



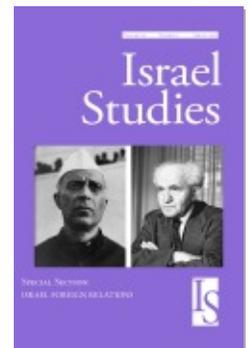
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(Im)Possible Romance: Intimate Relationships Between Israeli
Jews and Non-Jewish Germans in Contemporary Israeli
Documentary Cinema

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ABSTRACT

The article explores several Israeli documentary films of the past fifteen years which dare to touch on the under-researched subject of romantic relationships between Israeli Jews and German non-Jews, in three different documentary sub-genres. The main premise here is that overall, the heightened emphasis in Israel on Holocaust commemoration, the unique insights of second and third generation survivor offspring, the rise of globalization and the attraction felt by contemporary Israelis to Berlin have inspired the production of films that tackle a subject once considered taboo. Unlike current Israeli documentaries however, which treat political and social issues like the plight of the Palestinians, immigrant workers, asylum seekers, etc., and focus on “the other” or “the stranger”, the films discussed here, burdened by Holocaust memory, foreground the Jewish-Israeli side of the relationship, thus precluding an in-depth representation of the German side.

Keywords: Holocaust cinema, Holocaust documentaries, Israel-German relations, Israeli culture, Israeli cinema, Third generation Holocaust survivors.

INTRODUCTION

UNTIL THE LATE 1980S, HOLOCAUST-RELATED DOCUMENTARIES produced in Israel dealt almost exclusively with Jewish victims and documentaries since the late 1980s have also incorporated the trans-generational effect of the trauma on the offspring of survivors and explored the impact of the Holocaust on Israeli society in general. In the new millennium, however, filmmakers have begun to explore new themes, among them, romantic relationships between second and third-generation Holocaust survivors and descendants of Nazi perpetrators. This article discusses Israeli documentarists who have begun to touch on this subject' in three sub-genres: live-action documentary [*I Shot My Love* (Tomer Heymann, 2009)], pseudo-documentary [*Hachaver Hagermani Sheli* (*The German*, Noga Netzer, 2018)], and animated documentary [*Taim Redumim* (*Compartments*, Daniella Koffler and Uli Seis, 2017)].

These films, produced over the past fifteen years, are analyzed within the scholarly context of Holocaust memory in Israel. My claim here is that the vast changes which have occurred in Holocaust commemoration, fresh perspectives on the connection between past and present, and the charms Germany and especially Berlin hold for members of the younger generation have enabled the production and acceptance of films that represent a subject that was once taboo. Nevertheless, the weight of Holocaust memory impedes a fuller depiction of Germans as complex figures. Rather, in most films, the German boyfriend/lover is a shallow character whose basic role is to support a more in-depth portrayal of the second or third generation Jewish-Israeli protagonists with Holocaust complexes. Hence, these documentaries differ from other contemporary Israeli documentaries on other sensitive topics as the plight of Palestinians, immigrant workers, asylum seekers, etc., in which Israeli directors marginalize the Israeli Jews and focus on “the other” and “stranger” in all their depth and complexity.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOLOCAUST
COMMEMORATION IN ISRAEL

The Holocaust continues to exert a profound influence on Jews in Israel and their cultural production.² The intensity of Holocaust memory in Israel and its manifestation in contemporary Israel suggest that the terms “second generation” and “third generation” are broader than biological reference. They are also cultural terms that refer to the

generations born in Israel after 1945 which and raised in a society where Israeli media, education and culture, and public discourse combine to frame the Holocaust as a current, ongoing local trauma rather than an event that ended decades ago in another place.³

The 1980s mark a watershed when the right-wing Likud Party, which rose to power in 1977, made the subject of the Holocaust a permanent feature of high school curricula and matriculation exams. Since then, both right and left wing parties have intensified the politicization of the Holocaust to fit their opposing agendas. High school delegations have toured the former concentration camps in Poland since 1988. Today tens of thousands of Israeli pupils take part in these delegations, in what has become an Israeli phenomenon (alongside pointed criticism of these trips).⁴ In addition, during the 1980s, many Holocaust survivors retired and began to write their memoirs. At the same time, second-generation survivors began to enter the cultural sphere, and expressed their “postmemory”⁵ in literature, poetry, film, theater and other media, positioning the survivors and themselves as protagonists through the telling of individual stories. These works portray the new lives the survivors created for themselves, as well as their emotional scars, the transgenerational transfer of the trauma, and the complex relationships between parents and second and third generation survivors raised in the shadow of the trauma. In addition, some second-generation activists began criticizing components of canonical Holocaust commemorations which, in their opinion instrumentalized, commercialized or politicized the Holocaust.⁶

Third-generation Holocaust survivors in Israel⁷ (who were born between the late 1960s and the 1980s) have thus grown up in a society of intense Holocaust awareness.⁸ What was once a novelty (survivors’ testimonies, cultural texts that deal with the Holocaust and its influence on the second generation) became mundane and overly familiar to them. As adults, many of them chose not to recycle earlier representations but to develop them in different ways. For this reason, many third-generation filmmakers deliberately ignore the usual bank of images and narratives and address the Holocaust from new perspectives.⁹ In addition, they grew up in an era in which attitudes towards Germany and interactions with Germans became more complex.¹⁰

Prior to the 1990s, only a small number of Jewish Israelis lived in Berlin. They began to settle in the city on a larger scale during the 1990s, and this trend which has intensified in the 21st century. In 2017, approximately 10,000 Israelis were living in Berlin. This choice corresponds to the cultural globalization since the turn of the millennium that challenges national and

cultural borders. Some refer to it as a “post-national” era.¹¹ There are larger Israeli communities in other locations such as New York City, Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, etc., but the community in Berlin has attracted the most attention because of its symbolism.¹² This thriving community is now home to many artists, which in itself has elicited great interest in Israel. The Israeli presence in Berlin has also intensified contacts and romantic relationships between young Israeli Jews and Germans.¹³

Documentaries began representing “the other side”; i.e., the descendants of Nazis as early as the late 1990s. They deal with the ways in which Germans and the descendants of Nazis deal with their past [for example, *Martin* (Ra’anan Alexandrowicz, 1999), *The Flat* (Hadira Arnon Goldfinger, 2011), *Hitler’s Children* (Yaldei Hitler, Chanoch Ze’evi, 2011), *Kleiner Rudi* (Michelle Stein Teer, 2006)]. They also explored themes such as expat Israeli Jews living in Berlin [*Art Liberates* (Omanut Meshaheret, Solo Avital and Adam Horowitz, 2004), *One, Two, Three, Four, Adolf Hitler at My Door* (*Ahat, shtaim, shalosh, arba migermania Hitler ba*), Tammy Gross and Yuval Cohen, 2002)], and friendships between the children of survivors and the offspring of Nazis [*Farewell Herr Schwartz* (*Lehitraot Mar Schwartz*, Yael Reuveny, 2013), *You Only Die Twice* (*Ata Met Rak Pa’amaim*, Yair Lev, 2018)]. This era also paved the way, for the first time, for filmmakers to document romantic relationships between Israeli Jews and Germans, a reality that has existed for many years but has intensified in the new millennium.¹⁴

FROM SLAVERY TO LIBERATION IN *I SHOT MY LOVE*

In this live-action documentary, made seventy years after his grandfather escaped from Germany, director Tomer Heymann returned to screen his film *Paper Dolls* at the Berlin International Film Festival. While there, he meets Andreas Josef Merk, a young German dancer. What starts as a one-night-stand turns into a love affair.

