THEATRE AND DRAMA AND THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS

by

ALVIN GOLDFARB

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December 22, 1977
date

Daniel C. Gerould
Chairman of Examining Committee

12/22/77
date

Stanley G. Wann
Executive Officer

Stanley G. Wann

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

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Alvin Goldfarb

Advisor: Professor Daniel C. Gerould

"Theatre and Drama and the Nazi Concentration Camps" analyzes the use of the camps in post-war dramatic literature and in post-war theatrical production. In the Introduction, the history and functions of the internment centers in the Third Reich are discussed. A brief history of actual theatrical activities in the concentration camps is also presented. In the first chapter, entitled "Dramas Set Inside the Concentration Camps," a number of plays whose dramatic actions are set in the Nazi internment centers are analyzed. These include Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice, Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy, Peter Barnes' Auschwitz, and Hedda Zinner's Ravensbrücker Ballade. Chapter II, "Dramas Depicting Performance in the Nazi Concentration Camps," deals with those works which employ the concept of performance in the Reich's internment centers, among which are the Pip Simmons' Group's An Die Musik, the American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz, Alberto Moravia's Il dio Kurt, and Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne. In Chapter III, "Dramas of the Survivors," there is a discussion

of those works that deal with the lingering effects of the concentration camps following the fall of the Third Reich. These include Arthur Miller's After the Fall, Peter Weiss's The Investigation, Yehuda Amichai's Bells and Trains, Tadeusz Hołuj's Puste Pole, and Martin Walser's Eiche und Angora and Der schwarze Schwann. Chapter IV, "Metaphorical Representations of the Concentration Camps," is an examination of those theatrical works which do not literally depict the Nazi internment centers but employ their images to create "a concentration camp aesthetic;" included are Jerzy Grotowski's and Józef Szajna's Akropolis as well as various productions by Józef Szajna. Throughout the dissertation, various other dramas that deal with the Nazi concentration camps are referred to. There is also an attempt to analyze the theatrical pieces that deal with the Nazi internment centers in relationship to non-dramatic Holocaust literature.

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In a very real sense, I view this dissertation as a collaborative venture. A number of people must be thanked, for without their assistance this study would have been stillborn. Len Borger, Jana and Enrico Bazzoni, and Shirley Goldfarb took the time to provide me with excellent translations of key plays. Anna M. Furdyna sent me a copy of her translation of Jasełka-Moderne. Claudine Quiclet, an exchange student at Illinois State University, provided me with plot synopses of Armand Gatti's concentration camp plays. James Schevill made a copy of his report to the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities on Cathedral of Ice available to me; Professor Schevill was also cordial enough to spend some time over dinner discussing his play. Józef Szajna talked with me about his oeuvre and his camp experiences when his Teatr Studio toured America for the first time in April 1975. Stanley Brechner, director of the American Jewish Ensemble, lent me his promptbook for The Theatre of Peretz. Peter Barnes permitted me to analyze his as yet unpublished Laughter. After I moved to Illinois, Rita Plotnicki rechecked some of my citations in New York libraries. To all of these individuals, I express my heartfelt gratitude.

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he has directed my attention to a number of the dramatic works analyzed in it. Without his assistance I would have been unable to complete my project.

I must also thank my wife Elaine for her understanding and compassion; a husband obsessed with the Nazi concentration camps is not always a pleasant companion. I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Shirley Goldfarb, and my late father, Martin Goldfarb, both of whom survived, as well as to all of my relatives who were less fortunate and died in the Holocaust.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my doctoral dissertation "Theatre and Drama and the Nazi Concentration Camps" is to examine the use of the camps in post-war dramatic literature and to analyze the employment of the camps in post-war theatrical productions. I will be discussing the theatrical techniques employed to recreate dramatically the internment centers, the dramatic functions of the camps within the plays chosen, and the various playwrights' (or directors') perceptions of the camp experience.

While there have been many works examining Holocaust literature, the drama generally has been overlooked. Such is the case, for example, in two recent studies of Holocaust literature, Cynthia Haft's The Theme of the Nazi Concentration Camp in French Literature and Lawrence Langer's The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination;[1] Haft briefly deals with Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, while Langer dismisses Peter Weiss's documentary technique in The Investigation and only mentions Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy in passing. Yet, just as T. W. Adorno's

[1]Cynthia Haft, The Theme of the Nazi Concentration Camp in French Literature (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1973) and Lawrence Langer, The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). The term Holocaust literature usually refers to those works that deal with Nazi atrocities. For a short introduction to the critical problems of this type of literature, see: A. Alvarez, "The Literature of the Holocaust," in Beyond All This Fiddle (London: Penguin Press, 1968), pp. 22-33.

observation that after Auschwitz there could be no poetry[2] did not prevent Paul Celan in Todesfugue (Fugue of Death), Anthony Hecht in More Light! More Light!, and Nelly Sach's in O! The Chimneys from creating verses to commemorate the Holocaust, so too the conclusion by Wolfgang Borchert, the author of The Man Outside, that no drama could reveal the sounds of the concentration camp[3] has been questioned by a variety of dramatic artists, for there are many theatrical works that either actually portray the concentration camps or use their image as a dramatic device.

Among the plays I intend to discuss are Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy, Peter Weiss's The Investigation, Yehuda Amichai's Bells and Trains, Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, Alberto Moravia's Il Dio Kurt, Tadeusz Hołuj's Puste Pole, Peter Barnes's Auschwitz, Arthur Miller's After the Fall, and James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice. Just a passing familiarity with these plays indicates that each playwright portrays and employs the camps in a unique dramatic fashion. I will also be examining those works created primarily by post-war experimental directors and ensembles that have used the concentration camp motif. These include Jerzy Grotowski's and Józef Szajna's Akropolis, Józef Szajna's Replika as well as many of his other productions since the concentration camp is central to his ouevre, the Pip Simmons Group's

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[2]T. W. Adorno, "Engagement," in Noten zur Literatur III (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1965), pp. 125-26.

[3]Wolfgang Borchert, "In May, in May cried the Cuckoo," in The Man Outside, trans. David Porter (London: Calder and Boyars, 1966), p. 190.

An die Musik, and the American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz. While critics have already examined some of these works, their focus has been on the artists' experimentation with theatrical styles. My primary purpose is to reveal how their experimental techniques are employed in order to create metaphorical representations of the Nazi camps.

Rather than deal with each work independently I have tried to unify them under shared dramatic techniques. In "Dramas Set Inside the Concentration Camps" I will analyze those plays which use the Nazi internment centers as their mise en scène; these include Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, The Deputy, Auschwitz, and Cathedral of Ice. "Dramas Depicting Performance in the Nazi Concentration Camps" will include examinations of Alberto Moravia's Il Dio Kurt, Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne, An Die Musik, and The Theatre of Peretz, all of which employ the concept of performance in the camps. In the chapter "Dramas of the Survivors", there will be a discussion of those works that deal with the lingering effects of the concentration camps following the fall of the Third Reich. Among these are After the Fall, The Investigation, Bells and Trains, and The Empty Field. My final section, "Metaphorical Representations of the Concentration Camps" will be an examination of those theatrical works that do not literally depict the Nazi internment centers but employ their images and create a "concentration camp aesthetic;" included are Akropolis and Replika.

Throughout there will also be an attempt to contrast the portrayal of the concentration camp in post-war drama and theatre to its presentation in non-dramatic literature, particularly in terms of

literary techniques employed and perceptions of the camp experience. Among the authors I will be alluding to are Taduesz Borowski (This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen), Elie Wiesel (Night), Jorge Semprun (The Long Voyage), Josef Bor (Terezin Requiem), Piotr Rawicz (Blood From the Sky), Charlotte Delbo (None of Us Will Return), Hannah Arendt (Eichmann in Jerusalem), Bruno Bettelheim (The Informed Heart), and André-Schwarz Bart (The Last of the Just).

History and Functions of the Camps

Before examining the dramatic representations of the concentration camp, one must first have a basic understanding of its history, structure, psychology and sociology.

With Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, the Konzentrationslagern (KLs or KZs)[4] were immediately organized.[5] Historians discuss three distinctive periods in the evolution of the concentration camp. From 1933 to 1939 there were approximately three major camps and

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[4]The German term for concentration camp. KL (or occasionally KZ) was the abbreviation used on all official documents.

