

Le Consentement (Consent: A Memoir) by Vanessa Springora (2020), and *Something Disguised as Love* (Hebrew: *Davar She'Mitchapes Le'Ahava*) by Galia Oz¹ (2021): Similarities and Differences

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Abstract

The two books: *Le Consentement (Consent: A Memoir)* by Vanessa Springora (2020), and *Something Disguised as Love* by Galia Oz (2021) were published by two women—French and Israeli about their child abuse by very famous writers: Gabriel Matzneff, who was more than 30 years older than Springora when the described events happened, and Amos Oz, one of the most famous and influential Israelis known and respected all over the world—the father of Galia Oz. Matzneff's abuse was sexual; Oz's—physical and emotional. The first part of this work is about the words used for the description of Matzneff's and Oz's deeds, as words not only reflect reality, they also create it. Its second part will show the main similarities and differences between these two books: reception as writers and reception of the books; their subject; the books' genre; the professional status of the writers; the literary status of the abusers; the writers' age their books tell about; others' knowing or believing; the families reaction; the time between the abuse happened and the publishing of the books; the shock when the truth came out; father versus father-figure; abusing "just" one girl versus abusing many girls and boys; using the full name versus abbreviations of the abuser; the use of ideology for explaining the deeds; being considered intellectuals; being good looking; being a moralistic preacher versus being a Nihilist.

¹As the writer of the book—Galia Oz, her famous father—Amos Oz, and her brother Daniel Oz share the same last name, I have referred to her as "Galia Oz", to her accused-as abusive father as "Amos Oz", and to her brother "Daniel Oz". The writer's older sister, Fania, is referred to as "Oz-Salzberger".

Keywords

Le Consentement, Something Disguised as Love, Child-Abuse, Comparison

1. MOTO

“Consent” is a Molotov cocktail, flung at the face of the French establishment, a work of dazzling, highly controlled fury...By every conceivable metric, her book is a triumph.—The New York Times

2. Introduction: Words Both Create and Reflect Reality

The term “consent” Springora had chosen as the title for her book is intriguing, polemic, maybe cynical, or even revolutionary. *Le Consentement*, the story of a child sexual abuse was published in 2020, 30 years after the debate about the scandalous sexual assaults of “G.”, or “M.G.” as Gabriel Matzneff, the abuser, was called by Springora in her book, was already a well-known 50-year old writer. Their sexual relationship, as Matzneff called it, was taking place since Springora was 14; it was presented to the public in the prestigious Television program “Apostrophes” (1990). Thus, according to today’s law there could not have been any “consent” to these sexual deeds; even at the time the things happened, when French law of “the age of consent” was the youngest among all developed countries, it was still higher than 14.

Galia Oz published the book *Something Disguised as Love* in 2020, about prolonged, harsh physical punishments and emotional physical abuse by her father, the admired writer Amos Oz, two years after his death. The keyword in the title of her book is “disguised”. It is the essence of the lie, the pretense, the fake relationship described in the book. The book that refers to deeds and events that had started 48 years earlier, when Galia Oz was just 8-year old. These deeds certainly do not describe love.

In the eyes of the contemporary reader, love does not appear in Springora’s book either. But Springora does describe warm feelings, admiration, a feeling of being special. Furthermore, the end of the sexual relationship between her and Matzneff was his initiative rather than hers, as happened in the case of Galia Oz and her father, in fact—her whole family. Matzneff uses the word “love” quite generously: it is well understood that he needs a justification for his deeds: “but love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10: 12). Thus, the connection between Springora and Matzneff might be called twisted, distorted, false, crooked, sick or pervert, but at the time the events happened, as described both the author and Matzneff, her abuser, they probably had warm feelings for each other, if not necessarily love.

In this article I am to show the power of words—all four “heroes”, the women who wrote the books and their former abusers are people of words. The power the men had because of their literacy made the abuse possible; the words that their victims used to describe their deeds made it possible for them to re-claim

their stories, their narratives, their literary place in the world of letters.

3. What Terms Had Been Used to Describe the Immoral and Illegal Deeds Described in Both Books?

The Austin public Library (2021) supplies us with a variety of terms used to describe Matzneff's deeds, as described mainly in *Le Consentement* but also in some other books of Matzeff, as well as by his oral presentations. Let us look at them:

“[...] an intimate and powerful memoir of a young French teenage girl's relationship with a famous, much older male writer”, [...] the hypocrisy of a culture that has allowed the sexual abuse of minors to occur unchecked [originally in bold].

