4. Dark tourism as controversial leisure enterprise in Israeli TV satire shows

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Introduction

Dark tourism to former concentration camps in Poland has become increasingly popular in Israel in the past few decades. Since the late 1980s, Israeli high schools, universities, and colleges send groups to Poland to the extent that this has become something of a rite of passage. Many others visit the camps with their families or as part of guided tours. Criticism of these tours began in the 1990s and intensified with time, alongside their success. Surprisingly, black humor and satire were and remain key elements fueling this debate.

This chapter analyzes the satirical critique of organized and individual educational trips to the former concentration camps by focusing on examples from TV satire and poetry: *The Chamber Quintet* [*Hahamishia Hakamerit*] ("Matar" Productions, Channels 2-Tela'ad, Channel 1, 1993–1997), *Am Segula* [*The Chosen People*] (Keshet Broadcasting, Channel 2, 2011), *The Arbitrator* [*Haborer*] (HOT Telecommunication Systems, 2007–2014), *Vicki and I* [Vicki veani] (Channel 10, 2017–2018), and the collection of poems *A Visitor's Guide to Birkenau* [Madrich lamevaker bebirkenau, Shmuel Refael, 2005]. The main thrust of this chapter is that although Holocaust humor is considered in general to cheapen the trauma and dismiss the pain of the survivors (Rosenfeld 2013, 2015), humor and satire by the victims, their offspring, and their surrounding society is different, especially in Israel, which is a unique sphere of intense Holocaust awareness. Dark tourism satire does not ridicule the victims and their pain, but points to the faults of Holocaust commemoration in contemporary Israel. It reflects serious issues that continue to be debated concerning these trips. Holocaust humor, in this case, functions as a social–

political wedge that addresses the problematic features of these tours, and challenges their organization, narrative, goals, effects, and necessity.

Dark tourism from Israel to the former concentration camps: the debate

John Lennon and Malcolm Foley (2007) coined the term "dark tourism" to describe a type of tourism interested in death, disaster, and atrocity, which they consider to be a growing phenomenon (pp. 3–4). The first Israeli delegations traveled to the former concentration camps in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1965 and 1967, but after Poland cut off its diplomatic relations with Israel after the Six Day war, and the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia, this program came to a halt. In 1983 youth groups traveled to Poland to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising spearheaded by Israeli kibbutzim and the youth movement "Hashomer hazair." Beginning in 1988, educational trips to Poland and the former concentration camps have been organized by the Ministry of Education (Soen and Davidovitz 2011).

This initiative began slowly but has developed considerably in the last two decades. Every year around 25,000 17-year-old students (16 percent of the students that age) travel to Poland for an eight-day trip to visit the main locations of the former ghettos, concentrations camps, and mass killing sites in Poland. According to sociologist Jacky Feldman (2008), since their inception, these trips have become one of the most intensive and popular means of transmitting the Holocaust memory to future generations (p. xv). Sociologist Haim Hazan (2001) referred to it as "a taken-for-granted part" of the Israeli educational system (p. 51).

Hazan claims that the narrative put forward during the high-school trips depends on the orientation of the participating school. Groups with different organizational and/or ideological affiliations conduct tours tailored to different agendas, and "one's memory is another's amnesia" (pp. 51–52). Feldman has argued that Hazan based his conclusions on the preparatory program that takes place in Israel prior to the trip and that the itineraries and experiences of the groups in Poland are similar (p. 21).

The Ministry of Education considers this program a study trip that involves the acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of educational values (Feldamn 2008, p. 3) Its proponents claim that the exposure to these sites constitutes a crucial educational

experience, and kindles an emotional reaction that strengthens Jewish solidarity as well as Zionism, humanism and democracy (Vorgan 2008). In addition, educational trips to Poland are organized by universities, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the Israeli police, and are also offered by travel agencies. Dark tourism has become "bon ton" in Jewish–Israeli society.

