

Appendix Three: The Viva (The conversation continues...)

Introduction

I submitted my Thesis in October 2009. It was examined by:

- Internal Examiner (For the University of Bath): Dr. Chris Seeley
- External Examiner (From the University of Exeter): Professor Andrew Sparkes

Being an 'unusual' thesis, possibly transgressive in both form and content, I had a long time to fantasise (and worry) about what the examiners might make of it. Finding a date for the Viva that everyone could make pushed us back to 1st February 2010. This gave me plenty of time for doubt, forgetfulness, anxiety, hope, further reading, reflection and inquiry. By happenstance (or was it just in the inimitable timeliness that has persistently punctuated this project?) I was invited to do some consultancy work in Jerusalem in January 2010, and this teed me up nicely for the approaching Viva. Going to Israel brought some of the questions of my purpose in this work into sharp relief. The significance of this will become more apparent below.

Of course, the choice of examiners hadn't been random. In the spirit of 'coming clean' I would admit to (and indeed encourage in others) an artfulness about that choice. As with all such processes, let alone 'post-modern' ones, where validity becomes a key contention (I wonder perhaps whether this should be in the nature of *all* such examinations?), together with my supervisor Dr. Gill Coleman and Professor Peter Reason, we considered this choice carefully and made what I come now to realise was a very wise, quality choice.

There is further the issue of who decides who is a competent and legitimate member of the interpretative community. The selection of members of the community to make decisions about issues of truth and value is considered crucial for the results in many cases, such as the selection of members of a jury, or a committee, to examine a Ph.D. candidate or an academic appointment committee. (Kvale 1995) p32

It has been common practice at the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) at the University of Bath for PhD examiners to discuss and agree lines of inquiry before the Viva. In keeping with a Centre that held open a space of participatory and consensus-based approaches to truth and validity, it is traditional for these lines of inquiry to be sent to the candidate before the Viva. Thus the notion of a 'Viva-as-defence' is deliberately morphed into a more generative (but nonetheless rigorous) process of 'support and challenge'. In short, the examination of the thesis can then be a generative continuation of the conversation, another cycle of inquiry. For me, it led to an incredibly rich and useful conversation, for which I am very grateful.

I thought (and was advised) that it would be useful to show some of this conversation, in the thesis itself. So I offer you both Andrew and Chris's comments and questions, and my response, in full, as evidence of, and a tribute to, the participatory tradition of excellence in knowledge development and legitimation that is the hallmark of CARPP.

I hope you find it useful, stimulating and a further spur to your own inquiries.

* * *

From Dr. Chris Seeley and Professor Andrew Sparkes

27 January 2010

Dear James

Here are our comments and responses for you in preparation for Monday's viva, which we are very much looking forward to. Your thesis is strong and creative, and we are in clear agreement about the key issues we want to discuss and learn more about on the day:

- **Issues of embodiment**
- **Issues of validity / judgement criteria**
- **Issues of connecting up masculinities and the ecological situation we find ourselves in now and how this links to your purpose and intention.**

For each of these three issues we anticipate that we will ask you to add in some short paragraphs to comment on and deepen your articulation of these issues in the work. These will be small minor modifications and we do not anticipate that we will ask you for any more additional writing than this to complete your PhD successfully. You will see in our detailed responses to you later in this document some more detail about our questions of you on these issues.

We are also interested in exploring – in discussion with you – some more depth around passive Jewish masculinity, and, of course, where this work will take you in the future.

We strongly recommend that you bring an audio recorder to the viva as we suspect that you might want to transcribe some of the conversation and use it directly for the additional paragraphs we will be asking you to write.

We hope this sounds do-able, encouraging, clear and interesting for you. We think the additions will add something for the field, you and your readers.

Now, on to our more detailed comments for you.

Andrew first – who is also sending for you the two attached papers to help with the next stages.