[...] “Vanessa Springora was the **teenage muse...**”

[...] “her perspective of those **events** sharply known.”

[...] “thirteen-year-old girl to **become involved** with a fifty-year-old man who happened to be a notable writer”.

[...] **“the events of her childhood** and her **seduction** by one of her country's most notable writers, Vanessa reflects on the ways in which this **disturbing relationship** changed and affected her as she grew older”.

“[...] Vanessa offers an intimate and absorbing look at the meaning of love and consent...”

“[...] a chauvinistic literary world that has for too long accepted and helped perpetuate gender inequality and the exploitation and sexual abuse of children”.

Library Journal (2021) **supplies us with some more:**

“[...] it departs from the typical American memoir of childhood abuse in exhilarating ways.”—Slate

“trauma survivors”—Los Angeles Review of Books

“[...] the sexually abusive relationship she endured at age 14 with a 50-year-old writer...”—Publishers Weekly

“[...] sexual abuse and victimization,”—Booklist

“A chilling story of child abuse and the sophisticated Parisians who looked the other way...”—Kirkus

3.1. How Were Matzneff's Deeds Named?

Here is a list of the names Matzneff's deeds were called both around 1990 and after Springora's book was published, from 2020 on.

3.1.1. “Affair”

Using the term “affair” for Matzneff's deeds (e.g. Goldszal, 2020; Talabot & Develey, 2019) is undermining his guilt. Other terms had been used for them, such as “rape of a minor” and “child sexual abuse”; for example: “The schoolgirl and writer had a two-year affair...”, “Although the Matzneff-Springora affair has passed the statute of limitations...”,

Matzneff's speaking about sex with underage children in the 1990 "Apostrophes" program was not for the first time. In the program: */Les enfants sont doués mais pour faire quo?* [Children are gifted, but to do what? (*Apostrophes*, 1975)]; already then he promoted the idea of sex with the under 16s, as a legitimate, matter of fact subject that can be discussed in France's leading literary television show.

3.1.2. "Relationship": Abusive; Sexual; Disturbing; Cannibalizing; Consent

In my opinion, referring to Matzneff's deeds as any kind of "relationship" – even when called "disturbing" or "sexual" is more than pretense: it is a lie. Thus, I think it is quite disturbing that even after "Paris prosecutors have opened an investigation into author Gabriel Matzneff" [...] *Prosecutors Investigate French Author for Rape, Based on Allegations in Book* (2020), it was called "sexual relationship" (ibid). there were many more identical descriptions (e.g. *Dunn, 2021*), and many dozens—both French and English—that called it "abusive relationship" (*Publishers Weekly*, in *The Austin Public Library, 2021*). In 2019, two years after #MeToo had already spread around the world, calling the abuse of Springora "A consent relationship" (*A Journalist Who Defends the Writer Matzneff Accused of Anti-Semitism, 2019*) must have been acceptable only in French culture.

3.1.3. Grooming

Dunn (2021) mentions that when Springora first met Matzneff, she was not 14-year old yet: "Springora was introduced to Matzneff when she was 13, at a family friend's dinner party she attended with her mother". Matzneff started immediately grooming Springora:

What followed was his grooming of Springora through a series of intensely complimentary letters, sometimes writing twice a day. When she finally wrote back to him, as she turned 14, he "pounced" (*Dunn, 2021*).

3.1.4. Child Abuse

It is quite surprising that the word "abuse" had been used in Matzneff-Springora case so little. However, there are still some examples it was, for instance:

France's equality minister Marlene Schiappa says the Matzneff case has exposed "major dysfunction" in French society, and has promised there will be no more safe refuge for child sex abusers" (*Thiessen, 2020*).

The ugly truth emerges in a headline-making account—of how a 14-year-old fell for and was sexually abused by a renowned writer three times her age (*Elkin, 2021*).

3.1.5. Seduction

According to *The Austin Public Library (2021)*, "As she (Springora) recalls the events of her childhood and her seduction by one of her country's most notable writers, Vanessa reflects on the ways in which this disturbing relationship changed and affected her as she grew older". Namely, Springora herself refers to Matz-

neff's deeds as "seduction". In my opinion, this word is not strong enough to describe the crime of robbing a child's childhood and doing something "that which is crooked cannot be made straight" (Ecclesiastes 1, 15). Schofield (2020) relates to the use of the term "seduction" with a firm sentence: "When sexual abuse was called seduction: France confronts its past". According to Dunn (2021) "She [Springora] recalls how he seduced the guests with his charisma, but his eyes were always on her".

