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Learning from ethnography: Reflections on the nature and efficacy of youth tours to Israel

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Ten thousand American Jewish teenagers in hundreds of organized programs have been descending on Israel during the summer months. What is the nature of their experience and what is its impact? These are the questions that guide the studies in this volume. Organizers of the tours and the parents who pay for them are interested in the answers, though they may not be prepared for what they will learn. Those answers come in various forms. First, the youngsters return home with their individual and collective diaries and their personal testimony.¹ Second, formal surveys gather responses and ratings from as many respondents as possible to form generalizations that might guide future planning. Not until now, however, could we benefit from the insights of ethnography. Ethnography is an anthropological account of the life of a community based on sustained first-hand observation. Historically, anthropologists did their ethnographies far from home among people very different from themselves. Today, they study their own societies using techniques and insights gained from the history of their discipline. It is in this spirit that Harvey Goldberg and Samuel Heilman followed two groups of 15-16 year olds around Israel during the summer of 1994. Goldberg, an anthropologist, focussed on a 35-day NFTY Safari for 41 American teenagers. NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth) is the youth arm of the Reform movement. Heilman, a sociologist, focussed on a 44-day Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour for 30 youths. Young Judea mostly draws from the Conservative movement. Using the ethnographer's toolkit—living with the group, participant observation, detailed fieldnotes, interviews, and short surveys—they have produced two fascinating case studies. What can we learn from them?

While such summer tours are very consistent from one program to another, they are also highly differentiated. Their common objective is to provide what is called The Israel Experience, most often in the form of a summer vacation. All programs hope that the youngsters will return home with a stronger sense of Jewish identity, attachment to Israel, and bond to the Jewish people. They hope the youngsters will return to Israel for a longer stay. These programs are also different enough for "The Israel Experience" home

¹ Some youngsters create web sites and post their diaries there. See, for example, the homepages created by two participants in the 1998 Masada Maccabi summer in Israel. Keshet's homepage, <http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Tidepool/8786/israel.htm>, includes a day-by-day itinerary, top ten lists, and a survey. Hannah Goldberg's homepage, <http://www.tjhsst.edu/~hgoldber/masada/masada.html>, "Masada/Maccabi Adventure 2 Website," features a detailed day-by-day itinerary complete with photographs. Personal testimony is incorporated into the marketing of future programs: see, for example, the "real stories" on "The Israel Experience" homepage, <http://www.israelexperience.org/>.

page to serve as a clearinghouse for 268 programs intended for North American Jewish teens and college-age individuals. After filling out a form, which presents 48 criteria and seemingly infinite combinations and permutations of them, prospective participants use a search engine to find precisely the program that matches their interests.² Moreover, each group, no matter what the auspices and no matter how consistent the program, is truly unique because of the individuals involved and the group dynamic they form. As Goldberg rightly notes, each group is different and together they express a highly differentiated American Jewish culture: "one cannot talk of a generic summer 'Israel experience' for North American youths." (G43) One of the strengths of these ethnographies is their insistence on the specificity of each group

No matter how differentiated these summer programs, there are issues that all of them must address. Those issues are at the heart of these two case studies.

- Do "the content and character of such trips fulfill the stated goals"? (H10)
- What is the relationship of group solidarity to individual development?
- Will the youngsters transfer their strong feeling of solidarity with one another to wider Jewish commitments—to Israel, Jewish communal life and causes, and/or religious observance? (H89)
- Does the efficacy of the experience lie in the group solidarity or in the explicitly Jewish content of the tour? Will it be possible to say, after the trip, that these youth "truly understood the Jewish nature of their experience?" (H89) Or, will they have had an American experience in Israel? (H41)
- What is the most effective balance of experience and knowledge? (G91) What precisely is the nature of an experience orientation that "demands carefully orchestrated scenarios so that the youngsters 'spontaneously' undergo positive experiences capable of making a lasting impact?" (G98) Might the participants play a more active role in shaping the program?
- Are the organizers of experiential tours correctly assessing the interest and capacity of the youngsters for knowledge? Might Hebrew play a larger role? (G108-124) Should there be a greater effort to convey geographical knowledge that would orient the participants to the landscape and its history in a coherent way? (G81ff) How is religion addressed and might it play a greater role? (H27ff)
- What are the implications of shielding the participants from the "existential reality of Israeli life" and "contemporary Israel as a real place?" (H58, G92) To what extent does the highly structured nature of these programs reduce the opportunities for chance encounters with the surrounding society that the youngsters themselves value precisely because they are not part of the formal program? (G98; H41,83)
- To what extent is the sponsoring organization's primary if unstated goal to use Israel as a resource in the organizations educational and communal objectives, including the continued involvement of these young people in the organization after they return home? (G94)

These questions emerged from the research and guided the study of how two groups of Jewish teens formed a temporary world of several weeks' duration and responded to a

² "The Israel Experience" home page, <http://www.israelexperience.org/>.

program that was intended to strengthen their Jewish identities.

Precisely because such intentional communities are so self-conscious about making themselves—or, better said, making themselves up—they may appear self-evident and already explained. Much that one might want to know is already stated in the marketing of the programs, official contracts, codes of conduct, carefully planned itineraries, highly produced events, press coverage, and detailed diaries that the youngsters create as a record of their trip. What none of these sources convey—and what these ethnographies explore—is how the official goals and formal program actually play out on the ground. While Goldberg and Heilman do address the fit between goals and outcomes, their most valuable contribution lies in their attention to process. True to anthropological inquiry, they explore the ordinary aspects of this extraordinary situation, while finding the extraordinary in some of its most ordinary moments.

Attending to process means taking seriously the most habitual practices, those repeated and often unnoticed behaviors that give the summer in Israel its distinctive rhythm, shape, and texture—its feel. Those daily patterns, precisely because they are repeated, may in the final analysis be what the participants most remember, even if those memories remain inchoate and inexpressible. The spectacular sights and events that are intended to be memorable may well not be. Precisely because they are so singular—and because so many "high" points are packed into such a short time—the featured attractions of the tour may well blur. The youths themselves are the first to recognize this dilemma. Emblazoned on one of their T-shirts were the words WE CAME; WE SAW; WE CAN'T REMEMBER A THING. (H58) Those who eventually return to Israel, while they may well revisit the highlights, will discover the power of the mundane to call up a flood of memories that could not otherwise be retrieved. Call them sense memory or body memory, they arrive involuntarily. They stand in contrast with the places and events that the youngsters compel to memory through photographs, souvenirs, certificates, T-shirts, and diaries. As D. Vance Smith (1997:163) suggests, "the everyday emerges along with the forgetting of the exceptional."

While surveys of these tours generally attempt to evaluate a program's success in achieving its stated goals, these ethnographies explore the *process* called The Israel Experience as it actually unfolds in real time. The ethnographies before us reveal precisely *how* a program works and examine both intended and unintended consequences. Goldberg and Heilman have immersed themselves in the lives of those they are studying. Consistent with an anthropological approach, they ruminate, test ideas, revise questions, and use the genre of ethnographic writing to explore in an open ended way the most profound questions bearing on these summer tours and the lives of the participants. Such insights are less likely to arise from multiple choice questions, ratings, and brief comments in answer to survey questions. Rather, ethnography offers the opportunity to roam in unexpected directions and encourages counterintuitive insights.

Instead of producing a normative account or aiming for the most widely applicable generalizations, Goldberg and Heilman follow a trail of paradoxes, contradictions, and conflicts in the flow of actual experience. For this reason (and not in order to evaluate or pass judgement), they are especially attentive to crises, or what the British social anthropologists have called social dramas. (See Turner 1974) Such disruptions force participants to articulate otherwise unstated assumptions—including

those underpinning the very goals of the program. This is one way that ethnographers try to illuminate some of the most elusive—and important—aspects of the phenomena they are studying. After all, at the heart of these summer programs is an ephemeral "experience" intended to have a lasting impact. A defining feature of that experience is the mobilization of feeling in the service of Jewish identity. What could be more intangible?

One way to try to capture this elusive subject—The Israel Experience—is through a finely textured picture from the perspective of the participants, both youth and staff, as filtered through the trained eye of the anthropologist. While the greatest value of these ethnographic accounts lies in the specificity and depth that comes from living with the group day in and day out, these studies also provide an invaluable basis for generating hypotheses. As a result, they should be read as much for the questions they raise as for any answers they may provide. Furthermore, while their immediate usefulness to those planning these trips is obvious, these ethnographies also make an important contribution to the historical record. They are part of a longstanding concern with Jewish youth, its culture, crises, and future, and its role in Jewish survival.³ They are also a valuable addition to a wider history of youth movements and youth culture and a distinctive research tradition associated with this subject. (See Dudek 1990)

Read together, these two ethnographies offer subtle points of contrast. Young Judea and NFTY differ in their approach to a summer in Israel. Each individual group of youngsters is unique. And, the ethnographers themselves offer different angles of vision. This afterword adds a third voice to the conversation, as it reflects on commonalities and differences between these two case studies and raises additional questions, offers alternative answers, and takes issue with some points. It also incorporates the responses of Goldberg and Heilman to what I have written here. Finally, this afterword situates these summer tours within several wider contexts. I will suggest that these tours are a distinctively modern rite of passage (an initiation rite) in a period of radical doubt. Their design and efficacy are intimately connected to the nature of tourism as a medium. Tourism has long served as an instrument of Zionist ideology and continues to play a vital role in the culture, politics, and economy of contemporary Israel. (See Katz 1985.) Tourism also continues to define (and redefine) the relationship of American Jews to the Jewish homeland. The Israel Experience is a way that American Jews address a perceived crisis of Jewish continuity right where they live, in the United States. These summer tours are of interest not only in relation to their professed goals but also as a window on American Jewry and its relationship to Israel at the end of the millenium.

The remarks that follow reflect on these two ethnographies in light of other Israel Experience programs in order to suggest the wider implications of their findings. These remarks are organized around eight themes.

- *Rite of Passage*. I argue that several features of these programs—the emphasis on group solidarity, their insularity, and above all the focus on a

³ See, for example, YIVO's youth research project during the 1930s in Vilna and the autobiography contests that produced some of its most valued primary sources. Selections from the hundred of autobiographies collected through these contests are now being prepared for publication in English translation by Jeffrey Shandler. On this project, see Weinreich 1935. See also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1996.

dramatic personal transformation—define them as a rite of passage and, in particular, as an initiation rite.

- *Realities*. This accounts in part for the sense that the "real" Israel eluded the youngsters and that considerable effort was required for their own experiences to feel real to them. The Israel Experience, however it is marketed, is not finally about what the ethnographers refer to as the existential reality of contemporary Israel.
- *The Israel Experience*. The goals and effects of The Israel Experience arise from experiencing tourism as a form of *aliyah* and finding in tourism a haven for Zionist ideas that have lost their secure moorings in some parts of Israeli society.
- *The Tourist Experience*. Both the intensity and the unreality of the highly produced Israel Experience arise from special features of tourism as a medium. They include the nature of adventure, as it is produced by the tourism industry, the peculiar way that itineraries juxtapose places, and the theatricality of attractions and events.
- *Pedagogy*. The pedagogy of The Israel Experience, which is informal, experiential, and participatory, takes advantage of precisely these features of the tourism industry.
- *Techniques of the Body*. Like tourism, The Israel Experience also depends on what Marcel Mauss calls techniques of the body. Physical challenge is consistent not only with adventure tourism, but also rites of initiation. The two converge in The Israel Experience, which depends on peak, or flow, experiences to effect dramatic personal transformation.
- *Feeling Jewish*. How experience is embodied is at the heart of the project, which is finally about learning to *feel* Jewish. This accounts for the priority of feeling over knowledge.
- *Identity*. Identity as it emerges from these programs is a question for discussion and a project of self-construction. This is consistent with what Haym Soloveitchik (1994) calls the end of self-evident Jewishness. (See also Friedman 1987.)

Rite of Passage

A defining feature of the summer tours is the promise of personal transformation while having fun. Two journeys, one to discover Israel and the other to discover oneself, converge. The discovery of Israel will bring about the self-discovery, or so it is hoped. After a NIFTY summer in Israel, Sara Rachlin asks prospective campers, "Have you ever had an experience so great that it changed your life?"⁴ Clearly, the traditional rite of passage, the bar mitzvah, does not qualify. If anything, these trips are an extension of the bar mitzvah, which signals not so much the onset of adulthood (apart from a ritual definition of it) as the onset of a long adolescence, during which there will be new and added rites of passage, including The Israel Experience. As more and more youths go on these trips, The Israel Experience takes its place, alongside the bar mitzvah, as a necessary stage in the process of growing up Jewish.⁵ The trips themselves have become

⁴ See "Kehillat Noar's Sara Rachlin Shares her ISRAEL EXPERIENCE," http://www.wct.org/Youth_Programming/Youth___KehNoar__9-12__1/youth___kehnoar__9-12__1.html.

⁵ Israel summer programs for American Jewish youth are in their way what the Grand Tour was

more sophisticated, the marketing slicker, and the travel diaries more high tech and public, as youngsters create their own web sites.

What then in the life of a young person--a life of constant becoming, indeed, constant change--could constitute a "change" of the magnitude envisioned by Sara's question? And, by what means can such a change be brought about? Much can be learned from a classic anthropological topic, rites of passage, and in particular, initiation rites. Rites of passage occur at pivotal points in the life cycle.⁶ Their express purpose is to effect a transformation of status and identity. With remarkable consistency across time and cultures, these transformations follow a sequence from separation through transition to incorporation. Initiation rituals, the classic rite of passage, are often, like these summer tours, a collective experience for an entire cohort of youths. It is important that they go through the process together away from their families and ordinary lives. Towards that end, they may be secluded for an extended period of time, from several days to several years. Physical ordeals and esoteric knowledge are essential to the efficacy of these rites of passage. Finally, the initiates return to society, where they are reincorporated as new persons, sometimes with a new names, their bodies marked, their hairstyles and clothing changed, their rights and responsibilities increased. Not only have these rites moved the initiates from one stage of life to another, from one status to another, but also the process is supposed to have secured the identification of the initiates with their cohort and community. Adolescence, an invention of modernity, is itself a long rite of transition marked by many milestones, from the bar mitzvah and summer in Israel to a driver's license and the right to drink and vote. With sufficient affluence to defer adulthood, this period of the life cycle expands.⁷

It is characteristic of rites of initiation that of the three stages—separation, transition, incorporation—transition is the most extended and elaborated. Transitions by their very nature are states of liminality—the term derives from *limen*, or threshold. Neither child nor adult, adolescents are betwixt and between. This time of life is at once full of possibilities and fraught with danger. Impressionable and vulnerable, resistant and rebellious, adolescents are a prime target not only for religious, social, and political movements (Hasidim, Haskalah, and Zionism, among others), but also for cults and gangs. Group solidarity of this kind is a feature of liminal states. They are a catalyst for what Victor Turner calls *communitas*—a special feeling of connectedness and potentiality that arises when the structures and hierarchies of everyday life are temporarily suspended, as they are during rites of transition. Utopian projects, including the kibbutz, arise from an ideological commitment to an enduring social arrangement based on the ideals of *communitas*. The group solidarity established by these summer

for young men in the eighteenth and nineteenth century—a finishing course for those who could afford to tour the highlights of continental Europe.