On Mentshlichkeit – An inquiry into the practice of being a good man Responses for James Traeger from Andrew Sparkes

A fascinating, thought provoking, and original thesis that explores the multi-layered complexities of gender identities over time and in different contexts. The author utilises various representational forms to achieve his stated goals, one of which is to illuminate and problematise not just what he thinks (as Jewish father, son, husband, PhD student, worker at Roffey Park, and so on), but also how he thinks about key issues in his life in relation to the subject positions he inhabits. This tactic is risky in that it rejects the traditional linear pathways that lead to authors telling the reader what he/she should know in favour of operating as an artful-writer-persuader who trusts the reader to engage with the text from their own positions and invites them to think with the stories

offered rather than just about them. This may be disturbing for some readers but is clearly welcome by others – including myself. For me, the tactic of using the ‘interludes’ throughout the thesis to playfully disorientate and re-orientate the reader worked very well, especially with regard to signalling the fragmentary and performative nature of the illusionary selves we think have at our disposal within a culturally imposed repertoire. Likewise, I found the manner in which the ‘chapters’ worked with various concepts and theories from a variety of disciplines to be insightful and challenging.

Of course, a thesis of this kind stimulates numerous questions. I would like to offer two as a starting point for our discussions at the viva.

1. Throughout the text, the author hints at the problem of **judgment criteria** for this kind of inquiry. For example, on page 11 he offers some thought on how the reader might engage with the text to ‘measure its quality’. Likewise, on page 202, the author reflects on certain features that might act as a ‘demonstration of this validity.’ In this regard, does the author feel comfortable with the criteria he has suggested be used to judge the thesis? Have they been achieved? How have they, subconsciously at least, shaped the telling/showing in the work itself? What other criteria might there be that could be sued for this thesis and those of a similar kind that will follow in the future.

2. While the author is applauded for seeking to be an **embodied presence** in the text – does he think he achieves this? If so, in what ways are his notions of embodiment played out in the stories told and the theories and concepts he chose to work with?

In Chapter 3 the author notes the irony of him yearning for an embodied inquiry while exhibiting the (Jewish and male) characteristic of disappearing. After this, he speaks of his desire to become more embodied in his writing. As he says, “I have bombarded you with words. These are words I am enthusiastic about. I love these ideas”. Does this love of ideas, however, lead to the promotion of a cognitive stance over other more sensual possibilities? For example, might the text be accused of being dominated by the cerebral and the visual rather than by ‘lower’ senses, such as, taste, smell, and touch? How might the text have been produced to engage the full range of the senses as a way of evoking the feelings of the flesh that are evident in so many of the stories provided and the reactions to them?

And now Chris’ responses:

Responses for James Traeger from Chris Seeley

1) Issues of form: first, I want to write in appreciation of the forms you chose, allowed and developed for this work. I am particularly taken by the ways in which you have created forms which mediate between this potentially “hot” topic and yourself, your co-inquirers and your readers. I would welcome more meta-commentary on the nature of this mediation, and am reminded of Rumi’s “Story Water” (“*very few can sit down in the middle of the fire itself*”):

*A story is like water
that you heat for your bath.*

*It takes messages between the fire
and your skin. It lets them meet,
and it cleans you!*

*Very few can sit down
in the middle of the fire itself
like a salamander or Abraham.
We need intermediaries.*

*A feeling of fullness comes,
but usually it takes some bread
to bring it.*

*Beauty surrounds us,
but usually we need to be walking
in a garden to know it.*

*The body itself is a screen
to shield and partially reveal
the light that's blazing inside your presence.*

*Water, stories, the body,
all the things we do, are mediums
that hide and show what's hidden.
Study them,
and enjoy this being washed with a secret we sometimes know,
and then not.*

As I read, I had the sensation of this “*secret we sometimes know, and then not*”. You mentioned a particular quality of gaze Jim cultivated through drawing people – a gaze that was beyond gender. And, on various occasions, you mention a sense of fleeting knowing... it made me think of *fleeting+gaze=glimpse*... glimpsing the possible like seeing something out of the corner of your eye. I appreciate this.