[5]The historical section of this introduction is based on Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews, 1933-45 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975); Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961); Eugen Kogon, The Theory and Practice of Hell, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Berkeley Publishing, 1971); Helmut Krasnik, et al., Anatomy of the SS State (New York: Walker and Company, 1968); Nora Levin, The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933-1945 (New York: Schocken Books, 1968); Roger Manvell and Heidrich Fraenkel, The Incomparable Crime (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1967); Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1953); Gertrude Schneider, "The Riga Ghetto: 1941-1943" (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York Graduate School, 1973); Kazimierz Smolen, ed., From the History of KL-Auschwitz (Panstwowe Muzeum w Ozwiecimiu, 1967).

sixty-five smaller ones with a total of 85,000 inmates. From September 1939 through 1942, there were sixteen large camps and fifty smaller ones, with a total population of 315,000 prisoners. The final period, 1942 through the spring of 1945, saw the development of twenty large concentration camps with 165 subsidiary ones, containing a total of 600,000 internees.[6]

In the first two years of Hitler's reign there was no planned system for the concentration camps; the early internment centers were not regulated by a central government agency. By the end of 1933 there were fifty small camps in the Third Reich. While most of these were established by Ernst Roehm's SA (Sturm Abteilung) men, a few were under the supervision of Heinrich Himmler's SS (Schutzstaffeln), or local police. The categories of prisoners in these early camps were Social Democrats, Communists, and other "enemies of the state," with the majority having been incarcerated under the protective custody (Schutzhaft) laws of February 28, 1933, which allowed the suppression of any political opposition to the National Socialist regime. That there was quickly a large number of political internees was indicated by Hitler amnestying 27,000 "protective custody" prisoners on Christmas Eve 1933.

During these early years of the concentration camps' existence, numerous complaints of brutality were lodged. In autumn 1933, an investigation into three deaths, which had occurred at Dachau during

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[6]Figures for the concentration camps vary; these are from Kogon, pp. 240-50. They are basically the same statistics cited in Martin Broszat, "The Concentration Camps 1933-45," in Anatomy of the SS State, pp. 399-504.

interrogations, led Hitler--after squashing the inquiry--to condemn lawless SS and SA violence and to close many of the "wild" camps. After Roehm's assassination on June 30, 1934, and the liquidation of his SA, most early camps were dissolved. The organization of the concentration camps was now centralized and standardized under Himmler's SS. The guard units, known as the Totenkopfverbande (Death Head Units) because their insignia included the skull and crossbones, were drawn exclusively from this para-military organization. Dachau, established by Himmler on March 26, 1933, became the standard camp on which later internment centers were modelled and in which future personnel were trained.[7]

Employing the grounds and stone huts of an abandoned gunpowder factory, Dachau, in its first months, was ruled arbitrarily. However, under Theodore Eicke, its second Commandant, prisoner treatment and punishment were systematized. Eicke also established SS and prisoner hierarchies. Himmler, impressed by Eicke's administration, created the post of Inspector of the Concentration Camps for him in July 1934. The establishment of this office meant that the camps were to be organized as legally independent administrative units.

In his new post, Eicke again proved to be an adept administrator, standardizing the concentration camps' ruling structures and consolidating the various miniature protective custody camps. By March 1935 there were seven large internment centers: Dachau, Sachsenburg, Esterwegen, Lichtenburg, Columbia-Haus, Oranienburg, and Fühlsbuttel, each

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[7]Rudolf Hoess was trained in Dachau. See Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz, trans. Constance FitzGibbons (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 69-90.

containing between seven and nine thousand prisoners. From 1935 through 1939, the number of camps continued to decline, but the construction of larger and more centralized centers was completed. While Oranienburg, Fühlsbuttel, Esterwegen, Lichtenburg, and Columbia-Haus were dissolved, they were replaced by Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, and the women's camp Ravensbrück. These three KLs functioned until the termination of the Second World War.

During this same period, new categories of prisoners were added to the camps. Under rewritten protective custody laws, habitual criminals, homosexuals and asocials were interned. Himmler also stretched the ordinances to include the work-shy, gypsies, and the pacifistic Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1938, after the Kristalnacht (Night of the Crystal Glass) pogroms, 35,000 Jews were interned in the existing Konzentrationslagern. However, up until the outbreak of World War II, Jews who obtained emigration papers were usually released. The sharp rise in the number of prisoners between 1938 and 1939 was also due to Germany's territorial expansion. Hence, Mauthausen and its quarries were immediately established in occupied Austria. Between 1937 and 1939 the concentration camps were also becoming centers of forced labor, with industries opening near the camps, or camps being founded on the sites of natural resources. For example, two new internment centers, Gross-Rosen and Natzweiler, were organized because of the presence of workable granite.

The beginning of the second World War marked a new stage in the development of the Nazi concentration camps. During the war the number of camps and prisoners increased sharply with inmates being predominantly

foreign nationals, among whom were a high percentage of Jews. As early as the winter of 1939-40 Buchenwald was overcrowded, leading to a mortality rate higher than the pre-war one. Among the important new camps established during this period were Nuengamme near Hamburg, Gross-Rosen in Lower Silesia, Stutthof near Danzig, Natzweiler in Alsace, and the Polish camp Auschwitz.

Also with the outbreak of the war, new types of subsidiary camps were established. Numerous transit camps arose, most having short existences. Some, however, lasted the entire war. Basically the transit camps were way stations for the larger internment centers. Among the most famous were Lodz in Poland and Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. For that matter, the Jewish ghettos, which the Germans established in almost every conquered territory, beginning with Poland in 1940, could be viewed as transit camps since they ultimately became way stations for the extermination centers.[8] Arbeitserziehungslagern (Labor Reeducation Camps) were set up for foreign civilians who had refused to labor for the Reich. In some territories the SS-supported local police opened labor camps modelled after the larger concentration camps; these, however, received no financial support from the German government.

With the outbreak of World War II, the employment of prisoners as laborers became an important function of the concentration camps. The prisoners built and expanded their camps and worked for war-related

[8]There is, in some cases, even a terminological confusion. For example, some historians, like Nora Levin, refer to Theresienstadt as a ghetto, while others label it a concentration camp. Strictly speaking, a Konzentrationslager had to fall under the jurisdiction of the Inspector of the Concentration Camps.

industries. The major internment centers, like Auschwitz, became affiliated with subsidiary labor camps.

Meanwhile, some camps were becoming extermination centers. After Germany attacked Poland, Himmler directed that saboteurs be executed without trials. The mentally unfit were also early victims of mass extermination, although they received a reprieve because of Church intervention. After Germany declared war on the USSR, captured Russian officers were frequently executed. These early liquidations were carried out either by firing squad, phenol injected into the heart, or gas vans, known as Black Marias, into which were pumped exhaust fumes. Mass extermination, however, did not begin until the final phase of the concentration camps evolution.

Hitler, as early as 1939, had declared that war would mean the destruction of European Jewry. The ghettos and resettlement sites were attempts to starve the Jews to death. In May 1941, SS Einsatzgruppen (Action Groups) were formed to systematically execute the Jewish population in conquered countries. Sometime during the winter of 1941-42—the date usually given is January 20, 1942, when at the Wannsee Conference, Reinhard Heydrich was appointed Commissioner for the Preparation of the Final Solution—the National Socialist regime decided to establish secret extermination centers in Poland.

Chelmno, the first permanent extermination camp, opened in December 1941. The other major liquidation centers were Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz. In all the camps except Majdanek and Auschwitz, the victims were gassed with carbon monoxide. They contained a few non-Jewish inmates and supported only incidental

industrial activities.

Only Auschwitz was both an industrial and extermination center. The first experimental gassings in Auschwitz were performed in late 1941. In the same year it was decided to expand the Polish camp. Eventually, Auschwitz was composed of three major centers. Auschwitz I, the original site from which the entire complex was administered, had room for 20,000 prisoners. Birkenau (Auschwitz II), constructed two miles away from the original camp, could accommodate 20,000 women and 60,000 men. Birkenau was a concentration camp city of 450 acres. Containing 250 stone and wood huts intended for 300 to 400 prisoners each, the living quarters were often filled with twice as many inmates. Auschwitz II also contained four gas installations in which 2,500,000 persons were liquidated and 46 ovens in which the liquidated were cremated. (It was also in Birkenau that Cyklon B was first proven to be effective in exterminating human beings.) This death camp continued to function until November 2, 1944. Monowitz (Auschwitz III), the largest of Auschwitz's thirty-nine outside labor detachments, was set up in 1942 in the vicinity of the Buna factory.

Auschwitz illustrated the paradox of the concentration camps during their last three years of existence. During the same period that certain camps were being employed for the methodological annihilation of "inferior races," there was an attempt in others to spur increased productivity through such incentives as visits to the camp brothel, tobacco, larger food rations. These rewards, of course, were limited to Aryan prisoners. The untermenschen, when employed as laborers, were usually worked to death. During the last year of the war, Oswald Pohl, head of

the SS Economic and Administrative Office, which had undertaken supervision of the camps in 1942, attempted to decrease the mortality rate in the forced labor centers.

Obviously, to assist in Germany's final war drive the number of camps and internees rose drastically. On April 5, 1944, Pohl reported to Himmler that there were twenty concentration camps with sixty-five subsidiary labor camps. On August 15, 1944, there were 524,286 inmates in the camps. In January 1945, there were 714,211 prisoners, one-third of whom died when the Germans evacuated the camps before the Allies arrived. During the war at least 500,000 persons died from hunger and disease in the concentration camps. Six and one-half million individuals were liquidated in the Reich's extermination centers.[9]

In outlining the historical evolution of the Konzentrationslager one does not really come to understand its unique environment nor its unique societal structure. However, since the Nazis attempted to standardize the camps' environments and their ruling structures, it is possible to generalize about them.