⁶ Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* (1960), the classic work on the subject, has inspired the more recent contributions of Turner 1974 and Marcus 1996.

⁷ Goldberg invokes Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) in his introduction to his case study. It is worth noting that Freud had relatively little to say about adolescence and that it was his Viennese disciple Siegfried Bernfeld, who brought adolescence into psychoanalytic theory and into the study of Jewish youth culture, a field he created during the interwar years. See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1996. Before him, the first major study of adolescence was Stanley G. Hall's *Adolescence* (1905).

tour groups is an example of normative *communitas*.⁸

Summer tours to Israel have become just such a rite of passage for increasing numbers of American Jewish youth during the last half of the twentieth century. Many aspects of these tours that may appear puzzling or even troubling make more sense when viewed as an initiation rite. The insistence on a dramatic personal transformation, the primacy of group solidarity, the insulation of the tour group within Israel, and the precedence given to experience and feeling are consistent with a rite of passage. Many aspects of the program are also consistent with a transportation, rather than transmission, model of communication. A transportation model of communication favors informal and experiential learning, exploration and discovery, emotional engagement and reflection, and ceremonies of group solidarity, in contrast with a transmission model, which stresses information. These summer programs do not just transport the youngsters to Israel, they do everything in their power to ensure that the youngsters will be transported by the experience. It is not enough to arrive in Israel. It is necessary to be carried away by Israel. The priority of identity, emotional engagement, and group solidarity over information, knowledge, and formal instruction is consistent with a ritual model of communication. According to James W. Carey, "A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs." (Carey 1988:18) The ritual nature of these summer programs may account, in part, for their experiential and theatrical character, the priority given to the emotional life of the participants, and the effort to produce personal transformation through epiphany. The Israel Experience, as seen in these two summer programs, is therefore more performative, than informative, a distinction that I will discuss more fully below.

Dramatic Transformation

Personal development, as postulated by these summer programs in Israel, is not a gradual or incremental process, but a dramatic transformation. More precisely, what might once have been a gradual process is thought to produce uncertain results or to have failed or simply not to be occurring. The less confidence that a gradual process will occur, the more pressure to effect a dramatic transformation. Fully elaborated initiation rites like these summer programs attempt to do just that. They are a response to what Soloveitchik (1994) has called the end of self-evident Jewishness. These tours promise change and they envision change as cataclysmic. The setting for the transformation is the crossroads represented by adolescence, a perilous period of experimentation and risk. The agent is a "great experience" and the *sina qua non* of that experience is Israel. However much the process is presented as a matter of personal choice, the desired outcomes are known in advance—a secured Jewish identity.

As Heilman notes, what has been defined as crisis in Jewish continuity, a crisis for the entire Jewish community, converges in these programs with a point in the life

⁸ See Turner 1969: 126-132. Turner distinguishes three types of *communitas*. Existential or spontaneous *communitas* involves the sudden, total, and temporary dissolution of boundaries and social structure. In the case of normative *communitas*, aspects of spontaneous *communitas* are, over time, organized into an enduring social system in the interest of social control and mobilization. Ideological *communitas* refers to utopian models of society based on existential *communitas*.

cycle, adolescence, which is understood as a turning point. (H4) These youngsters are still, it is hoped, impressionable, susceptible, and malleable, while at the same time they are also in many ways unreachable and resistant. Their identities have not yet congealed. They are experimenting. They could go either way, towards or away from Jewish commitments. Two crises converge—the crisis of Jewish continuity and what is understood to be the crisis of adolescence. Organizers and parents hope that intervening in the latter will solve the former. This is why they invest so much in Israel Experience programs and expect so much of them. Not until "the crisis in Jewish continuity" coalesced as a theme of the organized Jewish community during the early 1990s, did congregational groups and federations finally realize that "the Israel experience is important and that no Jewish education is complete without it," according to Dan Adelman, executive vice—chairman of the American Zionist Youth Federation. (H4)⁹ The Israel Experience is seen as important not only for each participant, but also as a key to Jewish continuity more generally.

Would it be going too far to suggest that this *is* the form that Jewish continuity is taking? This might account in part for the prominence of these summer programs in the communities that work so hard to make them happen.¹⁰ The organizers, sponsors, and parents take the sheer numbers of youth who go to Israel and their reports when they return as direct evidence of the program's success. They bank on the future impact of The Israel Experience. But, these ethnographies also suggest that the Israel Experience is not only a means towards an end—a Jewish identity—but also the very form that American Jewish continuity is taking.

Gibush

How does an American Jewish youngster connect to the Jewish people or to Israel in the abstract? These programs attempt to address this questions by providing tangible contact with Israel as a place—its landscape, archeological remains, cities, and people—in the hope that such experiences will produce a feeling of attachment. They also draw on ceremonies and symbolic acts, from T-shirts to signing the Declaration of Independence, to concretize the abstraction and associate it with positive feelings. However, for all the activities, sights, ceremonies, and symbols, Israel seems to have played a smaller role in the awareness of the youngsters on these summer tours than the ethnographers expected. Instead, friendships and solidarity as a group reigned supreme.

Many tourists travel together in an organized group. They can be spotted from a distance by their "uniform," which consists of hats, carry-on bags, T-shirts, and nametags

⁹ There have been several studies of Israel Experience programs. See, for example. Herman 1995.

¹⁰ If anything, the reliance on trips to Israel is intensifying as can be seen in Birthright Israel, which is jointly sponsored by the Israeli government and Jewish philanthropy abroad. The idea, "first proposed several years ago by Yossi Beilin, now the Justice Minister," was picked up by Michael H. Steinhardt and Charles R. Bronfman. Steinhardt intends this program to "provide every young Jew on the planet a free educational trip to Israel as a birthright." (Greenberg 2000) This program is criticized by those who question the wisdom of spending millions of dollars to bring youngsters who could afford to pay their own way. They also doubt that ten days in Israel can have the desired impact. Birthright Israel has developed a sophisticated website, <http://www.israelexperience.org/>, which bills the free trips to Israel as "A gift from one generation to the next."

emblazoned with the logo of their sponsoring organization or tour company. Within mass tourism, even tour groups of strangers will form a certain esprit de corps—but not quite the way these summer programs go about creating group spirit. To capture the style of solidarity so important to the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour, Heilman uses the term *gibush*, an Israeli metaphor for group solidarity envisioned as crystallization (Katriel 1991b). That solidarity, which is also encouraged in American Jewish summer camps, was a primary, if not the primary, concern of those leading both tours studied here. (See Joselit and Mittelman 1993.) Finally, the participants pointed to their friendships and time together as the defining experience of the summer. Israel was supposed to be at the forefront of their memories and the catalyst of their personal transformation, but it was their solidarity with one another that provided the foundation for a collective rite of passage.

Heilman's account of the role of the T-shirt is a vivid example of the concrete and symbolic ways the Young Discovery Tour went about creating *gibush* and marking the stages in The Israel Experience as a rite of passage. First, the youngsters brought their favorite T-shirts, bearing emblems of American popular culture, with them. Then, at JFK, just before they boarded the plane for Israel, the staff gave them identical T-shirts—the logo identified them as Young Judea, while the color distinguished this group from other Young Judea groups. As they were receiving the T-shirts, one of the staff commented, "They're about to get their identities," which is to say, they are about to bear the emblem of their affiliation. This is identity by ascription. This is neither an inherited nor an achieved identity. Not until later in the trip, after picking up individual T-shirts at various places in Israel, would they design their own group T-shirt. The project of identity is not as easy as putting on the right shirt. One cannot pick up and possess an identity the way one can pick up and possess the symbols of that identity. T-shirts, logos, caps, and pins seem to materialize something intangible. They reify identity when they treat it as a thing. Identity becomes something to acquire and possess, as in "my Jewish identity." The T-shirt ritual, while it is intended to effect a change of identity, also suggests that identity is something one wears. It can be put on and taken off. Above all, it is a sign of affiliation. It indicates that one belongs to a group. An utterly generic form, the T-shirt, is one of several tangible ways that the goal of *gibush* was expressed and aligned with the goals of the sponsoring organization. (H14)

Because the youngsters were so preoccupied with themselves and each other, was their experience finally an American one? Heilman argues that instead of identifying with Israel, the youngsters on the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour identified with ID X, their tour group, or they confused the two. (H89) This confusion vitiated the impact of being in Israel, in his view. While this may be true, it is also the case that contemporary Israel is actually embedded in the very form of the experience, in the style of group solidarity, and in the techniques that were used to achieve it. More difficult to discern and articulate, Jewish (and Israeli) is not only content, it is also form, including new and emerging forms. Perhaps the most direct and enduring Israeli experience these youngsters had was precisely the experience of *gibush*, something their Israeli counselors understood and knew how to orchestrate, though in the case of NFTY there was a clear preference for American counselors specifically trained for the summer programs. It could be said that in achieving *gibush*, the youngsters experienced a little Israel of their own making. Their temporary Jewish community modeled Jewish solidarity and group life on a small scale and in terms they could understand. This was an authentic expression of their

Jewishness, though they did not put it in quite these terms. It was not, however, the kind of emotion "that ties people to a national identity and history. This was *gibush* with a small *g* rather than with a big *G*." (Heilman 1999)

Group solidarity has historically been essential to the socialization of Israeli youth. Reflecting on his own experience as an American Jewish adolescent in the fifties, Goldberg responded to what I have written here with the comment that "In the youth socialization we 'oldies' experienced, there was a clear pattern of exposing North American youths to Israeli style socialization. I'm not so sure this is what goes on today--but, if your analysis is correct, perhaps it still does in subtle ways." (Goldberg 1999) Moreover, the Zionist ethos of collectivism is understood as emancipating, not constraining, individual autonomy, which may account in part for why these tours emphasize personal development in the context of group solidarity.¹¹ How personal development is understood, the emphasis on peak experiences, self-actualization, and dramatic transformation, will be discussed below.

Did Israel finally matter? Would the *gibush* the youngsters experienced during the summer of 1994 lead to sustained Jewish communal attachments? Here again, the form of the experience is important, for it speaks to the concern with affiliation. Though these tours are framed in terms of identity, they are in their very form an attempt to address the falling off of formal affiliation within the organized Jewish community. These summer programs enact affiliation by establishing bonds within the tour group itself, between the tour group and the sponsoring organization, and between the participants and Israel (and all that it is asked to stand for). Hopefully, in the years ahead, these youngsters will make the most consequential "affiliation," namely marriage to a Jewish partner and all that flows from that choice—forming a Jewish family, raising Jewish children, playing an active role in a Jewish community, making a commitment to Jewish values, literacy, and causes, and doing so through formal affiliations within the organized Jewish community.

The importance of these trips for those who do *not* go on them should not be underestimated. Parents, teachers, organizations, and the youngsters themselves invest extraordinary time, energy, and resources in fundraising and creating scholarships, marketing the programs and preparing for them, motivating youth to go on them and to report when they return. In a sense, the youngsters are not only the target of organizational hope and attention, but also their proxies. It is through youth (and not only on youth) that Jewish organizations enact their values and goals. This was especially clear on the NFTY Safari. Annette Hoffman, who represented the Jerusalem municipality and is a Reform Jew, instructed the youngsters to proudly declare "I am an American Reform Jew," when asked who they are. (G36) This is a very specific identification. It was not proposed as a "choice." Presumably by signing up for this program, the youngsters were enacting their affiliation with the Reform movement and the tour itself would provide them with many more opportunities to perform that affiliation.

As Goldberg demonstrates, "'Israel' became a resource utilized in implementing NFTY educational goals." (G94) First, lessons drawn from ancient sites and the history of

¹¹ See Hazan forthcoming, 21-22, for a discussion of the Zionist practice of viewing "the individual as the carrier of collective ideals and as subordinate to them, while celebrating the pioneer and the sabra as independent individuals."

Zionism "merged the idea of Israel, Reform Judaism, and the future of Judaism in Israel," while eliding the historical tension between Reform Judaism and Zionism. (G35). Second, climbing Masada, which was called "the NFTY EVENT," was one of several examples of how NFTY Safari "assimilated the drama of the site to its own goals" and filled an Israeli form with American Jewish content. (G38) The NFTY EVENT at Masada involved an elaborate process of getting from Jerusalem to Masada together with the other NFTY Safaris in Israel. It included ceremonies, marches, speeches by leaders of the Reform movement, a barbecue and sleepout at the foot of Masada, a sound and light show at 2:30 a.m., a "blazing 'inscription'—NFTY IN ISRAEL—ignited near the top of the mountain while still dark," a sunrise climb, tour of the site, morning prayer service, and descent along an historic path. (G39) As Goldberg notes, *ketovot esh* (fire inscriptions) are a well-established Israeli practice in Israeli youth movements and army induction ceremonies. (See Katriel 1991c) Here again, the form is Israeli, the content American, and the purpose to unite the youngsters around the common cause of defending Reform Judaism in Israel.

After all, The Israel Experience lasts only a few weeks, while its effects are supposed to endure long after the youngsters return home to the United States, hopefully with an intensified commitment to NFTY and all that it represents. The youngsters brought NFTY culture with them, which, as Goldberg notes, includes the importance of prayer, the active role of the youngsters in leading services, and the use of the standard NFTY version of prayers and a songster with familiar tunes. Many youngsters had internalized liturgical practices and did not have to be reminded. They approached sacred sights with seriousness and dignity. They were encouraged to feel and express strong emotions and discouraged from indulging in inappropriate humor. Priority was given to such sites as the Kotel, which was visited within 48 hours of their arrival in Israel. (G43) The activist curriculum and articulated ideals and practices are also consistent with NFTY culture. Goldberg observes that the NFTY Safari youngsters seemed more autonomous, thoughtful, knowledgeable, and motivated than other such groups. They may also have been a little older than the Young Judea participants and several of them were at odds with their peers at home and with members of their families. Moreover, the leaders may have underestimated their Jewish knowledge and commitment.

