Jewish? A Visual Auto-Ethnoghraphy: On Collaborating Jewish Meaning.

Goldberg, Eden

Jewish?

A Visual Auto-Ethnography: On Collaborating Jewish Meaning

Student	Eden Goldberg
Student number	s3744116
Supervisor	Dr. Mark Westmoreland
Submission date	23-06-23
Word count	14.420 (includes 2509 words from research proposal)
University Programme	MSc Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Specialisation Visual Ethnography

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank Marian, my grandmother, who bravely granted me access to a domain of her life that is as complex as it is precarious, for us to work together on this research project. Our conversation about being Jewish well preceded this research and was the seed it grew out of. I want to thank her for her insatiable curiosity, as she has never stopped developing her thinking in relation to the changing world around her, remaining open to the unknown through all stages of life. This is my biggest inspiration. I hope to be like you one day grandma!

My two sisters, Jonnah and Dana never hesitated to be a part of this auto-ethnographic research even though my questions were probed to the uncomfortable aim to look beneath what we might know about ourselves and deep into our hearts. Thank you for trusting me. I want to thank my parents who, besides some shared fundamental values, often bring opposite perspectives to life. And although not always convenient, this has built me up as a critical person and probably even as an anthropologist.

I want to thank Merav Krone, Elfi Boink and Hannah Oldenburger, for agreeing to work together so closely, to explore our Jewishness. Thank you for sharing your stories and time with me, your questions and energy guided me in telling this research story.

My supervisor Mark Westmoreland helped me to develop this research project out of my personal and conflicted feelings regarding my Jewish identity, a challenging task he took on with commitment and kindness. He gave me the guidance and confidence I needed to complete this work, thank you.

I want to thank my supervisory group because their involvement and feedback were fundamental to this research, and because they are some badass women. Thank you Tamar, Zehra, Dewi and Solé.

I cannot begin to thank all the Jewish research collaborators on this project. They invited me into their work, into their homes, into their families and into their lives. They shared their life stories, doubts, dreams and knowledge with me. I am humbled and grateful for their trust and efforts towards my research. Thank you,

Sam Ghilane. Giza Landweer, Mendel Landweer, Sam Beek, Romée Swaab, Judith Kruithof, Joey Boink, Boaz Krone, Lievnath Faber, Tori Egherman, Jelle Zijlstra, Chaja T. Merk, Charley Spaan, Judith Hoekstra, Tali Gross, Kèrèn Vromer, Tamar van der Wouden, Eli Menco, Wouter Kompier, Noah Simhy, Yonathan Listik, Eva de Haan, Eelco van Hulsen, Kyra Sachs, Noah Ferron, Ezra Brecher, Ruth Carlitz,

and all Oy Vey'ers who shared their ideas and experiences of being Jewish in the Netherlands today.

Thank you Jamie van Haastere and Janna Grosfeld for being there when it got tough.

And thank you to all students and staff of the Visual Ethnography Masters Program 2022-2023, part of the Masters Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University.

Abstract

Despite having been the most influential Jewish population in the world, seventy-eight years after the Shoah Jewish life in the Netherlands remains ambiguous. For Dutch Jews, especially those non-religious, a post-war memorialisation of genocide overwhelmingly determines what it means to be Jewish today. This Dutch post-war reality materializes in the omnipresence of Jewish death (monuments, memorials, and museums) and the absence of Jewish life (shops, bakeries, and restaurants) in Dutch public spaces which contributes to the invisibility of Jewish contemporary life, vitality and joy. This has led to a generational search for ways to reclaim, co-construct and make space for contemporary Dutch Jewish identity and life. This research is an expression of such a search, where it simultaneously explores and constructs a future-oriented rethinking of being and doing Jewish in a Dutch contemporary context. It does so by using 'future-memory work' as a methodological tool to explore what *it could mean* to be Jewish in the Netherlands today, making sense of a contemporary Jewish experience in relation to the past and the future. The study is an auto-ethnographic film project in which unaffiliated (not a member of a practising community) millennial Dutch Jews from Amsterdam, the Dutch city that had the largest Jewish population before the second world war, embark on a collaborative open-ended search for Jewish identity and community to learn about and beyond their families' past.

Table of Content

Introduction

I have never read Anne Frank's diary or visited the Anne Frank house. Maybe I avoided her story because the world accepted it so willingly, as she became and continues to be 'the most recognizable face of the Holocaust' (Foray 2011: 331). Her story gave the world an inside into a Jewish experience in the Netherlands during the 1940-45 German occupation but became *the* story of the persecution of Jews in Europe universally. For humanity to grapple with its own inhumanity, stories with beginnings and endings are needed. Anne Frank's diary provided the world with such a story, written from her hiding address in Amsterdam before her family got betrayed and deported to concentration camps. The story has a clear stage and timeframe, it includes the good and the bad, a conflict and an ending. But to me, as a Dutch Jewish person, this popularized narrative doesn't offer satisfaction.

What makes Anne's story so digestible? 'The Annex'[1] became "the canonical Holocaust text", translated into 55 languages and sold more than 24 million copies (Cole 2000: 23) while surprisingly, the Holocaust merely functions as a context for the developing adolescent romance between Anne and Peter that are in hiding because they are Jewish. "Only the most preliminary outline of the coming of war against Jews […]" shimmers through, where "[…] specific references in the diary to the activities of the Nazis are restricted to the few snippets of information gleaned from radio reports or Dutch 'Christian' visitors" (ibid: 23-24). Anne's everyday coming-of-age contemplations "[…] represented a longing for freedom and autonomy that have become grounds for psychological identification and symbolic extension on a mass and global scale' (Ibrahim 2009 paraphrased by Silverstein 2018: 8), and simultaneously soothes the problem that the Shoah presents 'the West' with: How was the Shoah to be reconciled with enlightened identity and modernity at large? Arnon Grunberg expresses in the new television series The Promised Land[2], his controversial and simply painful perspective that Europe can never forgive the Jews for the Shoah[3] as the genocide can't coincide with Europe's Enlighted self-identification.

But Anne's diary wasn't picked up with great enthusiasm immediately. Despite the efforts of her father Otto Frank to get the diary published after the war, it did not receive much attention in the Netherlands. It was only after the 1956 Broadway play based on the diary that the story gained precedence (Cole 2000: 25-26). Anne's story needed to travel across the Atlantic and back to the Netherlands for it to be seen as important and "[a]rguably the 'Anne Frank' who returned to the Netherlands in the mid-fifties […] had been 'Americanised', [...] her story reshaped and repackaged" (ibid: 26). Of course, Anne's story is important for bringing attention to the Holocaust on a global scale, yet so much is left outside of the frame when we take one story to represent the persecution of Jews. Not only does this disregard the vast variety in which nations exercised antisemitic hate against their Jewish citizens before, during and after the second world war, but it also doesn't address the ways in which a Dutch post-war reality continues to construct what it means to be a Dutch Jew today. At most, the acceptance of a digestible story to educate and remember Jewish experiences during Hitler's national socialism is exemplary of the ways in which contemporary Jewish experiences are bound to historical imaginations about Jewish life and death.

---

[1] The Dutch title of Anne Frank's published diary is Het Achterhuis, meaning The Annex.

[2] Het Beloofde Land, a currently running BNNVARA documentary series in which Dutch Jews talk about their complex relationality to Israel, 75 years after its establishment.

[3] Evelien Gans (Ensel, Remco and Gans, Evelien 2017) writes in *The Holocaust, Israel and 'The Jew'* that the word *Shoah* means 'catastrophe' or 'destruction' in Hebrew, while the term *Holocaust* stems from the Greek meaning 'burnt offering'. In this research proposal I employ the word *Shoah,* as I see this term more appropriate to describe the national-socialist genocide of 1940-1045. But when using quotes, I keep the originally used terminology.

As long as I can remember I've known I'm Jewish. But what this being Jewish means, to me and to others, is something I couldn't explain. Being Jewish was only familiar in an alienating and traumatic way, where it was always associated with big complex historical stories of the Shoah and Israel. I didn't know what was considered Jewish from a Jewish perspective. As one of Ronit Palache's interviewees states in her book on contemporary Dutch Jewish identity, '[i]ts weird to belong to a group that doesn't know you' (2016: 130)[4]. Moreover, a focus on the horrors of the Shoah and charged positionalities towards Israel in the Netherlands today, is always present in the ways Dutch Jews negotiate their Jewishness in their contemporary lives.

I was born and raised in Amsterdam, growing up with Jewish parents that 'didn't do anything with' being Jewish. Being Jewish was never made particularly important except on the 4th of May, the Dutch national commemoration of the victims of Nazi rule, when my family visits the Hollandsche Schouwburg in Amsterdam to commemorate, among others, our family that was held there before deportation in 1943. Family stories about the Shoah, about Israel, and many instances in which I was perceived as Jewish by others, created a 'sense of being Jewish' (De Vries 2010: 59) in me. But besides some Jewish symbols that found their way into our family homes, like a Mezuzah[5] at the doorstep or my mom burning the eight Channukkah candles (the only Jewish holiday practice that found its way into my childhood household) and sharing a Shana Tova (happy new year) pictures on Whats-App in September, I grew up knowing close to nothing about Jewish tradition.

If not defined by religious beliefs and practices, what makes (me) a Jew in the Netherlands? In search of answers, I researched how unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews seek, express, and construct their Jewish identity/their Jewishness today, against the backdrop of intergenerational stories/emotions that tie them to a traumatic past, complicated relationality to Israel, and deeply integrated antisemitism in Dutch society. This group is bound by these historical, political, societal and familial issues rather than by being a contemporary Jewish community. In other words, this 'group' doesn't really function as a group but is the sum of a fragmented whole of individuals dispersed through society with a shared history. I am only one of these fragments but figured that if some Dutch Jews survived the Shoah, like my great-grandmother and her brother on my mom's side, then there must be other Jewish descendants who walk around with questions about their Jewish past, present, and future. While logically I'm not the only 'secular' Dutch millennial Jew, I didn't know many other Jews of my generation. Finding them would help me find answers about my own Jewish identity.

[4] "[h]et is heel vreemd om bij een groep te horen die jou niet kent".

[5] A Mezuzah is a piece of parchment with inscriptions from the Torah that is hung at the doorposts of Jewish homes. They should be placed at every doorstep in the house to remind Jews of God's commandments.

The Personal and Academic are Political

This research project is both personal and academic work in which I counter negative familiarities with being Jewish in a postwar Dutch society among unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews, by enriching this experience with new and joyful familiarities (finding support by talking about these experiences with peers, and celebrating Jewish holidays together), through a collaborative ethnographic film project. Through this process, Dutch Jewish identity is explored and pushed forward, contributing to the under-exploration of dynamic contemporary Jewish lived experiences in anthropological thinking (Brink-Danan 2008).

Firstly, I'm the person in my family that wants to actively re-claim a Jewish story 'on Jewish terms', one that takes Shoah trauma into consideration but also moves beyond it. What this 'on Jewish terms' means, is something that postwar European Jews have to figure out anew (Pinto 2008: 27), because '[r]oughly two-thirds of the Jewish population [of the Netherlands] was deported and murdered' (Van Imhoff et al. 2002: 459), fundamentally changing a European and Dutch Jewish experience. This has been and continues to be a challenging position, as I have often felt like an imposter in Jewish spaces during fieldwork while simultaneously working through unresolved family traumas where my elders tend to dismiss their Jewish identity altogether. "Figuring out how to cope with the legacy of the Shoah [is] an ongoing process Ensel and Gans write in their book on antisemitism in postwar Dutch society (2017: 33). This process depends on generational relationality towards this past, a decline of sympathy for Israel after the Six Day-War of 1967 in the Netherlands, and contemporary Jewish identity in Europe and North America marked by plurality, assimilation and secularization (Webber 2003, Liebman 2003, Goldschieder in Robinson et al. 2016). This project foregrounds how unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews negotiate their Jewish heritage in contemporary Dutch society, and more specifically, in Amsterdam.

