

Negotiating Consciousness, Pariahness, and Parvenuness through Social Justice Praxis:

Towards an anti-racist configuration of Jewish victimization

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the 2016 election cycle and Trump's election, Jewish Americans have experienced the integration of anti-Semitic rhetoric within political discourse, marking a climate shift for Jewish Americans. This has caused a tension not only discursively, but also within the Jewish community, a tension that is particularly palpable in Baltimore, which in combination with the Baltimore Uprising, has led to a divided experience and perception of what justice or a more equal society looks like. Through semi-structured interviews with ten white-Jewish Baltimoreans, this study will explore the phenomenology of social justice praxis, with a specific focus on Jewish participation or non-participation in anti-racist work. Hannah Arendt's typologies of the pariah and parvenu, as well as her emancipatory figure of the conscious-pariah, offer a way of thinking about Jewish emancipatory praxis while reimagining Jewish victimization. Given the contemporary context, this research seeks to understand how Jewish victimization impacts Jewish social justice praxis and how can a contemporary conscious pariah figure contribute to the abolition of the racial hierarchy and a more just society. The integration of critical race studies and interviews reveal an emancipatory typology outlined by participants from Jews United for Justice: (i) race-consciousness contextualizes anti-Semitism as an ideology of white supremacy and anti-black racism as a systemic issue, (ii) pariahness is situated as a chosen identity, not as pariah to systems of power, understands Jewish-pariahness in solidarity with black oppression, and sees themselves as pariah with parvenus, and (iii) a parvenu consciousness, as access to white power, is integrated into the emancipatory typology.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
TABLE OF FIGURES	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: JEWISH VICTIMIZATION	4
1.1 Complicating Victimization	7
1.2 Pariahs, Parvenus, and Conscious Pariahs	8
1.21 Arendt's Typology	9
1.22 Explorations of Arendt's Conscious-Pariah	13
1.23 Examining the Conscious-Pariah in the Contemporary American context	16
CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND THE JEWISH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE	18
2.1 Aesthetics of Victimization and Resistance	20
2.2 American Jews: Pariahs within Race?	23
2.3 Arendt's "Race Thinking:" Detours in Pariahness and Consciousness	27
CHAPTER 3: A BRIEF HISTORY OF JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE	32
3.1 Not So Hidden Tradition: Jewish Solidarity Work	34
3.2 White Anti-Racist Work	36
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	39
4.1 Discursive Borrowing: Examining Jewish studies with Critical Race Theory	39
4.2 Interviews from a Cultural Studies Approach	40
4.3 The Question: Thinking with Conscious Pariah	41
4.4 The Interviews	43
4.5 Sampling and Justice Work in the City	44
4.6 Limitations	47
4.7 Brief Background of Jewish Baltimore	49
CHAPTER 5: AN ANALYSIS OF JEWISH BALTIMOREAN'S SOCIAL JUSTICE PRAXIS	53
5.1 Coming to Pariah	53
5.11 Passive Resistance: Community and Jewish Customs as Praxis	57
5.12 Active Resistance: What are We Working Towards?	62
5.2 Constructing the Enemy	64
5.3 Pariahs to Black Liberation	68
5.31 Not (thinking with) Oppressor or Oppressed	68
5.32 Pariah to Parvenu and Pariah	74
5.4 To Conscious-Parvenu-Pariahs	78
5.41 Mobilizing the Parvenu through Pariah	85
CONCLUSIONS	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	98

TABLE OF FIGURES

Table 1.1 Guiding Topics.....	43
Table 1.2 Interviewee Information.....	47

INTRODUCTION

In the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States, Jews were categorized as other, pariah to whiteness and deemed subaltern. At this time, the exclusion of Jews was ambiguous, with a sizeable Jewish elite in parallel to quotas and rental agreements limiting Jewish access. After the Second World War, Jews were in essence allowed entrance into the “us,” institutional arrangements allowed for the Jewish adoption of white economic and cultural capital and Jews were considered white in the American census.¹ Jews, according to scholars of Jewish studies and critical race studies, became white, a classification that remained largely unthreatened in dominant discourse until the 2016 election season. Today, the emergence and empowerment of the Alternative Right, with figureheads like Steve Bannon and Richard Spencer, have led to an increase of anti-Semitic rhetoric—53 Jewish Community Centers (JCC) in North America received approximately 68 bomb threats,² reports of the desecration of Jewish tombstones,³ and Richard Spencer leading the alt-right in chanting “heil Trump, heil victory.”⁴ While this rhetoric may remain theoretical, a cliché populist narrative without institutional repercussions for the Jewish people, it signaled to many a shift in the framework of “us” and “them,” particularly for those Jewish Americans generations-removed from the Holocaust. This has caused a tension not only discursively, but also within the Jewish community, with some organizations and individuals showing their support for Trump, his policies, and nominees, and others who

¹To be expanded on later in the thesis. Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1998).

² Daniel Burke, “More Bomb Threats Target Dozens of Jewish Centers. Trump Finally Responds,” *CNN*, February 27, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/16/living/jcc-bomb-threats-anti-semitism/index.html>.

³ Berlinger, Joshua, “Jewish Cemetery Vandalized in New York, Third Case in Recent Weeks - CNN.com,” *CNN*, March 3, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/03/us/jewish-cemetery-vandalized-headstones-new-york/index.html>.

⁴ Joseph Goldstein, “Alt-Right Gathering Exults in Trump Election With Nazi-Era Salute,” *The New York Times*, November 20, 2016, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/us/alt-right-salutes-donald-trump.html>.

condemn it and stand in opposition.

In Baltimore, this is a tension that is particularly pronounced. Baltimore has a large and growing Orthodox population that is overwhelmingly conservative as well as geographically divided from more progressive and less religiously conservative Jews. Baltimore's Jewish population is politically divided around contemporary issues that impact them and their city. These issues also drastically impact black Baltimoreans, a demographic in which the Jewish community has both a history of conflict as well as camaraderie. After 25-year-old Freddie Gray died while in custody of the Baltimore Police Department on April 19, 2015, another unarmed black man killed by the police, and the conversation of systemic racism was once again brought to the center of the dialogue within the city. After Gray's death and the acquittal of the involved police officers,⁵ activists, community organizations, and community members protested. The Baltimore Uprising, which co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Movement, Alicia Garza, described as a protest against state violence, was about bringing people "together and advancing new solutions and new visions and new demands to create a new world where Black peoples' lives matter."⁶

Standing in solidarity with black-led community organizations and activists were many Jewish organizations, faith-leaders, and activists. Accordingly, the research began as an exploration as to why these Jewish activists felt compelled to engage in anti-racist work, and how they negotiated this work in terms of their religious, cultural, and racial identity. Interviews with Jewish anti-racist activists resulted in conversations regarding contemporary and historical

⁵ This coalition led to the Department of Justice's investigation of the Baltimore Police force, in which they found the department guilty violating civil rights, a violation that disproportionately impacted black Baltimoreans. See U.S. Department of Justice, "Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department," Findings Report (justice.gov, August 10, 2016).

⁶ Coleman, Christina, "What Is Black Spring? Alicia Garza, Co-Founder Of Black Lives Matter, Breaks Down The Baltimore Uprising," *News One*, May 6, 2015, <https://newsone.com/3112797/what-is-black-spring-alicia-garza-co-founder-of-black-lives-matter-baltimore-uprising/>.

anti-Semitism, a theme that widened the scope of this study and offered a lens through which Jewish justice within the context of Jewish victimization could be analyzed.

Navigating Jewish victimization or othering in the context of emancipatory politics is a topic that Hannah Arendt also negotiated in “The Jew as a Pariah,” in which she constructed typologies of Jews in Europe in the 18th and 19th century and outlined three figures: the pariah, the parvenu, and the conscious pariah. The original conception of the pariah and complimentary typologies were based on the European Jewish experience, and as such the literature offered is often situated within a European framework. One consequence of this scope is that it excludes the particular nuances of the American ideological framework of race when it comes to constructing outsidership and privilege, as well as a pedagogy for an equal society. Given the contemporary climate in the United States in which racism is at the forefront of the national conversation, this study will particularize and expand upon the notion of the conscious pariah by imbuing the configuration with critical race studies. A critical race lens offers a path through which to study white supremacy as a system of power, an examination that contributes to a better understanding of structures of oppression. Inspired by scholars like Du Bois and hooks, this lens also orients subalternness, uplifts cultural productions of marginalized identities, and promotes ambiguity and authenticity, in order to better understand the experience of victimization in the United States and create the ability to imagine the abolition of racial thinking and a just society.

For Arendt, action is fundamental to human freedom. As such, social justice work will be considered in the Arendtian sense as a tactic of political judgment and action, or praxis, as a means to counter “world-alienation.” Accordingly, by conducting interviews with Jewish Baltimoreans involved in social justice work, this study seeks to combine empirical and political-philosophical approaches. This examination of Jewish Baltimoreans with diverse sectarian and

ideological perspectives offers insight into how Jews perceive and negotiate their otherness, specifically in regard to the way they see justice from struggle or systems of oppression, given the shift in contemporary discourse. By focusing on white Jews in particular, this study will also explore the dynamics of race between Jewish and black Baltimoreans. The intention of the sample (five of whom are Orthodox and five who are not) and structure of the paper, is not to perpetuate a binary framework within my interviewees – oppressor versus oppressed, parvenu versus pariah. Rather, it is to engage with these binaries in the contemporary realm, contextualize praxis as a product of identity construction and specifically victimization, and underscore ambiguity within and among the participants. The exploration of this typology through interviews offers a descriptive analysis of Baltimore Jews and their relationship with social justice. This analysis reveals a phenomenological interpretation of the conscious pariah that will ultimately contribute to a typology of the conscious-pariah that challenges white supremacy, a system of oppression that creates and perpetuates injustice, and instead works towards a world in which “we all flourish.”⁷

CHAPTER 1: JEWISH VICTIMIZATION

But Jews have made this same tenet their own, proving, as needed, either the timelessness of anti-Semitism or the timelessness of the Jewish mission in the world. And the eminently political importance our foes attach to these theories inversely makes them politically impotent the moment they arise among us, devoid of even the most wretched reflection—like rags pulled from the dusty storage bin of the nineteenth century to dress a persecuted, pogromized people and turn it into a fairy tale of princes and princesses.⁸ – Hannah Arendt

For the Jewish people, social memory⁹ —dependent on histories, culture, institutional intervention, and power— is enveloped by a constructed consciousness of victimization. The

⁷ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press, 2007), 112.

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron Feldman, 1st ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 48.

⁹ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1998, 133.

phenomenon of marginalized groups constructing group identity based around histories of oppression is not limited to the Jewish people, however, the Jewish people are often considered archetypical victims. This phenomenon, overt within Jewish holidays revolving around suffering, or covert within Jewish mnemonic devices, is understood as ubiquitous for the Jewish people.¹⁰ This victim-identity, integrated within Jewish historiography, imagination, and mythology, has culminated in the identity of Jewish victimization not only as a metric, but also as the fate for the Jewish people.

The construction of Jewish identity narrated by its victimization clearly has had consequences for the Jewish people. This victim identity is not only relevant for Jews who lived through the Holocaust or direct anti-Semitism, but it also has broader consequences for generations removed. When it comes to victims of ethno-political conflict, post-traumatic stress can be passed down for at least two generations. This distress is found in those who identify with the victimized group, especially those who strongly identify, even when not directly related, as a result of collective victimization.¹¹ This identification can be fear-inducing, as the identifiers fear victimization in the future. Stress and fear also result in members of these groups to limiting circles of trust to members of their in-group, especially when there is an increase in fear.¹² For Jews, the exacerbation of this fear, for example, in the form of targeted anti-Semitic hate crimes, or even the social construction or perception of anti-Semitic hate crimes, leads to a contemporary Jewish consciousness with victimization at its forefront.¹³ For example, hate crimes that in

¹⁰ Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

¹¹ Michael J. A. Wohl and Jay J Van Bavel, "Is Identifying with a Historically Victimized Group Good or Bad for Your Health? Transgenerational Post-Traumatic Stress and Collective Victimization," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 41, no. 7 (December 2011): 818.

¹² Katie N. Rotella et al., "Blinding Trust: The Effect of Perceived Group Victimhood on Intergroup Trust," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 116, doi:10.1177/0146167212466114.

¹³ Dana M. Greene, "The Holocaust as Recurring Reality: Victimization Themes and Jewish American Ethnic Identity Formation," *Sociological Spectrum* 27, no. 3 (March 22, 2007): 279, doi:10.1080/02732170701215941.

reality or reception mirror retrogressive anti-Semitic troupes or that involve symbols of the Holocaust have the potential to be re-traumatizing.

The psychology of victimization is particularly powerful when it comes to creating strong group identities. It results in the attachment to binary understandings of oppressor and oppressed and to a conflict in which their victim identity is emphasized.¹⁴ Greene cites this as a recent phenomenon for Jews in America. She found that in a post-Holocaust world in which Jewish Americans sought to understand their Jewish *hyphen* American identity, they highlighted mnemonic devices of suffering in order to signal their marginal status in juxtaposition to white Americans and white supremacy. She analyzed the Anti Defamation League (ADL) as a site of Jewish victim-identity construction, arguing that they aggravate the narrative of Anti-Semitism and hate crimes by emphasizing their occurrence, and contribute to a perception in which Jews are under attack. In the ADL's juxtaposition of Holocaust iconography and contemporary hate crimes, they also, "socially construct a level of Jewish American suffering at the hands of an oppressor or a perpetrator of a hate crime against the Jewish community."¹⁵ In the combination of the occurrence and construction of the hate crimes, the Holocaust and Jewish suffering are reincarnated as "recurring reality." Their reiteration of a victim narrative, which thwarts Jewish "assimilation and acculturation," however is strategic in the re-insulation of the community; fear creates a reality that prioritizes Jewish boundary maintenance and in-group benefits.¹⁶ The construction of this knowledge results in the reiteration of Jewish victimization, which is then reinforced by Jewish agencies and furthermore by communal insularity.

¹⁴ John Searle-White, *The Psychology of Nationalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 99–100, <http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9780312233693>.

¹⁵ Greene, "The Holocaust as Recurring Reality," 282.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 281; 279-282.

Understanding the Foucaultian regime of truth as the gatekeeper, an authentic and nuanced imagining of victimhood is thwarted, perpetuating the erasure of narratives of interruption or dissonance. Studies of victimhood and victimization are studies of power and dispossession, and require the analysis of the oppressor and the oppressed. As bell hooks describes, the nature of power is to construct an “us and them agenda,” a condemnation of ambiguity in an attempt to establish those who are innocent and virtuous, and those who are not. For example, hooks describes that American hegemonic innocence is constructed as white looking and privileged, and often excludes vignettes of innocence that are poor, working, or black.¹⁷ In this pursuit of innocence, the components of surviving and defiance, if not extinguished, are condemned to subalternness and the hidden transcript,¹⁸ and the ambiguous nature of truth is lost. Understanding victimization through these terms offers a narrow perspective of peoples categorized by their victimization and condemns critical thinking beyond the scope of the status quo.

1.1 Complicating Victimization

Sociological studies have shown that while identifying with a group impacted by collective trauma can lead to the internalization of the trauma, identifying as a part of a group can also reduce stress, as group membership fulfills a basic human need.¹⁹ Group membership can be especially therapeutic when the trauma is discussed or worked through within the group, because this adds meaning, support, and understanding.²⁰ In this way, in-group homogeneity can be considered a mechanism for creating positive identity and also defense.²¹ The remembering of group victimization, “promotes direct intensions to aid the in-group,” for example, supporting

¹⁷ bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (Routledge, 2013), 12.

¹⁸ James C. Scott, “Everyday Forms of Resistance,” *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008): 33.

¹⁹ Wohl and Van Bavel, “Is Identifying with a Historically Victimized Group Good or Bad for Your Health?,” 818.

²⁰ Ibid., 819.

²¹ Rotella et al., “Blinding Trust,” 116.

organizations or intermarriage with the perception that these behaviors, “enhance the in-group’s vitality.”²² Beyond in-group benefits, identifying one’s victim identity encourages empathy, and can lead to solidarity between marginalized groups.²³ The equating of victimization, suffering, and Jewishness is a particular narrative—the dominant narrative—within Jewish identity. However, this narrative is limited, not only temporally in that it excludes periods of Jewish history, but also it marginalizes the understanding of Jewish identity to a singular, insular, and oppressive experience of victimization. In order to gain an authentic and potentially emancipatory understanding of Jewish-victimization, it is important to not only outline dominant narratives and their consequences, but also their recourses, uplifting subaltern narratives and calling out their repression. Specifically, victimization can be examined not simply as marginality, but also in terms of possibility and production, contributing to theories of emancipation from systems of oppression.

1.2 Pariahs, Parvenus, and Conscious Pariahs

For Rahel, ‘the central desire of her life had been to escape from Jewishness, and this desire proved unfulfillable because of the antisemitism of her milieu, because of the ban, imposed from the outside, against a Jew becoming a normal human being... In the end, Rahel reportedly declares, ‘The thing which all my life seemed to me the greatest shame, which was the misery and misfortune of my life—having been born a Jewess—this I should on no account now wish to have missed.’²⁴ - Hannah Arendt

Arendt’s “The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition” offers typologies of the Jewish people that complicate victimization, critique structures of oppression, and offer a pedagogy for Jewish resistance in the wake of the Second World War. Her configurations have not been explored in the American context, and given the perception of a rising threat against the Jewish people and an increasing presence of a “Jewish Resistance” in the streets and also on social media platforms,

²² Ibid.

²³ Johanna Ray Vollhardt, “Victim Consciousness and Its Effects on Intergroup Relations -- A Double -Edged Sword?,” *Doctoral Dissertations Available from Proquest*, January 1, 2009, 1–242.

²⁴ Larry Ray and Maria Diemling, “Arendt’s ‘Conscious Pariah’ and the Ambiguous Figure of the Subaltern,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 19, no. 4 (2016): cited on 4-5, doi:10.1177/1368431016628261.

tagging #jewishresistance.²⁵ In order to accommodate the topics of the contemporary “Jewish Resistance,” such as allying with vulnerable groups including victims of police brutality, immigrants, Muslims, and those impacted by Trump’s policies and nominees, Arendt’s configuration will be explored with a critical race theory lens. This lens specifically addresses white supremacy and racial power that targets vulnerable groups and seeks to imagine possibilities that transform power, leading to racial emancipation.

1.21 Arendt’s Typology

In Michael Beer’s tragedy *Der Paria* (1823), he tells a story of a Hindu outcast as a pariah, and his wife, a member of the nobility. In his dystopian India, he portrays the exclusion of the Hindu man as an allegory to Jews as pariahs in Germany.²⁶ As pariahs, Hindus were not located within the social caste, but rather peripheral to the ordering of society. Beer’s *Paria* juxtaposed Hindu outcasts and Jewish outcasts in modern European society—ambiguously included and excluded, “a subject who embodies divergent, and seemingly irreconcilable, orders of belonging.”²⁷ Max Weber adopted this to describe the ways in which Jews chose to self-segregate from their host countries, making them guests within the nation, and therefore socially dispossessed. In Weber’s scientific exploration of the Jewish pariah, he sought to understand why and how Jews were an unassimilated guest people, concluding that Jews voluntarily and ritually self-segregated.²⁸ Given the limitations of a scientific understanding of pariah, this is a term that has been adopted by Jewish scholars as a means to subvert and re-write non-jewish projections that orient the Jewish experience of pariah-ness in singularly negative terms.

²⁵ Debra Nussbaum Cohen, “What Is the ‘Jewish Resistance’? Behind the Movement of Millennial Jews Rallying Against Trump,” *Haaretz*, January 13, 2017, <http://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-1.764925>.

²⁶ Magdalena Zolkos, “Aporias of Belonging: Jean Améry on ‘being a Jew without Judaism’ and the Tradition of Conscious Pariah,” *Journal of European Studies* 44, no. 4 (2014): 362–377.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 364.

²⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, “A Note on Max Weber’s Definition of Judaism as a Pariah-Religion,” *History and Theory* 19, no. 3 (1980): 314–15, doi:10.2307/2504547.

In response to the 19th century putative “Jewish Question” of Jewish assimilation in Europe, Hannah Arendt explores, “just how ambiguous is the freedom which emancipation has ensured, and how treacherous the promise of equality which assimilation has held out” through a re-interpretation of the Jewish pariah.²⁹ In Arendt’s, *Rahel Varnhagen*, Arendt tells a story of Rahel, a Jewess outsider who transcends her pain as a Jewish woman into a story of political emancipation. Years later, in her “The Jew as Pariah,” Arendt describes two portraits of the Jewish experience: the parvenu and the pariah, the former based on Jews “playing” the part, or in other words, coming into privilege and assimilating to the status quo, and the latter based on the nominative social outcast. Arendt writes:

So long as the Jews of Western Europe were pariahs only in a social sense they could find salvation, to a large extent, by becoming parvenus. Insecure as their position may have been, they could nevertheless achieve a *modus vivendi* by combining what Ahad Haam described as ‘inner slavery’ with ‘outward freedom.’ Moreover those who deemed the price too high could still remain mere pariahs, calmly enjoying the freedom and untouchability of outcasts.³⁰

However, in the wake of the Second World War and the victimization of the Jews on the level of the nation state, she described that both the Jewish pariah and parvenu, “are in the same boat” and, “cannot stand aloof from society.”³¹ For Arendt, in the wake of the social and national exclusion of the Jews and the threatening of their very humanity, it was critical for the Jewish people to re-negotiate the imposed terms of the pariah identity. Given the pre-disposition of dominant configurations of marginal identities to essentialize the “other” through their subalternness, Arendt found it necessary to highlight the pariah people’s “Hidden Tradition” of re-writing their conceptions and fate. She acclaimed Jewish conceptions of the pariah that highlighted blending of Jewish and national identities, such as that of Heinrich Heine who was

²⁹ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 100.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

able “to speak the language of a free man and sing the songs of a natural one.”³² In this configuration of the pariah, a positive ambiguity is highlighted within the Jewish experience, in juxtaposition to the ambiguous terms of Jewish freedom.