More on form – The ways in which you have mingled your *imaginal reality* with your *experienced reality* are sophisticated and engaging (for example, I was especially thrilled by the meeting of Jim and James). I would like you to meta-comment on this more clearly from within an action research and **validity** frame as I think you have an important contribution to make here. You do it already – especially when you write about plotting vs spontaneity. You bring some new insight into the extended epistemology which I would like you to claim more explicitly as being valid.

As a reader, I learned from both of these realities equally. I did, however, find myself yearning for being shown more frequent insights into your own micro-experience and practice. I have to read a lot before I get them. On several occasions, for example, you bring readers to the brink of diving into your **embodied experience**, only to back off again. When I did get your actual lived experience - the Obama piece (why relegated to an appendix?), your early mention of your heart, you doing a jig, your visceral excitement at some of the theory, the phenomenology of holding your tongue when Esther presented – I felt both myself and you more present in the work. I want to

encourage you to be even bolder in dissolving those abstract boundaries between public and private space (“decompartmentalisation”).

More again on form – I found the future “Trem-world” intellectually interesting but rather clinical and less engaging. Everything was all very much under control in that world, quite Trekky and to my eyes, masculine again. Clean... white... er, cleansed... (for an example of future writing with a juicier, muddier feel, see Ursula LeGuin’s “*Always Coming Home*”).

And one last thing on form: late on, you outline your six practices. I think this sense-making is currently underplayed and could benefit from being more clearly framed, signposted and used – maybe earlier on as framing for some of the other pieces. How might you point towards this hard-won knowing more boldly in order to help guide and inspire others?

2) On purpose and intention: I feel that there is another level you can get to and state more explicitly in terms of your intentions. This doesn’t need to be a big thing, but I feel you are touching on it rather obliquely at present.

This work of learning to question and dismantle “his masters house” from the inside out, as it were, strikes me as being incredibly important for our times. How the global “haves”... those with unearned privilege (with white Western males at the top of the tree)... step back or aside from that unearned privilege whilst retaining and expanding meaning in life? That you are bringing this hidden transcript into the light is a worthwhile political act. So, can you be more politically explicit in why you seek to question the nature of masculinity at all? Can you say why unbridled un-self-reflective masculinity is important in terms of causing eco-shock / social insecurity, in the same ways as you imply that broadening and freeing up the “emotional range” (I was thrilled by that Grayson Perry quotation about enabling a wider emotional range through cross-dressing), and the behavioural flexibility for men (and anyone, for that matter... which leads me to want to talk through what Steve said about this work being about human evolution per se...) is such as liberatory gesture? I applaud wholeheartedly this aspect of your work and read it with joy and my own sense of liberation and possibility to transgress gender and other norms... And transgressing the patripsych (which I found a very useful way to distinguish masculinity from maleness / being a man... sometimes in your work I felt these distinctions blurring around – the idea of the patripsych gave me a kind of notion to push against)... And fear of being “punished” for transgressing the patripsych (Grayson Perry, I think, is referring to this when he talks about “tramp fear”).

3) On Manhood, Jewishness and Fatherhood as a trio: This is a rich nexus. I wonder if you have worked the Jewishness and fatherhood elements of your inquiry in as comprehensive and integrated way as you might. In the development of *mentshlichkeit*, I am interested in you being more explicit about the relationships between the social conditioning, (earned/unearned) privileges and power issues in the nexus of these three.

How do these differences, when they are making a difference, play off against one another? For example, being a white Western male may offer you some unearned

privilege, and how might this play off against the sometimes underprivileged position of Jewishness?

What is the difference that is making the difference in any given situation – how do you know and how do you find yourself acting in response? What does your Jewish heritage tell you about acting for change, acting for a good life from a position of being (in Robert Chambers’ terms) a global lower?