As noted earlier, the SS oversaw the concentration camps. At the head of each camp was the Commandant; his adjutant put his orders into effect and was the bridge between the Commandant and the lower echelon on the SS. Direct command over the prisoners was wielded by the Officer-in-Charge (Lagerfuehrer). Each camp usually had three Officers-in-Charge who rotated on a twenty-four hour basis. While supposedly subordinate to the Commandant, it was the Lagerfuehrer who made the

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[9]These figures are from Broszat, p. 504. Again, statistics vary.

major decisions regarding the inmates. All prisoner affairs were passed from the internees to the Officer-in-Charge through the Roll Call Officer (Rapportfuehrer). Each camp had two Roll Call Officers who rotated daily. Under the Rapportfuehrer were the Block Leaders (Blockfuehrer) who were in charge of the individual barracks. The Detail Leaders, in charge of the prisoners' labor details, were equal in rank to the Block Leaders. The only autonomous camp subdivision was the Political Section, which controlled prisoner and SS records and which was headed by a high-ranking Gestapo agent.[10]

The SS also encouraged a prisoner hierarchy to emerge through which the Nazis hoped to prevent comaraderie. The establishment of a prisoner hierarchy meant that inmates would have to compete for the more enviable positions and that prisoner-officials would have to mimic their SS counterparts in order to escape punishment and loss of status. There were three Senior Camp Inmates (Lageraelteste) whom the SS appointed and who were the prisoners' representatives before the Schutzstaffeln. A Senior Block Inmate (Blockaelteste) and his assistants, the Barrack Orderlies (Stubenaelteste), were nominated for each barrack by the Lageraelteste. They were to maintain order and, more importantly, distribute rations. The Kapos and Assistant Prisoner Foremen (Vorarbeiter) were in charge of labor details. Often prisoner-officials were convicted Aryan criminals who treated their compatriots more harshly than the SS did. Political prisoners who attained positions in the hierarchy, on

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[10]Haft, p. 24; Manvell, pp. 139-40; Smolen, pp. 24-5.

the other hand, were noted for their leniency.[11]

While the striped, pajama-like uniforms were standard for the average internees,[12] there was a means devised to distinguish the various prisoner categories. Each inmate had a colored triangle sewn to the left breast and right trouser leg of his uniform. Political prisoners' triangles were red, criminals' green, Jehovah's Witnesses' purple, asocials' black, homosexuals' pink, and illegal emigrants' blue. In addition to their classification triangle, Jews were forced to wear a yellow triangle, so that the two, when sewn together, formed the star of David. Recidivists had a black bar affixed above their triangle, while race defilers had a black border around theirs.[13] Foreign captives were identified by letters within their triangles. Prisoners assigned to the disciplinary labor detachments had a white "A" superimposed on their marking. A prisoner suspected of planning to escape had a red and white target sewn or painted on the front and back of his uniform. Prisoners' serial numbers, which replaced names as a means of identification, were also sewn onto their clothing. In some camps the numbers were permanently tattooed on the inmates.[14]

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[11]Manvell, pp. 140-41. Prisoner officials were, of course, also chosen in the women's camps. Their titles were slightly different. A female Blockaelteste was a Blockova. Her personal maid was the Califactorka. The maid's assistants were the Vertretennen. (See Manvell, p. 141 and the glossary in Haft.)

[12]Except in the extermination center of Treblinka. See Jean Francois Steiner, Treblinka, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 132.

[13]Race defilers, according to the Nürnberg Laws, were Jews who had sexual relations with Aryans. See Anatomy of the SS State, pp. 32-7.

[14]Borszat, p. 452; Kogon, pp. 44-5; Smolen, pp. 10-11.

The Third Reich's internment centers were multifunctional. The initial purpose of the camp system was the elimination of political opposition. Later the camps became economically important. Even extermination was turned into a profitable venture. Those who arrived for liquidation had to relinquish their possessions. Furthermore, the victims' bodies were made functional. Gold teeth were removed from the corpses' mouths, while all body hair was shorn.[15] According to rumors, the exterminated prisoners' body fat was converted into soap.[16] Disregard for life also allowed the camps to function as centers for medical experimentation. Among the scientific studies undertaken at Dachau, Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbruck were X-ray sterilization, attempts to counter homosexuality with gland transplants, human freezing and revival tests, and typhus and yellow fever experimentation.[17]

Inaccessible areas were usually chosen as the sites for the concentration camps. Abandoned installations were frequently employed. For example, Dachau was established on the grounds of a deserted gunpowder factory, while Auschwitz was set up on the site of an old Polish army base. If a civilian population happened to reside nearby, they

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[15]The Auschwitz Museum still contains the last shipment of hair from the final liquidation before the camp's evacuation; Smolen, p. 80.

[16]Piotr Rawicz, in his novel Blood From the Sky (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), repeats a popular joke dealing with "Jewish soap." "Smiechowski owned a soap factory and on his products there had lately appeared three enigmatical letters: 'R. J. F.' In the opinion of the race which had considerable experience in solving such riddles, they stood for Rein Judisches Fett [Pure Jewish Fat]" (p. 60).

[17]Kogon, Chapter 14; Smolen, pp. 99-117.

were deported.[18]

The three main areas in every KL were the headquarters area, the SS residential center, and the prisoner compound.[19] The compound was surrounded by electrified barbed wire. Entrance to the camp was controlled by a gatehouse in which the office of the Officers-in-Charge and special prisoner cells were located. Inside the gate was an extensive barren space known as the roll-call area. The prisoners' one-story wooden and two-story masonry barracks were located behind the roll-call area. The one-story barracks had two wings, the two-story edifices four. A wing contained a day room and sleeping facilities for one to two hundred prisoners, although over four hundred inmates might be crowded in. In these sleeping quarters, cots with straw mattresses covered with checkered sheets and one or two blankets were organized in tiers. The day rooms contained benches and tables as well as the prisoners' lockers; these were sectioned wooden boxes in which the inmates stored their tin plates, cups, and spoons. Sanitary facilities consisted of open latrine pits twenty-five feet long, twelve feet deep and twelve feet wide. Wooden poles accommodating twelve to fifteen men were set up. In the larger camps the compound area might have also contained the mess, the prisoners' hospital and the crematory. The wide camp streets were totally unpaved.

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[18]Borszat, p. 429; Smolen, p. 2.

[19]For a complete description of the physical setup of the camps, see Kogon, Chapter 4.

The camp day began between four and five o'clock in the summer, between six and seven in the winter.[20] Half an hour was provided for washing, dressing, breakfasting, eliminating, and bed-making. Breakfast consisted of a piece of bread--usually issued the preceding evening--and a pint of thin soup or sugarless, milkless ersatz coffee.

Morning roll-call followed. On a given signal each barrack's internees marched eight abreast to their assigned positions in the roll-call area. After the prisoners were tallied, they were ordered to salute the Officer-in-Charge. If they did not remove their caps in unison, the procedure was repeated. Afterwards, the camp laborers marched off in double time, frequently being forced to sing while the camp band played.

The only respite from daily labor was a half an hour for lunch, the only hot meal of the day, which consisted of a quart of thin broth. Work ended in the winter at five o'clock, in the summer at eight. Evening roll-call followed, with the internees again being forced to stand while they were counted in order to detect escapes. Those laborers who had died during the day were carried to roll-call. Any mistake in tallying necessitated rechecking and created a delay of several hours. If a prisoner had escaped, the whole camp frequently remained standing until he was recaptured. After the counting was completed, public punishment was meted out. Only then were the inmates allowed to retire to their barracks. Dinner, consisting of bread, a pat of margarine, and a sliver of sausage or a spoonful of cottage cheese, was issued after evening roll-call.

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[20]For a further description of the daily routine in the camps see Haft, pp. 26-8, and Kogon, Chapter 7.

Some prisoners had to continue to work for several hours into the night. The rest congregated in the camp streets, in the barracks, in the washrooms, or in the latrines. Some went to bed. Depending on the season, taps sounded between eight and ten o'clock. Within thirty minutes everyone, except those working, had to be indoors and in bed. Even in the winter the inmates were allowed to sleep only in their shirts.

Food meant survival in the concentration camps. The internees provisions had a maximum caloric value of 1500 calories per day.[21] Those inmates who were unable to obtain extra rations could not survive for an extended period of time. Aryan prisoners, in the pre-war camps, were allowed to receive provisions in the mail; however, they were often confiscated by the postal censors. Internees who volunteered or were assigned to certain work details procured extra rations. Those employed in "Canada," the labor detachment which sorted the belongings of the liquidated, ate well and smuggled food into the camps.[22] The Sonderkommandos, the inmates in charge of burning corpses, were also well fed. Although the Nazis liquidated the Sonderkommandos every three months, the temptation of additional rations led many prisoners to volunteer for this assignment.[23] The prisoner elite, of course, ate well. Even though starvation was widespread, stealing another man's bread was

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[21]Manvell, p. 153.

