**Trauma and Architecture**

**Hints of Trauma in Architectual Embarrasment Zones**

**Gaby. Introduction: Why is it important to us?**

Consciousness is the developmental engine of human kind. The premise of psychoanalysis is that the expansion of consciousness is a necessary condition for human development and creativity. But consciousness is not only what one “sees.” There is the consciousness that is above (on the surface) and the consciousness in the basement, that which is thrust into dark, invisible places. There is that which is full and that which is empty, that which is built and that which is destroyed. There is what “is,” but psychoanalysis is interested mainly in what “is not.” It is in terms of this premise that in the stages of researching, planning, and building within extant architectural spaces, architecture must turn its attention to, or in Bayon’s terms, project a “beam of darkness” onto repressed and rejected spaces. These are the spaces of embarrassment.

Frequently, we find ourselves living and/or planning in the city’s historical centers. The planning-conservation discourse, in which contemporary conservation planners engage, does not provide a sufficient solution for handling areas carrying traumatic memories. Therefore, we intend to present here today an elementary experiment of cooperation between a psychoanalyst and conservation architect. Our purpose is to better understand and define historical zones, which are in the planning stages for conservation, as “embarrassment zones.” The definition of a site as an embarrassment zone will prompt a professional conservation ethic that is definitive and respectful, and accommodates the interested parties whose memories are engraved on the buildings’ walls and etched in the collective consciousness.

**Amnon**:

In 1972, at age 21, I went to Italy to study architecture. The more I studied and tried to understand the local culture, the closer I came to the conclusion that as an architect I would deal with the relationship between past and present – the creation of a new architectual work out of an existing one, that is, dealing with the **conservation** of a constructed legacy, not only as a means to commemorate and remember, but rather mainly as a means to build new living environments that integrate the accomplishments of the past in our future lives. Upon returning to Israel, and the more I studied and became familiar with its history, I came to realize that there is a tremendous gap between the story we tell ourselves and upon which we continue to create, plan, and build, and the reality as it is perceived by those who were not bound to the great Zionist ideology.

For the past 25 years, I have been combining my professional work in planning and conservation with teaching at the David Azrieli School of Architecture at Tel-Aviv University. Between 2010 and 2012, the conservation studio, which I instructed, engaged in the research and planning of the Arab neighborhood of Manshiya in Jaffa, which was partly erased after the occupation of Jaffa in 1948, and which today is part of Tel-Aviv. Currently, expansive lawns and a few structures remain, and most of the space serves as a promenade “densely populated” by parking lots.

The space carries difficult memories and trauma for each one of the population groups that were negatively affected there – the Muslims, who bear the memory of the occupation and of ethnic cleansing across Jewish Tel-Aviv, and the Jews, who bear the memory of the murderous terrorist attack on high school students who had come to spend the evening at the Dolphinarium club.

When my students and I came to the realization that the space is traumatic and carries harsh memories, I turned to a friend from the past, psychoanalyst Gabi Bonwitt, and asked him to join us and help us understand the mental and emotional significance of planning in this damaged site.

The denial of historical trauma increases the danger of repeatedly reconstructing it in the sense of Freud’s repetition compulsion. Our hypothesis is that hints of denied trauma can be identified in architectual spaces. At the beginning of the research, we chose the kibbutz dining hall as an illustration of this hypothesis, and later expanded the research to post-traumatic enbarrasment zones in Israel’s three largest mixed cities – Tel-Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem.

Three research questions arose:

1. Would we be able to find common ground for a dialogue between architecture and psychoanalysis?

2. Can evidence of the denial of traumatic events in the histories of local communities be found in planning and building? Is it possible to identify the obstacles (obstructions) within the collective memory?

3. Is the recognition of these spaces as traumatic, and the disclosure of their historical complexity a step toward creating sane living spaces?

**Gabi: Trauma and repetition compulsion**

Trauma is a chaotic experience in which the line between two realities, the internal and external, is blurred, and the self ceases to exist as a separate entity. We need to remember that trauma is related to processes of internalization, but in this case, internalization that occurred in the course of a violent act that “penetrated” and conquered consciousness from within.

To avoid this destructive process, a mechanism of dissociation is activated, which pushes the event, and particularly its emotional significances, to unconscious areas of the mind.

It is important to note that not only the victim, but also the violent party, can suffer from post-trauma – the exposure to and display of violent traits, which exist in every self, can activate the exact same dissociative mechanisms that are activated in the victim. There are quite a few Israeli soldiers suffering from post-trauma syndrome as a result of their being exposed to their own violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

In trauma, what replaces the memory and its processing is the repetition compulsion.