How is the Jewish patriarchy related to the patripsych? How do you find that transcendent third position (of radical openness and possibility) which is not (just) in response to feminism but transcends all the –isms? Where does this leave you as a father in terms of being true to the historical legacies which you inherit, whilst questioning and reshaping the possible futures for both of your children?

4) Power: as you suggest a various points, gender issues are inextricably linked with power – gender is often a “difference that makes a difference” – and a basic, material difference at that. I was surprised that the thesis touched on these issues but did not engage in any sustained depth into the relationship between the patripsych, gender and power (over the “Other”). I found that your exploration of the dynamics of power as they are (micro-practiced) are as yet underdeveloped. As a reader, I found myself wanting to be shown more about how the elements of power available to you – whether earned or unearned privilege – played out, intentionally and otherwise. It seems to me to be central to this work that you are trying to question and dismantle inappropriate use of power-over which may (un)consciously be used by or available to men / or through masculine behaviours (notice again there we have this potential blurring between men / the masculine). *This issue of power is something I would like to touch on in discussion but am not asking you to dive into for another piece of writing.*

5) Responses to your own questions:

Has it moved me? I was moved in parts – most of all, with compassion through the two old men on their separate trains: first, your grandfather and second, the black guy in Washington.

I was moved with good irritation when the double binds get mentioned and as Helena’s predicament gets described.

And I was particularly moved and enthralled by the meeting between James and Jim. The meeting of these worlds (reminded me of “*The Time Traveller’s Wife*”).

Where has it met with my own experience? How has it helped me by informing me about my own action? What paradoxes and dilemmas has it supported me to act in the face of? All of these questions evoke the same responses from me: The desire to transgress the patripsych and the tacit fears associated with “not being normal”. With the practices of surfacing hidden transcripts. The facilitator’s practices of biting my tongue.

How has it made me “usefully uncomfortable”? It has reminded me about just how far we have to go. That men seem differently trapped in the web of our own making than women. And that our liberatory gesture / yearning overlaps towards a transcendent third space. But for me, that that third space is juicy and messy not clean and sorted.

That I am constantly colluding with all of this and that the collusion is driven by deep set fears...

Addressing the Questions Posed by Andrew and Chris (The scared yid tries - again - to break out)

Addressing:

- Issues of embodiment
- Issues of validity / judgement criteria
- Issues of connecting up masculinities and the ecological situation we find ourselves in now and how this links to your purpose and intention.

I begin with:

In the bright, cold morning: look at the sky, through the pear tree branches, slurp the bitter-tasting, smothering-my-mouth coffee ('I want more!' it shouts), the slippy, blue, blue, blue Chelsea mug, wait...withhold, suspend, suspend, wait one moment longer...then act, write, get more coffee, that moment of extra suspension allows a sense of wonder to flood in. The Chiasm is opened. Connections flow.

Here's a phrase about validity/judgement criteria I like:

What is the validity of the validity question? What is it about this: "legitimation mania"? (Kvale 1995)

What does the Academy seek in its urgent quest for validity? Is it about the validity of knowledge or is it about its own validity? Two points come to mind:

- Does a business school, like Roffey Park, (beyond a limited offering of formal qualifications), seek to affirm its own existence as its main criterion of validity? Its focus is internal, and validity is judged in terms of whether it supports its own (financial) survival – 'do people want to buy another management programme from us?' I notice this strong subtext to the final chapter; in particular the 'Steel' story. What legitimation is this? Perhaps the key legitimation in this work has been about bringing me home to Roffey Park, becoming more fully connected here? If so, (how much longer) do I want to stay? I seek a criterion of honesty here, of 'coming clean', *in the half-light where intention, action and reflection meld and play like the flickering shadows of flames on a cave wall. (p163).*
- What do Universities fear when they question the validity of post-modern/subjectivity-based approaches as legitimate knowledge? Chaos? Or just the messiness Chris invokes? A loss of purpose? Do they fear the realisation that their sacrosanct role, the legitimation of knowledge, may have been wrested from their grip, long ago, by institutions such as global business, the mass media or the internet? (And is the Church laughing on the other side of its face at this, saying, "Now you know how it feels!?")