Secondly, when Jewish issues are engaged in anthropology, there tends to be an overemphasis on religious practice and "Jewish memory", although well conducted and relevant, taking the shape of "salvage anthropology" (Danan-Brink 2008: 683), seeing Jews as historical subjects, disappearing. She asks '[h]ow can we balance the need to commemorate loss with an ongoing commitment to describing the living, their [Jews] particular needs and desires, their plans, and their visions?' (ibid). However, some important contributions to anthropological thinking about Jewish lived experiences have been made by Barbara Myerhoff with visual ethnography Number Our Days (1976). A film and book about how some of the last people originating from Ashkenazi shtetl communities in Poland and Russia, negotiated their social lives at their American final station in Venice, California. Her project challenged an Othering anthropological gaze by turning the gaze inwards, as she states in her film:

> "Most anthropologists work with remote exotic people, so studying my own people, was a new idea for me. At first, I wasn't sure if it was anthropology or a personal quest... An anthropologist tries to feel the inside of a native's head, that's in a way how you know the culture. But in a sense, that's false, in a way it's an exercise in imagination. Because you will never be that. […] I will never be a ritual Indian, but I will be a little old Jewish lady" (Myerhoff 1976, 2:18).

Still, '[t]he preponderance of Jewish intellectuals in the early years of Boasian anthropology and the Jewish identities of anthropologists in subsequent generations have been downplayed in standard histories of the discipline' (Frank 1997: 731). Frank argues that the public silence around Jewish foundational influence in the discipline is a result of "[…] the tone of liberal humanism and cosmopolitanism set by Franz Boas [...]" himself (ibid). A tone set in an antisemitic political climate in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe and America. The Jewish identities of anthropologists like Franz Boas and his well-known students Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead were and continue to be whitewashed, 'reflecting fears of anti-Semitic reactions that could discredit the discipline of anthropology and individual anthropologists' (ibid). As Brink-Danan (2008) puts it, denying Jewish particularity in the face of antisemitism made it hard to study Jews as anthropological

subjects. This legacy of explicit underemphasis of Jewish identity remains present in contemporary anthropology and reflected in the discipline's common fields of interest, where Jewish issues are underexplored and underrepresented while in "[…] today's academically and geographically border-crossing world" (2008: 682), Jewish life is an ideal anthropological issue.

There is no such thing as a homogeneous Jewish culture (Stratton 2000: 2). In a European context, there is an established distinction between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews under which there are many different religious and cultural groups, and they have balanced assimilation with keeping Jewish culture alive through history. This research addresses the complex positionalities of unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews as "Western Others" (ibid) which inevitably leads to the undermining reality that this research inevitably engages contemporary Jewish issues related to the daunting past of the Shoah and contemporary antisemitism, while the aim is to 'work out Jewishness' beyond external hostilities. Yet, the question of whether there can be such a thing as Jewishness extricated from 'external hostilities', is hard to answer. One could argue that negative framings of Jews are an inherent part of Jewish experience throughout history. And although this research aims to push forward contemporary Jewish identities, I am bound by the reality of my family's past. A heritage that I need to engage to do any sort of future work.

Initiated by my personal (yet societal) need for 'something more' than lasting Shoah effects as Jewish identifiers, I searched for theoretical foundations of the possibility of a different way of being Jewish. Dutch Jewish futurist Fred Polak established futurist thinking in 20th century Holland, exploring how our creative ability to imagine a future has always shaped historical processes. He views "[s]ocietal change […] as a push-pull process in which a Society is at once pulled forwards by its own magnetic images of an idealized future and pushed from behind by its realized past" (Polak 1973: 1). I position this research in a futurist tradition of exploring "[…] interaction between completed and noncompleted time' (ibid), where being Jewish continues to mean countless things in relation to the continuum of historical processes, while these meanings can also be re-thought applying our imaginative abilities that shape these historical processes and bring about social change. Inspired by Afro-futurists "[…] rethinking the past, present, and futures of the African Diaspora […]" (White 2021: 22), I explore what it *could* mean to be a Dutch Jew today. A Dutch community in Amsterdam is doing such communal restorative future-oriented work since 2019, creating spaces where Jews with different relationalities to their Jewishness are welcome to explore and develop their Jewishness together. On their website, they state that

> "Oy Vey is an outward-facing, inclusive, and unapologetically Jewish hub in Amsterdam. Oy Vey aims to facilitate and amplify the creation and expression of contemporary Jewish culture. It is a place where everyone is welcome to participate in, learn from, and proudly enjoy all things Jewish" (Oy Vey 2023)[6].

This "messy collective", as one of its founders Tori Egherman summarized, can be understood as an expression of future-facing Jewish community work, exploring issues of re- and co-creating Jewishness through cultural programming, Jewish celebrations, online and offline learning programs and anti-racist and anti-fascist activism in the Netherlands. Oy Vey is a multi-temporal and multi-spatial group that organizes learning sessions, group discussions, Shabbat potlucks and Havdalah meditations[7], a Jewish film festival. This recreation of Jewish life is reactionary to a Dutch Jewish experience, described to me in different Oy Vey meetings by different participants, where Jewish peers encounter dismissal, gatekeeping, and even verbal aggressions when they want to vocalize a Jewish experience beyond the historized Jew as Shoah victim or an aggressor in Israel. Oy Vey events

[6] https://oyvey.nl/

[7] Havdalah is the demarcation of the end of Shabbat on Saturday evening. Oy Vey organizes meditations sessions in which Tali Gros sings her musical interpretations of old Jewish prayers in Hebrew and Lievnath Faber guides the evening. It is a space where unaffiliated and affiliated Jews can come together and enjoy this ritual in a yoga studio in the east of Amsterdam.

became a place where I participated in the running program of Het Joods Manifest, learning together with other participants about what it means to be Jewish in the Netherlands today. Oy Vey became a place of Jewish learning for me personally and a place to meet collaborators for my research project. OBJ

Theoretical Foundations and Ethnographic Applications

With this research project too, I created spaces in which Dutch millennial Jews raised without Jewish traditions in postwar Dutch society, could learn something among peers about their own Jewishness through collaborative research interventions. To conduct this research I brought together unaffiliated[8] millennial (born between 1980-1999/early 2000) Dutch Jews to talk about what it means to be Jewish to them. Therefore, I knew there was no established social group dynamic to be unravelled but one to be co-created. To support this, I used an *open-ended approach*, geared towards the collaborative creation of ethnographic knowledge and contemporary Jewish experience, and future-facing meanings of Jewish identity.

A search for Jewish meaning is a collaborative process because being, doing and feeling Jewish is relational and interpersonal. Since making a film is inherently collaborative too (Pink 2008: 153), I prioritised the collaborative nature of creating audio-visual ethnographic knowledge and Jewish experiences in this collaborative auto-ethnographic research project. I envisioned that a collaborative film effort would become part of the expression and development of Jewish identity of those that collaborated on the project (including myself). This vision was inspired by the book *First Person Jewish* (2008 Lebow) on autobiographical films by Jewish filmmakers that often take the shape of auto-ethnographic films as 'mediating documents' (ibid: xxvvi) that express and create their Jewishness.

Moreover, since this research deals with issues of collective and intergenerational memory, trauma and with resilience, I devised an embodied film project to explore these issues. I developed an embodied auto-ethnographic film practice, doing hand-held first-person filming in combination with "walking itineraries" with research collaborators through their homes. This is an open-ended and embodied research method through which my "[…] guide's ideas, memories and explanatory frameworks" (Moretti 2016: 96) are constructive of the audiovisual materials we created together. I established 4 main research collaborators on this project with whom I filmed individually and with their significant others at different times: Merav, Elfi, Hannah and me. We agreed to work on this research project as part of our search for future-facing Jewish identity. Their stories are explored in the film output of this thesis. I also held 20 Tascam recorded unstructured interviews with other research collaborators. Some of them I met during Oy Vey events, and others I found through my own and collaborators' networks. Every unstructured interview was a very personal conversation between the research collaborator and me, exploring issues like growing up as a Jew in the Netherlands, intergenerational war trauma, Jewish tradition, religion, culture, antisemitism, Israel, food and literature. These conversations were inductive as they guided me in the next conversation. Both the Tascam interviews and audio-visual materials are analysed in this text. Parts of this text are revised

[8] *Unaffiliated* is an emic concept that was introduced to me on a Saturday morning in February 2023 by Debby Abram Uijenkruijer during a Shabbat service at her home. Debby is a tour guide in the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam and a colleague, friend and Jewish teacher, of one of my main research collaborators, Hannah Oldenburger, who invited me to the celebration. Debby is 'een aangesloten Jood' (an affiliated Jew), which means being a member of a Jewish community, synagogue or Zionist organisation, participating in Jewish communal life. She subsequently called Jews that aren't part of any form of Jewish organized life, 'onaangesloten' (unaffiliated) Jews, and even 'rand Joden' (edge Jews). Jews that dangle on the outside of Jewish communities but do feel Jewish. According to Debby, most Dutch Jews today live an unaffiliated life. I replaced the concept 'secular' with 'unaffiliated', as this is more applied to a non-religious Dutch Jewish experience.

sections from my research proposal.

I took "intergenerational transmissions" (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein 2014) as a concept to analyse how spoken and unspoken histories that come in the form of objects, conversations and emotional transmissions, are negotiated to construct Jewish identities by research collaborators on this project. This sets the stage to look at how "borrowed memory" (Aarons and Berger 2017: 42) plays in "Jewish consciousness" (Liebman 2022) and identity construction for postwar generations. Speaking from my own experience, an ongoing conversation with my grandmother born in the winter of starvation[9] of 1944 from my Jewish great-grandmother who survived the Shoah, I often had the feeling that 'my sense of being Jewish' (De Vries 2010: 59) rests on the imaginations and experiences of a past I didn't live through.

Secondly, I take sense of belonging as an analytical concept to claim space for Jewish lived experiences in a Dutch societal and academic context, where currently more space is being made for Jewish death than for Jewish life. Through an analysis of film montage, I show how the Shoah continues to structure public space in Amsterdam and an experience of that space of Jewish war victim descendants. Sense of belonging helps thinking about the complex contemporary dynamics that shape this search for Jewish identity, like feelings of uprootedness, being under- or misrepresented, dehumanized as eternal victims or as the powerful and rich elites that dominate world power, ultimate aggressors in the Middle East, both Western and Other. This research shows how unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews search for belonging growing up around these determining narratives about Jews. By analysing how both intergenerational stories and sense of (not) belonging evoke a sense of being Jewish today, and how Jews push back against these alienating and traumatic narratives as an expression of their Jewishness, I contribute to anthropological knowledge as '[t]he sense that Jews still exist, in so many cultural variations throughout the world, remains absent from critical anthropological discussions' (Brink-Danan 2008: 682). To grasp these dynamics of a search for belonging among unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews, we first need to understand something about the historical and contemporary processes this search derives from.

[9] De Honger winter.