What forms have been used to symbolize the connection of the youngsters on such summer programs to the State of Israel? There are ceremonies of honorary citizenship on the occasion of Israel's 50th anniversary. Each group (3500 "Diaspora Jewish youngsters" in all) in the "Israel Experience programs organized by the Jewish Agency/WZO's Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education...signed a copy of Israel's Declaration of Independence and then march to a rally at nearby Mount Herzl."¹² Groups associated with other organizations have, in the past, received an official certificate verifying their visit. Many summer programs, like the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour, are marketed as a "*Passport* to adventure and excitement." Indeed, as I will discuss below, tourism, including these summer programs is envisioned as a potential stage in the process of immigration or *aliyah*, the ultimate expression of an affiliation with Israel.

The Bubble

¹² "An Israel Experience 'Happening' in Jerusalem Brings Together Thousands of Jewish Youngsters," The JAFI [Jewish Agency for Israel] Mag-Net, <http://www.jafi.org.il/arts/1998/sept/4.html>.

If *gibush* is an Israeli metaphor for the group's coalescence, *bubble* is a metaphor for the group's insularity. (See Cohen 1985; Schmidt 1979) To the consternation of the ethnographers, the youngsters filled *gibush*, a form that has such resonance in Israeli culture, with the American (and American Jewish) cultural content they brought to Israel, while insulating themselves from the sights and sounds that were supposed to define The Israel Experience. With their earphones tuned to a soundscape of American popular music, the bus window shades pulled down as they moved through the landscape, English their lingua franca, the uniform of American teen culture their garb, and each other as constant companions, these "initiates" were embarked on a voyage of personal discovery whose destination was known in advance, if not yet to them. The desired outcome had presumably occurred for many others and was promised as an inevitable and enduring result of an initiation rite in the form of a trip to Israel.

The sources of the bubble are several—the emphasis on group solidarity, the American youth culture that the youngsters brought with them, the American matrix that structures the encounter with Israel, and techniques that actually distance the youngsters from the reality of contemporary Israeli life. Each organization structures the "interaction between a group of young travelers and the country of Israel," consistent with its particular educational goals and with its own understanding of which Israel they want their youngsters to experience. (H80, G94) These programs are after all produced for American Jews by American Jews (working with Israelis). Though the tours are marketed as if the youngsters will have a direct and unmediated encounter with Israel, Israel actually receded into the background and only what was meaningful to the group's internal life came into focus. As Heilman notes: "Israel became a tableau that came to life most when it was filled with the sounds and sights associated with their special group experiences." (H50). It was precisely at such moments that the youngsters were actors in their own script, their own drama, and not (or not only) reenactors of someone else's script, someone else's drama, someone else's life.

Realities

From the marketing of these trips, one would think that the youngsters' experiences in Israel would be self-evidently real. As Goldberg notes, however, it was not uncommon for the youngsters to express a sense of unreality. (G76) First, the realness of experience is something that must be achieved. It is not given, not even in Israel, and not even in programs predicated on this expectation. Second, there is the question of the realness of the Israel the youngsters experienced. These programs mediated and theatricalized the youngsters' encounters, idealized the Israel of Zionism, and insulated the youngsters from contemporary Israeli life. Third, an American matrix and the educational goals of American sponsoring organizations prevailed. Fourth, a priority for both the organizers and the youngsters was group solidarity. Vital to their life together as a group was the American (Jewish) culture that the youngsters brought with them. Fifth, we might reexamine the claims and expectations of these programs. How realistic are they?

The ethnographies thus raise important questions regarding realness. How and why were the youngsters insulated from the contemporary realities of Israeli life? How did the youngsters achieve a sense of the realness of their own experiences?

The Real Israel

It could be said that the "existential reality of Israeli life" is fundamentally incompatible with The Israel Experience. (H58) The Israel Experience is by definition extraordinary. The real Israel is not. The existential reality of Israeli life is not a vacation filled with adventure and excitement. It is not a compressed series of unique and intense experiences leading to a dramatic personal transformation. It is not lived in perpetual motion on an itinerary of scenic and archeological highlights. It is repetitive. It is ordinary (or wishes it could be). It is fraught. Second, ordinary Israel is coming to resemble ordinary America for Israeli youth of the same age and class as the participants in these programs. They share the English language, American popular music, films, and fashion, shopping malls, and a middle-class life style complete with cell phones, video games, and vacations abroad. The real Israel may be too familiar to be interesting to American Jewish youngsters. It may be too close to home to serve as the basis for The Israel Experience.

Neither the goals of the program nor the fundamental conditions of the youngsters' lives in Israel were conducive to experiencing the realities of daily life in Israel. The youngsters lived with each other, not with other Israelis. Homestays with peers were limited. NFTY Safari's visit to Israelis in a home setting, twelve days after they arrived, consisted of a "barbecue on the lawn of an American Israeli, who was connected to the NFTY program, living in a community settlement in the North." (G93) One of the youngsters characterized his lifestyle as "bringing America to Israel." (G93) At the same time, an American *oleh* offered them a model they might want to emulate. The youngsters were too young to travel independently and, for reasons of security, their leaders did not encourage spontaneous encounters outside the program. The ethnographers question whether the programs were perhaps too protective, not only for reasons of security, but also because group solidarity and a coherent set of messages about Israel were higher priorities.

The focus of these summer programs is not contemporary Israel, even when the marketing expressly says that it is. A USY [United Synagogue Youth] Israel Pilgrimage promotion declares, "Have an incredibly exciting and stimulating summer in Israel with USY. For six weeks, you'll be exposed to the history and contemporary realities of Judaism and Israel." What itinerary will fulfill this promise? "You'll climb the fortress of Masada, explore the stalactite caves of Netifim, swim in the waters of the Kinneret, pray at the Kotel and drink tea in a Bedouin tent on the sands of the Negev deserts."¹³ Where in this list is contemporary Israel? It would seem from such promotions, as well as from the ethnographies, that contemporary Israel is the unmarked term, it is ambient. It is not thematized, it cannot be thematized, because it is taken for granted. Even if closer contact with the existential reality were a priority, ordinary life is too diffuse, too spread out in real time and real space, to lend itself to the medium of tourism. By its very nature tourism selects, compresses, and, when necessary, simulates. Packaged as just the highlights in a short time, any place will begin to feel like Disneyland, because the very techniques that produce intensity can also create a sense of unreality. The quotidian does not lend itself to being experienced by those who do not actually live it. Unless, of

¹³ Teen Trips to Israel! USY Israel Pilgrimage,
<http://ezra.mts.jhu.edu/~rabiars/teens/israel.html>.

course, you are an ethnographer or an independent and experienced traveler. It takes time and skill to find the ordinary interesting, particularly when it is familiar.

These youngsters went to Israel not as anthropologists but as part of "the Jewish family." Echoing what was promised, several youngsters would report that they felt at home in Israel or that they now knew they had two homes, one of them in Israel, even if they will never live there. Home, in an ideal sense, is familiar, not strange. It is comfortable, welcoming, friendly, and secure, not dangerous. It is one's own, not someone else's. One is not expected to take what might be called an ethnographic interest in one's own home and family. Given this premise and the insularity of the tour group, there was no chance of anyone "going native," so to speak. After all, most if not all parents do want their children to come home to the United States and would not be happy if their children had a "conversion" experience that distanced them from their families, no matter how Jewish that conversion might be. Trips to Israel can produce such results. Nor did the participants evince ethnographic interest in the "exotic" situations, a Druze village or Bedouin encampment, on their itineraries.

To create a comfortable feeling of "home," it was apparently necessary to avoid confronting the existential realities of daily life in Israel, even at the risk of producing "false consciousness." (H58) Given the avowed importance of forming an attachment to Israel, why and how did these programs create and maintain distance? Heilman points out a discrepancy between the program's stated goals (attachment) and its actual practices (detachment). He notes a fundamental tension for the youngsters between the pull of their peers and the pull of Israel. While it was hoped that peers would pull together in one direction, namely towards Israel, this did not quite occur. Rather, peer pull won out. Not only were the youngsters kept at a distance from the real Israel, as he puts it, but also from "Jewish frames of reference." (H46) Indeed, that distance makes it possible to speak of "exploring your Jewish heritage" or "discovering your Jewish identity." The unstated premise here is that these youngsters are unknown to themselves. Jewish culture is foreign to them. They are tourists in relation to themselves and to their Jewish culture. This bears on the larger project of identity, which will be discussed below.

Without cultural competence (or the time to develop it), they could not have the kind of experience Heilman envisions. As an example of their lack of cultural competence, Heilman cites the campers who "were given a 'shopping list' of items to get that included eggplants and mayonnaise" and returned with a "raw eggplant and a jar of mayonnaise." (H44) But, this episode is also evidence of a failure of cultural translation on the part of their leaders. Whoever issued the instructions must have assumed that the campers would be familiar with the dish (eggplant salad), but not with its Hebrew name (*salat hazilim*). The improvised translation produced an ambiguous instruction.¹⁴ Was

¹⁴ "Eggplants and mayonnaise" is not the common name in English either, judging from a search of 7,217 recipes in the archives of the Jewish Food listserve as of February 5, 1999 and survey of several Israelis knowledgeable about food. I found 163 recipes for eggplant, many of which were for "eggplant salad" (some of which called for mayonnaise), "eggplant caviar," and *baba ghanoush*, which is made with tahini, not mayonnaise. Only one recipe specified mayonnaise in its name, "Eggplant salad with mayonnaise," and it was from "*Chag Sameach—Yeshiva College Recipe Book*. Note that the name specifies salad and is phrased to indicate a dish and not simply a list of ingredients. Eggplant salad (*salat hazilim*) is the generic term for all these varieties. "With mayonnaise" is a marker that distinguishes this dish from other eggplant salads that do not use

"eggplant and mayonnaise" to be understood as the conventional name of a prepared dish, an improvised description of a prepared dish, or a list of ingredients? The miscommunication was produced by both parties and not by the cultural incompetence of the youngsters alone.

The Reality of One's Own Experience

Israel's unreality also arises from its dreamlike quality. Thanks to tourism marketing, adolescent yearning, and Jewish (and specifically Zionist) visionary hopes, dreams are a prominent feature of The Israel Experience. Goldberg notes the frequent references to dreams on the NFTY Safari and points out the historical importance of dreams in Jewish tradition. Speaking of situations that are "on the border of 'the real,'" Goldberg notes:

From one point of view, Israel's "unreality" makes it evanescent and of little weight in "normal life." On the other hand, it is precisely its lack of definition and form that makes it, for those with an educational background which has attached importance to "Israel," a potential bearer of imaginings and hopes, in a word—the site of "dreams." Dreams eminently symbolize these two sides of the "non-real," as something of little significance on the one hand and of possibly powerful motivation on the other. It is not accidental, in my mind, that a theme which received a certain degree of prominence in the summer, particularly throughout the second week, was that of "dreams." (G80)

Not only is there a dreamlike quality to the youngsters' experience of being in Israel—"I cannot believe I am really here"—but also their own futures unknown. As Goldberg notes, "The question of the 'reality' of their experience would remain an issue as they continued in the summer in a 'safari' that was 'in Israel' but only partially 'of Israel.' Israeli 'reality,' moreover, was not a given." (G80)

To account for the youngsters' sense of unreality, Heilman points to the dependence on theatrical techniques, role-playing, simulations, and spectacle—in other words, to techniques that require the suspension of disbelief and produce what might be called a waking dream. While these techniques induce the emotional intensity of such highly produced events as the arrival of the *ma'apilim*, they also contribute to their fictional quality. Techniques that are intended to make things more real—imagining oneself into historical situations and empathetic identification—can have just the opposite effect. Their use here is consistent with the idea that what mattered was not an Israeli actuality out there, but an emotional reality within each individual youngster. The organizers relied on such patently theatrical techniques, even though Israel was not supposed to require such dramatic mediation to produce the desired emotional effects.

The Israel Experience

The Israel Experience is the brand for a niche market in the tourism industry. Thanks to the language of tourism marketing, we no longer travel to a place or even just

mayonnaise. Goldberg (1999) commented, when reading this account, that "At one point I asked the kids what they meant by 'Jewish food,' and 'pita' and 'felafel' were mentioned spontaneously, as if they always had been part of American Jewish life."

experience a place. In the language of tourism, place has been supplanted by Experience. Israel, the place, is apparently not exciting enough. It must be produced as an Experience. American Jewish youngsters do not come to Israel, they go on safari. They do not simply land at Lod Airport, but reenact the arrival of the *ma'apilim* (illegal immigrants) on the Exodus '94, which left Brindisi, Italy, as had the *ma'apilim*. Heilman's Young Judea group participated in the first such re-enactment, along with United Synagogue Youth groups, other Young Judea groups, and NFTY groups. Goldberg's NFTY Safari was not on the boat. They flew directly from JFK to Lod. As Heilman (1999) explains, "In effect, my ethnography really covered two experiences: the first week in Italy and the boat with my YJ group that floated in with the others, and then the remaining weeks in Israel, when my group did its discovery tour." While optional, the Exodus component has become so popular that since Exodus '94, "each group has its own boat." The number of youngsters who arrive in Israel role-playing the *ma'apilim* may well exceed the number of actual *ma'apilim*.

After their dramatic arrival by boat or plane, the youngsters view "Israel" through the windows of a moving bus (assuming they have not pulled down the shades) or from a commanding promontory (Jerusalem from the *tayelet* promenade and the Dead Sea from Masada), preferably enhanced by a sunrise or sunset.¹⁵ They will traverse the desert by camel, donkey, and jeep. Sound and light shows will animate the silent stones of archeological sites. An athletic extravaganza (Maccabiah) will culminate in a spectacular laser light show, rock music, and fireworks. Yacht disco parties, dancing under the stars, and a major farewell bash are part of the package. (H52) In sum, the Israel they experience has the quality of an event, a "happening," a performance.

