

“May Her Memory Be a Revolution”

Rethinking Queer Kinships through Mourning and
Trans Necropolitics

ABSTRACT

This essay explores the ways in which queer kinships are manifold through mourning. Using an autoethnographic methodology accounting the suicide of DanVeg, a transwoman and queer activist from Israel/Palestine and a member of the author's chosen family, the article aims to question the different affects of queer kinships as they unravel through mourning, as well as the challenges trans death pose to them. Examining different mourning practices and subversive political actions following DanVeg's death, through the lens of critical kinship studies, queer and trans theories of necropolitics, and spectrality theories, it is claimed that eventually queer kinships are a precarious haunting ghost on the nuclear, biological heterosexual family, always in danger of being deconstructed but nevertheless always lingers and posing a threat to the normative kinship matrix.

Keywords: queer kinship, mourning, necropolitics, Israel/Palestine, trans death, suicide, autoethnography

DEATH IS A critical point for any kind of family or kinship. The different ways in which close ones remember a person who passed away are diverse and complex, fuelled with rituals, memories, and layered forms of relationships. This is even more so in the case of deaths of queer and trans people, who frequently construct forms of relationships, kinships,

and families that differ radically from the heteronormative biological nuclear family. In these cases, who is allowed to mourn, and in what ways? What constitutes a relationship that is hard to define by biological, marital, and social definitions, after death? What happens when death is narrativised as one caused from transphobia, queer neglect, and ongoing oppression?

In December 2016, DanVeg, a transwoman and a queer activist in Israel/Palestine, committed suicide. DanVeg was living with me and three other queer activists and friends, and we all considered each other as our chosen family, along with several other people who were not living with us. DanVeg's suicide was caused by several complex reasons, including a history and present of racialised neglect and poverty as a Mizrahi Jew, and transphobic violence both from the general cis-straight public, and from inside the queer and feminist communities. Her death was part of, what can be called, a wave of trans suicides in the trans community in Israel/Palestine, which started in early 2016 and is still in motion to this day.

In this essay, I will examine the complex questions regarding queer kinships that arise from DanVeg's death through an autoethnographic account of the mourning practices that I, and my extended chosen family, partook in after the suicide of a family member. I will begin by describing what kind of a "chosen family" we were (and are) through a critique of the imagined ways chosen families are performed and produced. Following that, I will explore the queer ways, and the ways that we queered, our practices of mourning, and then discuss DanVeg's death through a necropolitical lens and our public mourning protests. Finally, I will frame queer kinship through the notion of haunting and ghosts. Throughout the essay, I will use different theoretical fields, namely critical kinship studies, queer and trans theories of necropolitics, and spectrality theories.

Through an autoethnographic and proto-poetic approach, I will be able to explore these issues delicately, moving back and forth from the very personal mourning to the theoretical/political one, from our own precarious bodies to the precariousness of queer kinship. That is the rea-

son I also chose to use DanVeg's real chosen name and not a pseudonym; while it is important to comply with the ethics of privacy and confidence in social research, our life with DanVeg was not only private but also public and political, thus also turning us into cultural objects/subjects. I derive here from the trans scholar and activist Rikki Anne Wilchins (2006), who wrote:

[I]n order to grasp our bodies, to think of them as well as to understand the cultural gaze that fixes upon them, we must construct what our bodies can be said to mean and to look like. We rely upon other members of our speech community to do this, since it is in the meanings reflected back at us through culture that we find truth. (Wilchins 2006, 551)

I elaborate here Wilchins' claim by proposing that our bodies consist also the truth of our gendered and otherwise lives and deaths, and in that sense, this article is also attempting to take a part in a trans remembrance project. Tami Spry (2001, 726) writes that this kind of "flesh to flesh scholarship motivates the labor of critical self-reflexivity and invigorates the concept and process(ing) of knowledge." I believe it is suitable for such topics to be processed and analysed through these queer methodological attempts, and hopefully spark a critical debate within and outside our communities about different forms of kinship and mourning.