[22]For a description of "Canada" see Rudolf Vrba and Alan Bestie, I Cannot Forgive (New York: Grove Press, 1964), pp. 132-40. Also see Tadeusz Borowski's short story "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," in This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, trans. Barbara Vedder (New York: Viking Press, 1967).

[23]Haft, p. 28.

considered the worst crime an inmate could commit and was drastically punished by other prisoners.[24]

With the work day lasting from nine to eleven hours, the labor detail an inmate was assigned to could also determine his fate. If a prisoner were assigned to an arduous work detail, he could only escape by bribing a Kapo and the clerks in the Labor Records Office. Otherwise, the internee had to learn to minimize his labor without attracting attention. Interior camp details were the easiest and most sought after. These included records and office work, prisoners' hospital, laundry, equipment room, carpenter shop, machine shop, and lumber yard. Being a skilled worker usually guaranteed survival.[25] Outside details were arduous. Many of the work sites were great distances from the camps, tools were primitive, and prisoner and SS supervisors brutal. Unlike other slave societies, in the Nazi camp the laborer was not an investment and easily replaced. For those workers provided to industrial concerns, the SS was paid.[26]

Poor sanitation, chronic water shortages, overcrowding, and malnutrition made epidemics quite common in the camps. The most prevalent diseases were tuberculosis, dyptheria, meningitis, and typhus. The SS

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[24]Vrba, p. 115.

[25]David Szmulewski, the member of the Auschwitz underground who took the photos of the crematoria which were smuggled out to the Polish Government in Exile, was a perfect example. Volunteering for a roofing assignment, though having no previous experience, he became a skilled roofer and survived the war. See Yuri Suhl, "Underground Assignment in Auschwitz," in They Fought Back, ed. Yuri Suhl (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967).

[26]Manvell, p. 164.

treated epidemics by liquidating the ill.[27] Among the less serious illnesses that long-term prisoners suffered from were low blood pressure, skin infections, chronic diarrhea, weakness of movement, impotence, loss of memory, and prolonged apathy. (Interestingly, there was a lower incidence of such common ailments as colds, chronic fatigue due to lack of sleep, and duodenal ulcers.[28])

Most camps had poor medical facilities. Auschwitz's hospital was comparatively well-equipped with two operating theatres and a large medical staff. On the other hand, in Buchenwald, not even primitive surgery could be performed until 1939;[29] the smaller labor camps were almost totally unequipped. Like the rest of the camp, the infirmary was overcrowded, with prisoners sharing cots regardless of their illnesses. Medicines were not provided. The prisoners' hospitals were staffed by inmate doctors, not all of whom had been trained in medicine, and a head SS physician. While prisoner-physicians could sporadically help their compatriots, they were more frequently placed in the position of having to aid the SS in liquidating the infirm. The hospitals were also the sites for many of the Nazis' experiments. Dental facilities were part of the hospital complex, with the only available treatment being extraction. Here, too, untrained prisoners were employed.

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[27]In this fashion the spotted typhus epidemic in Auschwitz in August 1942 was "cured." See Vrba, pp. 119-24.

[28]Manvell, p. 167; Kogon, p. 142.

[29]Haft, p. 29; Kogon, pp. 143-46; Manvell, p. 167.

Punishments in the Nazi concentration camps were meted out arbitrarily and a prisoner was never certain what type of disciplining his offense might warrant.[30] The offenses that merited the most drastic punishments were attempting to escape, sabotage (loosely defined), and political propagandizing. Escape was always punished by public flogging followed by public hanging, while the other two transgressions warranted execution by firing squad or starvation. Various minor offenses were also grounds for disciplining. These included keeping hands in pockets during cold weather, turning up a collar in the rain, missing buttons, dirtied uniforms (although inmates went without a change of clothing for months), unshined shoes, failure to salute, sloppy posture, extended latrine absences, stepping out of the rank and file during roll call, picking up cigarette butts, and eating garbage. The most common punishment was flogging. The other prevalent forms of disciplining included a ban on receiving mail (applicable only to Aryan prisoners in pre-war camps), penal drill (known as sport) during which the internees were forced to jump, roll, crawl, squat and run, working during off hours, deprivation of food, beatings, assignment to penal companies, hanging by the arms, and confinement to the standing cell. Four inmates were imprisoned in a standing cell which measured ninety centimeters by ninety centimeters and which contained only one air vent, five centimeters by five centimeters. The length of confinement varied. The water bunker (a water filled cell) and the dark cell were variations of the standing cell.

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[30]For a complete catalogue of punishments, see Smolen, pp. 55-76.

The psychological effect of concentration camp life was drastic.[31] The introduction to such an extreme situation frequently led to traumatization. The initiation period began with the transport to the camp; the internees were not informed of their destination, crowded into cattle cars lacking sanitary facilities, and not fed for the entire trip. Hence even before arriving the deportees were introduced to three common camp experiences: uncertainty, overcrowding and hunger. The novice prisoners were made to realize that they were no longer autonomous.

For Jewish transports arriving at Auschwitz and the other extermination centers, there was a selection at which time women, children, and unfit males were separated and sent to the gas chambers. Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim hypothesizes that Jewish passivity was an indication of the success of the transport process. The new internees who entered the camps were disinfected, registered, given numbers, and given a harsh introductory lecture by the Roll Call Officer. After having been provided uniforms, which usually did not fit, and having their hair shorn, the novice prisoners were assigned places to sleep. Assignment to labor details occurred twenty-four hours after arrival. The purpose of this camp initiation was to crush the prisoner's individuality and concept of self.

During their first six months the surviving prisoners were metamorphosed into concentrationaires. During this period several necessary

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[31]The information on the inmates' psychology is based on: Bruno Bettelheim, The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age (Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); Elie Cohn, Human Behavior in the Concentration Camps (New York: Norton and Company, 1953); Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

personality transformations occurred. There was regression to a more primitive state. The SS forced the inmates to adopt child-like behavior with the victims becoming dependent on their tormentors for all their basic necessities. Since hostility toward the SS was dangerous, prisoners began identifying with their captors, viewing them as strict father figures. According to psychologist Elie Cohen, "For all of us the SS was a father image of such ambivalence, however, that the intensity of identification varied from one minute to the next."[32] Needing to vent their hostilities, the concentration camp inmates turned against the outside world (their friends and families), fellow prisoners, minority groups, and themselves. During the first half year the internees continued to learn that individuality was dangerous. An individual's transgression resulted in group punishment. For example, the entire camp was usually disciplined with an extended roll call because of an escape. The inmates also learned that there was safety in the masses; that to be inconspicuous meant to survive.

To protect their psyches prisoners had to develop defenses. During initiation, denial of reality was the most prevalent reaction. Eventually, adjustments had to be made. Emotional detachment became obligatory. Daydreaming was quite prevalent among the older prisoners. Selective amnesia, the blocking out of unpleasant memories, was also common. Some internees, clinging to their past values, attempted to take pride in their work. An extreme example were the Kapos who strongly identified with the SS and brutally followed orders.

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[32]Cohen, p. 130.

According to Viktor Frankl, another psychologist who endured Nazi internment, the only way to survive the camp situation was to discover a reason for continued existence, to find a way of making life meaningful in this irrational universe. Hence, resistance and culture flourished in the camps, for both provided internees with reasons to stay alive and proved to the involved camp prisoners that they were still autonomous.

There were many forms of resistance.[33] Escape was an act of defiance; few escapes, however, were successful. More passive forms of resistance included shirking work and inefficiency. There was also organized defiance; almost every camp had a political underground. These underground organizations attempted to contact the outside, engineered escapes, and, when liquidation of a camp seemed imminent, led insurrections. With the aid of political prisoners, the Sonderkommandos' rebellions in Treblinka and Sobibor led to the dissolution of those extermination centers in 1943. In 1944, an insurrection at Auschwitz culminated in the destruction of one crematorium, while an uprising at Chelmno forced the closing of that liquidation center. The most passive and intriguing form of resistance, however, was cultural activity.

In the concentration camps prisoners did have a limited amount of leisure time and filled it with various activities. On Sundays, when

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[33]The two best works dealing with resistance during the Holocaust are Yuri Suhl, They Fought Back: The Story of Jewish Resistance in Nazi Europe (New York: Crown Publishers, 1967) and Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Conference on Manifestations of Jewish Resistance (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1971).

there was a respite from work, the prisoners might stroll or lie in the sun. The SS encouraged sports for the healthy and still strong. There were soccer games, handball, and volleyball. There were even boxing matches such as the one Tadeusz Borowski describes in his short story "Auschwitz Our Home (A Letter)."[34] In the older camps, radio music was piped into the barracks over public address systems. In May 1941 the Buchenwald SS equipped the hall normally employed for public hangings as a motion picture theatre, and for the next four years, old discarded movies were shown at irregular intervals. Buchenwald, however, was the only camp with such a film theatre.[35] In some internment centers libraries were established using books received from home or discovered by "Canada," or purchased with prisoner contributions. The latrine also provided many of the library's acquisitions. Since toilet paper was scarce, shreds of banned literary works were provided to the prisoners by the SS. The camp intelligentsia scavenged through these scraps, discovering bits and pieces of classics which they collected for the libraries. The Nazis made available their propagandistic newspapers.[36]

Artists also attempted to make their compatriots' lives more bearable. The same prisoner orchestra which played marches as the camp laborers left for and returned from work were allowed on Sundays to entertain the resting inmates. According to survivor Dr. Rudolf Vrba, "My position was made tolerable only by the music of the Auschwitz

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[34]Borowski, pp. 93-4.