3.1.6. Rape

The word "rape" was mainly mentioned in description of the charges against Matzneff, namely, in legal terms (e.g. "accused of rape of a minor", Prosecutors Investigate French Author for Rape, Based on Allegations in Book, 2020). The law did not define having sex with a 14-year old as rape, neither was the public opinion that it should be.

3.1.7. Implied Incest

Springora describes the literary mask of Matzneff deeds. She met Matzneff when "she accompanied her mother, a press attaché for a Paris publisher, to a literary dinner" (Marlowe, 2020). Namely, her mother was invited to a dinner, she accompanied her, which means she was around the age of the guests' children – if they had any. The fact that Matzneff "skipped a generation" by choosing Springora, a child, rather than a grown-up woman, is already suspicious.

More explicit is Dunn's (2021) description of the mother as a complier of her daughter's seduction, after she herself tried "her luck" with Matzneff:

Her mother flirted for his attention and offered to drive him home; despite knowing his preference for young girls, she allowed her just-teen daughter to sit beside him on the backseat where something magnetic passed between us. He had his arm against mine, his eyes on me (ibid).

3.1.8. Pedophilia

The term "pedophilia" has been used directly when describing the sexual deeds of Matzneff, with Springora and other underage girls as well as with 11-year old boys. The first time "pedophilia" was spelled out was in the television program *Apostrophes* (1990), when Bombardier called Matzneff a pedophile. Since the publication of Springora's book Matzneff was called a pedophile by Jourde (2020), and many more French- and English-writing critics (e.g. *La pédophilie de l'écrivain Gabriel Matzneff dénoncée dans un livre-témoignage*, 2019; Thiesen, 2020). "Pedophilia" has also been used in an implied way, for example, when describing the large age difference between Matzneff and his victims. For example: "a young French teenage girl's relationship with a famous, much older male writer" (Consent: A Memoir, Springora, 2020b)

3.1.9. Sodomy

Though Matzneff's deeds to young boys were no secrets, the term "sodomy" was rarely used when describing them. The first one who used this term was, again,

Bombardier (Apostophes, 1990), who was “Horrorified at Matzneff’s literary boasting of sex exploits including sodomy with teenagers” (Thiessen, 2020).

3.1.10. “The Predator”

An additional name Matzneff received by some critics was “the predator”. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), “predator” has two meanings, a concrete one: “an organism that primarily obtains food by the killing and consuming of other organisms: an organism that lives by predation” and a metaphoric one: “one who injures or exploits others for personal gain or profit”. In Matzneff’s case the metaphoric meaning had probably been intended by the critics using it, but as cannibalizing his relationships (Dunn, 2021) was also a way of describing Matzneff’s actions, the degradation of him to the level of an animal by describing him as an animal that naturally preys on others goes along with the use of “cannibalizing” to describe his relationships. Dunn (2021) gives a convincing example from Springora’s (2020b) book that explains her use of the adjective: “predatory”: “He had his arm against mine, his eyes on me, and the predatory smile of a large golden wildcat.”

4. Main Similarities and Differences between These Two Books

4.1. Reception as Writers and Reception of *Le Consentement* (*Consent: A Memoir*) (2020), and *Something Disguised as Love* (2021)

The reception of a literary work depends on many factors. In fact—reception theory, or, as originally called by Hans Robert Jauss, considered “the father of modern Rezeptionsästhetik”, who started it in the 60ies, but its most influential works were published in the 70ies and early 80ies (e.g. Holub, 1995; McMillen Conger, 1981).

Galia Oz had won mixed reactions, including also slanders (e.g. Uziel, 2021; Ziffer, 2021a). Some of these critics were undermining her character, for example: “Amos Oz and daughter Galia. In her book the grown-up daughter is either too lazy or is unable to reconstruct her internal world as a child within the violent setting described.” (Ziffer, 2021b) Those who publicly sided with her were neither the majority nor the more influencing literary critiques (e.g. Yichya, 2021). Springora’s book, on the other hand, which won praises from the entire French literary and feminist community, received in Israel mixed critics, some negative (e.g. Levin, 2020). As a result, Springora refused to give an interview to *Haaretz*, the daily newspaper “due to attacks from Matzneff’s admirers” (ibid).