I Shot My Love falls into Bill Nichols’ “performative mode” category in which the documented events are shaped by the actions of the filmmakers themselves who take an active part in the scenes.¹⁵ One subgenre is “*I* movies,” in which the directors focus on themselves, their families or friends, their encounters with their surroundings, and the conflicts that consume them. Beyond documenting an individual story, these films also tend to reflect on wider cultural, social, political, historical, and/or economic issues.¹⁶ Michael Renov’s “domestic ethnographies” define a mode

of autobiographical practice that associates self-interrogation and the documentation of a family member with ethnographical concerns. Renov states that “in an era of great genealogical curiosity such as our own, shared DNA becomes a powerful incitation to documentary practice.”¹⁷ He argues that the films that emerged in the 1970s and gained prominence in the 1990s are linked to the identity politics that developed in the 1970s, and have turned the spotlight on self-observation related to the family, the community, and ethnic/national/gender backgrounds. In these documentaries, subjectivity is not shameful, but rather is the basic driver that acts as the filter through which the world is documented.¹⁸ Many scenes in *I Shot My Love* look spontaneous, grainy, and unplanned. The camera is shaky, which lends the film a sense of authenticity. Even though Tomer documents intimate moments in his and his family’s life, he rarely films himself. Instead, in many scenes his voice is heard from behind the camera, and he accompanies other scenes with his voice-over. This creates a documentary in which he opens himself to others, and invites the viewers into his intimate world by using the camera as the eyes representing his point of view.

The trip to the Berlin Film Festival was the first time Tomer and his mother Noa had visited the country from which the filmmaker’s grandmother escaped in the 1930s. The first time the viewers encounter Andreas, he is in the shower. He can be heard singing a poem by Bertold Brecht in German before his face is shown. After he gets out, Tomer puts him in front of the camera and interviews him. The interview is conducted in English since there is a language barrier between the two. This language barrier is a key feature in other third-generation documentaries which examine the relationships (platonic or romantic) between Israelis and Germans, since the vast majority of directors do not speak German. As a result, the German language, which is still traumatic for many Israeli Jews to hear, is minimized. Andreas’ interview reflects the basic questions still asked by Israelis more than seventy years after the Holocaust: “Are you proud to be German?” “Do you like being German?” Andreas shakes his head: “I’d rather deny being German by not saying that I’m German [...] because of history [...] what happened in Germany [...] of course it’s my background, I grew up there [in Germany] and for sure I have some German things.” As a gay man, dealing with the past of his Nazi grandfather becomes even more complex, since he would have been persecuted in Nazi Germany and sent to a concentration camp. Tomer asks Andreas if he ever talked to his grandfather about the war, and Andreas confesses “I never talked to him much because my father didn’t have a good relationship with them [his grandparents] and I never dared to ask either.” Tomer insists and forces

Andreas to continue his confession: “But is it something that was on your mind? [Whether] your grandfather or grandmother [took part]...? Andreas admits “Yes. I was afraid of that. Maybe that’s why I also didn’t ask, [so as not to confirm] the idea of having grandparents or ancestors or relatives who had been close to Hitler.” “But you might have?” Tomer asks. “I might have, yes” Andreas answers.

Silence within German families has been explored extensively in research. Scholars have noted that from the 1960s onward, certain offspring of Nazis have disavowed the silencing of the Holocaust in their parents’ generation and demanded changes in Germany’s collective memory.¹⁹ However, these attempts to break the silence have only been partially successful. Families tend not to discuss the War,²⁰ even when Germany, as a country, began to acknowledge its past, teach about the Holocaust, or engage in public commemoration. Studies on the differences between learning the facts and breaking the silence suggest that this particular silence was not broken because the open politics of acknowledgement of war crimes did not address individuals’ responsibility, guilt, or shame. Because it was dealt with on a collective level, not in the private sphere, families continued to be silent in many instances or else to embellish the past.²¹ Andreas’ confession implies that offspring sometimes upheld silence out of fear of knowing the truth.

This ‘interview’ is the only scene where the German side is heard and even there Andreas’ dialogue is fractured and fragmented. Andreas’ family history remains a blur until the end of the film. Tomer does not belabor the point, and their relationship develops in spite of the past. The one-night stand turns into a long-lasting romance, and Andreas buys a one-way ticket to Israel. Tomer’s family accepts him with open arms, although Tomer wonders whether it bothers his mother that Andreas is German. “No way! Why would it bother me?” she answers. “What, all Germans are Nazis? No. And not all Jews are so nice.” Andreas attends family dinners; on Passover he joins the family *Seder*, and reads aloud from a 1930s Jewish-German *Haggadah* provided by Tomer’s uncle. The symbolism of emerging from slavery to freedom appears to be reflected in the fact that a Jewish descendant of Holocaust victims is involved in a romantic relationship with a descendant of the Nazis. It conveys the notion that third-generation members may be able to free themselves from their Holocaust complex and instill a form of ‘normalcy’ between themselves and their German peers.

After Andreas calls his parents on Christmas, he sits in silence and seems pensive. “Why can’t it be just ... you know, listen and ask. It seems there are so many layers. Stupid fucking past.” “Today, can we celebrate the

present and the future?” Tomer asks. “We are here now, not in the past.” Andreas does not answer. The following year, Andreas asks Tomer to go with him to celebrate Christmas in Germany. This is the first time he ever brought a partner home to his parents. Documenting a German household and a German family gathering is a novelty in Israeli documentaries. Tomer is silent, documenting from behind the camera, as Andreas’ father reads with emotion from the New Testament, the parents and two brothers go caroling, family members hug each other, and Andreas plays the piano. The colors are warm, and this sentimental scene constitutes a pleasant portrait of a German family; a scene Israeli audiences had not encountered before in Israeli cinema.