Dutch-Jewish Historical and Contemporary Contexts: A Research Argument

History

With their standard work *De Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*[10] (Blom et al. 2017) discuss the multitude of historical perspectives on and the many faces of Jewish presence in the Netherlands throughout history. The first traces of Jewish presence in the Netherlands dates to the thirteenth century, when Jews were solely perceived negatively both in the Netherlands and the European-Christian world at large (ibid: 39). Judaism was perceived as a threat to Christianity; the Jews would have killed Jesus, looked and spoke differently and even practised devilish traditions (ibid: 52). In the years 1349-1350 the Jewish population in the Netherlands was held responsible for the black plague that was spreading throughout Europe, killing one-third of its population. The rumour spread that rich Jews poisoned the water wells in Spain and that their poison was spread throughout Europe by other Jews (ibid: 26) leading to the mass persecution and killing of Jews in the Netherlands (ibid: 19). In the sixteenth century, the Dutch Republic offered a relatively safe haven for Jews fleeing the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the pogroms in Eastern Europe (Gans in Ensel and Gans 2016: 18), but this tolerance wasn't boundless.

> "Here, too, certain cities and professions were out of bounds to Jews, and there was a great deal many more prohibitions, along with a host of anti-Jewish prejudices. But Jews were free to worship in their own communities and in a sense formed a little state within the state – the *'Joodsche Natie'* [Jewish Nation] – with its own jurisdiction and language. The government benefited from the international trade networks of these new citizens. No violent persecution took place. There were antisemitic incidents, disturbances, scandals – but no pogroms" (ibid).

Demographically speaking, the Jewish population in the Republic was never a centre of Jewish life in numbers while their impact on international trade, monetary circulation and cultural and political development, made the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jewish population in the Netherlands the most influential in the world (Blom et al. 2017: 98). Historians that thought about Dutch Jews as Dutchmen stressed how they simultaneously were privileged to live in a Dutch tolerant Republic and contributed greatly to its development. Postwar historians, however, being in the know of the faith of Jews in 20th century Europe, showed how Dutch Jews were never fully accepted as Dutchmen and that integration was an illusion (ibid: 11).

[10] The History of the Jews in the Netherlands.

The Shoah and Postwar Antisemitism

The Dutch Jewish population counted 140000 people before the second world war of which only 27 percent survived the Shoah. This is a remarkably low survival rate compared to surrounding European countries, where 60 per cent of the 66000 Belgian Jews and 75 per cent of the 320000 French Jews survived (Croes 2006). In the book *Holocaust, Israel and 'the Jew': Histories of Antisemitism in Postwar Dutch Society* (2016), the authors Ensel and Gans show that antisemitism preceded Nazism and never disappeared from Dutch society. They analyse the 'dark side' of 'the Dutch Paradox' (ibid: 22) where a Dutch self-image as a tolerant nation contradicts the low survival rate of Dutch Jews and the ways in which this contradiction amounts to new forms of postwar antisemitism. Antisemitism is a form of hate directed at Jews throughout history. Ensel and Gans introduce Helen Fein's definition:

> "A persisting, latent structure of hostile beliefs toward *Jews as a collectivity*' where these "hostile beliefs" function "in *individuals* as attitudes, and in *culture* as myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery, and in *actions* – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace or destroy Jews as Jews" (Fein 1934 quoted by ibid: 24).

Yet, antisemitism remains a slippery slope to engage academically and socially where it often "manifests indirectly and unintentionally" leading to "[a] major obstacle for scholars and analysts of postwar antisemitism [in] that their findings tend to provoke disbelief and defensive reactions – often because people, consciously or unconsciously, use Nazi antisemitism and Jewish persecution as a yardstick" (ibid: 25). To further problematize this, debates about what is and what isn't antisemitic are permeated by claims of antisemitism in the face of any critique of Jews, Judaism and Israel, while others deny the existence of antisemitism all together. Whether claims of antisemitism are weaponized or denied, the most important finding from this book for ethnographic research on Dutch Jewish lived experience today is that "[…] the Shoah and Israel have come to function both as the most important new – that is, postwar – points of fixation for expressions of antisemitism, and at the same time, and not coincidentally, as the two most important building blocks of postwar Jewish identity' (2018: 22-23).

Today

The Jews [11] is an ambiguous and contested concept. Meaning has been ascribed and continues to be ascribed to the Jews to serve diverse political agendas by both Jews and Gentiles, as well as by Jews as expressions and experiences of identity, religion, culture and nationalism. The book *What is Discussed when Jews are Discussed?*[12] (Wertheim 2022) discusses what role *The Jews*[13] play in Dutch collective memory and moral cultural reference. Wertheim observes that the conceptualization of the Jews is operationalized to serve political agendas and assert moral positionings in Dutch society by groups dispersed on the political spectrum. Ajax supporters that chant 'Joden' during football matches, the PVV that 'embraces' the Jews to demonize Dutch Muslims, young Muslims who express antisemitic tropes during pro-Palestine demonstrations, the comparison between the Holocaust and the Dutch slave trade to stress the historical and societal relevance of nationally acknowledging the later, anti-vaxxers that compare state implemented corona measurements with the exclusion of the Jews leading up to the Holocaust, and the, mostly Christian, idolization of Jews (Oostveen 2022). In response, Wertheim argues that when different groups in the Netherlands talk about Jews, they often don't talk about actual Jewish people, but employ this historically and politically charged *concept of the Jews*, to advance and push political agendas. These political operationalizations aren't new and often carry antisemitic (hate for Jews) or philosemitic (love for Jews) tropes in them. Whether stereotypes are framed negatively or positively, they ascribe meaning to Jews as Jews, a dehumanizing mechanism with harmful implications (Gans in Ensel and Gans 2016: 154).

This presence of *The Jews* in Dutch awareness could be approached with Gloria Wekker's concept of the "cultural archive" (2016: 50). An analytical framework to think about an unprocessed Dutch colonial history and the subsequently (to most white Dutch) invisible anti-Black racist "substructures" (ibid: 51) that continue to shape Dutch awareness. Thinking with Wertheim's analyses of the weaponization of *The Jews* for moral and political positionings, and Wekker's concept of the "cultural archive", I argue that the appropriations of *The Jews*, an abstraction of a group that serves as a vehicle for political meanings, continues to construct an imagination of *The Jews* in Dutch awareness as Other, as victim, as historical or mythical figure, as aggressor in the Middle-East, rather than coevals in Dutch society today. These invisible processes that continue to structure the imagination of Dutch Jews as Other in a Dutch postwar context mix with the seemingly innocuous Dutch form of "[p]assive, or latent, antisemitism, based on deep-rooted Christian, socio-economic and cultural prejudices and anti-Jewish stereotypes […]" (Gans in Ensel and Gans 2016: 64). These antisemitic "substructures" are often implicit, rather than the explicitly political and racist antisemitism like exercised by (neo)Nazis. This passive antisemitism was foregrounded by historian Dienke Hondius as enough for a commonly accepted distance between Jews and non-Jews, possibly leading to the scarce effective solidarity with Jews during the second world war in the Netherlands (ibid).

So what is Jewish from a Jewish perspective? How do Dutch Jews negotiate these historical sociocultural realities? Marlene de Vries conducted a study about the religious and ethnic ties to Judaism among a sample of 1036 Dutch Jews between the age of 18 and 95 in 2010. This study foregrounds the various ways in which Dutch Jews define themselves "[…] as a Jew, as someone of Jewish descent [...]" (2010: 58). This amounted to the formulation of two "substantive factors" (2010: 59) through which Dutch Jews relate to Judaism, Jewish identity and their sense of being Jewish. The first being a socio-cultural domain where a sense of being Jewish is shaped by "[...] a cluster of

[11] *De Joden* has a local connotation in a Dutch context that gets lost in translation here. This connotation is hard to graps in words but might be reflected in the ways that the Jews are weaponized in Dutch public debates. This gives us an insight into the complicated position Jews hold in the Netherlands historically. This historical presence and influence of the Jews in the Netherlands, with the ungraspable events of the Shoah as a turning point for Europe as a whole, makes De Joden a charged concept in Dutch collective memory.
[12] *Waar gaat het over als het over Joden gaat?*
[13] De Joden.

feelings, attitudes and behaviour with multiple dimensions, both secular and religious" (ibid). Being Jewish is experienced "[...] through a bond with other Jews or with Israel (usually accompanied in the latter case by a hefty dose of criticism), or through a certain kind of family culture that is considered "typically Jewish"' (ibid: 58).

Here, I need to address "[t]he overlap between Judaism and Jewish ethnicity" (Phillips 2010: 64). Because an exploration of non-religious Jewish identity, commonly categorized in 'the West' as 'secular', begs for a consideration of how religious and ethnic identity conflates. Talal Asad (1993) studied the genealogy of religion, localising the dichotomy of religion vs. secularism in a Christian historical context. Lambek (2019) continued in this vein, deconstructing the distinction made in academia and dominant (western) thinking as "[...] an opposition that may [...] be said to be part of secularism's own ontology" (ibid: 5). In Judaism, as lived religion, culture and ethnicity, these boundaries between the religious and the secular don't hold, as one research collaborator described to me:

> " It is very complicated, but in recent years, I think I started to understand what Judaism means to me. Of course, the first entrance that you have, that I had, to Judaism was the last name of my grandmother that covers half a Holocaust monument, you know. Like, oh fuck, all those people carried that name. So that's the Holocaust. That's the first entrance you have. After that the first point of entrance is religion. Yes, because that's what it is right? So the first Jewish things I did were religious, lighting Shabbat candles, going to Synagogue, and celebrating Holidays. But I intrinsically felt all that religious stuff wasn't really for me. Because I simply don't believe in God. So lately I feel and know, that the religion, the history, the tradition, the culture, their all... It's like a store where you can pick from. […] You have all those layers of history and tradition around you and you can pick something now and something else later. That's what I really love about Judaism. It has so many things to pick from. I'm reading this book now about Jewish magic, […] a lot of folklore, superstitions. Super interesting. Of course, it all hangs together, and I think the glue is, in English you say Peoplehood, I don't know how to translate that to Dutch"[14] (Jelle Zijlstra 03-03-23).

The second important "[...] source of Jewish identification derives from World War II and from anti-Semitism and is often accompanied by sensitivity to criticism of Israel by non-Jews" (De Vries 2010: 58). I recognize this sensitivity in myself. Even though I am very worried and critical about Israeli politics, I inherited the feeling from my elders that 'if shit hits the fan again', at least there is Israel. During the first decades after the second world war, the remnants of a deeply traumatized and scattered Dutch 'Jewish community' was dominated by "[…] a very Zionist atmosphere […],

[14] Ja het is heel erg ingewikkeld maar ik merk dat het voor mij, de laatste jaren, begin ik het denk ik steeds beter te begrijpen, wat Jodendom voor mij betekent. En natuurlijk de eerste ingang die je hebt, de eerste ingang die ik had, tot Jodendom was de achternaam van mijn oma die een half Holocaust monument bedekt weetjewel. Zeg maar echt oh fuck, het zijn echt... al die mensen die zo heten. Dus dat is de Holocaust. Dat is de eerste ingang die je hebt. En daarna was voor de eerste ingang religie. Ja, want dat is blijkbaar.. dat is wat het is toch? Dus het eerste Joodse wat ik deed was religieuze dingen, Shabbat kaarsen aansteken, naar de Synagoge, feestdagen vieren. En, ja ik ben er denk ik toch wel in die jaren.. ik zei ook altijd ja, ik voelde denk ik ook intrinsiek ook wel van ja dat religieuze dat is eigenlijk niet echt is iets voor mij. Want ik geloof gewoon niet in God. Alleen, de laatste tijd voel of weet ik gewoon van ja de religie en de geschiedenis, de traditie, de cultuur, dat zijn allemaal... het eigenlijk net een soort winkel waar je gewoon uit kunt kiezen. […] en je hebt die lagen van geschiedenis en traditie om je heen en daar kun je de ene keer dat uit pakken en de andere keer dat uit pakken. En dat vind ik heel mooi aan Jodendom. Dat je dus ook, ja dat het zoveel in zich heeft. […] Ik lees nu een boek, Joodse magie, hartstikke interessant. Wat dat dan weer is. Kabbalah, maar er is ook heel veel folklore, bijgeloof, meer volkse traditie. Super interessant. Het hangt wel allemaal met elkaar samen, en ik denk dat de verbindende factor, ja in het Engels zeg je Peoplehood, in het Nederlands weet ik niet zo goed hoe je dat moet vertalen. Ja volk. Volks.

accompanied by a deep lack of belief in the continuation of the Dutch Jewish community" (Brasz 2001: 154). A new generation grew up with the idea that there was no Jewish future in the Netherlands and that Israel was the solution, but this widespread Zionism has never led to mass migration, with a peak of "[...] 565 emigrants to Israel from the Netherlands in 1949 [...](ibid: 153-154). Jewish suffering wasn't given special attention in Dutch society, it was only in the late 1960s that Dutch Jews started to receive some recognition for their trauma" [...]and in 1972, the Jews openly protested the release of three German war criminals who were still imprisoned in the Netherlands. The media took an interest in the survivors and the Jews – as victims – were finally offered a chance to tell their own story" (ibid: 157). Yet, simultaneously, young Jews"[...] were not willing to be identified as victims alone [...]" and" [t]hey were looking for other ways to identify" (ibid).