As I write this, I feel a sense of fatigue. Maybe a good story stands just because it is a good story? Yet, as a practice of quality relevant to *mentshlichkeit*, I seek to hold tensions...so what is my way back into engagement with this? How do I put aside my fatigue?

*My own position is that conversations about criteria are important to the interpretivist community, if for no better reason than to engage and elaborate a complex and interesting dialogue and to create a space for a shared discourse wherein we might discover a new community of interpreters. (Lincoln 1995)
p276*

I am prompted to engage, and would want to respect and honour this yearned for clarity; these lines in the sand that people are earnestly struggling to draw, whether

locally or universally (as I write that, the image of Tony Blair at the Chilcott Inquiry and a line in the Iraqi desert comes to me...what does a validity discussion have to say about *that?*). I looked back over my thesis and read the papers that Andrew sent to me. I recognise their open-handed gesture. I felt slightly ashamed of my petulance...I do have further energy for a complex and interesting dialogue...

The Story looks more closely at its own possible Judgment Criteria...

Jim and Sarah sat together in her office, looking at the thesis. Out of the corner of her eye, she looked at his face. It seemed more lined than before. She wanted to reach out and touch it. Would it feel as papery as it looked, or slightly rough where the stubble came through? Like her father's face had done, when she had stroked it as he lay in the hospital.

- I like it, she said

- So do I... he said, and added: of course! [and they both laughed a little]

- But you know what is troubling me slightly

- I guess it's the same for me

- Has he been explicit enough in his validity, his judgement criteria?

- Indeed. So what more could he have said?

Jim sat back and she watched him smooth down his long grey hair that had been ruffled by leaning forward. As he did it she could smell a kind of oil he must have rubbed in. Again she had an urge to touch him. She noticed this, noticed the taboo, and let it go. I'll write about it later in my journal [she thought].

He spoke.

- I wish he'd said more about making connections as a judgment criterion

- Connections?

- Yes, as a piece of writing it is so full of connections. He bridges so many gaps. Holds so many tensions. Between genders, between the 'fictional' world and the world of 'action', between the plotless world and story, trying so between himself and the reader, and then himself and these characters that take on their own life, between him and his own children. The main emphasis of *mentshlichkeit* seems to be about holding the tensions, making connections between them, wrestling with them. And that seems to fit with this practice of challenging the myth of the 'whole male self' and also of reflecting with the world. It fits with *mentshlichkeit* and the Jewish masculinity, that is not 'self-made'. Can you have a judgment criterion that is around the quality of connectedness? At the end he also asks validity questions of the reader, trying to make connections with them too. The body/self as a site of connection.

- Yes and it fits the evolutionary perspective he touches upon. A kind of bridging, connecting quality, the Chiasm, that makes connections and this helps life proliferate. The capacity for 'not knowing', so that new connections can be made. This is a good definition of generativity, giving life, 'real' and 'storied', all these options for growth and proliferation.

- But it's as if sometimes, he doesn't quite make it. He seems to sink back into himself. Hence the lack of sensual embodiment, which he himself laments. It's as if there is a quality of 'breaking-out' in it. Maybe that in itself is a quality criterion – the voice breaking out of the box of conventions? And it can only go so far. He only goes so far. It's like he uses his bi-cultural (Jewish) history as a kind of rocket motor to power him through this gravitational pull of convention, but he doesn't quite make it. He ends up in orbit of it, at best. So there is a partial breaking out. Maybe that's what he sought? After all he wanted, needed, to stay tied to certain communities, conventional communities, like his family, like Roffey Park. Unlike me, he has stayed at home. At least so far...

Why didn't Sarah touch Jim? Does this say something about the territory of embodiment? Through the frame of gender, this sensual (and sexual?) territory feels

very risky. What are the reasons why I failed to get more present to the embodied in my writing? Am I just too much of a scared yid?