The consent was Springora’s first book. She was the winner of the Grand prix des lectrices de Elle (a French literary prize awarded by readers for Elle magazine, since 1970) (Goldszal, 2020). When the book was published Springora was a publisher, writer and film director. In 2019, she was appointed head of Éditions Julliard, a publishing house founded in 1942 (Austin Public Library, 2021). Unlike Galia Oz’s book, *The consent* has praised for its literary value, though the

writer labeled it as “A memoir”. Here are some of its praises:

- ...One of the belated truths that emerges from [Consent] is that Springora is a writer. [...]Her sentences gleam like metal; each chapter snaps shut with the clean brutality of a latch (The New Yorker);
- Consent [is] rapier-sharp, written with restraint, elegance and brevity (The Times (London));
- [Consent] has something steely in its heart, and it departs from the typical American memoir of childhood abuse in exhilarating ways (Slate);
- Lucid and nuanced...[Consent] will speak to trauma survivors everywhere (Los Angeles Review of Books);
- Springora’s lucid account is a commanding discussion of sexual abuse and victimization, and a powerful act of reclamation (Booklist).
- an elegant and perceptive writer (Kirkus) (Austin Public Library, 2021; Translated from the French by Natasha Lehrer).

4.2. The Common Subject: Child Abuse

There are many differences between each of these two books; however, they are both about child abuse. Springora’s book is about sexual abuse, which is—and was 30 years before the publication of the book—rape of a minor due to her age at that time: 14.

Some might argue about the comparison between sexual and physical child abuse. Indeed, the law differentiates between these two felonies, but this article is not a legal document, neither wishes to use legal arguments in order to judge Matzneff and Amos Oz, the two allegedly abusers. As the point of view of this work is that of the writers of these books, both based, according to them, on their own life experiences, the comparison might be interesting without getting into the question of the severity of the deeds described and their influence on the victims’ future lives.

4.3. The Genre

There has been a debate about the literary genre of both books, were they fictions? Autobiographies? Memoirs or something else?

According to Miller (2021): Vanessa Springora’s exhilarating—and very French—*Consent departs from the typical memoir* of abuse. According to Grasset Editions, the French publishing house founded in 1907, it is a “brilliant text” [texte fulgurant], “non-roman” and “non-simple testimony” [Pas un roman, ni un simple témoignage] (Springora, 2020a). According to Talabot and Develey (2019) it is a “cathartic text” [récit cathartique] or “witched” [un “sortilege”]

Galia Oz, the writer, has written a memoir, autobiography which is not disguised as a novel (David, 2021).

4.4. Professional Status of the Writers When Publishing Their Books

When *Something Disguised as Love* was published, Galia Oz was already a

well-known children's writer, with 11 published books, a winner of several important prizes; some of her books were best-sellers who were awarded gold and platinum status. She was also the screenwriter and director of four documentaries, dealing with social and political issues presented in various television channels and festivals. No wonder her book was published in the prestigious "Kinnet, Zmora, Dvir" publishing house.

But in addition to the enormous difficulties Gaia Oz has to face when doing what had been perceived as "slaughtering a holy cow", namely, writing a book that blames her world-admired father of child abuse, she had to face vicious literary criticism. For example: *Strangers at home* (Yoel, 2021) calls is "literally, a shocking book", "aggressive and very sad to read. It is also lacking, forcing, almost firmly, cold academic interpretation especially when leaving one's brain aside and focusing on feelings". Yoel (ibid) comes to the conclusion that "it is not even a book, it is more like a personal composition, essay, thesis, annotated, enlarges, diary—but not a complete book".

4.5. The Literary Status of Amos Oz in Comparison to That of Matzneff

Amos Oz has been considered one of the best Israeli writers, Matzneff was not in his league. The item: "Amos Oz" (born 1936) appears in Wikipedia in 50 languages; Gabriel Matzneff (Born: 1939) only in 17. Oz has been translated to 45 languages; only Shai Agnon, the only Israeli winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1966) was translated to more (80 languages). In fact, Amos Oz was a candidate for the Nobel Prize a few times (e.g. Cain, 2018). Between 1965-2018 he won no less than 29 Prizes, awards, honors, honorary degrees, a world premier and naming of his book as one of the ten most important books since the creation of the State of Israel. Amos Oz published "novels, novellas, short-story collections and essays, as well as around 500 pieces for Israeli and foreign periodicals" (Zohar, 2018). Amos Oz was dealing in his writings with Israeli and Zionist identity in non-fictions, and known as an activist, a "Peace Advocate" (Kershner, 2018) who "promoted peace with the Palestinians" (Zohar, 2018). He was even called "a Fanatic of the Two-state Solution" (Burg, 2017). No doubt all these honors made the reception of Galia Oz's book, shortly after her father's death, quite polemic.