Until this day, Jewish identity is a dynamic and changing phenomenon that continues to be explored individually and institutionally. For instance, the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam currently exhibits the exposition "Me, Jewish?!"[15], in which the diversity of Jewish issues and experiences constitutive of Jewish identity in the Netherlands are on display. My questions of self as an unaffiliated Dutch Jew born in 1996, simultaneously echos Jewish efforts to push back against negative and alienating over- and underemphasis of Jewish difference in Dutch society and offers a new contemporary expression of such efforts.

[15] Ik, Joods?! https://jck.nl/nl/tentoonstelling/ik-joods accessed on 12-06-23.

Research

Methodology, Operationalizations and Fieldwork

This research is geared towards understanding something about contemporary Jewish identity, intergenerational stories and memories, a search for belonging among unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews in a post-war Dutch society, and the huge and unanswerable yet relevant question that permeates this all, what is Jewish? I have explored these historical and socio-cultural interconnected domains that continue to shape Dutch Jewish experiences today, by doing open-ended research interventions with collaborators in which new Jewish experiences and exchanges could emerge. The result is a synthesis between a search for what is already there considering Dutch Jewish life, culture and Joy, and a manifestation of new joyful and communal Jewish experience for those collaborating on this project.

The field was the sum of these research interventions that were designed to create spaces for unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews to rethink their Jewish identities collaboratively, as an antidote to alienating and traumatic familiarity with their own Jewishness. These were conducted over the course of 10 weeks from the end of 2022 till May, 2023, and during the montage and writing period thereafter. This multitemporal and multi-spatial field was difficult to navigate, reflecting the demographic realities of unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews. On January 23rd 2023 I wrote in my field report:

Addressing the first forms of contact with the field requires some reflection on what kind of field I'm exploring. It is not a physical place, located somewhere for me to enter and exit from. The field in this research contains different places and times depending on appointments between participants and me. These come in the form of phone calls and physical meetings in people's houses and public [spaces]. This is in line with [the research argument], where [unaffiliated] Jewish Dutch life doesn't play out in an organized/established communal place. Jewishness becomes relevant in different contexts with different people and is often not bound to a physical location (although it can be). The collaboration on this film becomes the research site, a place where being Jewish is collaborated on...

To support this, I used an *open-ended approach* and I envisioned that the audio-visual research methods and their outcomes would become part of the expression and the development of Jewishness and Jewish identity of those that collaborated on the project (including myself). Here, I built on Lebow's (2008) analyses of autobiographical film, which often takes the shape of auto-ethnographic film by Jewish filmmakers. Autobiographical Jewish films, is the argument, become "part of, [and] even create the phenomenon they document" (Ginsburg 1995 cited by Lebow 2008: xxvii) and thus become "[...]part of the process of the re-invention(s) of contemporary Jewish identity" (ibid). Therefore, us the term *research collaborators* because the fieldwork was a collaboration on a future-facing re-claiming of Jewishness amongst Jewish peers. This work was very new to some (including me), and complementary to others' creative and brave personal/communal work (like Oy Vey is doing) to blow fresh air through the traumatic parts of their Jewish heritage and knead it into something fruitful and new. I feel that due to the historical distance from the Shoah, a new space opens to reconnect to Jewishness 'on Jewish terms' in the Netherlands.

Open-ended research "[...]begs for good organisation and planning where "[j]ust letting things happen" is the most difficult and demanding form of practice, because it supposes that you have already cleared enough space within the semi-conscious layers of your personality for something *other than yourself, more than yourself,* to happen" (Snowdon 2017: 9). This 'more than yourself' is exactly the kind of imaginative space I engaged with this research. To do so I worked with Anne Chahine's methodological tool "future memory work", a "speculative practice" designed to "use the potential of the future to elevate the present in conjunction with the past" (2022:1). Chahine employed this tool to study how indigenous Kalaallit youth of the Arctic make sense of their lives in societies

where they are Othered through a linear and evolutionist temporal framework through which they are not considered coevals. They are imagined as mere part of the past, and in this way hegemonically controlled within the society they live in. Dutch Jews in Dutch society are Othered in similar ways where Jews are imagined as victims of the Shoah or aggressors in Israel, clouding engagement with the idea that Jews are coevals in Dutch society. Moreover, both Gentiles and unaffiliated Dutch Jews eternalize such hegemonic Dutch narratives about Jews growing up in the Netherlands, which is illustrated by the following fieldwork experience.

Hannah Oldenburger, one of the main research collaborators on this project started working at the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam as a tour guide to become more familiar with her own Jewishness a year ago. She told me that being Jewish was strongly defined by the memory of the Shoah in her family. With lasting effects, as her 87-year-old grandmother still didn't "come out" (Freedman 2001) Jewish to her friends. When Hannah's mother was growing up, she wasn't allowed to tell in school that she was Jewish either and she refused to participate with Hannah in this project. But Hannah, like me, wants her Jewishness to be more than something to hide. One day she gave me a tour through the old Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam (where the museum is located). At some point, she stops and contemplates that she has learned so much about Jewish history and life in the past year, and that previously she "[...]also thought that Jews ceased... with the war. That they didn't continue to exist. And that [she] actually didn't know anything about the rich history of Jews in the Netherlands, and in particular in Amsterdam" (Hannah, 05-02-23)[16]. It's hard to grapple with, but an unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jew tells me she didn't realize Jews continued to exist after the war. This might reflect the hegemonic power of constructions of *The Jews* as many things but coevals in Dutch society. Yet, Hannah is finding alternatives for this internalized narrative of the Jews as historical figures by working in the Jewish Museum, where she engages with Jewish culture in her daily life. The search for new joyful familiarity with being Jewish often takes the shape of unlearning the problematic framing of Jews while making space and finding language for another story. Doing this together through research interventions changes a sense of being Jewish ánd creates a sense of belonging, as Hannah expressed during one of our conversations that" due to our conversations, I found some sort of peace. [...] Now I know that people like you exist, and I know that I am not the only one thinking about these things" (Hannah, 26-05-23).[17]

To support this collaborative nature of looking for a new Jewish story of self, I conducted a 'collaborative auto-ethnography (Chang et al. 2013) to use both "emotional self-reflexivity" (ibid: 19) and "researcher-participant intersubjectivity" (Foster, McAllister and O'Brien 2006: 47 cited by ibid: 18) as a methodological research approach. By doing so I prioritized the intersubjective and relational nature of Jewish experience and was able to analyse my own experiences in the field 'as a window to society' (ibid: 21). Chang et al. define collaborative auto-ethnography as

> "a qualitative research method in which researchers work in community to collect their autobiographical materials and analyze and interpret their data collectively to gain a meaningful understanding of sociocultural phenomena reflected in their autobiographical data" (2013: 23-24).

Accordingly, I intended to work horizontally with research collaborators placing my own story amongst theirs during fieldwork to explore what it means to be an unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jew

[16] '[...]dat ik ook dacht dat Joden ophielden... met de oorlog. Dat ze niet meer voortbestonden. En dat ik eigenlijk ook helemaal niet wist over de rijke geschiedenis die Joden in Nederland en voornamelijk dus in Amsterdam hebben.'

[17] "Door onze gesprekken heb ik ook wel echt een soort rust gevonden van […] dat ik weet dat er mensen zoals jij bestaan en dat ik nu weet dat ik niet de enige ben die over dit soort zaken nadenk" (Hannah, 26-05-23).

together, which simultaneously changed the experience into something new, more alive and shared. The auto- was a strength and a weakness. My personal fieldwork experiences were rich data sights and a good compass throughout the research. Moreover, being transparent about my own questions, insecurities and experiences as an unaffiliated Dutch Jew was a powerful elicitation method and a real heartfelt way to learn intersubjectively about Jewishness with research collaborators. Like reflected in this excerpt I wrote after an unstructured interview with Sam Ghilane in her home:

I'm eager to talk to her because she has a way of explaining in which I recognize myself. There is something powerful in recognizing yourself in someone else's language of self. Hearing experiences so similar to your own, explained in new ways that help you think your own story" (TDA2, 13-04-23)

While my embodiment of the research issue proved productive as it informed my research constantly, it also troubled my ability to keep the necessary analytical distance to do ethnography occasionally. My conversations with collaborators affected me deeply, making it difficult to treat those experiences as research materials. This resulted in a struggle to fit these, in a way therapeutic experiences, into a research story as every theme and conversation was relevant to me personally. But during the film montage and writing of this text, I found a structure around themes that emerged through the fieldwork experiences and material analyses.

The collaborative aspect of my methodology played out differently as I didn't analyse the auto-ethnographic data with collaborators after producing it as Chang et al. envisioned it. Rather, the research interventions were collaborative efforts to share experiences and find language to express our fears, needs and dreams, and finding recognition and joy in doing so, changing the experience the research explores. So even though I intended to work horizontally, placing my own search for Jewish identity among others', I remain the researcher telling this research story. Yet, in line with their methodology, in this project "each participant contributes to the collective work in his or her distinct and independent voice. [While] [a]t the same time, the combination of multiple voices to interrogate a social phenomenon creates a unique synergy and harmony that auto-ethnographers cannot attain in isolation' (Chang et al. 2013: 24).

As being Jewish isn't necessarily a materialized or ritualized part of the identities of the research collaborators on this project, the speculative practice of "walking itineraries" (Moretti 2016: 96), helped to "[…]open a performative space: a time and place for inhabitants to take on, bend and respond to the many histories, questions and meanings that might be associated to particular locales" (ibid) like homes. The walking itineraries became elicitations of private (and sometimes public) spaces where Jewish meanings and family histories became tangible, in objects, monuments and stories, and the intimate activity of exploring their spaces together sometimes felt like an exploration of how to come home in Jewish meaning-making. Merav Krone and I conducted this practice together in her home after which I wrote in my TDA3 of 20-04-23:

Merav directs me to a shelve on which she placed two stones with blue cracked ceramic glazing. 'So, I wanted to show you these stones that Boaz gave to me...' She puts her hands on one of them as an embarrassed smile appears on her face. 'But, well I thought this is also very interesting because... I turned them around.' She turns the stones around and first it takes a second to see why she gives me the impression that she is revealing something quite intimate to me. And then I see the Jewish symbols engraved in the stones. A Menorah and a star of David. 'Oh! You turned them around. Why?' I want to know. 'Yeah, I'm not so sure about it. I don't really like it when it's so prominently visible actually. But that's just intuitive. It's not really based on something.' 'You want to hide it a little bit actually.' I say invitingly, hoping she will elaborate. 'Yes.' She says with the same torn expression on her face. 'But I'm a little ashamed that I want to do that'. She adds. 'It's not like I really know... I can't reason why. So I always find that a sad idea.'

