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HOW TO MEND LOVE? WRESTLING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE HOLOCAUST IN RECENT ISRAELI FICTION

*The children of Holocaust survivors struggle with the legacy of parental trauma, which occurred before they were born. In three recent Israeli novels the nature of this struggle departs from the normative Zionist attitude to the Holocaust, which has affirmed the triumph of the national rebirth. Rather than subscribing to the Zionist orientation, which looks at the catastrophe from the standpoint of the "new" Jew, the protagonists in the novels – children who replace the dead – turn to the unknown and unknowable past in an attempt to mend the parental love that was irreparably damaged in the destruction. Their attempts to reenter the world of parental terror reveal their predicament: they feel obligated to tell the story of suffering, which they find impossible to tell. My discussion shows how in these novels the moral obligation toward the parental story takes the form of a struggle to both reaffirm and reassess moral values in the face of the Holocaust dehumanizing destruction. David Grossman's *See Under: Love* explores the viability of the ideals of the Enlightenment; Michal Govrin's *The Name* confronts the idea of the Divine; Ruth Almog's *The Inner Lake* explores the possibilities of artistic creativity in face of terror. Paradoxically, the struggle to penetrate the parental experience signals a hope of repair. The daring to face the terrifying echoes and phantoms in an attempt to reconstruct the destroyed parental world becomes the act of mending because it reaffirms the relevance of humanistic values.*

In a recently published anthology of fiction and memoirs by descendants of Holocaust survivors, *Nothing Makes You Free*, the editor, Melvin Jules Bukiet – an American Jewish writer and a child of Holocaust survivors – points out that the most important events in the descendants' lives occurred before they were born. While Bukiet acknowledges that the children of the survivors "received a tainted inheritance, secondhand knowledge of the worst event in history" (18), he nonetheless affirms, "It's our job to tell the story, to cry 'Never Forget!' despite the fact that we can't remember a thing. ... [W]e have no option but to imagine" (16, 21).

While Bukiet's comments highlight the dilemma that faces the children of Holocaust survivors, their writings attest to the overpowering need to wrestle with parental legacy. In this essay I investigate the representations of this dilemma in recent Israeli fiction. As I show in my discussion of David Grossman's *See Under: Love* (1989), Michal Govrin's *The Name* (1995), and Ruth Almog's *The Inner Lake* (2000), this fiction departs from the normative Israeli attitudes toward the Holocaust.¹ It does not conform to the

Zionist affirmation of the triumph of the national rebirth nor does it concur with literature critical of this ideological position. Rather, this fiction strives to comprehend the survivors' trauma and wrestles with its emotional impact upon the children. In these novels, the children are driven to restore the power of parental love vanquished by the Holocaust.

The thematic of the post-Holocaust relationships between survivors and their children is interesting due to the biographical fact that only one of the writers, Michal Govrin, born in 1950, is a child of a survivor; her mother, whose first child died in the Holocaust, survived Auschwitz. The family of David Grossman, born in 1954, arrived in Palestine long before the end of the war. Ruth Almog's parents escaped Germany in 1933 to settle in Palestine, where she was born in 1936. Their need to wrestle with the implications of the event demonstrates that the legacy of the Holocaust has become equally compelling to the biological children of survivors and to those who, in Geoffrey Hartman's words, "have adopted themselves into the family of victims" (8). It is possible to argue that the identification with the Holocaust generation of the latter has been to a considerable extent determined by the consciousness of the totality of the Nazi decree against the Jewish people. In view of the fact that the Final Solution targeted the entire nation, every post-Holocaust Jewish child is the descendant of an accidental survivor.²

In contrast with the Zionist orientation, which refrained from facing the catastrophic, the aforementioned works of fiction attest to the profound impact, both emotional and ethical, of the tragedy on the Israeli-born writers regardless of the biographical distance from the event. The consciousness that the Holocaust trauma deprived the descendants of parental love raises the issue of the relevance of humanism in the wake of the destruction; the desire to mend a life haunted by the Holocaust trauma necessitates rethinking the validity of progress, faith and art in the post-Holocaust world. Such rethinking is at the heart of these works of fiction, which strikingly deviate from the ideological context in which they were conceived.

The Holocaust from the Zionist literary perspective

In the immediate post-war era, the response of the *yishuv* and then of the State, to the annihilation of European Jewry emphasized Zionist dogma, which affirmed that Jews could be safe and independent only in their own country. In a tragically ironic sense, the Zionist ideal of the "new" Jew liberated from the weakness and the humiliation of the diaspora was validated by the Holocaust. Redemption lay in the Zionist collective effort of building the country and defending the sovereignty of the state. Hence, to recuperate from their tragic experience, Zionist dogma held that the survivors should join the Zionist collective as nation builders.

This teleological orientation – the "Zionist metaplot" as the literary scholar Gershon Shaked named it – was reaffirmed in Israeli post-Holocaust literature. Novels, such as *Saul and Yohanna* (1957–1961) by Naomi Frankel and *Between the Dead and the Living* (1958–1964) by Yonat and Alexander Sened, focused on the national pride of the Jewish European youth who struggled heroically against the Nazis and then became Zionists in Eretz Israel. According to Shaked, this literature "implied that, despite the catastrophic defeat of the Jewish people, the metaplot would triumph and that exile would be succeeded by liberation" (Shaked 190). Indeed, the literature of this period mirrored the

view of the Zionist establishment, communicating the ideological message that the survivors ought to shed their exilic past, expunge their Holocaust experience, integrate into Israeli communal life and its Hebrew culture; in brief, transform into "new" Jews.

Nevertheless, the tumultuous history of the state did not allow this clear-cut, programmatic attitude toward the survivors to dominate the Israeli scene for long. The public exposure of the Holocaust in the Eichmann trial in 1961, the constant threat of destruction prior to the 1967 Six-Day War, followed by the spectacular victory and the new reality of occupation, the precariousness of the state in the 1973 October War and the disastrous Lebanese War in 1982, all evoked dialectical responses to the Zionist metaplot. In view of these traumatic events that deeply affected the Israeli national self-image, the memory of the unspeakable victimization and suffering of the Jewish people could no longer be subsumed by the ideal of collective nation-building. The Eichmann trial was a watershed event that transformed Israeli Holocaust consciousness; the testimonies of the survivors confronted the Israeli with the unequivocal concreteness of the victim's experience. As Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, a noted scholar of Holocaust literature, observed, "[The trial] directed attention to the survivors and contributed to a process of individuation and an appreciation of the ambiguity of issues that had hitherto been parcelled into ideologically cogent and facile categories" (Ezrahi 261).