Using the past as a hermeneutic strategy, Arendt felt it was important to center Jewish traditions and characterizations that subvert the pariah status, especially those that locate power within the vulnerability of the pariah position, and use this marginality as a mode of resistance. She emphasized the Jewish political tradition of justice within the pariah identity, complicating conceptions that disempower Jews as outcasts. Arendt highlighted the Jewish tradition of conscious-pariahs, the final figure in her typology, in which rather than detaching from their Jewish pariah status, Jews organized as pariahs and abandoned victim narratives. She praised Bernard Lazare’s vignette of the conscious-pariah, who was simultaneously self-aware of their own victimization at the hands of the hegemony, present or historical, and then used this victimization to work towards emancipation. Lazare’s conception of the pariah’s consciousness revolved around linking messianism and utopia in a revolutionary way, as a modality of resistance. For the conscious-pariah:

This perspective is that what needs to be challenged – and transformed – is the exclusive nature of the volkish nation-state and its replacement by a political framework that is based on complete, universal, civil equality without the erasure of socio-cultural varieties that exist among its (potential citizens). The second feature is that conscious pariah’s historical consciousness is underlain by the conviction that the histories of the hegemon and its victims, of the colonizer and the colonized, are so inextricably intertwined as to collapse into one history. What is inseparable in this latter history are the identity of the colonizer and its interaction with the colonized.³³

For Lazare, a component of emancipatory practice was awareness and opposition to the pariah’s suffering on behalf of the masochistic parvenu. Lazare said, “I want no longer...to have against

³² Ibid., 107.

³³ Gabriel Piterberg, “Public Intellectuals and Conscious Pariahs: Hannah Arendt, Edward Said and a Common State in Palestine-Israel,” *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (Edinburgh University Press) 12, no. 2 (November 2013): 142, doi:10.3366/hls.2013.0067.

me not only the wealthy of my people, who exploit me and sell me, but also the rich and poor of other peoples who oppress and torture me in the name of my rich.”³⁴ The parvenu oppressed and benefited in the oppression of the pariah, a parasitic relationship perpetuated by so called charity in which the parvenu is able to reassert the order of dominance, even under the guise of parity.³⁵ Thus, it was the responsibility of the conscious-pariah to not evade their pariah status, but rather find power within it, rearticulate it, and use this status to resist dominance from gentile and parvenu oppression. The notion of the conscious-pariah, as opposed to non-jewish or jewish configurations of pariah as purely victim, orients marginalization within emancipatory politics—values of resistance, justice, responsibility, and possibility. Through this politicization and transformation of the pariah to the conscious pariah, one could re-imagine victimization use it as a tactic for political action.

Arendt’s conception of the conscious-pariah as a pedagogy of liberation has been analyzed and re-interpreted in order to take into account Arendt’s personal identity, ideologies, and geographic and temporal circumstances. Through her description of the conscious-pariah, Arendt offers a pedagogy for liberation, one that is “in consort with other peoples” for the “establishment upon earth of a commonly conditioned and commonly controlled humanity.” At this time, liberation for the Jewish people meant liberation from systems that limited their “political freedom” or “admission to the life of nations,” and advocated for their destruction. For Arendt, the Jewish people would resist or die, so parvenu and conscious-pariah were oppositional terms of slavery versus freedom. Arendt’s experience of the Holocaust is unique from the Jews that lived through concentration camps, a privileging that must be considered as impacting her perspective, and as a philosopher of civic engagement, her emancipatory praxis.

³⁴ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 109.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

She also wrote *The Jew As Pariah* prior to the creation of a Jewish state, a project she felt Jews shouldn't pursue, as the notion of wordlessness was conceived by the hegemony and thus was not a vehicle of liberation. Scholars after the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel have continued to analyze the notion of the conscious-pariah in order to understand the temporal and ideological limits, modern Jewishness, and philosophies of justice.

1.22 Explorations of Arendt's Conscious-Pariah

Magdalena Zolkos explores the work of Jean Améry and his constructions of Jewishness as a Holocaust survivor through the lens of the conscious-pariah. Because the conditions of Améry's experience were circumscribed by genocide, his capacity for resistance cannot be compared to those of the Jews before or after the Holocaust. Améry describes resistance as "*enduring*, or *undergoing*, Jewishness" as opposed to imbuing Jewishness with an active political stance.³⁶ While different from the Lazarean conception of a conscious-pariah, and Arendt's binaries of parvenu versus pariah or pariah versus conscious pariah, *enduring* as an act of resistance, "blurs the binary opposition between the action of a rebel and the passivity of a victim."³⁷ Zolkos argues that desiring the parvenu position while experiencing physical threat cannot solely be conceived of negatively. Ray and Diemling also negotiate terms of resistance, citing that Jews in the Diaspora wandered between "power and powerlessness," engaging and disengaging in politics, and resisting or being passive in their domination. Through this lens, these scholars view the practices of resistance with more hybridity, negotiating the inclusivity and exclusivity of the term conscious-pariah.

A widespread critique of Arendt as a scholar and of her conscious-pariah is the secularization of the vignette. Arendt famously identified "being a Jewess" as central to her

³⁶ Zolkos, "Aporias of Belonging," 368. Emphasis in original.

³⁷ Ibid., 370.

identity, but limited her Jewishness to non-religious aspects. Some scholars argue that her personal practice limited her conception of acts of resistance and ultimately her configuration of the conscious pariah by excluding religious aspects. Ray and Diemling point to Kabbalistic mysticism as a “source of strength” or “spiritual resistance,” foundational to the Jewish experience.³⁸ For example, practicing Judaism within the public sphere could be considered a passive act of cultural resistance. In the context of the Diaspora, practicing Judaism can be seen as an embodiment of the hidden transcript, “off-stage,”³⁹ in the privacy of one’s own community. With the inclusion of religious practices as acts of resistance, more instances of the hidden tradition of the conscious pariah emerge. This inclusion cements the foundation of the conscious-pariah not only historically, but also as a religious imperative, inscribed as Jewish responsibility or law.

Survivors like Améry described an inability in seeing his Jewishness beyond his experience in the Holocaust. This made it impossible for him to achieve the Lazarean consciousness or see the possibility or power within his own victimization. According to Zolkos, a consequence of Améry’s “Catastrophe Jew” is that because of his negative conception of Jewishness, his memory is apocalyptic —haunted by death and destruction, disturbing the “dialectical process of self-realization.”⁴⁰ For Zolkos, living through the Holocaust as Améry did does not impede the conscious-pariah identity. Rather, conscious-pariahs of the time would have different processes of constructing mnemonic devices and therefore different consciousness. While the validity of the memory is disrupted or erased by death, “it is within this site of mnemonic deracination or negativity that the ethical imperative of the Jewish subject position is

³⁸ Ray and Diemling, “Arendt’s ‘Conscious Pariah’ and the Ambiguous Figure of the Subaltern,” 509.

³⁹ Scott, “Everyday Forms of Resistance.”

⁴⁰ Zolkos, “Aporias of Belonging,” 370–74.

formed. He [Améry] writes: ‘I must be a Jew and will be one.’”⁴¹ This conception of the conscious pariah still allows for the construction of Jewish identity as political subject, but without the necessity of specific mnemonic devices. As self-realization is an achievement and not necessarily inherent, the Améry conception allows for conscious-pariahs to include Jewish resistance with varying privilege and power, and moreover specifically uplift those systematically disempowered or oppressed voices.

Scholars like Zolkos also question the orientation of the conscious-pariah. Améry’s conception of domination and power did not include the possibility for Jewish liberation, let alone, liberation from all systems of oppression. Because of his phantasmagoric trauma, he said, “the victim remains locked in a static standoff with the historic perpetrator... how [then] can victims disentangle themselves from the perpetrator so as to enable a re-engagement with the world?”⁴² While some scholars conceived this skepticism negatively, others like Zolkos noted this as an “ethics of resentment,” citing that Améry’s rhetoric of oppression is an act of solidarity, demonstrating an understanding that Jewish liberation is tied up in the liberation of all oppressed peoples. As a result, Jean Améry’s conscious pariah, through the experience of victimization, is “oriented towards, and haunted by, the suffering not of the self, but of others.... [and] proposes a ‘hyperbolic’ ethical position for the politics of redressive justice.”⁴³ For Zolkos, this ethical view is the essence of imbuing Jewishness with a political stance. It also views the oppressor through a specific lens of domination, with an unwavering and eternal praxis of supremacy, citing not only overt but also covert acts of oppression. As these scholars have pointed out, the configuration of the conscious-pariah is subject both to conscious-ness and

⁴¹ Ibid., 371.

⁴² Ibid., 363.

⁴³ Ibid., 367.

pariah-ness, factors that are dynamic and dependent on place and time. Its exploration within the contemporary American context has not been studied, and given the re-introduction of Anti-Semitism within the political discourse, its application contributes to a larger understanding of the typology and its contours.

1.23 Examining the Conscious-Pariah in the Contemporary American context

After Trump's election, there has been a surge in hate crimes against Jews, with Trump supporters claiming Trump will "cleanse America" and "make it shine again."⁴⁴ Richard Spencer, Trump's nomination for Navy secretary and the president of the National Policy Institute, a white nationalist think tank, said, "No, Jews are not white. Jews are Jews."⁴⁵ This election has created a rift in the American Jewish community, with some organizations like Zionist Organization of America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs supporting Trump, and others like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Ameinu warning that his election means the legitimization of anti-Semitism in the political arena. According to the ADL, anti-Semitic incidents have increased since the last election cycle, with a 33 percent increase in 2016 and an 86 percent increase in 2017, as of April, including instances of bullying, vandalism, harassment and assault.⁴⁶ This rhetoric marks a shift in the climate for Jewish Americans, many of whom are generations removed from the Holocaust or experiences of direct anti-Semitism in the United States. Given the context of collective memory and victimization, the rise in anti-Semitism, real or perceived, offers a new conception in which the conscious pariah-is able to be studied. How

⁴⁴ Yan, Holly, Sgueglia, Kristina, and Walker, Kylie, "Hate Crimes, Racist Graffiti after Election; Trump Says 'Stop It' - CNN.com," *CNN*, December 22, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/10/us/post-election-hate-crimes-and-fears-trnd/>.

⁴⁵ Daniel Solomon, "Richard Spencer: By My Definition, Jews Aren't 'European,' or 'White,'" *The Forward*, February 3, 2017, <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/361618/richard-spencer-by-my-definition-jews-arent-european-or-white/>.

⁴⁶ Anti-Defamation League, "U.S. Anti-Semitic Incidents Spike 86 Percent So Far in 2017 After Surging Last Year, ADL Finds," *Anti-Defamation League*, April 24, 2017, <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/us-anti-semitic-incidents-spike-86-percent-so-far-in-2017>.

do American Jews feel about this victimization? In what way does contemporary anti-Semitism construct the pariah, parvenu, and conscious pariah identities? How is the experience of victimization utilized today as praxis towards creating a better world?

The literature offered is often limited to or situated within a European framework, and accordingly, the original conception of the pariah was based on the European Jewish experience. In this context, Jews were peripheral to the social hierarchy, neither hegemonic nor subaltern, but rather outsiders. One specific consequence of this scope, when understanding the American normative or ideological configuration of the conscious pariah, or even the American experience of Jewishness, is that it excludes the particular nuances of the American ideological framework of race. The Jewish-American experience after the late 19th century, which will be addressed in brief later in the study, was often understood in terms of race, with authors like Brodtkin analyzing *How Jews Became White Folks* after the Second World War. The changing racialization of the Jews demarcates aspects of the Jewish American experience in ways that are unacknowledged in literature about the conscious pariah.

Additionally, today in the United States, despite the positing of a post-racial reality and colorblindness, the struggle for black liberation is central to social justice work. In particular, as a response to the wave of police shootings of unarmed black folks, Black Lives Matter was initiated. It has sparked national attention, as well as intervention from the United Nations. Oftentimes framed as in line with Jewish solidarity work during the 1960's, Jews across the United States have formed organizations or stood alongside black Americans, while others have chosen to not participate, or actively work against the fight for black liberation. Given the centering of black liberation movements within the social justice dialogue, the way Jewish advocates of social justice work interact with movements for black liberation is particularly

salient, and can contribute to a contemporary and American perspective of the conscious-pariah. Beyond the acts of resistance themselves, on whose liberation will the resistance focus? Or against whose domination? In the context of white-supremacy, what does consciousness look like, specifically in regard to emancipation? How does this race-consciousness manifest itself in the Jewish conscious-pariah? What does a contemporary conscious-pariah look like and how can they contribute to the abolition of the racial hierarchy and a more just society?

In order to get a fuller understanding of the experience of Jewish victimization in the American context, this research will combine a critical race and cultural studies lens with Jewish studies, in which black suffering and black liberation are not seen as equal, but rather congruent to the present topic. The inclusion of ideologies of race as they pertain to oppression and liberation offer nuance and possibility to the movements for Jewish liberation, especially within the understanding that individual or group liberation is dependent on the liberation of all marginalized people. By analyzing Jewish history through the lens of critical race studies, the Jewish American experience is contextualized, hierarchical thinking is exposed, and a pedagogy of solidarity is illuminated.

CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND THE JEWISH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

In "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States," Barbara Fields describes a Supreme Court Case in 1987, in which the Court had to decide if Jewish and Arab Americans were protected by anti-discrimination civil rights law. The case was addressed through the lens of race—if Jews and Arabs were white, then civil rights law did not protect them, but if they were a racial category, the law protected them. According to Fields:

The Court knew no better way to rectify injustice at the end of the twentieth century than to re-enthroned the superstitious racial dogma of the 19th century... bound, that is to say,

by its participation in those rituals that daily create and recreate race in its characteristic American form.⁴⁷

As Fields describes, while race to an outsider is seen as nonsensical or unmentionable, otherness within the United States is understood in terms of blackness, exposing the unoriginality and attachment of the United States institutions and ideologies to a framework encapsulated by history. She emphasizes however that ideologies are inanimate and non-inheritable; rather they are malleable, constantly reimagined and recreated overtime, in order to maintain the status quo. At the point of Jewish immigration to the United States, Jews, as all immigrants and non-immigrants alike, interacted with the black/white ideological binary, and navigated its chosen and unchosen privileges and prejudices.

While explorations of anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jewish people are often oriented in Europe,⁴⁸ anti-Semitism as an ideology is based in perceptions of dominance and takes on different forms depending on structures of power in the host country. Within the diaspora context, Jews in America did not navigate as a singular unit, but rather often assimilated or acculturated, or at the very least were impacted by American culture and ideologies. Given the virulence and impact of ideologies of white racial power in the United States, anti-Semitism in the American context must also be examined in these terms.⁴⁹ Jews interacted with whiteness and blackness in different capacities at different moments in history. As such, ideologies of whiteness and blackness should be considered as interacting with Jewish ideologies and experience. Particularly, the paradigm of the Jewish conscious pariah should be considered alongside of critical race and cultural studies.

⁴⁷ Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review*, I, no. 181 (1990): 97.

⁴⁸ William Toll, "Anti-Semitism and the American Racial Context: A Historical Inquiry," *History Compass* 12, no. 4 (April 1, 2014): 374–87, doi:10.1111/hic3.12149.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 374.

2.1 Aesthetics of Victimzation and Resistance

A philosophy of critical race understands the world order as manipulated by white supremacy to ensure its eternalization, resulting in consequences for the dispossessed, as well as the possessors of power. Integral to a critical analysis of power and practice is its examination through a structural lens, contextualized by history. The institutionalized racial hierarchy of white supremacy built the economy of the United States, creating a power structure that offered economic and social stability for its creators. By creating this notion of racial difference, whiteness was understood as “centered in power” and therefore able to racially designate non-whites as without access to power.⁵⁰ In essence, the constructed inferiority of blackness legitimized whiteness’s power over blackness, with whiteness and white power as the non-racial norm.⁵¹ While the ideology may be developed and expressed uniquely and to different capacities, racial phenomena must be looked at as products or structures of racism, as inevitably changing and transforming, able and likely to hide, temporally-linear, and related to the hierarchy of white supremacy inherently.⁵² These dynamics of white power exist externally, within state sponsored institutions or narratives, and also as consciousness experienced by individuals. In “Home,” Toni Morrison writes:

From the beginning I was looking for a sovereignty—an authority—that I believed was available to me only in fiction writing...[But], it became increasingly clear how language both liberated and imprisoned me. Whatever the forays of my imagination, the keeper, whose keys tinkled always within earshot, was race.⁵³

The internalization of whiteness as virtue and blackness as subaltern is experienced by whites and non-whites alike. Coping with the experience of being raced and dehumanized individually

⁵⁰ Michael Harris, *Colored Pictures* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2003), 17.

⁵¹ Fields, “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America,” 97.

⁵² Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Rethinking Racism: Towards a Structural Interpretation,” *Center for Research on Social Organization Working Paper Series*, 1994, 29–34.

⁵³ Toni Morrison, “Home,” in *The House That Race Built: Original Essays by Toni Morrison, Angela Y. Davis, Cornel West, and Others on Black Americans and Politics in America Today*, ed. Wahneema Lubiano (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010), 3.

and systemically has led to resistance of white dominance in many forms, from asserting and affirming blackness, to organizing movements for liberation.

In negotiating the terms or manifestations of compliance versus resistance to systems of power, both the strategies and ideologies of the powerful should be interrogated as well as the circumstances, experiences, and cultures of subalternness. For the purpose of this paper, “the domain whereby we interpret the confines of our existence and reinterpret our resistance,” is the aesthetic of victimization and resistance.⁵⁴ While generally relegated to the realm of art, aesthetics for the purpose of this paper borrows from Frankowski’s critical aesthetics, which refers to: the way people relate to and sense one another, and takes into consideration modes of oppression as limitations of this domain. Critical aesthetics is “a way of rethinking and expanding the range of voices included” in order to highlight imagination and transformation.⁵⁵ The aesthetics of whiteness aims to thwart confrontation, and accordingly, scholars interrogating white power have noted a particular tactic, speaking truth to power, as an aesthetics of provocativeness that charges the powerful with oppression by naming its power and strategies, offers comparatives that are uncomfortable, and makes room for imagination within the realm of the possible. With knowledge and truth as antidotal to power, productive to analysis is ambiguity and disruption, including specifically highlighting subaltern perspectives not only to undermine dishonest scholarship, but also as an intervention to collective culture and memory. Post-colonialist scholars like Edward Said illuminate systems of knowledge that re-inscribe and affirm ideals of dominance and victimization in conjunction with space for imagining new possibilities through hope, will, and transcendence.⁵⁶ While the public realm of political conflict, for example

⁵⁴ Alfred Frankowski, *The Post-Racial Limits of Memorialization: Toward a Political Sense of Mourning* (Lexington Books, 2015), xviii.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978).

public protests, occupies the “center stage,” Scott argues the subaltern also utilize “Everyday Forms of Resistance” in order to critique power.⁵⁷ For example, bell hooks describes marginality as “more than a site of deprivation,” because marginality in combination with consciousness:

is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance. It was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose, to give up, or surrender as a part of moving into the center, but rather as a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist. It offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds.⁵⁸

This conception is rooted in post-colonial thought, offering a strategy in coping with white supremacy as well as affirming cultures of resistance that are often ignored, erased, or appropriated.

Seeking and affirming possibility within oppression can be seen as a strategy in navigating one’s own victimization. For example, in W.E.B Du Bois’ description of black oppression in *Souls of Black Folks*, he describes a “two-ness” within black Americans, an awareness he named “double-consciousness” or the experience of not only experiencing life through one’s own eyes, but also through the eyes of others. In this case, the other being a “world that looks on in amused contempt and pity,” producing a sense of “two-ness” that is “warring.”⁵⁹ While this consciousness has the potential to simply create cognitive dissonance and pain, Du Bois considers its potential—“Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight.”⁶⁰ The Du Boisian notion of double consciousness examines victimization not only through suffering, but also through the product, the gift, a strategy that one

⁵⁷ Scott, “Everyday Forms of Resistance.”

⁵⁸ bell hooks, “Marginality as Site of Resistance,” in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990), 341.

⁵⁹ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

can use to navigate systems of oppression and see beyond the veil that disguises the hegemony as truth. Gilroy expands on this notion as it manifests in the black diaspora or *Black Atlantic*; while this duality “emerges from the unhappy symbiosis” it is something to be embraced and celebrated.⁶¹ In Gilroy’s contextualization of Black victimization, he positions slavery and the black diaspora within modernity as counterculture, a creolization of cultures, a site of production. These conceptions of subalternness as power inspire the framing of this research, specifically the tactics of resistance utilized by the black and Jewish communities.

2.2 American Jews: Pariahs within Race?

“It is easy,” he tells his cousin, “for you to forget how to feel and what it is like to be hurt and stepped on when you think of yourself as white today and forget what it was like being a Jew yesterday...” The cousin wondered aloud, “Is it so bad that they should hate someone else for a change?”⁶²

While the European Jewish pariah was based on being outside the hierarchy of society, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States, Jews were not treated as outside the system of race, but rather as specifically other to whiteness, and sometimes within the otherness of blackness. In response to anti-Semitism in Europe, Jewish immigration to the United State’s rapidly increased after 1880, when 23 million European immigrants came to U.S. Cities and soon made up more than 70 percent of the population of the country’s major cities.⁶³ Soon immigrants were foreigners, threats, and politicians like Theodore Roosevelt warned of a “race suicide” if immigration were to continue.⁶⁴ While this was not true for all Jews, by the early 1900s, “folklore held that Jews, inside out, were niggers” and were an “oriental infection” within American culture.⁶⁵ In factories, employees were divided into “white men” and “kikes.”⁶⁶

⁶¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Harvard University Press, 1993), 127.