Montage

Montage is an inherent process in all 'artistic, cultural and academic practices" (Suhr and Willerslev 2013: 1) but becomes specifically important when engaging "the "invisible", whether understood in terms of vision or in the form of hidden ideological, economic, psychological, or magico-religious structures" (ibid: 2). In film montage, one can use artistic expressions to evoke invisible realities that often precede visible manifestations in social realities. Transcending academic legacies in visual anthropology like rejecting naïve realism, the idea that our senses grand us direct and transparent access to reality "as it is" (ibid), and efforts to make the invisible visible in Marxist traditions geared towards making people 'see' how their lives are controlled by invisible forces (ibid), Suhr and Willerslev argue that these traditions obscure engagement with the invisible as a domain of social life in and of itself. They opt for montage as a tool that can "[…]make present by a certain absence the invisible ground of the visible world" (ibid: 4). Instead of depicting the invisible, montage can evoke it. As I inquire the intangible and invisible human experiences of intergenerational identity construction and feelings of (not) belonging, film montage became an important analytic in this project.

Moreover, new meanings emerge from montage synergies. The authors use Eisenstein's (1949) concept of "surplus" to describe this emergence of new meanings as edited assemblages that amount to more than the sum of its elements and can "[…] provide the viewer with a reality that is more real than the objects seen in isolation […]" (ibid). This research brings together a fragmented whole of stories, memories, and places that play into a sense of being Jewish for unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews in Amsterdam, showing through montage how research collaborators search for new Jewish meanings and how these quests function in a wider (invisible) generational narrative. Montage is an analytical tool that enables us to communicate the unstable and fragmented nature of human experience (ibid 17-19) and is a method to approach memory as a "[…] highly pictorial, yet ultimately invisible and irreproducible phenomenon" (Grossman 2013: 199). As the search for Jewish identity of research collaborators on this project are messy, complex and emotional, a mere translation to written text might have "[made] a mess of describing it" (Law 2004: 1). Where academic written texts ask for conclusions, "[…]in films the complexity of people and objects implicitly resist the theories and explanations in which the film enlists them, sometimes suggesting other explanations or no explanations at all" (MacDougall 2006: 6). To account for the complex and dynamic social issues that anthropologists inquire, they have struggled to find "[…] language metaphorically and experientially close to them" (ibid). Through my audio-visual text, I created a language of sensorial, emotional and embodied knowledge that may answer to some of the invisible domains of human life. Through montage, I created a film-space in which an audience is invited to not only think but also feel along my arguments and learn something both intellectually and emotionally.

While filming I anticipated possible sequences and narrations which is described as "in-camera editing" (Postma 2021: 131), in that way recording "[…]images and sounds that both support and generate ideas" (Lawrence 2020: 60). Here I was inspired by Chantal Akerman's film *News From Home (*1977), in which she juxtaposes establishing shots on the streets and down subway stations of New York City with a voice-over in which she reads the letters her mother sent her, she lays bare a sense of 'the invisible'. Or rather, in the layering of image and sound, an experience of belonging/not belonging in these urban spaces is generated. Although I didn't use voice-over in my film, my voice is present in most filmed instances and I counter this subjective embodied filming with establishing shots of Amsterdam, suggesting the invisible search for Jewish meaning in Dutch society.

This foregrounds the auto-ethnographic as MacDougall writes, "[t]he portrayal of subjective experience becomes a strategy for re-situating anthropological understanding within the multidimensional richness of a society" (1999: 95). To account for the collaborative in audio-visual research methods, I borrow the film technique of "participatory camera" as the MacDougalls used in their film *The Wedding Camels* (1978). This method alters the power relation between filmmaker and subject as interactions between what happens before and behind the camera become part of the

content. Doing so allowed for an intersubjective narrative to unfold where an audience can get an insight into the conflicting and changing moments, questions and perspectives, in short, the uncertainties and resilience that come with questions around unaffiliated Jewish identity in the Netherlands today. This helps challenge and complicate often unconscious but problematic associations with Jews in Dutch society by offering an accessible story of a contemporary Jewish experience.

Reflexive Analyses with a Conceptual Lens.

Presence in Absence: Intergenerational implications

Although "the exact demographic story of the destruction of Dutch Jewry during the Nazi period will quite likely never be written" (Tammes 2017: 294), the Jewish demographic of Amsterdam was unmistakably altered due to the Shoah. Tammes establishes that in 1941 77000 Jews lived in Amsterdam, amounting to more than half of the Dutch Jewish population of 140000 (Croes 2006). Since the war, Jewish communities have been re-established in the suburban areas of Amstelveen and Buitenveldert, but in the Amsterdam Jewish quarter around Waterlooplein and the Weesperstraat, Jewish life was replaced with Jewish memorials and museums and the lack of Jewish life (bakeries, restaurants, shops) in Amsterdam remains to this day.

For postwar generations, "identity formation and the making of personhood exist within a continuum of trauma" (Aarons and Berger 2017: 46) and they "attempt to recreate the past in response to absence" (ibid: 47). Youth "construct a historical identity" through "intergenerational transmission of recent history" (Achugar 2016: 1) while they act as "cultural agents" in "peer-to-peer discursive processes" through which they shape "the process of transmitting the past" (ibid: 103). "Intergenerational transmissions" (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein 2014) entail different kinds of communicative processes that contribute to cultural continuation and change. Engagements with the Shoah became a practice of "borrowed memory" (Aarons and Berger 2017: 42) where the experiences of elders become "[…] an internalized past, […] in which atrocity literally reverberates through the minds and lives of subsequent generations" (Hoffmann 2004 cited by Aarons and Berger 2017: 42). Moreover, Holocaust representation in popular culture translates "traumatic memory" into "post memories" too (Liss 1998: 85), making (an imagination of) the Shoah omnipresent in our society and Jewish consciousness today.

I encountered a variety of these processes amounting to coping mechanisms with the intergenerational legacy of the Shoah in the families of research collaborators, varying from shame, denial and efforts to reconnect with Jewish culture and life. As Sam Beek told me during an unstructured interview: "I didn't know I was Jewish for a while. I think I was five or six when my grandmother told me. And my grandfather got really angry with her that she did. They really fought about it. And then I gave a presentation about being Jewish in school" he adds with a laugh (17-02-23)[18]. Sam's elders didn't agree on whether to tell him he is Jewish, and their quarrel informed him about the precarity of revealing his Jewish identity. In response to these family events, he felt like he had to figure something out about Jewry. Unaffiliated millennial Jews negotiate their (grand-) parents' identifications and/or rejections of Jewish identity, often by trying to learn something about Jewish history and culture and making something of their own Jewishness. Like I'm doing with this research. Yet, in another family, Jewishness isn't hidden, on the contrary, it rarely doesn't come up. Romée Swaab's sense of being Jewish is ignited by:

> "The stories they [her elders] tell. Especially my aunt who is almost eighty and my dad who is almost seventy. It is absurd, but they can tell family stories from 1860. It feels more... okay maybe this sounds really bad, but it feels more tribal, as if we're a tribe. That oral history goes back 160 years already! And why do I think that's Jewish? It could also be a family thing. But it does feel like a Jewish thing to me. Maybe because I link it to; this family was erased, and doesn't exist anymore. This is where we come from. I feel that very strongly. […] There is this atmosphere of storytelling and sharing about Jewish history. How these people lived.

[18] Een tijdje lang wist ik nog niet dat ik Joods was. Ik denk dat ik 5 of 6 was, toen heeft mijn oma me dat verteld. En toen is mijn opa daar ook heel boos over geworden. Daar hebben ze echt ruzie over gehad. En toen heb ik een speekbeurt gegeven over Joods zijn op school.

> They say: "Your great great great great granddad Bram, something something..." That makes it so tangible. I really connect that to Jewish identity" (Romée, 15-02-23).[19]

Besides "discursive practices" like oral histories, intergenerational transmissions as communicative processes can be "embodied practices" (Achugar 2016: 3) as well, where undiscussed Shoah trauma in families informs how unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews experience their Jewishness. As Elfi Boink put it:

> "It's all shreds of events... […] You don't really have whole stories about grandpa's and grandma's, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, but... Because it is such heavy stuff, it's still a lot... There is a big load, and maybe less real information, but you know it's a lot. It's charged" (Elfi, 30-01-23)[20].

Families deal differently with genocide-inflicted trauma, taking pride in their long Jewish lineages, or distancing from it as it is too painful. In any case, family stories give us a sense of belonging and direction in life (Jones and Ackerman 2018), and "[…]convey the shared, ongoing narratives of family memory, persistent beyond any single member, that a family builds to create a sense of collective identity and connection across multiple generations" (ibid: 1). Narratives help us interpret our past, present and future and therefore play an important role in making sense of ourselves and the world, especially in the case of negotiating traumatic experiences (Kellas and Trees 2006). Elfi's response to growing up "[…] somewhere, where something is not spoken of" (Elfi, 17-03-23) is to engage with Jewish spaces like Oy Vey and this research. During an Oy Vey event on the 28th of November 2022, Elfi explained that she was participating to learn something about Jewish culture for her to pass on to her own children Naim and Mimoen. Through the absence of family (stories) there is a sense of loss that needs to be repaired. She is doing future work here as she is actively rethinking her Jewishness, driven by an imagination of "[…] an idealized future", where she imagines bringing at least some Jewish tradition into the household her children grow up in, as a response to the legacies of "[…] a realized past" (Polak 1973: 1).

Besides intimate spaces where intergenerational transmissions in family relationships shape a sense of being Jewish in research collaborators, public memorialization of Shoah victims also continues to shape 'the Dutch Jewish' experience. Erll introduces the concept of "cultural memory" as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts", where practices of remembering happen individually, socially and nationally (2008: 2). In Amsterdam public spaces, German occupation, some actions and inactions by the Dutch in response, and the death of many war victims are memorialized in monumental sights. Space is being made for Jewish death in different locations

[19] "[…] wat voor mij het meest Joods aanvoelt is de orale geshiedenis. Dus echt de verhalen die ze vertellen. En vooral mijn tante en vader, zij is bijna tachtig hij is bijna zeventig. Ik vind het absurt. Zij kunnen dus vertalen vertellen over familie uit 1860. Dat voelt dus ook een beetje, misschien klinkt dat heel fucked up, maar het voelt dus meer een soort van tribal. Alsof we een tribe zijn. Die orale geschiedenis gaat nu dus als 160 jaar terug. [...] En ik heb echt het idee, maar waarom denk ik dat dat Joods is? Dat kan ook een familie trekje zijn. Maar dat voelt dus wel voor mij heel Joods. Ook omdat dat volgens mij een beetje gelinkt is aan, deze familie is deels uitgeroeid, bestaat niet meer. Dit is waar wij vandaan komen. Super erg dat. En die verhalen... ze steken elkaar ook aan. Er ontstaat een soort sfeer van verhalen delen, storytelling, geschiedenis. […] Joodse geschiednis delen. Hoe er toen geleefd werd. Ze hebben het echt dan nog over, jullie over over overgroot vader Bram, blablabla, dat maakt het zo invoelbaar. Dat link ik heel erg aan de Joodse identitiet. […] En ook het gevoel van, na deze generatie zijn ze weg, als ik er niks mee ga doen." (Romée Swaab 15-02-23).