Our premise is that the traumatic event can be generated not only in individuals, but also in a group, community, and society. A group as well can adopt the same mechanisms that the individual employs in face of events that they (or the community) cannot process and remember. The society or community will use dissociation mainly at times in which aspects of its identity are incompatible: past and present; the ideal and reality; collective values and ethics and manifestations of violence in the history of a certain community or society.

In 2004, author David Grossman coined the term “intraumatic.” What is the in-traumatic situation that Grossman is refering to? It is one of the outcomes of the continuing violence, wars, and constant fear of the next war, that turn us into a society preoccupied with survival in face of the continuity of the violent events. In Grossman’s words: “The main contents with which contemporary Israeli leadership fills the shell of its government are mostly contents of fear, on the one hand, and intimidation, on the other. This anxious survival state stifles observation and insight, and as a result, internalization and memory are not possible. The difficulty to learn from experience and draw conclusions turns our lives into a aggregation of behaviors that recreates itself, sometime even to death.

Grossman’s term, the “hollow leadership,” fills our society with anxiety, is driven by a process of draining, and escalates the situation by preventing both a political and social emergence toward a new horizon.

The link between architecture and psychoanalysis took place in the traumatic space given that it was clear that one cannot talk about re-construction without taking into account the trauma of the residents in a mixed city neigborhood that was vacated of its Arab population that had no option of return. This link is also true for the research on the kibbutz dining hall. The challenge involved in this connection is not simple.

**Amnon: Embarrassment zones**

An “embarrassment zone” is an area, which had you entered it, or more accurately, were brought into, you would feel compelled to escape it. In most cases, the experience of embarrassment entails responses that involve a sense of incoherency, which you, as the subject of the embarrassment, are certain that everyone has noticed.

What are the main characteristics by means of which an embarrassment zone can be identified?

1. Even before arriving at the area, you are already aware of snippets of partial information.

2. You are in the densely built heart of a historical or ancient city with definitive architectural characteristics, which are comprehensible almost immediately, while the “embarrassment zone” lacks these architectural characteristics and is distinctively different than all other areas in the city. You notice a late architecture, which is completely different, in terms of style and scale, then the remnants of structures and ruins or bare and neglected spaces.

3. The empty spaces left behind after the destruction are sometimes transformed into thickets (small woods) or partially abandoned municipal parks.

4. You become aware, based on what you see and the bits of information you have, of a combination between existing, partially destroyed tangible cultural legacies and **intangible** cultural legacies, which were not completely destroyed along with the vast majority of the community.

5. The original architecture that is integrated in later architecture, in combination with the adjacent emptied spaces, leaves you historically and urbanically disoriented, without an understanding of what you see.

Instead of complete and conscious comprehension, you are left with a sense of inexplicable mental discomfort - embarrassment.

**Gaby:**

How is this embarrassment zone created and what is the dynamic that takes hold of the embarrassed individual in a way that is visible to others?

At the basis of embarrassment is the human illusion that memory can be erased. Architectural embarrassment zones come into being in a reality in which at a particular moment a discomforting mental situation evolves that combines suffering and disorientation - a sort of mental labyrinth. The human response is dissociation in which the mind conceals the labyrinth by way of either its imagined or realistic destruction. Such a solution creates an imaginary reality in which the labyrinth does not exist. This is the illusory basis of denial, dissociation, and concealment.

Opposite this solution are memory and consciousness which do not enable erasure. In fact, while wandering in physical embarrassment zones, one might notice spatial “quill-pen emissions,” which burst out of the attempts to erase, and call attention to the buried level beneath them, revealing the embarrassment in all its nakedness.

What are the emotional states that constitute the foundation for denial and dissociation? What is the emotional fuel that sets concealment and negation in motion?

To answer these questions, we need to talk about embarrassment.

In my opinion, embarrassment is the combination between guilt and shame. Embarrassment is disclosed in the face, at the moment when the concealment is revealed. That is where the falsehood is revealed. Our only wish is to not be there. For our purposes here today, we choose the word embarrassment which is associated with “bar” – in the sense of “stopping” – and barrier. This bar or barrier is a conscious obstacle that detaches us from the sliver of memory that arouses our embarrassment. When the concealment is revealed – when the secret, which, as we have mentioned, is also a secret we hold from ourselves, not only from others – becomes known, everything stops, and our face turns red and burns with embarrassment, as if the buried secret has turned into a fire grazing our face.

A point of reference to embarrassment zones is by way of Wilfred Bion’s term “attacks on linking.”

In his attempt to describe thinking and learning processes, Bion speaks of creating links between areas of thought in the mind. This link, which characteristically is largely associative, enables the metaphorization and mentalization of thought and the creation of more and more spaces that will belong to the “**self**.”This is a necessary condition for growth and development.