[35]Kogon, p. 139; Manvell, p. 155.

[36]Kogon, pp. 139-41.

orchestra, truly a superb body of musicians drawn from the capitals of the world."[37] In Buchenwald a jazz combo entertained the internees on their days of rest.[38] In the Czech camp Theresienstadt, the barracks became the scene of nightly cultural activity.

Obviously then, the desire for culture and entertainment was never extinguished. Nor was the desire to perform. Remarkably, a variety of theatre activities existed in various camps. Since a number of dramatic works to be discussed in this thesis employ the concept of internees performing, including the American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz, the Pip Simmons Groups' An die Musik, Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne, and Alberto Moravia's Il Dio Kurt, it might be worthwhile spending some time analyzing the phenomenon of theatrical activities in the Nazi concentration camps.[39]

Theatrical Activities in the Camps

The most common theatrical activity in the Nazi concentration camps was the presentation of clandestine programs of songs and readings in the individual barracks. In Buna-Monowitz (Auschwitz III), a group

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[37]Vrba, p. 11.

[38]Jorge Semprun, The Long Voyage, trans. Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 127. Although this is a fictional account, Semprun, who was interned in Buchenwald, faithfully reproduces the concentration camp background and his facts are trustworthy.

[39]Much of the following material appeared in my article "Theatrical Activities in the Nazi Concentration Camps," Performing Arts Journal, 1, No. 2 (Fall 1976):3-11. There was a great deal of theatrical activity during the Holocaust. For a related study detailing the survival of theatre in the Polish ghettos see: Moshe Fass, "Theatrical Activities in the Polish Ghettos During the Years 1939-1942," Journal of Jewish Social Studies, 38 (Winter 1976):54-72.

of Jewish cultural leaders, including the author Joseph Wolf, the actor Moishe Potashinski, and the Dutch, Yiddish and Hebrew scholar Itzhak Goldman, organized such entertainments. In his memoirs, Potashinski, a former member of the renowned Yiddish Vilna Troupe, describes a typical presentation. The audience sat on their bunks; the performers recited fragments from Sholom Aleichem's Tevye the Milkman, Chaim Grade's The Cry of Generations, and Moishe Kolbak's The Bells Have Rung. They also sang Itzik Manger's "The Song of Our Teacher" and Mordecai Gebirtig's "Our Town is Burning," a song commemorating a 1938 Polish program in Przytyk.[40] A similar production, staged in the Monowitz infirmary for the Jewish doctors, was prefaced by a lecture discussing the contributions of the Yiddish theatre to European theatre. (Apparently, one of the most popular divertissements in the camps was literary discussion. Nico Rost notes that on numerous occasions in his Dachau barrack, he and compatriots discussed the dramatic works of Racine, Goethe, Mickiewicz and Toller. One full evening was spent analyzing Stanislavski's production of Hautpmann's Before Sunrise and another devising a short play which dealt with what the reactions of the great German literati would

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[40]Yonas Turkov, "Teater un Konsertn in di Getos un Kontsentratsye Lagern (Theatre and Concerts in the Ghettos and Concentration Camps)," in Yidisher Teater in Yirope . . . Poyln (Yiddish Theatre in Europe . . . Poland) (New York: Knight Publishing, 1968), pp. 500-01. (All translations from the Yiddish are my own. Transliterations of titles and names have been prepared in accordance with the table found in Uriel Weinrich's Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968], p. 228. However, if a name has an accepted transliteration, I have employed it.)

have been had they discovered themselves in Dachau.[41]) Songs were followed by readings from Isaac Loeb Peretz, Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Moishe Nadir, A. Lutzky, and Baruch Shefner; this program also concluded with the singing of "Our Town is Burning."[42]

Similar concerts were organized in various barracks of Auschwitz. Among the other performers who entertained fellow prisoners were David Abramovitsch and David Bergholtz. Some entertainers were able to earn necessities and luxuries by staging such concerts. Moishe Polaver and Shmai Rosenbloom, after entertaining "Canada" laborers, received cigarettes for remuneration. The Yiddish actor and theatre historian Yonas Turkov, a survivor of the Holocaust, describes Polaver and Rosenbloom's presentation: "Instead of a stage a table was used, on which both actors stood and gave their recitals. The program consisted of songs and recitations . . . and humorous sketches by A. Sternberg and Moishe Nadir. These performers also presented recitals in the infirmary and Block 13. Their presentations were enormously successful."[43] Primo Levi, an Italian inmate, recounts an even more primitive one-man show in Auschwitz:

> From the outside door, secretly and looking around cautiously, the story-teller comes in. He is seated on Wachsmann's bunk and at once gathers around him a small, attentive, silent crowd. He chants an interminable Yiddish rhapsody, always the same one, in rhymed quatrains, of a resigned and penetrating melancholy (but perhaps I only remember it so because of

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[41]Nico Rost, Goethe in Dachau: Literatur und Wirklichkeit (Germany: Verlag und Velt, 1948), pp. 57-8, 71, 79, 180-81.

[42]Turkov, p. 501.

[43]Ibid., p. 502.

> the time and place I heard it?); from the few words that I understand, it must be a song that he composed himself, in which he has enclosed all the life of the Lager in minute detail. Some are generous and give the story-teller a pinch of tobacco or a needleful of thread; others listen intently but give nothing.[44]

Similarly improvised entertainments were staged in Auschwitz's women's camp. The Yiddish actress Mila Veyslitz, the wife of Moishe Potashinski, presented programs of songs and readings in Block 10.[45] Kitty Hart, a survivor of Birkenau's female camp, was fortunate enough to be assigned to a comparatively easy work detail barrack. Here various impromptu entertainments were organized:

> Supper over then camp entertainment. As a rule, the Greek girls had wonderful voices and their very popular sentimental song "Momma" made most of the others sob, for nearly all had lost their mothers. Then there were the Hungarians who could dance so well, they dressed up, in rags, and even on one occasion staged a complete ballet. There were also many gifted writers who recited their poetry. Comical acts were very popular, especially those imitating the SS.[46]

As in Auschwitz, artistic internees in various other concentration camps attempted to make their compatriots existences more tolerable. Holocaust historian Dr. Mark Dvorzhetski points out that clandestine meetings, which included community singing and recitations, were held in the barracks of the Jewish Estonian camps, even though these were among

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[44]Primo Levi, If This is a Man, trans. Stuart Wolf (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. 62.

[45]Turkov, pp. 502-03.

[46]Kitty Hart, I Am Alive (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1961), p. 72.

the worst labor sites established by the Reich.[47] In the Riga labor center in Latvia, the actress Musia Deyches often recited poetry and drama for fellow female prisoners. Sirele Lipovski and the Czech opera singer L. Burian entertained the women who were laboring for the German Electrical Organization.[48] In the Malines transit camp in Belgium, Veyslitz and Potashinski, both of whom were imprisoned in this camp before being transported to Auschwitz, organized clandestine entertainments. According to Turkov, the Nazis interned prisoners of French, German, Flemish and Dutch origins in Malines, many of whom were theatre artists. The SS exploited these performers for propaganda. The Nazis forced them to present "variety shows" in the camp yard on Saturdays and Sundays; reports of these productions would then appear in the Belgian press to allay fears of still hidden Jews and to counter rumors of German atrocities. At the same time, however, Veyslitz and Potashinski organized two surrepitious presentations in the camp barracks; thematically, the material selected dealt with the historical suffering of the Jews. Their second presentation, on April 15, 1943, was their last in Malines, for four days later all those imprisoned in this Belgian camp were shipped to Auschwitz.[49]

In the women's camp of Ravensbrück, French concentrationaire Denise Dufournier was asked to organize her barrack's spare time. "Travel

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[47]Mark Dvorzhetski, Jewish Camps in Estonia: 1942-44 (Jerusalem, 1970), see the chapter entitled "Cultural Life." (In Hebrew with an English abstract.)

[48]Turkov, p. 511.