Not only do you need a passport to enter the country. You also need the "passport to excitement and adventure" that a Young Judea journey to Israel can provide. (H52) Such terms as experience, excitement, and adventure signal a shift in the tourism industry from product to service, from places to persons, from out there to in here, and from looking to doing. These terms distinguish contemporary tourism from earlier forms as well as from books, television, and cinema. For these reasons, contemporary tourism is a particularly congenial medium for achieving the objectives of organizations that sponsor summer programs in Israel. Making full use of the tourism industry, including its marketing language, these programs sometimes send out contradictory messages. For example, the "USY Israel Pilgrimage" is a "USY Great Summer Escape."¹⁶ Escape tourism is defined by the desire to leave (to escape). Pilgrimage is defined by the pull towards a destination. Acknowledging the apparent incompatibility of the two, the NCSY [National Conference of Synagogue Youth] Israel Summer Experience promotion poses the rhetorical question, "Can you gain a deep understanding of Israel and its place in Jewish History through swimming, climbing, hiking, rafting, and sports?"¹⁷ The answer is, of course, yes. While critics see the extravagances of tours based on these promotions as gimmicks "to attract the jaded and spoiled Americans to come to Israel," these

¹⁵ Indeed, it could be said that one of the prime lessons is how to be a good tourist, how to view landscape. On the history of viewing landscape from the window of moving vehicle, see Schivelbusch 1986.

¹⁶ USY Israel Pilgrimage, USY Online, <http://uscj.org/usy/escape/ip.asp>.

¹⁷ NCSY Israel Summer Experience, NCSY Online, <http://www.ou.org/ncsy/summer/ise.html>. They too offer a "Passport to Excitement." NCSY, which traces its history to the 1950s, identifies itself with Orthodox Judaism.

extravagances are more consequential than such dismissals might suggest. (H18)

The Israel Experience is made up of many *experiences*. As one of the Young Judea staff members said, "In my opinion, one of the goals [of the summer]...is to be laden with experiences." (H57) This formulation suggests that experiences are focussed, bounded, and multiple. They can be accumulated, enumerated, named, and rated. They can be possessed. They have a certain materiality. One can be "laden with experiences." The itinerary of attractions, sites, events, and programs is the chief instrument in achieving this goal. The Israel Experience also distinguishes its pedagogy (informal education) from the formal educational programs of schools. The key to the distinction is an "*experience orientation*"—that is, active participation in situations and what might be called situated learning or learning in situ. However, as Goldberg notes, "The experience orientation demands carefully orchestrated scenarios so that the youngsters 'spontaneously' undergo positive experiences capable of making a lasting impact." (G98) Finally, there is the use of the term experience to refer to a sense of actuality or existential reality or to a state of heightened consciousness—a religious or spiritual epiphany, a peak experience, a feeling of flow. A phrase such as The Israel Experience intentionally conflates all these meanings—Israel as a highly produced *Experience*, the many *experiences* listed on the itinerary, the *experience orientation* of an informal pedagogy, and the *transforming experience* that strengthens Jewish identity.¹⁸

Tourism as Aliyah

Tourism has become a form of *aliyah* to a holiday destination. It is a stage in the immigration process. The Jewish Agency's homepage not only features The Israel Experience Program, but also lists "Life as a Tourist (and the next step...)" on a page entitled "Coming Home: Immigration and Absorption."¹⁹ The most dramatic example of tourism as *aliyah* is the way that the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour arrived in Israel. By reenacting the arrival of the *ma'apilim*, the youngsters transformed themselves from tourists to immigrants (and immigrants of a very special kind). They did not simply arrive in Israel, as one might arrive in Paris. They made *aliyah*, they ascended, they immigrated. An otherwise perfunctory arrival for a summer vacation became a matter of life and death. This provisional going home was something of dry run, a tryout for the ultimate going home. It was also particularly ironic, given the chasm separating refugees from tourists and the recent critique, in Israel, of the distinction between *aliyah* and ordinary immigration. (Goldberg 1999).

Immigration, which plays such a prominent role in the American imaginary, is configured differently in Israel's historiography, as the very term *aliyah* suggests. Moreover, those who came in the first *aliyah* are not even thought of as immigrants, but as pioneers. Nor are all waves of immigration equal in ideological importance. Neither are they equally "dramatic" in their mode of arrival. It is significant that the youngsters were asked to identify with the *ma'apilim*, rather than with earlier *aliyot* or the ingathering or more recent waves of immigration from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. They were to imagine themselves not as pioneers, but as survivors of the Holocaust. Scripted right into the itinerary is the link between the Holocaust and the

¹⁸ Goldberg (1999) notes that he participated in a conference at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1984 that was called "The Sephardic Experience."

¹⁹ The JAFI Mag Net, <http://www.jafi.org.il/aliyah/index.html>.

necessity and legitimacy of the Jewish state.

What is marketed as the Young Judea Exodus involves a flight to Athens, where participants board "a cruise ship for a three-day Exodus-like voyage to Israel."²⁰ The Italy portion of Young Judea tour is specifically thematized as "Heroism and Hope." This message pertains not only to those who perished and those who survived, but also to the illegal arrival of refugees in Israel that the youngsters were reenacting. Why was arriving in Israel not exciting enough? Why did it need to be dramatized? Why did they have to perform their arrival by reliving the more dramatic experience of someone else? The presumption is that their own arrival was not consequential enough. Instead, they took part in a process of "arriving" that took about a week (including three days in Rome). Into this carefully produced dramatic framework, the participants inserted the imagined feelings of excitement that someone else in desperate circumstances must have felt about arriving. Without this scenario, the youngsters would have done nothing more than leave one airport and arrive in another with nothing in between but dead time.

Instrumentalizing the Holocaust

The use of the Holocaust to secure identification with the State of Israel represents an important shift in the place of the Holocaust in Zionist ideology. The reenactment of the arrival of the *ma'apilim* offers a way to integrate two historical narratives that for a time seemed mutually incompatible and were even compartmentalized. The Holocaust represented all that was wrong with the Diaspora. Israel represented a completely different historical development. They were unrelated, except as antitheses of each other. Linking them are the heroes of the Holocaust, particularly those who survived and whose arrival in Israel, by virtue of its illegality, was also heroic. After the Eichmann trial and the 1967 and 1973 wars, a sense of Israel's vulnerability made the Holocaust resonate in new ways. The Holocaust became not only an object lesson (this could happen again), but also "a national integrating factor and a locus of Jewish solidarity." (Hazan forthcoming:54; see also Feldman 1995 and Stier 1995) The phenomenon of international delegations to Holocaust sites (like the March of the Living) is consistent with the tendency to personalize the Holocaust by focussing on "the suffering of the individual" and by personally identifying with it. (Hazan forthcoming:55) This approach informs the reenactment of the arrival of the *ma'apilim*, as well as visits to Yad Vashem..

On entering the Yad Vashem museum and noting its dark and foreboding atmosphere, one youngster on the NFTY Safari recalled the "numerous Holocaust memorials" she has visited in the past, the familiarity of the photographs, and her inability to feel anything. "Am I insensitive?", she asked in her diary, or "desensitized" after seeing "so much of the horror." She searched "for something powerful that could reveal the reality of the number 6,000,000" and found it in the Hall of Names, where she focussed on the alcoves of books and visualized the installation as "library of death." "Suddenly," she writes,

the gripping power of 6,000,000 inundated my soul. Each alcove had dozens of shelves. Each shelf had dozens of books. Each book held thousands of names.

²⁰ UAHC The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, <http://uahcweb.org/youth/israel.html>.

Before I could realize what was happening, I was dripping with tears. But I wasn't shedding my tears. I was crying the tears of 6,000,000 members of my family who perished in the Holocaust. A minute later, the sensation passed and I was calm. I once again tried to imagine 6,000,000, but I could no longer feel it. But I know, for one instant in my life, 6,000,000 became a rational number as I wept for my brothers and sisters. (G104-105)

Skilled visualization and empathetic identification, assisted by an effective installation, are one type of personalizing practice. Role-playing the *ma'apilim* is another. Through such personalizing practices, the Holocaust is instrumentalized in the service of a Jewish identity linked to the necessity for a Jewish state.

Zionism Dreams

Zionism and tourism are odd bedfellows. Zionism's ideology of self-sacrifice and tourism's ethos of self-indulgence would seem to be incompatible. However, tourism has long been a tool for achieving political, religious, and economic objectives in the Holy Land and, later, Palestine and Israel. A dream machine for national imaginings, tourism lends itself to the propagandistic goals of political ideologies. It showcases a place, a regime, a political program. Claims to a place can be made through tourism that cannot be made in other ways, as the role of Zionist tourism in the historical formation of the state attests. Tourism, as already suggested, is figured as a kind of *aliyah* and possible first step towards permanent immigration. Moreover, tourists are a peaceful army, a pool of actual or potential supporters. They can be rallied in the interest of the state. Their very presence legitimates Israel's existence and serves as a barometer of its security and safety.

The Israel Experience is thus an historically specific instance of a much longer tradition. (See Shandler and Wenger 1997) Organized visits for American Jewish youth go back to the 1950s, as Goldberg and Heilman point out. Based on my own experience, which included a year in Israel in 1960-1961, between high school and university, such visits were closely tied to the prospect of *aliyah* and to an ethos of contribution. There was a closer fit between the form and medium of a visit to Israel and a Zionist style of socialization, perhaps because the participants were older (closer to college age) and the state was younger. Thirty-five years later, the relationship of American (and Canadian) Jews to Israel has changed. Israel still needs the Diaspora—for money, for immigrants, for political pressure, for moral authority—but not to the extent or in the ways that it once did.

What these summer programs suggest is that the Diaspora needs an idealized version of Israel for its own continuity and is finding it in tourism. These summer trips are not fundamentally about what these youngsters can do for Israel, but about what Israel can do for them, though the value of a Diaspora committed to Israel's survival is not underestimated. Tree planting, helping to create a park on a kibbutz, and a visit to the "Tzedakah" project for Down Syndrome children, which were features of the NFTY Safari, are ceremonial and symbolic, rather than substantive contributions. (G 127) Even the youngsters understood this when they "worked" at Kibbutz Gezer. Disappointed that they were not involved in agriculture, they were told that the farming operation had become too technologically sophisticated for them to take part in it. With so many groups of youngsters wanting a brief "kibbutz experience," the kibbutz had to find ways to

accommodate them without disrupting the real work of the settlement or making it into a work display for visitors—kibbutz theatre, as it were. The solution was a park project suited to the intermittent appearance of visitors who want to work for a few hours. While the park will benefit the kibbutz, it took some doing to wrest the ideological lessons from it that the kibbutz "experience" was expected to provide.

The idealized Israel of the Zionist dream is best conveyed through sites relating to ancient Israel and the history of the state. A visit to the cemetery by the Sea of Galilee where founders of the state were buried prompted a NFTY Safari youngster to say that "the dreams and the ideologies of the Zionists cannot be lost..." (G24) This statement was quoted by a staff member in his benediction to 900 NFTY youths "gathered on Mt. Herzl at the opening of the 'NFTY Event'." The youngster's words made him "proud to be part of the gathering of any youth movement any place in the world at this moment. I am more proud at the words which were said by one young member of NFTY, and who said it for all of us." (G24). One would not know from this benediction that the historic values associated with Zionism are themselves under scrutiny in a post-Zionist era and no longer secure among Israeli youth, who may well share more with their American peers than with their Zionist forebears. This is one of the motivations behind the efforts to rekindle Zionist values in Israeli youth, including the kibbutz museums and March of the Living tours of the concentration and death camps of Poland. (See Hazan forthcoming)

A haven for ideas and ideals that are being contested in contemporary Israeli life, tourism becomes a museum of Zionist ideology. Like the kibbutz museums, these summer tours seem undisturbed by "the open public debate over the interpretation and standing of the Zionist project and its history." (Katriel 1997:8) As the political landscape since the 1996 election attests, the revisionist position does not represent the Israeli mainstream. Nor is it reflected in Israel Experience programs. Dissenting intellectuals may engage in revisionist history, but their views do not shake the "fundamental truths" of "power, common blood, and territory [that] belong to the realm of the Zionist myth." (Hazan forthcoming:16) Those "truths" continue to be harbored in tourism, heritage projects, museums, and, last but not least, in the summer tours organized for American Jewish youth. This may explain why itineraries of the programs studied here seem to encapsulate the youngsters in a bubble and insulate them from the contemporary reality of Israeli life.

First, these itineraries are consistent with "the Zionist periodization of Jewish history," which divides the past into antiquity and exile. (Hazan forthcoming:17) Second, while itineraries—like the Jewish calendar itself—make no chronological sense, they do make another kind of sense. They make paradigmatic sense. Accordingly, tour leaders make ancient events and sites "relevant" to the present time and to the lives of the youngsters. This contributes to the mythic quality of these events and places. These are "collective scripts for national mobilization." (Hazan forthcoming:18) As such, they privilege "the mythical time of the Zionist ethos," not the "historical time of 'normalization,'" or what the ethnographers call the existential reality of contemporary Israel. The urgency of attaching American Jewish youth to Israel is born, not of Israel's normalcy, a condition towards which Israel struggles, but rather its exceptionalism. As Goldberg notes, there was little if any effort to keep the NFTY Safari youngsters apprised of the news or to capture their interest in actual incidents that they witnessed by chance. Radio news has been the ubiquitous soundtrack for Israeli life—in buses, supermarkets, shops, homes, and offices. One of the most obvious ways that the summer tour bus

differed from the public buses Israelis use every day was the absence of a continuous stream of news emanating from the public address system. Granted, without Hebrew, the youngsters could not understand the news. But, even Israeli music did not issue from the speakers of their buses.

American Jewish youth are not the only targets of the project to revive Zionist ideology. Their Israeli peers are also distant from the Israel of Zionist idealism. The pioneer settlement museums on kibbutzim, for example, "are expected to work like some kind of ideological inoculation, reinvoicing adherence to the master-narrative of Zionist revival that is a centerpiece of Israeli mainstream ideology." (Katriel 1997:10-11) As Tamar Katriel, in her landmark study of these museums, explains: "This master-narrative, of which a variety of localized versions exist both in and out of the museum walls, runs as follows: After 2,000 years of dispersal in which Jews maintained their distinctive religion and culture in the face of persecution and suffering, they returned to their Biblical, promised land to build a new kind of Jewish society grounded in a new type of Jewish person. The accomplishment of this enterprise is signaled by the establishment of the state of Israel, which involved many sacrifices and heroic deeds associated with both settlement activities and military battles." (Katriel 1997:10-11) In other words, being Israeli is no guarantee that one will feel rooted in the place of one's birth and committed to Zionist values. The increasing emigration of Israelis to the United States and other countries is difficult to reconcile with Zionist ideals.

