

Survival as Resistance in Livia Bitton-Jackson's *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust* *

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Abstract

This paper deals with the first memoir of the Holocaust survivor, Livia Bitton-Jackson, namely *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*. It attempts to look at the memoirist's survival against Nazi policy during the Second World War. Her survival in various ghettos and concentration camps has been analysed as a motif of resistance in the face of cruelty and suffering. Further, it endeavours to find out how the memoir portrays the survival of the memoirist and how she challenges and undermines the power of the oppressor in a conspicuous manner. Rather than being submissive to the tyrannical policies, orders and situations, the memoir emerges as a mark of resistance to oppressive Nazi ideology. Thus, it offers corrective discourse and positive vision for life.

Keywords: Holocaust; Livia Bitton-Jackson; Memoir; Nazi; Resistance.

Introduction

I

When we discuss resistance against the Holocaust vis-a-vis literature, it is worth mentioning that, this memoir does not talk about the collective resistance. As far as collective resistance is concerned, history has witnessed Jewish people's resistance through the setting up of Jewish underground organizations in seven major ghettos like Bialystok, Cracow, Czestochowa, Kovno, Minsk, Vilna and Warsaw along with forty-five minor ghettos. Similarly, armed uprisings took place in five concentration camps and eighteen forced-labor camps (Tec1). However, this paper will not deal with collective resistance; its focus would rather be on individual resistance through survival/staying alive. To comprehend the narrator's experi-

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ence in the concentration camp, it will be pertinent to discuss the Holocaust, the oppressor and reasons for the genocide of the Jews to develop an understanding of the survival motif.

The Holocaust, Survival and Resistance

The word 'holocaust' is believed to be coined by Elie Wiesel (a Holocaust survivor, Nobel laureate and a writer) during 1960s. It has its origin in the Hebrew Bible too. Both Wiesel and the Hebrew Bible relate the meaning of the word to the genocide of Jewish people during the Second World War (Hellig 15). The *Encyclopedia of Holocaust Literature* views the Holocaust memoir as "not the memory of a life" but "the memory of one's death" (xiv). The theorists who have extensively contributed to Holocaust studies are Zygmunt Bauman, Raul Hilberg, Saul Friedlander, Lawrence Langer, Deborah Lipstadt etc. Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* was published in 1989 and speaks about how the Holocaust can be viewed as a product of modernity. Hilberg draws our attention because of his studies on the bureaucratic process vis-a-vis genocide through his book *The Destruction of the European Jews* published in 1961. Friedlander is a Holocaust survivor and the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *The Years for Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945*. Langer was a teacher/scholar of Holocaust literature and known for his *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. Lipstadt views differently to the events related to the Holocaust through her *Denying Holocaust: the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* saying the extermination of six million Jews is exaggerated.

Survival is the most fundamental human need. When we think about survival vis-a-vis the Holocaust, it goes beyond the physical level. It does not only encompass the physical act of surviving in ghettos or extermination camps. Rather its broader concept includes the preservation of Jewish identity amid the War and anti-Semitism. Viktor Frankl, the famous Austrian psychiatrist and a Holocaust survivor views survival as not a "struggle" during the Holocaust, "but an acquiescence, a miracle of will that mitigates the ruthlessness of the marauder, extermination, by invoking human agency (attitude) as a defense against its assault on the physical self" (Langer 24). Frankl's perspective points towards the role and power of will to survive in adverse times like the Holocaust for the Jews. Leah Bassel and Akwugo Emejulu in "The Politics of Survival" quote Audre Lorde's much-cited sentence i.e. "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (81). Lorde's words can be analysed from the viewpoint of self care and how it is used as resistance for survival during the Holocaust.

Escape or evasion can qualify as resistance where open resistance is too risky.

We do find this motif in various slave and Holocaust narratives that undermine a dominant relationship. It is similar to James Scott's idea of everyday resistance. Unlike open resistance it is hidden in nature and an asset for the powerless people. Various theorists and writers have immensely contributed to the survival theory vis-a-vis resistance. Scott is well known for his *Weapons of the Weak* where he delineates the hidden and disguised form of resistance. Franz Fanon talks about the survival motif in his famous work *The Wretched of the Earth* in the context of colonialism.

