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Book Sections and Chapters

At the heart of this book lies the question of passing on the memory of the Holocaust from the survivors to the next generations. The shift from a direct memory, one that is engraved onto the survivors' very bodies, to the shaping of the memory from beyond the space of time and experience, is explored in this book from a wide variety of perspectives and voices. At a time in which a fight is being waged in the world over the Holocaust's narrative, this book offers a fundamental, critical, artistic, and personal discussion of the process of shaping the Holocaust's memory – its character, its motives, and its ramifications.

This issue has many facets. First, it requires an examination of the characteristics of personal and collective memory alongside an analysis of memory's role in the shaping of the present – both of the individual and of society, which seeks to maintain and impart the mark of a formative event in its history. Second, the construction of memory formations from a distance, by those who did not undergo the trauma themselves, utilizes poetic devices from various fields of art and life, and it is influenced by cultural worldviews and traditions that are uncovered, on their various aspects, in the book. Third, awareness of the memory construction process, which is similar in many ways to the creation of fiction, is foundational to a critical examination of Holocaust memory formations as well as the attempts to deny it. Fourth, the shaping of collective memory in general, and of the Holocaust in particular, has significant ethical ramifications. Finally, it raises the question of how these insights lead to the shaping of the memory of the Holocaust. All these facets are echoed in the various voices in the book.

This book is based on the discussions of a multidisciplinary research group that was held in the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute between 2012–2015; at the heart of its activity lay the issue of the shaping of the memory of the Holocaust. Due to the questions that guided the research group, in addition to the numerous professional expertise, research, and art forms of its members, the texts and images in the book present a wide variety of styles, genres, and fields of thought. Each text opens with a personal monologue from the writer, thereby establishing the subjective aspect of meditating on memory. Throughout the book, each text and image stands and can be understood by and on its own; nevertheless, similar and sometimes surprising links arise between the different approaches, constructing central themes in regard to the meanings of the Holocaust and the shaping of its memory. Accordingly, the book is divided into seven sections. Hereinafter, the book sections and chapters are introduced in order to shed light on the process upon which the book is based and on its components.

The opening section, *Conversations in First Person*, includes two conversations with three Holocaust survivors who were part of the ‘founding fathers’ of public discourse on the Holocaust in Israel and around the world. In these conversations, which were documented in the three survivors’ meetings with the group members, these Holocaust survivors speak openly of their life during and after the Holocaust and of the ways in which their biography led them to art and research on the topic of the Holocaust. The first text documents a meeting with the author *Aharon Appelfeld*. During this meeting, sections from his works were read as part of a conversation about his thoughts and personal experiences in regard to the link between memory and imagination, silence and language, and the origins of personal and artistic power – in his words, “where does the power to write come from”. The book’s title, *But There was Love There*, comes from his words during this meeting. The second text in this section documents a conversation between and with Holocaust historians *Saul Friedländer* and *Otto Dov Kulka* about repressing versus processing memories, the link between the personal and the scientific in history research in general and in their research in particular, and ‘the behind the scenes’ of their pioneering scientific work and the controversies it spurred. This conversation deepens the awareness of historical research’s role in shaping collective memory and its ramifications.

The second section, *Languages of Memory*, examines the essence of memory from three main perspectives or languages. The first is the psychological language – psychoanalyst *Yolanda Gampel* offers insights about memory and forgetting from her multi-decade study of the intergenerational transference of the memory of the Holocaust in survivors and second and third generation Holocaust survivors (in which she coined the key phrase ‘radioactive transference’), as well as her personal biography as a second generation Holocaust survivor who was silent about the trauma. The second language is the artistic one – artist *Orit Livne* presents three large-scale cloud drawings whose minute details she painted over a long period of time, as the clouds changed over and over again in a way that embodies, in her eyes, the constant changing and movement of the memory. The third is the scientific language – neuroscientist, memory researcher, and neuropsychologist *Eli Vakil* opens a window into the cognitive and neurological processes that occur in the brain in various aspects of memory and forgetting, and explains their roles and necessity for the individual; he discusses ways of treating traumatic experiences, and draws an analogy between these neuro-psychological treatments and the processing of trauma in the Israeli memory of the Holocaust.

The third section, *Facing the Nothingness*, is a collection of texts and visual images that confront different aspects of the fracture created by the Holocaust; it presents five such written or visual texts. The first is curatorial – curator *Yehudit Kol-Inbar* presents the ways she, as director of ‘Yad Vashem’'s museum division,