But what happens if there is an area in the mind that endangers and threatens to deconstruct the it? The subject hates these areas and will maintain their status as areas which are forbidden to undergo mental transformation. These are areas that Bion would call psychotic areas mainly because they did not undergo processes of symbolization, abstraction, and mentalization. Such, for example, would be regions of a traumatic nature. Deconstruction anxiety and the hatred toward these traumatic materials causes the mind to detach from the links to those experiences and by doing so prevent them from becoming part of the “**self.**”

Can the same processes be employed when we talk about social and cultural spaces?

In our opinion, the answer is yes.

How, then, can new links, which will turn traumatic regions into part of the collective consciousness, be created? It is at this point that architecture – or more precisely, conservation architecture – comes into the picture. Can an architect create new links through planning and building?

Social or cultural integration contains links between contradictory and paradoxical elements. The attempt to create homogeneous historical and architectural spaces sharing a common narrative is destined to fail, and there is much evidence to prove this.

**Amnon:**

Why is it important to identify and try to understand embarrassment zones?

These problematic zones in the heart of the city are a consequence of local urban policy and constantly catch developers’ attention as potential land for accelerated real estate development while completely ignoring the past. We have already learned from many cases that the more memories of the past are infused with difficult traumas suffered by disadvantaged population groups, the more deliberate neglect increases and significantly contributes to a decrease in the land’s value. This in turn, intensifies the developers’ pressure to “save,” develop, and build in the seemingly “barren” and neglected space.

By employing urban-conservation planning tools, we can try and treat post-traumatic zones in which proper living conditions will be possible in the future without disregarding the values of past cultures and the nightmares associated with them.

Is it possible to sustain a damaged urban area without disclosing and addressing the past?

A common human solution is the total erasure of the rejected legacy of the past, in an attempt to change consciousness by way of physical changes.

A city suffering from traumatic memories, but which aspires to develop for the sake of its residents welfare and their present and future quality of life, must attend as well to its past and give it the place it deserves on its agenda. This can be viewed as a way to face and handle traumas by means of rational urban and architectural planning.

The planning architect plays a special role in the embarrassment zones. In addition to urban and architectual planning and design, they must also take responsibility. First, the responsibility for identifying the place as a damaged, post-traumatic area, which carries values from the past intertwined with difficult memories. It is only after making this identification, that they can turn to research and to finding planning tools that are sensitive and respectful of all the cultural legacies in the location. Before physically intervening in the wounds (exposed and hidden) of the damaged urban tapestry, we must first familiarize ourselves with its inhabitants, both past and present – to study their past and get to know their dreams, to research the history of the place and its importance in the past, while at the same time exposing the traumatic events that it and its inhabitants endured and which completely changed its many historical values.

**Gabi: A connection between languages**

A few words about the dialogue between languages:

The architectual language and the psychoanalytical language are different from one another in terms of many parameters.

**The architectural language** is founded on empiricism. Every idea must be supported by proof containing an objective dimension. Any metaphorical representation must stem from an observation which serves as proof of the idea or validity of the representation. **The psychoanalytical language** is completely complied of representations and metaphors constructed upon experiences whose subjective dimension is central and often, exclusive. The saying “learning through experience” is fundamental and central.

There are also similarities between the two languages. The common point of departure for both is **thoughts**: the analyst transforms thoughts into words; the architect transforms them into spaces. Architecture and psychoanalysis both deal with the human mind and spirit. They are both science and art and also craft (Nina Coltart).

The borderline between these two languages is a transitional space, that is neither mine nor the other’s, but which is affected, on both sides, by characteristics of the other. This is the space in which the “other” is met and in which play and learning occur, a space within which there is renewal.

From this perspective, the attempt to connect between psychoanalysis and architecture creates a space in which it is possible to build something that **neither side can build alone**, and herein is the uniqueness of this connection.

A dialogue between languages, between the languages of psychoanalysis and architecture, requires a common understanding of the need for a fine line between them.

**Amnon: The examined spaces**

Kibbutz Dining Halls

Initially, the study dealt with the kibbutz dining hall, which constitutes the central structure in the kibbutz and through which one can understand the developmental processes of the kibbutz, from its founding to its dismantling and privatization.

The Israeli kibbutz movement, which was founded at the beginning of the 20th century, was a globally unique phenomenon based on the socialist ideal: “from each according to their ablity, to each according to their needs.”

Sharing was the central value of kibbutz life. The kibbutz dining hall, therefore, constituted the center of communal life, in geographical, social, and ideological terms.

The dining hall, which was the heart of kibbutz life, was built at its center on elevated ground. Over the years and as a result of social and organizational changes, it became a problematic, often vacant, structure – a white elephant that could not be used, but which also could not be destroyed – a type of sad and gloomy reflection of a social, political, and cultural ideal, which at its peak swept multitudes and constituted a standard and compass for an entire society.