The term 'resistance' has *resistere* as its Latin root signifying to "stand against." The *Webster's New World College Dictionary* offers four definitions of resistance: (a) "The act of resisting, opposing, withstanding etc.," (b) "Power or capacity to resist," (c) "Opposition of some force... to another or others," and (d) "A force that retards, hinders or opposes motion...." (qtd. in Knowles and Linn 4). Everything that undermines or attempts to undermine a dominant relationship can be termed as resistance. Resistance is a subaltern's response to power; a practice that challenges and which might undermine power (Vinthagen 7). Resistance is not only a response to power but power might as well be considered as a response to resistance. James C. Scott in *The Weapon of the Weak* categorizes resistance into two forms i.e., public and disguised. Disguised resistance is also known as "everyday resistance." Public resistance is open and organized whereas its disguised form is hidden. Generally, we find disguised resistance operational when public resistance is not possible. Nevertheless, it undermines power. An important feature of autobiographical resistance narratives is the "challenge they pose to hegemonic history." While narrating life, writers generally "seek to document the experience, to correct misinformation, to educate their readers and to encourage the continuation of struggle" (Perkins 70).

A Glimpse of Hatred Against Jews

Adama Dieng, the United Nations special advisor on genocide prevention speaks about the origin of the Holocaust thus: "Genocide is a process. The Holocaust did not start with the gas chamber. It started with the hate speech." The traditional religion of the Jewish people is Judaism. When Nazis came to power under Adolf Hitler in Germany, it resulted in genocide of the Jews. He declared Germans or Aryans as superior race and Jews as inferior. Even before Hitler's regime, history witnessed the atrocious treatment meted out to Jews. They were persecuted, humiliated and massacred; however, there had been no attempt to destroy them completely unlike during Hitler's regime (16-17). Raul Hilberg in his seminal work *The Destruction of the European Jews* explores the "mechanism of destruction" and finds the "administrative process" done by bureaucrats to the cause of the Holocaust (xi) and thus argues that the modern bureaucracy system as one of

the responsible *factor* for the killing of millions of Jews.

Sheryal Silver Ochayan from the Yad Vashem (Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust) remarks how the Jewish people have been blamed and accused since the beginning of human history due to anti-Semitism. She further says that Jewish people were blamed for their association with the devil. In the middle ages, they were held responsible for the Black Death. They were also accused of using the blood of non-Jewish people in their religious practices. Moreover, the commission of treason to Germany in World War I and the betrayal of Jesus Christ were linked with anti-Semitism (Vashem "Antisemitism"). It thus becomes clear that anti-Semitism reached its extreme point during Hitler's regime. Steven Beller has defined anti-Semitism as hatred of Jews which can be found across continents, and has a history of a thousand years. Moreover, he views this as a political movement which is a modern phenomenon. It may also be viewed as the culmination of the phenomenon that came to light during the Holocaust. Anti-semitism originated from the conflict between Christianity and Jewish roots (Beller 1). Therefore, it can be viewed as a form of racism. In the light of the above discussion, this paper is an attempt to understand the problems and challenges that the memoirist faced vis-à-vis her survival during the Nazi regime.

II

Livia Bitton-Jackson (b.1931) born Elli L. Friedman, is a Holocaust survivor and author. She was born in Czechoslovakia. She was just thirteen when she was deported to Auschwitz, the concentration and extermination camp along with her family during the Nazi regime. She was liberated in 1945. She along with her brother and mother survived the Holocaust but her father and aunt perished. She came to the US in 1951 in a refugee boat and pursued her studies. She got a PhD from New York University in Hebrew culture and Jewish history. She served as a Professor of History in the City University of New York. Her memoir, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust* published in 1997 won the Christopher Award in 1998. Her next book *My Bridges of Hope: Searching for Life and Love after Auschwitz* is the sequel to *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*. Her second sequel is *Hello, America* was published in 2005.

The memoir, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust*, opens with a short description of the author's dream and her beautiful childhood memories. It bespeaks of the excited life of Bitton-Jackson wherein she loves to dream of enrolling herself in a school in Budapest. Furthermore, her love of swimming in the blue water of the Danube in her childhood and becoming a poet in the future speak about her normal life. However, as we move ahead in the text, the narrator tells us about Germany's invasion of Budapest and Hitler's shrill ra-

dio broadcast in which he promises devilishly: "We will play football with Jewish heads" (qtd. in Bitton-Jackson 16). Thus, her dreams get shattered and a helpless situation hits her life when the military and police unit of the Nazi party namely the Schutzstaffel (SS) arrives in the town. She shares her apprehension thus: "We are in the hands of the SS. The process of our 'liquidation' has begun" (Bitton-Jackson 25). After the arrival of the SS, Jewish people were ordered to deposit their valuable stuff including jewellery with them. Her father had gifted her a bicycle on her birthday. When the order came to deposit the bicycle, she expressed her sharp disapproval of giving the bike to the SS. Her resistance is reflected in the memoir as she writes: "I was not going to do it! Let them kill me, I was not going to let them take my new bike!" (26).

