

A Suggestion for Another Haggadah Video:

A Reflective Exploration of Zionism, Trauma, and Tradition

As I sat down for the Passover Seder this year with non-Jewish friends, I found myself translating the Haggadah for the first time. This act of translation forced me to confront the content of the text and its relevance (or irrelevance) to our contemporary world. In this context, I contemplated the poignant video art piece "A Suggestion for Another Haggadah," a 33:24-minute exploration of the intersection of Zionism, tradition, and the roles we play within our families.

The piece is a powerful examination of a fundamental issue at the heart of Zionism: the inability to question. As a movement built on a complex web of narratives, Zionism cannot afford to allow its followers to scrutinize their traditions and positions too closely. By delving into the depths of this issue, the artist encourages viewers to reflect on their own relationships with the Haggadah and the broader implications of Zionism in their lives.

Each character in the video represents a different role that Jewish Zionists might assume within their families and society. First, there is Amit, the child who inherits the "problem" of Zionism. In order to begin asking questions about her heritage, she must escape her homeland and distance herself from her roots. Yet, she remains attached to Israel and the complex web of emotions it evokes in her. The car conversation, which perhaps takes place as her parents pick her up from the airport or drive her somewhere during a visit, is a microcosm of her struggle to come to terms with her inheritance.

Yariv, the father, represents the facade of openness and deep conversation that belies underlying hypocrisy. Despite being a man with greater societal power, he ultimately does nothing to enact meaningful change. This portrayal of the Jewish-Zionist male is a stark critique of the liberal-democrat stance that claims to embrace critical thinking but avoids taking action.

Ayelet, the mother, is perhaps the most intriguing character. She acknowledges the moral issues with the Haggadah but refuses to embrace change, opting to internalize the blame and responsibility that comes with her role. She fully embodies Zionism, unwilling to open

Pandora's box of questioning her beliefs and traditions. Ayelet's character represents the struggle of many who grapple with the complexities of their heritage while fearing the consequences of challenging the status quo.

Before we conclude our analysis, it is essential to recognize the multi-layered nature of the family conversation depicted in the video. While the Haggadah serves as the main topic, the dialogue traverses three dimensions of time, creating a rich and complex narrative. The time of Exodus, the time of early Zionism and the Holocaust (as represented by references to previous generations and Amit's grandparents), and the present all interweave throughout the conversation.

This intermingling of periods highlights the deep, untreated trauma that the characters carry with them. The entire discussion is predicated on the assumption that someone is always seeking to harm or annihilate the Jewish people. From Pharaoh to the Nazis and now to an unnamed contemporary threat, the dialogue exposes the pervasive fear that haunts the Jewish psyche. By incorporating these various time periods and historical events into the conversation, the artist emphasizes the complex web of emotions, fears, and traumas that underpin the characters' relationships with their heritage and the world around them. Furthermore, it is crucial for those who oppose Zionism and its occupation project to recognize and understand the trauma and fear that underlie these deeply rooted beliefs. Acknowledging the emotional and historical complexities that inform the Jewish-Zionist perspective is essential for fostering empathy and promoting constructive dialogue between opposing viewpoints.

In conclusion, "A Suggestion for Another Haggadah" is an essential personal introspection that represents a generation seeking answers and solutions to the problems they perceive around them. Using the Haggadah as a starting point, Amit Leblang delves into a profound exploration of identities and societies. The piece serves as a powerful reminder of the complexities of identity, heritage, and the necessity for critical reflection as we navigate our way through an ever-changing world, healing ourselves from inherited trauma.

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