[49]Ibid., pp. 505-506.

talks, philosophical discussions, discourses on our folklore, alternated with the precis of one of Shakespeare's plays. . . . A revue of great originality was staged in twenty-four hours. Choruses were trained to sing classical music in perfect harmony. Poets were invited to read their verse."[50] Corrie ten Boom describes similar concerts in the Dutch transit camp Vught,[51] as does Micheline Mauriel in her reminiscences of Neubrandenburg; Mauriel remembers one camp performer in particular: "Among the performers who joined us in the summer of 1944 was Fanny Marette, the comedienne, who amused us so greatly with her imitation of a man at the movies. She sat on a stool . . . pretending the bowl on her lap was the gentleman's hat."[52] In Bergen-Belsen, Sammy Feder, who later, when Belsen was converted into a Displaced Persons (DP) camp, helped to organize the famous Belsen Katzet [Concentration Camp] Theatre which toured throughout Europe, aided the primitive attempts to keep theatre alive, even when it meant making great sacrifices: "We had produced shows even in the concentration camp. We used to improvise a stage right in the middle of a foul barracks, make an old blanket into a curtain and put on a show, with myself as producer, for Chanukah, Purim, or whenever we felt we had a 'good' guard who would not be too harsh. Sometimes we paid for it

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[50]Denise Defournier, Ravensbrück, trans. F. W. McPherson (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1948), p. 29.

[51]Corrie ten Boom, A Prisoner and Yet . . . (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1947), p. 66.

[52]Micheline Mauriel, An Ordinary Camp, trans. Margaret S. Summers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), pp. 75-6.

with casualties, but we never gave it up."[53]

The diversity of the materials presented indicates that these clandestine programs of readings, sketches, and songs served various functions. The need for escapist entertainment accounts for the popularity of humorous works by Sholom Aleichem, A. Sternberg, and Moishe Nadir. The desire to cling to tradition resulted in lectures, like the one on the contributions of the Yiddish theatre, and the reading of I. L. Peretz, H. N. Bialik, and other noted Jewish authors. These surreptitious entertainments also functioned as outlets for resistance. Potashinski and Veyslitz chose works describing Jewish suffering. "Our Town is Burning," sung at many of the Auschwitz gatherings, was probably meant not only to lament the current plight of the internees but to assure camp audiences that previous oppression had been overcome. The prisoners in Kitty Hart's barrack resisted by mimicking the SS. Even more importantly, these minor theatrical activities aided some in surviving. Necessities such as additional food were rewarded by fellow prisoners. (Parenthetically, on occasion, even the SS might reward imprisoned performers for entertaining them. For example, in Auschwitz and Majdanek, Greek singers and dancers were provided extra rations by their Nazi audiences.[54]) Gisella Perl, who was an inmate-doctor in Auschwitz, relates the tale of a French actress who, in order to escape

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[53]Sammy Feder, "The Yiddish Theatre of Belsen," in Belsen (Israel: Irgun Sheerit Hapleita Me'Haezor Habriti, 1957), pp. 135-36.

[54]Judith S. Newman, In the Hell of Auschwitz (New York: Exposition Press, 1963), pp. 57-8 and R. J. Minney, I Shall Fear No Evil: The Story of Dr. Alina Breuda (London: William Kimber, 1966), pp. 93-4.

a gas chamber selection, "wandered from one block to another, singing her arias to obtain right of asylum."[55]

The Nazis frequently oversaw cabaret-like productions organized by prisoners. For the 1938 New Year, Buchenwald's camp Commandant ordered the internees to give a week of "humorous" presentations. A prisoner, who before his internment had been the master of ceremonies in a Berlin Music Hall, was chosen to discover talented camp inmates, finally selecting fifteen. According to Curt Daniel, who was imprisoned in Buchenwald and Dachau and was involved in theatrical activities in both camps, other inmates constructed a theatre by tearing down the partitions of a large barrack and constructing a proscenium stage along the middle of one of the hut's long sides. A few lights were hung and some crude scenic pieces constructed. The presentations, each usually attended by 500 prisoners and various SS officials, were vaudeville-like with jugglers, acrobats, dancers, magicians, and musicians. That the comedic sketches satirized camp conditions did not seem to vex the Nazi officials.[56]

In Oranienburg, one of the early concentration camps, prisoners were given permission to stage shows once a month which were attended by the SS as well as the internees. The productions were presented in the main barrack's hall "at one end of which was a platform of planks set on four barrels, a curtain made of regulation blankets, and footlights

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[55]Gisella Perl, I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz (New York: International University Press, 1948), p. 102.

[56]Curt Daniel, "The Freest Theatre in the Reich: In the German Concentration Camps," Theatre Arts, 25 (November 1941):804-05.

fashioned out of lanterns."[57] Originally the inmates "had put on a sort of amateur night, loud, sentimental, and uproarious."[58] In 1938, however, Baron Rudolf Carl von Ripper, a political prisoner, authored a subtle anti-fascist piece. The comic show had a backdrop depicting a large map of Germany, with every concentration camp denoted by a symbol of a castle. (While the German word burg means castle, many of the early camps' names ended in "burg.") The dramatic action consisted of an American being given a "supervised (by the SS) tour" of these German "castles." All the jokes satirized the Nazis' penal institutions. The American is told that although at one time the castles were prisons, they are now used "for educational purposes only." When he is taken to Papenburg, where camp prisoners slaved in swamps, he is informed that he too will be able to partake in "water sports." Remarkably, here too the SS seemed untroubled by the political humor.

In 1940, for Christmas, the prisoners in the French Vernet concentration camp were allowed to organize entertainments in each of their three sections. Arthur Koestler, an inmate of this internment center, provides a lengthy account of these cabaret presentations:

> The festivities consisted of an amateur variety show in an empty barrack. . . . There was a Russian choir which sang Hungarian folk songs; an acrobat from Barrack 32, a Jugoslav [sic] choir which sang Jugoslav folksongs, a clown solo of Storfers, a Polish choir which sang Polish folksongs, a Czech choir which sang Czech folksongs, and then we all sang the Marseilles and were marched back to our barracks.

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[57]David Wolff, "Drama Behind the Barbed Wire," Theatre Arts Committee Magazine, 1 (March 1939):15.

[58]Ibid.

> . . . Section A and B also had their performances and we learnt that B, the "politicals," had put up an excellent satirical revue about the conditions in the camp. . . . It goes to the credit of Pernod [Vichy SS official] and his staff that they watched the performance of B to the end, holding their bellies with laughter and slapping their thighs. Their attitude was a perfect illustration of the traditional French respect for l'espirit--and of the futility of it: for naturally the conditions of Homo Veriensis remained the same as before.[59]

These productions were repeated for the New Year's festivities.

In Buchenwald there was also underground cabaret, both of a political and non-political nature; the non-political performances were staged by professional entertainers, while the political cabaret was organized by amateurs. On weekdays, several groups, each consisting of five men, would tour the political blocks between 6:00 o'clock and lights out. Inside the barracks the arrangement was similar to the Viennese Kleinkunstbühne, with the audience seated in a small circle around the performers.

> The first item was always the singing of the Buchenwald song by the group. This was an excellent song of the Volkslied type. . . . Next came a humorous monologue of an imaginery conversation between the drunken camp leader and the equally drunken leader of the German labor front, Robert Ley. . . . This would be followed by more political songs. The most important item would be a short play for three players, lasting some twenty minutes, a mixture of comedy and satire attacking the administration of the camp and the blood-soaked system which maintained it.[60]

Writers interned in the camp, such as the Austrian poet and dramatist

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[59]Arthur Koestler, The Scum of the Earth (London: Hutchinson, 1968), pp. 142-43.

[60]Daniel, p. 806.

Jura Soyfer, authored these shows.[61]

Surreptitious cabaret presentations were also common in Dachau. Since Sundays were days of rest for the prisoners and for the SS, inmates were provided the opportunity to organize entertainments. In the barracks habitated by the political prisoners, cabaret was frequently staged. Curt Daniels describes these shows as being "characterized by the recital of poems criticizing the regime and making fun of camp personnel, humorous political monologues lashing the Nazis, and anti-fascist patter for one, two, or three actors."[62]

As in Buchenwald, cabaret employing professional actors was organized by the non-political prisoners. Ironically, with the Anschluss the quality of the cabaret performers improved since many Austrian entertainers such as the actor-playwright Paul Morgan were imprisoned. Daniel's account again indicates how complex these productions were:

> With the exception of some of the cabaret acts the material was "foreign" to the camp. It was the Vienna or Berlin stage transformed in miniature to ill-lit huts of Dachau. Among the . . . prisoners were many well known in the world of European theatre, actors, singers, composers, and artists--the drawing cards of Vienna's leading cabarets. The performances generally took place inside a hut, with some hundreds of prisoners grouped in a circle around the artists. Sentries were posted at the ends of the huts to make certain that there were no SS men in the locality. At times there might be three shows running simultaneously in these huts. The "stars" ran from one hut to another for their turns.[63]

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[61]Horst Jarka, ed. and trans., The Legacy of Jura Soyfer, 1912-1939 (Montreal: Engendra Press, 1977), pp. 346-50. Soyfer also authored the lyrics to the well-known Dachau lied. The lyrics and music to this camp song can be found in Jarka, pp. 351-54.

[62]Daniel, p. 803.

[63]Ibid., pp. 803-04.