In this social space, which includes all aspects of communal life by providing a place for each individual in the community, everybody participates fully under the basic condition of a common recognition of the elected authority of power and wisdom. Visitors are obligated to pay close attention to their footsteps, to the teeming sound in the space, they must smell the smells of cooking and food and delve into this unique world of the cooperative. They are taking part in an ideology, they will perform all the necessary actions in the ritual of tray, flatware, main course, side dishes, dessert, and soft drink. They will discover and try to decipher the people and symbols surrounding them in the space – and then, through their bodies and past experiences, they will experience a total existence within a total space.

Over the years, the kibbutz dining halls expanded, and transitioned from a shack to a concrete structure, which is presented as an acropolis, something between a fortress and synagogue or temple. The dining hall is located on a hill, usually at the highest point in the kibbutz. The ascent to it involved crossing the “great lawn,” on which most major kibbutz ceremonies took place.

Among the changes that the kibbutz dining hall underwent throughout the years, one can identify characteristics of trauma from as early as the planning and construction stages throughout its life. Moreover, one can say that the dining hall transformed from a structure that was used as a place of connection and unification, a place where people wanted to be, a pilgrimage site, to an abandoned structure that represents the crisis.

Notably, the motif of traumatic abandonment constitutes a repeated and reconstructed central feature in the founding and development of kibbutzim in Israel. I will mention a few aspects of the notion of abandonment in the history of the kibbutz:

1. “The world is about to change its foundation” – the founders of the kibbutzim abandoned their European culture, their families, and the bourgeois Jewish society of pre-WWII, while establishing a society founded mainly on universal socialist principles.

2. A significant percentage of the kibbutzim were built on Arab land, or expanded on land appropriated by Israel. In many cases, a deliberate attempt was made to obfuscate any memory of the Palestinian village whose inhabitants were expelled or forced to abandon during the 1948 War. Still, if we look closely, we will identify agricultural terraces, fruit trees, and sometimes ruins of structures that had belonged to the Arab villages.

3. The parents’ abandonment of their children under the principle of communal lodging (sleeping arrangements).

4. During the major kibbutz crisis in the 1980s, a significant part of the younger kibbutz generation abandoned the kibbutz, leaving its elderly parents behind.

5. The abandonment of the dining hall due to privatization has rendered it a sort of monument stuck between memory and forgetfulness; a symbol of the loss of the original kibbutz ideal, or, as Haya, a kibbutz member, said: “dementia of time.”

Today, many kibbutz dining halls stand empty, useless, while some are rented out as work space for start-up companies, factories, or, for example, a dialysis center. In kibbutz Ga’aton, the dining room was transformed into a rehearsal studio for the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company.

The concept of the kibbutz collapsed together with the collapse of the socialist ideals as a political-social solution. We argue that there is an unavoidable connection between processes that occured on the kibbutz and parallel processes that occured not only in Israeli society but throughout the world.

Three neighborhoods – the identification of three different embarrassment zones

Following our research on kibbutz dining halls, we turned to study post-traumatic urban areas in Israel’s three largest mixed cities: Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Haifa.

In each one of these cities, we located a neighborhood which in our opinion constituted an embarrassment zone. This aggregation of three neighborhoods presenting both similar and different features of embarrassment, point to a characteristic treatment process, involving various levels and types of erasure or revision, employed from the instatement of Jewish sovereignty over the mixed space till today.

Tel-Aviv-Jaffa: Manshiya

Manshiya was a mixed neighborhood, sprawling over 460 dunam in the Northern part of Jaffa, on the beach. The neighborhood was partially destroyed during the War of Independence, and systematically erased, in totality, from the end of the war up to the 1970s.

Today, the space reflects the neighborhood’s physical and planning history. Despite grandiose plans developed over the years, the destroyed area refused to be filled and today serves mostly as a promenade “densely populated” by parking lots.

Manshiya was built during the late 1970s along the seashore north of Jaffa’s old city.

The marking of the border between Jaffa and Tel-Aviv in 1921 was a turning point in the way the space was perceived, a change whose consequences are still visible today. From the mid-1930s, the new spatial distinction between the Arab neighborhood called “Manshiya” and the Hebrew neighborhoods of Tel-Aviv, was firmly fixed.

The territorial definition separating Tel-Aviv from Jaffa was a vital element in the realization of the cultural ideal of a “Hebrew city.” Its urban constitution was entwined in the Zionist ethos of building and development. This ideal could not exist without the separating border between “us” and “them.”