⁶² David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Basic Books, 2006), cited on 107-108.

⁶³ Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*, 27.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁵ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 49.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

This was based on the oxymoron of “scientific racism,” an anthropological notion that real whites were from north-west Europe, and Jews, like blacks and other people of color were not white, and therefore “feeble-minded.”⁶⁷ Once immigrants became a majority in the cities, they served as a threat to white power itself.

While anti-Semitism took on different forms in the United States,⁶⁸ Jewish immigrants and their culture were seen as threatening to white civilization. The perception was that Jewish immigrants wanted to take jobs from the American people, people who these jobs belonged to. In order to maintain white supremacy, a culture of disinclusion was curated; Jews became one of “them” and were excluded from physically and socially. In 1912, Chicago’s *Jewish Daily* courier concluded, “in this world... the Jew is treated as a Negro and a Negro as a Jew.”⁶⁹ By virtue of their existence, Jews were capable of stealing the coveted access to economic and cultural capital that belonged to whiteness and thus they became an enemy to whiteness, and their otherness was accordingly constructed to ensure the protection of the status quo.

While for the most part, overt anti-Semitism after the war was considered de-legitimate, outside of major metropolitan centers, anti-Semitism remained acceptable within the mainstream discourse. Post World War II discrimination against American Jews is less overt than prior to the war and often involve indirect attacks.⁷⁰ A perception of an increase in anti-Semitism today suggests the possibility for re-examining the discourse as well as the personal experiences of Jews living today in the United States. The putatively increasing anti-Semitic discourse is inspired by white-supremacist ideology, an ideology that touches any of those deemed non-

⁶⁷ Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*, 29.

⁶⁸ Toll, “Anti-Semitism and the American Racial Context.”

⁶⁹ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 98.

⁷⁰ Greene, “The Holocaust as Recurring Reality,” 282.

white. This examination, within the context of contemporary movements for black liberation, reveals the potential for what Fanon names “cross-traumatic solidarity”⁷¹ in the neo-colonial era.

The incorporation of critical race theory within this analysis is critical for the geo-temporal frame. This inclusion must not only examine Jewishness through the lens of black liberation theory, providing nuance and potential by paralleling black and Jewish oppression, but also aesthetics of whiteness, its literal and figurative privileges and ideals, specifically those that empower Jews and disempower people of color. According to Brodtkin, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, European immigrants, including Jewish immigrants were considered white, and at this point were allowed access to social and economic capital. While this was disrupted by the late-nineteenth century, not all Jews were subject to the same level of victimization, based on their ability to pass as white. Also, after the war, they were given privileges that demonstrated their access in the form of federal assistance or benefits. For example, before the war, the Federal Housing Association would not sell to Jews, Catholics, or blacks, but after the war, the only group that was excluded was blacks. Additionally, the GI Bill of Rights, a bill that gave benefits and powerful advantages to World War II veterans, provided benefits to white men, including Jews, while black Americans were excluded (as were women).⁷² These institutional privileges offered a space in which Jews were able to accumulate wealth and social and economic capital, privileges that are often neglected in dominant narratives about Jewishness, especially within the Jewish community.

Jews were considered, within different points in history, as other, and when convenient, not as other, but as white. Jews after the Second World War according to Brodtkin, were allowed to *become* white. In post World War II America where anti-Semitism was defined as the enemy,

⁷¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 372.

⁷² Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*.

the United States' institutionally-endorsed anti-Semitism, for example in the form of housing and workplace discrimination, the former of which will be discussed in brief later in the thesis, was disremembered in dominant discourse in order to uphold the valor of whiteness. White remembering is distributed through a Gramscian process in which the institutions of whiteness, such as the media, educational resources, and monuments, implicitly through erasure or distortion, "symbolize, celebrate, and endorse white supremacy, privilege, and power."⁷³ Moments of reconciliation or redemption and neo-liberal contributions towards "progress" are highlighted, and narratives that threaten this, especially "racial phenomena," if not erased, are controversial and called inflammatory in nature by "preserving the turbulence of the past."⁷⁴ These "post-racial aesthetics" highlight the so-called inclusivity and progress, and shadow continued oppression and discrimination, creating a dominant narrative of remembering that continues the concealment and power of whiteness.⁷⁵ In the dis-remembering of anti-Semitism in the United States, not only is the narrative of the melting-pot uplifted, but the historical context of contemporary anti-Semitism is ostracized, promoting the forgetting of white supremacist anti-Semitism that targeted Jews alongside black folks. Decades before, Baldwin went a step further than Brodtkin:

It is probable that it is the Jewish community—or more accurately, perhaps, its remnants—that in America has paid the highest and most extraordinary price for becoming white. For the Jews came here from countries where they were not white, and they came here, in part, because they were not white; and incontestably in the eyes of the Black American (and not only in those eyes) American Jews have opted to become white, and this is how they operate.⁷⁶

⁷³ Cynthia Pelak, "Institutionalizing Counter-Memories of the US Civil Rights Movement," *Sociological Forum* 30, no. 2 (n.d.): 305.

⁷⁴ Sarah Florini, "Recontextualizing the Racial Present: Intertextuality and the Politics of Online Remembering," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 31, no. 4 (August 8, 2014): 317, doi:10.1080/15295036.2013.878028.

⁷⁵ This text uses Frankowski's definition of "post-racial" to "designate a series of contemporary practices that refers to our anti-black or racist past in a way that makes racism and its past too far distant." Frankowski, *The Post-Racial Limits of Memorialization: Toward a Political Sense of Mourning*, xiii.

⁷⁶ Baldwin, James, "On Being White... and Other Lies," in *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*, ed. Kenan, Randall (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), 136.

In choosing whiteness, Jews are able to access its privileges, and as a consequence, also take on aspects of white aesthetics. Following the scientific shift from “theories of nature and biology” to “theories of nurture and culture,”⁷⁷ the goal of the Jewish elite became the “de-orientalization of the Russian Jew,”⁷⁸ or assimilation into whiteness. Assimilation, a safety that offered systemic benefits, promoted the adoption of white values, for example, promoting white innocence and constructing unambiguous interpretations of right and wrong. These aesthetics protect the fragility of whiteness, “secur[ing] its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular,” thereby guaranteeing its ability to “hid[e] in plain sight.”⁷⁹

This should not be understood as a universal experience for every Jewish American, because doing so would contribute to the erasure of the experiences of Jews of color in the United States, a topic that will not be addressed in the scope of this paper. Also, experiences of privilege should not erase the experience of feeling other-ed or victimized, as even in periods of relative privilege, there has always been anti-Semitism. However, it is important to speak truth to privilege as well as dispossession in order to understand the limitations of the comparability between the black-American and Jewish-American experience, and also illuminate ambiguity within the Jewish experience, an ambiguity that informs every aspect of Jewish life.

2.3 Arendt’s “Race Thinking:” Detours in Pariahness and Consciousness

Of course. I’m the last Jewish intellectual. You don’t know anyone else. All your other Jewish intellectuals are now suburban squires. From Amos Oz to all these people here in America. So I’m the last one. The only true follower of Adorno. Let me put it this way: I’m a Jewish Palestinian.⁸⁰ - Edward Said

Arendt wrote about the conscious-pariah and American racism in different geo-temporal contexts, and she wrote them as separate pieces of literature. Her conscious-pariah was not written about or for Jewish Americans, and as such she did not take into consideration Jewish

⁷⁷ Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America*, 36.

⁷⁸ Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 49.

⁷⁹ Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 19.

⁸⁰ Piterberg, “Public Intellectuals and Conscious Pariahs,” cited on 141.

“race thinking” into the configuration. Nonetheless, her race-thinking offers insight into dominant narratives about Jewishness and race. Juxtaposing her typologies and race-thinking offers insight into the way thinking “as an outsider”⁸¹ can limit philosophies of racial-emancipation in the United States.

Gordon, in “What Should Blacks Think When Jews Choose Whiteness” demonstrates the ways in which Arendt’s race-thinking thwarted her understanding of anti-black racism and ultimately a pedagogy of black liberation. According to Gordon, Arendt “often claimed the position of an (European Jewish) outsider to the critical philosophy of race.”⁸² When she described not wanting to move to the South to participate in or write about Black Power Movements, despite her prominent position as a writer of emancipatory politics, she said she would find this “unbearable.” She continues that, “like most people of European origin, I have difficulty in understanding, let alone sharing the common prejudices of Americans in this area [the South.]”⁸³ In Arendt’s distancing, by claiming a position of outsider based off of her European and Jewish origin, she allows the European aspect of her identity to relieve her from addressing structural racism. In her distancing between herself and the issue, she claims pariahness, dis-remembering her white skin privileges, her parvenuness, and the legacy of structural white supremacy in the United States.

In her “Race-Thinking”: Arendt states that while “racism was neither a new nor secret weapon” during the Holocaust, she says “never before had it been used with this thorough-going consistency.”⁸⁴ In 1957, the federal government enforced de-segregation in the public schools in Little Rock Arkansas, an intervention that Arendt wrote about and ultimately criticized in her

⁸¹ Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” *Dissent* 6, no. 1 (1959): 46.

⁸² Jane Gordon, “What Should Blacks Think When Jews Choose Whiteness?: An Ode to Baldwin,” *Critical Philosophy of Race* 3, no. 2 (2015): 244.

⁸³ Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” 46.

⁸⁴ Arendt, Hannah, “Race-Thinking before Racism,” *The Review of Politics* 6, no. 1 (January 1944): 36.

“Reflections on Little Rock” in 1959. In this essay, she stated that “the country’s attitude to its Negro population is rooted in American tradition and nothing else.”⁸⁵ This limited scope, while it should be understood as a direct product of her experience living through the Second World War, trivializes legacies of colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the United States.

For Arendt, government intervention was “exaggerated,” because public schools are a part of the social sphere, a sphere in which people have a right to discrimination. She felt that de-segregation placed a burden on children and made race relations worse in the South.⁸⁶ For Burroughs, Arendt’s philosophical categories distinguishing public, private, and social spheres, are limiting, her interpretation of prejudice results “from her anti-black racism and her dismissal of the political strivings of African Americans,” and her conception that racism in the United States is merely a tradition or “cultural interpretation” demonstrates “her misunderstanding of the sociopolitical significance of race and racism in the United States.”⁸⁷ The sentiment that the government should not intervene in de-segregation in combination with her self-conception of outsidership securitizes her own innocence as pariah, rather than imposing the identity of implicated, or oppressor, onto herself. Also, her philosophy of non-intervention decontextualizes black suffering as an institutional issue. Furthermore, Arendt conceives of black Americans and their desire for integration to be about “social-climbing” and “assimilation” as opposed to an understanding that quality education directly correlates to political participation or seeing that “equal education was itself a political act.”⁸⁸

Arendt not only criticized campaigns of black liberation movements, like de-segregation in public schools, but also the tactics of the leaders themselves. Burroughs cites Arendt’s

⁸⁵ Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” 46.

⁸⁶ Michael D. Burroughs, “Hannah Arendt, ‘Reflections on Little Rock,’ and White Ignorance,” *Critical Philosophy of Race* 3, no. 1 (January 16, 2015): 52–78.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

descriptions of Africans in her earlier works, in which she calls Africans “savages” who “behaved like a part of nature” and “who lacked the specifically human character.” Arendt also portrayed leaders of the black liberation movements of the 1960’s as “silly and outrageous” in contrast “with the ‘disinterested and usually highly moral claims’ of white student protestors.” Arendt criticized “Negro public opinion,” and political philosopher Sidney Hook who felt that racist state-bans against intermarriage between blacks and whites were not top priorities for the black community. To Arendt, repealing these marriage bans was of the utmost importance, and wrote “oppressed minorities were never the best judges on the order of priorities.”⁸⁹ Her characterization of these movements reifies the notion that blackness is inferior, leading Burrough to conclude that “white ignorance constitutes this epistemic error.”⁹⁰ In her dismissing of black liberatory practices and dehumanization, she contributes to the structure of whiteness that claims anti-hegemonic discourses as misguided or wrong, and reinforces the dehumanization of black folks, and “criticizes the colonized.”⁹¹

While she de-legitimized the practices of black suffering, she simultaneously praised Jewish resistance movements, believing they were imperative, and defended them as expressions of victimization. However, she demonized resistance movements run by Jews of color, for example, calling “Israeli crowds as an ‘oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul or some other half-Asiatic country.’”⁹² In her condemnation of blackness and affirmation of white Jewish resistance, she reiterates the marginality and silencing of black expression, reiterating whiteness’s picturesque innocence. According to Gordon, in this understanding, “Arendt placed the currency of her Jewishness in the service of delegitimizing black aims in a way that for

⁸⁹ Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock,” 45–46.

⁹⁰ Burroughs, “Hannah Arendt, ‘Reflections on Little Rock,’ and White Ignorance,” 59; 70.

⁹¹ Gordon, “What Should Blacks Think When Jews Choose Whiteness?: An Ode to Baldwin,” 256.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 250.

Baldwin betokened whiteness.”⁹³ By positioning black folks and black causes as wrong, a distance is reinforced between oppressed groups. This idea of lines and borders, that kinship is not a possibility, but an idea from whiteness that attempts to divide those that are not a part of it in order to maintain its own power. The delegitimization of black oppression and tactics of liberation confines oppression to something emotional as opposed to structural. It also contributes to the othering and dehumanization of black folks and their causes, ultimately perpetuating these systems of oppression by denying their right to advocate for their own emancipation.

The limitations of Arendt’s race thinking should be understood as productions of her victimization. Even “woke” scholars like Morrison identify white-thinking within themselves. Whiteness and white privilege is seductive, offering protections and power while seeming unassuming or non-existent. For Arendt, this meant that whiteness constrained her vision of emancipation politics, bringing the parvenu discourse of power and privilege into her own consciousness. In Arendt’s non-alignment with the hierarchal racial framework of the United States, she not only disremembers its colonial legacy, but also perpetuates its existence by conceiving of movements for black liberation as illegitimate and disassociating contemporary racism from systems thinking. As a result of her personal experience with victimization and statelessness, she conceived of herself as an outsider, because an insider status in the United States’ would mean placing herself within the category of oppressor, de-securitizing her victim-status, and her pariahness to race-thinking. As a putative outsider, there was a possibility to examine the institution of racism as a European-Jewish-pariah and with an “enlarged mentality” to examine racism with institutional and historical legacy. However, her outsider status rather

⁹³ Ibid.

placed her so far outside the realm of “spectator” thinking that she became parvenu to its consequences and its privileges.

As a “follower of Adorno”, Said recognizes systems of oppression as they are created by cultures of capitalism like white supremacy. By claiming a Jewish and Palestinian identity, he addresses what he understood as a hypocrisy between Jewish theories of liberation and Jewish colonial projects. Said’s statement is one that specifically calls to Jewish parvenus, calling out Jews and Jewish intellectuals for esteeming aesthetics of whiteness and capitalism and accepting its privileges in order to access (white) power, ultimately dismissing critical theory. Arendt’s race-thinking does not undermine her conception of the conscious-pariah; these are concepts that she imagined separately and in different circumstances. However, as a Jewish philosopher of freedom and revolution, these detours when examining black liberation movements offer insight and context into the detours of whiteness. Specifically, for Jews involved in social justice work, and more precisely, involvement or non-involvement in anti-racist work. They also hold a mirror to Jewish American consciousness, pariahness, and parvenuness, including perceptions of power structures, modes of resistance, potential for solidarity, and who emancipation is for and what it looks like.

CHAPTER 3: A BRIEF HISTORY OF JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE

The relationship between Judaism as a religion and social justice has been studied in depth in many different fields. From a religious Jewish perspective, justice is a topic detailed in the Torah as well as its commentaries. For example, the Mishnah includes ethics and morals for interpersonal relationships and character building inspired by the Jewish wandering from Egypt (*Pirkei Avot*). These religious works outline the duty to seek justice, from helping the poor to bettering interpersonal relationships and oneself. Woocher defines “civil Judaism,” the beliefs

and practices that construct Jewish American identity. He defined seven tenants of this civil Judaism:

1. The unity of the Jewish people;
2. Mutual responsibility
3. Jewish survival in a threatening world
4. The centrality of the state of Israel
5. The enduring value of Jewish tradition
6. Tzedakah, or philanthropy and social justice; and
7. Americanness as a virtue ⁹⁴

This civic understanding of Jewish identity dominantly manifests in Jewish philanthropy or non-profits today, a topic that will not be negotiated in the scope of this paper.⁹⁵ Seeing as Arendt's conception of justice work excluded charity, citing that it reiterates a hierarchy of power,⁹⁶ organizations that reflect this civic identity through social justice action will be explored. For Durkheim, justice is about achieving a "science of moral facts," something that charity is unable to achieve. Schoenfeld and Meštrović argue that the Durkheimian conception of justice, that esteems justice as opposed to charity, was inspired by his Jewish upbringing.⁹⁷ Durkheim saw justice in terms of power, and like Arendt, condemned charity as continuing a power relationship between groups. This is something that is also reflected in Jewish justice organizations, in which organizations utilize tactics outside of philanthropy and charity and rather advocate for action in the form of acts of kindness or *tikkun olam*, the idea of repairing the world.

⁹⁴ Woocher, Jonathan, "'Sacred Survival' revisited: American Jewish Civil Religion in the New Millennium," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism*, ed. Kaplan, Dana, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 286.

⁹⁵ Jewish federations and organizations net around 26 billion dollars, with the largest proportion of the money going to Israel. Josh Nathan-Kazis, "26 Billion Bucks: The Jewish Charity Industry Uncovered," *The Forward*, March 24, 2014, <http://forward.com/news/israel/194978/26-billion-bucks-the-jewish-charity-industry-unco/>.

⁹⁶ Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, n.d.), 285–86.

⁹⁷ While Christianity affirms charity work, Judaism emphasizes justice "and contractual relations with the deity."

Eugen Schoenfeld and Stjepan G. Meštrović, "Durkheim's Concept of Justice and Its Relationship to Social Solidarity," *Sociological Analysis* 50, no. 2 (1989): 120, doi:10.2307/3710982.

Krasner examines the usage of the term *tikkun olam* through time, citing that while it has biblical origins, it was reintroduced in the middle and latter parts of the 20th century. Krasner argues that the Holocaust changed the meaning of social justice for the Jewish people, leading to the adoption of *tikkun olam*, which as a concept it deals “with human agency, a human-centered utopian quest to realize God’s Kingdom on earth.”⁹⁸ While prior to the Holocaust dominant interpretations of social justice were inspired by the sacred performances of *mitzvot*, or God’s commandments, *tikkun olam* as a concept was a more ambiguous term combining “the divine and the human.” In this connection, “it implied the brokenness of the world,” providing a frame to “the bafflement that the Jews felt as they sought to grapple with what was seemingly inexplicable.”⁹⁹ The founder of *Tikkun* magazine said Judaism was “irrevocably committed to the side of the oppressed” and called for their solidarity from a perspective that was oriented in Judaism.¹⁰⁰ For some, *tikkun olam* is not only a product of the “struggle,” but a part of the “struggle” itself.

3.1 Not So Hidden Tradition: Jewish Solidarity Work

Jewish justice organizations not only focus on justice when it comes to the Jewish community, but also outside of the Jewish community. In working in solidarity with other groups, Jews have historically placed the contemporary struggle within a context of Jewish collective struggle, for example citing Jewish slavery in ancient times or the Holocaust as mobilizing the struggle. This historical memory acts as an inspiration for mobilization or the construction of a movement’s collective identity.¹⁰¹ The paradox within the analysis of Jewish social justice identity is that Jews carry both histories of oppression as well as power and privilege, a paradox that reveals

⁹⁸ Jonathan Krasner, “The Place of Tikkun Olam in American Jewish Life,” *jcpa.org, Jerusalem Center For Public Affairs*, (January 11, 2014), <http://jcpa.org/article/place-tikkun-olam-american-jewish-life1/>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ron Eyerman, “Social Movements and Memory,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, ed. Anna Lisa Tota and Trevor Hagen (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 79.

itself within justice activism. This nuance is particularly interesting in the context American racism and Jewish solidarity work with black liberation movements, as Kaufman explores in his book *Broken Alliance*.

Kaufman emphasizes Jewish participation in the civil rights movement of the 1960's, in which Jews participated as lawyers or funders for black-led movements, or as Rabbis or members of the Jewish community on the protest lines. For Kaufman, this was directly linked to the understanding of anti-Semitism at the time, especially rhetoric around Jewish immigration and the emergence of white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan which targeted both Jews and blacks. While this is the preferred narrative when it comes to Jewish solidarity work, Kaufman concludes that Jewish involvement in American liberal causes was brief because Jews, based on their experiences in Europe, feared mass movements would end up persecuting the Jewish people. He also cites American Jewish Zionism as contrasting with the increasing militancy of black power movements and their goal for international liberation from imperialism, increasing tension between the groups. For Kaufman, Jewish privilege, power, and blindness to the institutional structures of racism were impediments to Jewish solidarity work, while Jews often framed their own narrative through victimization and highlighted the narrative that affirms social justice as inherent to Judaism. This, in combination with dominant perceptions of Jewish progressivism is correlated to the securitizing of Jewish innocence; parallel to Jewish abolitionists were Jewish slaveholders, to the Jewish civil rights fighters like Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman, were Jews contributing to practices of segregation.¹⁰² This inclusion is not to disremember legacies of Jewish social justice, but rather to complicate and empower the so-

¹⁰² Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

called legacy, to remember that acts of resistance, especially anti-racist acts of resistance, should be affirmed as such.

