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Living in the Past, Living with the Ghosts: Trauma and Postmemory in Jonathan Lichtenstein's *Memory**

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ABSTRACT
The 'memory boom' has promoted a wide array of plays among a large amount of literary output in Western literature. Among these, Jonathan Lichtenstein's 2006 play *Memory* is an aptly named memory play. Inspired by the memories of the playwright's father, the play interweaves three stories: one set in 1933, when the Nazis took power in Berlin; the second in East Berlin, 1990, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall; and the last in Bethlehem, 2006, as the Apartheid Wall was rising. Whilst connecting these separate stories at the intersection of memory, this paper seeks to address a traumatized and conflicted relation to the past, and drawing on established trauma theorist Dominick LaCapra's terms 'acting out' and 'working through', it discusses how traumatic memories and one's relation to them shape the present. The study then reflects on Marianne Hirsch's term 'postmemory' as manifested in *Memory* as well as Lichtenstein's life.
Keywords: Postmemory, trauma, acting out, Holocaust drama, *memory*

Introduction

Freddie Rokem in *Performing History* (2000) evaluates Marcellus's question, "*What, has this thing appear'd again tonight*?" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as deeply evocative of the operations of the theatre itself. Emphasizing the theatrical representations of the past, he says, "*On the metatheatrical level, this question implies that the repressed ghostly figures and events from that ('real') historical past (re)appear on the stage in theatrical performances.*"[1] Echoing Rokem, Marvin Carlson remarks concordantly, "*theatre, as a site of the continuing reinforcement of memory by surrogation, is not surprisingly among the most haunted of human cultural structures.*"[2] "*All theatre,*" Carlson further argues, "*is a cultural activity deeply involved with memory and haunted repetition.*"[3] As Carlson and Rokem propose, theatre, among all other literary and artistic forms, retells, again and again, the stories of the past; hence, by means of re-enacting, it activates the memory and resurrects the past and its ghosts.

Memory and theatre, two closely associated words, have been sharing a common ground for centuries. The fact that theatre has exclusively been dominated by memories, has made this affinity more manifest. Together with this, Western playwrights have been at the forefront of the memory boom, the upsurge in social and scholarly interest in individual and collective memory in the last four decades, and stages around the world have hosted a wide array of plays bringing expunged or ignored memories to the spotlight. Among others, the ravages of two World Wars and the Holocaust legacy have been widely enacted on world stages. One such play, Jonathan Lichtenstein's *Memory*, is an aptly named memory play in the literal sense since it was inspired by the memories of the playwright's father, who escaped Nazi Germany as a child with the *Kindertransport*, as well as his own relationship with these memories. Informed by modern trauma theories, this paper reflects on how traumatic memories of the past penetrate the whole lives of the traumatized and what unworked through traumas amount to, as manifested in Lichtenstein's play through the central character Eva's Holocaust memories and Israeli-Palestinian conflict that continues to wreck people's lives. In line with the unworked traumas, drawing on Marianne Hirsch's concept of 'postmemory', the present study also discusses the possibility of bearing the burden of traumatic memories even though one is not a first-hand victim of the catastrophic incidents, namely Eva's grandson Peter and Lichtenstein himself.

Memory in Trauma, Trauma in *Memory*

Alluding to the challenges literature faces in embodying traumatic memories, Anne Whitehead in *Trauma Fiction* (2004) notes, "*impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by*

1 Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), 133.

2 Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*: *The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 134.

3 Ibid., 134.

mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that [in the works of trauma] *temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection.*"[4] As an exemplary trauma narrative, Lichtenstein's *Memory*, manifesting this resistance to direct representation, interweaves three trauma stories on a metatheatrical level and demands a critical reading by presenting the stories' interrelationship in a non-linear fashion. The play opens in a rehearsal room where a group of actors is preparing the play *Memory*. The first story opens in 1990, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Seventy-eight-year-old Eva is visited by her grandson, Peter, who lives in the UK with his parents. Peter tries to reveal his family's past, which unsettlingly prepossesses him, by questioning his estranged grandmother. The second story, set in 2006 in Bethlehem, is not directly related to the main plot. Unlike the previous scene which starts following the fall of a wall, in this one, a new wall, the Apartheid Wall between Israel and Palestine, is rising. A Jewish soldier, Isaac, talks with a Palestinian, Bashar, whose house will shortly be pulled down for the construction of the wall. With a flashback, the third story goes back to Holocaust-era Berlin, around 1933, where twenty-one-year-old Jewish German Eva marries another Jew, Aron, leaving his best friend Felix jealous. Eva and Aron attempt to run away from Germany with their son and two other children whom Eva tries to save from the Nazis. However, Felix, who becomes an SS soldier, gives them away.