On November 29, 1947 the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine was passed in which Jaffa was added as an enclave of the Arab state. A short time after, the area was evacuated by the majority of its Jewish inhabitants and became a combat zone. The fighting reached its peak in April 1948 when Etzel forces conquered the neighborhood. During the fighting, many of the neighborhood’s homes and infrastructures were destroyed, and the deserted homes of Arab refugees were declared properties of absentee landlords and confiscated.

Part of Manshiya’s Arab residents fled to Jordan, while the others were exiled to Gaza and Egypt via the sea. Only a few were concentrated in Jaffa and later lived together with refugees from Jaffa and neighboring villages in the Ajami ghetto.

Already during the War of Independence, the neighborhood was populated by Jewish refugees from Europe, new immigrants, families of soldiers, and refugees from Tel-Aviv neighborhoods whose homes had been damaged in the fighting, and it became a densely populated, impoverished neighborhood. When the fighting ended, the Tel-Aviv municipality sought to completely demolish most of the neighborhood’s territory, including the homes that remained. However, the hundreds of Jewish families that lived in these homes turned the plan to demolish Manshiya into a complex problem.

Since the 1950s and 60s, the Tel-Aviv municipality has produced ambitious, and often destructive, plans for this site. Most of these plans promoted a new municiple agenda, which corresponded with the hegemonic Israeli agenda that entailed the annihilation of all Arab legacy in the area. As Ben Gurion said to the Government Naming Committee in 1949: “To distance the Arabic names for political reasons: as we do not recognize the Arabs’ political ownership of the Land of Israel, so we do not recognize their spiritual ownership and their names.” One prominent plan was the “city” plan. According to this plan, the modern city’s new urban center would be built on the territory of the former neighborhood. This center was supposed to connect Tel-Aviv with Jaffa and become attached to the old commercial center in the Ahuzat Bayit area. The plan included the construction of highrise office buildings, overpasses, and wide roads.

Although not even one plan was officially approved, toward the end of the 1960s, the evacuation of Manshiya’s residents was completed, and the demolishing of the neighborhood’s homes began. The contractors who demolished the homes did not remove the construction waste from the site, but rather “shoved” it to the nearest possible “dump site” – into the sea. Very soon, huge amounts of construction waste accumulated on the beach. However, as it soon became clear that the cost of removing construction waste was extremely high and that it would be more profitable to bury it under a layer of earth, the municipality decided to build a park consisting mostly of grass lawns – Charles Clore Park – on top of the construction waste.

Despite attempts to develop the city business center, only a handful of buildings were built in the area. These buildings were all that remained in the area, and Tel-Aviv’s business center was never established there.

Currently, the Tel-Aviv municipality aspires to transform the territory of what was Manshiya into a mix of hotels and residential buildings. Just recently, the demolition of the Dolfinarium structure was completed. Passersby on the promenade pass by a “mountain” of ruins unaware that the promenade upon which they are standing was constructed upon an even larger pile of ruins, those of the prior urban stratum.

This dubious decision to destroy the Dolphinarium illustrates how attempted denial leads to the repetition of history, again and again. The Dolphinarium’s monumental structure carries historical significance for the site, and it could easily have been converted into a worthwhile public building. However, the destructive impulse dominated, and the site’s traumas were “erased” once again.

Haifa: Wadi Salib

Wadi Salib was built in the 1920s as an Arab neighborhood in downtown Haifa. Over the years, the neighborhood’s inhabitants were uprooted twice, and most of its buildings were destroyed or sealed.

Today, the space reflects the establishment’s neglect and disregard over the past four decades. Most of the neighborhood is not populated. The few remaining original homes stand empty and sealed with concrete and bricks.

The Wadi Salib neighborhood was built parallel to the construction of the Hejaz railway station (“Valley Train”), which in turn, accelerated the development of Haifa’s port and industry, and brought prosperity to the entire area. As a result, people responding to the growing need for laborers began flowing to the area.

The neighborhood’s main road, Omar Al-Hatab, crossed the valley, and small houses were built on both sides of the street. A network of staircases was built to connect the upper parts of the neighborhood with its lower parts, and to connect the neighborhood with the more elevated parts of the city. Most residents were Muslim Arabs. Jewish neighborhoods developed around Wadi Salib.

Wadi Salib continued to grow parallel to the growth of the city of Haifa. It was considered one of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in the city in terms of infrastructure.

In accordance with the UN’s resolution of November 1947, Haifa, which at the time was a mixed city, was destined to be part of the future Jewish state. The resolution ignited a series of nationalist-oriented confrontations, which gradually increased until April 1948. During that time, Haifa’s Arab population decreased from 110,000 to a mere 6000 Arab residents. That small segment of Arab population was relocated to Wadi Nisnas, while other Arab neighborhoods, like Wadi Salib, remained deserted.