A scared yid. I offer this is not as an excuse, just an elaboration. If I am *promoting a cognitive stance over other more sensual possibilities*, it is because I might be too scared of doing more towards these possibilities here (like Sarah was). This may just be about me (not letting myself off the hook), but it also maybe signalling a perspective on these sensual possibilities from the position of a particular 'global lower' as Chris says, (citing Robert Chambers). In other words, if, as a Jew, my intellect gets in the way of my body, it could be because it has long been there as a shield against the blows.

Developing this, there was a word in Andrew and Chris' wonderfully rich commentary that really grabbed me, that may inform this further. It was 'passive', as in 'passive Jewish masculinity'. Had I used that word? I checked the thesis thoroughly, even using the 'find' function in MS Word. Nope. Not there. It wasn't my word. This perhaps takes us on another turn that helps in addressing some of their questions.

Passive. The word landed as a blow. I felt it in my guts. All sorts of thoughts, feelings and sensations rush in: Passive: A blow, here in my stomach, ouch, shame, wanting to hit back, Holocaust, Israel, tears.

Calling on my own 'shared community of interpreters', I ask my friend Martin, another self-confessed 'scared yid', whose ability to make connections with his own body I admire, what do the words 'passive Jewish masculinity' say to you? He says:

First time you said it, I felt something in my face then my belly. A tingle around my nose, then the energy went down, lit up my stomach, then the tops of my thighs, [he sweeps his hands down in a kind of arc from his chest to his thighs]. I am not sure what to make of it. What comes to me in words? I don't like it. It is negative rather than positive. The little scared yid comes to me. The slightly comedic Jew, oppressed, neurotic, short, weedy, the Jewish accountant. Like Jackie Mason's joke about when the car breaks down. He sees the non-Jew get out, gets under the hood, fixing it. He just says to himself, 'It's stopped. Where's the nearest Goy?' [non Jew]. He's intellectual, disembodied, big brain. Impractical. He calls a gentile to sort it out. It's that double thing. The 'who has power over whom?' story. I'm the one with the money; I don't need to get my hands dirty. I'm so clever I'll call the muscular non-Jew, who I resent, but who I also feel superior to. We project our hostile feeling out to them and then see their hostility to us.

In early January this year I went to Israel on business. So this is fresh in my mind. It perhaps says something about how this may continue to play out, and perhaps 'how I connect up masculinities and the ecological (and other) situations we find ourselves in and how this links to my purpose and intention'. So forgive me for another diversion into the (safer) territory of ideas...

Yuri Slezkine, in *The Jewish Century*, writes about the Jews as archetypal 'mercurians'; shape-shifters on the edge of 'apollonian' (non-Jewish) society. The mercurians were what he calls 'service nomads', attached to a trade, book, or role, required but (often) despised by their fixed, agriculturalist, apollonian 'clients' (and vice versa), who are attached to a land.

The Jews, Parsis, Armenians, Eastern European Germans, Overseas Indians, and Overseas Chinese were not only more literate (on average) than their

clients; they were acutely aware of being more literate - and thus more knowledgeable and more sophisticated. (Slezkine 2004) p29

So these service nomads were often seen by their settled, land-based, Apollonian clients as physically weak, inferior and 'passive', but also feared by them for their flexibility, knowledge and artfulness. In turn, these service nomads allowed this view of themselves as passive and physically weak, because it served them, as a mirror of their own sense of their intellectual and storied superiority. But this did not mean that they didn't fear the blows too, from 'Ivan', the model of the threatening Russian male, the classic Apollonian:

Either way, they would all take a justifiably dim view of Ivan. If one values mobility, mental agility, negotiation, wealth, and curiosity, one has little reason to respect either [Apollonian] prince or peasant. And if one feels strongly enough that manual labor is sacred, physical violence is honourable, trade is tricky, and strangers should be either fed or fought (or perhaps there should be no strangers at all), one is unlikely to admire service nomads. And so, for much of human history, they have lived next to each other in mutual scorn and suspicion – not because of ignorant superstition but because they have had the chance to get to know each other. (Slezkine 2004) p29