Nevertheless, criticism and disapproval have become increasingly more vocal since the 1990s. Pilgrimages are historically one of the earliest form of tourism. It was and is often associated with deaths that have religious or ideological significance to a group of people. A pilgrimage is a physical as well as psychological journey. Researchers such as Tim Cole and Jacky Feldman differentiate between "tourism" and "pilgrimage" based on the argument that the Holocaust (and Auschwitz) have gone through a process of sanctification in Israeli culture and become a pilgrimage site. Cole (2015) suggested that "For Jews, visiting the death camps of Poland (and Auschwitz in particular) has become obligatory […] Auschwitz has become a sacred space of a secular religion and pilgrimage there has become a secular ritual" (pp. 1–22, 97–120). Feldman (2008) defined the trip as a "rite of pilgrimage," a "civil religious pilgrimage" and a transformative ritual (pp. 1–30, 254–268) where a group uses quasi-religious language to describe its experience through prominent symbolic displays and ceremonies. These trips are more like religious pilgrimages than diversionary tourism (pp. 4, 21). Both these researchers see the sanctification of the Holocaust through these trips as an unhealthy, problematic means of commemoration.

Some of the dark tourism objections relate to the high-school delegations, but others are opposed to dark tourism in general. The main points of contention refer to aspects of commercialization, lack of historical authenticity, emotional, ethnic educational, economic and nationalistic problems. These will be elaborated on below.

Alongside this criticism, TV skits and poetry books have taken a satirical stance on the subject. They are part and parcel of the changes in Holocaust commemoration in Israeli society in the last 20 years. For many years, Israeli culture recoiled from dealing with the Holocaust from a humorous or satirical perspective, and official agents of Holocaust memory continue to maintain this approach. It is felt that Holocaust humor would threaten the sanctity of its memory, evoke feelings of disrespect, and offend Holocaust survivors. Since the 1990s, however, a new and unofficial path of memory has begun taking shape in

tandem. Texts that combine the Holocaust with humor, satire, and parody are now part of the debate on the way Holocaust memory is shaped in Israel (Steir-Livny 2014, pp. 35–50; Zandberg 2006, pp. 561–579).

Obviously, some prevalent types of Holocaust humor relentlessly and viciously mock the Holocaust victims, their suffering, and their unbearable hardships, and it can be seen also in antisemitic texts (Steir-Livny 2014, pp. 29–31). The perception of Holocaust humor as dangerous is therefore an arguable point when dealing with Holocaust commemoration in the world. However, my own point of view is that Holocaust humor by the victims, their offspring, and their surrounding society is completely different, especially in Israel, which is a unique sphere of intense Holocaust awareness. This chapter focuses on Hebrew dark tourism satires and pose two main claims: first, dark tourism satires in Hebrew do not ridicule the victims and their pain but are targeted at Holocaust commemoration and Holocaust collective memory agents in contemporary Israel. Second, dark tourism satire is a reflection of the key criticisms of the serious debates listed above. Thus, they do not deride or scorn the Holocaust itself but constitute another layer of critique that both opposes the collective agents that promote these trips and work toward a re-evaluation of their value.

Satire aims to change society. It mocks certain events, sometimes with brutality, and emphasizes their negative sides to better prompt reconsiderations of current issues. Satiric discourse usually combines three major functions of humor and enacts them simultaneously: the aggressive function that serves to vent frustration, the intellectual function that gives the satirists a feeling of superiority, and a social function that helps reinforce intra- and intergroup bonds by strengthening the cohesiveness of interpersonal relationships, which is crucial in particular for opposition groups. It is the laughter of the helpless, a release of feelings of vengeance and contempt. This kind of humor allows the helpless to rise above their oppressors, even if fleetingly. By directing humor against persons of stature, they are removed from their pedestal and can be excoriated for their errors. For a short while, satire can make feelings of anger, depression, and anxiety disappear and can strengthen social cohesion among those who experience these feelings (Simpson 2003, pp. 1–11; Ziv 2017, pp. 47–73).