The film’s soundtrack is replete with songs about home, the meaning of home, and the longing for a home. Tomer ends the film by stating in his voice-over that he and Andreas have created a home for themselves in Tel-Aviv. Although the film deals with a taboo subject, Andreas is not the main character. This film is part of a series of intimate documentaries Tomer produced about “Home” involving himself and his family [*Tomer vehasrutim (It Kinda Scares Me, 2001)*] and a later eight-part documentary series *Baderech habaita (The Way Home, 2009)*. In *I Shot My Love*, his mother Noa, their close relationship, her aging and her deteriorating health are discussed in greater depth and given much more screen time than the character of Andreas.

OPEN QUESTIONS IN *COMPARTMENTS*

For many years, animated films were perceived as fiction, children’s entertainment, as opposed to the perception of documentary films, as windows on reality. As such, controversy surrounded the animated documentary genre which first appeared in 1918, and was used to depict real events. For a variety of reasons, however, attitudes to the genre have shifted, especially since the 1990s, due, inter alia, to a growing acknowledgment of the problematic truth values of real-live documentary filmmaking, advances in technology and the mimetic capabilities of computer imaging software, postmodern views of “reality”, the blurring of boundaries between “high art” documentaries and “lowbrow” animation, and cross-disciplinary approaches to cinema.²² Animated documentaries have proliferated worldwide since the late 1990s and their production is integral to documentary research and documentary film festivals.²³ The international success of Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* (1986) and *Maus II: A*

Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began (1992),²⁴ resulted in a surge in Holocaust-related animated documentaries. These films, all produced in the Western world, consist of the first-person testimonies of Holocaust survivors alongside the first hand narratives of their descendants, who, many times, discuss growing up in the shadow of the trauma.²⁵

Compartments is a short Israeli-German animated-documentary co-production directed by third-generation Jewish-Israeli director Daniella Koffler and German director Uli Seis, based on Koffler's experience, with direct references to dialogues and events in her own life. The film tells the story of Netta, a young Israeli woman, who was taught by her second-generation father never to forgive the Germans. As an adult, Netta meets Martin, a German her age who is visiting Israel. They fall in love and Netta decides to move to Berlin with Martin. Netta's father (unlike Tomer's welcoming family) responds with horror and refuses to speak to her ever again. Netta tries to start a new life free of Holocaust memories in Berlin, only to discover that the memories of Germany are imprinted within her.

Koffler and Seis create a world in which each animated character is decked with a kind of wooden box containing many tiny compartments where their memories and identity symbols are stored. The characters have control over these memories, but at certain times specific memories become magnified or else disappear. The compartments also include collective memories that do not pertain to them directly but are integral to their identity because they are shared by their groups.²⁶

The vast majority of the film consists of flashbacks. Netta, who lives in contemporary Berlin, receives a package from her estranged father. Memories surface about the incidents in her life which led her to this city. Her voice-over accompanies this journey into her past, as she tries to make Martin understand her complicated ties to the Nazi past and the German present.

"Father and I ... it's a complicated story," she begins. The camera zooms in on her compartments and then transforms them into an Israeli landscape. The camera pans and creates the impression of a train travelling through a sunlit terrain of bright little houses, the antithesis of cold, dark, snow-clad Germany where the film begins. The camera enters the study of Netta's father, where once as a child in pigtails she mischievously climbed a ladder that stood there. The blurring of past and present is symbolized initially by the red polka-dot blouse her character wears both as a child and as an adult.

When little Netta opens a book she has found in her father's study, she discovers a dedication her father has written there in Hebrew "My dear

Netta, never forget what the Germans did to Grandma and Grandpa. Never forgive them. Your father.” She reads the lines intoned by the deep resonant voice of her father. The compartments on her chest evolve into images of a concentration camp, train tracks, barbed wire, prisoners in striped uniforms behind barbed wire, which Holocaust researcher Oren Baruch Stier refers to as “Holocaust icons.” These icons, he says, are “symbolic, often visual pointers derived directly from the events to which they refer.” They are “vehicles of Holocaust memory, enhanced Holocaust symbols that embody memory.”²⁷ In her distress, Netta drops the book just as her father enters the room. Seeing her shocked countenance, he hugs her tenderly and picks the book up from the floor. His compartments are a grouping of personal and communal items (a guitar, books, a glass of wine), distinctly Jewish symbols (a menorah), Israeli symbols (an IDF insignia), or Holocaust-related symbols (the yellow badge). All items are drawn in brown, as integral parts of the brown wooden box, but as he retrieves the book, the bright yellow badge stands out, making a visual statement that dominates all other components of his personality.

Dina Wardi has suggested that in families of Holocaust survivors, there is usually one child who functions as a “memorial candle” for the dead. That child is expected—implicitly or explicitly—to serve as a link between the traumatic past which must be remembered, the present, and the future.²⁸ In *Compartments*, this “memorial candle”, is not limited to the second generation. As Netta’s father puts the book back, the yellow badge falls out of the book and onto the floor. Little Netta picks it up and places it in the largest compartment on her own chest. From now on, she too is branded, and her life will never be the same. Like her father’s badge, the bright yellow color of Netta’s badge stands out signifying that it is the most dominant part of her identity. A solemn expression spreads over Netta’s face and her father smiles, glad to have transferred the family trauma. From now on, post-memory²⁹ is no longer his legacy alone, but hers as well.

Netta’s father is never mentioned by name, but acts as a symbol of the second-generation who transmit the message of ‘never forget’ to their children, grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. But Netta’s father is not the only acknowledged transmitter of transgenerational trauma in *Compartments*. “History was all around, you know?” says Netta’s voice-over, and the camera pans out the window. “All around me as we were growing up.” The camera tilts down from blue Israeli skies and focuses briefly on a scene in which elementary school children stand at attention with their teacher, as is the custom in Israel when the siren sounds on Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day. Behind them a large

sign announces, “Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day.” Glued to the sign are pictures of prominent icons connected to Holocaust commemoration: Anne Frank, Janusz Korczak, Hannah Szenesh. All the pupils in the frame carry the yellow Star of David in their largest compartments. The aesthetics of the scene epitomize growing up in the shadow of memories. As the siren sounds in the background, the camera pans from the school children, standing at attention, heads bowed, and then to youth groups and high school students standing at attention, and then to the same groups standing at attention, this time on a high school trip to the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial and museum, under the sign “*Arbeit Macht Frei*”.³⁰ Finally, the camera shifts to the same youngsters, now grown up and serving in the Israel Defense Forces. The sequence ends on a crowded street in Israel where the adult Netta and her father stand at attention as the siren sounds.