Bruno Heilig, another Dachau survivor, presents an even more detailed description of the individual artists' contributions to this camp cabaret:

> Every Sunday a cabaret performance was given by the artists in the camp. Fritz Gruenbaum, Paul Morgan, Hermann Leopoldi, and the Berlin singer Kurt Fuss. At first the idea of starting a cabaret in a concentration camp seemed to us absurd; but it proved a success. Crowds of prisoners attended the performances. Gruenbaum and Morgan gave their old sketches, which were uproariously applauded by their comrades. Leopoldi made a great hit with Viennese Lieder. Kurt Fuss sang sophisticated ballads about women and love. "From early youth the cunning band have had me on the string"--this song had not been absolutely the latest thing even when I was still a schoolboy, but in a concentration camp it is of no importance to hear only the latest popular favourites. These cabaret matinees gave us the illusion of a scrap of freedom. For an hour or two one almost had a sense of being at home.[64]

Cabaret also existed in Auschwitz, Westerbork, and Theresienstadt. According to psychologist Viktor Frankl, who was imprisoned in Auschwitz, a kind of cabaret was established in that camp in a temporarily cleared hut; programs of sketches satirizing camp conditions were produced. The Kapos and those prisoners not assigned to evening work details attended.[65] Similar presentations must have taken place in Westerbork, a Dutch transit camp, for Bruce Zortman states that "camp comedian Max Ehrlich accompanied by Willy Rosen at the piano revived their revues Vinegar and Oil and Mixed Fruit Cocktail before meeting their untimely death."[66]

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[64]Bruno Heilig, Men Crucified (London: Eyre and Spottinwoode, 1941), p. 121

[65]Frankl, p. 40.

[66]Bruce H. Zortman, "Theatre in Isolation: The Judischer Kulturbund of Nazi Germany," Educational Theatre Journal, 24 (May 1972): 159. A 1975 Israeli documentary, The 81st Blow, which uses captured German footage to illustrate Jewish oppression under the Third Reich, contains a few filmed moments of cabaret performances in Westerbork.

Historian H. G. Adler notes that cabaret flourished in Theresienstadt, though much of it was clandestine or semi-legal.[67] Performing in the camp's delapidated buildings, the most noted cabaret artist was the Czech Karl Schwenk, whose highly satirical material led to his being nicknamed "the Aristophanes of Theresienstadt." Holocaust historian Nora Levin describes

> . . . one his most unforgettable productions . . . The Last Cyclist, based on the old saying that "Jews and cyclists are responsible for all misfortunes." The plot is an allegory of Hitler-Europe, but with a happy ending. All cyclists and those who cannot prove that their ancestors had been pedestrians for six generations are deported to a horrible island by lunatic rulers of a mythical country. One cyclist--the last--escapes deportation and is first exhibited in a zoo. Everything can be blamed on him. In the end, however, he prevails, and the rule of the lunatics is defeated, at least on the stage.[68]

In December 1942, a Kaffehaus was established in this model camp for cabaret performances.[69]

The popularity and proliferation of cabaret was probably due to the ease with which productions could be mounted. Any available space could be transformed, as was done in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, and Theresienstadt. It seems quite apparent that these cabaret presentations were acts of resistance and attacks on the Third Reich. The heavily satirical content of these entertainments has already been noted.

Cabaret was not the only popular performing art to survive in the Nazi concentration camps. Probably the most unique theatrical presentation

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[67]H. G. Adler, Theresienstadt, 1941-1945: Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft (Tubingen, 1955), p. 595.

[68]Levin, p. 485.

[69]Adler, p. 595.

in an internment center took place in Kaiserwald, near Riga. A group of female internees, in the German Electrical Organization's block, decided to honor their lenient Lageraelteste by organizing a puppet show for her birthday. The organizer of this project was a Flora Rome from Wilno; assisting her were Adela Bay, Musia Deyches, Regi Litvas, and the Kotik sisters. Rome authored the satirical program and supervised the construction of the puppets, which were made out of material cut from the prisoners' pin-striped uniforms and sewn together with threat from their kerchiefs. A bench was converted into a puppet stage and blankets employed as curtains. The text was spoken by Serele Lipovski and Musia Alperovitsch. The production was directed by Musia Deyches. Traditional songs, sung a capella, were included in the program. This unique production was so successful it had to be staged twice.[70]

Children's theatre was also produced in some internment centers. Vittel, a French resort, was transformed into a camp serving as a way station for Auschwitz. Here Jews who had earlier taken refuge from Hitler in France were imprisoned until being deported to the gas chambers. Nevertheless, the Hebrew and Yiddish poet-dramatist Itzhak Katzenelson organized various cultural events including a Chanukah presentation for sixty interned children.[71] A Chanukah entertainment implied an act of passive resistance. The festival, celebrating the Jews regaining control over the Jerusalem temple from the Syrians, glorifies active Jewish defiance even in the face of overwhelming odds. (It is no coincidence

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[70]Turkov, pp. 510-11.

[71]Ibid., p. 514.

that Sammy Feder remembered that the two holidays which inspired theatrical activities in Bergen-Belsen were Chanukah and Purim. Purim also commemorates Jewish victory over oppression.)

Probably the most successful production in Theresienstadt was an original children's opera, Brundibar, composed by the Czech Hans Kras. Levin summarizes the dramatic action:

> All the children of Theresienstadt were swept up in their collective hatred of a wicked organ grinder who refuses to let needy children sing for money in the district he considers his own beat. Animals finally advise the children to get together and fight the wicked man. The evil Brundibar is finally defeated. Again, the gay marching song that expresses their victory became a substitute defiance of the evil the Jews were helpless to fight in the Ghetto: "Beat your drum, we have won. . . . We did not give in! We are not afraid!" The character of Brundibar was so skillfully humanized by the fourteen-year-old orphan Honza Treichlinger that Honza became a camp celebrity.[72]

Full-scale productions were mounted both in Czestochowa and Theresienstadt. The Polish Czestochowa labor camp was run by the Wehrmacht rather than by the SS and, therefore, daily existence was comparatively more tolerable. The first entertainments presented in this camp, in early 1944, were organized by an actor from the Warsaw Yiddish Theatre, Shie Tigel, a singer named Zisman, and a Czestochowan amateur, Jacobowitsch. Going from barrack to barrack, they created an improvised travelling theatre by placing a plank over bunks and employing a curtain of blankets sewn together. Since Tigel, the group's regisseur, had an easy work detail, he was able to devote time to reconstructing theatrical materials from memory, while holding rehearsals in the evenings. With the arrival of more Jews, including a complete sixteen-man band,

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[72]Levin, p. 485.

his theatre ensemble grew. Even more remarkably, "a special barrack for theatre, with a stage, curtains, and light reflectors was constructed."[73] The first full-scale production, a classic Yiddish farce, The Two Kuni Lemels,[74] was presented four times with music arranged by the camp orchestra's conductor, Katershinski. Understandably, Czestochowa's theatre became a popular institution, with performances given every Saturday and Sunday.

According to Tigel, the only damper on the holiday-like festivities was the presence of German observers. Other productions directed by the Warsaw actor included Goldfadden's Hungerman un Kibtsnizon, Lateiner's Sarah Scheindel, a musical entitled I Am to Blame, and a Yiddish version of Sergei Tretyakov's Roar China. For Roar China, intensive rehearsals were held, new scenery painted, new costumes sewn, and an original score was composed by Katershinski. The only change in Tigel's adaptation of the Soviet propaganda play was that instead of the red banner being flown at the play's end, a green flag was substituted. At the end of 1944, when control of the Czestochowa camp was turned over to the SS, this short-lived, yet productive, theatrical venture ceased operation.[75]

Analyzing the varied fare produced under Tigel's supervision sheds more light on the functions of concentration camp theatre. The

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[73]Turkov, p. 508.

[74]For a detailed plot synopsis of The Two Kuni Lemels, see Nahma Sandrow, Vagabond Stars: A World History of Yiddish Theatre (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 48-9.

[75]Turkov, pp. 507-09.

Goldfadden plays and the Lateiner drama are all classics of the Yiddish theatre; Goldfadden, for that matter, is considered the "father" of Yiddish drama.[76] The productions of these works indicate the desire to cling to tradition. Roar China, on the other hand, could only have been meant as propaganda. Tretyakov's play deals with the exploitation of Chinese coolies by Western powers. When a Chinese boatman kills an American businessman in self-defense, retributions are demanded, including the execution of three innocent coolies. The final scene, however, depicts the successful beginnings of a revolt by the oppressed.[77] The parallels between the exploited Chinese and Jewish slave laborers in Czestochowa are quite obvious. For example, just as the boatman's act of self-defense resulted in brutal and arbitrary revenge, any act of resistance or attempt to escape usually culminated in the execution of innocent concentration camp prisoners. Therefore, in Shie Tigel's production, Roar China's denouement may have been intended as an incitement for revolt. Tigel apparently realized how propagandistic his production was and, fearing German reprisals, he presented it only once.

