

"A Tug of War": Intercultural Practices within Israeli Orthodox Women's Theater

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Abstract

Theater in Israel has always been an art associated with secular western society and culture. In the past few years, Orthodox Israeli women have adopted theater as a legitimate space to explore religious and social issues through original texts based on the Jewish canon. The article gives two examples of scenes which included intercultural elements. These allowed the orthodox artists further explorations of religious forms of self and communal expression. Intercultural practices onstage embody possible reforms for orthodox women but after close examination of theatrical techniques and metaphors, we conclude that orthodox women are ambivalent about the changes that they themselves are presenting to their audiences.

Introduction

This article will compare two scenes performed by orthodox Israeli actresses within the time span of four years. The scenes, based on Jewish holy texts, a chapter from Psalms and a famous prayer from the Yom Kippur service, included intercultural elements such as music and costumes from the Far East and from the world of pop music; calm, meditative movements and wild disco-dancing. These elements added an enigmatic quality to the performances and challenged their audiences' sensibilities and sensitivities.

Intercultural practices onstage reflect the community members'/performers' liminal existence 'betwixt and between' different societies and cultures [1](#). I would like propose that in the case of orthodox women's theater in Israel, the stage has become a 'testing ground' where radical reforms can be examined and experienced by women who still unconsciously accept traditional male hegemony and lack their own repertoire of religious devotion. In the article, I will demonstrate how on the one hand intercultural elements (Hindu and Western) seem to offer the women options to draw from in order to express their feminine devotion to Judaism. Adopting these elements seem to demonstrate the artists' 'liberalism', 'hybridity', receptivity of other cultures but most of all, their desire to connect to a more basic and universal desire for feminine spirituality through liturgical practices. Yet on the other hand, they produce the desired experience only when the Jewish text is prominent and the 'foreign' elements (movement, music, chanting) remain in the background. Analysis of the performances and a comparison between them will lead us to insights about the 'tug of war', so to speak, between reforms in traditional Jewish liturgy and the Jewish orthodox patriarchal system which still controls the actresses' cultural and spiritual world, as well as their physical presence in the public sphere.

Orthodox women's theater in Israel is a relatively new manifestation of artistic expression which has been formed at the juncture of the many different cultural, social and even political experiences of contemporary Israeli orthodox life. I will relate specifically to the national religious faction within this community and try to explain its responses to this new venue of artistic expression in the context of social and political changes. I will also be taking into consideration that in the past decade or so, New Age and Far Eastern religions have infiltrated into Jewish orthodox life in Israel and influenced many of its members. [2](#)

The context: Changes in Israeli orthodox society

In the past decade, the national religious orthodox community in Israel has become more diverse and complex. 'New Age' and Hassidic practices have become part of religious services (liturgy) but also of life styles and discourse of many young members in this society. [3](#) The influx of newly religious [*Hozrim Betshuva*] within the community has also become influential. While in the past, newly religious artists abandoned their art when joining the 'ranks' of orthodox society, [4](#) today these artists legitimize their artistic endeavors as a means to express their devotion to Judaism. [5](#)

In addition, orthodox feminism has encouraged many women to become more expressive and active in the public sphere as well as in the religious sphere. Women prayer groups exist in some communities and many young women attend thriving higher education centers [*midrashot*] in order to study the Jewish canon intensively. Women litigators appear in rabbinical courts and social and political activism is encouraged by educators and community leaders. The orthodox women's organization, 'Kolech' works intensively to improve orthodox women's status in society and deals with injustices women encounter especially in legal situations. Theater can be considered another means for 'conscious raising' activities, self expression and activism.