3.2 White Anti-Racist Work

According to John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev's "Toward a New Abolitionism: A Race Traitor Manifesto," the white race, as a historical construction is unnatural and can and should be undone in order to achieve a just society. They explain that the "white club" doesn't mean being a white supremacist, but that those who "look white are... fundamentally loyal to it" and they "defer to the prejudices of others."¹⁰³ With the fundamental principle that, "treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity," they argue that while an individual cannot relinquish their whiteness, these new abolitionists would put their own privileges at risk, breaking the "laws of whiteness" and exposing its myths. To Garvey and Ignatiev, the abolishment of racial-thinking and the "white club" are key to the actualization of justice in the United States and to the imagining of new possibilities.

It is important for groups who are directly impacted by oppression to lead movements for their liberation, but this type of activism also comes with consequences for the individuals doing the confronting and also, depending on the audience, to the outcomes. Chris Crass in *Towards Collective Liberation* emphasizes that oppressed people must deal with the impacts of oppression and navigating a world that de-legitimizes and disempowers them at every level. When these marginalized people are also activists, they must put "resist, persevere, and overcome" in a world, and even in a movement, that is "directly trying to undermine their leadership."¹⁰⁴ While notions of radical self-care and creating communities of struggle offer psychological relief for

¹⁰³ John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev, in *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*, ed. Mike Hill (NYU Press, 1997), 347.

¹⁰⁴ Chris Crass, *Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-Racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building Strategies* (PM Press, 2013), 139.

the burden of confrontation, it is important for sustainability of movements and intersectional outcome for people with respective privilege to mobilize in solidarity.

Sociological studies have also confirmed the effectiveness of confrontation when it comes to challenging racism. If the confronter is seen as hostile, however, the outcomes are often more negative. These findings are important, especially when considering white folks' perceptions of black folks and white fragility. While the content or tone of black confronter overall might not in reality be any more hostile than a white confronter, the tone of the black confronter is seen as more threatening and as a result, the confronted is likely to feel more negatively.¹⁰⁵ When taking fragility and fear this into consideration, given that white people often perceive black people as more angry in general and their fragility when it comes to racial confrontation, the importance of white people confronting other white people about discrimination becomes more clear. Because of these findings, it is clear that outgroups have a particular role in working towards with marginalized groups. This especially resonates for groups with power and privilege.

White supremacy as a praxis must be analyzed and exposed within anti-racist work led by non-black folks.¹⁰⁶ With the understanding that white supremacy is an ideology that is embedded within everyone, its praxis is also found in white-Jewish anti-racist work. Working for the outgroup in any capacity has limitations. Racist ideologies of whiteness are found even in social justice praxis and are able to harm, despite so-called intentions. These iterations of whiteness, or tactics that aim to protect white fragility, narratives, or systems, can be understood as detours¹⁰⁷ in anti-racist work. In the context of anti-racist work, disconnecting injustice from the structural

¹⁰⁵ Jenessa R. Shapiro et al., "Following in the Wake of Anger: When Not Discriminating Is Discriminating," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 35, no. 10 (October 2009): 6, doi:10.1177/0146167209339627.

¹⁰⁶ For more information, see: Carol Schick, "'By Virtue of Being White': Resistance in Anti-Racist Pedagogy," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 3, no. 1 (February 2000): 83–101, doi:10.1080/713693016.

¹⁰⁷ Olsson, Jona, "Detour Spotting for White Anti-Racists: A Tool for Change," *Cultural Bridges to Justice*, 2005, 1–23.

realm not only blurs the urgency of this work, but also limits modes of intervention and space for possibility. Also, by condemning the mentioning of race, the pedagogy of white power aims to vilify black-led modes of resistance, favoring neo-liberal suggestions such as “diversity” or “tone-policing” in an attempt to highlight white contribution and colorblindness. This does not make impossible allyship between the black and Jewish communities, but rather exposes the space for possibility along the lines of anti-white supremacy work.

As Kaufman suggests, solidarity work between Jews and blacks is something that shifts through time. When Jews felt threatened by white-Supremacy, Kaufman argued that their solidarity work was more widespread and effective. This tension is particularly interesting to explore within the realm of social justice work, because it reveals conceptions of world orders, accountability, and emancipatory politics. Today, different communities within the larger Jewish American community have diverse conceptions of justice. Jews are dominantly considered more politically progressive, demonstrated in the most recent election in which 70% of Jewish Americans voted for the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, and only 25% voted for Donald Trump. However, according to the Pew Research Center, Orthodox Jews, a rapidly growing segment of the Jewish community, are predominantly Republican.¹⁰⁸ Also, religiousness positively correlated with the likeliness of voting for Trump.¹⁰⁹ For some, this election exacerbated existing tensions between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities, with discourse increasing around a split within the Jewish community. Given the contemporary increase in anti-Semitic rhetoric, Jewish praxis, especially anti-racist praxis, should be examined in order to understand contemporary actions as well as future possibilities for solidarity work.

¹⁰⁸ Uriel Heilman, “Most Orthodox Jews Are Republicans and 11 Other Findings from Pew,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, August 26, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/2015/08/26/news-opinion/united-states/how-many-orthodox-jews-are-republicans-and-11-other-findings-from-pew-on-orthodox-jews>.

¹⁰⁹ Laura Adkins, “By The Numbers: 3 Key Takeaways from the 2016 Jewish Vote,” *The Forward*, November 9, 2016, <http://forward.com/news/353914/by-the-numbers-3-key-takeaways-from-the-2016-jewish-vote/>.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The approach to this study is based on semi-structured interviews with Jews involved in social justice in Baltimore. After the initial interviews, the research question changed based on the topics the interviewees offered.¹¹⁰ The structure of these interviews also shifted, from a basic semi-structured interview model to one incorporating cultural studies and social movement studies¹¹¹, in order to accommodate storytelling and experience in the conversation. Using discursive borrowing as a methodological approach, this study examines interviews through the lens of Jewish studies and also critical race and post-colonial theories within cultural studies. This approach allows for the incorporation of subaltern histories, systems thinking, and space for possibility and imagination.

4.1 Discursive Borrowing: Examining Jewish studies with Critical Race Theory

The analysis of this study through the frame of critical race theory does not intend to promote discursive plagiarism¹¹², another instance of whiteness claiming and appropriating something that belongs to blackness. Rather, this study will borrow the discourses of critical race theorists like Du Bois, Said, Gilroy, hooks, and Morrison, who navigate this feeling of otherness. In their exploration of otherness, they orient the experience of blackness, transcending simplistic vignettes of difference or victimization, and enter a realm of production and possibility. Discursive borrowing, however, especially when applying productions of blackness, must carefully consider appropriation, and power, including legacies of oppression. Keeping this in mind, this study does not intend to compare the experience of Jewishness and blackness normatively or suggest that the histories or experiences are equivalent. This juxtaposition of

¹¹⁰ As described in my introduction, I was initially interested in specifically interviewing white-Jews in Baltimore doing anti-racist work.

¹¹¹ Michael Pickering, "Experience and the Social World," in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 17.

¹¹² For more information about discursive plagiarism and discursive borrowing, see "Marilyn Randall, "Imperial Plagiarism," in *Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World*, ed. Lise Buranen and Alice Myers Roy (SUNY Press, 1999).

racist and anti-Semitic attitudes is not to equate the depth or impact of these prejudices, but rather to situate pariahness within the aesthetic of othering in the United States.

Additionally, critical race and post-colonial studies are considered as an approach within this framework—an approach to navigating history, literature, and identity construction, and also to the raw data collected in this work. Critical race studies offer a structural perspective of white supremacy and an aesthetics of speaking truth to power, a framework that will be evident within the results and also applied within the analysis of this work. A cultural studies approach that focuses on critical race and post-colonial studies, seeks to expose orders of power, especially white power, and offer insight towards a pedagogy of emancipatory praxis.

4.2 Interviews from a Cultural Studies Approach

Cultural studies approaches are especially relevant and offer potential to be empowering, especially when it comes to marginalized groups.¹¹³ As this topic deals with experiences of historically marginalized groups in exchange with other marginalized groups, the cultural studies approach provides nuance in its interrogation of simplistic notions of reality, and acknowledges intersectionality in an attempt to achieve authentic and empathic understanding. Cultural studies, according to Pickering, revolves around its fluidity, borrowing from other disciplines, and what distinguishes it, is the application of theory to the methods chosen.¹¹⁴ Similarly, in the realm of social movement studies, Doetsch-Kidder draws from the life stories of activists, and in her interpretation, recognizes a theory-in-praxis, a story infused with political analysis and ultimately a consciousness of intersectionality.¹¹⁵ When it comes to the analysis of this collected data, cultural studies places the notion of experience in the understanding that “experience always

¹¹³ Pickering, “Experience and the Social World,” 22.

¹¹⁴ Michael Pickering, “Introduction,” in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 1.

¹¹⁵ Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, *Social Change and Intersectional Activism: The Spirit of Social Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 159.

involves interpretation,” and while the experience should be respected as truth, it should be understood as *a* truth, as both a process and a product and thereby critically interrogated.¹¹⁶ Specifically, data should be assessed in juxtaposition to dominant social discourses in the Foucauldian or Saidian sense, hegemonic frameworks and “the Other.”¹¹⁷ For activists, Doetsch-Kidder describes that the acknowledgement and theoretical understanding of these frameworks develop a specific type of vision evident in the experiences and stories they share.¹¹⁸ Stories and storytelling are also interpretable by researchers as resources, and they should be emphasized in acknowledgement of their spatio-temporal markers, the deeper structures within the narratives themselves and the hermeneutical construction the storyteller employs.¹¹⁹ This emphasis is particularly relevant for this research given the emotional nature of the contemporary moment and how individuals situate themselves and their actions in histories and spirituality. In both of these approaches, the emphasis on interpretation, frameworks, and vision not only complicates the narratives of the interviewee, but the interpretations of the interviewer.

4.3 The Question: Thinking with Conscious Pariah

Configurations of the conscious-pariah are often left to the literary or artistic realm, applied to the work of scholars or Jews in the abstract, and as a result individual narratives are lost, resulting in essentialist or exclusive conceptions of Jewish resistance or justice. In response to this absence, this study will treat the individual praxis of Jewish Baltimore justice actors through the lens of the conscious-pariah, affirming their judgment as legitimate and potentially emancipatory portraits of the Jewish experience. Through a phenomenological approach, this study will navigate the terms of conscious-ness and pariah-ness within the contemporary

¹¹⁶ Pickering, “Experience and the Social World.”

¹¹⁷ Steph Lawer, “Stories and the Social World,” in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

¹¹⁸ Doetsch-Kidder, *Social Change and Intersectional Activism: The Spirit of Social Movement*, 159.

¹¹⁹ Lawer, “Stories and the Social World,” 33.

experiences of Jewish otherness and victimization within the context of American hegemonic frameworks. As opposed to making judgments about the activism, demarcating praxis as conscious pariah versus parvenu, this study will examine contemporary Jewish Americans through this lens, offering a normative understanding of its configuration. This study will seek to understand how these Jews in Baltimore understand anti-Semitism, its impact on their experience, and why. The term social justice has many different interpretations and manifestations, a nuance that will be demonstrated through the course of this research. For the purpose of including diverse ideological perspectives and personal praxis, social-justice-practitioners, or activists, should be understood broadly. Social justice, in the context of this study, refers to praxis that addresses “inequities and equality, barriers and access, poverty and privilege, individual rights and the collective good, and their implications for suffering.”¹²⁰ Given the ambiguity of conscious-ness and pariah-ness, it is important to juxtapose different methods of social justice as modalities of resistance, not to simply judge, but also to understand the motivations, resulting tensions, and possibility.

This study will particularize and expand upon the notion of the conscious pariah within the American context today by first, in brief, imbuing the configuration with critical race and cultural studies, examining Jewish victimization in terms of their racialization, in order to better understand the experience of victimization in the United States. Inspired by Audre Lorde’s notion that revolutionary change isn’t only about systems of oppression, but also the “piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us”¹²¹ the extensions of whiteness necessitate its interrogation on the individual sociological level. By doing so in parallel to the exploration of Jewish social justice praxis and the interactions of subalternness, this study will analyze

¹²⁰ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (SAGE Publications, 2017), 359.

¹²¹ Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 123.

circumstances, limitations, possibilities within the conscious-pariah portrait. Given the contemporary context, this research seeks to understand how Jewish victimization impacts Jewish social justice praxis and how can a contemporary conscious pariah figure contribute to the abolition of the racial hierarchy and a more just society?

4.4 The Interviews

I began my interviews with the basic semi-structured interview model, providing a space for the interview's viewpoints and conversation while keeping the interview within a specific outline.

¹²². Following Flick's model, the questions I asked were theory driven in order to explore the hypothesis of this study.¹²³ Over the course of the interviews, the conversations became less structured in nature, in order to accommodate the personal-historical and identitarian nature of the interviews. Doing so is what expanded this research and ultimately shifted the nature of the conversation to one specifically about activism to the current conversation about Jewish victimization as it manifests within social justice praxis. These conversations were guided by the following questions:

Table 1.1 Guiding Topics

1) Can you talk to me about the type of justice work you are involved in? What is your experience like?
2) What is/was your motivation? How do different aspects of your identity come into play? How does this work relate to your Jewish identity?
3) What is a challenge for you in this work? What is meaningful for you about this work?
4) What are some issues in your city? How do you see your work as contributing to the betterment of Baltimore?
5) How do you feel about the Black Lives Matter Movement? The protests in the city?
6) Can you talk to me about your personal safety? How do you see Jewish safety today?
7) How do you feel about the Trump election? How do you think Trump will be for the Jews?
8) How do you feel about the recent anti-Semitic vandalism? Anti-Semitic Rhetoric?

¹²² Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 150.

¹²³ Ibid., 157

Due to the personal nature of the topics, participants talked about their family's experience with anti-Semitism, their personal ideological projects, and their spirituality. Participant also shared reactions to contemporary issues of the time, for example: local issues like politics and activism in Baltimore, police Brutality and the Baltimore Uprising or "unrest" or "riots,"¹²⁴ national issues like the Trump election and his policies such as the travel ban or "Muslim Ban," bomb threats at Jewish Community Centers and Synagogues, vandalism of cemeteries, and international issues like anti-Semitism and Israel. Each interview lasted between one hour and two and a half hours. The interviews were mostly conducted at the homes of the interviewees at their request, though some were held in coffee shops and one was in a park outdoors.

4.5 Sampling and Justice Work in the City

The scope of this study could not accommodate the full range of Jewish justice work in Baltimore. When necessary, the name of the organization or position title will be altered in order to maintain anonymity of the participants. While they can be considered, in one capacity, a reflection of the organization they are a part of, they also spoke from their personal ideologies. I began the study by focusing on the Baltimore chapter of Jews United for Justice, an organization whose mission reads:

Embedded in our Jewish tradition is the concept of tikkun olam (repairing the world), which teaches us that as Jews we have a responsibility to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed, both within and outside our community. Once slaves in Egypt--and strangers

¹²⁴ While the media mostly covered the reaction to the acquittal of Baltimore officers a "riot," many community members and activists called the response an uprising. Given that riots are socially constructed, and race is a strategic ideology, "race riots" must be understood in both of these contexts, taking language, power, and history into consideration. The protest paradigm describes the phenomenon in which the media marginalizes movements by labeling their actions as deviant or highlighting auxiliary demands or concerns. The impulse to vilify the actions of people of color by naming their expressions of grief and sadness by calling it "rioting" is not unique to this circumstance. In the use of the term "riots," these expressions of grief in the context of the collective memory of police violence are portrayed as irrational and also disorganized. It also means that these demonstrations are heavily policed. For more information about this phenomenon, see Messer and Bell or McLeod, and for more about it within the Baltimore context, see Cave. Chris M. Messer and Patricia A. Bell, "Mass Media and Governmental Framing of Riots." Douglas M. McLeod, "News Coverage and Social Protest." Damien Cave, "Defining Baltimore: #Riot, #Uprising or #Disturbance?"

in many lands since--we learn from our history and liturgy the importance of adding our voices to a universal call for justice. As members of a community that has experienced both prejudice and privilege, we have a unique understanding of and commitment to social justice wherever we find ourselves.

After coming to Baltimore in 2014, JUFJ has been working on closely on police reform and transforming rent court. They have also been involved in other campaigns, for example, limiting TIF deals for Port Covington.¹²⁵ I interviewed participants within JUFJ in combination with a meso-level analysis of their organization, in which I attended one of their largest events, the Social Justice Seder. JUFJ acted as a hub for progressive Jews doing anti-racist work in Baltimore. After the initial interviewees described feeling a tension between their work and the Orthodox community, I shifted to the snowball sampling method. Naturally, there is no hub for Jews doing the opposite of Jews United for Justice, as in there is no Jewish organization doing racist work. Rather, I sought to locate Jews doing Justice work not based on race or addressing racism, Jews that were more politically or religiously conservative, and Jews that were not involved in solidarity protests after Freddie Gray's death. Because I have been involved in Jewish anti-racist work, using the snowballing method, I was able to expand my own circle, and reveal the "stranger," allowing for a broader perspective.¹²⁶ I sought out to find organizations run by Orthodox Jews, and asked previous participants if they knew someone or knew someone who might know someone else, that was involved in different types of justice work and who had more politically or religiously conservative perspectives. I also reached out to a Torah-observant

¹²⁵ Port Covington is located on a peninsula in Baltimore that Kevin Plank, the billionaire and founder of Under Armour, wants to develop as one of the biggest development projects in the United States. In order to develop this property as a "city within a city" with upscale housing targeted towards millennials, a development that would defy affordable housing and job laws, he has requested a 660 million dollar TIF deal. This deal would lead to a contract of debt to the city as well as federal and state subsidies, as well as 140 million dollars from taxpayers— "That's nearly three times what the city currently spends each year to keep existing parks barely functional." Opposition to the deal, from organizations like JUFJ as well as other community-led organizations, has led to its delay. The project should begin development in 2018. Good Jobs First, "Great Organizing in Baltimore Wins Delay in Nation's Third-Largest TIF Deal," *Goodjobsfirst.org*, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/blog/great-organizing-baltimore-wins-delay-nation%E2%80%99s-third-largest-tif-deal>.

¹²⁶ Denzin and Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 110.

woman with whom I had worked in the past, and she directed me to many of the more politically and religiously conservative participants. This led me to an Orthodox girls school. I went in to the interview thinking I would use it to connect with other Orthodox justice organizations, but the staff emphasized that their mission was emphasized a commitment to “community” and “the Jewish People.” I also was able to connect with a volunteer with the emergency ambulance organization, Hatzalah. They provide free ambulance service all year round in order to address the needs of the Orthodox community as well as to provide, “immediate emergency medical care during those few precious minutes where immediate and proper care can mean the difference between life and death” and “maximize patient survival.”¹²⁷ I also sought to speak with people involved in activities related to the Associated, Baltimore’s Jewish Federation. Many of the participants from JUFJ spoke about feeling a tension with the “Associated Jews,” and through snowballing, I was able to meet with people who currently or previously were involved. There are numerous social justice organizations in Baltimore and many Jews that are involved in social justice organizations that are not explicitly Jewish, however the former will be focused on for this study. The participants varied in the praxis of their social justice, but for the purpose of understanding social justice work through a larger scope, analyzing differing ideologies, and getting a fuller experience of the American Jewish experience, a wide variety of praxis will be considered.

I initially thought to ascribe each interview a numerical value (for example: Participant 1), but then found the de-personalization discontinuous to the methodology of this study and to the authenticity of the participants themselves. As a result, I decided to give each participant a name, and if applicable, a name that would reflect their torah-observance.

¹²⁷ “Hatzalah of Baltimore,” *Hatzalahbaltimore.org*, 2016, <https://hatzalahbaltimore.org/about-us/>.

Table 1.2 Interviewee Information

Anonymized Name	Religious self-Identity	Justice Work
Akiva	Orthodox, Torah-Observant	Hatzalah volunteer
Andrea	Jewish	Jewish service learning, JUFJ
Ayelet	Conservative-Orthodox/Modern Orthodox	Jewish justice and advocacy wing of the Associated, Jeremiah Fellowship, JUFJ
Chaviva	Orthodox, Torah Observant	School for Orthodox girls
Adam	Jewish	Labor organizer, Jeremiah fellowship, JUFJ
Danielle	Jewish	Environmental NGO, Palestine-Solidarity work, JUFJ
Dov	Orthodox, Torah Observant	Administrative rabbi, Jewish fundraising, financial mentorship, Associated leader
Jeremy	Conservative-Orthodox/Modern Orthodox	Jewish day school and Hebrew school teacher, prayer leader, Associated involvement
Lori	Jewish	Jewish historical organization, blogger, JUFJ,
Sara	Jewish	JUFJ

The participants that are marked “Jewish,” simply identified as such, and mostly were on the reform or reconstructionist spectrum. The participants that are listed as just Conservative-Orthodox/Modern Orthodox identified somewhere along the Orthodox spectrum, going to different synagogues with different sectarian identities. Those that are marked as “Torah-Observant” were given this title inspired by one of the participants, in order to distinguish herself from non-Torah-Observant Orthodox Jews. The practices of each individual will not be discussed in depth, but it should be noted that those marked with Conservative-Orthodox/Modern Orthodox, and even more so Torah-Observant, are read as Jewish, while with the others, it is less visibly obvious.