Most dark tourism satire relies on self-deprecating humor, incongruity theory, and relief theory. Incongruity theory involves the juxtaposition of conflicting ideas to reveal the incongruence between what is expected – the familiar and the known – and the real situation. It is an encounter between the reasonable and the unreasonable. In order for a joke to be funny, the audience needs to share the cultural or social knowledge the joke is based on. The "comic gap" refers to the level of incongruity between the extraordinary situation perceived by the audience and what is familiar and known to them. The relief theory claims that laughter helps to relieve stress and anxiety in individuals and groups (Sover 2009, pp. 19–20, 125–127). The following sections will discuss the debate over key issues in the trips to Poland and their satiric representations.

Commercialization of the trips

Lennon and Foley (2007) made the point that through its presentation in popular culture, death has become a commodity for consumption in a global communication market. The educational side of the death sites have been commodified into commercial tourism products (pp. 5, 11). Cole (2015) found that foreign visitors to contemporary Poland are strongly encouraged to engage in Holocaust tourism as part of their visit. Holocaust sites are mapped out and the tourist guidebooks endorse Auschwitz as a "must see" destination (p. 94). Holocaust commemoration researcher Imogen Dalziel (2017) noted how intensively Holocaust sites are publicized, in a way that turns them into a tourist attraction, as symbolized in one advertisement she found entitled: "Book Auschwitz, Get a Free Lunch."

Critics of the Israeli trips to Poland maintain that the trips have become an industry tainted by commercialization and financial corruption. Former Minister of Treasury Avraham Hirchson was convicted in 2009 among other charges of misuse of funds earmarked for the annual "March of the Living," which takes place every year between Auschwitz and Birkenau. In January 2016, it became public that various travel agencies in Israel had coordinated and created a cartel to maintain the high costs of these trips for high-school students (Levi-Weinriv 2017).

Satirical skits on Holocaust commemoration in Israel have been broadcast on major Israeli TV channels since the 1990s. *The Chamber Quintet* was the first satirical show that

dared protest the commercialization of these trips. The skits expressed the frustration of groups who feel that Holocaust memory is being manipulated (Zandberg 2006, 2014). In one skit called "The railway agents" ["Sochnei hamesilot"] an Israeli goes into a travel agency to book a vacation in Turkey. The travel agent begins discussing the vacation with him and then gets a phone call. She interrupts their conversation and begins to talk on the phone, describing various deals to the former concentration camps in Poland as though they were ordinary vacation destinations:

> I have a weekend in Poland that includes a visit to three concentration camps and a shopping day in Warsaw […] I have a whole week in Poland that includes seven concentration camps and a shopping day in Warsaw, and I have a tour throughout Poland that includes visits to all the concentration camps, including Auschwitz, but it doesn't have the shopping day in Warsaw.

The agent then recommends taking the full concentration camp tour and mentions in the same didactic tone that her nephew cried in Auschwitz. As she talks the camera focuses on the waiting Israeli fidgeting uncomfortably in his chair. When she hangs up, she resumes her conversation with the Israeli in her office about his vacation in Turkey in exactly the same tone of voice. He attempts to protest ("I don't want to offend you, but it sounded horrible"), but the travel agent does not understand the problem ("Well, what happened there was pretty terrible, wasn't it?").

The skit criticizes the way Israeli society has turned the Holocaust into a commodity. Its aggressive black humor does not deal with the historical trauma or the survivors themselves, but with individuals in contemporary Israel who have turned the Holocaust into an industry. The skit writers explained that the commercialization of the Holocaust has basically numbed reactions to the Holocaust and that the skit was designed to denounce the superficiality of Holocaust memory and the way the historical trauma has been turned into a tourist attraction.

Another critique of the commercialization of the Holocaust in Israel was broadcast in a skit on the popular weekly show *It's a Wonderful Country* in 2004. The skit was screened after a terror attack in the Sinai desert (a popular holiday destination for Israelis) and at a time when the government had issued warnings against traveling abroad. In the skit, a

travel agent suggests that a couple worried about flying to dangerous places should consider flying to a former concentration camp museum. When they get there, the woman remarks that she feels very safe because of the watchtowers and the electrified fence. The skit thus criticizes the "industry of fear" in Israel. It is a part of the continuous conflict between right-wingers and left-wingers and it feeds off recurrent warnings about the likelihood of terrorist attacks and the creation of a constant state of anxiety in Israel (Bar-Tal 2007, pp. 112–137; Zertal 2002, pp. 13–15). In this skit, criticism was directed not only at the threats but their reflection in the media, and the way the death camps have been turned into generic sightseeing attractions.