Indeed, initiated by the Eichmann trial, the wide spectrum of still ongoing literary responses of Israeli – mainly Israeli-born – writers has attested to the relentless preoccupation with the issue of the victim-survivor. The literary responses, to mention just a few, depict situations such as the contemptuous attitude of the Jewish soldiers who fought with the British toward the liberated concentration camps survivors in Hanoch Bartov's *The Brigade* (1965); the displacement of the mentally sick survivors in Israeli society in Yoram Kaniuk's *Adam Resurrected* (1969); the estrangement of a young Polish survivor by the *yishuv* in Shulamith Hareven's story "The Witness" (1980). In the post-Six Day War period we note the permutation of the Jewish victim's suffering to the Arab characters. In *Satirical Cabaret* (1968), by Hanoch Levin, the Arab character assumes the identity of the oppressed and suffering Jew; in David Grossman's *The Smile of the Lamb* (1983), the Arab protagonist is the victim of the Israeli occupiers; in the anthology of second-generation poetry, *My Yellow Robe* (1997), the poets, Giora Segal and Tzvi Atzmon, among others, compare the Israeli soldier to the Nazi oppressor.³

Even this brief survey elucidates how the theme of the survivor has served as a prism for harsh criticism of Zionist ideology and of the politics of the Zionist state in Israeli literature. The insensitive treatment of the survivors by Israeli authors provided grounds to criticize the Zionist metaplot at large. Ironically, as the defendants of the survivors, the Israeli writers remained in the Zionist fold; what they protested was the *wrong* approach of the Zionist establishment to the integration of the survivor into Israeli society, but they never doubted the Zionist premise of Israel as the survivor's only haven and homeland. Furthermore, while sincere, the desire to act for the survivor did not signify the Israeli's identification with the victim; rather as an empowered "new" Jew, the writer advocated for the weak and helpless diaspora Jew.⁴ As Yael Feldman succinctly answers the provocative question "Whose Story Is It, Anyway?" with regard to the treatment of the survivors in Israeli literature, "one cannot escape the impression that ... this is the *sabra's* story rather than the survivor's; that what is at stake is the preservation of the *difference* Israelis have carved for themselves out of Jewish history and

identity" (Feldman 224; emphasis in original). Thus, even though sensitive to the survivor, the Israeli writers maintained their distinction from the diaspora Jew.

Interestingly, the desire to erase this distinction is shared by the survivor, as implicit in the fiction of Aharon Appelfeld, Israel's foremost writer-survivor. Appelfeld's outstanding autobiographical novel *Searing Light* (1980) depicts the process of transformation from a young refugee, stranded on the beaches of Italy in the aftermath of the war, into a Hebrew-speaking, productive member of Israeli society. Like the Israeli fiction mentioned above, *Searing Light* is bitterly critical of the unequivocal demand to conform to the Zionist collective ethos. But the novel is also a story about the survivor's desire to integrate into the collective. The evidence that this desire has eventually prevailed lies in Appelfeld's adoption of Hebrew as the language of his literary work, a choice that displaced German, his mother tongue. Furthermore, his consistent dwelling on the self-deception of the pre-Holocaust assimilated European Jews vis-à-vis the increasingly foreboding reality, and his equally consistent avoidance of the story of the extermination of these Jews, attest to his acquiescence with the Zionist critical attitude toward the diaspora.

These features of Appelfeld's writing demonstrate his successful integration into the Israeli cultural establishment. Recall Hans Robert Jauss's theory of reception, which defines the social function of literature in terms of the reader's "horizon of expectations," a capability of accepting the work informed by "other works of art" as well as by "the everyday experience of life" (Jauss 39, 41). Israelis expected the survivor to integrate into Zionist society and culture. It is important to note that this expectation served not only the ideological objective of nation-building, but also the need to avoid the "everyday life experience" of traumatic encounters with the reminders of the Holocaust. In *The Seventh Million*, a seminal study of Israel's responses to the Holocaust, Tom Segev observes, "Israel was apprehensive of [the survivors] and wanted to change them... People sincerely feared meeting the survivors face to face, with their physical and psychological handicaps, their suffering and terror" (158). In this sense, the expectation of the survivor to transform into a "new" Jew reflected the desire to repress the fearful consciousness of the event on both the individual and collective levels.

It is now possible to see how Appelfeld's thematic choices, which met the Israeli "horizon of expectations," contributed to the canonical status of his fiction. While the avoidance of the Holocaust reduced the fear of his Israeli readers, his criticism of the shortsightedness of European Jews reaffirmed the Zionist indictment of the diaspora. It is true that Appelfeld expanded the Israeli horizon to include the subject of Jewish life in the diaspora, yet his unsparing representation of the diaspora Jews, as his famous novel *Badenheim 1939* (1979) demonstrates so well, complied with the Zionist orientation, and sanctioned a positive reception of his work.⁵

It would of course be unwarranted to claim that Appelfeld made his thematic choices consciously. It is possible to argue, however, that his reception in Israel was possible thanks to the choice he had made long before, as a refugee on the beaches of Italy. By opting to integrate into Israeli society and its Hebrew culture, he had, in effect determined his future choices. As a "subject" in a community, Slavoj Žižek writes, "you have freedom to choose, but on condition that you choose the right thing," since "the subject *must choose what is already given him*" (Žižek 165; emphasis in original). What was "given" to Appelfeld upon becoming a "subject," that is, a member of the Israeli community, was the Zionist outlook, which perceived the Holocaust as the consequence of the

willing Jewish perpetuation of the exilic existence. By adopting this outlook, Appelfeld engaged in what Michael André Bernstein calls “backshadowing,” a perspective which looks back at history and treats the participants in past events “as though they too should have known what was to come” (Bernstein 16; emphasis in original). This anachronistic, judgmental viewpoint promotes the Zionist metaplot, because it sets a clear divide between the self-deceptive, erring, sick Jewish life in the diaspora and the constructive, positive, and healthy Jewish life in the Jewish state.

To mend a life bereft of parental love

The works of fiction whose protagonists wrestle with the traumatic legacy, devoid of parental love, deviate sharply from the mainstream dogmatic treatment of the victim. In opposition to Appelfeld’s conscious refraining from telling *his* experience of the Holocaust, the writers of these novels seek an experience that was not theirs and which, as Bukiet reminds us, they cannot remember. Rather than subscribing to the Zionist metaplot which looks at the past of Holocaust suffering from the powerful standpoint of the “new” Jew, the protagonists in the novels turn to *this past* (of the Holocaust) to understand its detrimental impact on their emotional being. More specifically, as the following brief synopses of the novels demonstrate, the protagonists are driven to engage with the past of evil that bereaved them of parental love.

Grossman’s *See Under: Love* combines the genres of the realistic, the fantastic, and, as the title indicates, the encyclopedic. It is the story of Momik, the son of Holocaust survivors named after the numerous family members who died in the Holocaust. In his childhood, Momik unsuccessfully tried to defeat the “Nazi Beast” to gain the love of his traumatized, grieving parents. Now an aspiring writer, Momik, persists in his efforts to mend the evil of the Holocaust. He seeks help from Bruno Schulz, the great Polish Jewish writer who perished (together with his masterpiece *The Messiah*) in the Holocaust, but finds solution in the fictional character of Anshel Wasserman, his great-uncle (whom he calls Grandfather), a pre-war Warsaw Yiddish writer of children’s stories. While Schulz, who has turned into a salmon, takes Momik on a fantastic voyage in the sea where he offers an apocalyptic vision of redemption, Wasserman takes Momik on a no less fantastic journey to a death camp where he restores the power of love through storytelling. Momik continues the story, which he writes in the form of encyclopedic entries.