4.6 Limitations

My positionality should be the first limitation addressed within the methodology. I worked within Jewish anti-racist work for two years, and this work represents my perspective as well as my interpretation of these materials. While it is my aim to promote ambiguity and regard praxis in terms of experience and self-identity, my aesthetic is informed by cultural studies and

liberatory pedagogy within the aforementioned framework. My ideological anonymity was therefore important for this study, so as a result, I chose to interview participants that had a limited knowledge of my work experience when possible.

Also, my religious identity should be seen as a limitation within this work. As someone who identifies Jewishly, I do have personal investment in the topic of Jewish solidarity work. While I adjusted my dress in order to be respectful to the interviewees, it is obvious that I am not a Torah-observant Jew. This was also revealed in my language—for example, while reform Jews use the word *Tikkun Olam*, Torah-observant Jews do not often relate to this term, identifying with biblical concepts like *Pirkei Avot*. While this perhaps gained me entry into the lens of the less observant Jews, the Torah observant Jews potentially saw me as an outsider. This might have impacted their level of comfort with and how much they were willing to share. I also understood that there was a dynamic in which they wanted me to see their observance in a certain light. They often invited me to dinner or told me about how meaningful and special being an observant Jew could be.

Also, due to the short research period and limited scope of the study, I was not able to interview Jews from every sect or from all relevant Jewish organizations. For example, it would have been interesting to include more perspectives from Rabbis or Jewish politicians. While I reached out to the aforementioned groups, I was not able to set up interviews with any of them. Answers to these questions could also have been considered qualitatively through a survey, which would have offered perspectives from a wider set and an increase in generalizability, but these results would have lacked depth and space for transcendental aspects of the participants' experiences and identities.

4.7 Brief Background of Jewish Baltimore

Baltimore is a city with a large Jewish population, a city with historic and contemporary racial segregation, and legacies of Jewish participation and opposition in legislating segregation.

The scope of this paper does not allow for a comprehensive history, but it is important to highlight moments of Jewish history in which they experienced victimization, periods of privilege, and power, and tension between the two, with a specific focus on solidarity and tension between Jews and Blacks. While histories of racism and segregation prior to the Second World War will not be addressed, it is important to note that the legacies of slavery in Baltimore are still consequential and visible when it comes to mapping racism in the city.

In *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*, Antero Pietila goes into detail about how white supremacist attitudes influenced housing laws and how this led to ghettoization, white flight, and contemporary segregation in Baltimore. Pietila described post Second World War Baltimore as having a three-tiered housing market, one for white homeowners, one for black homeowners, and one for Jewish homeowners. This manifested itself through different restrictive measures, for example through creating residential zones, restrictive deeds, or up-charging.¹²⁸ Black homeowners were subject to “redlining,” in which the Federal Housing Association coded black communities as undesirable in influence and in population. Also, based on the weak welfare state, landlords would engage in “blockbusting” in which they would exploit fears of white homeowners, contributing to the undesirability of black neighborhoods. Through upselling and segregation, landlords built a dynamic in which they were able to profit off white fear as well as white flight, and also the ghettoization of black folks.

¹²⁸ A study in 1946 found that black renters paid approximately 75 percent above the average market level. Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010).

Under the guise of so-called development, banks and landlords invested in white neighborhoods and disinvested in black neighborhoods, a racist tradition continues today.

Jews in Baltimore were also considered non-white in real estate , and they made up the third tier of the real estate market economy in Baltimore. Signs in Baltimore, for example at the Baltimore Country Club on York Road, read "No Dogs, No Coloreds, No Jews" as late at 1969. Thirty years later, this country club still maintained its exclusionary practices, however more covertly, by simply not accepting applicants with Jewish last names.¹²⁹ Through legal and illegal means, as late as the 1970s, blacks and Jews were excluded from certain neighborhoods in through restrictive “deed covenants” or “Gentlemen’s Agreements” respectively, and they were forced to rent from corrupt landlords, ghettoized in predominantly the Northwestern parts of the city. For example, The Roland Park Company was a development company that wouldn’t sell to black folks or Jews. In 1953, after World War II when Jews *became* white, the Company stated that they wouldn’t sell to Jews in order to ensure “congenial neighbors, ” which they enforced covertly through Gentlemen’s Agreements, and overtly excluded black folks until federal intervention.¹³⁰

Despite having been targeted alongside of black Baltimoreans specifically in the housing market, after being allowed access to economic security and the white-market through post-war legislation like the GI bill, Jews contributed to redlining and blockbusting in the city. While the preferred narrative is one that cites Jewish landlords as being the first to rent to black homeworkers, Jewish landlords also contributed and funded racial segregation in the city. This was a reality even prior to the Second World War, in which wealthy land-owning Jews would

¹²⁹ Jeffreys, Daniel, “No Jews on Their Golf Courses,” *New Statesman*, August 23, 1999, <http://www.newstatesman.com/node/149688>.

¹³⁰ Garrett Power, “The Residential Segregation of Baltimore’s Jews: Restrictive Covenants or Gentlemen’s Agreement?,” *Faculty Scholarship*, October 1, 1996, 5, http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/fac_pubs/254.

engage in racial-segregation. For example, in partnership with the Roland Park Company, Jewish philanthropist Meyerhoff, whose buildings line Baltimore city, participated in the exclusion of blacks as well as Jews in Roland Park. When confronted by the Jewish community in 1948, he said he wouldn't include Jews because the inclusion would ruin his developments and investments.¹³¹ Jewish exclusion of blacks and of other Jews was the practice of many real estate development firms. Even under the guise of progressivism, Manning Bernstein and Warren Shaw, a Jewish and black real estate pair, were charged by the Real Estate Commission for engaging in racist practices. While the court said it was not about race, the court did find that the duo mishandled properties. According to Pietila, the duo felt it was so unfair, that they took the case to the Supreme Court. Bernstein said, "religiously or ethically, we didn't do anything wrong. We advocated the cause of Black people."¹³² Many Orthodox Jews also chose to self-segregate, and create communities particularly in the Northwest of the city that accommodated their needs. Given their putative non-desirability, this was a practice that was affirmed by Jewish and non-Jewish developers alike.

Today, this perception of a paradoxical and even hypocritical housing scheme contributed to a tension between Baltimore's black and Jewish community. Baltimore has a large Jewish population in a predominantly black city. Since 1999, the Baltimore Jewish population has increased by sixteen percent, making the total number of Jewish homes around 42,500 as of 2015. The Baltimore Jewish community is also comparatively more traditional than Jewish communities in the United States, with Orthodox Jews as thirty-two percent, Conservative as twenty-five percent, and reform as twenty-three percent.¹³³ The Jewish community is also

¹³¹ Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City*.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 153.

¹³³ Wiener, Julie, "Amid the Unrest: Background on Baltimore's Jews," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 30, 2015, <http://www.jta.org/2015/04/30/news-opinion/united-states/how-are-baltimores-jews-doing-amid-the-violence-there>.

geographically divided—the traditional and Orthodox Jews pre-dominantly live in the Northwest parts of the city, and the less traditional or nondenominational Jews are more scattered, though increasingly the latter are moving downtown.

The tension between Jews and blacks is particularly exacerbated in Orthodox neighborhoods in Northwest Baltimore, like Park Heights, a racially mixed neighborhood. The first survey of Baltimore's demography was conducted in 1968 showed that the "core" of the Jewish community resided in Park Heights. This same year, the year of the Baltimore "riots" in reaction to Martin Luther King's Assassination, marked the diminishment of the Jewish community in this neighborhood, as many became white-flighters and moved over the county line to Pikesville.¹³⁴ Today, Park Heights is 96% black, many of whom are immigrants.¹³⁵ The Jewish population has for the most part resettled to the North of Northern Parkway, called "Upper Park Heights" or colloquially "Little Jerusalem" or "Jewish Baltimore," with black neighborhoods predominantly to the South. Tensions between the black Jewish communities in this area came to a climax in November of 2010 when the Werdesheim brothers, from a volunteer Orthodox community patrol unit, *Shomrim*, had a violent interaction with a black fifteen-year-old student, Corey Ausby. While patrolling, the brothers saw Ausby and they approached him saying, "didn't I see you at Park Heights? You don't belong here. You belong in school."¹³⁶ Ausby became scared and threatened to hit them with a studded plank of wood, when Eli Werdesheim struck Ausby on the head with his radio and held him to the ground. The coverage of the issue was mixed, with some implying the phrase "you don't belong here," was

¹³⁴ Bruce Phillips, "The Geography of Jewish Inter-marriage in Five U.S. Urban Areas," in *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics*, ed. Stanley Brunn, vol. 1–5 (Springer, 2015), 3249–82.

¹³⁵ Mary Carole McCauley, "Once Again, Building Community in Park Heights," *Baltimoresun.com*, October 28, 2016, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/retro-baltimore/bs-ae-retro-baltimore-neighborhoods-park-heights-20161028-story.html>.

¹³⁶ Jeannine Bell, "Reshaping Public and Private Space: Public Accommodations, Neighborhoods, and Housing," in *Boston University Law Review*, vol. 95 (Boston University: Boston University Law Review, 2015), 856.

inherently racist, and others said the Werdesheim brothers were innocent or just doing their job. The Jewish community was split over this issue, with many members of the Orthodox community affirming their support for the brothers and Shomrim, mostly non-Orthodox Jews and the Jewish Community Center condemning their actions, and others geographically and therefore consciously removed.

It is important to conclude that in Baltimore today, while segregationist practices still remain for black folks, these same practices do not exist for Jewish folks. Historically, while both deed covenants and Gentlemen's Agreements both resulted in segregationist results,¹³⁷ the distinction is demonstrative of anti-black racism as an ongoing institutional system. While the understanding was that Jews are non-white and their experience can be understood alongside of racist tactics—listed on the same signs for restricted entry—their exclusion was more ambiguous and conditional, especially after the Second World War, when Jews were given a choice to self-segregate.

CHAPTER 5: AN ANALYSIS OF JEWISH BALTIMOREAN'S SOCIAL JUSTICE PRAXIS

5.1 Coming to Pariah

To the tired climbers, the horizon was ever dark, the mists were often cold, the Canaan was always dim and far away. If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect. In those sombre forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself, -- darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another.¹³⁸ W.E.B Du Bois

Danielle, a Palestine-solidarity activist as well as a member of Jews United for Justice, described a shift in her sense of self over the last couple of months, a revelation that would come to inspire

¹³⁷ Power, "The Residential Segregation of Baltimore's Jews," 6.

¹³⁸ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Atlantic Monthly Company, 1897), 5, <http://www.americasinging.com/wordpress2/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/WEB-DuBois.pdf>.

the framing of this research and offer new and deeper questions about Jewish *consciousness* and *pariahness*. With a sarcastic smile, she described her “solid foundation of a Zionist Jewish education,” with thirteen years in Jewish day school and years at a Jewish summer camp. The Holocaust, and a survivor-descendant narrative, “and all the shtick around that” was very wrapped up in her “strong” Jewish identity and a “flaky liberal Zionism.” “And then,” she said, “over the process of awakening, I did a total 180.” She described having a “very visceral reaction to” and a “hatred” toward any discourse that was Holocaust related, anti-Semitism related, Israel related. She said, “I was very dismissive,” and “I rejected a lot of their [other Jews’] historical narrative.” Once again, there was another shift over the past couple of months. With the “emboldening of anti-Semitic discourse” in mainstream narratives, she felt a real “sense of fear” and “otherness” she had never experienced prior. After the election, she and some of her non-Jewish friends were “bereft” and “petrified,” and created a text message thread to share their “sadness and snark.” She said:

The day Bannon emerged from the ashes as a Phoenix to save us all and I sent something to them like you guys, we are the most fucked, will you hide me in your basement when they come to me? And one friend wrote something back to the effect of, ‘well we will all need to be hidden, we are women, they are coming for us all.’ Woah, I never felt so separate from you. You don’t realize that I am telling you from a real and profound sense of fear, that for the first time in my life I fear my body is under direct threat and that is an experience that I have only heard of other people experiencing. It was a cognitive concept, and now I feel it profoundly in my bones, and you can not get it.¹³⁹

Within this anecdote, she shared the experience of coming to understand her identity, a recognition of the self/other. While growing up she had felt an attachment to Jewishness based on the experience of having Holocaust-surviving grandparents, she now recalls a new dimension of the experience of victimization. When she says, “so separate from you,” “you don’t realize,” “I feel it... and you can’t get it,” she is citing the experience of distancing, of being outside of

¹³⁹ Danielle, Interview with Danielle, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 27, 2017.

the experience of her non-Jewish friends. Her perception that they *can't* get it suggests her ability, and the ability of her Jewish friends, *to* get it. After this realization, she described the process of creating an affirmative Jewish community for herself, restructuring her social network so that her “chosen family” was Jewish. Amongst Jews, she was able to find a sense of understanding, some capacity to provide comfort given their shared experience. When she felt a distancing between her personal identity and the Jewish collective identity of victimization, she felt a sense of shame, a shame that would further distance her from other aspects of her Jewish identity, including her community, history, and spiritual practice. The experience of then understanding herself as other, ignited an imperative to see herself with a new consciousness.

Adam, like Danielle, saw the anti-Semitic rhetoric as an alarming shift. Especially, Adam said, because his girlfriend is both a Jew and an immigrant. While Adam explained he felt safe in Baltimore, citing his own maleness and whiteness as privileges that allow him this safety, he still understood his Judaism as a distinguishing factor. Despite his privileges, and feeling he wouldn't be a target of anti-Semitic violence, he expressed feeling other-ed, of knowing that despite his privileges, he was seen as Jewish. He shrugged, slightly gesturing his curly hair:

Having been identified as a Jew by others, I didn't have any choice in that, and I still don't really have a choice on some level...It is an experience of being singled out or marked. I've never experienced overt anti-Semitism. At the same time though, it's an experience of knowing or feeling myself all the time like I am Jewish and people see me that way. Because of stereotypes about Jews, I've always been really self-conscious about picking up change in public.¹⁴⁰

While Adam felt that being a Jew was central to the way he saw himself, he was aware that this was a lens through which others saw him. This experience of “feeling myself all the time like I am Jewish *and* people see me that way” is a direct mirror to the Du Boisian notion of double-consciousness. His feeling that he shouldn't pick up change in public, is a consciousness of a

¹⁴⁰ Adam, Interview with Adam, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 14, 2017.

characterization of Jewishness created by non-Jews. He was aware of his other-ing by an entity deemed all-knowing, right, and superior, a shadowy presence that is able to see and judge even the most minute details of his life. He internalized this characterization, understood its implications, and as a result of this knowing, he adjusted his behavior. For Adam this was not something that he newly experienced after the election, but he understood it as a part of his experience, he has “always been self-conscious.” While in this way, his experience contrasts to that of Danielle, this fear impacts their sense of inclusion within the larger society.

Jeremy mentioned instances of anti-Semitism more than any other participant. Most questions—including those regarding the Uprising or other social justice movements, the experience of being Jewish in the city, and the Baltimore City police—returned to the topic of anti-Semitism. He referenced seeing swastikas on synagogues, a Molotov cocktail being thrown at a Jewish library, and many other incidents of violence against Jews throughout the years. He also described being “targeted as a white guy” by the police on two different occasions. When asked what happened, he said, “They [the police] mistook me for some other white guy.” “And then what happened?” He replied, “that was all.”¹⁴¹ For him, he placed a heavy emphasis on Jewish victimization, he felt it throughout his life. He said,

I have come to accept [feeling unsafe in a Kippa]... I frequently wear a hat. I’ve gotten the anti-Semitic slurs. When you wear a Kippa people ask you crazy questions, like, ‘where are your horns?’ You used to be you hear about anti-Semitic incidents every couple of months, and now you hear it every week.¹⁴²

As a teacher at a Jewish day school, he was deeply concerned that his students began to hear anti-Semitic remarks after the election. Also, as a response to anti-Semitism he felt that Jews should, “maintain [their] Jewishness, wear it proudly, don’t bow down to the fear, [and] know

¹⁴¹ Jeremy, Interview with Jeremy, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 24, 2017.

¹⁴² Ibid.

why [they are] Jewish.”¹⁴³ His emphasis of threats against Jews throughout the interview is derivative of his feelings of responsibility as a teacher as well as his bondedness to Judaism. He cited the entity of insecurity in his everyday life as the Black and Hispanic gangs and described the “riots” after Freddie Gray’s death “horrifying.” For him, Jewish safety in Baltimore was a problem, as it was for Dov and Chaviva.

For some, this feeling of otherness was more abstract, but they understood it as a part of the Jewish experience. Amongst the Orthodox Jews in particular, anti-Semitism was understood not with singularity, but rather as consistent and inevitable. Dov, an Orthodox Rabbi, said:

It is *halachah*, or Jewish law, that Esau hates Jacob. That there will be hatred from non-Jewish entities against Jewish entities. That will always be. There is commentary that the name of the Arab nation, Ishmael, comes from *Yishma-el*, that god will hear. There is a commentary on when Yishmael was named, that his generation will oppress Jews and instill fear in them that they[the Jews] will be forced to pray to god, and that god will hear. That is their [the Arab nation’s] purpose, that is going to happen. They will hate the Jews, they will oppress them and terrorize them...Every forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years, there is another horrendous blow against the Jewish people, that usually should wipe them out. It shouldn’t make sense that we keep surviving and growing stronger.¹⁴⁴

For Dov, Jewish victimization is patterned. There is no uniqueness within this time, there is no anti-Semitic post-Trump phenomenon, there is no new entity. Rather, the oppressive force, immortal and omnipresent, is a constant dynamic of tension and danger for the Jewish people, and so it is written. The terms and understanding of pariah-ness for these individuals varied, an understanding that impacted the way that they saw justice, injustice, and their stake in both.

5.11 Passive Resistance: Community and Jewish Customs as Praxis

In order to offer ambiguity within the typologies of parvenu/pariah, this study will affirm passive acts of resistance as legitimate and potentially revolutionary praxis. The Jewish community in Baltimore will be explored in two different capacities, one as an examination of its physical spaces as production, and the other a more abstract understanding of the Jewish “community.”

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Dov, Interview with Dov, interview by Jillian Lipman, May 1, 2017.

Chaviva, Dov, and Akiva, described living in the Northwest as an Orthodox bubble. For Chaviva, the Orthodox community is “so rich” in stores and organizations, that while they are unable to, for example, eat at a restaurant downtown, this does not make them feel marginalized because the bubble represents her values. For Dov, the bubble is “a protective measure, it is our safe place.” Dov said he was “trying to encourage my children and my family to live a devout life that is committed to Judaism and that doesn’t have influences that would pull them away from it.”¹⁴⁵ Rather than conceiving of this bubble as a product of their pariah-ness, these participants look at the Orthodox bubble through the lens of production.

Participants living in these neighborhoods described them as “special” and “bonded.” The exceptionality of these neighborhoods, especially for Chaviva and Akiva, led to radical empathy for their neighbors, manifested in interpersonal interactions as well as in the numerous Jewish NGO’s that specifically tailor to the Orthodox community. Akiva, a volunteer with Hatzalah, the emergency medical service targeting Orthodox Jewish populations, elaborated on victimization as ethos within his community:

You have to sense that you are responsible for your neighbor, and that is hard to find in other communities, Jews have always been forced, because we have been persecuted for many years, forced to be very close to each other, to have tight bonds for each other.¹⁴⁶

For Akiva, Jewish peoplehood motivated him, and this peoplehood was characterized by its exceptionalness, closeness, and persecution. In this sentiment, Akiva demonstrates a connection between the persecution of the Jews and radical empathy. He continued to describe this feeling as seeing everyone within his community as his “mother or father or sister or brother.” Within this geographically marginal space, he describes the ability to actualize Jewish values, and create a culture in which subalternness and marginality produces collective compassion. This is what

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁴⁶ Akiva, Interview with Akiva, interview by Jillian Lipman, May 1, 2017.

inspired him about volunteering for Hatzalah. Hatzalah specifically sought to accommodate the needs of the Jewish community, not only providing free and fast medical service, but also religious coverings in the event that someone had an emergency and wasn't able to cover themselves. Akiva also involved his children by having them babysit if both parents needed to go to the hospital, "the city is not going to do that."¹⁴⁷

Perhaps the least affirmed manifestation of social justice work is the creation of Jewish spaces as resistance to subalternity. Understanding the simple act of creating community as a legitimate modality of resistance allows for affirmation of subaltern identities in pursuing their own cultures and values. For Arendt, assimilation in the mid-twentieth century was oppositional to the conscious pariah, symptomatic of a desire to not be Jewish, and ultimately led to "hopeless sadness."¹⁴⁸ Given their religious and cultural differences, Orthodox Jews in the city have largely chosen to the path of non-assimilation, a choice that resulted in the creation of a vibrant and growing Jewish community in which they celebrated their other-ness and created structures that uplifted one another and accommodated specifically Jewish needs. Also, these Jews identify with and are identifiable as the victimized group, compounded their sense Jewish victimization, thereby increasing the desire to create Jewish spaces. In the creation of communal spaces based on Jewish values, they reproduce the "Jewish tendency toward utopianism."¹⁴⁹ In Arendt's description of Heine's portrayal of the Jewish pariah people, she describes that pariahs in their chosen ostracism celebrate the simple pleasures of the common people, rootedness in nature or song.¹⁵⁰ In this space of marginality¹⁵¹, they are able to nourish the values that are important to their religious practice and their self-affirmation.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 272.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 280.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 278–79.