Several paradoxes emerge. First, the historic values of Zionism (contribution, social commitment, collectivism, self-sacrifice, labor, and austerity) are at odds with a tourism industry predicated on self-entitlement and service. The notion that Zionist ideals of self-sacrifice could be transmitted through a tourism of self-entitlement is one of the great paradoxes of these summer programs, though Goldberg (1999) notes that the youngsters did "go through a certain degree of down-scaling of life style." He cites youth hostels, hiking, 'working' at archeology, and preparing their own meals in the Negev. A second paradox lies in using idealizations that are being contested in what has been called a post-Zionist Israel to anchor the identity of American Jewish youth. Though The Israel Experience drops the anchor of Jewish identity in contemporary Israel, the Israel to which it anchors the youngsters is elsewhere—historically and existentially. Third, while the historic values of Zionism might seem to be at odds with modern forms of tourism, contemporary Israeli life is not at odds with them. The contemporary reality of Israeli life (including a very sophisticated tourism industry) not only makes these tours possible, but also gives them their distinctive character, even if the contemporary reality of Israeli life is not the focus of the tours.

The Tourist Experience

"It took over 5000 years to build the perfect resort." Where? "Israel, on a TWA Getaway vacation." The Israel Experience idealizes Israel in ways that are seemingly incompatible with one another. Israel as Zionist dream, vacation paradise, and existential reality are different places. These summer programs must negotiate competing sets of values as they pursue a Zionist program through the medium of tourism. This can be seen in their names: Destination Israel, Etgar! The Ultimate Israel Challenge, Mayanot Wilderness Adventure, Desert Lion Lite Israel Summer Adventure Program, and NFTY Safari.

It can also be seen in how they are marketed. USY uses the appeal of tourism to advertise its Israel Pilgrimage, but disavows tourism in its promotion for Etgar! The Ultimate Israel Challenge. Those who chose USY Israel Pilgrimage are promised the following: "Buy the latest fad on the chic streets of Tel Aviv and fresh pita from the sumptuous stalls of Machane Yehuda" (as well as float on the Dead Sea, hike up Masada at dawn, and wander through the cobblestone walkways of Safed's artist colony).²¹ In contrast, those who opt for Etgar! The Ultimate Israel Challenge will "go beyond the souvenir stands and discover the Israeli side of Israel."²² While this suggests that other programs (even USY's own) do not offer "the Israeli side of Israel," the goal here is to distinguish Etgar! from hundreds of Israel Experiences on the market, and to distance it from the taint of tourism, which has long been condemned as an inherently shallow experience of the ersatz. (See MacCannell 1976 and Boorstin 1964) Calling itself the *ultimate* Israel *challenge*, Etgar! is actually repositioning itself within the adventure sector of the tourism market, which offers "thrilling action adventure experiences," otherwise known in the industry as *ultimate* sports and *extreme* activities—"extreme rides" is the term for new generation roller coasters, for example.²³

Adventure

Adventure, like the terms explore and discover, provides an aura of challenge, risk, excitement, spontaneity, novelty, and individuality to what are very carefully planned programs for organized tour groups. Adventure tourism figures in The Israel Experience as wilderness hikes, survival treks, scuba diving in the Red Sea, rappelling down a Jerusalem cliff, whitewater rafting, kayaking, jeep rides in the desert, camel rides, and the like. The tourism industry contrasts "active" adventure tourism with "passive" cultural tourism, scenic tourism, and package tours, in its differentiation of offerings and effort to attract a young market. The Israel Experience combines them in the hope that the excitement of adventure tourism will translate into an intensely emotional attachment to Israel and that having attracted youngsters with adventure opportunities the program can provide content through cultural attractions. NCSY answers the rhetorical question, "Can you gain a deep understanding of Israel and its place in Jewish History through swimming, climbing, hiking, rafting, and sports?", with the assurance that "ISE [Israel Summer Experience] participants will come back with a real love for the Holy Land and an appreciation for the beauty of the Land of Israel."²⁴ Typical of other such programs, the itinerary combines adventure and cultural tourism.

Adventure tourism markets itself to people who like to think of themselves as "non-tourists," by repackaging "passive" nature tourism as "active" wilderness adventure for independent individuals, and by offering technologically sophisticated interfaces for rugged environments. As Destination Adventure, a common phrase in tourism marketing, suggests, adventure can be an end itself, wherever it might happen to occur. This is one of the reasons that Israel so often figures as background, not foreground, in the summer tours described here. As Heilman notes, "Israel would be recalled more as the locale" of

²¹ USY Israel Pilgrimage Program Options, <http://uscj.org/usy/escape/ipoptions.html>

²² USY Israel Pilgrimage, United Synagogue Youth Online, <http://uscj.org/usy/escape/ip2.html>.

²³ See, for example, South African Tourism Update, June 1997, Action Adventure Feature, <http://rapidtp.com/tourism/97/97junt.html>.

²⁴ NCSY Israel Summer Experience, NCSY Online, <http://www.ou.org/ncsy/summer/ise.html>. They too offer a "Passport to Excitement."

their friendships—and I would add, of their adventures—"than as an actuality." (H41) This happens for several reasons. First, the interfaces and protocols of adventure tourism generally take precedence over the places where they occur so that the activity is in the foreground and the setting is literally in the background. It is in the nature of adventure tourism that the activity, not the location, defines the adventure, just as the above list—"swimming, climbing, hiking, rafting, and sports"--indicates. Indeed, each activity has specific requirements that a location must be able to provide—snow, hills, rapids, cliffs, caves, waves, wind, dunes. The activity, including the special equipment associated with it (skis, bikes, rafts, ropes, surfboards, buggies), structures one's physical engagement with selected material features of the location. The salient features of the location are defined by the activity. Adventure tourism is consistent with the experience orientation of The Israel Experience, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Itineraries

What is gained in experience is often lost in coherence. As the ethnographers note, the youngsters did not have a clear sense of geography and often did not know exactly where they were. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to relate a map to a territory (the map is not the territory in any case) when you do not have responsibility for navigating them. Disorientation is intensified by immersive experiences, because there is nowhere outside of the situation from which it may be viewed. The trade off is high involvement, but low information and low coherence. The youngsters themselves made a joke of their disorientation when they emblazoned the words "WE CAME; WE SAW; WE CAN'T REMEMBER A THING" on their T-shirts. (H58) What they report is consistent with the way tourism structures experience, including not only the overall itinerary but also each stop along the way.

A defining feature of travel is movement from one place to another. Like the bus and the airplane, that movement can be down time and dead space between high points or, like the *ma'apilim* arrival, it can be an adventure in its own right. The distinction between road and route that Milan Kundera (1991) makes in *Immortality* is useful here: "A route differs from a road not only because it is solely intended for vehicles, but also because it is merely a line that connects one point with another. A route has no meaning in itself; its meaning derives entirely from the two points that it connects. A road is a tribute to space. Every stretch of road has meaning in itself and invites us to stop. A route is the triumphant devaluation of space, which thanks to it has been reduced to a mere obstacle to human movement and a waste of time." This is precisely how the youngsters dealt with the bus, where they spent so much of their time. It was a route, not a road, and a waste of time. Pull down the shade, put on the earphones, get lost in the music, or visit with friends while moving down the line that connects two points, just like flying from JFK to the Rome airport. Young Judea's arrival on Exodus '94 was designed precisely to make the route into a road, to make what would otherwise be a line between two points, into a meaningful passage and dramatic arrival. The reenactment thematized the process of movement itself.

Itineraries—even those that retrace an historical route—are surreal in the way they juxtapose unrelated, even incompatible, elements. Many of Heilman's descriptions capture this quality, nowhere more clearly than in the reenacted arrival of the *ma'apilim* on Exodus '94, a boat with all the amenities of a cruise ship. In a single day, the Young

Judea tour visited Pompeii and embarked on the Exodus '94. While these two activities occurred in the same place, nothing else connected them—notwithstanding the efforts to make Rome a Jewish experience. The "theme" of Jewish survival was expected to hold together the Forum, the Coliseum, Vatican City, and Pompeii, not as entries in a Jewish history textbook, but as fully experienced sites.

What determines the sequence in which tourists will experience sites is first and foremost proximity and the logistics of getting from here to there. The sites themselves are scattered and for the most part unrelated to one another, except through the labors of interpretation. What historical sense could the Young Judea tour make as it proceeded from Pompeii to the Exodus '94, Yad Vashem, the Amatzia caves, Yemin Moshe, a Druze village, Museum of the Diaspora, Masada, Kibbutz Ketura, Caesarea, and Katzrin, with various other stops and activities in between? It is simply not possible to provide chronological coherence to itineraries that are, by necessity, determined by spatial relationships (travel the shortest distance between two points). Considerations such as variety, contrast, balance, weather, and fatigue are even more important considerations in planning an itinerary. Moreover, surreal juxtapositions are not only a source of confusion, but also pleasure, qualities that Heilman captures in his ethnography, which is in the spirit of "ethnographic surrealism." (Clifford 1981; see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998a) Goldberg (1999) notes that the NFTY Safari did make an effort to develop "some over-riding curricular themes pulling together different parts of the itinerary."

However much may be learned by actually being in a place, an itinerary is not a textbook. It is of a completely different order. Even if the elements in a single day are more closely related, the contrasts from day to day contribute much to the interest and pleasure of the trip and to the sense of its fullness and completeness. Blurring might be seen as the failure to assimilate discrete experiences and make sense of them as a whole. As Italo Calvino (1972) wrote, "Traveling, you realize that differences are lost; each city takes to resembling all cities, places exchange their form, order, distances, a shapeless dust cloud invades the continents." Blurring might also be an appropriate adaptive response on the part of these youngsters to their own, understandable limitations. Unable to integrate the parts into an articulated whole (this is a challenge for adult tourists too), they form a whole whose parts have blurred, but they do form a whole. It has contours and emotional tone and sensory reality and social resonance. It does not look like an assembled puzzle, whose individual pieces can be discerned. Like the puzzle, however, there is a certain arbitrariness to the shape of the pieces. They may have difficulty remembering specific places and incidents, but they do have vivid memories of the trip as a whole and of each other in particular.

For this reason, among others, Israel functioned for these youngsters like the memory palace of the ancient rhetoricians.²⁵ This art of memory, which formed a system

²⁵ Orators were taught how to remember a speech as follows. According to Cicero's instructions, the orator was to associate each paragraph with an appropriate image. Then, "the orator walked slowly through a familiar building nearby and placed the images, subjective as they were, upon its salient parts" or did the same thing on "the exterior of public buildings, the walls of cities, or even imaginary structures. Each image had its 'seat' on a column, in a corner or on an arch, where it would remain in store until it was recalled. Thus a speech was prepared. Its delivery consisted of a second, this time fictitious, walk through the same architectural environment, during which 'one asked from every chosen place that which had been entrusted to it.' and thus recalled in proper

of places and images, has its roots in the practice of narrating architecture. (Yates 1966) This involved telling stories in relation to images painted and sculpted on the walls of buildings and using the act of walking as a form of embodied narration. To be memorable, according to Cicero, the images should be "vivid, strong, and discrete." (Bernheimer 1956:230) In recording their itineraries, the youngsters mapped their experiences on to the places they had visited. Those experiences may have had little to do with what was on the official program and much more to do with their own group life. Where this is not the case, the youngsters' account may be little more than a list of where the group went and what they saw or did—in other words, little more than the itinerary itself.²⁶ The locations on the itinerary are like the architectural elements in the orator's memory palace to which he has affixed what he wants to remember. What they have in common is the arbitrary, idiosyncratic, or improvised relation between the content of the memory and the architectural element or stop on an itinerary to which it is attached. The Young Judea group may remember Safed more vividly as the place where one of them got lost than as a place of historical importance, though some NFTY youngsters did report that being in the places where Biblical events had occurred made their prior knowledge of the Bible suddenly take on "a dimension of concreteness or 'reality'." (G76) (See Ben-Ari and Bilu 1997.)

Preparation for the summer trip included for many youth Bible study and knowledge of the stories. The pedagogy of the Israel experience was to make what they had learned from books "real," by situating events in the landscape where they actually occurred and encouraging, through visualization and enactment, a clearer understanding of the texts, intense emotional attachment to the place, and more profound sense of import. What the youngsters did was to make that landscape into a memory palace for their own experiences. While this may have occurred during the official program, such experiences were often independent of the program's formal pedagogical goals. What is so often most memorable about travel are its travails, the serendipitous, and that which is unique to an individual's experience of what is otherwise a well-known sight—often something with little direct connection to the nature and import of the site itself, but rather to the conditions of visiting it.

Theatricality

Despite the promises of tourism, much that you came to see cannot be seen, but must be visualized and imagined. This is true of the most revered sites, not only for Jews, but also for other religions. Pilgrimage depends on liturgy, ritual, the protocols specific to a site, and the prior preparation of the pilgrims. (See Levy 1997 and Eade and Sallnow 1991.) What matters most may not have left any material remains or, if something endured, it may not be particularly spectacular to look at. The Kotel is the small part of the retaining wall supporting the western side of the Temple Mount and is all that remains of the destroyed Second Temple. Imagining the Temple that once stood there is another matter altogether. As Heilman (1999) explains, the Kotel "carries 'weight'

sequence what one had intended to say." (Bernheimer 1956: 229; see also Yates 1966:1-26). This is, in essence, what these youngsters did when they recorded what happened at each place and later reviewed their journals to recall the tour.

²⁶ See Hannah Goldberg's day by day itinerary for Masada/Maccabi Adventure 2, <http://www.tjhsst.edu/~hgoldber/masada/masada.html>. Interestingly, while her text is basically a list of the planned activities, the photographs not only document the sights, but also the group.

because of the generations of Jewish 'tears' [shed] there over personal and national continuity. My campers were struck at how much they expected to feel there and the fact that their 'guides' pretty much left them on their own." To more fully visualize the whole of which the Kotel is but a fragment, the youngsters had to go to the Holy Land Hotel. The Kotel and the Jerusalem model at the Holy Land Hotel are subject to very different protocols.