This short sequence of pans and tilts depicts the cycle of growing up in a society steeped in Holocaust memory. It echoes Louis Althusser’s notion of interpellation which he defined as recurrent happenings embodied in major social and political institutions that turn individuals into subjects of the hegemonic ideology. Interpellation causes the subject to act (and think) according to hegemonic ideological notions that are produced by social forces rather than independent individuals.³¹ Israeli scholars have argued that Holocaust indoctrination in the Israeli educational system creates an “awareness of victimization”³² and “a religion of trauma”.³³ Koeffler’s images do not differentiate between those who are and who are not the biological descendants of Holocaust survivors yet they strengthen the notion that “second generation” and “third generation” are not only biological terms but also cultural terms describing the generations that have grown up with the memory of trauma imprinted in their identities.³⁴

The first time Netta and Martin notice each other they have just been standing at attention in the street. Like the film *I Shot My Love, Compartments* does not stipulate what Martin’s grandparents did during WWII. In fact, no information about Martin is provided aside from the fact that he is a handsome young German, a symbol of the generation that serves as a catalyst for Netta’s transgenerational transfer of the trauma and her attempt to combat it. In *Compartments*, falling in love and moving to Berlin is an act of defiance, not only against her father, but against Israeli society as a whole. Although the film deals with the intimate relationship between a Jewish-Israeli and a non-Jewish German, it only depicts the Israeli side of the relationship.

When Netta tells her father about Martin, he is shattered. Their voices as they argue are drowned out by dramatic music but their import is communicated through body language and the compartments they bear. Netta's father turns to her, arguing, waving his hands. Netta seems to be trying to explain, and the wooden box on her chest flashes color pictures of modern Berlin, while her father's compartment flashes photos of Nazi Germany. This esthetic choice highlights what animated documentary researchers see as an advantage of the genre over live-action documentaries since animated documentary can portray the depths of human emotions,³⁵ and provide insights into mental states, fantasies, dreams, emotions and inner worlds, thus heightening the viewer's sense of identification with the protagonists.³⁶

The first stretch of Netta's stay in Berlin is depicted as a "victory." In a sequence resembling the often-used romantic montage of different scenes in a short sequence, Netta and Martin are portrayed like any other couple falling in love. The Berlin they inhabit is a modern city, filled with parks, flea markets, colorful graffiti, cafes, and "cool" young people having fun. "Berlin was everything I hoped for," Netta's voice-over confirms. "I fell instantly in love with it." As she walks, enchanted, down the streets of Berlin, the largest compartment, the one which had previously contained the yellow badge, is now empty. Throughout her summer in Berlin with Martin she collects new memories and stores them in her compartments. But when Martin is not around, and Netta strolls down the streets with her headphones trying to learn German, her father's voice returns. For example, as she listens to a language course and learns how to pronounce "mother" and "father," (mutti and vater) her father's voice intrudes: "Mutti, Mutti, wo bist du?" (Mother, mother, where are you?) "Do you know what that means?" he thunders at her. "Your grandfather used to scream those words in his sleep. For years I would wake up in the middle of the night, hearing him calling for his mother in the evil language that killed her." Netta rips off her headphones, trying to escape the voices in her head, but his voice continues to haunt her on her walks through Berlin, forcing her to look at the buildings as though they were projecting pictures from the Nazi past.

Researcher Dominic LaCapra argues that survivors sometimes act out their pasts, in the sense that the past is not construed as a remote event long gone or a distant memory, but is reborn rather and experienced in a way that is integral to present-day social and cultural life. LaCapra suggests that this response can also be found in those who are close to survivors and are affected by their trauma.³⁷ In *Compartments*, both Netta and her father

act out a trauma they have never experienced directly. In their present state they (re)live a past that was not theirs.

However, the problematic perception of Germany in *Compartments* does not lie only in the painful postmemory of the second and third generations. In one scene, Netta is attracted to a food truck by the smell of a dish that reminds her of her childhood. As she waits for her food, she happily chats with the seller. "It smells like my grandmother's cooking" she confides to the blond, blue-eyed young man. "Where are you from?" he asks. Netta answers that she lives in the neighborhood, an answer that seems like another act of defiance against her father, since it would kill him to hear her representing herself as a Berliner. The food seller says that it is indeed a nice area but very expensive, and continues to push Netta: "I mean, where are you from? What country?" When she admits that she is from Israel he replies "Israel is a very rich country, yes?" Netta's face crumbles. Her smile and confidence disappear. "Why do you think so?" "Because everyone there is Jewish" he replies, recycling the old anti-Semitic trope that connects Jews with money.

This scene reflects what historian Deborah Lipstadt calls "dinner party anti-Semites;" in other words "ordinary" people who do not perceive themselves as anti-Semites and may even condemn anti-Semitism, yet hold anti-Semitic views.³⁸ The vendor does not make the comment in a malicious way, but casually serves his anti-Semitism up with the plate of hot food, which somehow makes it even worse. From Netta's perspective, the dish becomes a plate of gold coins, and the seller's previously kind face now appears vicious and intimidating. Scenes of Netta as a frightened child, surrounded by anti-Semitic posters and Holocaust pictures fills the frame as they take over her mind. As she stands next to the food truck breathing heavily, the yellow badge returns to her largest compartment for the first time since her arrival in Berlin. Later, when she gets home she tells Martin "it's just under the surface." Beneath the veneer of the modern city are layers of enduring anti-Semitism. The vendor, after all, is not some carry-over from the Nazi era, nor is he a neo-Nazi; he is just a young man, her contemporary. The film's ending is left open: viewers are not told what happens to Netta and Martin after this incident. It offers no closure or "happy ending." Ultimately, the filmmaker has no definitive answer to the question of whether intimate relationships between Israeli Jews and German non-Jews are possible. But the dangling questions, struggles and emotional upheavals are depicted only for the Israeli protagonist without probing what the German thinks or feels about the influence of the past on the present.

THE RETURN OF THE NAZI PERPETRATOR
IN *THE GERMAN*

In *The German*, Noga Netzer, the director and a third-generation Holocaust survivor, moves into her grandmother's house on an Israeli moshav after her grandmother moves to a nursing home. A German tourist looking for work becomes her gardener. What begins as a love affair develops into a documentation of abuse and violence, with the Holocaust hovering over the twisted relationship.