Personal/Political Home: A Queer Chosen Family

Queer kinship, or rather, LGBT+ kinship, has been an ever-expanding field within the broader field of kinship studies for the past two decades. Kath Weston's monograph of gay and lesbian kinships, *Families We Choose* (1991), sparked dozens of researches on the different ways in which LGBT+ people choose, make, and produce their own forms of family. Nevertheless, it seems that this kind of sociological and anthropological research within LGBT+ kinship studies focuses more on the ways in which queer people choose to have, make and produce nuclear types of families, aligning themselves within a genetic, biological pronatalistic apparatus that does not challenge, or queer, the heterosexual

nuclear apparatus. This has been both a mirror, a result, and a production of the fact that indeed, increasingly more LGBT+ people are taking part in this heteronormative project of family, a fact that has been driven, at least partially, by the new politics of normalcy, human rights, and homonationalism (Puar 2007; Spade 2011; Andreassen 2018).

As Ulrika Dahl (2014, 144) illustrates, several scholars throughout these past two decades have been troubled by this tendency and have tried to ask different questions regarding those types of kinship ties that are left out of the equation of the new gay and lesbian “normal” families. This is where my own queer family has found – and is still finding – itself. What constituted our family of choice? What practices and affects have generated it, and have been produced by it, and how can it help us understand the mechanisms of queer mourning?

In September 2016, all five of us moved to a big house in Rehovot, a city in the southern part of the central district of Israel. We moved there after lengthy conversations and discussions about a deep will and motivation to move closer together (during the years before the move we lived far away from each other) and share our lives in a meaningful way. This sharing of life was based on, and led by, several collective assumptions and conclusions. Most of us were rejected, on different levels and times, by our biological, nuclear families. We have been each other’s support network at times of deep hardships and great joys. We have been political comrades, both in queer struggles and in others. It was obvious to us that we are each other’s family, even if every one of us had a different sense of the nuances of what a family is.

Moving in together symbolised for us the materialising of a project to construct both a safe haven, and a communal activist base, from which different queers can find their place to struggle from, to resist, and to rest. In a way our vision was inspired by the ideas of feminist consciousness-raising groups and radical anarchist cells within a violent society. These are the grounds on which the material shared lives become political, and in turn motion the affective forces of the personal. A chosen family becomes a safe place for the community, a place to inspire the comrades, a temporary autonomous zone that in turn keeps this same

chosen family in motion. This motion tries to defy and deflect the heavy wheels of the heterosexual society that keeps on threatening to break the surface of our personal/political home (Bey 1991).

At these delicate crossroads of queer life and activism, of shared traumas and triumphs, of weaving brave and fragile new and old lines of a chosen family – this was the context in which DanVeg took her own life, and we as a family had to mourn her.

Queering a *Shiva*: Kinky Traditions

Following DanVeg's death, we decided quite quickly that after the funeral we would hold a *shiva* in her honour. The *shiva*, meaning "seven" in Hebrew, is the Jewish common practice of mourning. During a traditional *shiva*, members of the deceased's nuclear family sit in their home for seven days. They are visited and cared for by relatives and friends, and submerge themselves in grief and mourning (Slochower 1993). Our decision was made because it was clear to us that DanVeg saw us, and we saw and continue to see her, as her chosen kin, and saw our shared house – the same house in which she chose to take her life – as her home.

This was not DanVeg's only *shiva*. Her biological family held a *shiva* for her as well. They commemorated her in her former name and gender; like so many cases of trans folk after their death, it is both an ontology and an opportunity for the hegemonic order to restructure, neglect, and erase the gender resistance of their trans being. Standing at the funeral hall in a melodramatic moment that was all too real, queers and allies on the one side and biological family members on the other, the rabbi expressively shouted to the body, which was shrouded in front of us: "The deceased, remember your name!" This was addressed in male pronouns, and the name, which DanVeg was asked to remember is a different one, or at least a much less complex one than the one she lived by. In this sense, her biological family's *shiva* commemorated her differently not only on a semantic level, but also on a symbolic one, which reflected and produced their aversion of her lifestyle and choices.

Our decision to hold a *shiva* in honour of DanVeg when none of us was her blood relative (nor each other's), puzzles the seemingly strict connec-

tions between kinship, death and the ability to mourn. When the cops came to our home on the night of the suicide, they could not figure out how we were all related; examining our shocked and traumatic reactions, they assessed that we were probably close to her, but our queer embodiments and the situation itself puzzled them and clouded their ability to figure out who we were. One of them came up with the most likely connection in his eyes, and gently asked one of us if our home was a shelter. Why else would a group of weird-looking, culturally ambiguously-read adults live together? We were the ones, who knew of her death at that moment, and we were clearly close to her – but we were not her biological kin. Therefore, we had to wait for the cops' approval to let other loved ones know of her death, while they were talking to the medics and had to inform DanVeg's "actual" family of her death.