Beyond these geographical boundaries is also the trend for the participants', in the awareness of their victimization, to seek peace, or cope, through Jewish practice. Lori, who currently works for a Jewish historical organization, described growing up non-religious. In middle school, when she learned about the "six million people that died because they were Jewish, like me, and I didn't know what that meant," she was inspired to start learning about Judaism.¹⁵² While reading, she came across the section about God hardening Pharaoh's heart, a passage about punishing sin, and she felt that it was "immoral." She concluded, "I know I'm Jewish because I can't not be Jewish, because all those millions of people died in order to be Jewish. I have to be Jewish."¹⁵³ In her echoing of Amery's self-realized imperative to be Jewish, this victimization, generations removed, obligated her to religious identity, as if non-identification contributed to the erasure of the people. Danielle and Lori also described their Jewish practice as being a space for affirmation and coping. After the stress of feeling anti-Semitism for her first time, Danielle said:

The biggest distinction for me, more than any political shift over the last few months, is a gravitation towards Jewish ritual and community that I never would have thought I wanted. I found that of my own volition, even if I am not having Shabbat dinner with friends, I crave lighting candles at home on a Friday night.¹⁵⁴

After perceiving a rise in anti-Semitism, many of the non-Orthodox participants also echoed this sentiment. Like Danielle, Sara described feeling inclined to incorporate Jewish text or prayer within JUFJ's events. Andrea described the Jewish religion, and specifically the Torah, helping her to understand the world and the way it works. She is deeply connected to "rootedness," that helps her know herself in the world, something she finds in "Jewish culture, in the deep meaning of the world culture." She said that people need this in order to understand themselves and the

¹⁵¹ hooks, "Marginality as Site of Resistance," 341.

¹⁵² Lori, Interview with Lori, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 13, 2017, 5.

¹⁵³ Lori, Interview with Lori.

¹⁵⁴ Danielle, Interview with Danielle, 6.

world, and “you don’t need to go to a place to find it...we have a portable version [the Torah], you just have to learn it.”¹⁵⁵ For Torah-observant and Orthodox Jews in particular, as individuals who strongly identify with Jewishness and Jewish collective trauma, practicing the religion of the subaltern religion can be understood as a form of resistance. Participants like Ayelet saw the Torah as a “light on to the world, [so] by being a part of it, I am bringing light onto the world.”¹⁵⁶ Faith in itself can be a emancipatory praxis—it can allow one to cope with the oppressive structures of reality and also offer a place of transformation and liberation. These participants also identified Judaism as a religion contributing to their desire to do justice work; Jewishness and justice, regardless of definition, were deeply connected. Many participants felt justice work was something that “god wants”¹⁵⁷ or that “the universe is compelling”¹⁵⁸ them to do, and others found it “inherent to the Jewish people.”¹⁵⁹ Chaviva cited *Pirkei Avot*, Jeremy, Dov, and Lori said *tzedeek tzedeek tirdof* (justice, justice, you shall pursue), a phrase from Deuteronomy, and Sara and Andrea talked about *tikkun olam*. Arendt, like Woocher, de-sacrilizes Judaism, highlighting its cultural or civic components. Arendt criticizes “the privileged wealthy Jews” and how they “appealed to the sublimities of the Hebrew Prophets in order to prove that they were indeed the descendants of an especially exalted people.”¹⁶⁰ This binary and exclusive understanding of resistance equates religiousness to parvenu-ness, narrowing the frame of emancipatory politics.

The creation of physical and spiritual Jewish communities in response to anti-Semitism is an interesting and powerful phenomenon in itself, built upon legacies of resistance to oppression in many forms. The focus of this study in particular, is Jewish social justice action as a response to victimization, a response that also takes into consideration community and religious practice

¹⁵⁵ Andrea, Interview with Andrea, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 6, 2017.

¹⁵⁶ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 19, 2017, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet.

¹⁵⁸ Lori, Interview with Lori.

¹⁵⁹ Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva, interview by Jillian Lipman, May 1, 2017.

¹⁶⁰ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 282.

inherently. Looking at justice action can help give a better understanding of how Jews see their own victimization within the context of the oppressor and the oppressed, hegemony, understanding what liberation and emancipation could look like and for who, and how Jews in Baltimore see themselves in terms of accountability.

5.12 Active Resistance: What are We Working Towards?

Akiva said, “There’s a very interesting thing, look, I am going to say something that is not so politically correct, but I am going to say it anyway...use it or don’t use it.” He shared a conversation he had with a “liberal medic” while volunteering at a hospital in Israel. The other medic asked:

‘You have a terrorist that is badly injured, so badly injured that if you don’t get to him he will die. And you have an Israeli soldier that is also injured that has a few more minutes, what would you do?’ And I knew what he wanted me to say, but I know what I would do. ‘I would step on the terrorist to get to the Israeli soldier and help out the Israeli soldier.’ And I said, ‘you are a hypocrite; let me ask you a question. Same situation, you have your wife and a Palestinian, where your wife isn’t as badly injured, who do you want me to help first?’ And he said, ‘my wife, of course.’ I view everyone as my family; I view the Jewish community as my family. Anyone that is not in the Jewish community is a step outside of my family... it’s a sense of family, that everyone is a part of one big family, that creates that passion.¹⁶¹

Akiva felt that Jewish peoplehood obliged him to specifically work within and for his own community. Ahuva, Dov, and Jeremy echoed this, citing that the Jewish people in Baltimore, the United States, and abroad, were the priority. Jewish peoplehood meant prioritizing Jewish needs, an idea that was also promoted in the Orthodox school. Chaviva said:

We don’t talk about helping those outside of the Jewish community, but we don’t talk against it. Our job is, if you’re on a bus and there is an old person, it should not matter if they are religious or not or if they are white or black, you should stand up for the old person because that’s what we do. But, we’ve had very little exposure to other communities, so I can’t say for certain that every child feels comfortable in other communities, because it is not who we are. Parents look at it as creating a safe environment for their children.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Akiva, Interview with Akiva, 8.

¹⁶² Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva.

She not only felt that working within the Jewish community and for the Jewish community was her duty, but also that working outside of it could potentially be a risk. Safety and justice were deeply linked, and for her certain types of justice work could make someone in her community uncomfortable or unsafe. This contributed to her reasoning why justice work was best for her and her community when done with and for other Orthodox Jews.

For Andrea, Jewish peoplehood and community did not mean working for the Jewish community necessarily, but rather working from it. Ayelet, Danielle, Lori, Andrea, Sara, and Adam did not engage in volunteer work that specifically aimed to benefit Baltimore Jews. While they worked to educate and mobilize Jews in the community, the primary communities in focus were largely non-Jews, predominantly black folks and other people of color in the city impacted by unjust landlord practices, police brutality, and gentrifying development in the city. Andrea described doing justice work with other Jews as “home,” a place where she was able to work comfortably through complicated issues like racism and anti racism. She said that working within the Jewish community towards justice offered security within “an issue that seems complicated on the one hand but also filled with lots of tension, and making societal change is always filled with lots of tension.” As someone who identifies as a “conflict avoider,” working in Jewish justice organizations gave her comfort.¹⁶³

Between these participants, the unsafe entity, is vastly different. Akiva’s usage of the term terrorist is problematic and othering, but within this context of safety reveals a perspective of victimization and justice, as if that individual person he stepped on was contributing to terror to the Jewish people. In this way, stepping on the terrorist for him is not only about getting to the Jewish people faster, but as a result of feeling terrorized, he felt he not only needed to move beyond the “other,” but also push them back, separate them more, demonize them. For Chaviva,

¹⁶³ Andrea, Interview with Andrea, 4.

while she felt her students should be willing to help people, “white or black,” after this statement, she felt it important to highlight that if they didn’t go beyond their community, that it was because feeling safe was more important. Within this is a euphemistic suggestion that going beyond the Jewish community has a potential for discomfort or potentially further victimization. Conversely, for Andrea, and the participants in JUFJ, the Jewish community offered a space for her to be able to work towards justice for non-Jews, using Jewishness to navigate places of tension and un-sureness.

Each participant described their own relationship and experience with Jewish victimization, with some identifying it as a recent consequence of the Trump election, and others as a temporally unconstrained, if not inevitable, Jewish experience. These different perspectives illuminate subtleties of victimization, one in which victimization prevents one from moving beyond, and the other which offers space for transcendence. Seeing possibility within the victim identity is deeply tied to understanding the entity of fear or enemy, and if the victim-category is regarded as exclusive or inclusive.

5.2 Constructing the Enemy

The imagining Esau as Arab, as Dov cites, is not a universally acknowledged or affirmed concept, but rather is something that evolved conceptually by Rabbinic commentary over time. In the Midrash, Esau was conceived of as representing wickedness, and then as a symbol of Rome, but throughout these characterizations, Esau was not a purely evil figure. While sometimes used by the Rabbis as representing the Arab nation¹⁶⁴, Esau was more often a metaphor for marginalized people.¹⁶⁵ None of the participants described being personally

¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that biblical mentions of Arab refer to Israel or a collectivity, and only as of the Hellenistic period could it be seen as being genealogically linear. Carol Bakhos, *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (SUNY Press, 2007), 67.

¹⁶⁵ The increasing association between Esau and the Arab nation began in the seventh century after the emergence of Islam in the Near East. Ibid., 66.

impacted by Muslim anti-Semitism, yet this fatalistic posturing of “the enemy” was associated with Islam predominantly among the Orthodox participants.

For Dov, Chaviva, and Akiva, the primary entity threatening the Jewish people was Islam. Jeremy specifically cited Muslim-Jewish relations in Baltimore as peaceful, but he perceived Muslim anti-Semitism abroad as a problem for the Jewish people. Muslim anti-Semitism certainly has aroused fears, with studies documenting the prevalence of anti-Semitic prejudice amongst Muslim populations in Europe.¹⁶⁶ For the aforementioned participants, this feeling of fear was compounded by their relationship with Israel, which they felt as central to their Jewish identity and the Jewish people. As a result of their understanding of Jewish peoplehood, attacks against Jews in Europe or in Israel are especially intense, contributing to their sense of victimization by an international entity.

A narrative predominantly amongst the Torah Observant community living in the Northwest was the subject of “bike stealing” or “robberies” in their neighborhoods. A critical component of the feeling of fear or victimization was the subject of location, namely the participant’s “neighborhood” or “community.” Ayelet referred to Orthodox communities as buffer communities. She said, addressing putatively anti-racist Jews living in the city, “So if you’re so anti-racist, why do you live in Roland park where there really aren’t black people? ... if you are so anti racist, why do live in places where you know that you won’t have black neighbors?”¹⁶⁷ This divided neighborhood, with Orthodox Jewish Baltimoreans to the northern

¹⁶⁶ The ADL measured Muslim attitudes in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the U.K, some of which had recent violent attacks against Jews. Of these Muslim populations, an approximately 55 percent demonstrated anti-Semitic attitudes. This percentage shifts based on region. The poll showed, “acceptance of anti-Semitic stereotypes by Muslims in these countries was substantially higher than among the national population in each country (ranging from 12 to 29 percent), though lower than corresponding figures of 75 percent for Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in ADL’s 2014 poll.” Abraham H. Foxman, “Rising Anti-Semitism in Europe: History Repeating Once Again,” *Huffington Post*, July 20, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/abraham-h-foxman/rising-anti-semitism-in-e_b_7835610.html.

¹⁶⁷ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet, 7.

part of the district and black Baltimoreans to the South, which is a high crime neighborhood. In these cases, the putative persecutors were often euphemistically identified by the participants.

For example, Chaviva said,

The kids who come down my block and want to steal my bike are not the white kids. But that goes all the way back to who is raising these kids? The people held up last Sunday on Clarks Lane were all religious Jews. They are not holding up their own people, I'm sorry. On park Heights Avenue at nine-thirty in the morning on a Sunday? They are holding up jews, because they can.¹⁶⁸

It is clear from this sentiment that the kids that are stealing bikes are “not the white kids” and that Orthodox Jews might not feel comfortable going into black communities suggests that for her, and also explicitly for Dov and Jeremy, there is a sense of insecurity around interactions with black folks.

Globalizing and distorting the fear, as Greene describes as a tactic of the ADL, promotes the perception that one's victimization is paramount, and should be, within their consciousness. The fear of inevitable victimization compounded with understanding of oneself in a physical space of danger exacerbates the construction of a victim narrative. This is reiterated by the visibility of the Orthodox community—because of their distinctive dress, culture, and presence within the city, their pariah-ness is visible. Orthodox Jews are aware of their otherness, it is a virtue of Torah-observance that one should highlight their exceptionalness. Their pariah-ness is at the forefront of their identity, it is physically visible and something they seek to affirm as a virtue of their Jewish experience. For these participants, Jewish pariah-ness is a given, it is only a matter of temporal circumstance. Critical to understanding this willingness or even desire to move beyond the Jewish community and to issues of uncertainty involve constructions of victimization and the enemy. Because of this, and the demographic composition of the

¹⁶⁸ Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva, 10.

neighborhoods they live in, any assault against them is understood as an attack on their Jewishness.

For other participants, they felt the oppressive entity was not a global Islam or non-violent crimes in the city, but rather local white Supremacy. Sara said:

You have white supremacists and Nazis in the White House. And sure, you have a Jew sitting up there too, and what's wild is the difference in view. Our progressive Jewish community [feels Trump] is perpetuating and breeding hate and violence, against people *including* us. And then you have my Orthodox Aunt in New Jersey, who lives in the town that Jared Kushner is from, who says 'who knew that Jared would be the savior of the Jews? He has trump's ear, he is going to protect us.' And it is protection from different enemies, or perceived enemies, or real enemies. She and her community are focused on hatred of Jews from radical Muslim communities, and we are concerned about hatred and violence from white Christian supremacists, *here*.¹⁶⁹

This understanding of anti-Semitism was something that was reiterated by Ayelet, Danielle, Lori, Andrea, Sara, and Adam. Because of this conception of anti-Semitism, the last instances of anti-Semitism in their collective memory were the Holocaust or prejudicial housing practices. While there have been anti-Semitic attacks led by white-supremacist groups within their lifetimes, this is not something that is integrated into a dominant discourse, especially a discourse within progressive circles. Danielle, Sara, and Lori especially emphasized learning in progressive and specifically anti-racist circles that Jews should stop centering anti-Semitism.

That is why for these participants, the integration of anti-Semitic discourse into dominant rhetoric has resulted in an identity shift. It is why they now feel a need to specifically cope in Jewish spaces or talk about how anti-Semitism functions as of this last election. Ayelet described Jews on the left dismissing her fears since the elections, during the wave of bomb threats. She said, "And I am like, maybe they are [just threats] and maybe that's true, but maybe there is also someone who hates us who will do something against us. It is not unprecedented, it has happened

¹⁶⁹ Sara, Interview with Sara, interview by Jillian Lipman, April 25, 2017.

before.”¹⁷⁰ Ayelet did feel insecure by threats against Israel, but for her, she did not feel that Muslim anti-Semitic sentiment was relevant in the United States. She, as well as Sara, Danielle, Lori, Andrea, and Adam felt a shift towards contextualizing the contemporary anti-Semitic rhetoric within a larger historical context of white supremacy.

This was something that was disremembered by the former participants. None of the Orthodox Jews, except for Ayelet, mentioned white supremacy or nationalism or the American state as a site of fear. For them, the fear abroad was in the form of Islamic extremism, and when in Baltimore, the fear was based around their black neighbors. On the contrary, these participants for the most part, were supportive of Trump. Jeremy specifically described voting for Trump, and Chaviva and Dov suggested that they supported him but did not explicitly say. The different conception of the putative enemy reveals an understanding Jewish victimization in the context of oppressor and oppressed, which in turn, reveals an understanding of Jewish solidarity and accountability.

5.3 Pariahs to Black Liberation

5.3.1 *Not (thinking with) Oppressor or Oppressed*

The Jew’s suffering is recognized as part of the moral history of the world and the Jew is recognized as a contributor to the world’s history: this is not true for blacks. The Jew is a white man, and when white men rise up against oppression they are heroes: when black men rise they have reverted to their native savagery¹⁷¹. - James Baldwin

For Chaviva, Dov, Akiva, and Jeremy, white supremacy was a topic they felt was irrelevant to their victimization in Baltimore. Rather, the entity of fear for the most part revolved around attacks against Jews abroad, or the interpersonal relations between them and their black neighbors. After describing the *kids* that steal bikes and *the people* holding up religious Jews,

¹⁷⁰ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet, 7.

¹⁷¹ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, cited on 216.

Chaviva said, "... and we are very easy targets, because we don't fight... We are certainly not going to fight, we are not going to shoot back."¹⁷² Language like "they," "the people," versus "we" reflect a distancing between us and them. Also, her inclusion that "we are not going to fight" or "shoot back" creates a binary in which an entity is violent while the other is non-violent. This statement was not only demonstrative of her understanding of the persecutor, but also reveals her construction of the enemy as a binary in which the Jewish community is the innocent victim. Similarly, Dov, after talking about his disinterest in "planting gardens" in West Baltimore, where Freddie Gray was from, said maybe he would be compelled to go there if he saw his "circle contributing to the problem of the oppression of other people," but he said he "did not see that."¹⁷³ Because the Jews would always be at risk for him, they were the community that he saw he wanted to spend his time working for and working within. From his perception, the idea of going to West Baltimore, the neighborhood of Freddie Gray, was dangerous and he didn't feel he needed to put himself in danger in the name of Justice, and moreover he didn't feel it was his people's responsibility. Dov's suggestion that Jews did not contribute to the anti-black racism in Baltimore also contributes to the securitization of Jewish victimhood.

When understanding victimization as a valued identity that offers group bonds and security, it is not groundbreaking that a victim would not want to identify as a perpetrator or oppressor in anyway. It is also not groundbreaking that one marginalized group would not want to identify with another marginalized group. Especially when one sees marginalization through an us/them dichotomy, where the victim should maintain its own innocence at all costs. Chaviva echoed this, saying that the black and Jewish communities were "too different" or didn't have kinship anymore because they had different values. She continued:

¹⁷² Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva, 10.

¹⁷³ Dov, Interview with Dov, 9.

The Jews seem in the eyes of the blacks to have succeeded, where blacks maybe have not. So it is definitely not that we are in the same boat, (laughs) no, no way. People feel like we have it better...But that goes all the way back to who is raising these kids?¹⁷⁴

Afterwards, she said that she understood that “they [the Jewish and black community] wanted the same things, for their families to be safe.” Despite this affirmation of mutual needs, she felt there was no kinship between the black and Jewish communities. She said that she has a black neighbor but she wouldn’t go over there for a party because “I don’t need to. We have lines about what works for us and what doesn’t.”¹⁷⁵ These “lines” were deeply connected to her emphasis on safety, and perceptions of what was unsafe. Moreover, these lines are reflective of an understanding of blackness that is inherently “too” different – *who* is raising *these* kids? In this statement, she expresses a distancing between her and the black community, one that is insurmountable, and undesirable to address. When asked about Black Lives Matter, Chaviva said:

It really hasn’t affected us, the Black Lives Matter movement... I think that’s their way of feeling like they matter. I don’t think anyone said Freddie gray was dead because he was black, but they did....Everybody’s lives matter...¹⁷⁶

She did not feel a kinship between her and the black community, largely because she saw them as unsafe or different. Based on her statement “who is raising these kids,” she also demonstrates an undesirability around black parenting and a delegitimizing of black culture.

Pariahness, especially for the Torah-observant Jews, was partially a chosen identity, it is one they were proud of and felt the Torah affirmed. However, the way Chaviva, Dov, Akiva, and Jeremy construct their pariahness is based around victimization and the experience of being outside, even to white supremacy, as they saw themselves neither as the systemic oppressor or the oppressed. Through this, their pariahness and conception of their own victimization

¹⁷⁴ Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva, 10.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

prevented them from understanding their experiences through a larger systems-thinking model. For example, rather than looking at robberies as products of systemic poverty or police brutality as an institutional issue, they saw robbery as the issue. Rather, their chosen-pariahness, de-contextualized the issues of justice in their surrounding community.

For Chaviva, Dov, and Akiva, their experience as pariah is directly connected to their chosen practices of non-assimilation. With this, and a self-perception of victimization as a non-negotiable inevitable, this identity is at the forefront of their consciousness and praxis. When asked what or who justice or tikkun olam is for, Dov replied:

Is tikkun olam fixing the world for the sake of fixing the world, or is the sake of fixing the world to promote safety and strength for the Jewish people. I think probably the latter...Is there a benefit for the downtown poor African American community that is dealing with a lot of issues with their youth? Is that an issue of importance to me? Yes. Is it an issue of importance to me just for the sake of importance? But do I feel like it's my issue? Only if it impacts the Jewish community...But I am concerned that a nuclear bomb is going to hit Israel or America, or somewhere that my family is. It all effects Jewish people to different degrees. You have to prioritize.¹⁷⁷

For Dov, it wasn't just that he felt compelled to do justice work for the Jewish community, which is also a truth for him, but moreover that justice and repairing the world itself was for him about and for the Jewish people. Within this, another us and them dichotomy is revealed, one that sees justice as something for us, and not necessarily as something for them. When asked, "do you feel this way because Jews are the most at risk?" He replied, "not because the Jews are most at risk, but because we help our family first. But the Jews are always at risk." Inherent in his conception of different worlds, where his responsibility was to fix one world and the black community is outside of that world, represents a distancing not only between himself and perpetrator-hood, but also the distancing between the Jewish struggle and the black struggle. He said:

¹⁷⁷ Dov, Interview with Dov, 9.