Unlike Tomer in *I Shot My Love*, who chooses to remain behind the camera, and Daniella in *Compartments* who uses an animated alter-ego, Noga films herself in the majority of the scenes. The film begins with Noga sitting in the middle of a room crammed with old furniture and a picture of her grandparents. The place is a mess; Noga looks puzzled and lost. The sinister background music, evoking a thriller soundtrack, and the tilted angles of the house shot from the outside create an atmosphere of danger before a single word is spoken. During a housewarming party Noga throws for her friends in her new home, her friend Yoav, noticing the overgrown garden, suggests she hire a German gardener "who hangs out around here." "What's he doing here?" another friend wonders. "Facing his past," Yoav answers cynically. Everybody laughs. "Do you want to ask Grandma for permission?" another friend asks sarcastically. The scene fades to black, as the ominous music continues.

The scene cuts to a bare-chested young German, twirling around in his chair as he listens to German heavy metal music. While this scene would be unremarkable in a non-Israeli film, in Israeli cinema it takes on a frightening significance. The screaming German music and the man twirling around with a slightly manic expression create a very disturbing atmosphere imbued with the past. The film title in Hebrew, translated literally as "My German Friend" appears in red and white against a black background, colors reminiscent of the Nazi flag, and letters that look like the Gothic font commonly emblazoned on Nazi artifacts. The word "mine" (in Hebrew *sheli*) appears somewhat smudged, hinting at both the future erasure of personality that the Israeli third-generation protagonist will experience in the presence of the German and the fact that this is not a personal story but rather a collective one. In the film, the perception of German abuse of Jews is not just consigned to the past but is very much alive in the present. Since the intention here is to tell a collective story, "the German" gardener is never given a name.

At first, the German seems quite pleasant. He tends the garden and says "I could be a slave here" when he sees the work required in the overgrown

garden. He smiles, but the camera focuses on his hands as he plays with the pruning shears. As the two begin to clean the garden, they discuss the fire ants which have infested it. "They're in hiding. Probably planning another attack," says the German as the camera moves in to take an extreme close-up, his eyes look creepy and conniving. The following scene also shot at close range, shows Noga's grandmother at the nursing home, recalling the murder of her grandfather's parents and "six million other Jews. It was all the idea of the Germans. They started it." She continues to talk about the relatives who were murdered in the gas chambers of Birkenau. (disguised as showers). The scene cuts to the German showering with a hose in the garden, which creates a clear connection between seemingly unrelated scenes and hints at what can happen to those who try to forget the past and believe in the possibility of relations between Israeli Jews and non-Jewish Germans.

The fire ants are a clear leitmotif in the film, discussed in the film's teaser by the friends who express their fear and dislike. During the film itself, the ant tunnels are photographed, with close-ups of the insects crawling in and out. The German describes, with great relish, how he smashes and dismembers them and contrives other ways of killing them (by poison, or drowning), particularly the queen. His lust to exterminate the fire ants suggests the dehumanization of Jews by the Nazis and brings to mind the Nazi metaphor of Jews as vermin. His desire to "kill the queen" becomes a reality later on when he mentally and physically abuses Noga.

Soap is used in the film as another Holocaust symbol. It bears a well-known association with the alleged manufacture of soap by the Nazis from by corpses of Jews. In one scene Noga and the German are seen together in the hot tub as he soaps her. The soap association reappears later when the German fights Noga over the shower. Noga is well-aware of these connotations: as she remarked in an interview "apparently some people are shocked to see a German washing a Jew with soap."³⁹

Recorded phone messages from her mother warning Noga not to allow the stranger in the house reecho in several scenes, emphasizing all that Noga has chosen to overlook while becoming involved with the gardener. Noga and the German become intimate and he moves in. The scenes of their initial life together are filled with intimacy and laughter; romantic music plays in the background. When the condition of Noga's grandmother deteriorates, the German accompanies Noga to visit her. Noga expresses her concern that his German military boots may distress her grandmother, but what is even more disturbing is the rope the German keeps wrapping around his hand and on which the camera focuses throughout this conversation.

The first time the German raises his voice at Noga is when she accidentally tears the pull cord of the roller shade. When she tries to help him fix it, he orders her to stand still, and not to talk. Instead of yelling back or protesting Noga simply stands there obediently. "I'm sorry, but you weren't listening to me" he says later when he notices her crying silently. "I had to make sure you'd listen." Perhaps in other parts of the world such a scene would simply be interpreted as bullying behavior on the part of a boyfriend, but in Israel the sound of a German barking orders at a helpless Jew conjures up the camps.

In a survey on Israeli-German relations conducted in 2013, most Israeli respondents (67%) stated that the Holocaust is attributable to "the German tendency to obey orders", followed by "the basic nature of the Germans".⁴⁰ These beliefs are reflected in the way "the German" is represented in this film. He is obsessed with rules and order, and when he yells at Noga for her offensive lack of hygiene he evokes the Nazi perception of Jews as filthy.

After the first fight, the ominous soundtrack is heard more and more often and many scenes are shot at night. German rock music, seldom heard in the earlier scenes, takes over the soundtrack just as the German takes over Noga's space and identity. As the deranged look in his eyes intensifies, the German rebukes her, yells at her, calls her a slob and informs her menacingly that he will "teach her" how to fix her "mad obsessive filth." He also accuses her of planning to torture him. Fights that might occur normally between couples take on a tone of relentless anti-Semitism when the German declares, "It's in your genes." Noga does not respond. He yells at her for leaving the doors half open so that they slam shut with a "ghostly sound," and claims that her Holocaust-survivor grandmother is the ghost in the house. His description of Holocaust survivors as ghosts which haunt him is disturbing coming from a German. Scenes of the German's rage are often shot in extreme close-up, emphasizing his maniacal eyes; the sound of his yelling is amplified in contrast to her continuous silence. As the situation deteriorates, the house is filmed in long shot, with twigs in the foreground that resemble barbed wire.

On Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, the German says "it's a beautiful day," and shouts at Noga to get out of bed and drink her coffee. A low-angle angle shot (her perspective from the bed) makes him look bigger, stronger, and more intimidating. Noga suggests that they go for counseling. He laughs contemptuously. "Why me? I'm German. I'm healthy," he declares, placing the subtextual blame not only on her but on her ethnic background. "Stop creating difficulties, just do what I say," he orders her. Noga films them as they sit together at an official Holocaust

Remembrance ceremony. Nazism and Holocaust scenes are screened on stage while *Quiet, Quiet (Ponar)* [In Yiddish: *Shtiler, Shtiler*], a well-known Holocaust song is performed. The song is about the infamous massacre of tens of thousands of Jews near the Vilnius ghetto. It is sung by a teenage girl accompanied by a children's orchestra. The camera focuses on the faces of the young performers, making it clear that the memory which haunts third-generation Noga will continue to haunt members of future generations, and those who are raised like previous generations will continue to see the present through the lens of the traumatic past.