Much that we associate with tourism is a response to the fundamental muteness of sights, their inability to speak for themselves, their failure to convey what they are about. There is little if anything that is self-evident about them. Techniques that address these limitations include, of course, the guidebook, the guide, the self-guided tour, markers such as plaques and labels, and performances such as sound and light shows at archeological sites. They also include models, simulations, recreations, reenactments, and other such theatrical techniques. These devices mark a shift in tourist culture from a discursive (talking, reading) modality to a more theatrical (enacting) style. What is the nature of the theatre that these tours produce?

- First, the spectators (youngsters) are its chief protagonists, whether they are playing roles or are the heroes of their own dramas.
- Second, this theatre is a mixture of epic in its staging of grand narratives and melodrama in its exaggerated emotionality.
- Third, it is environmental and immersive: there is no fourth wall, no separation between actor and audience, nowhere to stand outside it in order to view it. Rather, the youngsters move around within the world represented by the sites and events and their associated stories.
- Fourth, this kind of theatre is often more spectacle, than plot. Even when razzle dazzle is used in the service of narrative, extravagant reenactments and Olympic-style athletic meets are more impressive, moving, or exciting as spectacle than as any story they may tell.

The world-as-theatre is tourism's forte. Etymologically, theatre (and theory) has its root in the Greek word *thea*, a viewing, and the term was first applied to the architectural space created for spectators, not to the stage or what was performed on the stage. Tourism is also about viewing, but in contrast with theatre audiences, tourists do not view what is before them from the fixed position of a seat in an auditorium. Tourists view the lifeworld or the designated attraction while moving, even if seated in a vehicle and, as the word *tour* suggests, they return to where they started.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch (1986) has suggested that the railway journey, and the visuality associated with viewing landscape from a fast-moving conveyance, prepared the ground for the development of cinema. Cinema, in turn, provides a model for the travel experience, as can be seen in the showing of Exodus in connection with the Exodus '94 reenactment of the *ma'apilim* arrival. It is not just the subject that made the showing of *Exodus* appropriate to the Exodus '94 experience. It is also the cinematic style in which Exodus '94 was staged, including a cast of 550 youngsters performing the role of illegal immigrants in a grand Zionist epic. Role-playing was so fundamental to the experiential pedagogy of the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour that they not only role played historical characters, but also Israelis. They played various Israeli types in a wedding skit. (H 47)

This then is a theatrical rather than performative Jewishness. This is Jewishness that is staged, rather than performed. I suggest that theatrical Jewishness is the next step in a sequence that Soloveitchik defines as shift from a mimetic to a performative Judaism. By mimetic Judaism, Soloveitchik means transmitting a way of life not through learning it, but by absorbing it: "Its transmission is mimetic, imbibed from parents and friends, and patterned on conduct regularly observed in home and street, synagogue and school." (Soloveitchik 1994:66) With the decline of mimetic Judaism, "Performance is no longer, as in a traditional society, replication of what one has seen, but implementation of what one knows." (Soloveitchik 1994:72) The result is what he calls a "performative spirituality, not unlike that of the arts," because of the imperfect fit between conception and performance, between the script or the score and the performance of it. This shift produces an ideological, rather than self-evident, relation to tradition, a relation that is part of much longer history of modernity. One response to this situation is *humra* (stringency in the observance of the law), which is what Soloveitchik is trying to account for. Another response is the theatrical Jewishness of The Israel Experience.

Like performative Judaism, theatrical Jewishness exhibits "more purity of ideology than of impulse." (Soloveitchik 1994:81) The ideology at the heart of the Israel experience conflates identification with affiliation and makes identity into a self-fashioning project, about which I will say more below. Theatrical Jewishness is literally staged and with high production values. It is thus essential to The Israel Experience that places and events not only be reenacted (staged as a drama) but also heightened (made even more dramatic). The effects are histrionic, melodramatic, and even "campy " or "corny," as Heilman (32) notes. Theatrical Jewishness is a way of *being* Jewish and not just a way of *becoming* Jewish, and it shapes not only these summer tours, but also the elaborated bar mitzvah and wedding celebrations that have developed in the United States during the post-World War II period.

Were this the first half of the twentieth century, these youngsters would not be part of such a highly produced summer tour, but they might well have experienced similar feelings by participating in the truly epic pageants so popular at the time. They might have been in the cast of thousands that performed *The Romance of a People* on Soldier's Field at the 1933 Century of Progress world's fair in Chicago or *The Eternal Road* at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan a few years later. These Zionist pageants, produced by Meyer Weisgal, were no less spectacular, melodramatic, and emotionally moving. (See Goren 1997, Citron 1989, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998a.) They were no less participatory, but they did take a form that was historically and culturally specific. Both *Exodus*, the film, and Exodus '94, the reenactment, suggest affinities with them, as Heilman suggests when he writes of the Exodus '94 experience that "We were all part of a living tableau of arrival in Israel." (H39) These mass spectacles, by virtue of their sheer size, produce their own synergy. The crowd, by its very nature, intensifies and amplifies the effect of the event. (Canetti 1962) In the past, the crowd would have been organized in a mass pageant for an audience. Exodus '94 is a different kind of theatre. First, there are no spectators, only participants. Everyone is in the picture. Second, this kind of theatre is environmental and improvisational. It is staged in situ, right where the original events happened (or as close to them as possible). Third, the style of acting involves role-playing and reenactment, not the declamatory, operatic, choral, and eurhythmic modes associated with earlier pageants. Fourth, the event encourages internalized identification

with the experience of illegal immigrants, thereby shifting the "stage" to the interior of the participants.

Theme Park

More than once, Goldberg and Heilman report a widespread concern, voiced by Meir Shalev, an eminent Israeli writer, that these summer programs are "turning Israel into a 'theme park'" and "ignoring contemporary Israel as a 'real' place." (G91) NFTY Safari youngsters were twice warned "against adopting this attitude. (G92) The youngsters protested that the difference between Disneyland and Israel was the "spiritual attachment" they felt in Israel. But, the concern voiced by Shalev surely referred not only to imagining but also imagineering the Jewish homeland. Imagineering is by its very nature thematic. As already suggested, contemporary Israel is too much like the rest of modern life, at least to the untutored eye, to serve as the basis for The Israel Experience. Israel as the Jewish homeland needs to be thematized. Thanks to reenactments and simulations, which are generally more thematic than informative, Israel emerges less as a place than an event. Israel becomes a series of stops, each one bounded in time and space and structured for viewing, with or without a guide.

To say of a serious enterprise that it is a theme park—that it is Disneyland—is to discredit it. However, the issue runs deeper, because The Israel Experience is modeled on precisely those features of theme parks that make them so successful. They include careful planning, attention to detail, a high degree of managerial control, an emphasis on experiential and immersive opportunities, an appeal to imagination, the use of narrative to evoke feeling, and a thematic handling of complex subjects. Nate Naversen, a theme park designer, explains the fundamentals of theme park design as follows: "The folks at Disney consider their parks *showplaces*, where guests can move around and interact in a three-dimensional story." (Naverson 1999) The key elements are story, envelope, senses, feeling, fantasy, and transport. A themed attraction should make you should feel like you are on a journey that transports you to a different place or time and completely engulfs you in a new world. It must make a story convincing by engaging all five senses and moving the emotions within "a closed environmental envelope" or "fantasy environment." The fantasy must feel completely real.

What immersive experiences gain in immediacy and personal significance they sacrifice in information, analysis, and synthesis—in the intellectual coherence that counts as knowledge. They make a different kind of sense, a term that I use advisedly, for above all they literally engage the senses and the emotions. Immersion is a way to stage a learning process that in ordinary life would take place slowly, over a long period of time, through absorption or imbibing in situations that repeat themselves. To speed up the process and match it to the opportunities provided on the itinerary, participants are enveloped by situations and environments that have been specially devised for them through reconstructions, simulations, reenactments, role-playing, or adaptations. They "experience" what it might be like to work on a kibbutz, serve in the army, or help out in a center for disabled children.

One of the purposes of The Israel Experience is to drive home the message "Israel is real." (H37) The very necessity for such a slogan suggests that its reality is not self-evident—that it must be performed. Tourist productions are a way to perform Israel's

realness. While technologies for realizing Naversen's theme park principles are more sophisticated than ever, older modes of virtual reality have long been used to envision the Holy Land, Palestine, and even Israel itself. Many summer programs visit the model of Jerusalem at the time of the Second Temple at the Holy Land Hotel, where guides give tours of the model. An extraordinary model of Jerusalem created in the nineteenth century is now on display in the basement of the Tower of David Museum. Modeling is an important pedagogical principle and is not to be discounted as not really real. Given the long history of modeling Jerusalem and, more specifically, the ancient Temple, and reenacting the historic events that occurred there, it could be said that the Holy Land has long been a theme park. (See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1997.) Encounters with these models and reenactments can be religious exercises. Clifford Geertz's distinction between *models of* and *models for* is pertinent here. (Geertz 1973:93) Both are at work in these summer programs, which provide not only *models of* ancient Jerusalem, but also *models for* the kinds of Jews these youngsters should become.

Pedagogy

The pedagogy of these summer programs is informal, participatory, experiential, reflexive, and embodied. Learning is to be effortless and fun, like much (though not all) situated learning in everyday life. However, the idea that learning should be effortless and fun is "an American myth" and at odds with the idea that "Jewish learning is a lifelong vocation." (Heilman 1999) Since the less preparation the youngsters bring (or are presumed to bring), the more the program must provide, doing so informally requires careful planning, tight organization, and a high degree of control. This informality has been formally devised. Informal learning, appropriate in a vacation context, requires first and foremost that the youngsters be receptive. If they would allow themselves to enter into the experience—to be immersed in it—then like a sponge they could absorb the experience and what it can teach them. An experiential pedagogy is compatible with tourism, which also promises to provide experiences that are hands on, face to face, and in the footsteps of those who went before. These body metaphors point to the embodied nature of the anticipated experience. Tourism, like experiential pedagogies more generally, deploy techniques of the body, as will be discussed below.

Participation

Active participation is one of the selling points not only of The Israel Experience, but also of the tourism industry. Both must overcome cynicism about tourism's prepackaged character and the perceived passivity of spectating. Not only is adventure tourism, as discussed above, a growing sector, but also the marketing of tourism in all sectors has developed its own tense. By contracting the future tense ("You will swim in the Red Sea.") to form the imperative ("Swim in the Red Sea."), tourism marketing produces the *future imperative*. This tense makes all activities, even those once considered "passive," sound active. The USY Israel Pilgrimage promotion issues the following future imperatives: "Wade in the waters of Ein Gedi.... Hike up the mountains of the Galil.... Buy the latest fad on the chic streets of Tel Aviv.... Float away on the Dead Sea.... Dig though the pieces of our past at Beit Guvrin and wander through the cobblestone walkways of Tzfat's artist colony. Examine your family's history at Beit

Hatfutzot [sic]...²⁷ Sights have become activities. Seeing (=passive) has become doing (=active). Youngsters will not simply enjoy Israeli hospitality (that would be too passive), they will "discover" it.

In other words, the distinction between active and passive is produced discursively in the marketing of these programs, even though the programs themselves may be underestimating and even juvenilizing the youngsters by deciding so much for them, a concern expressed by the ethnographers. For all the emphasis on participation, the very terminology of *give*, *make*, and *laden* presumes passive recipients of a program that acts on its charges. To achieve their goals, these programs set out to make an impression on the youngsters, to have an impact on them, to move their emotions, and to transport them. They attempt nothing less than to effect a dramatic personal transformation and to direct its course, in order to play a determining role in what kind of person and what kind of Jew each youngster will become.

Knowledge

One indication of the secondary role of knowledge was the reliance on the counselors, rather than outside experts, for specialized knowledge about particular sites. (H24) Rather than study archeological sites in their own right, the youngsters were encouraged to find personal relevance in them, even if that meant drawing tendentious lessons from Jewish history. (G30) Goldberg, who discusses the experience versus knowledge orientation at length, notes that ingenious pedagogical devices like role-playing may mobilize "the active participation of the youngsters...*in place of* the inherent appeal of the material presented." (G30) Such techniques may well overshadow the content in whose service they are being used. They may produce a lot of participation, but not much information. As Goldberg notes, the leaders did not take advantage of chance opportunities to encourage knowledge of Hebrew and to orient the youngsters in the geography of Israel.

The frenetic pace and desire to pack in as much as possible suggest that youngsters and staff alike lacked the skills, or perhaps the confidence, to sustain interest at a slower pace. Consistent with tourism more generally, a full itinerary indicated that the youngsters, like any value-conscious tourist, were getting their money's worth. The longer the list, the more value for the dollar. In a crowded market, tours that include more elements are presumably more competitive. The result can be brief and rushed encounters of too many kinds, rather than the active learning that is intended.

Finally, the test of the program's success was not how much information or knowledge the youngsters acquired, but the nature and intensity of the emotions they felt. At the end of the day, they were not tested on geography, history, Bible, or Hebrew. But, they were asked to assess their experiences for personal significance. The program was designed to *give* the youngsters "Jewishly tinged emotional 'highs'," to *make* them feel a strong attachment to Israel, and to insure that they would be *laden* with many experiences. Emotional involvement took precedence over intellectual engagement. This pattern is consistent with a ritual mode of communication, which values the representation of shared beliefs over the imparting of information. This can be seen in the

²⁷ USY Israel Pilgrimage, <http://uscj.org/usy/escape/ip.htm>.

way the summer director of the Young Judea tour stated the program's objective: "to take a group of kids with minimal background in Zionist and Jewish knowledge, to *make* them love Israel," "to intrigue them," and "to *make* them want to come back." (my emphasis, H61) Consistent with a ritual mode of communication, the youngsters *do* in order to *feel*. This, in essence, is how the program defines experience. Understanding comes later. These programs eschew direct inculcation. They are structured to make feeling, not knowledge, a first step in securing a youngster's attachment to the desired object—Israel and the Jewish people. As I will suggest below, this pedagogy is designed to produce a sensibility or structure of feeling.²⁸ Above all, the youngsters are learning to feel Jewish.