Orthodox women's theater must also be analyzed in the context of the dynamic Israeli reality since Rabin's assassination. Other crucial events such as the second Intifada and years later, the disengagement from Gaza which effected many national religious settlers' lives have triggered a series of redressive actions within the crisis-ridden orthodox community, including a search for new spiritualities and the surge of artistic creativity. Interviews with artists indeed confirm that they feel that the theater they are creating is empowering and therapeutic:

The Jewish aspect of women interests me. I have an interest to connect with this aspect of women, with the energy that gets them going...to approach the areas of women that are problematic or those that require spiritual "work" in order to succeed in them, the feminine strength that unites the nation of Israel. That is the feminism I see every day: women who maintain the whole 'business'. I want to move them but not educate them to leave home. I want to start from where they are and show them that there are others layers... My theater stems from my belief in the power of women and I know there are experiences women go through that men could not. Women have power, creativity and a lot of patience and a lot of everything... (Dina Schochat, 2000).

Our theater should be gentler and should deal with sensitivities and aspects that the secular person is not aware of. Every subject it deals with should be done with great complexity. I want our theater to make people become better

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Developments

One might say that the adoption of theater as a legitimate artistic venue by Jewish orthodox women is in itself an intercultural practice. The Talmudic prohibition against "the theatre and circuses of idolatry" (Avodah Zara 18b; Shabbat 150a) has been the main explanation for the absence of theatrical activity within Jewish society throughout the ages. Although some theatrical activity developed in Eastern Europe during the season of the carnival-like holiday of Purim (the Purim Spiel) and on weddings, even this type of theater involved consultations with rabbis with regards to questions of modesty, and the interpretations of canonical texts.⁷

Most orthodox actresses feel that they are contributing to the establishment of a new kind of Jewish theater which may serve as an alternative to the secular Israeli theater which they find crude and abusive. That is perhaps the reason that instead of dealing with existing plays from the Western repertoire or spending time searching for suitable materials in theater archives, they engage in original playwrighting. They convert texts from the Jewish canon (from the bible, from prayers, from the Talmud and Midrash and other rabbinic sources) into dramatic forms or they base the plays on life histories and personal monologues. The original theater they create reflects contemporary political and social issues, using language that draws from ancient Jewish texts and therefore is not always appealing to audiences who are not familiar with these sources.

Although Israeli orthodox women criticize their own society, they do not create theater as a subversive art which communicates with the 'outside' world and adjacent Israeli communities. Their art is directed internally and as such it empowers their community and reflects its position (in most cases right wing and nationalistic) *vis a vis* the 'others' (secular, left-wing). Theater as a 'conscious-raising' activity calls for self expression in the public sphere although orthodox women have been educated to modesty in dress, language and even thought mode. It is a public 'safe' space where they can express religious aspirations and social convictions or vent out negative feelings. Orthodox women's theater contributes to the subtle changes taking place in the national- religious society particularly with regards to the status of women.

Throughout the years of my fieldwork, I have witnessed changes in orthodox women's theater in genres, contents, acting techniques and directing. Today younger actresses have initiated: political street theater, have joined a 'mixed' (men and women) orthodox theater group, have staged comic shows as a way to deal with the poignant internal social issues⁸. Today women show virtuosity in their theater work which did not exist a decade ago. Perhaps this stems from the fact that in the past, most of the performers were older women whose busy schedule included raising children, working outside of home in addition to performing theater. But today, most of the performers are younger and more professional. After completing their national service, they usually travel abroad, and then study theater either in university or in the Emunah College in Jerusalem. Those who are in the forefront of orthodox theater today dedicate themselves to this art, consider themselves professional as so they found small theater companies.⁹

Methodology

The two scenes I will be dealing with in this article have been part of a larger research project (Ph.D) about orthodox women's theater in Israel. It was completed in 2006 and then published in Hebrew in 2007 as a book *The Audacity of Holiness: Orthodox Women's Theater in Israel*. The data was collected intensively during the years 1998-2002 and later updated until 2006. It was based on qualitative research methods which included formal, 'in-depth' interviews of performers, directors and educators connected to the field, spontaneous interviews jotted down in a field journal, videotapes, texts and press reviews. In addition, I observed the rehearsal process and examined directing and acting techniques. Wilmar Sauter's method of conducting 'theater conversations' with a group of seven people randomly chosen from the audience¹⁰ helped to examine the receptivity of the plays. These were analyzed according to parameters relevant to the inter-disciplinary research I was conducting and were based on theories of feminism, performance and anthropology.