faced the challenge of creating an exhibition of the Holocaust from the Jewish perspective. She describes the new approaches she developed for this challenge with her 'Yad Vashem' colleagues, illustrating them through three successful exhibitions dedicated to the topics of women and children in the Holocaust, exhibitions that were daring in their innovativeness, as well as through the shaping of the exhibition that presented the group's work. In the second text of this section, writer *Michal Govrin* writes 'a negative of a testimony' about the power of imagination to highlight the presence of the nothingness. She also depicts her journey of collecting and preserving memory fragments of her late brother Marek, who was killed as a child in the Holocaust before her birth, up to his memorialization in the 'Yad Vashem' 'Children in the Holocaust' exhibition and in the UN as 'the child who did not leave a trace'. The third text in this section was created by photographer and researcher *Dana Arieli*, who presents four images from her 'Phantoms' project, which documents remnants of history in central global sites in which dictatorships operated. This project hints at the relationships between culture, memory, and politics, with the images that are presented alongside the texts adding personal, historical, and political dimensions to the photographs. The fourth text was written by plastic artist *Gary Goldstein*, who presents a poetic fragments collection that illustrates the experiences that shaped him as the son of Holocaust survivors who grew up in a reality in which the nothingness was very much present – in the shadow of family members who were killed and about whom he did not know, and within silence, forgetting, and feelings of emptiness. Alongside these fragments are eight of his drawings, portraits from what he calls "a forest of portraits" of family members he never met. The section ends with the story of *Mendy Cahan*, theater artist and second generation Holocaust survivor, who tells of his personal journey that led him to create the non-profit organization 'Yung Yidish', which preserves and nurtures the Yiddish culture, and of the meaning of passing on memory by collecting and preserving books "that have the dust of forgetting", in his words.

The fourth section, *Echoes and Witnesses*, raises the issue of Holocaust testimony and thoughts of the ramifications or echoes it left behind. First, researcher of modern Jewish thought *Ron Margolin* presents reflections on the Holocaust and its religious meanings in Jewish thought after the war, and on the complex relationships between the personal, the communal, and the theological in this field. Margolin also presents his ethical stance regarding 'the lessons of the Holocaust' and the moral responsibility it imposes on the next generations. Holocaust researcher and historian *Mali Eisenberg* presents ultra-orthodox Holocaust literature and the 'ultra-orthodox resistance' that operated in Polish ghettos in the fight to practice the Jewish way of life and rituals in hiding, presenting it as an alternative, ultra-orthodox historiography to the Zionist-secular historiography.

Eisenberg discusses the debate over whether these acts should be categorized as the work of 'a resistance' and the development of a model of spiritual bravery as 'alternative bravery', and explains the importance of the way the memory of the Holocaust is constructed for the formulation process of ultra-orthodox society's identity. Next, historian *Yochi Fisher* discusses the dialogue between mythical memory, historical research, and literary fiction. She does so using her father's mythical testimony – which is alive yet silent – about his experiences in the Holocaust; Fisher creates memory and completes her father's story by writing fragments addressed to him. The next two texts in this section explore the topic of testimony. In the first text, Holocaust researcher and political philosopher *Michal Aharony* examines Hannah Arendt's skepticism in regard to Holocaust survivors' testimonies (in light of Arendt's first book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, from 1951); Aharony offers her own critical interpretation, which links this skepticism to Arendt's broader outlooks on suffering, mercy, and compassion. The section ends with an essay from writer and essayist *Michal Ben-Naftali* about 'the death of the witness', i.e., about what's left after the witnesses are gone – in line with 'death of God' and 'death of the author'; about whether the impending deaths of the last Holocaust survivors will serve as the end of 'the era of testimony' regarding the Holocaust, as declared by Elie Wiesel; and about how this will affect Israeli society's mourning as a fundamental characteristic of its self-perception.

The fifth section, *Poetics of Memory and Forgetting*, explores various ways of shaping the memory as well as the forgetting of the trauma. This exploration is demonstrated by five writers from several artistic fields: literature, plastic art, music, and installation. Literature researcher *Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan* raises the question of the act of literature as "a way to cry out", in Appelfeld's words; in other words, how can a traumatic fracture be shaped in a literary and coherent manner without betraying it or falling into the abyss of madness. By doing so, Rimmon-Kenan exposes the techniques of several authors who dealt with this challenge. Literature researcher *Rina Dudai* addresses the same question with a focus on one creator – Dan Pagis. Dudai ties the literary shape of the riddle at the heart of Pagis's research with the riddle at the heart of his poems; she views the form of the riddle as a fundamental constitutive representation, both by the researcher-creator and the poet-creator, of the world after the catastrophe of the Holocaust. Painter *Meir Appelfeld* writes about the mission of forgetting and memory in the creation process, and about the link between creation and theology in the history of Western art – i.e., art as a ritual that is a remnant of the magical ritual. This is accompanied by three of his paintings which, like his whole body of artistic work, were based on the stance he formed about memory and forgetting. Composer *Eitan Steinberg* writes about memory and forgetting, which are bound together in the musical composition, and about the forgetting as conditional for

creation as a kind of ‘remembrance in the future’. Steinberg demonstrates this through the thought process of composer Arnold Schoenberg and through some of his own works, in which the memory’s features become a composing technique, concrete or abstract inspiration, and even the work’s subject. The section ends with an essay by multidisciplinary artist *Etty BenZaken* about the ‘Virtue for Opening the Heart’ installation, which she co-created with Eitan Steinberg. BenZaken describes her personal process of creation – from a starting point that is full of doubt, through meeting the corpus of the familial and artistic memory, to finding the artistic solution that echoes these memories in a new way.