Techniques of the Body

The term *experience* is vague, in part because it arises from a wide range of embodied, cognitive, and affective practices. Even the language of immersion and absorption indexes the body's largest organ, the skin, through whose very pores the youngsters are to soak up experience. These experiences not only involve touching, in the physical sense, but also are intended to be emotionally touching. Tourism is an embodied practice. It involves physical movement to get from one place to another, to follow an itinerary, and to explore the stops along the way. A defining feature of tourism is precisely one's physical presence in a location and experiences that are above all sensory and proprioceptive, or having to do with the body's orientation in space. This is the appeal of grand vistas as far as the eye can see, or monumental structures such as Masada, whose immensity can only be experienced by standing on or near them. This is the attraction of rapid movement (whitewater rafting) and the disorientation of climbs, heights, and falls that are mediated by ropes, balloons, and parachutes. This is also a key to the pleasure of total enclosure in caves or submersion in water using scuba or snorkel gear. Adventure tourism—like the physical challenges of the Young Judea tour—raises the threshold of difficulty associated with tourism's embodied practices. While these are not what we associate with the embodied practices of Jewish religious observance, they are being deployed in these summer programs in a reflexive project of Jewish identity using particular programs of actualisation and mastery, to paraphrase Anthony Giddens on modern self-fashioning. (Giddens 1991:9)

Embodiment

Tourism as a technique of the body is central to the pedagogy of The Israel Experience. That pedagogy, as it emerges from these ethnographies, appeals to the truth of the senses, to body knowledge, and to forms of memory that are not only inscribed, but also incorporated. What Marcel Mauss (1979) has called techniques of the body and what Paul Connerton (1989) terms body memory involve bodily practices that can never be fully verbalized. *Inscribing* practices, which involve language and particularly writing, are the basis for the formal education of these youngsters. *Incorporating* practices consist of repeated actions that become habitual. They are remembered by the body. These tours stress embodied experience over language. For all the discussion and diary writing that take place on these tours, language will finally be inadequate to the task of communicating the youngsters' experience. The brochure for the Young Judea tour tells prospective campers that they will "feel the richness of the Jewish people and be enriched

²⁸ For an extended discussion of structure of feeling in relation to the revival of klezmer music, see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998b.

by it in a way words can never explain." (H6) They will *feel*, not *understand*, this richness. Feeling is the form that understanding will take, and language will fail to express it adequately.

Two aspects of embodiment—its global quality and its unavailability to conscious reflection and verbalization—suggest that the youngsters may well have learned more than they realize or can report. Because of its global quality, embodied experience is fluid, shifting, and multi-sensory.²⁹ It is not predicated on the notion that everything need be specified in advance. What is learned and known does not have to be broken down "into analytical components or explicit instructions." (Hayles 1993:159) Indeed, to do so is to change what it is. In this light, "What counts as knowledge is also radically revised, for conscious thought becomes as it were the epiphenomenon corresponding to the phenomenal base the body provides." (Hayles 1993:160). To speak of "out there" and "in here" is to index the desire to incorporate into oneself that which has until now been out there: this is a way of talking about the process of converting thought into embodied experience. Pierre Bourdieu's work on *habitus* shows "how embodied knowledge can be structurally elaborate, conceptually coherent and durably installed, without ever having to be cognitively recognized as such." (Hayles 1993:160)

Lacking a fully Jewish *habitus* back home in the United States and insulated from the *habitus* of everyday life in Israel, these youngsters turn to the embodied practices of tourism.³⁰ Like those of the lifeworld, the practices of tourism are learned "not only through the observation of bodily movement but also through the orientation and movement of the body through cultural spaces and temporal rhythms." (Hayles 1993:159) Bourdieu's *habitus* is related to what Soloveitchik means by mimetic Judaism. They are referring to the idea that culture is transmitted, not through a "collection of rules, but as a series of dispositions and inclinations which are at once subject to circumstances and durable enough to pass down through generations." (Hayles 1993:160) Rules are of course present, but much that is valued is not transmitted through them. The key terms here are *disposition* and *inclination* for they speak to a fundamental concern of these summer programs—feeling Jewish.

While knowledge of other kinds is certainly important and could play a larger role in these programs, the nature and importance of embodied knowledge should not be underestimated. Connerton has argued that "Every group will entrust to bodily automatism the values and categories which they are most anxious to conserve. They will know how well the past can be kept in mind by a habitual memory sedimented in the body." (Connerton 1989:102) It is in the nature of this kind of knowledge that it should resist change. Precisely because it is habitual, these internalized strategies are less available to consciousness and to manipulation. Indeed, to subject embodied knowledge to language and analysis is to change what it is. By bringing phenomenal experience into language, The Israel Experience uses it in the service of its own goals.

Group discussion, journal writing, and photographs are among the ways that interior processes of reflection are exteriorized, monitored, and regulated. This process is precisely what moves experience from the self-evident to the self-conscious, from the

²⁹ This discussion is based on Hayles 1993.

³⁰ Goldberg (1999) notes that the lack of explicitness may also help *hide* the fact that 'feeling Jewish' in America is not all that different from 'feeling Italian,' etc." and cites Schneider 1998.

embodied to the discursive. These activities help to produce the estrangement that is constitutive of Jewishness in our time. Here then is a fundamental paradox of The Israel Experience: these programs mobilize conscious examination of embodied experience in the hope of producing a sedimented and enduring sense of things Jewish. Ideally, this is to be the basis for a dramatic transformation in the identity of the youngster, a transformation of irreversible Jewishness, or at the very least it should lead the youngsters to become involved in other Jewish activities and commitments in the future.

Physical Challenge

The Israel Experience is defined not only by the emotional highs associated with theatricalized situations, but also the adrenaline highs associated with physical challenge. Both kinds of peak experience are important to the project of self-actualization, dramatic transformation, and identity, though physical challenge was more important to the Young Judea tour than to the NFTY Safari. The two types of peak experience converge in megaevents like the Maccabiah and even more so in the desert hike described by Heilman: "It is at the end of this hike that one camper yells out, 'I love this fuckin' country,' a kind of *cri de coeur* that is both a cry of triumph of having climbed to the top of a great hilltop in scorching heat and having passed the first 'test' and a sense that triumph leads to love of Israel and therefore Judaism. That is why the kids wanted to repeat that line. That, and of course its scandalous nature. Scandal does act to galvanize, in the original meaning of scandal." (See Marty and Appleby 1991) These activities sediment memory in the body.

Total physical engagement is consistent with both adventure tourism and the experiential pedagogy of The Israel Experience. This is muscular Judaism (or muscular Zionism) of a special kind. It is different from historical modes of Zionist socialization associated with agricultural and military ideals of the early state. It is also different from hiking that is directed to knowledge of the land and appreciation of nature and from Israeli dance, which once figured so prominently in the Zionist culture of American Jewish youth. The extreme athleticism of physical challenge indicates a shift in techniques of the body consistent with adventure tourism. The Masada/Maccabi program, "Adventure Extreme," includes kayaking on rapids, rappelling, a camel trek, a desert survival course, and jeep trips. Where the adrenalin rush was once a function of genuine danger—or, was induced in situations intended to prepare one for real danger—the rush becomes a pleasure in its own right and is actively pursued through variations on the theme of challenge. The very term physical challenge suggests that its value lies in itself. The activity is autotelic in the sense that the reward is internal to it. The activity is an end in itself. Cumulatively, the highs associated with these activities, the locations where they occur, and the meanings they encode are directed to the larger goals of The Israel Experience.

Flow

As Heilman notes in his discussion of Abraham Maslow's theory of self-actualization, peak experiences cannot be mandated or willed. They just happen. Indeed, they are episodic and may be characterized as a spurt (note the acronym of NCSY's program Jewish Overseas Leadership Training—JOLT). This of course presents a dilemma for the organizers of these trips, because despite the language of discovery, little

is left to chance, least of all the peak experience. To better understand how peak experiences are produced and why physical challenge is such a prominent technique of the body in many Israel Experience programs, I turn now to the concept of flow put forward by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975).

Flow experiences are characterized by involvement and absorption, losing oneself (as in listening music, something these teens know exactly how to do), a feeling of rapture, ecstasy, or transcendence, or what athletes call "being in the zone." A key to flow experiences is the right relationship between mastery and challenge. More challenge than mastery will produce anxiety. More mastery than challenge will produce boredom. For flow experiences to occur, the following conditions must be met:

- First, the goal must be clear. This is certainly true of the Israel Experience programs, which define their goals in unequivocal terms--discover Israel and discover yourself, strengthen your Jewish identity. The goals are particularly clear in athletic events and physically challenging activities.
- Second, there must be feedback so that you know where you stand with respect to the goals. The group discussions and personal and collective journals are ways to offer feedback, whether that feedback comes from others or from self-reflection. Scores in games and visible indications of how far one has traveled in the case of difficult hikes are ways of getting feedback.
- Third, there needs to be the right match of challenge and skill. This is more easily achieved in sports and games, but it also pertains to educational goals. Here the ethnographers question whether the leaders of the tours have not underestimated the intellectual capacities of their charges and not challenged them enough. The leaders, for their part, have created a very intense itinerary that makes up in arduousness for what it might lack in other kinds of challenge.
- Fourth, participants must concentrate and focus on the task at hand. If the mastery and challenge are mismatched, boredom will produce distraction or fatigue and anxiety will militate against concentration. There are fine examples in these ethnographies not only of how activities were structured to achieve such focus, but also of the techniques that individual youngsters had devised for themselves, particularly at Yad Vashem, as discussed above.
- Fifth, with the right balance of skill and difficulty, there comes a feeling of control. The feeling of control contributes to the self-assurance that these programs try to foster and to the independence and autonomy that they want the youngsters to develop.
- Sixth, under such conditions, participants will feel a loss of self-consciousness, which is of special importance to adolescents, who tend to suffer from acute self-consciousness. They will be completely caught up in the moment, absorbed, oblivious to everything else. They will feel at one with everything around them. What they are doing will feel effortless, even though the required effort and skill may well be considerable.
- Seventh, one's sense of time is transformed. Some report the feeling of no time or time standing still or time passing without one realizing it or an unusual sense of eternal time, as one youngster reported when she looked out over Jerusalem from the *tayelet* promenade.
- Eighth, the experience will be its own reward. The notion of intrinsic reward,

the autotelic (the end is in the means), is central to the notion of flow, and for many youngsters the summer away from home was just that.

Youngsters know a lot about flow, which is a hallmark of not only play and games, but also listening to music—their favorite American popular music became the soundtrack to their travels in Israel. Though flow experiences are part and parcel of everyday life and can arise in relation to simple tasks and pleasures, these summer programs demonstrate the various ways such experiences can be induced and channeled in relation to objectives that are extrinsic to the immediate activity.

Boredom

The fullness of the Israel Experience itineraries provides a way to coast between highs without the lows of boredom. Boredom is an affliction of youth. It is experienced as waiting and waiting seems to go on forever. While we might expect the newness of everything to be enough to banish boredom from the lives of youth, newness presents its own challenges, as these summer trips amply demonstrate. Indeed, as Susan Sontag has written, "Boredom is just the reverse side of fascination: both depend on being outside rather than inside a situation, and one leads to another." (Sontag 1977:42) Boredom is a stage through which these youngsters will pass, whether in the context of this trip or later. It is intimately linked to introspection, reverie, dreams, and experience, not all of which are exciting in the ways these trips promise.

One way that youngsters avoid anxiety in challenging situations is boredom. Another is tuning out, which they did literally when they pulled down the window shades on the bus, tuned in to their favorite American popular music, which Goldberg took as indication of their failing to "tune in" to Israel, or fell asleep. (G85) That the highlights blur and are hard to remember indicates that the youngsters can only absorb so much and make sense of even less until they develop the necessary frameworks. At the same time, boredom is a form of resistance, a refusal (when it is not an inability) to take interest in what has been mandated as noteworthy. What looks like indifference, apathy, or passivity in such highly structured programs may have the redeeming virtue of serving as a healthy brake on susceptibility. Total compliance is not good, no matter how worthy the goal. After all, The Israel Experience is not just a program, in the sense of a schedule, itinerary, and activities, it is also programmatic in its goals. Despite the emphasis upon personal choice (starting with a youngster's decision to come on the program), The Israel Experience also tries to program (or reprogram) these youngsters. JAFI [Jewish Agency for Israel] is explicit on this point: "Research has shown time and again what every Jewish parent knows—an Israel Experience changes everything for young people. They return home with a strong sense of their Jewish identity which they never lose."³¹ As Goldberg has noted, the life changing experience that is supposed to happen spontaneously is in fact carefully orchestrated. Moments of boredom, if they are not outright resistance, are at least a healthy sign that no matter how salutary the goals, such programs cannot completely "program" their participants.

Feeling Jewish

³¹ Jewish Agency Information Center, The Israel Experience Program, <http://www.jafi.org.il/discovery/ex.html>.

No effort was spared to produce emotional and not just adrenaline highs. It was expected that the summer in Israel would be an emotional experience and every effort was made to ensure that it was. Those efforts included visits to the most resonant sites (the Kotel, Yad Vashem), the most impressive (Masada), the most spectacular (the laser light show at the Maccabiah), and the most theatrically realized (Exodus '94). Heilman notes that the *ma'apilim* reenactment pushed "nearly every emotional button in the Israel/Jewish identity switchboard." (H34) The switchboard image is particularly fitting, for it signals a cultural repertoire of emotions and their associations. Even corny touches, which did not escape the youngsters, could produce the desired effects. They included the proper expression (yells, cheers, hugs, bursting into song and dance) and somatic indicators (a lump in the throat, a chill down the spine, an urge inside, uncontrollable weeping, crying tears of joy).

The youngsters' own emotional terminology—cool, awesome, anger, disgust, sadness—register what might be called the adolescent sublime and is closer to what have historically been called the "passions" (strong emotions) than to subtle nuances of feeling.³² "I did so many awesome things" includes a mud bath at the Dead Sea, hiking up Masada to see the sunrise, and a felafel on Ben-Yehuda Street.³³ The ethnographers' language for characterizing emotion is also indicative. Heilman, who is particularly attentive to the ways in which an entire range of emotion was evoked, channeled, and orchestrated, notes that although youngsters on the *ma'apilim* voyage showed some distance from the event, as indicated by occasional tittering, he discerned "palpable excitement that inflamed everyone," a wording that suggests incitement and "programmed enthusiasm." (H20)

The sudden and involuntary eruption of powerful emotions and their effusive and public display were not left to chance. The very rhythm of the Young Judea tour peaked at various points, from the reenactment of the arrival of the *ma'apilim* at the beginning of the program to the spectacular Maccabiah towards the end. This athletic competition was planned so that "not only would the campers be pumped up physically, to see who was the strongest, fastest, most agile, and so on, but they would get emotionally infused with enthusiasm and solidarity, as they competed to see if indeed 'ID X was the best.'" (H80) Cheers and "a loud public display of rooting (a reprise of what had been called for during the boat landing)" succeeded in raising "the participants to a fever pitch, an emotional high," which was supposed to be remembered long after the summer had ended. (H80)

This language indexes a heightened state of arousal. Its appropriate manifestation is an expressive, effervescent, even ejaculatory enthusiasm, to use Heilman's felicitous term for the spontaneous exclamation of love for Israel on the part of a Young Judea youngster. (H62) The conflation of expressive and somatic responses is consistent with the emotional calculus of the entire program. Somatic responses such as tears, while they might seem spontaneous and involuntary (hence authentic), are induced through a particular style of theatricality that falls between epic and melodrama, as in Exodus '94. Sights that should be impressive in their own right are produced, even overproduced. Did the sound and light show at the foot of Masada overdramatize the site? Not according to the NFTY youngsters, who recognized the danger that it could. (G97) Whether a result of

³² On the history of cool, see Stearns 1994.