The First Scene- "The Lord is my shepherd I will not want" (Psalms 23)

Background Information

The first scene I will discuss, "The Lord is My Shepherd - I Shall not Want" (Psalms 23) was performed by Dikla Galed, a student in the Emunah College for the Arts in Jerusalem in 1998. It was one of the monologues that comprised the production called "Beur Hametz" [the burning of Hametz] which was performed by the first graduating class of the department and directed by two secular directors. Since the performance took place just before Passover, both directors gave it a name they thought was appropriate. Later, when the performance was branded by some of the orthodox women in the audience as blasphemous, the 'innocent' name became symbolic. According to those who were offended by the production, the name, 'Beur Hametz', indicated the students' desire to publicly burn and discard Jewish orthodox values and norms. Indeed, some monologues questioned the need to conform to codes of dress and modest behavior. Others expressed a desire to revolt against expectations from them to abide to obligations of domesticity: to "be good girls", to marry young, to have many children, to cover their head after marriage and to engage in domestic routines such as cleaning and arranging the house before Shabbat. Some expressed a strong desire to break free ("Gali does not want to be a good girl!"), experimented with transgressional behavior (taking off head coverings and hats) and even destroyed sacred symbols such as the Shabbat table, the Jewish symbol of family unity and love. Although not all the monologues were subversive, those which were made a tremendous impact on the audience. The performance was moving, even shocking. After the performance ended, most women remained seated silently and pensively for quite a while. Only after some minutes did some 'post performance mingling' between the actresses and the audience take place, mainly silent hugging; in some cases some even weeping.

The Scene: Description

The scene is divided into two distinct parts and demonstrates stages in the life of this actress. The first presents a playful, happy child, then an adolescence involved experimentation with limits (smoking on the sly and putting on makeup) and then- the discovery of feminine sensuality. The actress is dressed in a short, flowery wide, dress. Her long curly hair is first arranged in pigtails as she plays a skipping game and experiments with smoking. But when she wears high heels and she dances wildly to the music of the provocative pop song "Touch me - I want to feel your body" she lets her long, curly hair loose. Then she is transformed into a sophisticated, sexy looking young woman who dances sensuously to the music as colorful lights create a discotheque atmosphere. After some time, she collapses exhausted on the floor and there is a 'black- out'. When the lights go up again, they focus on a long black coat pinned to the wall in the back, hanging higher than what we guess is the actress' full height with a hat on top of it. It looks like a silhouette of a tall man dressed in traditional ultra- orthodox clothes, looming from behind. The 'absent presence' seems to oversee or gaze at the figure of the young woman lying on the floor. The left sleeve of the coat is pinned onto the wall but the right is hanging free. At the light comes up - the music changes into a familiar melody composed for the first verse in Psalms 23, "The Lord is my shepherd I will not want". The actress gets up slowly and walks to the back wall where the black coat is hanging. She puts her arm through the right sleeve and envelops half of her body in the wide, black coat. At once her sensual female body is fragmented, split into two. She becomes half sensual woman - half orthodox man. Her right hand, which is in the black male coat sleeve, strokes her left feminine cheek lovingly. It looks as if this

hand belongs to the tall 'absent presence' in the black coat and that it is he, who is caressing her. Her eyes, lift upwards towards 'him' and express pleasure in this encounter which is either sexual or patronal. Perhaps this is the fulfillment of the wish expressed in the first part of the scene ("Touch me, I want to feel your body"). The hand then initiates the Jewish ritual of washing hands [*netilat yadayim*] which is a mitzvah performed by both men and women. Afterwards it extracts a little prayer book from the large pocket on the right side of the coat. The hand leafs through the prayer book until the place where the Psalm is printed. At that point, the left hand, clearly of the actress, helps balance the prayer book.. The religious actions are of a neutral nature, neither geared to men nor women. In the background we hear a women's chorus ¹¹ singing the chapter in Psalms and the actress closes her eyes and joins the chorus singing with great fervor.