Govrin’s *The Name* (*Hashem*, “name” is also an appellation of God) both follows and transforms the story of Exodus. The protagonist-narrator, Amalia, was named after her father’s first wife, Mala, who died in the Holocaust. Her father’s mourning over Mala deprived Amalia of his love; to gain his love, she strives in vain to redeem the dead and the world at large. Amalia’s attempts to espouse the Orthodox and the kabbalistic theodicies prove futile. Eventually, the story of Exodus reveals to her the source of human suffering in God’s ambivalence toward his people. Amalia finds a measure of serenity and love in the acceptance of the imperfection in the Divine.

In Almog’s *The Inner Lake*, the narrator-writer overcomes her fear of the Holocaust story and creates her protagonist, Glycera. Glycera is the daughter of a Holocaust survivor who married a German woman. Glycera’s mother wished to atone for the sins of her Nazi father. Glycera was named after another Glycera, the girl her father loved, and

who had been killed in the war. Deprived of her father's love and haunted by her heritage, Glycera attempts to defeat the evil of the Holocaust. Her plan to expose her Nazi grandfather fails and she dies, shot by Joachim, her lover and a Nazi hunter. Watching her protagonist die the narrator-writer learns that while evil is bent on the destruction of love and art, the artist must persist in affirming art to keep love alive.

These complicated plots display the common theme of the loss of parental love; all three protagonists "replace" not only the children who were murdered, but also those who would have been born to the Holocaust dead; all three propose that to restore parental love, the evil of the Holocaust must be defeated. In *Children of Job*, a study of second-generation American Jewish responses to the Holocaust, Alan Berger defines the second generation as "replacement" children, while insightfully pointing out that, "a lost child is never 'replaced'" (5). This observation of the impossibility of replacing the dead children is central to the discussion of the protagonists in the novels, all children bereft of parental love.

The replacement role of the protagonists had been determined before they were born. While Momik replaces all the lost family children, Amalia and Glycera replace the children who could have been born to their fathers' dead beloved. The intention to replace the dead, however, fails on the emotional level; the second children cannot compensate for the first. The names that they carry represent the presence of the dead, a presence palpably manifest in the infinite bereavement of the parents. The dead continue to live in parental memory, depleting the ability to love the "replacements." Thus though they are the *only* children, the replacement children feel *second* in parental affection.

The sense of replacement determines the life narrative of the second children as "postmemory," in Marianne Hirsch's term. "Postmemory," Hirsch argues, "characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own stories are *evacuated* by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor re-created" (*Family Frames* 22; my emphasis). Because incomprehensible, the story of the trauma is never complete; the experience presents itself through fragments, hints and allusions. As Judith Greenberg argues in her poignantly entitled essay, "The Echo of Trauma and the Trauma of Echo," while the survivor's story remains silent, the repressed event emits "echoes," which signal the traumatic past (Greenberg 340).

Naturally, the fearful signals from the dead are internalized at the formative stage. The early exposure to postmemory "invades" the children's consciousness with haunting echoes. Hence, to construct an independent identity, the ominous echoes of the dead ought to be "evacuated." In the works of fiction under discussion, the physical absence of the parents rules out an attempt to change their attitude toward the children in a "dialogue."⁶ Having emitted anxiety-provoking echoes of their interminable bereavement, the parent-survivors either send the child away (*See Under: Love*), or die (*The Name*), or disappear (*The Inner Lake*). The battle for liberation from postmemory is thus waged entirely in the psyche of the grown-up child. The protagonists must contend with what the psychoanalysts, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, call the "phantoms" of "parental secrets" "encrypted" in the psychological makeup. In their work on the transmissions of trauma from one generation to the next, Abraham and Torok claim that the disconnection created by the parental secret haunts the child like a phantom. The child inherits "the parents' unspoken fears" which may lead "to phobias,

madness, and obsession" (180, 140). While the phantoms may be detrimental, however, they may also have a therapeutic function. Torok claims, "Phobia-inducing phantoms haunt in order to move the haunted persons to expose a concealed and unspoken parental fear" (Abraham and Torok 181).

But how can the children expose fears that are not merely unspoken but also unspeakable? How can they bring to light parental traumas that evade contemplation, let alone verbal expression? The Holocaust imposed silence even on the perpetrators, as Dominick LaCapra shows in his discussion of Himmler's Posen speech. Himmler swore his officers to silence about "an unwritten, a never-to-be-written page of glory" (LaCapra 108). Is it possible that the horrific, as LaCapra calls it, "negatively sublime" event of the genocide irrevocably blocked the story for the descendants by silencing the perpetrators as well as the victims?

The question of Holocaust silence looms large in Jean-François Lyotard's discussion of the impossibility of an artistic presentation of terror in the postmodern age.⁷ The unrepresentability of the trauma resonates with the unrepresentability, or the silence of the sublime (Lyotard, *Heidegger and the Jews* 32). Lyotard claims that in the postmodern world the artist "puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself" (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 81). Reaffirming Adorno's famous credo, Lyotard postulates that, "to make beautiful art today is to make kitsch" because in the "[A]fter Auschwitz' [era]... it is impossible for art and writing to bear witness to the Other" (Lyotard, *Heidegger and the Jews* 45, 48). As Lyotard sees it, postmodern art tells *art's* inadequacy to face the terror; self-consciously, art admits to be lacking the imagination to tell the story.

Lyotard conveys a foreboding message to the descendants of the victims. The failure to bear witness to the Holocaust experience through artistic imagination refutes the hope of mending a life bereft of parental love. Lyotard's view of the impotence of art to access the "secret story" leaves the children at the mercy of the unappeased phantoms of the past. But the impossibility of telling the parental story not only endangers the psychological wellbeing of the children, it also precludes the fulfillment of a supreme moral obligation. Even though *second*, the descendants are the *only* children of the survivors; they are the transmitters of the parental legacy and, therefore, it is incumbent upon them to ensure that the parental experience will not be forgotten. Recall Bukiet, who declares: "It's our job to tell the story, to cry 'Never Forget!' despite the fact that we can't remember a thing" (Bukiet 16).

To explore the obligation to keep the memory of the parental story alive, I turn to Walter Benjamin's prescient observation in his treatise, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" which he completed in 1940, before his suicide while escaping the Nazis:

The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a *secret agreement* between past generations and the present one. *Our coming was expected on earth*. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak Messianic power*, a power to which the past has a claim.

(Benjamin, "Theses" p 254)

According to Benjamin, the parental generation imposes upon the children the obligation to tell its story of defeat, threatened by the story of the victor who intends to

erase the past of the vanquished so that “*even the dead will not be safe*” from oblivion (Benjamin 257, 255; first two emphases in the text mine).⁸ The “secret agreement” with the parental generation thus empowers the children to become “messianic” redeemers of the memory of the defeated.