Despite being only thirteen years old, Bitton-Jackson's disinclination to accept the order speaks about her strong opposition to power. She questions the moral rights of the power holders by saying: "What right do they have to take it from me?" (26). Before she is taken to ghettos and concentration camps like Plaszow and Auschwitz, the narrator narrates a unique moment of resistance in the chapter titled "The Tale of Yellow Star." Jewish people were ordered to wear a yellow star of a particular size on the left side of their chest. It was a Nazi ploy to mark Jews and segregate them from non-Jews for future course of action. Any Jew who violated the order was supposed to be arrested. This was a peculiar way to dehumanize and humiliate Jewish people. The author recollects some stories wherein Jews were humiliated during the Middle Ages by forcing them to wear yellow stars. Bitton-Jackson initially refuses to wear a yellow star and engages in a verbal argument with her brother: "I refuse to leave the house. I was not going to appear with the Jew badge. I couldn't be seen wearing that horrible, horrible thing" (30). Thus her resistance to wearing the yellow star is evident here. This incident is followed by their forceful removal from their home to ghettos. The memoir portrays her indomitable courage to stay alive and it emerges as a leitmotif in the text.

How can just staying alive be equated to resistance to certain dominant and repressive orders? Is there any distinction between the two? Roger S. Gottlieb has a pertinent answer. According to him, survival itself is an act of resistance particularly in the context of the Holocaust. Since the goal of the Nazis was to seek the death of every single Jew, staying alive would simply thwart such an attempt. Gottlieb explains that in case the oppressor tries various means like "hypnosis," "physical torture," and various "psychological assaults" to persuade a person to commit suicide, one can foil the former's attempt by simply surviving in such an oppressive situation (39). Thus, if s/he survives and thereby resists the oppressor, it qualifies to be viewed as resistance. In the memoir, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust*, the memoirist narrates several incidents that thwart and challenge Nazi ideology.

The memoir also offers a glimpse of the ghetto life of Jewish people when they are taken from their homes. Before taking to the concentration camp, they were placed in ghettos. Bitton-Jackson describes how all of the Jews were forcefully removed from their homes and taken to a ghetto named Nagymagyar. They had to leave everything including the keys of their houses except some furniture and personal possessions (Bitton-Jackson 37). Nevertheless, despite being placed in a crowded area, the Jews maintained a normal lifestyle. They had to adopt ghetto life under the watchful eyes of Hungarian soldiers and military police after their removal from their homes. Bitton-Jackson writes:

Our life is taking on a bearable course. The early confusion changed into a harmonious hustle and bustle. Together we prepare meals, eat at long tables, retire for the night, and rise for prayers. The mood is shifting to optimistic, even confident. There is a hopeful tone to the rhythm of life. (Bitton-Jackson 43)

This shows how Jewish people were unaware of their extermination in the concentration camp. They initially thought that they would all return to their respective homes. However, they started to build a normal lifestyle in ghettos which points towards their ability to adapt to a different locale. But as time passed, the food in the ghetto was not sufficient and soon the Jews ran out of food. Bitton-Jackson writes “[d]ays pass and we use up the last scrapings. Our flour sack is empty” (49). She remembers an incident which comes like an angel in mercy to rescue them. Accidentally she meets her schoolmate Marta Kalman and her mother. She receives flour, eggs, and a goose from them under the watchful “hurried” and “frightened” glance of guards (51). The author calls it a miracle since life without food in the ghetto is unimaginable. The help from her friend can be viewed as an evidence of humanity among Jewish people. They thus bring successfully alive the spirit of humanism in times of unprecedented cruelty and racial discrimination. Such an instance of mutual help in the ghettos may be viewed as resistance since it ensures survival of the Jews.

