

Redeeming the Self-Settling Scores with the Nazis by the Means of Poetics

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Abstract : Beyond the testimonial act, that sheds light on the feminine experience in the Holocaust, the survivors' writing voices first and foremost the abjection of the feminine self brutally inflicted by the Nazis in the Holocaust, and in the same movement redeems the self by the means of poetics, and brings it to an existential state of being a subject. This study aims to stress the poetics of this writing in order to promote the Holocaust literature from the margins to the mainstream and to contribute to the commemoration of the Holocaust in the next generations. Methodology: The study of the survivors' redeeming of self is based on Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject: the self-throws out everything that threatens its existence and Liliane Steiner's theory of the post- abjection of hell: the belated act of vomiting the abject experiences settles cores with the author of the abject to redeem the self. The research will focus on Ruth Sender's trilogy *The Cage, To Life and The Holocaust Lady* as a case study. Findings: The binary mode that characterizes this writing reflects the experience of Jewish women, who were subject(s), were treated violently as object(s), debased, defeminized and, eventually turned into abject by the Nazis. In a tour de force, this writing re-enacts the postponed resistance, that vomited the abject imposed on the feminine self by the very act of narration, which denounces the real abject, the perpetrators. The post-abjection of self is acted out in constructs of abject, relating the abject experience of the Holocaust as well as the rehabilitation of the surviving self (subject). The transcription of abject surfaces in deconstructing the abject through self- characterization, and in the elusive rendering of bad memories, having recourse to literary figures. The narrative 'I' selects, obstructs, mends and tells the past events from an active standpoint, as would a subject in control of its (narrative) fate. In a compensatory movement, the narrating I tells itself by reconstructing the subject and proving time and again that I is other. Moreover, in the belated endeavor to revenge, testify and narrate the abject, the narrative I defies itself, and represents itself as a dialectical I, splitting and multiplying itself in a deconstructing way. The dialectical I is never (one) I. It voices not only the unvoiced but also and mainly the other silenced 'I's. Drawing its nature and construct from traumatic memories, the dialectical I transgresses boundaries to narrate her story, and in the same breath, the story of Jewish women doomed to silence. In this narrative feat, the dialectical I stresses its essential dialectical existence with the past, never to be (one) again. Conclusion: The pattern of I is other generates patterns of subject(s) that defy, transgress and repudiate the abject and its repercussions on the feminine I. The feminine I writes itself as a survivor that defies the abject (Nazis) and takes revenge. The paradigm of metamorphosis that accompanies the journey of the Holocaust memoirist engenders life and surviving as well as a narration that defies stagnation and death.

Keywords : abject, feminine writing, holocaust, post-abjection

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