The Holocaust instilled Benjamin’s intergenerational “secret agreement” with poignant relevance. The coming of the children was *not* expected, because the generation of parents was to be exterminated. And thus the obligation of the post-Holocaust generation is to tell the “never-to-be written” story of the Final Solution, to bring Himmler’s speech to mind. In this sense the telling of the Holocaust has become both imperative and impossible. The story which, as Bukiet asserts must be told, cannot be remembered because it has been shrouded in the silence of the “negative sublime” of unprecedented suffering.

The juxtaposition of Benjamin and Lyotard’s views further elucidates the predicament entailed in the obligation to tell the Holocaust story. Since the Holocaust marked the collapse of civilization, can the story of suffering be told in a world that has repudiated justice, empathy, and love? I would argue that in the post-Holocaust context Benjamin’s imperative of the obligation to bear witness has become especially important; the telling of suffering signifies not only the rescue of the parental story, but also the restoration of the moral values defeated by terror. For Lyotard, however, in the post-Holocaust world, telling can only reflect the unrepresentable, that is, the collapse of civilization, because art can no longer call on moral values to counteract the evil of terror. The defeat of moral values has made a meaningful story of Auschwitz impossible; an attempt to tell the story produces kitsch (Lyotard, *Heidegger and the Jews*, 45, 48).

Lyotard’s apprehension of the trivialization of Auschwitz is understandable. However, acquiescence with the moral impotence of artistic expression in the face of terror negates, to return to Benjamin, the “secret agreement” between parents and children. Such a collapse signifies a twofold failure. Not only will the disavowal of this agreement doom the children to an existence inhabited by the “phantoms” of the parental “secret story;” the renunciation of the agreement will also spell the victory of terror over humanism and moral values. As the following discussions of the novels demonstrate, the search to fulfill the moral obligation vis-à-vis the parental story takes the form of a struggle to both reaffirm and reassess moral values in the face of the Holocaust. *See Under: Love* contends with the ideals of the Enlightenment, *The Name* struggles with the idea of the Divine and *The Inner Lake* explores the survival of art in the face of terror.

See Under: Love: rethinking the Enlightenment

Momik desperately contends with the haunting question, “How can you go on living and believing in humanity once you know [about the Holocaust]?”⁹ Compulsive collecting of historical facts about the Holocaust offers no relief. Momik knows that to save himself from despair he must face not only humanity’s proclivity to evil, but also his own moral weakness. He will have to recognize “how scared [he is] of [himself], and of what [he has] to say about life in general, and Over There [the world of the Holocaust] in particular” (122).

Bruno Schulz teaches him that redemption lies in the elimination of the “language of killing.” The author of the lost *Messiah* proposes a radical restoration of humanity to

its Edenic state of innocence, which would change "everything based on time-worn rules and traditions, and belonging to the petrified, mechanical systems of the past" (168). In contrast to Schulz's apocalyptic solution, Wasserman, whom Momik also calls Grandfather Anshel, a writer of children's stories, urges tolerance. Wasserman claims that, "utopias are not for mortals. And the people are like flies, that the stories they are told must be like flypaper ... covered with everything man secretes. ... Especially the suffering. And our hope is that its measure is the measure of man, and forgiveness" (225). While Wasserman acknowledges human weaknesses, he also recognizes the human ability to forgive. Wasserman's universal message extends to Momik: it promises forgiveness for Momik's childhood moral failure.

The desire for liberation from the identity of a replacement child has brought about Momik's moral fall. Momik was given his name in memory of his father's dead son (24) as well as "in So-and-so's and So-and-so's memory. They'd have liked to give him a hundred names" (26). To free himself from the fearful echoes of multiple deaths, Momik considers ways to rescue his parents and the neighbor-survivors from the "Nazi Beast." He assumes that once they have been released from their fears, he will become a "normal" son of "normal" loving parents. The fight with the Beast marks Momik's exacerbating aggression; his adoption of the militant Zionist metaplot reflects his shame at having been associated with the "plot" of Jewish weakness. Initially, Momik wishes to rescue the survivors from their past, "almost like Dr. Herzl. ... He made a blue and white flag for Over There and between the two blue stripes he drew an enormous drumstick tied to the back of a Super Mystère,¹⁰ and below it he wrote the words *If you will, it is no fairy tale*" (50).¹¹ Momik's efforts to transform "old" Jews into patriotic, militant "new" Jews have no effect upon the traumatized survivors. Desperate, Momik decides on a face-to-face battle with the Beast.

Momik's plans are interrupted by Wasserman's return from Over There, that is, from the Holocaust. Inspired by Wasserman's pre-war children's adventure stories, *The Children of the Heart*, Momik devises an alternative plot to defeat the Beast. He fantasizes about the irresistible spell of the stories of goodness and love defeating the Nazi commander of the death camp. Yet, raised in the reality of war, Momik mistrusts Wasserman's peaceful methods of fighting the Nazi Beast. Torn between the terrifying echoes from Over There and Israel's militant slogans, Momik is filled with violent "hatred and rage and revenge" at the survivors, the "poor bunch of crazy Jews who stuck to him and ruined ... his whole life" (83). As he sadistically trains his imaginary animals to attack the Nazi Beast, Momik is consumed by guilt over his cruelty which, as he becomes aware, has turned *him* into a beast. In the end violence prevails. Momik attacks Wasserman yelling, "you can't kill the *Nazikaput* with a story, you have to beat him to death." He calls on Israeli planes, to "bomb Germany, and wipe out every trace of Over There ..." In mad frenzy, he screams, "War is what we need!" (85).

Momik's lifelong despair over humanity's evil is therefore inseparable from the consciousness of his own inherent evil, which made him betray the ideals of goodness and love of "the children of the heart." To mend his failing, Momik follows Grandfather Anshel (Wasserman) to the "bowels of hell" (209) of the death camp. There he witnesses the redemption of the Nazi commander with the story of love. This "rite of passage" positions Momik firmly in the sphere of Benjamin's "secret agreement." The blessing that Grandfather Anshel bestows upon Momik makes him the legitimate heir of the survivor-writer: "Write, then," said Anshel Wasserman. ... "There is no other

way. Because you are like me, your life is the story, and for you there is only the story" (297). A "smart and ancient man" (57), the survivor endows his heir with a "weak Messianic power," which ensures the tradition of telling.