Israeli black humor goes beyond its criticism of the commercialization of these trips to also deal with the commercialization of the former camps themselves. The book of poems entitled *A Visitor's Guide to Birkenau* (2005) was written by Shmuel Refael, a second-generation Holocaust survivor. Refeal, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, is a Ladino researcher who has documented the Holocaust in Greece. His collection of poems was the outcome of his trips to Poland with his students and colleagues. In this book, the gravity pathos and national tone, which are integral features of the canonical remembrance and of many volumes of poetry on the Holocaust, are replaced by cynicism and black humor. Auschwitz is depicted as a tourist attraction like any other, where the tourists are completely detached from the meaning of the site and are preoccupied with trivialities. "Industrialized Memory" ["Zikaron metoas"] is about the thoughts of an overweight 15-year-old German high-school student who was sent to Auschwitz "to visit relatives from the recent past." Throughout her visit there, she deliberates constantly on what she should buy: "a Twix bar, for three and a half zloty?/Orange Miranda/ in a can? Or/ in a bottle?/Perhaps a diet coke.…" The "souvenirs" sold at the museum mean nothing to this outstanding student who was selected to make the tour. They are no more than commodities and her choice is governed by the same mechanisms she would use to buy a blouse in a boutique: "the thoughts would not rest, would not rest/ Anne Frank in Swedish, Turkish or Japanese? A poster of leg amputees/ or a Jewish dwarf seated on a wicker chair?"

Another factor that is often voiced in the serious critique is the lack of historical authenticity in the former camps. Cole (2015) notes that the Auschwitz tour poses as authentic but lacks historical authenticity. The tourists pass "artificially aged" barbed wire

that has replaced the rusted originals on their way. Along the way visitors are shown authentic relics including piles of shoes, suitcases, human hair, and Zyklon B gas containers taken from Auschwitz II and placed behind glass in Auschwitz I. This creates a mediated past and "the greater the intervention at historic places, the greater the manipulation […] as we stray from strict preservation, we come closer to pure entertainment […]" (p. 111). Refael's poems also relate to the lack of authentication discusses by Cole.

> In Birkenau, electrical barbed wire is replaced every day, the old one is rusted, crumbles, it's are not worth the effort to come from afar/the overpriced flight ticket and hotel/ and tourists demand, and rightfully so, their money back.
>
> ("Barbed Wire" ["Hutei Tail"]).

The poems, loaded with pain, reveal the open wound of the second-generation Holocaust survivors and demonstrate that the cynicism or the discussion of the tragedy imbued in black humor is not a form of disparagement or disrespect. It is the way a second-generation survivor, living his parents' trauma, chose to cope with what he perceives as the problems of this form of tourism. Rafael, who knows and understand the importance of museums and commemoration, is basically inquiring whether this is the way to remember, or whether it only creates a superficial perception of the atrocities. Instead of drawing the visitors closer to the historical events, the poems suggest that they distance them by turning the horror into kitsch representations that contribute to the process of forgetting. However, he remains ambivalent in that in other poems he writes about the way the site brings back his parents' memories. This complexity, according to the poems, has no definitive answers.

Emotional, educational, and ethnic factors

Research has discussed intensively the complex encounter between the Ashkenazi[1] majority and the hundreds of thousands of Jews from North Africa and Asia (Mizrahim)[2] who immigrated to Israel in several waves from the late 1940s until the 1960s. The marginalization of the Mizrahim has also been expressed in Holocaust memorialization (for example: Eliav and Alfi 2006; Kimmerling 2001; Shalom Chetrit 2004; Svirsky 1981; Tsur 2000). Until recently, the Holocaust in North Africa was rarely discussed and the Holocaust was perceived and commemorated solely as an Ashkenazi

trauma. Thus, Mizrahim were marginalized not only in Israeli culture in general, but also in terms of Holocaust commemoration (see for example, Avrahami 1989; Avramski-Blai 2007; Satloff 2006).