4.6. Springora's and Galia Oz's Age When They Were Abused

Springora describes the literary mask of Matzneff deeds. She met Matzneff when she was not 14-year old yet, "accompanied her mother, a press attaché for a Paris publisher, to a literary dinner" (Marlowe, 2020). While English sources refer to her age as 13, according to the American way of counting years: meaning, that until Springora's 14th birthday she was 13, The French do not (e.g. *A Journalist Who Defends the Writer Matzneff Accused of Anti-Semitism*, 2019, the cover of the English translation; *La pédophilie de l'écrivain Gabriel Matzneff*

dénoncée dans un livre-témoignage, 2019). Maybe this has to do with presenting child abusers—whose victims are adolescents – as having consensual sex with them.

Galia Oz describes long years of physical abuse starting when she was about 8. She separated herself from her family when still young, but in her book she describes many scenes of violence of her admired father—most of them against her, but one against her mother, when Amos Oz slapped his wife’s face. Galia Oz also describes one scene when her mother Nili had beaten her.

Though there is no justification to child abuse, Galia Oz tries to explain her mother’s “looking aside” by implying that she was also a victim, a wife living in fear from her husband’s temper. As for Springora—she does not explain Matzneff’s deeds; he does is quite successfully himself...

4.7. Did Others Know? Did Others Believe?

In 1990 Gabriel Matzneff was interviewed in the prestigious television program “Apostrophes”. That was the first time when he had to answer direct questions about his sexual abuse of minors, made by Denise Bombardier (*Apostrophes*, 1990). One of the most amazing characteristics of that interview was a lot of laughing during it, both by Matzneff but also by other participants, such as the French lady participating in the interview (*ibid*). Only almost 3 decades later, after reading Springora’s book, *Ravary* (2019) wrote: “In 1990, Quebec author, journalist and documentary filmmaker Denise Bombardier shocked the Parisian literary milieu when, on prime-time French TV, she accused star author Gabriel Matzneff of being a pedophile”. During this shameful interview, where, as one of the commentators wrote: “Une femme qui fait honneur au Québec”² (namely, one woman who saved the honor of Quebec, the province of Canada where Bombardier came from). [Bombardier]. Who was the laughing French lady in the interview?

4.8. How Did the Families React?

In the case of Springora—to the best of my knowledge, nothing was heard from the family after she published her book.

In the case of Galia Oz: Galia Oz published her book after her father’s death. Describing her father’s cruelty and prolonged abuse towards her, while other family members kept silence and denied that it did happen. Almost everybody, besides her immediate family, defended Amos rather than Galia Oz regarding

²Most of the 587 comments (until February 26, 2023) praised Bombardier and denounced Matzneff. For example:

Daniel S.: Un grand merci à cette grande dame.

Yvon Brault: Bravo madame Bombardier, quel courage et quelle lucidité!

TL: Dommage qu’ils aient coupé la suite; Bombardier répond à Matzneff que “au Québec, il y a des lois pour protéger les enfants contre les gens comme vous.”

jean-baptiste Voltuan: Merci Denise Bombardier d’intervenir avec lucidité et bienveillance pour toutes les victimes!!

the question: “did it happen?” The allegedly abuse was at home; the potential witnesses could have been the mother and the two siblings, none of them could have benefited either from helping Galia Oz if or when the terrible deed she described happened, or support her later: a mother who ignores her child suffering is condemned; a sister, especially a respected university professor, as Fania Oz-Salzberger, will probably not wish to be connected to a “scandal in the family”, especially when its subject is her admired father. The brother Daniel, who, as he himself had written, had not done too well in life (Oz, 2022) and thus maybe wanted to use his role in the family drama as a way to move into the foreground.

Here is what her older sister, Prof. Fania Oz-Salzberger wrote:

The family’s response: (1/3) Today, Galia Oz launched a new book hurling serious allegations against her father, Amos. Also against us, her mother and siblings. We have known all our lives a very different Amos, a warm and affectionate man who loved his family deeply and gently (Oz-Salzberger 2021).