The author survives for more than a month in Nagymagyar ghetto and then is deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. It was the largest concentration camp built by the Nazi regime. The author spent most of her time in this camp and succeeded to survive. The memoirist had a narrow escape in the gas chamber due to her facial appearance. She and her mother were separated from her aunt on the day of selection, and her hair was appreciated by the SS officers’ Doctor Mengele as he said “Goldene Haar!” When she revealed her age as thirteen, she was told by the officer that henceforth her age would be sixteen (73), and thus her life was saved from being sent to the gas chamber for some time. In an interview, Bitton-Jackson was asked about her feelings for the officer. She responded by

saying “He didn’t do it for me. He did it because I looked Aryan. Two minutes later I could have been shot” (qtd. in Helmreich 2). The incident exposes the racial inequality where Germans believed themselves to be a pure race and thus superior to the Jews. The memoir also offers other dimensions of her survival in the largest concentration camp at Auschwitz. Though for a short while she and her mother escaped the clutches of death, more trauma and dehumanizing incidents awaited them in the death camp.

The memoirist Livia Bitton-Jackson, then fondly called by everyone as Elli, witnessed the dehumanizing aspect of being a Jew in the Auschwitz concentration camp. All the Jews were ordered to get undressed and forced to shave their hair. Bitton-Jackson calls the shaving of hairs of heads, underarms, and in the pubic region an “unexpected torture” (77). Survival in such scenario was a costly affair. There were other Jews who initially appeared to be “strange creatures” to her in the camp. The narrator views the shaving done to women as a “figure of contempt” when they “longed for dignity and compassion” (80). Bitton-Jackson observes the after-effects of this incident very closely and feels that Jewish female identities have been transformed into bodies, a “monolithic mass,” and rendered “inconsequential” (78). Further, it snatches their Jewish identity and makes them a member of the Auschwitz concentration camp. She writes thus: “We have become members of an exclusive club. Inmates of Auschwitz” (80). Regardless of the effort put by the oppressor on Jewish people to dehumanize them, the author speaks of survival in the death camp, before she could know about the gas chamber. Along with other inmates of the camp, as she marches, she strongly feels the need to survive:

But now, as we march from the showers toward the camps, we know only of survival. We sense its sinister significance. Survival is programmed in every fibre of our muscles, and with those muscles we march, not understanding, not even wishing. We march on, driven by instinct. We march, steadfastly avoiding German whips, growling German shepherds, and poised German guns. (Bitton-Jackson 82)

When we think about survival, food is necessary to preserve life and ensure growth. Fighting against such adverse conditions in Auschwitz was challenging. The narrator delineates her survival despite the hardship of staying alive without food and water. Though the inmates were given food, it was not sufficient enough to stay alive. Both food and water were insufficient enough to kill the Jews. Bitton-Jackson’s life was dreadful in Auschwitz. She finds no water to drink. During such an awful time, she meets her cousins, Suri and Hindi. They take both Bitton-Jackson and her mother to a lake which was filled with filthy and murky water. The memoirist narrates how along with her mother she had to drink the filthy wa-

ter. Similarly, the narrator had to swallow a piece of bread that looked like a cake of mud only to survive. She writes: "I swallow. The first food in Auschwitz. To survive" (89). Apart from her survival in Auschwitz, the memoirist also narrates her experience in the Plaszow labor camp. The inmates of Plaszow were given soup putrefied and filled with worms. She stops her mother to drink the soup, but the way her mother drinks speaks volumes about the significance of survival. Her mother accepts the soup and says, "I can't leave this food. I am very hungry. Do you want me to die of hunger?" (103). Thus, the dire condition of Jews and their struggle to survive become evident. Besides the non-availability of proper, sufficient food and water, the Germans used to shoot Jews on trivial pretexts. Hence, to be alive was the most difficult task for every Jew.

The memoir narrates several incidents wherein Bitton-Jackson recollects how she survives under the nose of cruel Nazis. It discusses many life-saving strategies of the narrator for survival along with some miracles that help her survive. The author uses her knowledge, skills and other activities to survive and thus undermine the power of the oppressor. On the other hand, apart from her endeavour, other Jews also have a similar role in the survival of the author and her fellow inmates. Bitton-Jackson recollects an incident where she had a close shave with death through a mass shooting.