In the months following the surrender of Haifa’s Arabs, as a result of a shortage in housing for the multitudes of Jewish refugees from Europe and new immigrants, the neighborhood’s deserted homes were populated by Jewish immigrants, mainly from North Africa. In the 1950s, the neighborhood, whose population peaked with some 24,000 residents—refugees and destitute new immigrants—continued to deteriorate.

In 1959, a widespread ethnic protest, known as the “Wadi Salib riots,” was sparked when police confronted, then shot, a Jewish neighborhood resident. Following this incident, a series of events began, including demonstrations, violent attacks against government officials, confrontations with police forces, and strikes. The protest led to demonstrations of solidarity throughout the country, and became a symbol of the North African (Mizrahi) Jews’ struggle against the discrimination and oppression of the ruling Ashkenazi establishment.

The government’s inquiry into the Wadi Salib uprising concluded that the neighborhood was not a suitable for inhabitation, and that to prevent future uprisings, it should be evacuated and demolished.

The evacuation and destruction began in 1962. During the next decade, the majority of the neighborhood houses were demolished. The few houses that were saved were sealed with cement and bricks to prevent the invasion of former residents, who in the meantime had been relocated and who wished to return to their homes in the wadi.

In 1968, following a government report on the future of the neighborhood, a plan was proposed to transform it into an artist colony that would include artist residents, galleries, small shops, and cafes, which would be housed in the old surviving buildings. Most of the territory (over 70%) was designated for a public park.

This idea of transforming Arab houses and neighborhoods into artist colonies was a common solution in Israel, which at the time, was preoccupied with the frantic and blind endeavor of establishing the young state. This phenomenon occured in places from which residents had been evacuated, such as old Jaffa, Ein Hud, and the Arab quarters in Zafed and Beer Sheva.

The plan to establish an artist colony was approved, and some years later, the plan for the park was approved as well.

High maintenance costs, the huge investment necessary for the development of the park and existing structures, and the relatively low land value, led to the conclusion that the “artist colony” plan in Wadi Salib was unreasonable in economic terms. Since the plan was not executed, the site remained abandoned and neglected, while other neighborhoods and areas around it were developed at head-spinning speed. This accelerated development only emphasized the vacuity of Wadi Salib, which had become even more alienated. The condition of the abandoned houses continued to deteriorate, and the neighborhood became a “black hole,” an empty embarrassment zone, unrecognized and neglected in the heart of Haifa’s urban fabric.

New real estate trends, the rise in housing costs, and the rising momentum in construction in Israel, led to a situation in which, due to their low price, neglected municipal properties like Wadi Salib became coveted real estate sites for new building initiatives. Thus, today grandiose housing projects are being built in the site, such as a 180-unit residential project. One can only imagine how it with impact the neighborhood. There is an attempt to reference history in this project, however these attempts do not accord with the neighborhood’s original historical values and constructed legacy. Moreover, the spaces between the buildings are designated for use by residents only, and therefore the project will not function as an integral part of an urban neighborhood, but rather as an area detached from its surroundings, which will most probably accommodate a closed, fenced in community.

Projects like these will neither help rehabilitate the area’s distress or rejuvenate the neighborhood, but will rather exacerbate its exclusion and isolation from the urban fabric surrounding it.

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Jerusalem: Talbiya

This neighborhood is the most complex in terms of researching the relationship between trauma and architecture, given its deceptive appearance and the social-economic status of its residents, both past and current.

Today, the neighborhood of Talbiya, which was established in the 1920s, is located on the margins of Jerusalem’s center. Its population is 16,500 and it is considered, as it was in its early days, a prestigious and wealthy neighborhood.

Most of the neighborhood was built on land that in the past belonged to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy. At the end of World War I, the Patriarchy encountered financial difficulties after the waves of Russian pilgrimages to the Land of Israel stopped as a result of the Russian Revolution, and it began selling its lands in Talbiya. The purchasers were Christian Arabs of a high socio-economic status, enterpreneurs, and businessmen who built a modern, prestigious Arab neigborhood on these lands.

In the neighborhood, which was predominantly Arab, only few Jews lived, including Reuven Maas, Martin Buber, and the author Yaacov Yehoshua, who documented the neighborhood.

On February 12, 1947, following the shooting of a Jewish woman in Talbiya, a small a Hagana truck drove through the neighborhood and, using a megaphone ordered all Arab residents to evacuate the neighborhood immediately, otherwise, “they and their property would be crushed.” “The truck was stopped and its passengers arrested,” a British report stated, however, “the Arabs were indeed evacuated.” During the War of Independence, the neighborhood was conquered by Hagana forces. Respectable Jewish families, designated to serve government institutions in the capital of the new State of Israel, were housed in the houses from which the Arabs had been evacuated.