I don't look at the current problems [within the black community] as slavery. The Holocaust and other current events already give me enough of a reminder. I don't think there is something I am going to realize about my family's past by looking at the African American community. But if I felt there were issues coming up again, if there was anyone going to fight alongside the Jewish community, it would be the African American community.¹⁷⁸

For Dov, it was not his or the Jewish people's responsibility to work for or with the African American community, and the parallelization of their experiences didn't *give* him anything; "the current events already *give* me enough of a reminder." Dov, like Chaviva, Akiva,¹⁷⁹ and Jeremy, were not in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, and did not see it as a Jewish issue. These participants described the protests after Freddie Gray's death as "riots" or "unrest." Jeremy said he was "horrified" and wanted to "leave town" and Dov described the violence of the protests as "stupid." Dov continued to point out the failures and wrongdoings of the Black Lives Matter movement, "from the perspective of marketing, because that is my job." He said:

Black lives matter? I don't know if that was a very effective marketing campaign. I think if it would have been effective, the violence of the protests ruined the marketing pitch a bit. I mean, you're saying, we are putting ourselves out into a group. We are black, that is who we are, we as a group, and we need to be treated not like animals, but like adults. And then a big bunch of those groups, there were people acting like animals. So it was a little counter their message, if you are combining them as a group. Or they could say, we are the sophisticated, appropriate, educated, reasonable, and sensible group called the Black Lives Matter campaign, and those people who just happen to be black and are going and setting fires and damaging cars and looting businesses and trying to hurt the police, those are not a part of our campaign. So some people might look at them all together because you are focusing on their color and not your message...the message and the actions are knocking each other out, because you are defining yourself as a color.¹⁸⁰

Other participants reiterated this sentiment, describing the riots as having "no leadership"¹⁸¹ or being "run by kids."¹⁸² These phrases illustrate an enemizing of black folks and also their tactics towards liberation. By describing black rioters as animals, brown bodies are illustrated as ciphers of fear, unsureness, and insecurity. This discourse of "animals" and "kids" in putative juxtaposition

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Akiva was not interested in talking about the Uprising.

¹⁸⁰ Dov, Interview with Dov, 9.

¹⁸¹ Jeremy, Interview with Jeremy.

¹⁸² Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva, 10.

to “appropriate” reflects an us and them, where blackness is subaltern, threatening, submissive, and nonhuman, and opposed to appropriate or sophisticated. Dov, as well as Chaviva and Jeremy, cited the “property damage,” as delegitimizing the cause. The condemnation of the property destruction as opposed to the condemnation of police violence is an example of tone-policing emotional responses, as well as the veneration of objects of so-called development over black life.

Jeremy, who emphasized and re-emphasized in his own story experiences of anti-Semitism and feeling other-ed, also saw the protests as a space of fear. For him, the fear and the tactics that black folks used in the movement were anti-Semitic or had the potential to lead to Jewish victimization. Jeremy felt that the Black Lives Matter Protests were specifically anti-Semitic and that leaders like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton were targeting Jews. When asked for more details, he replied that he wasn’t sure who said it or what was said, but the anti-Semitism was “definitely out there.”¹⁸³ He also recalled the incident with Shomrim as an attack against the Jewish community. He felt so targeted by rhetoric against Shomrim and by the NAACP, who came to Baltimore and advocated for Ausby, that he protested on behalf of “the boys”. He said, “but it was rather lonely, it was only the Orthodox Jewish community.”¹⁸⁴ In his telling of the story, it is evident that he found it of the utmost importance to promote the innocence of the patrollers. He also criminalized Ausby, saying the student threatened Shomrim first, which is also reiterated by his construction of the brothers as innocent. While he does not refer to fifteen-year-old Ausby as a “boy,” he refers to the officers as such, despite the fact that the brothers were twenty-four and twenty-two. In this reiteration of black criminality, he prioritizes the

¹⁸³ Jeremy, Interview with Jeremy, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

securitization of Jewish innocence, as opposed to the affirmation black folks' experience with police brutality.

These re-tellings of the Black Lives Matter protests and the Shomrim incident demonstrate a distancing from black folks and also movements for black liberation. For these participants, the distance revolves around Jewish pariahness—being outside, being different, not being like *them*. A dominant narrative within the Orthodox Jews in the so-called bubble do not see themselves as contributing to anti-black racism or oppression or as having similar experiences or relating to black folks. This also correlated with feeling pariah to seeing Black Lives matter within a Lazarean context of colonizer and colonized, thereby resulting in non-accountability or participation in solidarity work. In this way, their own pariah-ness limits the scope of structures of oppression.

5.32 *Pariah to Parvenu and Pariah*

For Arendt, a conscious-pariah mobilized from their own pariahness in order to recognize systems of oppression and align themselves in solidarity based on their own histories of victimization. She saw the creation of a consciousness, recognizing histories of oppressor and oppressed, critical to the configuration of the emancipatory pariah, as well as transcendence beyond their own pariahness. For Arendt, oppositional to consciousness was parvenu-ness, or the choosing of the values or systems of the oppressor in order to be rewarded by its benefits. She specifically criticizes the parvenu “who was not even born to the system, but *chose* it of his own free will.”¹⁸⁵ In the context of the United States, parvenu-ness—detours of privilege and power available for American Jews if they so choose—should be seen as accessing and choosing aesthetics of whiteness. These aesthetics of whiteness are visible within the non-identification

¹⁸⁵ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 279.

with black liberation movements, condemnation of black liberation tactics, the disremembering of racism as an institutional issue, and alignment with the police.

These participants, opposed to the Black Lives Matter movement, did not identify with black folks in the city experiencing systemic marginalization. Rather than constructing an us and them that revolved around solidarity with colonized groups or resistance against systemic oppression, Dov didn't see the Jews as needing or be able to *give* something to black liberation. Dov concluded his statement, however, by citing that if the Jews were targets of victimization, the African American's would be there, they could *give* the Jews something. Dov's non-recognition of black liberation as a movement relating to Jewish liberation or relevant to the Jewish people, and non-alignment with their cause, is followed by a transactional understanding of black liberation. While he didn't feel the Jews could *give* anything to black folks, black folks could *give* something to Jews, if needed. This demonstrates a perspective in which Jews had it worse, as opposed to a narrative of cross traumatic solidarity. In this way, a comparative and systemic frame is thwarted. According to hooks, this manipulation as an iteration of the status quo, "assaults us in the place that we would know hope... we cannot create life-sustaining communities of resistance" if marginalized communities do not align with one another.¹⁸⁶ This distancing from the struggle for black liberation, and its subsequent condemnation, is a reinscription of the conceptualizing of Esau not as a marginalized people but rather as enemy. This denunciation perpetuates and contributes to the hegemonic tactics of disempowering and disenfranchising otherness, as opposed to redressive tactics that uplift marginality.

In the condemnation of social justice tactics of black folks, white ideology also informs their own praxis, seeing black emotions and movements as inherently de-legitimate, threatening, and against them. The condemnation of black emotional responses and liberatory praxis is an

¹⁸⁶ hooks, *Teaching Community*, 12.

example of tone-policing and is a detour to authenticity, uplifting subalternness, and rebelling against the status quo. In the designation of black spaces and black social justice praxis as fear, the circles of safety and innocence are reinscribed by the values and tactics of whiteness, disguised by words like “sophisticated,” “educated,” “messaging,” and “marketing.” Black folks, in response to white oppression, are not supposed to be violent, but rather they should use “sophisticated” tactics, and tactics that do not implicate systems, but rather individuals.

As opposed to seeing themselves as working towards liberation on a systemic scale, their scope is limited, reserving justice only for them, as opposed to *tikkun olam*. The understanding that the movement didn’t affect *us*, or that it wasn’t *our* responsibility, also illustrates a distancing that reflects two different realms—one world is safe, sophisticated and educated, and the world that justice is about and for, and the other is animal and violent, making it unworthy of justice. In this dis-remembering, the perpetuation of Jewish innocence and white innocence are preserved—Jews are not implicated for having responsibility for black liberation and white institutional structures are not implicated for institutionalized violence, for example in the form of police brutality.

Another manifestation of the privileging of parvenuness at the expense of systemic change is the valuing of a close relationship between the Orthodox community and the police. Many of these Jews felt an allyship with the police or a necessity to strengthen the police institutions in the city as a means to protect Jews in the city. Jeremy and Chaviva specifically advocated for an increased militarization of the police force, with Chaviva citing Israeli soldiers as a model. She felt frustrated that the police in America couldn’t do anything during the riots, while in Israel, a soldier “would have just killed them [the rioters.]”¹⁸⁷ She also felt it was important for Jews to carry guns in order to protect themselves. Jeremy felt that the police

¹⁸⁷ Chaviva, Interview with Chaviva.

system was corrupt, however, he also felt the city needed to strengthen its police force, especially in Jewish communities, and he advocated for Jewish policing like in Shomrim. The Shomrim incident negotiated the issue of violence—violence of authority—against a black student. This student at fifteen years old, was criminalized by his neighbors who felt the authority to harm him because he was loitering. This desire to align with the police is particularly revealing. For one, the police are in institution that specifically represents the authority of the state. The alignment with this state structure is a direct alignment to the status quo and its tools. It is also aligning with an entity that historically has been used to enforce the hegemony, and through its affirmation, demonstrates a disremembering of Jewish subjugation at the hands of authoritative structures. This dis-remembering is evident in their social justice praxis, in which parvenu-ness and their own pariahness is privileged at the expense of systems thinking and alignment with other marginalized groups. This suggests an understanding of Jewish victimization and anti-Semitism within a context of one-on-one interaction and “non-safety” as opposed to a structural approach of oppressor/oppressed. Doing so de-contextualizes the framing of victimization and injustice within the Lazarean understanding of colonizer and colonized. In this way, the ideologies of privilege and power of the parvenu, blur the visioning of a world in which all emancipatory visions are empowered.

These sentiments are demonstrative of the securitization of Jewish innocence and the creation of a perfect pariah, one that is not implicated in any way. These participants prioritized their victim identity, sidelining the parvenu-ness in their history or contemporary, prioritizing the singularity of victimization. With the parvenu-ness as white supremacy, a structure that aims to criminalize and marginalize black folks and maintain a post-racial status quo, the pariahness to the parvenu identity disassociates the adjacency of white-supremacist anti-Semitism and white-

supremacist anti-blackness, disremembering their own history in the context of colonizer and colonized and vindicating the current nationalist rhetoric. In thinking outside of the framework of white supremacy, they also disremember legacies of white supremacy in the United States against their black neighbors and also against them, because thinking within this framework would lead to the insecurity of their victimhood. This perception of victimization as requiring unambiguity resulted in the choosing of white ideologies like tone-policing and delegitimizing blackness as an answer to the Jewish question of safety and protection. Because their understanding of victimization as central to their experience, the securitization of their innocence was of the utmost importance, which led to engaging in self-protectionist tactics. When describing black praxis, instability, insecurity, and unrest are highlighted. Through understanding blackness as a site of fear in combination with a dominant sense of one's own insecurity, the enemy of blackness, whiteness, becomes an ally or space of security. In other words, while black folks are not the oppressor or the hegemony, in the scrutiny of black tactics as opposed to systemic dispossession, the emancipatory lens is distorted, leading to the conclusion that security comes in the form of white-institutions. Pariahness, limited by the virulence of white parvenuness, thwarts the actualization of a possibility-oriented victim-identity and the actualization of a conscious-pariah.

5.4 To Conscious-Parvenu-Pariahs

People who are forced to give up their verticality are pretty to all kinds of dangers. But, let us imagine a person who has a job, possesses the means to remain vertical, but chooses momentarily to give up that verticality? To undergo that threat to his/her bodily/spiritual categories—that person would learn something. I did... Now I crawl to remember.¹⁸⁸ William Pope L.

When Adam saw the rise in anti-Semitism, he said:

¹⁸⁸ English, Darby, "The Aesthetics of Dispossession: William Pope.L's Performance Interventions," in *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness*, 2007, cited on 266.

It did make me worry, it kind of provoked some contradictory feelings in me, one of which was worry thinking about the fact that neo-Nazis and skin-heads and white nationalists are openly organizing in the United States. It hurt because when he [Spicer] said ‘even Hitler didn’t use chemical weapons against his own people,’ he was saying that the Jews weren’t Hitler’s own people. It also forced me to think the other valence of his comment, when he says, ‘bombed your own people,’ it’s actually the stock phrase that the U.S. uses to justify attacks on people abroad. Trump and previous American administrations are attacking people in the United States all the time. They attacked Standing Rock activists¹⁸⁹ and are poisoning children in Flint.¹⁹⁰ It happens all the time, but it doesn’t happen to America’s own people.

Adam’s reflection offers a synecdoche for the contemporary conscious-pariah. In his comment, he orients his analysis through his own historical trauma and subsequent fear, and through this memory calls out structural oppression against two contemporary colonized groups. For Adam, his Jewish pariahness revolved around understanding parvenu-ness, or the system of whiteness as it impacts people of color in the United States.

As an Orthodox Jew, Ayelet spends her time within the Orthodox bubble and interacting with other Orthodox folk in her community. She finds a deep sense of pride within her Jewish identity, and for her, the Torah is about understanding systems of oppression. Ayelet described herself as remembering a racial consciousness from a young age because she knew “we [the Jews] too descended from slaves.”¹⁹¹ She said that when reading the Tanakh, she found:

There are things that were unclear, things like ritual slaughter, and then there are things that are very clear. For example, about how we treat each other. Not having scales that are tipped towards one way or another. Not oppressing the poor. Not enslaving people. It makes anti-racist work feel natural.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ In response to “the Native American-led movement, which rose up in opposition to the pipeline being built just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation,” members of the national guard and police force took over the protest encampment “in a military-style takeover.” Carrie Wong, Julia, “Police Remove Last Standing Rock Protesters in Military-Style Takeover,” *The Guardian*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/23/dakota-access-pipeline-camp-cleared-standing-rock>.

¹⁹⁰ The federal and state governments have neglected the poisoning of the Flint water supply a predominantly black city in Michigan. Black Lives Matter called this an issue of state violence and environmental racism. Rakia, Raven, “Black Lives Matters Calls the Flint Water Crisis an Act of ‘state Violence,’” *Grist.org*, January 25, 2016, <http://grist.org/living/black-lives-matters-calls-the-flint-water-crisis-an-act-of-state-violence/>.

¹⁹¹ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet, 7.

¹⁹² Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet.

With the Torah as a framework for navigating justice, another entry point for her anti-racist work was because of an encounter she had with the police. She called the police when her now ex-husband assaulted her and faced “really brutal treatment.” She said, “I was proselytized, the notion of calling the police for help and then being proselytized with my tax dollars was just, it was absurd.”¹⁹³ For her, this experience of victimization became a moment of waking up, in which she was forced to confront systemic racism. She said, about the court system:

It was much easier for me, but being in the same boat as these people that I never thought were on the same boat as me, really made me much more empathetic to some of the structural issues that were happening.¹⁹⁴

She felt compelled to mobilize from her own space of victimization, and used it as a tool in order to advocate for others fighting against their victimization. Beyond her individual experience, she saw the larger systemic injustice as relating to her understanding of the world. For her, justice work includes one-on-one actions and interactions, but her perception of the justice that is commanded of her via her Judaism relates to systems of oppression, fighting power, and liberation.

Through her understanding of systems of oppression, she saw peoplehood as beyond the white Jewish Orthodox community, but rather all those dispossessed by white supremacy. Ayelet, like Jeremy, has Orthodox as well as non-Orthodox friends as a result of her work with the Associated. For Ayelet, her community also expanded as a result of her work experience with the court system and her work with JUFJ. Ayelet said:

I have my religious community, and I have the place where I put the most time and the most money, but I care about other people. It is a really scary thought that I live in a city where the police can just snap someone’s neck and nothing happens. It is less scary if a thug got what he deserved. The narrative in the Jewish community right now is the police are on my side, they will protect me. If your mind is such that [a thug] is not someone

¹⁹³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

who you care about, it is easy to plug along. But if your mind is they are part of my community and they are being assaulted by police officers on duty and that is my tax dollars...¹⁹⁵

Ayelet's community transcended exclusivity—she did not feel it was only necessary for her to advocate for Orthodox women of domestic assault, for which there is a specific organization in the city, but she also felt compelled to specifically recognize the Jews of color within her community and people of color within the city. Rather than questioning one police officer or one oppressive ideology, like anti-Semitism, her response was to question state authority and white supremacy as a system of oppression. In the complex acknowledgement of power and privilege, she reveals a consciousness, not only of her own victimization, but also of colonizer and colonized relationship. Through her connection of institutional white supremacy and her own experience of victimization, her understanding required an emancipatory praxis that revolved around collectivity.

For Ayelet and Adam, like the other participants in JUFJ, the entity of fear in regard to Jewish security was white supremacy—white supremacy as dictating Jewish inclusion or exclusion, as the Nazi regime, and as white-nationalist rhetoric in the contemporary political realm. Danielle, Lori, Andrea, Adam, and Sara all brought up their own white-privilege as impacting their identity. Andrea said that while her “personal identity” didn’t feel white, that is separate from “knowing that I walk through the world with white privilege.” While she didn’t feel like she identified with the culture of whiteness, she said it was a personal and Jewish obligation to “understand race privilege and what we get from it and what we have in terms of power and responsibility to work to dismantle it.”¹⁹⁶ Andrea felt that working from a Jewish place, considering the “unique” Jewish history, “allows us to see the fluidity of race labels” and

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Andrea, Interview with Andrea.

that through this fluidity, “we can get away with having a special place both inside of whiteness and in other spaces. When used well and respectfully, [this] has the potential to make a large difference in allyship with other groups.”¹⁹⁷ She felt that their her identity as a Jew included both the identities of oppressor and oppressed, and saw the power that specifically came from each of these putative conflicting identities. In this way, she acknowledged the parvenu-ness within herself, and felt empowered to call it out in order to dismantle it and work in solidarity.

Given this understanding of white supremacy and their white-skin privilege as Ashkenazi Jews, these participants described a tension around topics of anti-Semitism. Prior to the election cycle, while they understood the pariah identity as a construction of Jewish memory, these Jews, who are particularly assimilated given the invisibility of their Jewishness and the neighborhoods in which they live,¹⁹⁸ Jewish victimization felt distanced or separate from their reality, so much so that talking about pariahness conflicted with their understanding of progressiveness. In their feeling of pariah to Jewish pariahness, they emphasized simply their parvenuness, as a means to appear progressive and in solidarity. For Danielle, talking about anti-Semitism or the Holocaust made her “uncomfortable” or for Sara she didn’t think it was something “relevant” to justice issues of today. However, considering the rhetoric during and after the election cycle, these participants felt compelled to re-examine their pariahness, and they did so through their pre-existing understanding of structures of oppression. In coming to their pariahness, they were able to locate the power within the victim identity as opposed to disassociating themselves from Jewish history, a symptom of assimilation which Arendt criticizes as a detour to emancipation. One particular power within Jewish identity is that it complicates whiteness, pointing to the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ These participants did not live in Park Heights, and rather lived scattered throughout the city. While Ayelet pointed out that many of these putative anti-racist Jews do not have black neighbors, in this sample, this was not the case. Both Sara and Andrea spoke specifically about living in predominantly black neighborhoods.

ambiguity of the term, a confrontation that ultimately is able to lead to the deconstruction of the so-called “white club.”

This coming to pariahness also compelled the participants to re-examine their history and anti-Semitism as an ideology. Sara described while she thought anti-Semitism was “a thing of the past,” once she looked at how anti-Semitism “works,” she said, “it is so obvious that we are in danger.” She continued:

In the early 1900s in Germany, people were writing about how anti-Semitism was a thing of the past and then all of a sudden in the blink of an eye you have a massive rise in anti-Semitism and Hitler comes to power...And that's the most insidious part of anti-Semitism, it does happen by surprise. The whole, ‘but we are in a position of privilege...’ Well, that is how it works. Jews are in a position of privilege and then are the targets of the people who are being oppressed because they are seen as the ones who have the power, the bankers, in charge of the media, so it's like get them. But they are not really the ones who have power. I think we are on the list, but we are not first... Anti-Semitism works in a much more overt way, so we can't center ourselves or our experiences.¹⁹⁹

This re-orientation to the pariah identity compelled her to explore her pariahness, contextualizing her contemporary pariahness with Jewish histories of oppression as well as other systems of oppression. The idea of anti-Semitism as something that works or functions points to an illustration of power that goes beyond the individual level. Rather, it points out power, the relationship between colonizer and colonized, and speaking truth to hegemonic frameworks as they function beyond national borders.

Through this analysis, the Nazi regime is able to be spoken about in the same anecdote as institutionalized racism or governmental violence against people of color, as in the Standing Rock and Flint cases. While they are not comparing the realities of living under these regimes, they reveal a structural knowing, aligning Nazi white supremacy with American institutionalized white supremacy. It also demonstrates an understanding of supremacy with a self-consciousness, of being able to understand oneself and one's surrounding territory. Through understanding their

¹⁹⁹ Sara, Interview with Sara.

own experiences of victimization on an institutional level, they are able to see how the institution interacts with others. By understanding it as an institution that functions in order to maintain its power, they are able to see their own privileges as something that can be utilized to shift the power. The victimization gives them self-consciousness as well as a consciousness of the hegemony, a double consciousness within their marginality.

The absolving of the Trump administration for its anti-Semitic rhetoric, which was a trend amongst the Torah-Observant Orthodox Jews, many of whom voted for Trump, and the simultaneous implication of black Americans as contributing to Jewish victimization continues to displace blame away from the people with power and to those who are disempowered. Not only does this reaffirm the delegitimization of the cause, but it illustrates a reality in which Jews should feel fear when black people protest, or even in black neighborhoods. By emphasizing black folks as the root of Jewish fear, despite the structure of white power in the United States, it demonstrates an understanding of the world that reaffirms the status quo, as opposed to tearing it down by exposing orders of power. Despite the fact that the swastikas were most likely not drawn by people of color, this perception of reality underwrites the manifestations of white Supremacy that contribute to anti-Semitism. Sara called out this phenomenon in our interview. She said, “people don’t categorize white Christian terrorists as terrorists, and that is what I worry most about, for our community at least.”²⁰⁰ For Sara, the phenomenon of absolving white terrorism and instead emphasizing black criminality also framed the way she understood Jewish pariahness, saying that Jews are “not *really* the ones who have power.” Rather than seeing marginality or subalternness as threatening, as whiteness constructs, she sees white supremacy functioning as it always has, as the gatekeeper of power, able to change its discourse. Through this, they are able to see their own victimization as a result of an entity that is also anti-black.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Given their personal exploration of their parvenuness, which led them to understanding systems thinking and parvenu consciousness as whiteness, they were able to contextualize the recent shift of rhetoric within the context of white supremacy. In this way, their victimization and liberation is tied to the victimization and liberation of all of those impacted by white supremacy. This understanding offers a space for solidarity, as pariah *with* people of color and others experiencing contemporary dispossession.