Lichtenstein's *Memory*, whilst interweaving these stories, raises a discussion of various ramifications of traumatic memories. At the very outset, the central figure of the two stories, Eva, stands out as a Nazi victim in one story and an old woman trying to cope with the traumatic memories of her past in the other. One of the corollaries of trauma speculated by theorists is that it creates impairments in a person's ability to adapt and make meaningful connections with other people, ultimately leading to isolation from society. The prolonged feeling of detachment from others eliminates the feeling of love, and as a result, the victims cannot commit themselves to any kind of relationship. As a witness and first-hand experiencer of the atrocities, Eva is heavily traumatized and estranged from other people, even her family. As her story unfolds, it is understood that while she, her husband, and two boys, the couple was looking after, cannot leave Germany, they succeed in sending their own son to the UK via the *Kindertransport*. Afterward, however, even though Eva survives the war and the Holocaust, she cannot reconnect her son and his family. As trauma theorist Judith Herman proffers, "*Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of self that is formed and sustained in relation to others.*"[5] This explains why Eva, the only surviving witness and owner of the traumatic memories in the play, withdraws from social engagements and leads an excluded life. As she cannot find any close relative for a prolonged time, she turns into herself and when her grandson shows up years later, she refuses to talk to him about the past.

4 Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 3.

5 Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence— From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 51.

Putting trauma into words has been the subject of a long-lasting debate among scholars. Mainly due to the "*speechless fright*"[6] trauma creates and an ensuing inability to put horrible experiences into words, many survivors of catastrophic events either prefer or are coerced to remain silent. Nevertheless, some trauma theorists accept the importance of putting traumatic suffering into narration and believe in the need to verbalize the incident for easing its detrimental after-effects while some others insist that words do not suffice to convey the enormity of these experiences. In order to clarify the underlying causes of this linguistic incompetence, neurobiologists Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart identify two forms of memory drawing on pioneering French psychologist Pierre Janet's studies. They classify them as 'normal' or 'narrative' and 'traumatic' memories. Singling out traumatic memories from others, they argue that

> *In contrast to narrative memory, which is a social act, traumatic memory is inflexible and invariable. Traumatic memory has no social component; it is not addressed to anybody, the patient does not respond to anybody; it is a solitary activity. In contrast, ordinary memory fundamentally serves a social function.*[7]

In this context, Eva's silence can be explained by her experiences being stored in traumatic memory. Because of their overwhelming nature, these experiences cannot have a place in normal memory; hence, they cannot find expression by way of speech. Her prolonged silence, thus, compels her to live with the buried memories of these experiences.

One of the key figures of modern trauma theory Cathy Caruth, on similar lines, formulates her definition of trauma, based on the elusiveness of traumatic memories in narrative representation. As she puts it, trauma "*describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic event in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena*,"[8] as "*the event is not assimilated or fully experienced at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it.*"[9] Caruth's formulation emphasizes the suddenness of the event and the belatedness inhering in the traumatic moment itself. Rather than being remembered as a past experience, trauma thus becomes a part of a survivor's life, being compulsively repeated in the present and maintaining its ungraspable nature.

In the light of these arguments, Eva comes to the forefront as an epitome of trauma. No matter how untouched she seems and acts, she relives traumatic memories of the past belatedly by various repetitions. As she breaks her memories to Peter, she confesses that she offered

6 Michelle Balaev, "Trends in Literary Trauma Theory," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 41(2) 149 (2008): 149-66.

7 Bessel van der Kolk, Otto van der Hart, "The Intrusive Past: The Flexiblity of Memory and Engraving of Trauma," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth 163 (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1995), 158-182.

8 Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1996), 49.