[20] "Het zijn allemaal flarden van gebeurtenissen.. Je hebt niet echt hele verhalen over opas en omas, tantes , ooms, neven, nichten... Maar omdat het zo zwaar is, is het nog steeds veel. D'r is veel lading, en misschien minder echte informatie. Maar je weet dat het veel is. Het is beladen."

throughout the city, from Stolpersteine[21] to statues like de Dokwerker[22], the national monument on Dam Square and several museums. More recently, the national Holocaust monument was opened, a memorial in which all the names of killed Shoah victims are housed on walls of stones, like was done in the 1995 published book *In memoriam-Lezecher* (Tammer 2017: 300). These efforts have indispensable importance for descendants of war victims, as my grandmother explained emotionally why she organized the placement of Stolpersteine for her grandparents and aunt: "That's what Doortje [her mother] would have really wanted, just being able to go to a cemetery and take care of the grave of [her] parents" (Marian, 31-02-23).[23] And to society at large, as these sights of remembrance are significant for educational purposes and historical awareness. But they have another unintended effect.

Spokes, Denham and Lehmann published a book on "[…] how the dead continue to inhabit space and place, and how this impacts and reflects differing approaches to memorialization" (2028: 8). They argue that "difficult heritage" (ibid: 7) often becomes a political tool as the commemoration of the infamous death is often politized by states and organizations. Moreover, these spaces tend to become sights of "dark tourism" (Busby and Deveraux 2015) where memorialization is framed through a consumption lens and these places become tourist attractions, like the Anne Frank house. To explore spaces in Amsterdam where Shoah victims are commemorated, I filmed twelve commemoration sights. During this fieldwork experience, the busy city life and the stillness of the monuments contrasted sharply, creating a sense of loss in me. Filming at the National Holocaust Name Monument I felt like the world kept spinning while all those names remained still, silenced forever. As the memorialization of Jewish death structures public spaces, they also shape the experiences of Jews moving through those spaces. As Chaja T. Merk expressed:

> "I think we don't realize, as Jews in a non-Jewish environment, that space is only created, in this [public] space that we find ourselves in, for dead Jews. So, you walk on the streets here, biked over here, passing Stolpersteine, the Name Monument, and the Jewish Historical Museum. You came here through a non-Jewish space and everything presented to you, was space for dead Jews. In Amsterdam.... in the Netherlands, no space is being made for living Jews. And that's actually very indicative of our experience as Jews in the Netherlands. Without us, or the non-Jewish people, being aware of this" (Chaja 03-03-23)[24].

Chaja's statement carries a sense of not belonging in these spaces that I re-constructed through film montage. I did so by showing that Jewish life in the Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam was replaced by memorials of Jewish death. I juxtaposed shots of the National Name Monument on the Westerstraat with a more intimate research moment on Merav's couch, where she explores this same space in google maps. Practising a "walking itinerary" through her home together, she ended up guiding me through an online space to engage what was lost in her family, as her great-grandparents ran a chocolate shop on the Weesperstraat before the war.

---

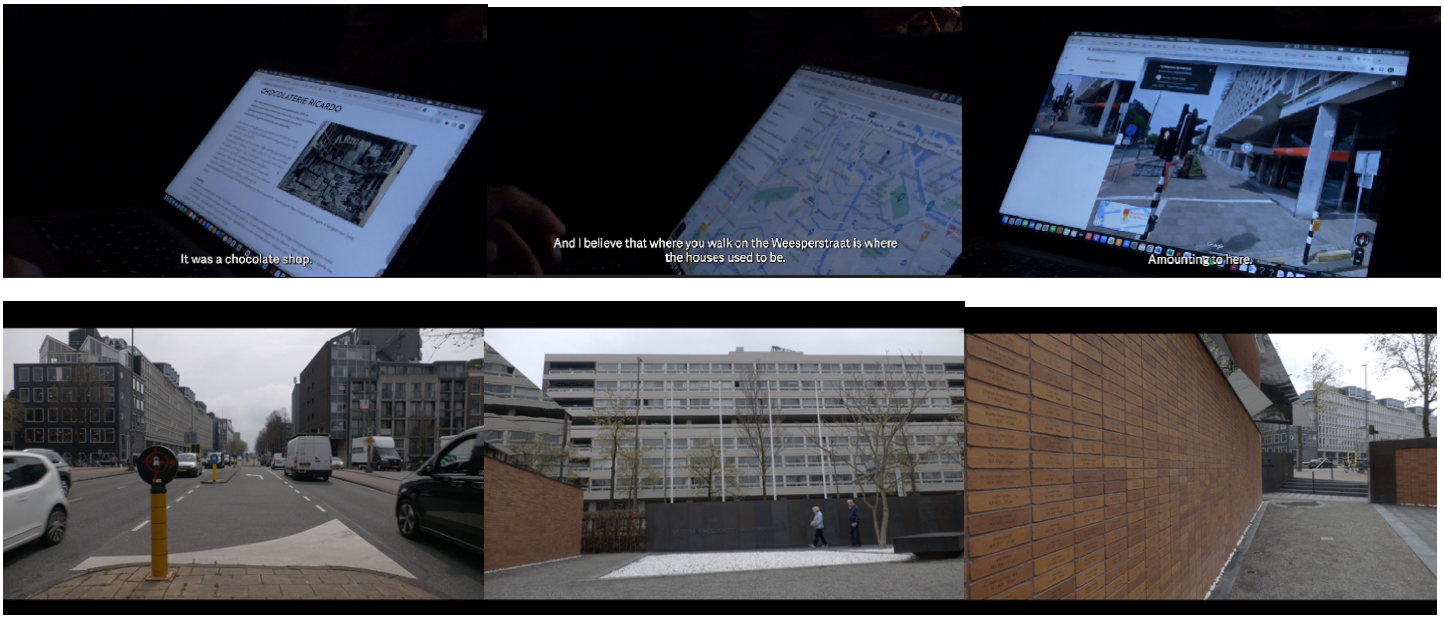
[21] Stumbling stones or 'Stolpersteine' are ten-centimetre square brass plated stones engraved with life dates of deported Jews. These stones are placed in sidewalks at the last voluntary addresses of the commemorated. The project is multi-spacial monument that was initiated by the German artist Gunter Demnig. Stolpersteine function in public spaces throughout Europe as stones one can stumble upon, integrating commemoration into the daily.

[22] The Docker is a statue on the Daniël Meijerplein in Amsterdam that depicts the February strikes held in Amsterdam in 1941 against the discriminatory measurements held against Jews in Amsterdam.

[23] "Dat had [Doortje] heel graag gewild. Gewoon naar een begraafplaats gaan en... het graf van [haar] ouders verzorgen."

[24] "Ik denk dat we ons niet beseffen, als joden in een niet joodse ruimte, dat er alleen ruimte wordt gecreeërd, in deze ruimte waar wij zijn, voor dode joden. Dus jij loopt hier over straat, jij bent hier naartoe gefietst, langs Strompelsteine, langs het Namenmonument en langs het joods historisch museum. Je bent hier naartoe gekomen door een niet joodse ruimte en alles wat aan jou werd getoond was ruimte voor dode joden. Er wordt in Amsterdam... er wordt in Nederland geen ruimte gemaakt voor levende joden. En dat is eigenlijk heel erg tekenend voor onze ervaring als joden in Nederland. Zonder dat wij, of de niet Jood, zich daar bewust van is".

The juxtaposition of the family stories with the absence of Jewish life in these places today evokes a sense of loss and the inaccessibility of 'our' Jewish heritage. The second-hand memories Merav tells me about her great grandparents running the shop, connect her to a time she didn't live through but keeps engaging to think about her Jewish present.



The following argument I make is an arduous one and the risk of being misunderstood or being offensive to others is high. Therefore, I will try to be clear and careful with the following statement. I argue that the focus on Jewish dead in public spaces contributes to the continuous construction of Jews as eternal victims in the past in Dutch public awareness, disrupting a sense of belonging for Dutch millennial Jews in Amsterdam. Pushing back against this Othering effect is balancing a heavily charged line between needed remembrance, commemoration and respect for those killed for being Jewish in recent history and creating space for contemporary Jewish life. Luckily, Jewish efforts are being made to imagine and rethink what this new Jewish presence in Dutch public space could look like, as Ruth Carlitz expressed during an Oy Vey meeting on how to repair a Jewish community:

> "So we were talking about different ways to repair the Jewish community. And also invest in and support Jewish life. And we thought a bakery could be really revolutionary. A bakery could be visible, appealing, attractive. You see it, you smell it, you want to go in. But it could appeal not just to someone walking by, who is hungry and wants some babka, but also could sell matzah blessed by the rabbis in Israel and really bring together different facets of the community" (Ruth, 30-01-23).[25]

Oy Vey organizes the collective rethinking and co-creating of Jewishness in the Netherlands today. Intersubjective Jewish spaces are created collaboratively, and both the organization and their events are organized horizontally, to consider what being Jewish *could* mean by imagining a Jewish future in Amsterdam. This generates more positive and intimate experiences with being Jewish as an antidote to negative historical, cultural and societal processes previously discussed. Doing this research was creating such a space, for myself and research collaborators to learn from each other, find recognition in each other's stories and questions, and build a future-oriented Jewish experience together, by making these new connections among peers. Yet, another narrative plays into a sense of (not) belonging for unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews. The idea that Jews living outside of Israel supposedly live "in the diaspora" (Adam, 22-05-23), as my dad expressed it.

[25] This statement was made in English.

Israel and (Contemporary) Antisemitism

Sense of Not Belonging

Israel, in all its historical, religious and political forms, is an undeniable dimension of Jewish life and consciousness. Yet, how Jews relate to Israel varies greatly and subsequently, research collaborator's relationality to Israel varied from complete rejection of any connection to feeling very strongly that Israel is their second home. The idea and reality of Israel as a Jewish homeland and state is contested and defended both by Jews and Gentiles and how meanings of diaspora operate in contemporary Jewish experience is diverse and complex. "Historically, Jews have harboured complicated relationships towards the idea of a Jewish homeland […]" (Aviv 2011: 33).

In 2021 violence in Palestina and Israel revived and so did media coverage of these outbursts. Many people in my online progressive bubble re-posted the horrors that Israel was inflicting on Palestinians, asserting how Israel is an apartheid state and that its existence is an example of colonial imperialism. Although this language is familiar to me as an anthropology student, and I am too horrified by Israel's political climate (which I won't discuss here), a weird feeling took hold of me. I felt defensive. And I wondered, was it the fact that my dad was born there and speaks Hebrew? That I have family living in Israel? Or is it an intergenerationally transmitted nostalgia about a Jewish homeland, the idea of life insurance for diaspora Jews? Or maybe it was the fact that people used the words Israel and Jews interchangeably in their online activism that made me nervous. In response, I travelled to Israel to figure out how to relate to this place. And although this trip evoked more questions than it provided answers, I now had my own experience of Israel which played into my sense of being Jewish back in the Netherlands. Making a trip to a supposed homeland as a born and raised Dutch Jew speaks volumes about the complex, multi-sighted and multi-temporal space between the Netherlands and Israel in Jewish quests for belonging.