Indeed, Momik becomes a storyteller. In the first section of the book, "Momik," he tells of his betrayal of love. In the last section, "The Complete Encyclopedia of Kazik's Life," he reaffirms the power of love. The seemingly oxymoronic title of the latter, which combines the genres of a biography (life) and of a reference book (encyclopedia), signals a reassessment of the values of the Enlightenment. "Encyclopedia" evokes the great *oeuvre* of the French *philosophes*, whose rationale for the *Encyclopédie* was to "exhibit the order and system of human knowledge of the sciences, the arts, and trades . . ." ¹² Momik's Encyclopedia, on the other hand, promises an exposition of the psychological "order and system" of the human being. It promises to "reveal the simplicity of basic mechanisms animating all members of the human race" (303). Momik finds out that these basic mechanisms common to all human beings are the common desire for love and happiness. Interestingly, the Encyclopedia of the adult Momik completes a forgotten childhood search in the *Hebrew Encyclopedia*. Then he discovers that "there seemed to be an awful lot of things that the *Encyclopedia* was trying to ignore, as if they didn't exist, like [love and sex], [whereas] 'Happiness,' the *Encyclopedia* doesn't even mention" (43). As the title *See Under: Love* indicates, in the aftermath of the greatest crime against humanity, the Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment, the symbol of the human desire to know, needs to be supplemented with a story that tells about the human ability to love.

The Name: rethinking the Divine

Grossman's fictional episode in which the survivor reforms the Nazi commander in the concentration camp with a story of love raised controversy. Some critics saw the episode as a postmodern fantastic construction intended to heal the trauma of the Holocaust. Others considered the episode as an unacceptable exploitation of the Holocaust for the sake of postmodern experimentation. ¹³ Lyotard's view of the unrepresentable in the age of terror calls into question the critics' categorization of *See Under: Love* as a postmodern text. Lyotard sees the postmodern as the impossibility of an artistic aesthetic of Auschwitz; in contrast, Grossman affirms the aesthetic of literary art as a powerful antidote to the evil of the Holocaust. The victory of the story of love over the story of hatred demonstrates the redemptive quality of art and, moreover, of art's continuing adherence to the humanist tradition of the Enlightenment.

The affirmation of the Enlightenment in *See Under: Love* contrasts with the depth of despair at the Holocaust in *The Name*. Like Momik, Amalia is a replacement child. Unlike Momik, however, she has no "wise old man" to guide her lovingly out of her distress. Because she is a replacement child, Amalia feels distant from her parents. She knows that for her father, she was a reminder of the first beloved wife, Mala, a famous Warsaw pianist, who had died a heroic death in Auschwitz; for her mother, she was a reminder of her husband's undying love for Mala. Even though Amalia's story takes place long after her parents' deaths, her estrangement still hurts; "Never succeeding in breaking through the warm, black circle around them, unable to cling to their wretchedness, rejected from the crookedness of Mother's and Father's body, always a pariah. . . . Always alone." ¹⁴ Yet, in a peculiar sense, Amalia is never alone. Mala has

become Amalia's nemesis (14, 63, 89), or, to recall Abraham and Torok, the "phantom" of the parental "secret story." The haunting presence of the dead woman has imprisoned Amalia in the Holocaust past, bringing her to the verge of madness.

When Ludwig Stein, a Holocaust survivor, commissions Amalia to "make a memory to Mala" (334) a hope for liberation from the haunting dead arises. Stein wants Amalia to produce a commemorative album of Mala's pre-war life and musical career. Will the photographic narrative of the destroyed past put the phantom to rest? We note that Amalia's journey in the footsteps of her could-have-been dead mother bears no resemblance to Momik's journey with Grandfather Anshel. While the message of love Grandfather communicated to Momik in the death camp reestablished the "secret agreement" with the survivor, Amalia's visit to Poland brings no consolation. On the contrary, the photographic narrative of Mala's world exacerbates Amalia's despair, leading to a suicide attempt.

How can one explain the extreme degree of distress triggered by the pre-Holocaust sites? For Amalia, the production of the album has become a tragically ironic exercise in futility. It has turned out, as she realizes, to be "one big pretense, as if it were possible to photograph nothing, to make an 'esthetic' in black and white out of that. . . . *Auschwitz in black and white*" (126, 336; emphasis in original). The perception of photographed "nothing" adds a poignant footnote to Roland Barthes's observation about the photographed object. Barthes calls the photographed object the "*Spectrum of the Photograph*, because this word retains . . . a relation to 'spectacle' and adds to [the photograph] that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the *return of the dead*" (9; second emphasis mine). In the post-Holocaust reality, however, the "thing" to which Barthes refers assumes even more "terrible" dimensions. Because of the "negative sublime" of the Final Solution, the Holocaust photograph does not present the "return of the dead," but rather the return of the spectral traces of the dead, the phantasmic "nothing" of the unrepresentable, to recall Lyotard. This "nothing" makes itself known through the negation of the known, as in Amalia's agonised complaint upon her return from Poland, "*there isn't even a grave*" (197; emphasis in original). Horribly, the "spectrum" of Amalia's photographic narrative emits the echoes of even the death of death.

Hirsch corroborates the "nothing" in Holocaust photographs arguing that "the horror of looking [at a Holocaust photograph] is not necessarily *in* the image but in the story that the viewer provides to fill in what has been omitted . . . [the] inability to take it in is perhaps the distinguishing feature of the Holocaust photograph" ("Projected Memory" 21; emphases in original). What the viewer is able to "take in," I suggest, substantiates the inability to re-create the story; the incomprehensible postmemory that the photograph communicates exacerbates the viewer's fear of "nothing." In this sense, Amalia's experience in Poland is associated with the fearful childhood experience of her parents' incomprehensible sorrow. The photographs reverberate with her father's desperate claim that "there is nothing anymore, not there, not anywhere! Only the black pit. . . . There is nothing anywhere, not even in heaven!" (188, 127). To Amalia, a replacement child, who strives to assert her identity vis-à-vis the dead, the "nothing" of Mala is particularly threatening. Has she become nothing but an echo of the echo of her dead namesake's phantom? Has she lost her self in the "nothing" of Mala's death? The photographs reinforce the "black pit" of paternal despair that threatens to dissolve Amalia's sense of being.

Amalia's desperation stands in sharp contrast with the hopefulness of the other survivor-friends, all fellow-Auschwitz inmates who, like Stein, revere Mala. For them, the photographic commemoration of Mala by her "could-have-been" daughter is a sign of consolation. It shows that, "The destruction is merely a symbol of resurrection, according to the lovely tradition that the Messiah was born on the afternoon of Tish'a b'Av." The rebirth of the Jewish state is the proof of messianic redemption: "We, the survivors, raise the holy memory of Mala in our independent state, despite the annihilation plan of Nazi Germany.... And that is revenge! We will show the world ... that from destruction the road leads to redemption!" (331). Unlike the traumatized survivors in *See Under: Love*, unable to identify with the ideology of national rebirth, the survivors in *The Name* have wholeheartedly subscribed to the Zionist metaplot. Mala's heroic legacy has enabled them to identify with the concept of the powerful Jew. Now the Israel-born Amalia will bear witness to Jewish courage in the Holocaust.

But Amalia, who can bear witness only to the "nothing" of Mala, is determined to sever all ties with the phantom of the dead woman. Placing her hopes in Maimonides' view of repentance as identity transformation – the penitent will shed her skin, change her name and say I am not the same one who sinned (195) – Amalia seeks liberation in a religious transformation.