This illustrates the way with which the state's bureaucratic regulations of death, is unable to handle different modes of kinship. An affective moment like this also happened three weeks after the suicide, when we got a letter from Magen David Adom (the Israeli local Red Cross) with a bill for the ambulance service we ordered for her. The letter was addressed to the family of DanVeg's surname, although none of us had her last name. The irony of this position was even greater when we went to the health care services' office to get a refund for the bill. After we told the receptionist the story, she asked us when DanVeg had died. When we said it was late at night, she shouted that to another clerk, who shouted back: "So they get a refund! If it was in office hours, you should have called a doctor, but since it wasn't, you are eligible for a refund!"

This is a moment where not only our mourning and trauma are engulfed by the cold, bureaucratic state processes of death, but it also shows that they cannot get through the heterosexual network of intelligibility, leaving us outside of any way to be understood and read as grieving subjects. Bureaucracy in the neoliberal state (and in others) is almost always a great force that affects the sensitive mechanisms of death and mourning. However, it is clear in this case that another added affective force is the heterosexual kinship apparatus, which effectively prevents different social agents such as police officers or bureaucrats from recog-

nising us as worthy of grieving and deeply connected to our deceased queer family member.

This puzzle of death and kinship accompanied me throughout the *shiva* and after it. The *shiva* gave a voice to a lot of queer people and provided them with a place to gather and mourn jointly; some knew DanVeg or one of us personally, while others knew of her life and activism and came to pay their respect, as well as process the pain and loss themselves. Nevertheless, people outside the LGBT+ community kept on asking the same question: “What was *she* to *you*?” This question had not found one answer in me. How can you describe your mourning for someone who was sometimes a friend, a sister, a lover, sometimes a daughter, and sometimes a mother, a fellow comrade, a community member? And sometimes she was all of these at once? These are crucial questions when addressing not only our particular case, but also the different hegemonic and subversive ways with which mourning is allowed and unravelled.

In the age of (neo)liberal debates on legislation of gay marriage, it seems that some forms of LGBT+ kinship are understood, even endorsed, by heterosexual society. However, these forms illustrate the limits of recognition in a heterosexist matrix. As Judith Butler (2002) writes:

[T]he stable pair who would marry if only they could are cast as currently illegitimate, but eligible for a future legitimacy, whereas the sexual agents who function outside the purview of the marriage bond and its recognized, if illegitimate, alternative form now constitute sexual possibilities that will never be eligible for a translation into legitimacy. (Butler 2002, 18)

Our mourning of DanVeg was unique in the sense that it cannot be eligible or read by the hegemonic nuclear kinship system. Antigone, Butler’s protagonist in her canonical text in kinship studies, *Antigone’s Claim* (2000), refers to her brother, Polyneikes, whom she illegally buried: “Were my husband dead, there could be another, and by that man, another child, if one were lost. But [...] no more brothers could ever be born.” (Sophocles 2003, 95) Polyneikes’ body was disgracefully left

in the field to be eaten by vultures, after he fought against his brother Eteokles, who ruled Thebes, in a deadly fight that killed them both. The new king, Antigone and the brothers' uncle, Kreon, hailed Eteokles as Thebes' hero, but decreed that Polyneikes will not be buried because of his treachery; whoever tries to break this royal decree will be executed.

By burying Polyneikes, Antigone defies the laws of the state and of normative emotional bonds. "An enemy, even when he's dead, is not a friend," says Kreon after he learns of her crime, framing her brother as one who society should forget and not mourn. Antigone answers to this: "My nature's not to join in hate but to join in love." (Sophocles 2003, 76) Antigone speaks here not of love in a normative or heterosexual sense; she is speaking of a forbidden desire. Laure Berlant (2012, 65) writes that desire can attach "itself to forms that, in turn, have an impact on the desiring subject, reorganizing its self-relation, changing the form and the spaces of its desire." This desire has a potentiality and intentionality of reframing changing subjectivities, and is punishable, cannot be spoken of, and almost unintelligible.

Thus, the mourning of the unique lost loved one defies the laws of the supposed natural kinship. This desire to mourn, and mourning of a lost, unspeakable desire, manifests itself in different queer ways. During one of the *shiva* evenings, one of the queer friends who had come to pay respects asked for a ceremony; she wanted another friend to pour hot wax on her back from the *neshama* candles that were in the room.