Sense of belonging plays a prominent role in diaspora experiences as well as in human experience more generally as we have a psychological "need to belong" (Baumeister and Leary 1995). The concept is defined psychiatrically as "[…] the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment" (Hagetry et al. 1992: 172). Theorists engaging with questions about Jewish identity have adopted queer theory to approach Jewishness, where "passing" for something you are not (straight and/or belonging to a white Christian European experience) and "coming out" (as queer and/or Jew) are negotiated in both experiences (Freedman 2001). This leads to the instances where Jews might 'pass' as white, until the point they 'come out' as Jewish. Jewishness is the argument, in the same vein as Queerness, can be understood as a spectrum, diverse, complex and Othered in different contexts. The Jewish Museum in Amsterdam hosted the exhibition "Are Jews White?" (2021)[26] where Jewish positionality with regard to contemporary identity and representation politics was explored. Are Jews seen as victims or perpetrators, and how do they think about that themselves? Being a Dutch Jew means to belong and not to belong in a Dutch cultural system, because Jewish identity is complex and disrupts simple dichotomies of Blackness and Whiteness. A sense of not belonging can be evoked by being considered as Other in social situations, enforcing a sense of belonging among Jews as they share this precarious experience. Whether you are considered Dutch or Jewish, can shift in moments, as Charley Spaan told me:

> "In Highschool, I wasn't really thinking about it [being Jewish]. But in the higher grades, people started being more politically and socially engaged. We watched the film Five Broken Cameras in class and during history class thereafter, we discussed the film. And all of a sudden, some people turned to me, with their emotions. They were angry and sad because of

[26] Zijn Joden Wit?

> the film. And shocked. It is about Palestinian life under the occupation. And I was like, but what do I have to do with this? I have nothing... I don't have family in Israel. […] I ended up crying. […] That's when I started to realize oh, I'm Jewish, and other people think something about that too" (Charley 22-02-23)[27].

This suspicion of Jewish loyalty laying elsewhere than with the Dutch nation is an old antisemitic trope (Gans in Ensel and Gans 2017: 18). Experiences like this instil a sense of not belonging in Dutch Jews as the way they are perceived in Dutch contexts can alter suddenly when Israel enters the discussion. This contextual sense of belonging ánd not belonging in Dutch society might be a reflection of "the long-term unease with Jewish presence in Dutch society" (Ensel and Gans 2017: 12). Despite centuries of Jewish presence in the Netherlands, it remains hard to see Dutch Jews as such, both Dutch and Jewish. Stratton describes European Jews as a "Western Other", part of a constructed Other in an orientalist sense (Shoah victims) and often "considered to be white, Western, and European" (2000: 2) (as Dutch, and as Western in the Israeli context). Jews don't fit the categoric differences made between the modern West and the racialized Other, complicating their position in European societies like the Netherlands. This plays into a sense of being Jewish as Mendel Landweer explained that:

> "[w]eirdly enough, I have a stronger connection with Israel because people want me to. And this is constantly interwoven with... Jewish identity is being confronted with other people's ideas about it […] and I feel more connected to other Jews because you share that experience. […] "Nowadays Israel comes into the mix easily. […] To many people it's the most Jewish thing they know, so when you say you're Jewish they connect you to Israel immediately. Or to be very religious. They don't know what else it can be" (Mendel, 21-02-23)[28].

The 'what else it can be' is hard to define. For unaffiliated Dutch millennial Jews, being Jewish amounts to the complex interplay of a shared history, familial and societal narratives and silences, and collective efforts to reclaim and rethink Jewish tradition and life. Historical narratives of Jews as victims, and conflations of Jews and Israel in critiques of the latter, hegemonically control Dutch Jews, leaving little room for Jewish agency. But Dutch Jews are here to stay and work actively against these forces to reclaim positive and alive spaces in the Netherlands, with this research project as an example of such work.

---

[27] "Op de middelbare school denk ik dat ik er niet echt mee bezig was. Maar vanaf de bovenbouw iets meer omdat mensen om me heen toen wat politiek of maatschappelijk geëngangeerder werden. En in de vierde of de vijfde keken we de film Five broken cameras. In de geschiedenis les daarna gingen we die bespreken en toen, richtten een aantal mensen zich opeens op mij. Met hun emoties, ze waren boos en verdrietig door de film. En geschokt. Je ziet het leven onder de bezetting in die film. En toen was ik van huh maar, wat heb ik hier nou mee te maken? Ik had echt niks... ik heb geen familie in Israel [...] Toen moest ik op een gegeven moment ook huilen. [...] Toen begon het een beetje van dat ik dacht oh je bent Joods en andere mensen vinden daar ook wat van."

[28] "Ik heb stom genoeg meer een band met Israel omdat mensen dat willen, dat je dat hebt. En dat is dus voortdurend wat er doorwoven zit... de Joodse identiteit is andermans ideeën d'r over waar je mee wordt geconfronteerd. [...] En voel ik me ook meer verbonden met andere Joden omdat je dat ook deelt ofzo. [...] Ja tegenwoordig komt natuurlijk heel snel Israel in de mix. [...] Voor heel veel mensen is Israel het meest Joodse wat ze kennen. Dus op het moment dat je dat uhm, dat je dat zegt dan verbinden mensen je daar ook aan. [...] of je bent heel religieus. [...] Veel mensen hebben niet zo'n beeld van wat het anders is."

Coming Out Jewish

Sense of Belonging

Although most research interventions were unstructured interviews and walking itineraries in the homes of unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews, sometimes there was a connection to more established Jewish life. One Saturday morning, Debby Abram Uijenkruijer hosted Hannah Oldenburger and me as her unaffiliated Jewish pupils, to celebrate Shabbat. After repeating the blessings Debby sang from her book of prayer and eating some of her delicious Kosher food, we sit and talk for hours. Debby explained:

> "Most Jews muddle along, or float a bit, a lot of mixed situations, a lot outside of the so-called 'Jewish community'. Most. So this muddling along is standard. […] I call them edge-Jews. So Jews that dangle on the edges. And that feel a need for community, support, understanding […]" (Debby Abram Uijenkruijer, 25-02-2023)[29].

Debby says that our quest for Jewish belonging is neither new nor unique. Jewish Social Work[30] provides care in the broadest sense of the word for Dutch Jews since 1946. Their initial focus was providing aid to Jewish Shoah survivors but from the eighties onwards their objectives broadened to attention to postwar generations, projects to strengthen Jewish identity and stimulate Jewish connections through the Netherlands[31]. Their objective is to provide Dutch Jews with communal services to reconnect with each other and Jewish life. This positions this work in a Dutch legacy of community work in which Jewish life and joy are prioritized in a post-war Dutch society, as Debby explained further:

"[…] And the fun thing about JMW is, you might think about social issues, with which you can also go to them by the way, they have therapies and whatnot. But they are all about, according to what is important in Judaism, and like you both are doing, is 'Lernen'. Learn about it. It can be about the war but also learn about something else. Try to face Israel differently for instance. Engage with it... and that's also therapeutic, right? That's how they see it. […] So your experience is totally normal. Very legitimate. A little difficult I would say. But you can really find support with each other, I think. Like the way we sit here now, the three of us" (Debby Abram Uijenkruijer, 25-02-2023) [32].

Sharing this time with Debby and Hannah and learning about Dutch Jewish efforts to restore and enjoy Jewish life in the Netherlands played into my sense of belonging as an unaffiliated Dutch Jew. I do feel that through these research interventions, I reconnected to my own Jewishness by learning

---

[29] "De meeste Joden klooien wat aan of dobberen een beetje, heel veel gemengde situaties, heel veel buiten de zogenaamde Joodse gemeenschap. De meeste. […] dus dat aanmodderen, dat is standaard. […] Ik noem dat maar rand-joden. Dus die een beetje aan de rand lopen te bungelen. En die wel behoefte hebben aan community, support, begrip. […]"

Joods Maatschappelijk Werk. Or JMW.

[31] Website of JMW, https://www.joods.nl/organisaties/joods-maatschappelijk-werk/), accessed on 15-06-23.

[32] "En wat het leuke is aan Joods Maatschappelijk werk, dan denk je aan maatschappelijke problemen, kan je ook mee terecht hoor, voor therapieën en wat dan ook. Maar bij hun gaat het erom, zoals het in het Jodendom belangrijk is en waar jullie ook mee bezig zijn, is lernen, leer d'r over, ga d'r mee bezig zijn. Kan wel over de oorlog zijn, maar ga nou ook over iets anders leren. Kijk Israel eens op een andere manier aan. Ben d'r mee bezig... en dat is ook therapeutisch he? Zo ziet JMW dat. […] Dus wat jullie hebben is volstrekt normaal. Heel legitiem. Beetje lastig wel. Maar dan kan je echt wel steun vinden bij elkaar, vind ik. Zoals wij hier nu zitten met zijn drieën".

collaboratively with others, sharing experiences and imagining a future for Dutch Jewish identity together. To contribute to this co-creation of new and joyful Jewish experiences further, I organized a potluck Purim party at my mother's house as a research intervention, inviting everyone that collaborated on this project. Purim is the Jewish Holiday that celebrates that the Jews were saved from annihilation in ancient Persia by Esther, the Jewish queen. Jews dress up and drink a lot of alcohol during this Holiday worldwide. What better way to co-create new joyful Jewish traditions and experiences with peers, than to throw a party and celebrate?

My grandmother Marian is sitting in the middle of the table, swept up in conversation with Hannah and Romée about their experiences with being Jewish. “What kind of role does Israel play for instance? Or religion? In my case very little, it’s mainly the war” Romée says. “For me that’s the same”, says Marian. “And do you feel Jewish?” Hannah asks her. “Well, maybe more and more... but in the past, it might be weird to say but... When someone asked me: Are you Jewish? I would say: Well, I have a Jewish mother. […] I must say... the way we sit here now... I never talk to anyone about being Jewish, well except for Eden”[33]. Although the whole evening felt very special, my mother reading the story of Esther to everyone, the abundance of food that everybody brought and the uplifting energy that buzzed through the living room as everyone seemed to be happy and excited to be here together, their conversation is more than I could have hoped for. Seeing my grandmother engage with being Jewish in this shared and joyful way was important, as being Jewish starts to be something more shared and alive for both of us.

[33] Excerpts from the conversation between Marian, Hannah and Romée, held during the Purim party that was a research intervention on 07-03-23.

In Conclusion

Being Jewish outside of institutional/religious life and in the shadow of determining narratives about the Shoah and Israel becomes a search for Jewish meaning and community. With this research, I explored and contributed to how unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews search for belonging by devising a visual auto-ethnographic and collaborative research project. The field became the sum of many research interventions through which intersubjective restorative work was done to rethink and co-construct new Jewish experiences in Amsterdam. With these research interventions, I explored how intergenerational stories and silences, complicated relationalities toward Israel, that are entangled with contemporary expressions of antisemitism, limit the space in which unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews manoeuvre their search for identity. Simultaneously, through these interventions, I created spaces for research collaborators to talk about their experiences as unaffiliated millennial Dutch Jews, which was new to many of us. These experiences became an antidote to the alienating and traumatic structures that shape their experience of being a Dutch Jew, by merely recognizing our own experiences in each other's stories and imagining what else it could mean to be Jewish. Oy Vey is a great example of such monumental and collaborative work, as they too create spaces to rethink and reclaim Jewish space in Amsterdam.