The teachings of Rabbi Gohelf reveal interesting correspondences between the Orthodox position and the Zionist metaplot. Like the Zionists, the Rabbi subscribes to a redemptive construction of the Jewish future. The survivors, he tells Amalia, had the strength to put the past behind them, "build a family," and "take part in the revival of our nation" (199). Since in the case of the Holocaust, theodicy lies beyond human reasoning, "the way to remember is precisely to forget and believe with complete faith" (198). What we should believe in is that redemption lies in the resumption of normal life. Thus Amalia is expected to marry and bear children. In contrast to the Orthodox response, the Kabbalist, Abuyia Asaraf, proposes a radical remedy for Holocaust destruction. He indicates that the solution lies in mystical unification with the divine in death. He tells Amalia that the only way of redeeming the Holocaust dead and the post-Holocaust world is through an act of self-sacrifice, "For the destruction is God's concealment, the sinking of the holy in the shell. ... The death of the saints is the beginning of redemption" (105).

Yet Amalia accepts neither the national ethos of the state, nor does she obey the Orthodox commandment of procreation, nor does she choose self-sacrificial death to enter a mystical communion with God. Instead, in her journal Amalia registers her search for liberation from the "nothing" of the dead. She models her quest for the parental "secret story" on the biblical story of Exodus. Her journal follows the seven weeks of *Sefirat ha'omer* (the Counting of the *Omer*), a period that marks the transition of the Israelites from enslavement to freedom. The Counting extends between Passover and Shavuot which marks the giving of the Torah. According to the rabbinic tradition, this period represents two contrasting stories: it commemorates the eagerness with which Israel was counting the days in anticipation of the Torah; at the same time, it marks the mourning over Rabbi Akiba's students of who died of plague.¹⁵

The tradition, which combines joy and sadness, birth and death, inspires Amalia's subversive rereading of the story of Exodus. Against Orthodoxy, which demands unquestioning faith in the inscrutable but just God, and against the unattainable kabbalistic desire to unveil the inscrutability of God's justness, Amalia discovers a God who

vacillates between moral strength and weakness, between goodness and evil. She rediscovers this shocking image of the Divine in the prophet's famous vision, "In your blood, live!" (Ezekiel 16), where God forgives Jerusalem, a whore whom he abandoned befouled in the blood of her sins, and takes her as his cherished wife. Behind the images of God's forgiveness, Amalia reads the prophecy as evidence of a cruel God who with the giving of the Torah also inflicted upon his children a history of unspeakable suffering. It is a God "unable to love," it is a God in panic when "[his] weakness increases, when the destruction once again gapes in [him], and slipping out of [his] grasp for a moment the world is suspended upon nothing" (321).

This perception of the God of Israel leads Amalia to an illuminating insight: the breaking of the first perfect tablets of the Law in the very moment of revelation foretold the long history of Jewish suffering. The shattered first tablets are but the blueprint of the subsequent innumerable instances of God's renegeing on the covenant. Paradoxically, the epiphany that Jewish suffering is a reflection of the flawed Divine empowers Amalia. To recall Benjamin, it endows her with a "weak Messianic power," which enables her to bear witness to the suffering of the chosen people that started with the giving of the Torah. This subversion of Jewish theodic theology¹⁶ transforms both the tale and the teller, allowing the resumption of the story in the aftermath of the Holocaust. In view of the imperfect God, the hope of redemption lies no longer in the expectation of divine mending, but rather in the recognition that "there is no repair for the break. And there is no instant repentance. Only acceptance" (364). The loss of faith in divine repair indicates that the parental story is also beyond repair, and therefore, the trauma of the destruction will never heal. It is left to Amalia, the estranged, replacement child, to come to terms with the "nothing" of the "black pit" of the unknowable story.

At the end of her painful journey, Amalia is capable of reaching a belated reconciliation with her parents. Her insight into the imperfect world and the flawed God dissolves her bitterness, anger, and self-pity; she is capable of transcending the barriers that excluded her from the "black circle" of their "wretchedness" and "crookedness." Amalia has been transformed from a child who yearns for parental acceptance and love into a mature person who is capable of extending "Forgiveness, for You, for them, and for Father and for Mother and for us there" (352). The sense of liberation and the hope for redemption do not lie in severance and flight from the "unremembered" yet haunting story; rather, it emerges in a compassionate recognition of the never-to-be known parental past as a legacy which ties the parents and the child in a "secret agreement."

The Inner Lake: rethinking art

The two novels, *See Under: Love* and *The Name* present considerably differing, and yet, contiguous visions of the post-Holocaust world. Neither accepts the Zionist metaplot as a redemptive response to the destruction; both reaffirm the value of ethics in the wake of the destruction. The Encyclopedia and the story of Exodus, the great symbols of human progress, indicate the writers' continuing trust in the mainstays of civilization. While these seminal books of knowledge and liberation need to be reconsidered and reinterpreted, the reference of these foundations of humanism communicates trust in humanistic values. The search to revalidate these values through imaginative telling evinces faith in the redemptive power of art.

The perspective shared by Grossman and Govrin highlights the extent to which Almog's *The Inner Lake* exposes the powerlessness of art in face of terror. In its form and content, Almog's text comes close to illustrating Lyotard's notion of the unrepresentable "after Auschwitz." Almog admits to have discarded the device of plot.¹⁷ She calls *The Inner Lake* a "hibur, [a compilation] of poetry and prose, fiction and reality, myths and mythological characters, lots of nature, especially swans and peacocks" (26).¹⁸ The book consists of numbered segments, a compilation of stories and legends about the two birds.

The intention of this abundance of information about swans and peacocks is to fend off the "after Auschwitz" phantoms that invade the text. The fear of the Holocaust has turned the nameless narrator-writer of *The Inner Lake* into an unengaged "bird watcher." But she knows the exorbitant price of the repression of the creative desire: "The true birds – "the seven little birds of her soul" – are "all her poems" that she buried in the "inner lake."¹⁹ On the one hand, the "bird watcher" knows that the attempt to capture terror in art forebodes disaster. On the other hand, the artist hidden in the "bird watcher" is compelled to heed the irresistible call of the freedom to create, so that "terrible beauty can be born" (20). Indeed, her premonition about the danger in the latter proves true. When the repressed story finally surfaces from the "inner lake" Glycera, the protagonist, greets her creator, the narrator-writer, with a threat of destruction which, as we shall see, eventually materializes: "I warn you, freedom will crush you, it will disintegrate everything: no image will emerge, no picture, no character, no story" (20).