After Noga's grandmother dies, the psychological abuse grows even more severe and takes over the film as it takes over Noga's life. In one violent scene after another the German yells at Noga, curses and humiliates her. "Are you a retard? Are you a cripple?" he screams when she fails to cut his hair the way he wishes. During the long haircut scene, half his head is shaved as German rock music blasts in the background, invoking neo-Nazi skinheads.

Finally, during a fit of rage, Noga pepper-sprays the German and calls the police while he continues screaming, locks her out and trashes the house. The pepper spray is a symbolic reference to the past, except now it is the Jew who uses "gas" to defend herself. "What happened" asks the policeman who arrives on the scene. "He is a German" Noga answers. "I see," says the policeman, as though this description says it all. "What's his name?" he asks, but gets no answer. Thus, "the German" is a generic title used from the beginning to the end of the film for the nation as a whole. The German is forced out of the house and the film ends. Subtitles describe his arrest and deportation from Israel. Noga is arrested for using pepper spray. She leaves her grandmother's house and returns to Tel-Aviv. The abandoned house is slated for demolition.

The German obviously has universal features. It can be seen as a film that articulates how easily an independent woman can become caught up in an abusive relationship. It also clarifies the power of psychological abuse; but ultimately, its narrative and visuals turn it into a collective Jewish story of fear and victimization. Gradual decline, false promises, the demand for obedience, strict rules and the deterioration of a pleasant life into a hellish existence after an encounter with "the German" is a specifically Jewish narrative.

The direct translation of the film's title in Hebrew is "My German Friend". Noga's previous documentary, *My Arab Friend* (2012) focused on her attempts to locate her Arab friend Fahres, an illegal resident from the West Bank, whom she met by chance and who has since mysteriously

disappeared. Her attempts to search for him expose the racist elements of Israeli society. This film was presented at documentary festivals as a genuine documentary and reviewed by journalists and critics as such. Right wing journalists discussed her “naiveté” in believing that such a relationship could exist whereas left wing journalists reviewed the film as a litmus test of Israeli racism.⁴¹ In his blog, Eli Eshed, a culture researcher and critic, and a close friend of Noga’s, revealed that *My Arab Friend* was, in fact, a ‘pseudo-documentary’ or ‘mockumentary.’ In his review, Eshed conflated the two genres whereas in fact they are alike and unlike. Both genres take the form of a documentary but portray real events only in part, if at all. Fictional events are presented as factual, but whereas documentaries are usually paradoxical or humorous fictional documentaries, pseudo-documentaries are usually more serious.⁴² “Totally fictional with several real items [...]”, Eshed wrote about *My Arab Friend*. “Noga played herself very successfully. One could almost believe the events in the film actually occurred.” He claimed that *The German* was real, that he witnessed the events and that in fact there were even more dramatic scenes left out for legal reasons.⁴³

However, *The German* may be pseudo-documentary after all. This concern was also raised by journalist Gili Izakovitz, who wrote that the film is fascinating and gut-wrenching but “one might wonder and ponder whether everything presented as documentary is indeed so ... how much is fiction in this documentary and how much is manipulation?”⁴⁴ Journalist Einat Olivier called it “A brilliant conscious horror comedy.”⁴⁵

In an interview Noga herself stated that “the style of the film challenges this lie called documentary. Truth is always deceptive.” She referred to her film as “an experiment” and admitted that she constructed the narrative as a racist trope verging on parody. She refused to provide the German’s real name in interviews (“we agreed I wouldn’t mention his name”) and claims he agreed to be photographed because he wanted to find out whether he, a grandson of Nazis, could come to Israel and shed his past. “In that sense, it began as a cinematic experiment of what would happen if we brought the German and the Jew together in the Holocaust survivor grandmother’s house. I asked myself whether as a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors I could live peacefully with a German. It’s an unresolved conflict.” In Noga’s view the film’s conclusion is that love is not stronger than DNA. “A person cannot be a tabula rasa or escape his/her own genes. Eventually culture wins out. [...] the German will always remain the German. The Jew will always remain the Jew. You can’t escape it.” Although the film takes place in Israel, Noga claims that “as far as I’m concerned this is a film about a Tel-Aviv phenomenon, about Israeli Jews who move to Berlin and vomit their guilt.

The greatest criticism in the film is not directed at the German, but at what I represent, a lazy, third generation survivor from Tel-Aviv, who supposedly forgives and forgets because she admires the well-built German".⁴⁶

Noga's vague descriptions of the genre, the visual hints of future violence which appear from the very beginning (for example, focusing on the pruning shears and the rope early on in their relationship when Noga is supposedly blinded by love), her insistence that she was the sole photographer even though there are scenes obviously shot by someone else, and the obvious allusions to the past (the fire ant scenes, the emphasis on soap, the barbed wired house) all raise questions as to the film's authenticity. This and her previous documentary *My Arab Friend* suggest that through her "autobiographical" films, Noga is trying to expose the deepest fears of Israeli Jews in relation to two of their innermost complexes: the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "The German" is not a complex character but rather a highly stereotypical caricature of the collective fear of Germans and represents the depth of Holocaust trauma within Jewish-Israeli society.

CONCLUSION

For the past ten years young Israeli directors have dared to represent the once-forbidden topic of romantic relationships between Israeli Jews and non-Jewish Germans. The visualization of this topic underscores the tremendous changes that have taken place in Holocaust commemoration in Israel.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Holocaust are major traumas that shape Jewish Israeli identity. When dealing with the former, Israeli documentary cinema since the 1990s has sidelined Jewish protagonists to produce films that deal with the Palestinian "other" [for example, *Through the Veil of Exile*, (*Miba'ad leraa'lat hagalat*, David Ben Shitrit, 1992), *Detained* (*Asurot*, Anat Even and Ada Ushpiz, 2001), *9 Star Hotel* (*Malon 9 cochavim*, Ido Har, 2007)]. Other documentaries present a problematic image of Israeli Jews in their encounter with Palestinians as they become perpetrators victimizing Palestinians [for example, *Checkpoint* (*Mahsomim*, Yoav Shamir, 2003)]. Some of the documentaries made by Israeli filmmakers which most successfully attend to the Palestinian point of view are first-person documentaries.⁴⁷

In Holocaust related documentaries the decision to represent the "other side" has proven more problematic. There are documentaries that paint a complex portrait of Nazi descendants (*The Falt, You Only Die Twice*) or even devote the entire film to their perspective (*Hitler's Children*).