9 Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1995), 5.

her body to Felix to buy her family's freedom and later Aron hanged himself believing Felix would save the children and Eva. In the meantime, ghosts of Aron and Felix appear:

> ***Peter:*** *Tell me. I am like him*
> ***Eva:*** *You are. You have come home. (Felix enters. Eva breaks away from Aron.) No! No! Not again! Not that memory again. I will not remember that!*[10]

This hallucination proves that Eva has been haunted by the compulsively repeated memories and ghosts of the past as she has been unable to assimilate the overwhelming experience of rape and her husband Aron's death. That being the case, rather than being remembered or communicated as a past incident, these traumatic memories, thus, become a part of her life recurring belatedly.

As these memories unveil, her grim past justifies Eva's persistent silence to an extent. This silence, albeit understandable, is not an ultimate escape way for trauma victims, though. While deliberating the challenging question of addressing and representing issues related to the trauma experience specific to the Holocaust, Dominick LaCapra draws a distinction between 'acting out' and 'working through' as possible responses to trauma. LaCapra interprets acting out as compulsive and repetitive re-living of the trauma, which keeps the survivor haunted by the past event and withholds them from re-engagement in life.[11] Working through, on the contrary, functions as "*a kind of countervailing force*"[12] in which the traumatized person can take a critical distance to the event they experienced. Turning back to the traumatic event and constructing a complete narrative, which is strongly supported by the theorists, is a rather effective working through tactic for enabling a step towards detraumatization. However, besides the enormity of the incidents that render her speechless, Eva cannot find anyone who can support and listen. On that account, she grievously stays bound to live with traumas and to act them out, diversely and indefinitely.

Eva's resistance to verbalize her pain and share it with others traps her into a loop of acting out which arises in form of distorted narratives, too. She occasionally talks of Eli and how she saved both him and Joshua from the Nazis by lying on them.[13] Peter reads one of the letters which were written by Eli, as Eva claims, yet he realizes that they seem to be written by Aron who definitely died a long time ago. In the culminating scene, she changes this long-standing story of saving boys from the Nazis by lying on them and states that the boys are both dead. Just as Eva begins her revealing speech, Lichtenstein disrupts the illusion of reality and turns the scene back to the rehearsal room. Actor Vivien, as Eva, forgets her lines, and a prompter helps her. This way, they complete the real story.

10 Jonathan Lichtenstein, *Memory* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2008), 50.
11 Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 174.
12 Ibid., 174.
13 Lichtenstein, *Memory*, 10, 12, 13, 41.

Eva: *The two boys in green hats were with me, squeezing my hands. One of them was crying. "You boy, stop crying," says some of the guards … (as Vivien.) I can't go on. … I don't know this speech. I told you at the beginning.*
Chris: *I'll feed you the lines. His tears would not stop.*
Vivien: *His tears would not stop.*
Chris: *He held my hand tight.*
Vivien: *He held my hand tight.*
Chris: *Stop crying the guard says.*
Vivien: *Stop crying the guard says.*
Chris: *But he couldn't*
[…]
Chris: *If you do not stop crying*
Vivien: *If you do not stop crying*
Chris: *I will kill you.*
Vivien: *I will kill you.*
Chris: *Then his brother started to cry.*
Vivien: *Then his brother started to cry.*
Chris: *Quiet tears.*
Chris: *Kneel down said the guard.*
Vivien: *Kneel down said the guard.*
Chris: *Gently.*
Vivien: *Gently.*
Chris: *And your brother.*
Vivien: *And your brother.*
Chris: *The boys were confused.*
Vivien: *The boys were confused.*
Chris: *Their lips were blue.*
Vivien: *Their lips were blue*
Chris: *The guard helped them.*
Vivien: *The guard helped them.*
Chris: *He arranged them*
Vivien: *He arranged them*
Chris: *So that the older boy was kneeling alongside the younger one* […]
Chris: *He levelled their heads*
Vivien: *He levelled their heads*
Chris: *So that they were at the same height.*
Vivien: *So that they were at the same height.*
Chris: *He took out his gun.*
Vivien: *He took out his gun.* […]
Chris: *He was precise.*
Vivien: *He was precise.*
Chris: *Then he shot them*
Vivien: *Then he shot them*
Chris: *One bullet …*
Vivien: *One bullet…*