Analysis of the scene

In the interview with the actress, she explained that the scene represented her transformation from being secular back to orthodoxy:

The girls did not accept the change lovingly and this really bothered me because I said: "This is me, the new, the old, it doesn't matter- this is me. Period. I accept this and if you accepted me when I was not feeling good with myself and was fighting my desires [*yetzer*] so accept me when I feel good [with myself]. (Galed, 1998)

Each stage in the actress' life is presented through costume, music, and movement. In the first part the embodiment of secular existence is through the mini dress, the provocative song and then the wild sensuous dance. In the second part, she embodies the change in her way of life by presenting contradictory elements associated with orthodox normative behavior. The costume is a long, black coat usually worn by ultra orthodox men, the music is a melody based on Psalms and her movements restricted by the black coat. Thus the sensuous, young woman is transformed into a devout praying a - sexual Jew, neither completely female nor completely male, an abnormal androgynous figure. According to King, this is "an integrative psychological model which by analogy can be transferred to divine reality, as encompassing all difference in unity, a symbol of integration which can transcend sexual polarity". ¹² The combination of both sexes in a single person "defies the limitations imposed by the traditional stereotypes of femininity and masculinity" ¹³ thus creating a new freedom in the realm of religious worship. The wild, sensuous movements have been replaced by a calm auto-erotic gesture which leads to an almost divine spiritual experience connected to the singing of the Psalm which speaks of the belief in God even at the time of death.

The bodiless figure represented in the black coat remains somewhat a riddle. A long black men's coat of that kind, looming higher than the actress, could either represent orthodox men in general, a specific father figure or could be a symbol of a masculine God. He is showing his personal attachment to her or perhaps his affirmation of her move from western culture to Judaism (the caress of her cheek – a fatherly gesture signifying intimacy). The 'tug of war' between western culture and Judaism results in the victory of Judaism. The actress' journey back to traditional orthodoxy was done through a praxis described by Laura Mulvey as "destruction of pleasure" of the "male controlling gaze". By covering up half of the female body with the long black coat, the actress' free movements become restricted. As in traditional film-making, which Mulvey researched, the male figure, in this case an 'absent presence', controls the female and does not allow her to be a sexual subject in her own right. The man is the "bearer of the look" while the woman is objectified and looked at. Even though in this case the audience was all-women, it identified with the 'voyeuristic gaze' Mulvey associates with sadism and the Freudian male 'castration anxiety' .This gaze ascertains guilt and control and subjects the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness ¹⁴ - the stroking of the cheek.

The significance of this scene and the fact that it was well received by the performers' friends but harshly criticized by the older, conservative staff members indicates that at this time the performer felt that she had to make a clear choice and that inter-culturalism was out of question. The journey back to traditional orthodoxy is presented simultaneously with the loss of wild sensuality the loss of basic freedom of movement. Older and more conservative members of the audience related to the first part of the scene and to its breach of modesty: the short dress and provocative music and dance, rather than to the section dealing with her return to Judaism:

I naively thought theater was a tool, but slowly but surely I realize that 'theatrical' means being more subversive, posing more question marks, more blasphemy, more absurdity. [Showing] Radiance, the motherly – no! (Rabbanit Lior, interview, 1998).

The fact that feminine spirituality was presented by a sexually abnormal figure, half male - half female accompanied by an all-women chorus singing fervently in the background reflects the performer's ambivalence about traditionally orthodox religious practices. On the one hand, she is conforming to orthodox standards, but on the other hand, she literally does not give up her female 'voice' and suggests that this is a metaphor which is meant to suggest that the journey back to orthodoxy comes with a subversive twist - changes will take place in the religious sphere and that even these slight changes will enhance women's overt, uplifting spirituality with her fellow sisters whose clear voices are heard singing in the background.