Mizrahi authors of the first school immigrant generation, such as Sami Michael, Eli Amir, and Amnon Shamosh expressed their profound identification with European Holocaust survivors. They included the Holocaust in their plots and manifested great empathy toward the survivors and their pain (Yablonka 2008, pp. 268–289). The second- and third-generation Mizrahim identify with the memory of the Holocaust in Israel alongside a rejection of the issue as a reaction to the way in which Mizrahim were marginalized. The sense that Israeli Ashkenazim have made the Holocaust a dominant component of Israeli identity, thus excluding the Mizrahim – not only from the particular memory of the Holocaust but also from "Israeliness" in general – is a constant theme in in the works of researchers, artists, authors and public figures (Hajbi 2013; Yablonka 2008, pp. 268–289).

Critics of the journeys to Poland claim that these trips turn the Holocaust as an Ashkenazi tragedy and marginalize Mizrahi students, their history, and the Holocaust in North Africa (Broyda 2013).

Critics also often cite the heavy emotional burden of these trips that may be difficult for young students and can create psychological trauma (Segev 1991, pp. 451–465), since supervision of emotional reactions is scanty. The argument is that the Ministry of Education does not know how to handle this issue and ignores the fact that there are guides who "order" the students "to feel" as though they were in the Holocaust (Kashti 2017).

The skit show *Am Segula* was created by the Mizrahi members of the comedy trio *Ma Kashur*, who also play the lead roles. One series on the show was about two Mizrahi high-school students, both named Yossi, who are part of a high-school trip to the former concentration camps in Poland. Each skit opens with a pseudo newspaper clip praising the educational trips ("Zionism at its best") and the "outstanding Israeli youth" before shifting its focus to the two Yossis. Ignorant, inarticulate, and vulgar, they are completely detached from any learning experience. Instead of engaging with the horrors of this tragic space, they mumble a series of emotionless clichés ("How sad … inconceivable … the saddest

thing ever") but they remain unable to feel real sorrow or pain. Most of the time, they are shown squabbling and searching for video and online games to pass the time.

For example, in a skit called, "They Didn't Have Facebook in the Holocaust" ["Lo haya facebook bashoah"], after going through the necessary clichés quickly ("How sad," "Totally"), Yossi informs Yossi that things are bad: he has not logged onto Facebook for two days. "All the sheep on my farm are probably already long dead," he complains, referring to the online game Farmville he plays. "How sad," they mutter, "inconceivable" thus equating the Holocaust and the video game. "How am I going to get to Facebook now? There were no computers in the Holocaust" whines Yossi. But they suddenly hear the guide explaining that they can use the computers in the Auschwitz Museum to find information about their family's roots by entering their family's last name. Yossi and Yossi, however, highjack the computer to send their friends messages through Facebook such as "Hey, what's up…." When the teacher asks them if they have found relatives in the database they claim that they have "plenty." Then the jungle of a Facebook message is heard. "Our grandfather, may he rest in peace": He just texted us …" they tell the outraged teacher.

In the skit, "The Germans Lost" ["Hagermanim hefsidu"], the two very bored Yossi and Yossi, still on the trip, are made to watch a film about the war. "When is this going to end?," one asks, "it depends, if they broadcast the entire war now or just the highlights," the other replies. They begin to quarrel over who is a better PlayStation player, and when the teacher tells the students to congregate near the Eternal Flame, they connect their PlayStation to the projector used to screen Holocaust films to settle their argument. The camera simultaneously pans between the Ashkenazi students silently standing near the Eternal Flame and the two Yossis playing. "The Germans lost because they had the broken remote" Yossi tells the teacher as she approaches them.