Chris: *Through both their heads.*
Vivien: *Through both their heads.*
Chris: *The guard said.*
Vivien: *The guard said.*
Chris: *Why waste two bullets?*
Vivien: *Why waste two bullets…* (*Silence*)[14]

Rendering one of the most poignant scenes in *Memory*, this part both offers recognition for the audience and Peter, and it unveils the real extent of Eva's trauma withal. Frozen in time, the memories of the traumatic events are so vivid that for Eva they are like now. Tense shifts from past to present, in this context, attest to the freshness of the memories and their "*durational time*"[15] that never passes. Lichtenstein's twist by taking the scene back in the rehearsal room, on the other side, primarily breaks audience identification and requests witnessing. Repetition of Eva's lines, disclosing the enormity of Nazi atrocities, intensifies pathos and evokes an echo. This, in that case, can be interpreted as an echo of that unprecedented violence that still reverberates today and will possibly reverberate for some more time.

Getting back to Eva's response to trauma by distorting the painful realities and fabricating positive scenarios that the above-mentioned scene reveals, Eric Santner's term "narrative fetishism" can render a better interpretation, since it meets Eva's situation in full measure. Santner in his paper titled "History Beyond the Pleasure Principle" defines narrative fetishism as the "*construction and deployment of a narrative consciously or unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place.*"[16] As a matter of fact, working through, as a healthy response to a loss or a traumatic happening, necessitates 'work of mourning' which embodies a process of accepting and integrating the traumatic loss by repeating and remembering it. Unlike mourning, narrative fetishism, Santner writes, is "*the way an inability or refusal to mourn employs traumatic events; it is a strategy of undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulating a condition of intactness, typically by situating the site and origin of loss elsewhere.*"[17] This means, while mourning necessitates acceptance of the loss and the trauma it causes, narrative fetishism invalidates the trauma, therewith, the need to mourn.

Eva, who focused on survival after the loss of her husband and two boys, cannot have a healthy mourning process either due to her inability or refusal and due to the lack of people who could support and listen. Unable to cope with the reality of trauma, she stalls herself and

14 Ibid., 52-54.
15 Lawrence L. Langer, "Memory's Time: Chronology and Duration in Holocaust Testimonies," in *Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays* 16 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 13-24.
16 Eric Santner, "History Beyond The Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma," in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"*, ed. Saul Friedlander 144 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 143-154.
17 Ibid., 144.

others to alleviate her pain utilizing a fabricated story. Very tragically she witnesses the death of two boys she was supposed to protect. Yet, even though she remains aloof and rarely talks to her family, in her letters to them and during her conversations with Peter, she frequently mentions Eli and Joshua and how she saved them from Nazi persecution. On the one hand, this distorted story ensures her a pseudo relief as it secures a persistent trauma, on the other because she cannot face real trauma and, therefore, cannot have a healthy working through. However, undervaluing the arduous process of coming to terms with the past and trauma, Lichtenstein awkwardly upties Eva's story. She concedes the past when she starts talking to Peter; because as she starts recalling her memories, other traumatic memories also bubble to surface and reveal themselves cascading back. Hinting at the power of speaking of the haunting past, Lichtenstein erroneously boils it down to a moment similar to an epiphany.

Postmemories, Post-victims

> ***Eva:*** *They happened to me. Not to you.*
> ***Peter:*** *They are like salt. They've salted me. A few white crystals affecting everything.*[18]

This interaction between Eva and her grandson encapsulates the very essence of Lichtenstein's dramatic work as well as winking at the vicarious forms of trauma. As she puts it, Eva witnessed and suffered unspeakable horrors with other victims; however, as Peter avows, these horrors have plagued a lot more people who had no experience of them. This is because the Holocaust, as John McCumber posits, is "*the master rupture*"[19] of the twentieth century, and its magnitude is beyond the comprehension of the human mind. It happened to a small minority in proportion to the whole world, yet as one of the most inhumane and darkest episodes of history, it created a rift that has not yet been sealed. On this account, its legacy continues to plague contemporary consciousness and vicariously traumatize a growing number of people.