During the research process, a more intimate and joyful way of being Jewish emerged through the research experiences of collaborative learning in intersubjective spaces about Jewish history, tradition and contemporary life. The intimate research spaces created through unstructured interviews and walking itineraries through the material worlds of homes of collaborators and their families, unstructured audio-recorded interviews and Oy Vey meetings, became the multitemporal and multi-sited field, reflecting the fragmented whole that this 'group' is. My preliminary ideas about creating something more for my own Jewishness with others, while not knowing exactly what this 'something more' would be was a hard journey with many obstacles, from feeling like an imposter in Jewish spaces, speaking up about the hard to grasp experience of being a Dutch Jew, to the balancing act of learning about a Jewish past with a future-orientation, feeling the need to move beyond its legacies. An alienating way of feeling Jewish was familiar to me, and now I can say that a shared and more grounded way of being Jewish became familiar to me too through this research project. Research collaborators on this project found new ways to think and talk about their Jewish experiences collaboratively, and making a film about this search was highly personal and political as I hope that this work will contribute to dismantling some of the problematic unawareness around Jewish issues in the Netherlands.

Jewish issues did prove to be an ideal anthropological issue as Brink-Danan (2008) claimed, where Jewish life houses many historical, cultural and social issues, like postwar identity construction, intergenerational and collective memory and communal future work. Therefore, I hope that this research inspired not only the research collaborators on this project but also my fellow anthropologists to consider the lives of Jewish people as an anthropological issue because so much of their lives remains beyond the scope of this research. The stories are there to be picked up. and deserve further interest.

Multimodal References

Akerman, Chantal.
1977 *News From Home* (104 min). Carlotta Films.

BNNVARA
2023 *Het Beloofde Land.* (Series +- 50 min per episode).

Joods Cultureel Kwartier 17
February 2023 – 24 September 2023 *Ik, Joods?! (Me, Jewish?!)* Exhibition.

5 June 2021 – 1 August 2021 *Zijn Joden Wit?* (Are Jews White?) Exhibition.

MacDougall, David and MacDougall, Judith
1978 *The Wedding Camels. (*108 min.) The NAFA Film Collection.
https://nafafilm.org/? q=node/471

Myerhoff, Barbara
1976 Number Our Days (28 min).

Literature

Aarons, Victoria and Alan L. Berger.
2017 *Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History, and Memory*. Reprint edition. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press. Pp. 41-66.

Achugar, Mariana.
2016 *Discursive Processes of Intergenerational Transmission of Recent History: (Re)Making our Past*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 1-15.

Aviv, Caryn.
2011 The Emergence of Alternative Jewish Tourism. *European Review of History.* 18(1):133-43.

Baumeister, R. F. and Leary, M. R.
1995 Need to belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation. *Psychological Bulletin.* Pp. 497-529.

Bergmann, Martin S. and Jucovy, Milton E.
1990 [1982] *Generations of the Holocaust.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Blom, J. C. H., van den Berg, Hetty, and Wallet, Bart, Wertheim, David.
2017 *De Geschiedenis van de Joden in Nederland*. Balans

Brasz, Chaya
2001 After the Shoah: Continuity and Change in the Postwar Jewish Community of the Netherlands. *Jewish History* (15) 149–168. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Busby, Graham and Deveraux, Miss Helen
2015 Dark Tourism in Context: The Diary of Anne Frank. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation.* 6(1): 27-38.

Chahine, Anne
2022 Future Memory Work: Unsettling Temporal Othering Through Speculative Research Practices. *Qualitative Research* 0. https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/ doi/epub/10.1177/14687941221129804, accessed 24-11-2

Chang, Heewon, Faith Ngunjiri, Kathy-Ann C. Hernandez.
2012 *Collaborative Autoethnography.* Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press, INC.

Cole, Tim
2000 *Selling the Holocaust, from Auschwitz to Schindler: How History is Brought Packaged and Sold.* Routledge. New York.

Croes, Marnix
2006 The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies.* 20(3): 474-499 https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcl022

De Vries, Marlene
2010 Jews in the Netherlands and their various ties with Judaism. In: Westin, C., J. Bastos, J. Dahinden, P. Góis (eds.), I*dentity Processes and Dynamics in Multi-Ethnic Europe.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Pp. 53-72.

Ensel, Remco and Gans, Evelien.
2017 *The Holocaust, Israel and 'the Jew'" Histories of Antisemitism in Postwar Dutch Society.* Amsterdam University Press.

Erll, Astrid, Nünning, Ansgar and Young, Sara B.
2008 C*ultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. Pp. 1-15

Foray, Jennifer L.
2011 The Nation Behind the Diary: Anne Frank and the Holocaust of the Dutch Jews. *The History Teacher.* 44 (3): 329-352. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41303988

Frank, Geyla
1997 *Jews, Multiculturalism, and Boasian Anthropology.* American Anthropologist 99(4): 731-745.

Freedman, Jonathan
2001 *Coming Out of The Jewish Closet With Marcel Proust*. A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 7(4): 521-551.

Gloria, Wekker
2016 *Witte Onschuld*. Aup Algemeen.

Golin, Paul
2013 Judaism and the Singularity: Using Futurism to Predict Possible Trajectories of Jewish Identity and Community. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* (88):½

Goldscheider, Calvin
2016 Macro and Micro Insights into Contemporary Jewish Identities: Europe, Israel, and the United States. In: *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity.* Robinson, Ira, Naftali S Cohn and Lorenzo Ditommaso (eds.) Academic Studies Press Pp. 294-313.

Grossman, Alyssa
2013 Filming in the Light of Memory. In: Suhr, C., Willerslev, R. (eds.), *Transcultural Montage.* Berghahn Books pp. 198-212.

Hagerty, Bonnie M.K., Judith Lynch-Sauer, Kathleen L. Patusky, Maria Bouwsema and Peggy Collier.
1992 Sense of Belonging: A Vital Mental Health Concept. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing* 6(3) Pp. 172-177.

Hoffman, Eva
2005 *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History And The Legacy Of The Holocaust.* Public affairs New York.

Van Imhoff, Evert, Hanna van Solinge and Bert Jan Flim.
2002 A Reconstruction of the Size and Composition of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in the Netherlands, 1945. *Population Research and Policy Review* 20: Pp. 457–481.

Jones, Jasmine and Ackerman, Mark S.
2018 Co-Constructing Family Memory: Understanding the Intergenerational Practices of Passing on Family Stories. Montreal: ACM Digital Library.

Johns, Aviva N., Brown, Laura S., Demarni Cromer, Lisa
2021 Examining Intergenerational Transmission of Holocaust Trauma as it Relates to Jewish Identity, Communication Type, and Mental Well-Being. Department of Psychology, The University of Tulsa. Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

Kellas, Jody Koeing and Trees, April R.
2006 Finding Meaning in Difficult Family Experiences: Sense-Making and Interaction Processes During Joint Family Storytelling. *The Journal of Family Communication* 6(1): 49-76.

Kidpon, Carol A.
2008 Surviving a Distant Past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity. *Ethos* 31(4):513-544.

Lambek, Michael
2019 Facing Religion, from Anthropology. *Anthropology of this Century* 25(4). Online: http:// aotcpress.com/articles/facing-religion-anthropology/, accessed on 11-11-2022

Law, John.
2004 *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research.* London: Routledge.

Lawrence, Andy.
2020 *Filmmaking For Fieldwork.* Published by Manchester University Press.

Lebow, Alisa S.
2008 *First Person Jewish.* Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.

Liebman, Charles S.
2002 Jewish Identity in Transition: Transformation or Attenuation? In: *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe and Beyond.* Gitelman, Zvi, Barry Kosmin and András Kovács. Central European University Pess. Pp. 341-350.

Liss, Andrea.
1998 *Trespassing Through Shadows Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 85-114.

Macdougall, David.
1999a *Transcultural Cinema.* Princeton University Press. 2006b *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses.* Princeton University Press.

Marcy Brink-Danan
2008 Anthropological Perspectives on Judaism: A Comparative Review. Religion Compass 2(4): 674–688.

Mchitarjan, Irina and Reisenzein, Rainer.
2014 Towards a theory of cultural transmission in minorities. *Ethnicities 14*(2): 181-207.

Moretti, Christina
2016 Chapter 5 Walking. In: *A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies.* Culhane, Dara and Elliot, Denielle (eds.) University of Toronto Press. Pp. 91-112.

Oostveen, Margriet
2022 ‘In Nederland heeft bijna iederéén het over Joden om een eigen agenda veilig te stellen’. *De Volkskrant.* https://www.volkskrant.nl/mensen/in-nederland-heeft-bijna-iedereen-het-over- joden-om-een-eigen-agenda-veilig-te-stellen~ba9def05/, accessed on 03-11-2022

Oy Vey
2023 Oy Vey est. 5779. https://oyvey.nl/category/oy-vey-newsletter/ accessed on 15-06-23.

Palache, Ronit
2016 *Ontroerende Onzin: De Joodse Identiteit in het Nederland van Nu.* Prometheus Amsterdam.

Phillips, Bruce A.
2010 Accounting for Jewish Secularism: Is a New Cultural Identity Emerging? *Contemporary Jewry:* 30(1). Pp. 63-85.

Pink, Sarah
2001 *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research*. Sage Publications.

Pinto, Diana
2008 A New Role for Jews in Europe: Challenges and Responsibilities. In: *Turning the Kaleidoscope: Perspectives on European Jewry.* Lustig, Sandra and Leveson, Ian. (eds.) New York: Berghahn Books. Pp. 27-40.

Polak, Fred
1973 *The Image of the Future.* Elsevier Sientific Publishing Company.

Postma, Metje
2021 Observational Cinema as Pocess, Skill & Method. In: *Audiovisual and Digital Ethnography A Practical and Theoretical Guide.* Cristina Grassing et al. Pp. 114-142.

Silverstein, Sarah
2018 Frank Thoughts: Investigating the Construction of Anne Frank as a Site of Heritage and Identity Formation in a Globalized PostHolocaust Society. Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. 2959. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2959

Snowdon, Peter.
2017 Filming as a Relational Practice. Leiden University, Ongoing Draft in Constant Revision. https://multimodalethnography.nl/me-site1/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Snowdon-Filming-as-a- Relational-Practice-v1.4.pdf, accessed on 10-12-2022

Spokes, Denham and Lehmann
2018 *Death, Memorialization and Deviant Spaces*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Stratton, Jon.
2000 *Coming Out Jewish.* London: Routledge.

Suhr, Christian and Willerslev, Rane.
2012 Can Film Show the Invisible? The Work of Montage in Ethnographic Filmmaking. *Current Anthropology* 53(3).

Talal, Asad

1993 *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam.* Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.

Tammes, Peter

2017 Surviving the Holocaust: Socio-demographic Differences Among Amsterdam Jews. Eur J Population 33:293–318

Webber, Jonathan

2002 Notes Towards the Definition of "Jewish Culture" in Contemporary Europe. In: Gitelman, Zvi,, Barry Kosmin and András Kovács (eds.) Ne*w Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europa and Beyond. Ce*ntral European University Press. First Edition.

Wertheim, David

2022 *Waar Gaat het Over Als het Over Joden Gaat?* De Bezige Bij.

White, Renée T.

2021 I Dream a World: Black Panther and the Re-Making of Blackness. In: White, Renée T. and Ritzenhoff Karen A. (eds.) A*frofuturism in Black Panther: Gender, Identity, and The Re-Making of Blackness.* Lexington Books.

Willerslev, Rana and Suhr, Christian

2013 Introduction: Montage as an Amplifier of Invisibility. In: Willerslev, Rana and Suhr, Christian (eds.), *Transcultural Montage.* New York: Berghahn books. Pp. 1-15.