The reference to Yeats's famous line, "a terrible beauty is born" from "Easter 1916" marks Almog's proximity to Lyotard's unrepresentable sublime. The oxymoron, "terrible beauty," indicates the disharmony between the artistic aesthetic and the world of bloodshed and violent death. In the world of terror the beauty of artistic form cannot compensate for the reality of collapsed ethics.²⁰ Indeed, Glycera constantly evokes a text which, unlike the great texts of the Encyclopedia and Exodus, represents an irreversible disintegration of all values. "Baladat haze'ev" ("The Ballad of the Wolf") by the Hebrew poet Saul Tchernichowski (1942), written at the time when the Holocaust was evolving, presciently signals the "negative sublime" of the Final Solution. The poem refers to the persecutions of the Jews in German towns at the time of the Crusades. The only merciful creature in the poem is the wolf, which kills the mortally injured, dying victims of the massacres. Nowadays, the poem concludes, human beings have become wolfish predators and the species of merciful wolves has been long extinct. In a real sense, Tchernichowski's poem gives birth to the "terrible beauty"; his tragic irony subverts the generic characteristic of the ballad, which by definition, tells of heroic exploits of a "greater than life" personality. Here the ballad praises the "personality" of a compassionate wolf, which gnaws on the victims' throats to ease the suffering inflicted by human wolves. Tchernichowski's commentary on *homo homini lupus* leaves no hope of redemption (93).

Glycera's compulsive recitation of the poem turns it into a "mantra" of terror. In an attempt to break through Glycera's despondency, the narrator-writer resorts to her swan and peacock stories, but Glycera finds no consolation in myths and legends about the beauty, the innocence and the purity of the swan. She gets especially enraged when her creator tells her about the peacock's mythical "hidden third eye," which allows human beings "to look inward and to envision eternity" and then offers her a "peacock

feather" which, according to the legend, signifies "eternal life." "To look inward?" Glycera exclaims, "I know there is nothing there! It is empty! And if there is something I don't need for sure, it's a peacock feather. Eternal life! Who needs life at all?" (107).

Glycer's despair reminds us of Amalia's sense of estrangement. Both are deprived of a loving father. Like Amalia's father, who bequeathed to his daughter his unrelieved grief over Mala, all Albert Cohen,²¹ Glycera's father and a survivor of a concentration camp, left his daughter with his despair over the world he had lost, and especially the loss of his beloved. But Glycera's despair reflects a dimension of hardship that exceeds the difficulties of replacement children that we noted in *See Under: Love* and in *The Name*. Glycera's maternal heritage (Glycer's mother was the daughter of a Nazi) invests her with yet another role: she was intended as atonement for her grandfather's evil.

Glycer's mixed ancestry makes her the bearer of two incomprehensible and terrifying legacies, two unspeakable "secret stories," that of the "negative sublime" of the Nazi, and that of the sublime trauma of the victim. Her acute sense of estrangement is exacerbated by the sense of homelessness. Like Momik and Amalia, Glycera does not find consolation in the Zionist metaplot; even further, she refuses to make Israel her home. As she sees it, Israel is a "tormented" country of bloodshed and war. The man she loved was killed, she was injured and lost all her possessions. Symbolically, in one of the terrorist attacks her Israeli passport was destroyed (68). The endless "brothers' wars" in her country have deprived Glycera of her sense of belonging (136). Yet Germany, her maternal native land, cannot offer a sense of home either. Glycera sees Germany as "a green country, a fertile and beautiful country, whose people are children of criminals, like her grandfather, and even worse" (73).

Glycer, who "never really understood who she was" (31), or where her home was, has incorporated the phantoms of her dreadful double inheritance. She feels as if has turned into "an empty woman, a bundle of rattling bones," who "senses nothing" and who "feels like a dead person" (24). The sense of emptiness, death and nothing raises terrifying questions: whose death does the "nothing" of her self re-echo? Is it the death of her father's love that she carries with her, or is it rather, the emptiness of her grandfather's evil soul that turned her into a walking corpse? Glycera's predicament impels her to expose the Holocaust story. But unlike Momik and Amalia, who seek redemption in the parental story of suffering, Glycera seeks redemption in the story of the victimizer. She intends to bear witness to her Nazi grandfather, "the Prince of Darkness, the Old Satan" (128). The confession of the satanic perpetrator will tell the story of the evil committed in the concentration camp; a story, which, ironically, is also the story of the victim. The revelation of the terror of victimization will expose the "secret story" of the parent and thus liberate the child from the phantoms of the past.

To ensure a wide exposure of the testimony, Glycera enlists her creator, the narrator-writer, to interview the Nazi and publish his confession. The two women set out on a mission which ends in the double death of Glycera and her Nazi grandfather. Joachim, Glycera's "twin," her alter ego and her lover, kills them. Joachim is the son of a Jewish woman survivor, who married a former Nazi guard. The mother died bidding Joachim to avenge her suffering. Obeying his mother's last wish, Joachim became a Nazi hunter. Joachim, who loves Glycera and wants to marry her, suspects that she knows the whereabouts of her grandfather and pursues her wherever she goes. Glycera, who loves Joachim and searches for him all over the world, suspects that Joachim has been involved in terrorist activities in Israel (67).

The echoes of the parental experience of evil mar the children's love relations. In Joachim's "secret agreement" with his mother, we observe a horribly tragic distortion of Benjamin's vision. Parental legacy, which bequeaths a life of crime and violence, marks the death of love. Evil has spread to the world of the victim and proceeds to contaminate the world of the child, infusing it with mistrust and suspicion. At the moment when Glycera and the narrator-writer are about to hear the confession of the satanic Nazi, Joachim and his gang burst onto the scene and shoot both grandfather and granddaughter. Ironically, the intention to avenge evil by killing the perpetrator ends up perpetuating evil when the innocent dies with the guilty. As the narrator-writer, who has witnessed the scene, observes, "Joachim was mistaken to think that he could mend the world and understood too late that there was no mending" (38). The post-Holocaust world seems beyond repair.

Indeed, *The Inner Lake* does not suggest a way to defeat evil, as does *See Under: Love*, nor does it seek to understand the source of evil, as does *The Name*. Tragically, and to the contrary, it tells of the victory of evil over love. It appears that in *The Inner Lake* Benjamin's vision of the "weak Messianic power" has failed, whereas Lyotard's vision of the impossibility to bear witness "after Auschwitz" seems to have materialized. Recall Glycera's foreboding prediction that the artist's claim to the freedom of creation is dangerous; the desire to give birth to "terrible beauty" threatens to disintegrate the story and to crush the artist. Indeed, the story of Glycera ends in the silence of destruction.

But the destruction is not complete. While her protagonist dies, her creator, the narrator-writer, does not. She continues to write and concludes the book with an image that cautiously defies ending. This image both affirms the birth of "terrible beauty" and highlights its vulnerability. The narrator-writer watches the seven little birds of her creativity flying over the inner lake. The artist knows that the liberated birds are not safe; their existence is constantly threatened by the hunter, "who lies in wait." But she also knows that "if the birds die, the woman will die" (138–139). In the age of terror, to claim the freedom to create art has turned into a perilous undertaking. But equally, or perhaps even more dangerous, would be to renounce the desire to create. *The Inner Lake* communicates that in the post-Holocaust world the story precariously balances the threat of its disintegration.