It has been revealed that trauma that is too serious and large in extent does not stay confined to its real victims but can be transferred to subsequent generations. In order to define this poignant phenomenon of trauma's continuing effect across generations, Marianne Hirsch, in her 1992 article, "Family Picture: Maus, Mourning and Post-Memory," coined the term 'post-memory'. The term refers to the memory "*that of the child of the survivor whose life is dominated by memories of what preceded his/her birth.*"[20] Hirsch argues that in cases of post-memory, descendants of survivors (victims as well as perpetrators) of massive traumatic events connect so deeply to the previous generation's remembrances of the past that they need to call that connection memory. Thus, in certain extreme circumstances, memory can

18 Lichtenstein, *Memory*, 54.

19 John McCumber, "The Holocaust as Master Rupture: Foucault, Fackenheim, and 'Postmodernity'," in *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, eds. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (Atlanta: Ropodi, 1998), 239-64.

20 Marianne Hirsch, "Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory," *Discourse* 15(2), Special Issue: The Emotions, Gender, and the Politics of Subjectivity 8 (1992): 3-29.

be transmitted to those who were not actually there to experience an event.[21] Given this, in Lichtenstein's play, it is apparent that Peter, who has never been to Germany before and has no experience of the Holocaust, inherited catastrophic memories of his ancestors. As he has grown up with inherited memories, not through direct experience or recollection but mediated images, stories, and behaviors, he turns up as a 'post-victim'.

The purpose of Peter's visit, likewise, verifies that for a very long time he has been grappling with the handed-down memories. Raised with the stories that his father told him, he wants to face them both by learning the details and by visiting the sites of these traumatic happenings before his grandmother dies. He wants himself, as well as Eva, to "*Make peace with the past*"[22] by facing its baggage no matter how hard it would be; so that both could get rid of its haunting traces. Even though Lichtenstein leaves the ending open, the ghost of Aron's putting out the menorah that Peter has lighted as Eva starts talking about what really happened to her and her family suggests a closure. It implies that Eva's dormant suffering has been alleviated after being ignited. Yet, this unsatisfactory attempt, unfortunately again, runs the risk of trivializing the trauma and underestimating the tough process for the closure of this ever-crying wound.

Actually, Jonathan Lichtenstein himself comes to the forefront as a paragon of post-memory. His father Hans Lichtenstein escapes from Germany alone when he was twelve with *Kindertransport*, yet his parents die there. Even though Lichtenstein's father does not talk about his childhood, family, Germany, or the Holocaust, Lichtenstein proclaims that he has been imbued with memories of them throughout his life. In "Writing Through the Silences of a Lost Family", he asserts:

> *Over many years I came to understand that I had been infused part of my father's traumatic history. Why this happened I do not know. All I do know is that it became the dark ghost inside me, the lining of my heart, the stones of my kidneys. His unspoken pain surrounded me, then settled inside me—and despite my battles with it, it gripped me.*[23]

Haunted with this ghost and unable to cast it aside, Lichtenstein decides to trace this trauma his father endured by taking him to Berlin where Hans Lichtenstein had lived as a child. Recreating the journey from Berlin to Wales backward, father and son visit places in Berlin where Hans had lived, shopped, eaten, played, and said goodbye to his mother for the last time. Playwright's book *Berlin Shadow* (2020) narrates their trip to Berlin and thus brings Lichtenstein's postmemories to light. Besides attesting to the playwrights' postmemories of the Holocaust, *Berlin Shadow* also evinces their traces in the *Memory*. Much like Peter's, Lichtenstein's father comes to the UK as a *Kindertransport* evacuee leaving his parents

21 Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29(1) 105-6 (2008): 103-28.
22 Lichtenstein, *Memory*, 13.
23 Jonathan Lichtenstein, "Writing Through the Silences of a Lost Family," *Literary Hub*. Accessed on 8 June, 2021. https://lithub.com/writing-through-the-silences-of-a-lost-family-history/

behind in Berlin. Avoiding conversations about the past, he hides his father's suicide until Jonathan's eighteenth birthday.[24] Although Hans Lichtenstein loses both parents, his grandmother survives whom Jonathan cannot talk to. In this respect, Peter can be regarded as Lichtenstein's spokesperson while penning *Memory* and later paying a visit to Berlin manifests to his real attempts of coming to terms with the past.