Galia Oz’s brother Daniel Oz called for both Galia Oz’s and his family’s voices to be heard. “My father was not an angel, just a human being. But he was the best person I had the privilege to have known,” he wrote.

A year after the publication of Galia Oz’s book, *Something Disguised as Love*, her brother published the book *Collection of seashells* (Oz, 2022), describing his own memories from his late father. Here is his main explanation for writing this book:

In the book of my sister Galia, *Something Disguised as Love*, she claimed that our late father was a psychopath that was beating her and abusing the whole family, especially her.

There is a reason for erasing all of us – her mother, sister and brother from her book. We do not appear there – neither are we mentioned by our names. But we were there in all aspects. Due to our life circumstances, Galia was not alone with him [Amos Oz]. We are not victims, brainwashed or liars. We remember him (Oz, 2022).

Daniel Oz had asked, right after Galia’s book had been published, not to dismiss his sister just because he did not agree with her. But, as he explained, as public criticism had been continuing and the book remained in the center of public opinion, he decided to write a book as an answer to Galia’s claims (Oz, 2022). In order to prove his “pure” intentions—writing for the sake of truth rather than for financial benefits Daniel had declared that all entire royalties he was to get from the publishing house would be a contribution to a non-profit organization for children-and adolescents-at-risk (Chalamish, 2022). Furthermore, according to Frid (2022), Daniel Oz’s book is “a bill of indictment that is disguised as a statement of defense”. However, its literary value is questionable, as it is “disguised as a book” (ibid)...

אוסף צדפים: “כתב אישום שמתחפש לכתב הגנה שמתחפש לספר”

4.9. Springora and Galia Oz Waited a Very Long Time before Publishing Their Books; They Were Published Almost Simultaneously

Springora's book was published about three years after The hashtag *#MeToo* was first used, as a way to draw attention to the magnitude of the sexual abuse problem. *#MeToo* was first used in this context on social media in 2006, on Myspace, by sexual assault survivor and activist Tarana Burke, but it took another 11 years to make a real revolution in the way society perceives it, in public denunciation of mighty men who were blamed for sexual felonies, in banning individuals not only for what had been considered "serious crimes", such as rape or causing physical injuries, but also of improper environment, intimidation, economic abuse, and the like. Work places had started publishing strict rules in order to make life more tolerable for women, and punishment against those who did not obey to the new world where both social and legal were forced on.

4.10. The Shock When the Truth Came out

Both cases—of Springora and Galia Oz—should have shocked not just the literary world at the time they occurred, but also the wide public, the authorities, the media—everybody who pretends to be there "for the best interest of the child". Child abuse – sexually or not – should NOT have been a part of *#MeToo*, as while women are in inferiority position to men in many aspects, in the countries where *#MeToo* made a revolution women did have a voice prior to the emergence of this movement. Children do not have legal rights when their own families are concerned; education, wealth or social position do not serve as protectors from child abuse; in many cases it is the other way round.

In both cases the publication of the books was labelled an earthquake: *Something Disguised as Love* by Galia Oz (2021) was a literary earthquake in Israel with high waves in many other countries (e.g. "Face cachée", 2021; Kershner, 2021). The same term had been used for Matzneff's sex actions revealed in Springora's bok: "generational earthquake" (Thiessen, 2020). Zaleski (2020), on the other hand, refers to the young people Matzneff had violated as "pedophilia victims". Miller (2021) refers to Matzneff's explanations, even justifications for being a pedophile as "pedophile excuses".

Offer Oren, 2021) does not use "pedophilia" explicitly, but this term is implied from her judgment of Matzneff's deeds "writing about sex with teenage boys and girls": according to her Matzneff should be "ostracized".

If there was still a doubt about Matzneff being a pedophile, not "just" a man who prefers much younger women, we can go back to what he said 30 years ago, when he was 54: he explained why 20 - 30-year old women were "too old" for him (Apostrophes, 1990). It should be noted, that everybody participating in the program was listening to him with a serious look at their face, politely nodding while he speaking. That was the milieu that aloud such horrible crimes against children.

Marlowe (2020) also mentions it: “Perhaps the most shocking thing about the Matzneff affair is that everybody knew”.

4.11. Father versus Father-Figure

Springora is honest about her infatuation with Matzneff in the early months of their relationship, about the novel intoxication of being desired so profoundly. In some ways, she is the classic victim, abandoned by a father who had no interest in her (Springora, 2020a), and with a mother who worked long hours. She was bookish, reclusive, different from her peers, but could be independent minded and fierce when her mother attempted to intervene. She was progressive and spirited, radical in her outlook. Matzneff had chosen wisely. This was a young girl who would be intrigued, admiring even, of her predator’s disdain for the bourgeois family (Dunn, 2021).