Neshama candles¹ – *neshama* is "soul" in Hebrew – are designated candles that are lit in the Jewish tradition for the ascension of the deceased soul. The origin of the tradition is from the Book of Proverbs in the Jewish Bible: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." (Prov. 20:27) The flame of the candle symbolises the soul of the dead, kept and cherished by god. This candle has a special status, and one is not allowed to recite a blessing for it (as one should do to the Shabbat candles, that symbolise the holy status of Saturday as a holy day of resting) (Adler and Eisenstein 1906).

The affective force of the hot wax on the skin has different meanings here, both material and symbolic. Pain is exhilarating; its touch

on the skin rushes the blood and produces endorphins. Pain is a form of inscription. Victoria Pitts (1998, 71) writes about the ways in which women use different painful practices of body modification and sexual practices to reclaim their bodies: “social inscriptions on the body can be rewritten, and the body [...] can be reclaimed.”

The inscription of the queer body with pain has a potential of reclaiming and reframing different oppression pains that were inscribed on the body as well. As Talal Asad (2000, 43) claims, pain is also a form of agency and connection. To witness one’s pain and bear testimony to it is what generates a kind of morality. In that sense, pain is “an active, practical relationship.”

All these issues compile into a kinky symbolism of what I would call “fucking one’s soul”; queer sexuality has a will, a drive, to break down boundaries of bodily connections, of flesh, and practices. Wilchins (1997) calls it “the pleasure of meaning”: our sexual desires and pleasures can be driven and fuelled by different meanings and symbols that we attribute to our practices.

Pouring the hot wax of the *neshama* candle is a ritual of mourning that entails bodily connection to the soul of DanVeg, a material affect of desire, sexuality, loss, and solidarity. Rituals have deep meaning in BDSM cultures; Charlotte Carlström (2018, 218) writes that in BDSM communities, rituals can create “strong inter-connecting [...] feelings and emotional energies in forms of healing, love, affection, vulnerability and membership symbols.”

This queer ritual melts together different traditions: the Jewish and the queer, the institutional and the subversive, the pain of the soul and the pain of the sexual body. The conflation of religious tradition and queer practices undermines the nature of the perceived contradictions between religious tradition and queerness, and draws new lines of a potential connection between these subversive and resistant ontologies, an opportunity for what Thea Gold (2010, 631–2) describes as a “gentle, open, nonoppositional queer politics of solidarity [...] that turns delicate coalitions everywhere while questioning what such coalitions might look like.”

“Her Death Was a Murder”: Trans Necropolitics in Israel/Palestine

As mentioned, DanVeg’s death was part of a wave of suicides among the trans-queer community in Israel/Palestine. Statistics from the past decade in the United States and other countries indicate that the suicide rate within the trans community is between 40% and 42% (while it is 0.5% in the general population) (Haas et al. 2010). This means that almost every second trans person tried to commit suicide at least once. In this sense, trans people are a part of a necropolitical apparatus.

Instead of being monitored, disciplined, and produced through living bodies and populations, what Michel Foucault (1990) called biopolitics – necropolitics is the complementary mechanism, coined by Achille Mbembe (2003), in which the power decides who lives and who dies. Necropolitics as a mechanism illuminates the hierarchies not only of power and its flow as Foucault discussed them, but also the hierarchies of subjectivities themselves. If biopolitics illustrates the ways of which power produces and makes subjects (and subjectivities) productive, necropolitics shows that only certain subjects and subjectivities become productive through life; the others are produced by, and produce themselves, through death. These subjects turn into living-dead people, half-people, and half-objects, and it does not matter if they live or die.

The scope of the necropolitical mechanism is wide, ranging from illegal immigrants and refugees (Pandolfo 2007), through racialised and (post)colonial subjects (Allen 2006), to trans and queer subjects. Queer necropolitics is usually produced through trans and queer folk of colour, and more specifically, trans feminine subjects of colour (Haritaworn et al. 2014). As Elijah Adiv Edelman (2014, 186) writes, because these trans bodies are failing to take part in a homonormative apparatus, these bodies are continually situated “not only as criminal bodies, but as acceptably disposable bodies and subjects.”

DanVeg’s suicide was seen by us as an acceptance of the necropolitical order to die and cease to exist; indeed, it was seen by us as a murder, which, like the AIDS deaths and transphobic killings, could have been

prevented. Those who are accountable for these murders are the cis-straight political and social institutions, and society as a whole. Like other LGBT+ remembrance communal initiatives such as the AIDS Memorial quilt project, the transgender day of remembrance, and Remembering Our Dead project – we wanted to make our mourning visible and public, and let our anger be spread and manifested out in the open (Blair and Michel 2007; Ryan 2008).