From Victim to Perpetrator

Set in Bethlehem, in 2006, the third duologue between Israeli Isaac and Palestinian Bashar seems very loosely connected to the main plot. Some critics even remark that the play would be better without this third plotline.[25] As a matter of fact, through critical reading, it is conspicuous that these three plotlines share a common ground. Apart from the names, the stories are the same yet in a reversed order; in another part of the world, in another time, another wall is being built and other people are being displaced from their birthplaces. A noteworthy difference is that former victims become the very perpetrator, at this instant.

Bashar and Isaac's confrontation ostensibly delineates the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, yet weaving this conflict with two other plotlines, the play facilitates a correlation between these disparate stories on the basis of memory and trauma. Hence, when read beyond the lines, the play implies a cause-and-effect relationship alongside a similarity between two traumatic incidents. One is overshadowed by the Holocaust and the other by the *Nakba;*[26]Israelis and Palestinians are two nations suffering from personal and collective traumas. No matter how incommensurable with the Holocaust, the ongoing prolonged and violent conflict caused both parties to inflict harm on one another, and to demand recognition of their identity and legitimate rights as well as suffering. In *Memory* Bashar's proposition "*We are the Jews of the Middle East*"[27] and Isaac's "*I am just carrying out orders,*"[28] echoing Nazi SS soldiers, embody this similitude. In addition to this similarity, their failure to recognize each other's suffering is also highlighted.

> ***Isaac:*** *They will make you move. […] You were born in this house?*
> ***Bashar:*** *And my father and his father.*
> ***Isaac:*** *You lived in this house?*
> ***Bashar:*** *All of us. Yes.*
> ***Isaac:*** *You will be buried in this house.*[29]

24 Jonathan Lichtenstein, *The Berlin Shadow: Living with the Ghosts of Kindertransport* (London: Scribner, 2020).
25 Tom Williams, "Memory," *Chicago Critic*. Accessed on 10 June, 2021. https://chicagocritic.com/memory/ Philip Fisher, "Memory," *British Theatre Guide*, 2008. Accessed on 12 June, 2021. https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/memoryPF-rev
26 Also known as Palestinian Catastrophe or Exodus, *The Nakba* refers to the expulsion and displacement of more than 700.000 Palestinians during Palestine War in 1948.
27 Lichtenstein, *Memory*, 39.
28 Ibid., 34.
29 Ibid., 33.

This speech embodying Bashar's grief over leaving the house, he and his ancestors have lived for decades, is mirrored in Aron's reluctance to leave Germany, which is his and his forefathers' home.

> ***Felix:*** *Take my advice and go.*
> ***Aron:*** *Felix, I'm a German. My father was a German and his father and his father. You know all this. I love Germany, so why? Why?*
> ***Felix:*** *I don't know. Truly, I don't. But. It may get worse before it gets better.*[30]

No matter how similar their sufferings are, both Bashar and Isaac fail to empathize and continue to blame one another. Thus, the conflict between them, just like several others between communities, becomes unsolvable.

Several scholars contend that major collective traumas fatally impair a group's sense of security, self-worth, and future creating a perpetual sense of victimhood.[31] Since the group is preoccupied with past traumas, this sense of victimhood shapes their worldviews, values, practices, and relationships with other people. If they stay fixed on their past traumas and cannot get rid of them, they stay alert to defend themselves from any threat leading them to easily turn into perpetrator.[32] Those who are victims of trauma fail to recognize and accept others' victimization. In this context, the duologue of Bashar and Isaac can be seen as a corollary of the unworked trauma of the preceding one. Besides, it is probable to see this new Apartheid Wall and never-ending walls visible and invisible across the world as evocative of unworked traumas of conflicts between nations and generations. This story, in these lines, also shows how unworked through traumas of victims turn them into perpetrators creating new traumas and victims, anew.

