear other people say things that apply to me, pick up on a common thread connecting all our lives. What they say is not relevant to what we are doing here.** (My emphasis)

112 Ibid. 52.

113 Gottesfeld et al. 398.

“What we are doing here” appears to be not only creating contemporary, social processes for mutual support and personal commemoration but also constructing a bonded, exclusive community of memory which will be a vanguard of Holocaust remembrance in the present and future. Recalling Dasberg’s *raison d’être*, support group activities are aimed both at providing a framework of mutual support and memory processing for survivor generations on the one hand and changing public awareness of the needs of first and second generation survivors on the other. One may now consider how the latter goal of public awareness must be logically linked to the former memory project. Recalling Rosenman and Handelsman’s collective mandate for the second generation,¹¹⁴ the literate carriers of Holocaust memory, as living traces of authentic Holocaust suffering, can raise awareness among the general public. Raising awareness entails attention to the unique needs of the survivors and their problems as target populations, in the hope of evoking wide scale remembrance, bridging between society as a whole and its ruptured, silenced past.

THE SUPPORT GROUP AS A SITE OF CONTEMPORARY, JEWISH COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICE

It should be clear from the above discussion that support group memory work attempts to construct individual witnesses or carriers of Jewish Holocaust memory, as well as achieve Jewish paradigmatic goals of communal remembrance. However, once again one may ask if the therapeutic policies and channels of second generation memory work resonate with and thus sustain the traditional Jewish paradigms and practices of memory outlined above. Firstly, the narrative recital of the transmitted PTSD scenario and embedded descendant profile has been shown to function as a contemporary channel for personal and collective memory work and mourning. As with the prototypic Jewish sequence, this work subsumes and homologizes individual stories into one Holocaust-related script that reorganizes the chaos of familial and personal suffering. Unfolding sequentially, the scenario ushers participants back to the ruptured past and having redefined that past as their personal, constitutive event, their present is made meaningful.

This recursive move, however, not only reconfigures the descendant’s past and present, but also directs them towards their destined future as burdened carriers of memory, who will perpetuate Holocaust memorial and thereby reconstitute the previously ruptured historical continuum. Having fulfilled key Jewish scenarios, the inevitable weight of their burden and its social stigma are transformed into a sacred mission. The reframing of psychosocial emotional wounds as non-stigmatic, socially valorized and

114 Rosenman and Handelsman 36.

even advantageous for the carrier and as well as for the collective, would not be possible without the synthesis of therapeutic practice with Jewish paradigms of memory.

Secondly, though cloaked in psychological epistemology, both the session agendas and dialogue condense Jewish, paradigmatic, memory related moral imperatives. Echoing the prototypic Jewish scenario of exile-suffering-redemption as a vehicle of memory, the scenario of intergenerational transmission evokes traditional mnemonic tropes, namely filial liability, imperatives of testimony, commemoration and redemption. Having repeatedly narrated the key scenario and internalized its grammar and meanings, the second generation individual embodies the Jewish root motifs of the empathic and knowledgeable witness. Once recited and internalized, the scenario functions to educate carriers of memory, repeatedly reinforcing their sense of obligation to testify to the past, be it via embodiment of profile scars, or recital of what may be considered a second generation "martyrology." Recalling the *memorbicher*, the key conduit of memory is the child or next generation who must be taught to "know and feel the burden" so that memory is transmitted from generation to generation. The support group as a site of commemoration also recalls the communal recital of *Slichot* (penitential prayers, literally "forgiveness") and *Kinot* (lamentations), whereby the narrative of oppression perpetuates collective identity.

Finally, although renegotiated and adapted, support group narrations may also be seen as maintaining the traditional, ritual mechanisms of reenactment, reactualization and visceral embodiment. As seen above, dramatic and symbolically loaded texts elicit an emotional visceral response. Psychological techniques are used to reactualize and reenact Holocaust related anxieties so that the participants may actually feel "as if they were there". As in traditional rituals, when returning from their virtual *communitas*, participants have internalized the founding myths of their personal and collective identity and reinforced their awareness of their place on the continuum of Jewish time. Facilitators appear to be aware of the parallels with traditional Jewish commemoration as they explain: "Being part of a group allows for the process of collective mourning as experienced in Jewish tradition with the help of various ritual and group ceremonies."¹¹⁵ Thus the format, structure and content of narrative text and support group ceremonial mechanisms mold a community of memory which co-constructs a narrative of shared suffering and a joint future mission of commemoration.¹¹⁶

115 Weiss and Schindler 416.

116 Although it is clear that the community of memory emerging from the support group is of a temporary nature, the fact that there is a core group of five or six participants who have repeatedly attended for a number of years and that some of the participants have kept in touch, indicates that the group does provide communality and a sense of belonging for the eight-month long process even for those who do not return or keep in touch, and for those that do, there is a more permanent sense of community among others (Wuthnow,

CONCLUSION

Let us now return to Yerushalmi's warning that with the decline of traditional religious "channels of memory", the past will no longer be personally and collectively "reactualized" or made present, nor will it be transmitted from generation to generation.¹¹⁷ It has been asserted that second generation support group memory work may be seen as a contemporary, cultural "renegotiation and adaptation" of the more traditional channels of Jewish memory.¹¹⁸ The group's "policy of memory" has in fact evolved in the particular cultural context of secularized post-Holocaust society and appears dependent upon alternative contingent psychological symbolic and social processes for its survival.¹¹⁹ Yet as seen above, the group's theoretical guidelines, ritual text and ceremony, preserve the structure and spirit of traditional text and channels of memory as culturally embedded mechanisms to educate both the individual and community as carriers of memory, obligated and valorized to achieve traditional objectives of remembrance. The sedimentation of Jewish paradigms of memory within support group practice in no way implies equivalence between Jewish traditional practice and psychological memory work. Rather it discloses the cultural survival of core traditional principles and practices embedded within a secular, cultural site of identity-memory work.