5.41 Mobilizing the Parvenu through Pariah

In this assertion of whiteness as a point of privilege within their personal and collective Jewish history, as well as the affirmation of their pariahness, these identities understood as a conflicting binary—pariah and parvenu—are affirmed as complimentary, and as a powerful consciousness. In the coexistence and collaboration of these identities, the conscious-pariah emerges as a figure, motivated by their own victimization, towards cross-traumatic solidarity and the creation of a better world. JUFJ, in its utilization of the hybridity of the Jewish-American experience, acts as a powerful mobilizer and educator towards a contemporary and relevant conscious-pariah. JUFJ's commitment to revealing and resisting white supremacy while drawing on histories of Jewish oppression is evident in JUFJ's mission as well as their praxis. These JUFJ-ers have individual identities and experience, but through the platform of the organization, they are able to actualize their own ideologies towards a collective goal.

JUFJ began its Baltimore chapter in September 2014, only seven months before Freddie Gray's death. JUFJ's initial campaign focused on rent court reform, a response to corruption amongst landlords in the city. When renters take landlords to court, the landlords win ninety percent of the time, and overwhelmingly, the families impacted by this system are poor people of

color.²⁰¹ This is an issue that indirectly and directly addresses the history of tension between Jewish landlords and black renters, as well as its continuing legacy. By virtue of the dominance of Jewish landlords in the city today, JUFJ's rent court campaign targets Jewish practices deemed unjust for people of color. Another campaign that targets this legacy is the campaign to amend the proposal to develop Port Covington. Developing Port Covington is a problematic issue about race and class. This development targets wealthy young people, and will not secure affordable housing for Baltimoreans, contributing to gentrification and dispossession in the city. Also, one of the developers for this project is a Jewish Baltimorean, and given his financial status, a prominent member of the community. As a result, working to amend and slow down the bill caused a tension within the Jewish community.²⁰² Sara described that the issue of Port Covington was the most controversial issue the organization had taken on so far, because it caused tension between members of JUFJ's and Rabbis in the community who did not want to take on a cause that would impact their congregants, and the other JUFJ activists who opposed the project. She said:

Jews are okay with social justice, even maybe with racial justice, but when you talk about economic justice? They have to give something up, and they are not willing to...Port Covington is so obviously bad for poor people. It is so obviously is investing in wealthy white people, and divesting black communities. That's the bottom line. It pushes people out, it breaks apart communities.²⁰³

Based on her experience in JUFJ, she explained that these Jews advocate for "development" when talking about bettering the community, but what they mean by development is "displacing the poor." This perspective is symptomatic of liberal tactics of so called justice work, in which financial gains outweigh the perspectives of or consequences to black folks. In this calling out of

²⁰¹ Baltimore Sun, "Leveling the Playing Field in Rent Court," *Baltimoresun.com*, accessed June 2, 2017, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-rent-court-20170430-story.html>.

²⁰² For more information about the demands of the Coalition, see Build Up Baltimore to Marc Weller, "Coalition Letter to Sagamore Development," September 2, 2016, http://www.aclu-md.org/uploaded_files/0000/0866/coalition_letter_sagamore.pdf.

²⁰³ Sara, Interview with Sara.

other Jews in this community, Sara cites parvenuness—the desire for economic capital, privileging monetary gain over black communities, and reiterating white ideas of development at the expense of poor black communities.

Ayelet also reiterated this when describing her experience as a substitute teacher after the Uprising. She recalled the girls in the school comparing the Uprising to pogroms. She said, “they were scared... they thought, ‘we are all going to get killed’ and ‘people are going to come take our money and rape us.’” She felt that this “terror” was unwarranted, and rather, it came from a place of their own irrational insecurity based on privileging of property. She was shocked to hear people, “comparing property damage to someone’s end of life.”²⁰⁴ In this way, she felt some Jews in her community chose parvenuness—rather than confronting the injustice, they privileged possessions not only in juxtaposition to, but more than the valuing of a black person’s life. In this way, the fear of losing power kept them from committing to what she saw as a justice that would contribute to liberation.

After Freddie Gray’s death, JUFJ also took on police brutality as a cause, standing in coalition with black led organizations. They organized a Passover Seder about police accountability in which they addressed contemporary issues of police violence through integrating Jewish histories of oppression. The Jewish Seder revolves around the story from slavery to freedom, and JUFJ’s Haggadah, the book from which the service is led, said, “just as we could not free ourselves alone, we have an obligation to also fight for freedom in every generation.” The Haggadah says that Baltimore Jews must look at their city, and specifically its institutions like the police, and see how Baltimore resembles “Mitzrayim, the land

²⁰⁴ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet, 7.

of bondage.”²⁰⁵ They juxtapose Jewish oppression with contemporary oppression in Baltimore, saying that, “while the Nazis and the Soviet secret police are no more, unfair and discriminatory policing continue.”²⁰⁶ A Jewish Seder is generally divided by cups of wine; at this Seder, with the first cup of wine, the Baltimore Jews should acknowledge white supremacy, the second to racist policing, the third to the effects of racist policing, and the fourth to thinking about a future of liberation, one without white supremacy and mass incarceration. The JUFJ Seder also created their own version of the “Four children,” a concept offered in the Torah describing typologies of the Jewish people. JUFJ’s typology includes: 1) a wise child who wants to learn and reads about racism, 2) the wicked child who asks, “‘how did this all happen to you?’ because he does not see himself as part of the system that upholds police brutality” and feels Freddie Gray was “no angel,” 3) the simple child who doesn’t understand the roots of racism, and 4) the child who doesn’t know how to ask a question and “stays silent as money is spent in his name defending the Baltimore Police Department from making true reforms.”²⁰⁷ This Seder embodied the incorporation of Jewish ritual within social justice work. For Sara, the connection between Jewishness and justice not only affirmed her personal ideologies and actions, but also the nexus offered a powerful tactic to mobilize other Jews. She described that the organization held a “beit deen,” or a rabbinic court, about increasing the minimum wage. The rabbis concluded unanimously that increasing the wage is the right thing to do. She said,

I have felt like jewish text doesn’t speak to me, or makes me uncomfortable... but being introduced to the text with a different interpretation and exploring text with a social justice lens has been really powerful and brought renewed meaning for me to our text and to our tradition. This is what we are *supposed* to be doing. This is what the Torah says. It is part of sabbatical values; the rabbis say you shouldn’t

²⁰⁵ Jews United for Justice, “Coming Through a Narrow Place: Seeking Police Accountability in Baltimore,” April 2, 2017, 3, <http://www.jufj.org/sites/default/files/Baltimore%20SJS%20Hagaddah%202017%20-%20web.pdf>.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 15–16.

be paying people minimum wage, you should be paying them prevailing wage... So we should increase the amount to which we include it [Jewish tradition].²⁰⁸

In this way, religious and historical precedence offered specific affirmation to her values, providing a firm framework within her praxis. She also felt this was something that would mobilize other Jews. For Ayelet, this was an important aspect of JUFJ—it did not make her choose, for example, between keeping kosher and doing anti-racist work. While Arendt disacknowledges the value of Jewish ritual within the conscious-pariah, these Jews found it important, specifically in order to bring Jewish people with them. Sara said, “it’s the eternal back and forth, those Pikesville Jews would never participate in what we were doing if [the organization was called] ‘United for Justice.’ It being a Jewish space brings meaning to them, like it is for them, and it is easier for them to engage.”²⁰⁹ That is why she described wanting to use more Jewish ritual in order to bring other Jews to the practice.

A motivating factor for these participants was to change the Jewish community in a way they felt would be for the better. In the self-awareness of their own privileges within white supremacy as a structural phenomenon privileging them and thereby contributing to the continuation of the status quo, these participants spoke about wanting to educate and mobilize other white Jews. One reason of this was because they felt a responsibility for the Jews as a people, or felt a sense of peoplehood. Lori said, “I want my people to be the good guys, I want my tribe to be the good guys, and I don’t think they are in a lot of cases.”²¹⁰ These participants felt obliged to “go back to my people”²¹¹ or “organize within my own community.”²¹² Adam described this obligation as partially resulting from having similar cultural experiences or

²⁰⁸ Sara, Interview with Sara.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Lori, Interview with Lori, 5.

²¹¹ Adam, Interview with Adam, 2.

²¹² Danielle, Interview with Danielle, 6.

“speaking the same language.” He also emphasized that it wasn’t only about culture, but because he felt a responsibility *for* the other Jews. Ayelet organized within her community towards anti-racism and anti-oppression because: “The Jewish community feels harder because it is more emotionally complex for me and I feel more anger towards it. If I’m going to be really authentic, that feels more like organizing my own people than SURJ²¹³ would be.”²¹⁴

This is why these participants felt it was particularly important for JUFJ to take on issues confronting so-called development or earned-entitlements, narratives that dispossessed black Baltimoreans and privileged whiteness. Sara said it was important to take on police accountability because, “we can’t expect and have never expected any cooperation from the Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC),” which is the political arm of the Associated.²¹⁵ When JUFJ and BJC partnered to run an anti-racism Hanukkah event, Sara said:

People were shocked that it was happening. <Which people?> Everyone. The JT [*Jewish Times Magazine*] covered it because they were shocked that the BJC was doing something like that. It went really well, but they got some flack for doing it. I mean, what could be controversial about anti-racism work? I don’t know, but parts of our community are super racist.²¹⁶

By running these campaigns, JUFJ directly addresses values of whiteness within their community, a narrative that is dis-remembered and therefore protected by mainstream Jewish institutions, like the Associated. While there is potential for understanding Jewishness as outsidersness and therefore non-implication within racial justice, the rhetoric of “I’m not white, I’m Jewish,” these participants saw their Jewishness with accountability way. Ayelet recognized her whiteness as something that offered her particular privileges, and felt working within the Jewish community was the best way to dismantle those privileges. She said,

²¹³ SURJ Baltimore, or Showing Up for Racial Justice, is a group that mobilizes white people towards anti-racist work.

²¹⁴ Danielle, Interview with Danielle, 6.

²¹⁵ Sara, Interview with Sara.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

I struggle with the idea of peoplehood, but, we have to not be racist so we don't scare the 20% Jews of color in our community away... I sometimes feel in white spaces, there is no differentiation, and that drives people away and pisses people off... I don't think this big amorphous group is really that helpful.²¹⁷

In this statement, she empowers social justice praxis that advocates working within one's own community, and also differentiation as a powerful tool. For her, differentiation breaks down the "amorphous group" of whiteness that claims everything that is non-black. She felt there was a specific power in working within the Jewish community, a power that previously she, and participants like Sara and Danielle, felt removed from. Through integrating Jewish culture and exceptionality, Ayelet felt she would be able to include and mobilize more Jews, especially parvenus.

In the Lazarean conception of the conscious pariah, a conception that Arendt affirmed, it was "necessary to rouse the Jewish pariah to fight against the Jewish parvenu." This responsibility was so critical that to not rebel would be to reiterate one's own responsibility "for the blot on mankind."²¹⁸ JUFJ as an organization creates a radical space in which Jews are doing justice work with other Jews. By using Jewish ritual practice and histories of oppression, they also accommodate the needs of the religious Jews, offering a space in which they are able to join. Also, by using these practices and doing events in synagogues or with Rabbi's, JUFJ aims to appeal to religious Jews. Arendt's disempowerment of Jewish prophets in the context of justice work is an impediment when considering the conscious-pariah configuration in Baltimore today, seeing as the religious Jews are often isolated from this work. Through the mobilizing of the parvenu, JUFJ also seeks to resolve the tension within the Baltimore Jewish community, a tension that disrupts solidarity amongst the community and also in the city as a whole.

²¹⁷ Ayelet, Interview with Ayelet.

²¹⁸ Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, lvii.

For JUFJ, they do not use their pariahness as a detour, making them exempt from responsibility and accountability, but rather to empower it alongside of their parvenuness, an illumination of Jewish-American hybridity. In this context, the hybridity simultaneously acknowledges Jewish history, like Nazism, the soviet secret police, and bondage in Egypt in ancient times, as a site of identity production. This pariahness is oriented in possibility, in looking at what has been and what could be created as a result of victimization. JUFJ's tactic of calling out white supremacy in their campaigns and also their educational materials speaks truth to power in the United States. Also, by confronting issues neglected or opposed by mainstream institutions, they confront white supremacy within the Jewish community as well. Within this systemic consciousness, understanding of white parvenuness, and a re-examination of their pariahness, this hybridity becomes power in their praxis and an opportunity to simultaneously utilize oppressor and oppressed status as a site of disruption. For them, pariahness does not make them outside, but rather it is a chosen identity to see their pariahness as radical marginality, a pariahness that inherently aligns them with other groups targeted by white supremacy. JUFJ acts as a space of production, in which a more authentic typology for Jewish American conscious-pariah emerges. This configuration revolves around Jewish pariah-ness, parvenu-ness, and race-consciousness—a race-conscious-parvenu-pariah.

CONCLUSIONS

Arendt's typology of the pariah, parvenu, and conscious-pariah offered more than a description of Jews in Europe in the middle of the twentieth century, but also a pedagogy of liberation for the Jews and all those experiencing oppression. Her configuration, radical for its time, was circumscribed by her own civil-Jewish identity, and critically, by the dominance of her victim-identity, as a Jew who survived. In order to understand the circumscription of the Jewish

American experience and its geo-political context, the structure in which power and privilege is distributed—white supremacy—is critical both as subject and methodology. For Arendt, part of evil’s banality is the way it obstructs one’s ability to have a moral dialogue with the world. In the United States, whiteness as a banal evil bequeaths privileges and ways of knowing, parvenuness, that contribute to its externalization and innocence, and it distorts both pariahness and consciousness for its subjects, including the Jewish people. Jews from Baltimore, a city with legacies of racism, anti-Semitism, and both tension and solidarity between the black and Jewish communities, shared their experiences as Jews today aiming for betterment in the world.

Arendt’s “Race-Thinking” offers insight into whiteness as it relates to parvenuness, even within emancipatory thinking. When living and writing in the United States, as a result of her self-understanding as a European outsider, she saw herself also as outside the system of race. For Arendt, her sense of pariahness within herself led to the unacknowledgement of racial privileges, as well as the adoption of a lens of examining black liberation movements distorted by whiteness. In her description of black tactics of liberation as juvenile in contrast to her affirmation of Jewish tactics of liberation, she reiterated the criminalization of blackness and decontextualized race as a neo-colonial struggle. Seeing as hegemonic constructions of victimhood require unambiguous innocence, to acknowledge white supremacy would have inherently led to her own implication, an ambiguity that is disremembered and disempowered by whiteness. The juxtaposition of Arendt’s writings on race and her configuration of the conscious pariah is not to condemn her typology or pedagogy, but rather explore its contours as insight into the genealogy of her thinking. For Arendt, the conscious-pariah should mobilize from their own place of victimization and place their struggle within the frameworks of the colonizer and the colonized. A phenomenological analysis of the conscious pariah in Baltimore revealed the agents of

limitations and liberations within the figures. These symptoms, analyzed through the framework of the conscious-pariah and critical race studies, reveal the devices of whiteness and their integration within the typology.

These interviewees shared their perceptions of pariahness as Jews in Baltimore and in the world today. Participants understood their pariahness differently, and this interpretation had bearings beyond their self-conception, to their social praxis. Chaviva, Dov, Akiva, and Jeremy, emphasized Islam as an entity of fear for the Jewish people. Jewish persecution in this sense was reoccurring and unavoidable; Jews and Israel would always be threatened. Contrary to their construction of a universal Jewish peoplehood and universal conception of anti-Semitism, they did not feel a rise in anti-Semitism as a result of Trump's election, and supported him to different capacities. These same participants also saw their black neighbors causing them fear, either in regard to the Uprising, which they referred to as unrest or riots, or non-violent crimes. Because these participants lived in Park Heights, an area that is high in crime and has predominantly black neighborhoods, they felt a sense of victimization based on the virtue of witnessing or experiencing crime. Based on this understanding of the root of their victimization, they associated blackness with criminality and disassociated themselves from the black community, both in justice praxis as well as people united by oppression. In this way, their understanding of their own pariah-ness thwarted the possibility for seeing solidarity and liberation. As a result, these participants were likely to engage in justice work with and for other Jews, specifically Orthodox Jews. Because of their emphasis on victimization as an unambiguous conception, recognizing white supremacy would imply complicity and accountability within white supremacy. These participants felt they were also pariah to parvenu, or access to whiteness and its privileges. Not only that, but in their critique of black liberation movements, they re-inscribe

aesthetics of whiteness, in which black criminality is highlighted in contrast to white legitimacy or rightness.

For Ayelet, Danielle, Lori, Andrea, Sara, and Adam, the entity of fear was white-supremacy, an entity that prior to the election they only understood as allowing them privilege and power. For these participants, the Trump election marked a shift in rhetoric, in which they felt their pariahness for the first time. As a result of their race-consciousness, the rise in anti-Semitic feeling was understood in the context of white supremacy, a context that created a space for solidarity with black Baltimoreans. For these participants, their understanding of accountability extended beyond the Jewish community, as they understood the source of their victimization as aligning them with other marginalized groups.

Pariahness is able to be a detour, one that dissociates oneself from neighbors in the putative out-group, reiterates hegemonic devices of empowerment and disempowerment, or results in the recreation of victimization for oneself or those around them. However, victimization understood as symptomatic acts as a mirror to the ideologies of the powerful, the veil that protects the status quo. A hegemonic interpretation of victimization also prevents the acknowledgement of white supremacy as a system, thereby disremembering the inevitability of un-earned entitlements to those who are a part of the “white club,” desired or not, wittingly or unwittingly. Therefore, acknowledging white supremacy for someone with white skin inherently requires self-implication, disrupting the absoluteness of innocence. Victimization can also result in production and possibility, as in the practice of Jewish rituals and creation of communities based on radical empathy. It can also lead to transcendence of one’s own community, and become an ethos of solidarity and praxis of emancipation. In an emancipatory envisioning of victimization, ambiguity and authenticity is empowered, as it disrupts binary constructions of

identities as imposed by outsiders, and utilizes ambiguity centered in power as a site of disruption.

Considering the ambiguous historical experience of Jews in Baltimore, one circumscribed by both empowerment and disempowerment and a context in which black liberation is at the forefront, this typology should be modified, inspired by hybridity, subaltern modalities of resistance, and praxis oriented towards justice. The interviews demonstrated ambiguity within typologies of Jewishness; as opposed to thinking about Jewish identity as pariah *or* parvenu *or* conscious-pariah, it is evident that given the internalization of collective trauma, perceptions of safety, and the systemic nature of distributing privilege and power, Jewish identity should not be discussed within a binary, but rather with complexity and compassion. Jews United for Justice uses victimization as a tool for resistance, contextualizes violence within systems of oppression, and specifically works to locate the parvenu within themselves and their community, offering a pedagogy for Jewish involvement in anti racist work that incorporates ambiguity. Through an examination of their campaigns, rhetoric, and participant ideology, a configuration of a conscious pariah conducive to anti-racism emerges: First, an affirmative consciousness is one that should embody a systems thinking model, speaking truth to national and local histories that reify white supremacy and dispossess black folks, integrate the Jewish experience within a consciousness of collective oppression, and place one's individual and collective Jewish history within a context of whiteness. Second, pariahness should be understood in the Jewish context as a chosen identity that remembers Jewish victimization with ambiguity and possibility. Jews today have access to social and economic capital and are able to acculturate and assimilate based on their own beliefs and practices. Pariahness also means understanding oneself as outside to power, not outside systems of power. In other words, while the Jewish experience in the United

States is unique, Jews have been treated specifically as non-white along side black folks as well as been treated and benefitted from whiteness. In this understanding of pariah, a conscious pariah is able to see their struggle along side the black struggle, and understand that Jewish emancipation is dependent upon black emancipation, and vice versa. In the context of Baltimore, considering its legacy of white supremacist practices, this means aligning oppression against Jews with other so called enemies of whiteness, for example, victims of police brutality or victims of rent court corruption. Also, in the understanding of pariahness, one should see themselves as other *with* Jews in the community, and include the parvenu in the process of liberation by utilizing Jewish ritual and culture. Third, the affirmative conscious-pariah must also include a conscious-parvenu identity. As opposed to typologies that contrast parvenu and pariah, as if they are conflicting identities, JUFJ creates a space in which both identities are chosen identities with potential to be radicalized as a space for emancipation by acknowledging histories of privilege and power, a conscious-parvenu-pariah.

Given the increase in white supremacist rhetoric within dominant discourse, the importance of the conscious-pariah figure is compounded. Bringing humanness to the discussion of oppressor and oppressed, parvenu and pariah, acknowledging ambiguity within experience, and considering specific identity constructions are important endeavors in order to imagine a pedagogy of emancipation that is accessible, specifically for those with marginalized identities. Through this understanding, victim identities should not only be approached as burdens, but also with compassion, as sites of suffering and survival, trauma and power, marginality and resistance.

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