The insistence on the freedom to create reminds us of Bukiet's claim that to imagine is the only option for telling the story that cannot be remembered. The three novels before us clearly agree with this perception of post-Holocaust writing: the death camp situation in *See Under: Love*; the encounter with the nothing of the destruction in *The Name*; the confrontation with the perpetrator of evil in the *Inner Lake* — these scenes certainly attest to the effort to trespass across the boundaries of the conceivable into uncharted, forbidding spheres of the imagination. In the three novels the undertaking to explore the unimaginable evokes despair, madness and death. Paradoxically, however, the determination of the protagonists to imagine the unimaginable signals the hope of repair. Daring to face the terrifying echoes and phantoms in an attempt to salvage the ties with the destroyed parental world invests the act of writing with special significance. In the post-Holocaust world, the artist's wrestling with evil at the risk of self-destruction becomes an act of mending; such courage reaffirms the power of love and obligation, and in this sense confirms the relevance of humanistic values in a world imbued with the consciousness of the Holocaust.

Notes

1. The three are well-known Israel-born writers. Michal Govrin studied literature and theatre at Tel Aviv University and received her Ph.D. from the University of Paris. She has written a number of volumes of poetry and her latest novel, *Snapshots*, was published in 2002. She is a theatre director specializing in Jewish theatre and ritual. David Grossman studied philosophy and theatre at the Hebrew University. He began his career at Israel Radio as a correspondent for youth broadcasts. He has been an essayist and novelist for both children and adults. He is a prolific writer and a public figure who often expresses his humanistic views on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. His latest works include *You Shall Be My Knife* (1998) and *Someone to Run With* (2000). Ruth Almog studied literature and philosophy at Tel Aviv University. She was assistant literary editor of the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz* for many years. Her literary work includes novels for adults and children. She has also written a number of detective novels. Her latest publication is *All this Exaggerated Bliss* (2003), a collection of her stories from 1967 to 1997.
2. For extensive discussion of the definition of the second generation, see Iris Milner, *Past Present: Biography, Identity and Memory in Second Generation Literature*. Tel Aviv: Oved Am Publishers, 2003. 28–35 [Hebrew].
3. Hanokh Bartov, *The Brigade* [*Fits'e bagrut*], trans. David S. Segal (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1968); Yoram Kaniuk, *Adam Resurrected* (*Adam ben kelev*), trans. Seymour Sinckes, 1971; Hareven, "The Witness" ["Haed"], in *L'orech Hashurot* (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1985); Hanokh Levin, "Satirical Cabaret," *Plays*. Vol. 7. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999); David Grossman, *The Smile of the Lamb* [*Hiyukh hagedi*], trans. Betsy Rosenberg (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1990); Oded Peled, ed. *My Yellow Robe: The Holocaust in Poetry of the Second Generation – An Anthology* [*Kutonti hatsehuba: hashoah beshirat hador hasheni bamedinat Israel*] (Tel Aviv: Agudat hasefarim ha'ivriyim beyisrael, 1997).
4. A telling example of such unintentional, yet patronizing and distancing attitude appears in the comment of Haim Guri, an Israeli-born poet, on the testimonies of the survivors in the Eichmann trial: "Each of the prosecution's witnesses was, therefore, the hero of an act of rescue. I refer to the rescue of the testimonies of *these unfortunate people* from the danger of being perceived all alike, all shrouded in the same immense anonymity." Quoted in Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, "Revisioning the Past: The Changing Legacy of the Holocaust in Hebrew Literature," *Salmagundi* (Fall 1985–Winter 1986): 261 (emphasis mine).
5. For insightful examinations of Appelfeld's interaction with the Zionist ethos, see Yael S. Feldman, "Whose Story Is It, Anyway? Ideology and Psychology in the Representation of the Shoah in Israeli Literature," 229–234, in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"*, ed. Saul Friedländer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) and Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), especially chapters 3 and 4. See also Saul Friedländer's perceptive comment on Appelfeld's recovery of the past in "Trauma, Memory, and Transference," in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 253–254.
6. Spiegelman's *Maus* is an example of such an attempt. By conducting taped interviews with his father, Vladek, Artie wishes to expose the trauma of the loss of the firstborn Richieu. The assumption is that the recovery of the story will free Vladek to recognize

- Art as the only beloved son. However, the dying Vladek calls Artie Richieu, thus cementing Art's identity as a replacement child. (*Maus II* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991)).
7. Lyotard is referring to Eli Wiesel's lament, "Perhaps we are no longer able to tell the story. Could all of us be guilty? Even the survivors? Especially the survivors?" (168) (*Heidegger*, 47).
 8. See Jürgen Habermas's interpretation: "It is no longer only future generations, but past generations as well, that have a claim on the weak messianic power of the present. The anamnestic redemption of an injustice, which cannot of course be undone but can at least be virtually reconciled through remembering, ties up the present with the communicative context of a universal historical solidarity." *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993), 15.
 9. David Grossman, *See Under: Love*, trans. Betsy Rosenberg (New York: Washington Square Press, 1990), 105. Henceforth page numbers appear in the text.
 10. A French jet fighter used in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s. The section "Momik" takes place in the end of the 1950s.
 11. Herzl's famous motto that proclaims that the fulfillment of the Zionist dream of the Jewish state is possible.
 12. MSN Learning and Research (<http://encarta.msn.com>)
 13. See, respectively, Gilead Morahg, "Breaking Silence: Israel's Fantastic Fiction of the Holocaust," *The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction*, ed. Alan Mintz (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1997), 143–183 and Avner Holzman, "The Theme of the Holocaust in Israeli Fiction: A New Wave," *Dapim lamehkar basifrut* 10 (1996): 131–158 [IHebrew].
 14. Michal Govrin, *The Name*, trans. Barbara Harshav (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), 339. Henceforth pages numbers appear in the text.
 15. See "Omer," *The New Encyclopedia of Judaism*, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder (New York: New York University Press, 2002). A rabbinic tradition claims that the plague was a punishment for Rabbi Akiba's support of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 CE, which ended in defeat and final exile.
 16. For an illuminating discussion of theological rejection of theodicy in post-Holocaust Jewish theology see Zachary Braiteman, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Braiteman claims that that "the Holocaust and its memory have radically recast the theodic and antitheodic contours of Jewish theology. . . . Antitheodicy. . . . proves especially compelling in an age of extermination camps and nuclear weaponry" (167).
 17. On Almog's previous literary experimentations and innovations, see the chapter on Almog in Yael S. Feldman, *No Room of Their Own: Israeli Women's Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
 18. Ruth Almog in interview with Yehuda Koren, "Ani lo makhira anashim me'usharim" ["I do not know happy people"], *Yediot Aharonot* (11 Feb. 2000): 26. Translation from the Hebrew mine.
 19. Ruth Almog, *The Inner Lake* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2000), 9, 11. Henceforth page numbers appear in the text. Translations from the Hebrew mine.
 20. For further discussion of Yeats's concept of the sublime, see Jefferson Holdridge, *Those Mingled Seas: The Poetry of W. B. Yeats, The Beautiful and the Sublime* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000).

21. An ironic reference to Albert Cohen (1895–1981), the great French-Swiss writer born on Corfu, whose *oeuvre*, especially his masterpiece *La Belle du Seigneur* (1968), presents the Jew as a messianic redeemer of the world.

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