When describing their first meeting she writes:

“Her mother flirted for his attention and offered to drive him home; despite knowing his preference for young girls, she allowed her just-teen daughter to sit beside him on the backseat...” (ibid).

4.12. Matzneff: A Molester of Both Girls and Boys; Amos Oz: Accused of Abusing “Just” One of His Daughters

Matzneff was called: “[...] a shameless predator of teen girls and preteen boys” (Dunn, 2021)

Matzneff used adolescent girls as muses, but also ventriloquised them as characters in his novels, cannibalising his relationships with them as well as the love letters they exchanged, **all without permission**. He stole their identities and remade them to serve his literary ego before they had even discovered their true selves (Dunn, 2021).

However, in her book, Galia Oz (2021) speaks also about the abuse her mother, Nili, was exposed to by her father. It seemed thus that while Matzneff was curving for youth—no matter whether masculine or feminine, for Amos Oz it was a matter of control, of acting out, maybe of releasing anger, and the two weaker persons around were his younger daughter and his wife—the target of his violence.

4.13. Full Name versus Abbreviations

Springora uses “G. M.” or “G.”—Galia Oz not only uses her father’s full name but also begins her story with the words: “my father...” and refers to him as such through the whole book.

4.14. Matzneff Had Ideology Explaining His Deeds; Oz Obviously Had None

The ideology of Matzneff was “teaching young girls about love”

[...] In *Les moins de seize ans* (1974; “the under-16s”), he claims: “To sleep with a child, it’s a holy experience, a baptismal event, a sacred adventure.” The book, published in 1974, was republished in 2005. Narcissistically, he continues:

What captivates me is not so much a specific sex, but rather extreme youth, the age between 10 and 16, which seems to me to be—more than what we usually mean by this phrase—to be the real “third sex” (Dunn, 2021).

He also said:

“And I think there is nothing more beautiful and fecund that can happen to an adolescent than to have a love affair, either with someone their age, but also perhaps with an adult who helps them to discover themselves.” (Marlowe, 2020)

Matzneff lessened the abuse, as Thiessen (2020) explains: French Paedophile Writer Gabriel Matzneff Says It Was No Crime At The Time”.

As Galia Oz’s book was published after her father’s death, he not only did not but obviously could not justify any of his deeds...however, the only source about abusing his daughter is Galia Oz’s testimony, and according to her Amos Oz had denied all accusations she tried to face him with.

4.15. Matzneff Was Serial Abuser

Another substantial difference between the allegedly allegations against Amos Oz and those against Matzneff. Matzneff was that while against Amos Oz there had never been any abuse allegations, Matzneff based his literary career on writing about his sexual experiences, all considered illegal, even criminal by today’s standards. Furthermore, Springora was not the first young girl he was grooming:

A decade before meeting Springora, he’d had a three-year relationship with Francesca Gee, beginning when she was 15 years old, who, some years later, came across an illustration based on a photograph of herself on the cover of one of Matzneff’s novels, *Ivre du vin perdu* (1981; “drunk on lost wine”), strolling by a bookshop window. The novel follows a middle-aged man Nil and his seductions of 15-year-old girls, and trips to Manila where he pays to have sex with 11-year-old boys. For four decades, with no regard for her or attempt to obtain her consent, Gee’s image was used to promote the kind of abusive relationships for which Matzneff is now being held to account (Dunn, 2021).

Another testimony of child abuse is:

[...] Matzneff wrote copiously about his affairs with minors, and about his sexual tourism in southeast Asia (Marlowe, 2020).

In fact, the literature of Matzneff had been based on his sexual “experiences” (e.g. Matzneff, 2009; Toledo, 2009); he used his victims not just for his physical satisfaction; he also robbed their own stories, from the point of view of the vic-

tim. Springora, thus, claimed her own property, not just her—and other’s—robbed justice.

4.16. Both Writers Were Considered Intellectuals

Amos Oz was honored (or: called, among others) as “intellectual” by the National Academy of Sciences (*Amos Oz Has Gone*, 2018) and many more (e.g. *Offer-Oren*, 2021) as was Matzneff (*Dunn*, 2021).