"Here I stand Impoverished in Merit" - "Heneni Aniya Meemaas"

Background

The second scene was performed by Rachel Keshet, a young wife and mother who had completed her studies in the Theater Department in Tel Aviv University a year before. She performed in the play "Say Not: 'Water water'" performed by 'The Dosiyo' ¹⁵ directed by Miri Lavie, a secular director. The play received a citation in the Acre Festival of Alternative Theater in 2002. This was an avant garde type of play, a pastiche based on personal monologues, texts from the Gemarra, from Agnon, from the Midrash and 'morality' literature. The main trend of thought was presented by the husband of one of the actresses who acted as an instructor [*melamed*] and presented the story quietly throughout the play as if he were teaching yeshiva students about four rabbis who entered a metaphorical orchard [*Pardes*] and only one came out unharmed (Rabbi Akiva). He did not act on the acting area *per se*, but always remained apart from the women's frenzied actions and associative scenes. He was the axis around which all the digressions surrounded, and his telling of the story progressed linearly although with many stops and digressions.

The show took place on various levels of a courtyard near the sea, causing the audience to shift its focus and pay attention to several things happening at once. Throughout the show the actresses screamed and moved wildly. Each of the six actresses of the group identified with one of these rabbis and formulated personal monologues connected to one figure. Their personal monologues connected to one rabbinical figure and also treated a number of situations in the lives of observant women in a critical manner, such as the *Mikve* (ritual bath), the pressure to get married young, to learn a "useful" profession and their desires to commit sins ranging from lighting a cigarette with the Shabbat candle and smoking to smudging their white dresses with chocolate, playing in the mud, becoming army commanders and slaughtering "holy cows" such as the reverence towards Jerusalem as the holy city and center of the Jewish people's yearnings.

At the time, Keshet had just returned from a three month stay in an ashram in India with her husband and daughter and was at the end of her second pregnancy. She was involved in a spiritual quest. The text she chose was the most famous and moving prayer recited by the cantor on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. The prayer "Here I Stand Impoverished in Merit" includes the cantor's personal confession of sins (said silently) and his solemn request from God that the prayers he will be leading the congregation in, will be accepted. It is one of the highlights of the holiday and is usually recited

very dramatically - almost in a whisper.

Description

When the lights came up, they focused on a figure wrapped from head to toe in a prayer shawl [*tallit*]¹⁶. On a higher level of the courtyard stood four actresses who were moving to Far Eastern/Indian type of music, repeating sounds and phrases ("love yourself" (in English), "finding a new place" (in Hebrew) and "shush" over and over again. Keshet, in her last months of pregnancy, was wearing a reddish brownish loose cotton robe (the color of clothes worn in the ashram she had visited) under the *tallit*. She started recited the cantor's prayer for Yom Kippur forcefully in a traditional Ashkenazi melody with the Indian music, actresses phrases and softly chanted in the background. The soft sounds could be heard in the spaces when Keshet was taking a breath, in between the lines of the prayer. What was most surprising was that the familiar text had undergone a drastic change - from the masculine mode, the mode in which all traditional prayers are written, into the feminine mode.

Analysis of the scene

Keshet decided to change the prayer into the feminine mode and extract it from its traditional Jewish context and specificity. This estranged the familiar Jewish prayer from the audience and defied "the standard prayers which are phrased with reference to men only, the same androcentric bias also which applies to all the classics of Jewish thought"¹⁷. Devoid of its traditional wording and accompanied by the addition of movements and sounds from other cultures, expanded the familiar Yom Kippur prayer to a new domain of spiritual experience. In the interviews that followed this production, Keshet explained that she felt free to choose from whatever culture she wished in order to interact with God and so she felt that the combination of Indian meditation practices and Jewish praying was a legitimate way to search for direct contact with God. Keshet said that she identified with the figure of Rabbi Akiva who was the only one of the four rabbis mentioned in the Talmud to enter this mystical experience (*pardes*) "in peace" and to complete the experience unscathed, "in peace". Taking him as her example, she too was striving to go through a mystical religious experience and to come out of them "in peace" ('*beshalom*').