With regard to the question of whether these resonances between Jewish memory work and support group memory work are sufficient to claim the active survival of traditional paradigms of Jewish memory, we may return to Yerushalmi's criteria for the perpetuation of Jewish collective memory. As he characterizes it, Jewish collective memory is "a function of shared faith, cohesiveness, and will of the group itself, transmitting and recreating its past through an entire complex of interlocking social and religious institutions that function organically to achieve this." Although the support group may not be considered a religious institution, to paraphrase Yerushalmi, it has reconstructed the unraveled "common network of belief and praxis through whose mechanisms . . . the past was once made present" where Jewish memory is healed because the "group itself finds healing" and wholeness is restored.¹²⁰

The rupture involved in secularization did engender and perhaps necessitate modified tools to evoke Jewish tropes and paradigms. Nevertheless, Jewish identity and memory appear to be sufficiently resilient

11–15, 360–367). See L. Irvine *Co-dependent Forever: The Invention of Self in a Twelve Step Group* (Chicago, 1999) 64–84.

117 Yerushalmi 44.

118 Valensi 85.

119 Bahloul 125.

120 Yerushalmi 94.

and resourceful in the construction of a “memory infrastructure” interweaving and grafting sedimented layers of traditional and contemporary meanings.¹²¹ It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the common form, symbolic structures and foundational paradigms shared by both traditional Jewish mnemonic texts and psychological epistemologies and constructs that may enable successful sedimentation, grafting and cultural conjunction in the case study at hand.¹²² Suffice it to say that within the group’s “structure of conjunction”¹²³ between contemporary psychological support group practice and dynamics and traditional paradigms of Jewish memory, Jewish interpretive schemes not only persist as frames for memory work but may have also redefined therapeutic objectives.

Taking a final look at the irrevocable, valorized burden carried by second hand witnesses, it may be possible to reconcile the paradox of the perpetuation of second generation, unfinished mourning. Paraphrasing Sahlins, if new psychological symbolic and social processes may “attain meaningful form through their interaction with previous [Jewish] schemes of interpretation,”¹²⁴ then the new, meaningful form of the healed second generation survivor may in fact be the literate carrier and transmitter of Jewish memory, who has discovered a contemporary means to bridge a very Jewish void. In accordance with archetypal paradigms of the personal and collective identity of embodied and empathic witnesses and communities of memory, this bridge does not lead forward to psychological redemption of ones traumatic past but rather must eternally turn in upon itself back to a Jewish past and forward toward a future resonating with that past.

As for the broader question of Holocaust representation and commemoration, Yerushalmi was correct in that Jewish paradigms of memory and Jewish memory are not preserved merely by virtue of the act

121 Irwin-Zarecka.

122 One might ask why new, very different, contemporary channels of Holocaust memory emerge as new cultural products successfully to perform mnemonic functions in parallel with traditional texts and practices. Does consistent historical sedimentation and weaving of deep structural traditional paradigms, tropes and practices with evolving contemporary practices itself render the structural and semiotic resonance between the old and new forms of memory inevitable? Beyond the case study at hand, are memory workers reflexively performing the sedimentation process? For an in-depth analysis of the common structure shared by both the Jewish, archetypal scenario of sin-exile-redemption and the psychological scenario of transmitted PTSD, see Carol A. Kidron, “Second Generation Holocaust Survivors,” Unpublished MA Thesis (Jerusalem, 1999) 78–83. Such an analysis begins to answer the question as to why psychological narrative practice and PTSD related epistemology may successfully fulfill the function of traditional Jewish channels of memory. For a comparison of Jewish and Psychological techniques of personal rebiographing life stories, see Mordechai Rottenberg, *Rebiographing and Deviance: Psychotherapeutic Narrativism and the Midrash* (Westport, CT, 1987) 1–3, 75.

123 Sahlins.

124 Ibid. xiv.

of remembrance, or even the act of transmission of the past as an historic event. He did perhaps undervalue the mnemonic potential of contingent, contemporary channels: for as long as they embed traditional tropes, scenarios and carriers, they will continue to sustain the presence of the past despite their post-modern discursive garb.¹²⁵ As shown in the present case study, secular and person-centered traumatic memory work has also evolved to commemorate the Holocaust event as a narrative of collective loss and catastrophe and to preserve the ideal of redemption embedded within the burden of wounded remembrance.

125 Yerushalmi makes one minor reference to Holocaust memory, asserting that despite the abundant historical attention paid to the event, Jews still await what he has previously described as traditional mechanisms of Jewish memory, namely a mytho-historical narrative with which to organize the event (see Yerushalmi 98). Although he refers to the novel as surrogate, one might assert that contemporary channels, such as the scenario of transmitted Post Holocaust Trauma functions as a founding myth of future carriers of memory and thus as a new mytho-historical narrative. However rather than viewing the trauma narrative as merely a modern surrogate, it might be conceived as much more, namely the most recent in a long series of evolving, cultural, discursive containers which unlike the surrogate, may only fulfill the function of preservation if it adopts, sustains and reproduces key aspects of the form and content of the cultural relic it contains.