³³ See Masada Maccabi participant.Keshet's homepage,
<http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Tidepool/8786/israel.htm>.

overproduction (Masada) or compassion fatigue (Yad Vashem) or anticipation without adequate preparation (Kotel), the banalization of such sites arises from the processes of tourism itself. Ever more heroic efforts seem to be required to ensure that such sites will continue to be experienced as extraordinary.

The youngsters were embarked on an emotional itinerary that served as a training ground for how to feel Jewish. The thrills and spills of physical challenge were to produce an adrenaline rush, while theatrical techniques, as well as ritual, ceremony, and formalized visits to historic sites were to produce emotional epiphanies. The youngsters were encouraged to identify emotionally with people, events, and places of Jewish significance. The program incited, channeled, and modeled how to feel Jewish. When all is said in done, The Israel Experience is supposed to coalesce as a structure of feeling that is identifiably Jewish. The intense, positive emotions that will make the youngsters feel happy about their trip are supposed to make them feel close to Israel and, above all, to make them feel Jewish. Dramatic personal transformation was predicated on intense and vividly expressed feelings. Goldberg questions the idea that strong feelings necessarily mean that an experience will have a lasting impact. (G78) Perhaps because of their perceived spontaneity, feelings are thought to arise naturally, but as these ethnographies show, feelings are culturally conditioned and historically formed.

Identity

The ultimate destination of this voyage of discovery is not Israel, but the Jewish identity of each individual participant. The Israel out there and the identity in here are critical sites for the destiny--the continuity--of the Jewish people. This is the message of these tours. As Heilman rightly notes of the Young Judea Israel Discovery Tour, the "single most important organizing principle of their involvement was their Jewish identity," though he is quick to note that The Israel Experience may well be occurring in a "vacuum of Jewish involvement." (H5) A defining feature of The Israel Experience, as seen from these ethnographies, is to make identity, and specifically Jewish identity, a reflexive project. The youngsters are expected to examine their experiences and reflect on their Jewish identities through moderated group discussion, personal diaries, and a group journal.

The youngsters have to make a choice, hopefully the right choice, among a myriad of options for how to be Jewish--various strands of Judaism, Zionism, communal involvements, etc. Even a primordial Jewish identity must be actively "chosen." Once chosen, can it ever be experienced as primordial? Choosing a primordial identity would seem to be a contradiction in terms. Most important, the reflexive processes that are mobilized in the name of choice actually produce something new--namely, the self as a reflexive project. These tours institutionalize identity as a project.³⁴ In this way, The

³⁴ The Chicago Platform, written by NFTY CAR (Chicago Area Region) on January 24, 1998, states that "each person should be Jewish in their own way." The section entitled "The Jewish People" includes such statements as "Anyone who believes, speaks, or acts as a Jew is Jewish" and "It is up to the individual as to whether or not they are Jewish." Interestingly, the Platform says "The role of Torah in Reform Judaism is something that we do not yet fully understand" and expresses the need to make that determination through study. It also states unequivocally that "The State of Israel is essential to the survival of the Jewish People" and defines the goal of Reform Jews as making *aliyah* and strengthening Progressive Judaism in Israel. NFTY Chicago

Israel Experience, as it emerges from these two ethnographies, is an expression of high or late modernity. Following Giddens (1991:2), we are witnessing the use of tourism, seen as a distinctive institution of modernity, in the service of new mechanisms of self-identity. Reflexivity, which is so central to the identity project of these summer programs, is a feature of modernity, which "institutionalizes the principle of radical doubt." (Giddens 1991:3) One of its hallmarks is the institutionalizing of "the principle of radical doubt." (Giddens 1991:3) Under such conditions, "the self, like the broader institutional contexts in which it exists, has to be reflexively made." Giddens elaborates:

The reflexivity of modernity extends into the core of the self. Put in another way, in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a *reflexive* project. Transitions in individuals' lives have always demanded psychic reorganisation, something which was often ritualised in traditional cultures in the shape of *rites de passage*. But in such cultures, where things stayed more or less the same from generation to generation on the level of the collectivity, the changed identity was clearly staked out—as when an individual moved from adolescence into adulthood. In the settings of modernity, by contrast, the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change. (Giddens 1991:32-33)

Moreover, this process, while it is associated with life crises, is not confined to them. Rather, "a reflexive mobilising of self-identity" is "a general feature of modern social activity in relation to psychic organisation." (Giddens 1991:33)

Consistent with these observations, the summer tours described in this volume not only attempt to direct the process of securing a Jewish identity, but also they socialize the youngsters into the very process of making an identity. The process is never complete. Nor is it confined to life crises. Rather, it is in the nature of high or late modernity that nothing can ever be self-evident again. These ethnographies—and this afterword—speak to those they are about. These studies become part of the phenomenon they are about. They enter into the very processes of reflexivity that are at the heart of the summer tours they describe. While it could once be assumed that ethnographies would never be read by the people they were about, that has not been the case for some time. Our science is social in more than one sense of the word.

Not only do these summer programs structure the experience of being in Israel, but also (and this is surely just as important) they make Jewish identity a question and a project. The goal may be a secured Jewish identity, but in actuality these programs pose an identity question. Is an "An afternoon discussing matters of Jewish identity" a means to an end? Or is it the form that Jewish identity now takes? To *be* Jewish is to *have* a Jewish identity. That identity arises from a process of *discovery*. It is something that can be explored and possessed, as in "my Judaism," "my spirituality," "my roots," "my heritage," and underpinning it all, "my experience."

Jewish is not given. It is not self-evident. The crises that shaped Jewish autobiographies of the nineteenth century were not defined in terms of identity, even though they addressed the crises of growing up and we might well read them today in

Area Region page, <http://rj.org/nfty/car/chiplat.html>.

terms of identity.³⁵ Such autobiographies raise the question of when Jewish became an *identity*? The Jewish Question (Are Jews a race, religion, or nation?), which referred to the collective, has become the Jewish Identity Question, a matter of personal choice for each individual. These two questions converge around the issue of *identification* (through affiliation), which is also at the heart of these tours. Identification is not the same thing as identity, though it is hoped they will reinforce each other.

American Jewish youths are not the only ones from whom identity is a choice, problem, or crisis. Israeli youths face this challenge too, though the context is certainly different. It is perhaps ironic that The Israel Experience is intended to do for American Jewish youth what Israel is having difficulty doing for young Israelis. To better understand how this issue plays out for Israeli youth, consider the following parable about roots recounted by a guide at one of the kibbutz settlement museums studied by Katriel (1997). Referring to the Kibbutz Ein Shemer museum as an "educational tool," the guide stressed its value in conveying "the experience, the story, the impression, the actual feeling" that is intended to "touch the roots of things, perhaps to reach those roots." (Katriel 1997:4) There are echoes here of the experiential pedagogy and identity project of The Israel Experience summer tours. Then, to make his point, the guide proceeded to tell three stories about the conundrum of trying to produce a self-evident Jewish identity reflexively:

Story #1. Whenever a friend visits Karkur's house, the friend expresses his concern about Karkur's flowerpots by examining them very carefully. He pulls the plants out to "look at the roots, to see if they're strong enough, and puts them back in. And each time after his visit, it's a catastrophe 'til the plants recover."

Story #2. In 1921, Winston Churchill, then Minister of the Colonies (and author of the "The First White Paper"), came to the land of Israel. He was based in Jerusalem. The city of Tel Aviv, known as the Garden City, wanted to honor him. Hastily, they organized the parade route. "They brought in trees, lots of trees, date trees, and dug holes in the ground.... Then they pressed down the earth and made pavements. The next morning Churchill was to arrive. But that night the weather turned very stormy, a great wind blew from the sea, hit the trees and they all fell flat. In the morning, when all the municipal workers arrived at 8:00, they saw the disaster. There was nothing they could do." The event proceeded and as it ended, Churchill could be seen whispering in Dizengoff's ear: "Listen, by us in England, when we line our avenues with trees, we plant them with deep roots so they can hold on to the soil, and so that what happened to you doesn't happen to us, that every passing wind can uproot them. If the roots aren't deep, the whole tree, everything on top, will not hold on. Take our advice, from the British."

Story #3. There was an insoluble problem with an orchard plot at Yavniel. The Ministry of Agriculture turned to Asherke, an ideologically motivated orchardworker and veteran of the third *aliyah* (wave of immigration, 1919-1923). What was the problem? A farmer had "planted an orchard on the slope, and the winter rains eroded all the soil from underneath the roots, and the trees were

³⁵ See, for example, the classic autobiography of Yekhesl Kotik (1922). David Assaf is publishing his annotated English translation of this autobiography with Wayne State University Press.

standing like that with the roots dangling in the air, no soil underneath, all the soil was down in the valley." What did Asherke advise? Careful plowing: "You have to plough according to the altitude of the mountains, and at the more distant spots, too, you have to plough deep enough and close enough [to the roots] but not get too close to them so that you don't hit the roots with the plow. But also if you cut the roots with the plow then the tree will die." Plowed correctly, "[t]he soil will be loose and the trees will stay in good shape and so the orchard will survive and not die." (Katriel 1997:4-7)³⁶

Here, in the context of contemporary Israeli life, is a version of the many tensions at play in *The Israel Experience* and in American Jewish life more generally. As Katriel notes, there is "the inevitable tension between ideological talk and the mundane texture of a taken-for-granted cultural experience that grounds it." (Katriel 1997:9) This messing with roots—pulling them out to inspect them, the roots themselves not being planted deeply enough, the delicacy of cultivating them without damaging them—is a metaphor for the preoccupation with identity, its failure to be self-evident, and the intense efforts to examine and cultivate it.

The guide's parable reveals a fundamental paradox for Zionist pioneers, later native-born Israelis, and American Jews who look to Israel for a solution to a "crisis" in Jewish continuity. According to Katriel, "This paradox of having to consciously cultivate a sense of affiliation where it should have been a cultural given" has only intensified with the passage of time. (Katriel 1997:9) The pioneers yearned for "the un-self-conscious experience of rootedness," but were consumed by the "active, deliberate cultivation of cultural roots." (Katriel 1997:9) If anything the "rhetoric of roots" had the potential to "undermine [the] existential force" of a less self-conscious sense of place. (Katriel 1997:9) The major question for Israelis is "how a consciously held ideological position of placemaking can be transformed into the unself-conscious structure of feeling associated with rootedness and nativeness that the pioneers were actively and paradoxically trying to produce." (Katriel 1997:9) How then could *The Israel Experience* expect to achieve for American Jewish youth what Israel has not been able to achieve for its own native-born citizens?

Katriel's remarks affirm the value of ethnography to reveal the relationship between ideological assertion and lived reality and, in particular, to show why the goal of an unself-conscious or, in Soloveitchik's terms, self-evident sense of place and person is so elusive. There may well be more value to aspects of the summer tours that remain taken-for-granted and unarticulated than we think. These ethnographies offer a basis for exploring this possibility. We might rethink Heilman's concern that the Young Judea group became, as he puts it, "confused" with Israel. The Jewish elements of the trip "seemed to be swallowed up within ID X life, part of taken-for-granted reality and background." (H89) Heilman worries that "often the Jewish element was left unarticulated" or "Or, it was so interwoven with the ID X experience" that it was

³⁶ I have greatly compressed these stories, which in their full form are richly textured.

indistinguishable from it. (H89) Finally, at the end of the six-week tour, can one say "the campers truly understood the Jewish nature of their experience"? (H89) From another perspective, it could be said that the confusion and conflation of ID X and Israel and the failure to distinguish and articulate the "Jewish element" of the tour are also achievements of a kind. Might there also be limits to the highly self-conscious construction of a Jewish identity? The parable of roots is a cautionary tale not only for Israel, but also for The Israel Experience.

The centrality of experience to this endeavor is consistent with the idea that "The reflexive project of the self generates programmes of actualisation and mastery." (Giddens 1991:9) It is not by chance that these summer tours are generally referred to as The Israel *Experience*. They are, after all, programs of actualization. This accounts for the role of experience, and specially emotion, in a drama of personal transformation. Despite the language of discovery and choice, the identity project of these summer programs is programmatic. "Experience of a lifetime" and "personal transformation" may suggest spontaneity, but both have been carefully designed, even engineered, if not imagineered through explicitly theatrical programs. The absorption that is promised from an Israel immersion does not produce what Soloveitchik understands as tradition. Tradition is imbibed gradually and in the course of sustained immersion, as it were, in a total Jewish lifeworld. These are the conditions necessary for tradition to be self-evident. Instead, Jewish life at the end of the millenium depends on tourism--a trip to Israel as a "birthright"--to ensure its own continuity. Such trips have become "rites of the tribe." (Kugelmass 1993)

Ethnography, to the degree that it is committed to conveying an inside view, must characterize what these summer tours are in their own terms—from the perspectives of the organizers, marketers, parents, staff, and youngsters themselves. It must do so with respect not only to goals and ideals, but also to actual practices and experiences. This is particularly difficult because it is so tempting, specially given the concern with evaluating these programs, to put forward a model of what these programs should be and then ask how they measure up—whether in their own or someone else's terms. After all, evaluation is part of the object of the study and not something external to it. Even the campers survey each other. The ethnographers, while attentive to evaluative processes that are internal to the phenomenon, are also outside of these processes and therefore in a position to also hold the *donné* of these programs up to scrutiny. Perhaps in the gap between the unrealistic promises of the promoters (this trip will effect a permanent transformation) and the skepticism of the researchers (will the Israel experience translate into any future Jewish commitment) lies the true meaning and value of The Israel Experience.

Note

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