During the different pride parades across the country we organised what we called “DanVeg blocks” – these were queer blocks that marched representing intersectional struggles and focused on trans suicides. We held different signs and shouted slogans that dealt with various issues such as anarchy, anti-Zionism, animal liberation, sex workers’ rights, and more. The most prominent signs, of which we had dozens, depicted DanVeg’s photo; “Her name was DanVeg,” was written on one side, and “May her memory be a revolution,” on the other.

Right before the Jerusalem pride parade kicked off, we got a phone call from DanVeg’s parents, asking us not to arrange a block in her name. “You must understand,” her father told me, “you guys were her friends, I know, but we are her family, and we don’t want that.” DanVeg’s father’s resistance was twofold. He objected us as agents who can make decisions of the ways to remember and mourn DanVeg, and he resisted the fact that we chose a public and political form of mourning. This was the moment when our public mourning cracked the foundations of the natural kinship laws, defying the idea that a “blood grief” is thicker than a “watered one.”

“*We* don’t want *that*.” DanVeg’s father’s axiom is mirrored and crashed against our own axiom that *we* don’t want *that*; we, the chosen family and the queer-trans community, don’t want *that* – in which case *that* is the violent erasure of DanVeg’s life and work, her activism, her queer name; not the name in a psychoanalytic sense, but her body, her identity, her struggle, which cannot and will not end with her death. That is the moment when society, as Butler (2000, 80) writes, must confront, “a socially instituted foreclosure of the intelligible, a socially instituted melancholia in which the unintelligible life emerges in language as

a living body might be interred into a tomb.” Thus, society had to confront the bloc we arranged in the pride parade, despite DanVeg’s father objection.

This raises questions about the tensions of the ways with which it is permissible to mourn, and who has this permission. Our mourning has politicised DanVeg’s suicide, and in that sense, it defies the natural, private idea of mourning. DanVeg’s father told us that her death is their domain: “We are private people,” he told me on the phone, “and we don’t want you to do that in her name.” This idea of privacy contradicts the essence of our action of publicising and spreading out our mourning; that DanVeg’s suicide, her death, has to do with trans identity, with pride and shame, with marginalisation and neglect, with personal and political pleasures and their social denial. Our will to put her death within a framework of necropolitics breaks down personal ties, bonds, and connections into a wider web of a political community that has a drive and responsibility to act, protest, and resist.

The Ghost of Queer Kinship

What does all of this teach us about trans-queer kinships? Our kinship to DanVeg was stabilised at the time of her death and our mourning – the *shiva* and the support from the wider queer community strengthened the bonds between DanVeg and us; but at the same time, this kinship is also constantly in danger of being deconstructed by social and political boundaries that leave it fragile and exposed. It generates constant attempts to rebuild, reframe, and guard this kinship especially after death, because no social boundaries are able to provide protection for this delicate structure. On the contrary, the bloody streams (pun intended) of the “natural” kinship keep on trying to drown the trans-queer kinship.

But what effect, and affect, does this trans-queer kinship have on the hegemonic, biological, nuclear, heterosexual kinship? Butler (2000, 57–8) indicated that Antigone’s mourning is constantly haunting both the state laws and the kinship laws; indeed, one can say that Antigone haunts the psychoanalytic thought of our time, constantly lying in the

shadow of her father's cultural proverb, the Oedipus complex. Antigone's elusive presence subversively threatens to put her as the protagonist of this hegemonic kinship myth, thus potentially altering profoundly the imagined baseline of society itself.

What would happen if instead of a parent's love, the baseline of (inter)subjectivity will be a kin's love, something much more ambiguous and indefinable? Affection between kin blurs the lines of hierarchy between subjects in its hard senses of the psychoanalytic hierarchies of parent/child and husband/wife. As Antigone, we do not even have words to describe this kind of elusive affection, and thus we are able to reform and reclaim it within ties and bonds that are not biological or heterosexual. This affective potential is like a hidden ghost that lurks in the dark allies of the heterosexual king's road of kinship's organised ties.