The sixth section, *Representation and Responsibility*, continues on from the previous section by presenting representation methods from two additional fields of art – cinema and photography; it emphasizes the ethical aspects of representing the Holocaust and displaying the portraits of its survivors. Cinema researcher *Raya Morag* examines the ways in which cinematographers who are third generation Holocaust survivors shape their attitude towards the Holocaust as well as the ramifications of these ways on their personal identity, and the place of guilt in their lives. She does so through a comparative lens, examining documentary creators from four countries – Israel, Poland, Austria, and Germany – as well as contemporary cinema in Cambodia, the subject of another study of hers; through these means, Morag reveals various stages of processing the past and building ‘a new regime of memory’. Cinema researcher *Odeya Kohen Raz* examines, through Arnon Goldfinger’s documentary film *The Flat*, the link between ethics and aesthetics in movies made by third generation Holocaust survivors in Israel; these people, unlike their parents who repressed the memory, deal with the memory of the Holocaust and the challenge of the gradual disappearance of the ‘cinematic referent’, i.e., Holocaust survivors who can testify about this period. Kohen Raz analyzes Goldfinger’s aesthetic solution and its ethical implication: taking responsibility for first generation Holocaust survivors and, despite their physical absence, making them present in the film. Cinema researcher *Sandra Meiri* provides another perspective on the discourse about the link between the aesthetic and the ethical in Israeli cinema, focusing on movies about maturation in the shadow of the post-trauma of women who experienced sexual violence during the Holocaust. Meiri shows the aesthetic means that were developed in these movies for representing the sexual trauma indirectly, a representation that is committed to loyalty to and respect for the survivors’ experiences on the one hand, and to emphasizing the disastrous consequences of intergenerational transference on the other; she calls these movies “cinememory”. Next is the introductory chapter of *Aliza Auerbach’s* book *Survivors* (2009), which is presented alongside several of the photos that appear in the book: portraits of survivors who currently live in Israel, portraits that emphasize the power of survival and the miracle of their rehabilitation, photos of objects they

saved from the Holocaust period, and photos of them surrounded by their large families. In the introduction, Auerbach recounts her personal connection to the subject and the process of creating her book. The sixth section ends with philosopher and writer *Dana Freibach-Heifetz*, who examines the process of creating the book *Survivors* (by Aliza Auerbach) and the movie *Fragments* (by Yonatan Haimovich), the latter of which documents the lives of immigrants from the Soviet Union in the building in which Haimovich lived as a child. Based on talks with Auerbach and Haimovich about their photography processes, an ‘ethics of documentation’ is formulated by Freibach-Heifetz. This ethics depicts and delineates the attentiveness that enables, and even invites, survivors of trauma to give testimony as a personal interaction between listener and narrator, an interaction that incorporates responsibility into what she calls “secular grace”.

The final section, *Hitkansut – Shoah Remembrance Ritual*, was written by members of a team founded by Govrin as a conclusion to the research group’s work; this team shaped the Haggadah of a new and different memorial ritual, ‘Hitkansut – a Ritual Gathering for Yom HaShoah’, which has been further developed and circulated by Shalom Hartman Institute. *Rani Jaeger*, one of the founders of Beit Tefila Israeli and the director of Shalom Hartman Institute’s ceremony division, discusses the conceptual and practical essence of the ritual. In his essay, Jaeger defines the components of ceremonial experience and offers practical tools for those who create and conduct rituals; this includes the ritual’s structure, the sources of its inspiration, the linguistic challenge of the ritual, as well as the relationship between the ritual and the community’s life on the one hand, and the personal intimate realm of its members on the other. Next, the group’s and the team’s leader, *Michal Govrin*, writes about the relationship between ‘the responsibility of remembering’ and ‘remembering responsibly’. Govrin analyzes how Holocaust memorial ceremonies in Israel and around the world are designed in light of mainly the Christian worldview, versus the Jewish ways of formulating the exodus from Egypt. She then describes how the ways of shaping the Jewish memory in the Passover Haggadah affect the process of shaping the ‘Hitkansut for Yom HaShoah’. Against this background, the ‘assembly’s Haggadah’ is portrayed as moving between two axes – from lamentation to getting up from the mourning, and from the responsibility of remembering to the demand to remember responsibly; with the order of this Haggadah’s chapters serving as a transformative, experiential, and mental process, both for the individual and for the ‘assembly’s circle of memory. *Rachel Jacoby Rosenfield*’s final essay describes the adaptation of the Hitkansut ritual to the Shoah memory for the North American context. She describes how the Hitkansut ritual embraced enthusiastically by the North American Jewish community, recently provided modes of facing Covid, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the aftermath of October 7th 2023. She concludes

with the hope that the Hitkansut ritual would be a mode of Shoah remembrance with dignity and integrity.

The community of shared history and responsibility that was created between the research group's members is echoed in the communities that are created in the 'Hitkansut' circles. The book's readers are also invited to take a part in the memory communities, to add their personal voices and insights, and to be partners in the shaping of the memory of the Holocaust.