During her stay at Plaszow labor camp, along with other inmates, she was assigned the work of digging the ground. As the work was on, due to a sudden heavy rain they were forced to stop the work for a while and it was noticed by Kapo (head of work detail). After that, during the evening roll call, it was announced that they would be decimated for sabotage on the next day morning. Bitton-Jackson's apprehension of being killed is evident when she writes: "This is a new experience in terror. I am terrified of dying. I am apprehensive of the sensation of the bullet penetrating my body. Of my blood flowing" (110). However, she was saved miraculously as the SS officer discovered a sudden and unexpected uprising on that day and the attention was diverted. As a result, she survived in the Plaszow labour camp and was taken to the Auschwitz camp. In the course of survival, the author had to take care of her mother as well.

Therefore safeguarding the life of her mother is another motif that runs through the memoir. Enduring the horrific situation, it was extremely challenging for Bitton-Jackson to take care of her mother's ill health. During her stay in the camp, a young inmate who was a doctor examined her mother who was found to be unconscious and paralysed completely. Moreover, the head of the barracks ordered to remove her from cell block to the infirmary where Germans used to keep sick and invalid people (127-29). Her mother was taken to the infirmary eventually, but owing to her critical condition, she was supposed to be sent to a

gas chamber. The author was not allowed to visit her mother. But she violated the order and got punished by the SS commandant. She was ordered to kneel down for 24 hours without food and water (130). But the author did not care about the punishment and kept on trying to save her mother's life by bringing her to cell block from infirmary. Bitton-Jackson succeeds to bring her mother back, which reiterates the survival motif as resistance. With the help of other three inmates of Auschwitz camp, she risked her life and brought in her mother undetected by any of the SS guards. Under such horrific circumstances where it was forbidden even to go to the toilet without being escorted by an SS guard, such a herculean effort is laudable.

Roger S. Gottlieb analyses the situation and writes about "mussel men," who are like "living corpses." Since they are not fit enough to move, eat or work, they find themselves in a situation where day-to-day survival becomes impossible. Such survival also includes group interactions and contact with others. Even though performance cannot guarantee their survival, failure to perform invites death (38). To Gottlieb, resistance means "resistance against the forces leading one to become mussel man" (39). Bitton-Jackson's act of saving her mother and bringing her back to the cell block thus exemplifies resistance as well as endurance. Moreover, this act of Bitton-Jackson along with other inmates can be viewed as the maintenance of social relations among Jews against oppression and the creation of "micro-society" (Courpasson and Marti 2). David Courpasson and Ignasi Marti observe this kind of act in other ghettos like Warsaw and write that, "What marks the ethicality of resistance is the collective creation and maintenance of social relations that permit the powerless to make lifestyle choices despite a radical reduction in freedom" (2).

In addition to factors like lack of proper food and water, fear of gas chambers, and of bullets, another important aspect that cannot be ignored is diseases attacking Jews during their stay in camps and ghettos. The memoir describes the diarrhoea epidemic in the Plaszow labour camp thereby throwing light on diseases like typhus. Bitton-Jackson witnessed this in the camps of the Dachau complex and Muhlendorf. She saw many people who survived this in a skeletal state (Bitton-Jackson 173). During her stay at Muhlendorf, she came to know about her brother, Bubi who was in the same camp. Both Bitton-Jackson and her mother discovered Bubi who had turned terribly weak due to lack of food. They used to throw food at Bubi for his survival. Roman Kent, another Holocaust survivor, also talks about survival as resistance. According to him, resistance does not require guns and bullets as he considers this as the easiest form of resistance. To Kent, when a mother gives a piece of bread to her child for survival is counted as resistance (Yad Vashem "Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust"). This is reflected in the memoir *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*. Bubi, the author's brother is given bread by his mother,

which has been described thus:

She [Bitton-Jackson's mother] swings her arm, and the soggy piece of bread flies above the barbed wire and lands in a puddle at Bubi's feet. With the deliberate, jerky motions of a robot, Bubi bends over to pick it up, but stumbles, and with an ear-shattering clatter rolls into the mud. Mommy gasps. I grasp her shoulder to give her support but cannot control my violent trembling. (Bitton-Jackson 176)

This episode speaks volumes about how Jews survived and maintained their humanity. Apart from the extremely horrific circumstances prevalent in ghettos, labour camps and concentration camps, the first memoir of Bitton-Jackson is a remarkable portrayal of her survival in transit. Jews were being ferried from one place to another in trains and their survival therein has shades of resistance. The transportation from one place to the other was meant to send Jewish prisoners to concentration camps. The trains served as a means to transport Jews from their homes to death camps. Surviving under such circumstances was impossible as the memoirist writes about life inside a box car of a train. Jews had to crouch and stand for a long time inside the boxcar. This is evident when she writes that "[w]e must have been standing for a long, long time" in an "airless and dark" boxcar. Further, it was difficult to survive without water and food therein. The narrator reveals this by saying that they have been locked for the fourth day without food (185).