In her groundbreaking book, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (1997), American sociologist Avery Gordon distinguishes between trauma and haunting. While trauma holds an intentionality of being processed and resolved, the haunting ghost is a social being that does not lead to a resolution, but rather to constant discord, destabilisation, and elusive potential within the fabric of the seemingly "normal" social life. In its absent presence, the ghost is forever interfering. Gordon (1997) writes:

The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life. The ghost [...] is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there [...] makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way [...] The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening. Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition. (Gordon 1997, 8)

On the first annual day of DanVeg's death, one of the members of our extended queer family organised a "DanVeg Festival." It was a public memorial event in which the community was invited to meet and do certain public performative and campy actions in the memory of DanVeg (for example, a group of us made an improvised tour that was aimed to explain the cisgendered society to the participants, and others wrote a prayer song in the memory of DanVeg).

The event took place on a Saturday evening at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv. Yitzhak Rabin was a former Israeli prime minister, who was assassinated in 1995 at that square (which was named after him postmortem), striking the mainstream Israeli-Zionist society with shock and grief. Rabin was considered by the mainstream forces as the prime minister who would bring peace, and therefore prosperity, to the state and society. His murder by another Jewish man marked and stained the contemporary Zionist narrative of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the soul of the Israeli society itself, and it keeps haunting it to this day.

Choosing this place to perform different actions in the memory of DanVeg was not accidental. Not only is it central, it is also imbued with national trauma that most queer subjects are not even a part of, and in our lives and politics resist it. One of the actions was sticking the name "DanVeg" on Rabin's memorial monument plaque. DanVeg's name on the plaque was comprised of small pink-black notes with a triangle on them, symbolising both the Nazi triangle patch for gays, and the triangle of the AIDS activists.

If Rabin is the dead father figure that haunts the Israeli nation, then DanVeg is the queer kin that haunts the father himself. This subverts the very basic core of the hegemonic, mainstream society, because the father is the mythical figure of the heterosexual imagination and psychoanalytic thought. As Jacques Lacan (1987, 88–9) wrote, the father is both the primordial "head of that hoard whose satisfaction [...] knows no bounds," and he is also the "Supreme Being," the "Eternal God." Therefore, the national ghost is itself haunted by a queer ghost that subverts the political natural-perceived ties, piercing through society's flesh and disrupting its cores.

Conclusion: Mourning Failures

It is a bit queer, (here *queer* in its original sense), to conclude an essay with the hailing of the subversion of queer mourning, especially a mourning of a person who got caught in the deadly web of necropolitical apparatus. In this case, it seems misfit to quote Lee Edelman (2004), who would celebrate the anti-futural stance of queers; nor does it seem fit to quote Jack Halberstam's (2011) reading of failure as a queer affect. That is because it seems that the failure here puts on a grieving gown, because the queer kinship after mourning is always on the brink of it.

Nevertheless, as Dahl (2014, 163) writes:

[T]here are a range of reasons for why we might want to theorize failure and loss as not the exception but rather something common with regards to queer love and family dreams. (Dahl 2014, 163)

In this case, I would like to ask, what could we learn from looking at these brinks of mourning? What can be learned about the different kind of kinship illustrated in this paper?

Death and mourning construct a particularly fragile social moment for the natural kinship laws; death and its aftermath such as mourning practices and inheritance quarrels might loosen strong biological connections between kin and break marital connections; thus, leaving formerly what was seemed as natural and eternal bonds between family members exposed and fragile. Mourning in that sense can lead to kinship "failures"; failures to keep the familial bonds intact, failures to process the loss and successfully assimilate it to normal daily life.

This potential failure puts the hegemonic kinship laws in a precarious state at the time of mourning; thus, the trans-queer mourning of a kin is a terrifying ghost to "natural" kinship. The different queer traditions imbued in the mourning practices keep on haunting the guarded gates of the nuclear family's kinship. Our own *shiva*, the pain of fucking the soul, the DanVeg blocs and antinational memorial – all of these are spectres that linger in the dark and haunt and remind the hegemonic kinship matrix that death of queers can never be fully normalised, that

desire keeps on spreading in the body even after death, and that a memory of a comrade and kin can become a revolution.

Without biology or reproduction to help it, this precarious alternative kinship still manages to threaten the very core of what produces cisgender identities and heterosexualities, forever present despite its absence, forever destabilising in its fragility, forever a potential for a different futurity of gender, sexuality and kin.

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NOTE

1. *Neshama* candles are usually called *Jaherzeit* in English because of the Yiddish word for it (Adler and Eisenstein 1906). Nevertheless, I preferred to use the older Hebrew name because also different non-European Mizrahi Jewish communities practiced this tradition.