Hiding her highly pregnant feminine figure under the male religious symbol of religiosity (the *tallit*- prayer shawl) freed her from the audience's objectifying gaze and allowed Keshet to reclaim "a feminine subjectivity" which according to Irigaray, most women usually give up when they encounter the difficulties of entering the male cultural world.¹⁸ This was a demonstration of "écriture féminine", a strategy presented by Helene Cixous, the known French postmodern feminist, who called for a new kind of relationship between female bodies and language.¹⁹ It is interesting that estranging the prayer from its traditional masculine formulation was performed simultaneously with erasing physical signs of her femininity under the *tallit*. Keshet was deconstructing gender as the determiner of the spiritual experience and Jewish worship practices just as she had done before by converting the prayer into the feminine grammatical form. She was suggesting that facilitators of communal prayers need not be men yet - they were not visibly women either! This vagueness perhaps hints that Keshet herself was dealing with difficulties in changing worship practices from 'within' and liberating herself from the conservative, patriarchal education she had received. Underlying her attempt for reform and postmodern spirituality was the dominance of traditional, patriarchal Judaism, the swaying 'absent presence', a figure wrapped in a tallit, singing the Yom Kippur prayer in the traditional manner associated with a male cantor.

This type of interculturalism in the realm of prayer could be considered, subversive and blasphemous in orthodox circles and in the more post-modern circles of Israeli orthodoxy – as a manifestation of New Age revitalization of Judaism. It demonstrates a trend that exists amongst many young orthodox Israelis to connect between Eastern rituals, kabalistic and Hassidic practices, post modern secularism and individual religiosity. Historically, members of the national religious faction of Israeli orthodox had always tended to take the "middle road" between ultra-orthodoxy and secularism, between traditionalism and modernity. Now they are influenced by globalism and therefore they legitimize new constructions and movements of spirituality. These "postmodern spiritualities" reflect and respond to the new social conditions in the post modern era.

Postmodern culture is characterized as a 'bricolage', combinations which are made without trying to integrate them. Keshet's scene seemed to suggest receptivity to "the richness of opportunities that humankind has to offer at the beginning of the third thousand and to the concepts that there are particularities and varieties which are essential components of the beauty and richness of the human state".²⁰ Keshet's use of movement, text, music and costumes from a different culture suggested that one can "move away from familiar concepts: ...from culture to being, from society to practices of revitalization; from social theory to communication."²¹

Comparison

Besides the obvious differences in style, degree of sophistication and different types of audiences between Galed's student performance and Keshet's avant garde, professional performance, both scenes share the same agenda, namely, the desire, as women, to actively attain spirituality through Jewish prayers and rituals. Keshet had expressed her difficulties in praying a year before, while she was working with the group in the Acre Theater Center.

I do not succeed in praying. Sometimes I succeed in praying and singing with Yiftach [her husband] but I want to pray myself! Without Yiftach, without music and melodies [*nigunim*] Just me and God Almighty. But I do not succeed. I do not know how to pray. I just stand there with my legs close together – or not – and just say the words, just like that. I do not succeed in praying. I succeed in singing...I want the Temple [Beit Mikdash] I want to sacrifice. I want to bring gifts. (Keshet, 2001.)

It is in the theater space, not in the synagogue, both women felt free to engage actively in Jewish worship. In both scenes, the 'tug of war' between cultures results in full victory of traditional Orthodox Judaism. The inclusion of intercultural elements in these scenes hint of new spiritual options and potential reforms in orthodox women's religious practices, yet these are combined with oppression of female sensuality and sexuality.