Conclusion

Multiplication of collective catastrophes maintains the proliferation of memory studies and enables umpteen artistic and literary responses. Among others, the memory of the Holocaust, punctuating a watershed in human history, is still a politically, socially, culturally, and artistically loaded subject. In parallel with this, whilst the Holocaust's impact on individuals and communities constitutes one of the most influential strands of research within memory studies, its painful

30 Ibid., 37.

31 Daniel Bar-Tal, Sabina Cehajic-Clancy, "From Collective Victimhood to Social Reconciliation: Outlining a Conceptual Framework," in *War, Community, and Social Change: Collective Experiences in the Former Yugoslavia*, eds. D. Spini, G. Elcheroth, and D. Corkalo Biruski (New York: Springer 2014), 125–136; Maya Kahanoff, "Collective Trauma, Recognition and Reconciliation in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," in *Recognition as Key for Reconciliation: Israel, Palestine, and Beyond*, eds. Yoram Meital and Paula Rayman (Boston: Brill, 2018), 59-92; Joseph V. Montville, "The Healing Function in Political Conflict Resolution," in *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice Integration and Application*, eds. Dennis J. D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 112-27.

32 Ervin Staub, "Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing, or Intractable Conflict: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Psychological Recovery and Steps toward a General Theory," *Political Psychology* 27 871 (2006): 867–94.

legacy that dominated post-war literature preserves its relevance in the contemporary world, too. Exceeding spatial and temporal limits, it still haunts a wide array of people and finds manifold artistic expressions perpetually. Thus, even artists, who are born much later after the War and have no direct experience of the Holocaust with the brunt of postmemory produce works manifesting trauma of this transnational phenomenon.

Exemplary of the Holocaust literature, Jonathan Lichtenstein's play *Memory* engenders specific manifestations of traumatic memory through three intertwined stories, each engaging in various ways with the pathologies of trauma. One story sheds light on the overwhelming incidents in 1930s' Berlin that will cause tremendous personal and collective traumas for many decades to come. Protagonist Eva, her husband, their son, and two other children experience Nazi persecution. Eva is separated from her only child, her husband commits suicide, and two little boys she is trying to protect are executed before her eyes. Besides keeping an account of unspeakable horrors, people suffer in Nazi Germany, this part also facilitates interpretation of the second story as it encapsulates underlying causes of the characters' trauma.

The second story, set in 1990s Berlin as a follow-up to the first, embodies the traumatic lives of the people arising out of the preceding catastrophes. Eva, now a woman of seventy-eight, lives in total isolation with the haunting memories of the past. As she cannot find anyone to support and listen to her, she lives fixed to her traumatic past and perpetually acts them out. Moreover, she tries to expunge traces of trauma by fabricating false memories which prevents her further from working through. In addition to Eva's trauma, this story also offers insights into the notion of postmemory through Peter. Eva's grandson, Peter is similarly haunted by the traumatic memories of his grandmother although he has no experience of them. Having been brought up with the images, stories, and sufferings of his father and grandmother, he is heavily traumatized and becomes an epitome of postmemory. It can also be argued that Peter is the spokesperson of Lichtenstein as the playwright himself is a Holocaust survivor's son. Vicariously traumatized for he was brought up with the harrowing Holocaust memories, Lichtenstein becomes a post-victim as an owner of postmemory and to verbalize his own trauma he creates this affinity in his play.

The last story manifests the heavy cost of the unworked through traumas in the form of new traumas on personal and national levels. Through a duologue between an Israeli soldier and a Palestinian, evacuated from his house, this story brings the persistent Israel-Palestine conflict to attention. Subsequent to the former two stories, this part renders a conflicted and traumatized relation to the past and its catastrophic consequences apparent.

Caruth asserts that trauma "*is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available,*"[33] Literary and

33 Caruth, *Unclaimed*, 4.

artistic works attempt to verbalize these various wounds, in this wise, bring untold traumas into relief. Among others, dramatic works provide fruitful ground for such traumas to be voiced and enacted anew. It can even be claimed that just like traumatic memories haunting their survivors, the past and its figures repeatedly haunt the dramatic works and theatre stages, as intrusive ghosts, in order to find expression by re-enacting what has happened earlier. Epitomizing this affinity, Jonathan Lichtenstein's *Memory* incorporates harrowing memories of the past that permeate the lives of the owners and plague many others. Enabling these memories to be remembered and communicated in one story, it deliberates on the possibilities of working through and alerts its audience against the risks of acting out former traumas time and again.

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