4.17. Both Writers Were Good Looking

Amos Oz was considered very good looking since he first appeared on the Israeli literary map. For example:

Even his casual good looks reflected the fantasy of the ultimate sabra, the golden boy of the kibbutz, and the Zionist dream (*Namdar*, 2020).

He kept his good looks until his last years, as can be seen from his pictures, but this fact was also mentioned in the many analyses of his personality and work. For example:

Now aged 77, his spectacles attached to a cord around his neck, he is still blessed with the rugged good looks and spellbinding English that have made international literary audiences swoon since the 1970s (*Freedland*, 2016).

However, no definite conclusions should be made because of this common external characteristic; for Amos Oz his good looks served mainly for his reception as he used, until his late 70ites, to give public lectures around the world, and for Matzneff—for seducing young girls.

4.18. Amos Oz as Moralistic Preacher; Matzneff as a Celebrator of Nihilism, Bacchus-Worshipper

Amos Oz was considered by many as a “moral lighthouse” (e.g. *Lazar*, 2021); “moral voice” (e.g. *Kershner*, 2018); “[The Kibbutz is] [...] a microcosm in which the world’s moral contests are waged” (*Parini*, 1991); he was even compared to “an angry, secular prophet” (*Kershner*, 2018). He preached for justice: “By ‘tragedy’ I mean a clash of justice with justice” (e.g. *Parini*, 1991). In fact, Oz was the first public figure who, “One week after the [6-day] war (June 1967), a group of young kibbutzinks [...] recorded intimate conversations with soldiers returning from the battlefield. The recording revealed an honest look at the moment Israel turned from David to Goliath” (*Rudoren*, 2015).

In Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua: *A tale of political twins* (*Baram*, 2022), a long interview with the Late Yehoshua 4 years after the passing away of Amos Oz, Yehoshua refers to both of them—the “twins” as moral leaders. The word “moral” in a variety of combinations (e.g. “political and moral image”; “a moral role in society”; Oz pointed to the profound moral failing of Israel’s control over hundreds of thousands of Palestinians” etc.) appears in the interview 15 times.

But it should also be mentioned, that were other voices, even before Galia Oz's book was published. One main not-so-positive opinion was that of Dan Miron, considered the "No. 1" critic of Israeli literature, who wrote: "how can Amos Oz guide anybody", which was published right after Oz's death (Miron, 2019).

In my opinion, an intersection between Amos Oz and Matzneff relies in the fact that both were considered progressive—though for Matzneff it was his well-served sexual "progressiveness" and for Amos Oz—his political views. While Amos Oz's views were very unpopular at the time he first gave voice to them, but later they became common and accepted by a substantial part of Israeli Jews, Matzneff's views had become unacceptable not only morally but also legally.

4.19. The Still Opened Question: How Come There Were Still Protectors of Matzneff in 2020?

In the already mentioned 1990 TV program (*Apostrophes*, 1990), there are some noticeable sentences. For example, Matzneff approached Bombardier by ordering her: "do not be aggressive". For today's listener, it seems unbelievable that Matzneff reproached Bombardier. Bombardier kept silence while Matzneff was pouring his egotistic ideology preference of young girls, who could have easily been his daughters. But Bombardier was exposed to Matzneff's insulting remarks and nobody, including the legendary host Bernard Pivot, stopped him. They all let Matzneff's degrading the famous Canadian guest who had honored "*Apostrophes*". By participating in this program, but of no less importance—why was nobody scolding Matzneff during that interview?

Supporting Matzneff rather than his victim seemed to be a French norm in the 20th century. His selfish, criminal deeds were the subject of two literary programs (*Apostrophes*, 1975, 1990). But even in 2020, after the #MeToo revolution, voices defending Matzneff were still heard. For example:

Commenting on the words of Denise Bombardier, novelist and lively critic of the writer since the 1990s and their appearance on Bernard Pivot's "*Apostrophes*" program, Josyane Savigneau wrote on Twitter: "Supporting Denise Bombardier is the last thing that would come to mind. I've always hated what she writes and what she says and I'm not changing my mind about Matzneff because the witch hunt [originally: *Chasse aux sorcières*] has begun. And he knows how to write at least. Bombardier, what a purge!" (Jourde, 2020)

Josyane Savigneau, the editor-in-chief of *Le Monde des Livres*, editorial subdivision of *Le Monde*, and the writer of two biographies and her own autobiography, went as far as far as calling the one person who, back in 1990, had publicly condemned the arrogant Matzneff, "a purge" (ibid).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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