In 1998, in the environment of the Emunah College, Galed could not combine different cultures harmoniously. Four years later, however, in the Acco Festival for Alternative Theater, Keshet gave her audiences an opportunity to explore a whole new range of religious practices. The inclusion of far eastern elements and change of the text into the feminine mode created a break from the traditional orthodoxy reverence of the Jewish sacred prayer. While the actress of the scene "The Lord is my Shepherd" submitted to traditional, patriarchal Judaism aided by anonymous female voices accompanying her, Keshet, embodied the change in traditional liturgy onstage but chose to hide her sexuality and future maternity under the male symbol of Jewish praying, the tallit. As Galed, her voice was audible but her female body was well concealed.

Conclusions

I would like to suggest that intercultural elements in theatrical productions of Israeli orthodox women serve as elements which negotiate between the static, traditional nature of orthodox, patriarchal Judaism and new variations of it influenced by feminism and New Age spirituality. The intention of the artists who introduced these practices in their autobiographical theater work was not to 'globalize' the Jewish experience, nor to contest Orthodox Judaism as a whole. Their intention was, in my opinion, to publicly demonstrate the opposite. They stresses the centrality of orthodox traditional Judaism in their lives and suggested that a variation of it, more inclusive for women, could become a legitimate offshoot yet, for the present, male

hegemony dominated liturgy. Intercultural elements in orthodox women's theater were used as foils to unsettle and challenge the audiences but they were not intended to be subversive. Manifestation of the female body in acts of spirituality were in both cases blurred or transformed into a less sexual - sensual form governed by objects symbolizing orthodox men (the long black coat or the male ritual shawl, the *tallit*). This demonstrates, in my opinion, the ambiguity of the actresses' positions *vis a vis* the feminist reforms they were embodying onstage in order to present as options to their audiences.

Analysis and comparison between these scenes have shown that orthodox women actresses create provocative scenes in order to suggest possible reforms. Yet closer scrutiny shows that their directing, theatrical metaphors and use of theater language and intercultural elements demonstrate the insularity of the Israeli orthodox community, rather than its openness and receptivity of foreign cultures.

Notes:

- ¹ Using Victor Turner's terminology.
- ² These have been dealt with by many Israeli researchers: Philip Wexler, Boaz Hus and Jonathan Garb.
- ³ Due to the fact that many young Israeli orthodox youth have traveled to the East after their national or military service.
- ⁴ Famous performers like Uri Zohar, Pupik Arnon, no longer performed after they became ultra orthodox.
- ⁵ Some famous performers are: Shuli Rand, Irit Sheleg-Neriya, Ehud Banai.
- ⁶ Not his real name.
- ⁷ The third chapter of my book: *The Audacity of Holiness: Orthodox Women's Theater in Israel*, deals with the rabbis' involvement in orthodox women's theater and the questions women ask them with regards to theater. A Theater responsa was published by the Emunah College in Jerusalem in which halachic decisions about women's performances were formulated. Some orthodox women performers adhere to them - others ignore them.
- ⁸ Prolonged social singlehood
- ⁹ For example, Shacharit Theater Company.
- ¹⁰ Sauter, 1988.
- ¹¹ In some orthodox communities women are not allowed to sing out loud when men are present.
- ¹² King, 1989, 154.
- ¹³ Warren, 1982, 170.
- ¹⁴ Mulvey, 1992, 29.
- ¹⁵ "Dosiyot" is a derogative term for orthodox women connotating a conservative style of dressing, behaving and thinking. This is what they were called jokingly by other groups performing there during the summer 2002 when they participated in the Acre Theater Festival of Acre. Without their knowledge, the name was given by the festival committee when it had to publicize the performance and so it became the official name of the group.
- ¹⁶ Until now most orthodox women do not use a *tallit* – just men.
- ¹⁷ Ross, 2004, 21
- ¹⁸ Luce Irigaray, 2004, 19.
- ¹⁹ Cixous, 1976, 311-312.
- ²⁰ Garb, 2003, 30
- ²¹ Philip Wexler, 2000, 2.

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