

□□□□ (Remember): An Analysis of Art as a Reflection of Sexual and Gendered Violence against Jewish Women during the Pogroms (1919-1920S) And the Nazi Era (1933-1943)

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Abstract : Violence used against Jewish women in both the Eastern European pogroms and during the Nazi era was specifically gendered, targeting their female identity and dignity of womanhood. Not only did these acts of gendered violence dehumanize Jewish women, but they also hurt the Jewish community as a whole. The devastating sexual violence that women endured during the pogroms and the Nazi era caused profound trauma. Out of shame and fear, silence about women's experiences of sexual abuse manifests in forms that words cannot translate. Women have turned to art and other means of storytelling to convey their female experiences in visual and non-verbal ways. Therefore, this paper aims to address the historical accounts of gendered violence against Jewish women during the pogroms and Nazi era, as well as art that reflects upon the female experience, in order to understand the emotional impact resulting from these events. To analyze the artwork, a feminist analysis was used to understand the intersection of gender with the other systems of inequality, such as systemic anti-semitism, in women's lives; this ultimately explained the ways in which cultural productions undermine and reinforce the political and social oppression of women by exploring how art confronts the exploitation of women's bodies. By analyzing the art in the context of specific acts of violence, such as public rape, as a strategic weapon, we are able to understand women's experiences and how these experiences, in turn, challenged their womanhood. Additionally, these atrocities, which often occurred in the public space, were dismissed and forgotten due to the social stigma of rape. In this sense, the experiences of women in pogroms and the Nazi era were both highly unacknowledged and forgotten. Therefore, the art that was produced during those time periods, as well as those after those events, gives voice to the profound silence on the narratives of Jewish women. Sexual violence is a weapon of war used to cause physical and psychological destruction, not only as a product of war. In both the early twentieth-century pogroms and the Holocaust, the sexual violence that Jewish women endured was fundamentally the same: the rape of Jewish women became a focal target in the theater of violence- women were not raped because they were women, but specifically, because they were Jewish women. Although the events of the pogroms and the Holocaust are in the past, the art that serves as testimony to the experience of Jewish women remains an everlasting reminder of the gendered violence that occurred. Even though covert expressions, such as an embroidered image of a bird eating an apple, the artwork gives voice to the many silenced victims of sexualized and gendered violence.

Keywords : gendered violence, holocaust, Nazi era, pogroms

Conference Title : ICSACS 2022 : International Conference on Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : November 18-19, 2022