In the skit, "Blessed Is the Match" ["Ashrei hagafrur"], the clueless Yossi claims: "If I was alive then, I would have joined the parasites, the ones who fought in the woods." "They weren't called parasites!" the similarly clueless Yossi scolds him, "They were called partiNazis." Next to them, Moran, the beautiful Ashkenazi teenager that they are pursuing, sings the Hebrew classic "A Walk to Caesarea."[3] Yossi and Yossi are scheduled to perform after Moran. They pass the time drinking and trying to flirt with her. They get on stage, Yossi lights a match while the other Yossi starts to sing "Ashrei Hagafrur" [Blessed is the

match consumed in kindling flame] (another famous Holocaust song performed at many ceremonies). He blows on Yossi's match to extinguish it, but his alcohol-filled mouth sets the match on fire, burning Yossi's shirt who is screaming, "Fire, My Brother, Fire."[4] "Yossi was burned in the Holocaust," weeps his friend, while melancholic music plays in the background.

The "Yossi and Yossi" skits forefront the emotional, ethnic, and educational problems of these trips. The skits suggest that there is no educational value to these visits since the students do not have the emotional capability to process what they witness. Some detach themselves completely, while others simply do as they are told. The "learning experience" turns into a series of superficial clichés.

These skits also voice an ethnic critique. Yossi and Yossi are Mizrahi students, who nevertheless are asked by their teacher to look for their family in the Auschwitz computers. This absurd scene points to the obtuseness of the educational system regarding ethnic differences, and highlights the marginalization of the North African Jews during the Holocaust and the disregard of the family roots of students whose grandparents did not immigrate from Europe. This critique is part of a wider critical debate regarding the absorption of Mizrahim and the commemoration of the Holocaust in North Africa.

The Yossi and Yossi skits can be analyzed in various ways: First, they can be read as racist skits about ignorant buffoons which reinforce negative stereotypes in Israeli culture regarding Mizrahim. The skits seemingly display the Mizrahim's lack of understanding of and sensitivity to the Holocaust, while simultaneously emphasizing Ashkenazi-phobia and its sophisticated mechanisms in current Israeli popular culture. They reinforce axiomatic ethnic dichotomies and Ashkenazi and Mizrahi separatist tendencies that consider all Ashkenazi Jews to be a somewhat omnipotent and predatory hegemony, while overlooking the vast changes in Israeli hegemony in the last 40 years (Kimmerling 2001). However, these skits can be interpreted as a form of resistance undermining these perceptions: the fact that Mizrahi comedians repeatedly engage in the issue suggests that they are actually profoundly interested in it rather than detached from it. In addition to and along with claims that the vulgarization of stereotypes shatters them (Shifman 2008, pp. 143–150), the Mizrahi characters in the skits are an inclusive collection of overstated negative stereotypes. These skits undermine these stereotypes rather than confirm them.

Another frequent representation of the so-called detachment of Mizrahim from the Holocaust that still showed their interest in the trauma appeared in the comedy-crime series *The Arbitrator* [Haborer] (HOT Telecommunication Systems 2007–2014) ,which tells the story of Israeli criminals, most of whom are of Mizrahi descent. In the fifth episode of the third season, one of the most preposterous and exaggerated characters on the show, Naomi "Spoon," the daughter of a Mizrahi crime family who has repented and found God, decides to travel to Poland. She scolds her husband for not wanting to join her with a series of absurd sentences:

> Shame on you. Have a bit of culture! We're going to fall on the graves of the righteous. People in the Holocaust went to sleep in fear, they were terrorized in their own homes, they were humiliated for years and couldn't live peacefully […] I know they're Ashkenazim. If there had been some Moroccans in the Holocaust, trust me it wouldn't have come to that. Wow wow wow, the things I would have done to them had I been in the Holocaust, all the Kapos would have been sent to the hospital by the end of the first day. Like someone could wake me up at four in the morning and tell me to go take a shower in the snow???? […] I'd tell them: pal, all Holocausts come to an end and you're on my list!!!

This skit again can be analyzed in two different ways: It can be read as displays of well-known stereotypes regarding Mizrahim (ignorance and a lack of understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust) and as reinforcing dichotomic ethnic observations, which overlook changes that have taken place in Israel over the past few decades. But alternatively, it can be interpreted as another way of expressing how Holocaust commemoration has been integrated into the lives of Mizrahim who have no biological connection to the trauma.

