

CFAR's Papers on Power is a series of commissioned essays for which artists, writers, activists, and cultural producers have been asked to respond to the question "What is power?" in whatever form best relates to their work and thinking.

RETREATING INTO LIGHT AND DARKNESS: TRANSFORMING TRAGEDY AS TALKING PROCESS

NICKI GREEN IN CONVERSATION WITH BINYA KOATZ AND XAVA DE CORDOVA

¹ NG: This text, titled SCARF, is ultimately a publication and performance piece... written and performed for the 2018 College Art Association conference...

Dear Friend,

I'm writing to you to see if you'd be interested in having a conversation with me about Power. In November 2020, I was invited to produce a text for the Center for Art Research at University of Oregon...

Once upon a time Rabbi Yochanan was bathing in the Jordan. Rech Lakish said to him "Why do you bathe in the river after..."

Rabbi Yochanan said, "I am the only one left from the beautiful ones of Jerusalem. One who needs to witness the perseverance of Rabbi Yochanan..."

Rabbi Yochanan used to tell his students that he would bathe in the Jordan River... "I bathe in the Jordan River because of the merit of the mitzvot..."

² NG: In Torrey Peters' recent NYT bestselling novel Detransition, Baby, she discusses the specificity of white trans women's community dynamics...

Note: At the time of this paper's conception, you two Binya and Xava, were my teachers in the Zoom class Trans Girl Talmud 101!

³ NG: "To embody 'reality,' rather than performing and competing 'realness,'... enables trans women to enter spaces with a level of being rebuffed or questioned..."

⁴ NG: "Reframing thought as the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, 1997 in which I explored and named each and every identity in relationship with the Other..."

⁵ BK: "Genesis 49:25 'And he buried his feet under the rock...'"

⁶ BK: "But rose petals do reflect light, right? Does it mean they're not reflecting light...?"

⁷ BK: "I think this is important! NG: Yes! The balancing and exchange of power resonates with this as a queer trans woman..."

⁸ BK: "I think it's also something to do with our being in a closet for my first Queer Talmud Camp..."

⁹ XA: "I think this is important! NG: Yes! The balancing and exchange of power resonates with this as a queer trans woman..."

¹⁰ NG: "I just feel like, when the order of things is dealt with in a way, a queer person is able to work on another iteration of this text..."

¹¹ BK: "I think it's also something to do with our being in a closet for my first Queer Talmud Camp..."

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BIOGRAPHIES:

Nicki Green is a transdisciplinary artist working primarily in film. Originally from New England, she completed her BFA in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009 and her MFA in Art Practice from the University of California, Berkeley in 2018.

Binya Koatz is a transsexual separatist/queer from Queens (NY). She loves diaspora, hashem and the gay tradition given to her by her queer ancestors.

Xava De Cordova is a trans, Sephardi woman and teacher living in Providence, Rhode Island. She got her start by creating a Jewish learning program in Washington, DC...