Reuven Maas, the Jewish “muhtar” of Talbiya prior to the war, kept a meticulous record of all the people who entered a house, apartment, or room that Palestinians left. Maas issued each new resident a “certificate of acceptance to the neighborhood” on which he recorded the exact details of the housing unit allocated to the Jewish resident. The new resident was obligated to take good care of the furniture in the house and to safeguard the closed rooms in which the Palestinian landlords stored the belongings they left behind. Likewise, the new resident was obligated to vacate the property within a month if so required by its lawful owners. Maas acted not only in accordance with orders from the “Situation Committee” in Jerusalem, but also from a sense of obligation toward his Palestinian neighbors who would possibly return. “In light of the good relationships we had with the Arab population here, I demanded to protect the Arabs’ property... In every apartment we designated a room in which we stored the landlord’s belongings, except for a table and chairs and beds, which we made available to the refugees...we sealed the room with wax and the new family was forced to sign an agreement stating that it would not live in that room... We stored the Arab property for three years...after three years, our government found that there was an urgent need for rooms for additional immigrants and refugees, so they sent government civil servants who moved all the property to warehouses. What became of it – I do not know.”

It was only after the Six Day War in 1967 and the annexation of the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, that a city plan for Jerusalem regarding conservation was consolidated – the Samsonian Plan (master plan) of 1968.

This plan, which was consolidated after the change in Jerusalem’s geopolitical status post-1967 and which stemmed from the sense of security after the war, indicated a tendentious shift in the planning approach toward conservation, restoration, and cultivation. It is important, however, to consider the nature of said “conservation.” Who were the “conservationists” and what did they choose to “conserve,” and mainly, what did they choose not to conserve?

In the 1950s, in the framework of the events surrounding Israel’s 10th anniversary, the name of Jerusalem’s neighbrhoods and streets were changed to Hebrew, Zionist names, as part of an attempt to totally erase the past.

**Gaby: Hints of trauma**

Kibbutz dining halls

Sha’ar Hagolan – from shack to “synagogue”

The dining hall in Sha’ar Hagolan was built through seven stages, from its establishment in 1937 to the 1960s. The first dining hall in the kibbutz was a wooden shack with a brick base extending up to the bottom edge of the upper windows above which it was finished in wood. The roof was made of corrugated tin. The dining hall was located in the shack until it was destroyed when the kibbutz was conquered by the Syrian army in 1948.

In the following years, the structure changed repeatedly. Each time, the dining room was expanded and its facade faced a different way. At first, it faced a lawn upon which there was a stage. Later, it faced the entrance to the kibbutz. In the last stage, a wing with the row of expressive arches, designed by Mestechkin in collaberation with the artist and kibbutz member Haim Bargal, was built. This wing was supposed to face the kibbutz’s main “big lawn,” but in fact it was surrounded by a huge cement square that distinguishes the building from the lawn.

 Yad Mordechai – a fortress

In 1943, the founding charter of the kibbutz was buried in the foundations of the dining hall, which at the time was located at the center of the kibbutz.

After the kibbutz was conquered by the Egyptian army, and the return of those who survived a year later, a new dining hall, also designed by Shmuel Mestechkin, was built. Like in Sha’ar Hagolan, it featured large arched openings facing the “big lawn.” A small turret-like feature were built on its corners, in which there were windows flanked by cement wings that blocked the sideway views – most significantly, the view toward the bullet-scarred water tower and toward the cemetery where the fallen soldiers from the 1948 battle for Yad Mordechai are buried.

Sasa – a stone from the village

We notice that the modern dining hall was built partially on the houses of the destroyed Arab village and that significant efforts were made to camouflage the building’s origins.

Kfar Etzion

After the kibbutz was destroyed by the Jordanian army in 1948, its members returned to re-establish it following the Israeli occupation in 1967. This time, the dining hall was built in such a way that it could not be destroyed.

Manshiya and Wadi Salib

The traumas of Manshiya and Wadi Salib have never been addressed or dealt with and for many years were denied and concealed. As a result, these traumas were repressed, however, they are still clearly visible on the ground given that both neighborhoods are located in the hearts of big and prosperous cities, have been frozen in time as embarrassment zones, and detached from the broad municipal context – indeterminately infused with sorrow and shame. One can say, therefore, that Manshiya and Wadi Salib are post-traumatic neighborhoods – embarrassment zones. Any previous attempt to treat these neighborhoods failed. Perhaps by defining the area within these embarrassment zones and treating them with psychoanalytical and conservational tools will help these neighborhoods return to their previous status as functioning organic parts of the city.