I would add that they have got to know each other 'in a certain way'; and that my purpose is to disrupt this way. Slezkine goes on to suggest that the 20th Century was the 'Jewish Century' because we have 'all become more mercurian', and the Jews in particular, with the notable (and significant) exception of the Holocaust, have thrived in a modern world more suited to mercurians. But then there is Israel. Israel, in this analysis, is from a time out of time; from a yearning of Jews to revive their own Apollonian myth. At a time when (nationalisms aside), the rest of the (Western) world is becoming (at least in theory) more mercurian, mobile, professionalised, negotiable, knowledge-rather-than-agriculture based, some (most?) Jews see their future is secure only in their own 'secure' land, with their own certain Apollonian dream fulfilled, in the land of Israel.

So how does this link to my inquiry? In my reaction to the word 'passive', there seems to be another vital connection to be made. I make this connection to non-Jews who are the main readership (so far) of my stories and writing. I don't believe that your use of the word, 'passive', is intended to hurt me, though it does. But rather than sinking back into the blow, taking it as an acceptable accompaniment to the story I carry in my community about your brutish artlessness, I reach out for mutual understanding. I have discussed the idea of a self-made man being disrupted by the idea of a Jewish man being 'made by his community', but until now, that has always carried the subtext, 'made by his *Jewish* community'. I make this hidden transcript more explicit now, because I see this as part of a world project:

- I challenge Zionism because I want my children to live as proud Jews, head held high in a more-than-Jewish world. My own children will not be safer in a 'secure' Israel (far from it) but in a world where *all* children are safe. This is the world I hope to help make.
- I challenge the self-made man, not just within my own Jewish world, but in the false boundary between *all* men and their rest-of-worlds. I once heard Peter Reason talk about how when we throw things 'away', where is 'away'? That 'away' is part of me. I am part of it. It, you and I, in the words of David Abram, 'are of the same flesh' (even if that flesh has considerable range of memories). (Abram 1996)

I reach out to you, to touch you, but I need you to know that I am still (somewhat) a scared yid, attempting to break out of (but not break *up*) my Jewishness and my masculinity, so that a proliferation of both may emerge.

Where does this takes me now? I see solutions to the ecological challenge served by the more immediate crisis of divisive nationalisms (such as Zionism) and the false divide between self and other. In my own (small) world, I would like to continue to tackle this in a several ways:

- In my everyday world, I would like to continue to serve for a better mutual understanding of the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. I hope to let go of my defensiveness (but not my fear perhaps) so that what it means to be a Jew is better understood by the non-Jewish world and vice versa. Roffey Park has been a good stage to set this play. Whether it continues to be or not....
- This means adherence to the criterion of 'coming clean', so... a very discomfoting connection is made...is the shame I felt above a victim's shame, for colluding with a system that tolerates violence as part of the status quo? We feared Ivan's blows but they were a price we paid for supplying our services...but then there was the Holocaust...
- In my Jewish world, I think it is time I tackled Zionism in some way, more directly. Again, I do not do this to create division, or to charge in like some 'hero', but to do some inquiring, healing work. How could I take the same quality of persistence I have shown towards gender questions into this territory? It is to engage, to make connection, to allow a stuck story to become unstuck, and to proliferate. When I was in Israel recently, my hotel bedroom looked out on two walls: the old wall of the city of Jerusalem (that I was supposed to look at), and the much newer, taller and uglier wall that separates Israel from Palestine (that I had to crane my neck to see). I know which one I'd most like to take a hammer to.

As an aside to all this, (or perhaps as another validating 'connection') in Jerusalem I bought a colourful, Druze-made Yamulka (head covering) for my son Max. For the last two weeks, he has been wearing it every day to School. I find this incredibly moving and timely (not to mention scary). Is he already doing much more than I am, I suspect, to embody a move in any of the above trajectories?