In the comedy series *Vicki and I*, Vicki, the youngest Minister of Education, who is of Mizrahi origin, and constantly fights with her political enemies, finds out that a pupil of Mizrahi origin was forbidden to travel to Poland, because in the preliminary visit to Yad vaShem, he urinated on the Janusz Korczak monument. At first, she could not care less but when she understands she can derive political capital from this incident she declares that, from now on, there will be trips to Morocco so the Mizrahi students can "bond" with their roots. The pupil bursts out in anger. He feels no need to find out about his familial roots,

he insists on going to Poland because in Poland there are bars, alcohol, and shopping malls, while in Morocco "there is only desert." This episode combines several critical themes: it highlights the commercialization of the trips, the way they are perceived by young people as fun, and devoid of historical emotional or educational values, the way the educational system had failed ethnically in explaining to Mizrahi students why this trip is an integral part of their identity, and its dismissal of the Holocaust in North Africa. As opposed to the *Yossi and Yossi* skits and *The Arbitrator*, *Vicki and I* breaks the perception of Ashkenazi hegemony, represents the new Mizrahi elite, and implies that the educational trips become an ethno-political tool as the hegemony changes.

In addition to these critiques, two other issues have not been dealt with in Israeli dark tourism satire: the cost, and the question of nationalistic ideology. The cost of the trip per student is approximately US$1,200. Those who cannot afford it miss out on a significant experience and are many times socially marginalized because they cannot take part in the experience together with the rest of their classmates, or afterwards in organizing the High School Holocaust and Heroism memorial days ceremonies (Broyda 2013). In addition, critics maintain that sending 17 year olds to Auschwitz, a year before they are drafted into the IDF, only strengthens nationalist motivations and deepens resentment and violent attitudes toward the "enemy" – currently the Palestinians (Zunshein 2012). Feldman (2008) indicated that research shows the predominance of nationalistic rather than universalistic reactions in students upon their return from Poland (p. 21); the ultimate purpose of the trip is to ground the sanctity of the State in the experience of the Holocaust, create dichotomy between "us" and "them," Israel and Exile, and construct a "religion of nationalism in which the nation is created as an object of devotion" (p. 6).

For all these reasons, alongside the popularity of these trips, a certain number of high-school principals have decided to stop sending their students (Skup 2016). Some Israeli parents even started a Facebook page entitled "We stopped sending the kids to Poland," and provide support to parents who are opposed to these journeys.[5]

Conclusion

The perception of Holocaust humor as dangerous is an arguable point when dealing with Holocaust commemoration in the world. However, "Holocaust humor" is a wide umbrella

and the black humor of the victims, their offspring, and their surroundings, especially in Israel, should be examined separately. Dark tourism satire in Hebrew, which is a part of a wider genre of Holocaust humor, satire, and parody in Israel, mostly does not deride or scorn the Holocaust, nor does it engage with the Holocaust itself. Rather, it confronts topics that appear in serious debates on the purpose and value of dark tourism. Alongside the serious claims, opponents of dark tourism in Israel use satire as another device to rethink its role in shaping Israeli identity. The incongruity and self-deprecating humor deals with contemporary forms of commemoration and not with the Jewish victims in Europe and their suffering. As such, dark tourism satire does not tarnish the memory of the Holocaust, but is fueled by pain and a desire to reconsider these trips by highlighting, what the satirists see as its problematic and often absurd facets.

1Jews who immigrated from Western countries and their offspring.

2Jews who immigrated from Islamic countries and their offspring.

3"A Walk to Caesarea" ["Halicha lecaesaria"] – a song written by Hannah Szenes, one of several dozen Jewish Eretz–Israeli parachutists (including three women) who were dropped behind enemy lines in Eastern Europe and the Balkans during the Second World War. Szenes was caught by the Nazis and executed. The song is one of several always played on Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day on the radio and in ceremonies.

4A word play on another classic song often performed during Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day ceremonies.

5www.facebook.com/StopJourneyToPoland/?fref=ts. Accessed December 22, 2019.

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