Talbiya – Hanna Dimitri House

In the 1960s, a house was purchased in Talbiya by the Israel Psychoanalytic Society. The house was built by Dimitri Hanna, a Greek-Orthodox Christian Palestinian. Mr. Hanna and his family became refugees during the 1948 War. After 1948, the house served various purposes, while its Palestinian past was almost completely erased from the engineering records of the Jerusalem Municipality.

The Palestinian Psychoanalytical Society was founded by Max Eitingon together with other analysts. They founded the Israeli branch in Palestine in 1933.

Upon entering the house today, one notices places in which time has stood still: the German Lutheran furniture, straight lines without any embellishment, arm chairs that look like they were brought from the Berliner Zimmer, German books on bookshelves – books which most probably have not been looked at for decades. There are rooms frozen in time, as time is often frozen in the traumatic areas of the mind. As if there, time ticks in another clock.

We can presume, therefore, that Eitingon and his group continued to conduct their daily affairs as if they themselves were not Jewish refugees expelled from their countries. They turned Jerusalem into an extension of Berlin and Vienna. Eran Rolnik says in his book *Ossei Hanefashot*: “Turning the Jerusalem institute into an offspring of the Berlin institute was of great importance for both the therapists and the patients. They felt as if they had succeeded in creating a microcosmos of Berlin, which would ease their acclimation in the new place.” Did they eventually become integrated in the country and feel a part of it? And perhaps, if I may propose an assumption, the furniture and language are a representation of the trauma of the expulsion which was not spoken of and certainly not internalized, as well as representations of a continued desire to be considered Germans.

In the place where traditionally a portrait of the proprietor hung – the patriarch to whose life achievements the central space is dedicated – today there is a portrait of Freud, gazing or perhaps supervising what is going on, as a kind of testimony to the fact that the original landlord was replaced by a “new” master. This is disturbing evidence of the new and strange content poured into the very distinctive mold of the nineteenth-century Arab bourgeousie.

Therefore, it may be possible to assume that the Palestinian house with the unfinished ornamentation on its facade and the German furniture in the rooms are quill-pen emissions through which it would be appropriate to read the “text book” of the unspoken traumas. We cannot ignore the questions that arise in face of these details, what caused the stonemason/craftsman to leave his work unfinished, particularly on the facade which is intended to impress. Did he encounter financial problems? Or perhaps political events forced him to leave?

Can we say that the powerful objection of quite a few members of the Psychoanalytic Society to the possibility of leaving the house and relocating to Tel-Aviv, which sounded like a fear of refugeeism, is, amongst other things, an expression of the double and unspoken refugeeism associated with the house?

And so, what is not remembered is reconstructed again and again.

And perhaps in the Psychoanalytic Society there also exists the illusion at the basis of the concept of Israel as a melting pot in which the past can be erased in order to coverup the contradiction between different aspects of identity, which here involve two pasts: the Holocaust and the violent elements associated with the War of Independence.

On Febuary 16, 2019, a resolution was passed by the vast majority of members of the Israel Psychoanalytic Society to fix a plaque on the entrance to the house engraved with the words: This House was built by Dimitri Hanna.

**Gaby: Conclusion – exit the labyrinth**

Deep inside the spheres of the Israeli, and perhaps also Jewish, ethos, there is this saying: Don’t wash your dirty laundry in public. The kibbutzim were frontrunners in adopting the culture of concealment. But what happens to laundry that cannot be cleaned? What happens to laundry full of traumatic stains? Will we hide it in the bottom of the closet? Will we wear it as if it is snow-white clean?

The interaction between architecture and psychoanalysis propagates many challenges related to different languages, methods of inquiry, and the difference between the concrete house/home (in its double meaning) and the symbolic home. However, as we tried to show here today, the traumatic space is one that is not only a potential space for common research, but is also necessary for our understanding of the dynamics of trauma and its physical manifestations as illustrated in the sad stories of the kibbutz dining halls, Manshiya, Wadi Salib, and Talbiya.

The practice of conservation requires deep and sincere research and documentation, from within which the site’s “values for conservation” and “cultural significance” – including its beautiful and less beautiful aspects – are defined.

Exiting the labyrinth entails an open, and sometimes painful, dialogue with those traumatic areas, in order to create a disharmonious historical continuity, and perhaps an architectual continuity as well, full of paradoxes and contradictions, as a way to enable learning and development.

Therefore, in dealing with embarrassment zones, reading the space as a traumatic space is essential, and in combination with conservation tools based on the site’s historical context, values, and broad cultural significance, it is possible to try and “cure” the place, and perhaps in this way, “exit the labyrinth.”

We believe that we are at the beginning of a new path and that additional expressions of common domains in the study of trauma and its significances will be revealed to us in the future.