However, when it comes to documenting romantic relationships between Germans and Jews, documentarists still find it hard to convey a nuanced image of Germans.

These films are variants of first-person documentary cinema. It is obvious that an Israeli Jew cannot tell the German side of the story from a subjective point of view. However, since Germans were involved in the production, the directors could have used a variety of cinematic techniques to create fuller and more complex German figures. For example, they could have given the camera to the Germans to document their thoughts and feelings or devote more time to questioning them about their perspectives. In *Compartments*, a German-Jewish animated coproduction, Martin's perspectives, thoughts and feelings could have been incorporated.

These films tend to explore Israeli Jews in depth, while the German protagonists are sketched in perfunctory and undeveloped tropes. They are either silent or mutter fragmented observations about the past, thus mimicking the stereotype of the Israeli perception of “the good new German” (*I Shot My Love*, *Compartments*), or present a caricature of the Israeli perception of “the evil German” (*The German*). Their opinions or thoughts about the future of these relationships are seldom heard.

NOTES

1. This topic has been discussed in several contemporary Israeli fiction films such as *Walk on Water* (Eytan Fox, 2014) and *The Cakemaker* (Ophir Raul Graizer, 2017). See: Liat Steir-Livny, *Two Faces in the Mirror: The Representation of Holocaust Survivors in Israeli Cinema* (Jerusalem, 2009), 184–8; Kobi Niv, *Black Past, Pink Future* (Gedera, 2011); Aner Freminger “‘Walk on the Water’ or ‘Precede God’ - The Second and Third Generation Are Looking for Solid Ground at Their Feet”, *Slit*, 6 (2012): 59–68 [all in Hebrew].

2. See: Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel versus Adolf Eichmann* (Jerusalem, 2001) [Hebrew]; Nurith Gertz, *A Different Choir: Holocaust Survivors, Aliens, and Others in Israeli Cinema and Literature* (Tel-Aviv, 2004), 16–41 [both in Hebrew].

3. Iris Milner, *Torn Past* (Tel-Aviv, 2004), 19–35 [Hebrew]; Oren Meyers, Motti Neiger, and Eyal Zandberg, *Communicating Awe: Media Memory and Holocaust Commemoration* (Basingstoke, UK, 2014).

4. Jackie Feldman, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity* (New York, 2008).

5. Marianne Hirsch suggested that the Holocaust, as represented in the works of second-generation survivors, is an indirect affinity structured on inherited

imagination and memory. This is what she terms *postmemory*, which characterizes the experience of those controlled by events that happened before they were born, and who apply their imagination to places they cannot remember, in “Past Lives, First Memories in Exile,” *Poetics Today* 17.4 (1996): 659–67.

6. See: Dina Porat, *The Smoke-Scented Coffee: The Encounter of the Yishuv and Israeli Society with the Holocaust and its Survivors* (Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, 2011), 357–78; Steir-Livny, *Two Faces in the Mirror*, 96–204; Milner, *A Torn Past*, 19–35 [both in Hebrew]; Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin, TX, 2001), 32–71; Dalia Ofer, “The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory,” *Israel Studies* 14.1 (2009), 15–31; Gulie Ne’eman Arad, “Israel and the Holocaust: A Tale of Multifarious Taboos,” *New German Critique* 90 (2003): 5–26.

7. For research on third generation cultural texts outside Israel, see: Victoria Aarons and Alan L. Berger, *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History, and Memory* (Evanston, Ill, 2017); Victoria Aarons ed., *Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives: Memory in Memoir and Fiction* (Washington DC, 2018).

8. Porat, *Smoke-Scented Morning Coffee*, 357–78; Liat Steir-Livny, *Let the Memorial Hill Remember* (Tel-Aviv, 2014), 17–36 [Hebrew].

9. Liat Steir-Livny, *Remaking Holocaust Memory: Documentary Cinema by Third-Generation Survivors in Israel* (Syracuse, 2019).

10. Avner Shapira, “What is Dudu Topaz Doing at a Conference on Nazi Cinema?,” *Haaretz*, November 3, 2016, [Hebrew] <http://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/cinema/.premium-1.2153857>

11. Horng-luen Wang, “Mind the Gap: On Post-National Idea(l)s and the Nationalist Reality,” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology* 46.2 (2002): 139–147; Yehuda Shenhav, “Identity in a Postnational Society,” *Theory and Criticism* 19 (2001): 5–16.

12. Gad Yair, *Love Is Not Practical* (Tel-Aviv, 2015); Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Israelis, Berlin* (Tel-Aviv, 2001); Shuki Shtaubert, *Israelis in Berlin* (Tel-Aviv, 2017) [all in Hebrew].

13. Maya Unger, “A Berlin Mix,” *Spitz*, August 2013. [Hebrew] http://spitzmag.de/issues/spitz_6/1175

14. Research shows that relationships between Jews and non-Jewish Germans and even Holocaust survivors and Germans have existed since the aftermath of WWII. See Lynn Rapaport, *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: Memory, Identity, and Jewish-German Relations* (Cambridge, 1997), 205–51. Other specific examples include: Esther Ofarim, the Jewish-Israeli singer who left Israel to launch her international career and lived in Germany in the 1960s and 1970. In 1982 she married a German (her second marriage). Another famous singer, Nechama Hendel, also left Israel for Germany in the 1960s and married a German. These stories were widely published and the Israeli audience had a hard time accepting the singers’ German lives. See: Yuval Levi and Hofit Cohen, “In Desperate Need of Consolation: the Singer’s Heartbreak Because the Israelis

Did Not Forgive”, *XNET*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.msn.com/he-il/news/other/%D7%9B%D7%94-%D7%96%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%94-%D7%9C%D7%A0%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%94-%D7%A9%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%91-%D7%A9%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%96%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%A9%D7%94%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%90-%D7%A1%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%95-%D7%9C%D7%94/ar-BB1oHuik>; In *The Talent to Live* (Amir Har-Gil, 2004) director Har-Gil tells the story of his father Shraga, a Holocaust survivor who has a long-term romantic relationship with Ula, a German woman whose Nazi father manufactured the gas tanks for Auschwitz that were used to murder Shraga’s family (among more than a million Jews). See: Amir Har-Gil, “The Man who Went back There”, *Panim* 40 (2007) <https://www.itu.org.il/?CategoryID=1215&ArticleID=9642> See also examples in the documentary *Stalags* (Ari Libsker, 2007).

15. Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), 92–106.

16. Jim Lane, *The Autobiographical Documentary in America* (Madison, WI, 2002); Shmulik Duvdevani, *First-Person Camera* (Jerusalem, 2010); Carmel Gottlieb Kimhi, *The Poetics of the Home: Representation of Home and National Home in Autobiographical Documentary in Israeli Cinema* (Jerusalem, 2009) [both in Hebrew]; Rosemary Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge, 1996).

17. Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary* (Minneapolis, 2004), 216.

18. *Ibid.*, 176–7, 216–8.

19. Norbert Frei, “Parallel Universes? Why Should we Examine the Touch Points between Historiography and Familial Memories?”, *Memory and Amnesia: Germany and the Holocaust*, ed., Gilad Margalit and Yifat Weiss (Tel-Aviv, 2005), 216–20 [Hebrew].

20. Anna Ornstein, “Foreword,” in *Not in My Family: German Memory and Responsibility after the Holocaust*, ed., Roger Frie (Oxford, 2017), xi–xii.

21. Roger Frie, “Historical Trauma and Lived Experience: An Introduction,” *History Flows through us: Germany, the Holocaust, and the Importance of Empathy*, ed., Roger Frie (London, 2018), 1–14; Harald Welzer, “Cumulative Heroization: Turning Bystanders and Criminals into Heroes of Nazi Resistance”, *Memory and Amnesia: Germany and the Holocaust*, ed., Gilad Margalit and Yifat Weiss (Tel-Aviv, 2005), 198–215 [Hebrew].

22. Steve Fore, “Reenacting Ryan: The Fantasmatic and the Animated Documentary,” *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6.3 (2011): 277–92.

23. Annabelle Roe Honess, *Animated Documentary*, (London, 2013), 231–46.

24. Numerous articles have been written about *Maus*. See: Andreas Huyssen, “Of Mice and Mimesis: Reading Spiegelman with Adorno,” *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, Barbie Zelizer ed., (New Brunswick, NJ, 2001), 28–44; Jeanne Ewert, “Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and the Graphic Narrative”, *Narrative Across Media: The*

Languages of Storytelling, Ryan, Marie-Laure ed., (Nebraska, OK, 2004), 180–93; Erin McGlothlin, “When Time Stands Still: Traumatic Immediacy and Narrative Organization in Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and *In the Shadow of No Towers*”, *The Jewish Graphic Novel: Critical Approaches*, Ranen Omer-Sherman and Samantha Baskind ed., (New Brunswick, NJ, and London, 2008), 94–110.

25. See: Orly Yadin, “But Is It Documentary”, *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television since 1933*, Toby Haggith and Joanna Newman ed., (New York, 2005), 168–72; Raz Yosef, “War Fantasies: Memory, Trauma and Ethics in Ari Folman’s *Waltz with Bashir*”, *Jewish Studies* 9.3 (2010): 311–26.

26. Tal Kantor, “Compartments”, *Munfash*, October 7, 2017 [Hebrew] <https://moonfash.co.il/%D7%AA%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A8%D7%93%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%9D-compartments/>

27. Oren Baruch Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Amherst, 2013), 25, 32, 45–7.

28. Dina Wardi, *Memorial Candles* (Jerusalem, 1990), 14 [Hebrew].

29. Hirsch, “Past Lives”.

30. Israeli high school educational trips to the former concentration camps in Poland have taken place since the late 1980s. Each year, tens of thousands of students go on in this trip. See for example: Feldman, *Above the Death Pits*; Dan Soen and Nitzza Davidovitz, “Youth Delegations to the Former Concentration Camps: Pros and Cons”, *Holocaust Commemoration—Issues and Challenges* (Ariel, 2011) [Hebrew]. <http://toldotofakim.cet.ac.il/ShowItem.aspx?ItemID=7a596d66-085f-47d7-82fi-b7c8a6fa73b2&lang=HEB>

31. Louis Althusser, *About Ideology* (Tel-Aviv, 2003), 51–60; Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History on the Problem of Place,” *Zmanim* 43 (1993): 13–15 [both in Hebrew].

32. Alon Gan, *From Sovereignty to Victimhood: An Analysis of the Victimization Discourse in Israel*, (Jerusalem, 2014) [Hebrew] 28–35.

33. Adi Ophir, *Working for the Present: Essays on Contemporary Israeli Culture* (Tel-Aviv, 2001) [Hebrew], 29–51, 256–80.

34. Milner, *A Torn Past*, 19–35.

35. Orly Yadin, “But is it Documentary?”, Toby Haggith and Joanna Newman, *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television since 1933* (London and New York, 2005), 168–72.

36. Roe Honess, *Animated Documentary*, 2, 35.

37. Dominic LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD, 2000), 87–90.

38. Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Antisemitism Here and Now* (New-York, 2019), 68–75.

39. Einat Olivier, “Israelis Who Move to Berlin and Throw Out of Guilt”, *Ma’ariv*, April 14, 2019 [Hebrew] <https://www.maariv.co.il/culture/movies/Article-694514>

40. Tal Alon, "The Study Reveals What the Germans Really Think about the Israelis and Vice Versa", *Spitz*, 15, January 2015 http://spitzmag.de/issues/spitz_15/5759

41. See interview of Netzer with journalist Ben Caspit, "My Arab Friend—An Interview with the Director", *YouTube*, June 12, 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2EVHqez5g8>; "My Arab Friend on Erev Chadash", *YouTube*, May 22, 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHQEzz3-UP4>; "My Arab Friend", *Habama* [both in Hebrew] <http://www.habama.co.il/Pages/Event.aspx?Subj=4&A rea=1&EventId=29981>; The film was represented in DocAviv documentary festival in 2013 <http://nfct.org.il/en/movies/my-arab-friend/>

42. See: Gary D. Rhodes and John Parris Springer ed., *Docufictions: Essays on the Intersection of Documentary and Fictional Filmmaking* (Jefferson, NC, 2006); Craig Hight, "Mockumentary: A Call to Play", *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives, New Practices*, in: Thomas and Wilma de Jong ed., (Maidenhead, UK, 2008), 204–16.

43. Eli Eshed, "Noga Netzer, the Film *My German Friend* and I" [Hebrew] <https://no666.wordpress.com/2019/01/31/%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%92%D7%94-%D7%A0%D7%A6%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%A1%D7%A8%D7%98-%D7%94%D7%97%D7%91%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%92%D7%A8%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%99-%D7%95%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%99/>

44. Gili Izakovitz, "My German Friend: An Inside Look on Abusive Relationships", *Haaretz*, January 29, 2019 [Hebrew]. <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/television/guide/.premium-1.6890491>

45. Olivier, "Israelis".

46. *Ibid.*

47. See films by Avi Mograbi. Two examples out of many: *How I Learned to Overcome My Fear and Love Ariel Sharon* (1997) and *Avenge But One of My Two Eyes* (2005).

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