Bitton-Jackson recollects a moment in this transit period when she and her mother have a union with her brother, Bubi. The train stops somewhere and some inmates celebrate the stopping of the train as liberation by coming out. But since it was not meant for liberation, some of the people were shot down and ordered to stay inside the train. During this moment her Brother was found in an injured condition. He was immediately taken by his mother to a women's bogie with his face covered. Hence, the union of the mother with the son is one of the moments where the survival motif continues to remain prominent. According to the Holocaust scholar, M. Dworzecki, resistance can be found among Jews when they cling to their "humanity," "solidarity," "mutual help" and "self sacrifice" (qtd. in Gottlieb 32). It becomes clear when her mother says: "Here. You are a woman now. No one will notice the difference. I want you to come into our boxcar. I will take care of you" (Bitton-Jackson 189).

The memoir tells us about yet another successful survival bid by Bitton-Jackson during the transit. She remembers an incident of a Nazi trap to kill Jews. They were lined up to receive warm soup but were taken aback by a sudden gun firing at them. It resulted in her brother, Bubi's bleeding head. It was a trap to kill them

easily while distributing soup (193). The gun firing took the lives of eight people and several others were injured on the spot. The author remembers her experience during the firing, and narrates it to reinforce the leitmotif of survival thus:

I cover my head with my tin dish. Whatever happens I must survive. Arms, legs don't matter. I must protect my head to survive. . . . I know this is the end. Yet somehow, somehow I must survive. Even though around me everyone is dying, I want to stay alive. Panic paralyzes me into one obsessive thought: to live. To live! (Bitton-Jackson 193)

Eventually, the firing stops, and the author, along with her brother and mother survives the death trap. The train moves ahead, and the moment of liberation comes when she gets to know about the surrender of the Germans before the Americans. They all come back to their homes and Bubi tells about the death of his father in the concentration camp. This news is heartbreaking for her family. Gradually she tries to restore normal life. Thereafter the war was over but anti-Semitism continued to exist. The author takes up the issue of her survival in the sequel to her first memoir, entitled *My Bridges of Hope: Searching for Life and Love after Auschwitz*. It takes up her post-war life and portrays the courageous life that was still threatened by anti-Semitism. The second sequel, *Hello, America* portrays her family's escape to America along with the life they lived there. The book delineates her love and struggling period as a refugee in a foreign land and how she is haunted by the war and post-war trauma. It ends when her long-awaited goal to be a teacher is accomplished against all odds and despite an anti-Semitic environment.

Conclusion

The memoirist has vibrantly portrayed her ordeal by escaping from the concentration camp. Her survival in the camp can be considered as an attempt to undermine Nazi power. Through her powerful narration, Bitton-Jackson is able to demonstrate her resistance right from the beginning till her liberation from the horrible death camps. The reading of a Holocaust memoir like *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* makes it evident about the sinister motive to annihilate a race that seems inferior to Hitler. Besides dealing with the role of identity and memory in bringing narration to the level of resistance, the author condemns and questions state-sponsored policies through her life narrative.

Bitton-Jackson justifies the importance of resistance in the memoir by writing about the past. The narrative thus can be termed as writing as resistance. This has

been done to prevent atrocities in times to come. Thus, to write about the past is to resist certain state policies and thereby protect the future by highlighting their horrible consequences. Bitton-Jackson's concern for the future is visible as she writes thus: "Reading my personal account I believe you will feel— you will know— that the Holocaust was neither a legend nor Hollywood fiction but a lesson for the future. A lesson to help future generations prevent the causes of the twentieth-century catastrophe from being transmitted into the twenty-first" (11). Bitton-Jackson dedicates her *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* to the children in Israel. She says that the children in Israel travel on the road of regions like Judea, Samaria and Gaza to reach schools by risking their lives. She goes beyond her own socio-cultural setup and acknowledges their sufferings and fights that have a universal meaning. Since she has suffered World War II followed by irreparable losses in her personal life, Bitton-Jackson can empathise with the plight of innocent children who are victims of war.

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