In Theresienstadt numerous full-scale productions were mounted, primarily in remodelled attics. In 1943 and 1944, the Germans ordered programs of theatre, opera, and cabaret produced in this model camp. Works by Schiller, Shakespeare, Shaw, Hoffmannsthal, Herzl and Molnar, including The Play's the Thing directed by Ben Spanier, were produced. Stories by the Yiddish author Isaac Loeb Peretz were also

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[76]David S. Lifson, The Yiddish Theatre in America (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), pp. 37-9.

[77]Sergei Mikhailovich Tretyakov, Roar China: An Episode in Nine Scenes, trans. F. Polianovska and Barbara Nixon (London: M. Lawrence Limited, 1931).

dramatized.[78] Mirko Tuma, a member of Theresienstadt's cultural community, reveals that Karl Schwenk was also a prime mover in the camp's "legitimate" theatre and that these productions were quite elaborate affairs:

> Schwenk staged excerpts from Cyrano de Bergerac and two productions: Molière's Georges Dandin and significantly, Gogol's The Marriage. These performances were no make-shift events, but subtle professional productions, designed by Frantisek Zelenka, the Jo Mielziner of Czechoslovakia, who in the thirties designed most of the major productions at the National Theatre in Prague. Schwenk was deeply influenced by K. B. Hilar, the greatest stage director of post World War I Czechoslovakia, himself a pupil of both Reinhardt and Piscator. (It is hard to believe, but the costumes, particularly for The Marriage, were rich and authentic and the lighting design a work of art in itself.)
>
> Schwenk directed the old Czech folk story "Esther" in an experimental style which he learned not only from Hilar whose experiments retained the Romantic or Expressionistic flair, but from the avant-garde Czech director E. F. Burian (himself a concentrationaire in a different camp). . . . Burian's influence--pre-war Burian, that is--was particularly traceable in Schwenk's cabaret work.[79]

Playwriting also flourished in Theresienstadt:

> A young German painter, Peter Kein, wrote a commedia dell-arte--a total escape from camp reality which was not produced in the original German but rather in a brilliant Czech translation by the poet Zdenek Lederer who, incidentally, wrote the most intensive study of Terezin after the war in London. I translated Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and adapted Calderon's The Judge of Zalamea, published in Prague in 1947 and dedicated to the memory of Schwenk who had worked with me on the new structural concept of this great anti-militaristic play.[80]

According to Adler, opera was even more popular than drama in Theresienstadt. Though they were difficult to produce, fragments from

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[78]Livia Rotkirchen, "Creative Life in the Shadow of Death," Yad Vashem Bulletin, No. 18 (1966):57-59.

[79]Mirko Tuma, "Memories of Theresienstadt," Performing Arts Journal, 1, No. 2 (Fall 1976):16-17.

[80]Ibid., p. 17.

the classic operas were often presented. The complexity of the productions ran the gamut from simple piano accompaniment to full-scale stagings. Tosca, Aida, Carmen, Die Fledermaus, and La Boheme were among the operas seen in the Czech camp.[81] Conductor Rafael Schachter was involved in many of these productions. Among his other credits were concert versions of Verdi's Requiem and Smetana's The Battered Bride, which premiered on November 28, 1942, and was presented thirty-five times.[82]

That the Nazis, in many instances, oversaw and encouraged the productions in this model camp explains why safe classics and operas were so frequently presented. Yet, even Mirko Tuma, who believes "that the equation between artistic activities in Terezin (particularly in theatre and music) and rebellion, or rather calculated rebellion, has been in most instances a myth,"[83] admits that passive resistance was at the heart of Schachter's Requiem:

> There is no adequate description of a moment in music when the "Dies Irae" and "Sanctus" were sung by a chorus, three quarters of which knew they'd be shipped in cattle wagons to Auschwitz the following day. This concert of the Requiem, I feel . . . was the ultimate outcry and triumph of human spirit and the final defiance of Nazism: a metaphysical defiance.[84]

Another example of this type of "metaphysical defiance" can be seen in an analysis of Der Kaiser von Atlantis, an anti-Hitler, anti-war

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[81]Adler, p. 590.

[82]Gerald Green, Artists of Terezin (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969), p. 73.

[83]Tuma, 17.

[84]Ibid., 16. A fictionalized account of this production can be found in Josef Bor's The Terezin Requiem, trans. Edith Pargeter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

opera, composed by Viktor Ullman, an Austrian-Jew composer-conductor, while imprisoned in Theresienstadt.[85] Ullman had hoped to present the work to fellow inmates but, after rehearsals had begun, the Nazis prohibited its production. Originally cast in the opera were some of the most renowned Jewish singers of Europe, including Karel Berman as Death, Marian Podlier, Hilde Aronson-Lindt, David Gruenfeld, and Walter Windholz.[86] Since Der Kaiser von Atlantis is a portrayal of the Nazi concentration camps, authored by prisoners before the conclusion of World War II, it might be appropriate to analyze the musical composition at this point.

The concentration camp opera is set in the kingdom of Atlantis which is ruled by the tyrannical Uberall. When Death hears of the horrors

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[85]Amazingly, Ullman's opera survived. According to the programme for its New York premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (May 19 to May 22, 1977), "The score of the opera and others of his works found their way to London where they are being cared for by a friend of Ullman's who lives there. . . . A good deal of the original score is illegible, the ink has run, indelible blue ink has gone right through the paper obliterating parts of the other side, and some sections were badly written, obviously in a great hurry. There are also alterations as well as cuts and sections that look as though they have been censored by some authority. There is more than one version of the text; and one of these is actually typed on the back of forms describing the background of the Theresienstadt inmates" (p. 8). After its rediscovery, the opera was first presented in Holland in December 1975; this same production, staged by Rhoda Levine, was done at the "Nineteenth Festival of Two Worlds" in Spoleto, Italy, in June 1976. (See the International Herald Tribune, December 23, 1975, and July 1, 1976.) Its American premiere was given by the San Francisco Opera in the spring of 1977. (See "Death Camp Work Premieres at S. F. Opera," New West, January 17, 1977, p. 65.) The Emperor of Atlantis's New York premiere was staged by the New Opera Theatre under the direction of Ian Strasfogel.

[86]"The Emperor of Atlantis," Brooklyn Academy of Music programme, May 19, 1977, p. 8. (The programme details the opera's historical background and contains a script. All quotations are from this version.)

of Atlantis from Pierrot and learns that the Emperor has declared another "holy" war, he proclaims that no one shall be able to die. Chaos engulfs the kingdom as the dictator's authority is eroded; for example, enemies, represented by a warring girl and boy, surrender their weapons and fall in love. Eventually, Uberall realizes that he is monstrous and gives himself up to Death so that mankind can again "respect the joy and pain of life and not take the mighty name of Death in vain."[87]

Like many of the forementioned concentration camp works, The Emperor of Atlantis is obviously an allegory. On one level the opera is a universal outcry against war. Uberall is said to be the epitome of all world leaders, secular and religious, who constantly goad the human race into battle. In scene 3, pacifism is symbolized by the young soldier casting off his weapon and falling in love with his female adversary. The reformed Emperor's farewell is a final plea for peace: "No other war has stopped, no war but this. . . . Ah, but how long will there be peace? The flame is merely weakened, but not put out. It will soon blaze anew. . . . O were my task accomplished. . . . Death would come as hunger, love, and life come: sometimes slowly or swift as lightning--but never to slay!"[88]

Yet, even more obviously, the short piece is an attack on Hitler and his concentration camps. Uberall is named after Hitler's famous cry, "Deutschland Uber Alles" and, like the German Fuehrer, he suppresses opposition through systematized executions. Pierrot is the archetypical

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[87]Ibid., p. 8.

[88]Ibid., p. 16.

concentration camp prisoner. For him "each day is like the other;" he lacks even the bare necessities: "I've stopped keeping track of days as I used to, since I've got no shirt to speak of, and will not take up a new day till I've got some fresh, clean underwear."[89] The dramatic action is pushed along by "the Loudspeaker, whom one hears but does not see" and which is an omnipresent reminder of the Nazi internment centers. Death is outraged by the technological methods employed in modern dying; the concentration camp being the ultimate tool of mechanized death. The play's moral that "the great and sovereign name of Death must not be taken lightly," is an attack on the Third Reich's death machines, wherein "natural death" ceased to exist. Given the satiric nature of the opera, it is no wonder that the SS withdrew permission for Ullman's presentation and that the composer and his twenty-five-year-old librettist, Peter Kien, later died in Auschwitz.

Though accounts of the survival of theatre in the Nazi concentration camps are fascinating, the more important question is why did the performing arts survive? Part of the reason, as has been indicated, lies in their being seen as vital acts of resistance. Satire was the main ingredient of the camp cabarets. The production of the propagandistic Roar China was an obvious act of defiance. The children's opera Brundibar was an allegorical attack on Hitler's Europe. In Malines, the primitive stagings of Veyslitz and Potashinski were attempts to undermine the Germans' forced theatricalities.

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[89]Ibid., p. 9.

These artists were also attempting to make their compatriots' existences more bearable. Entertainment and escapism were key factors in keeping theatre alive. Hence, traditional dramas, comedies, and cabaret were the basic staple of camp productions. As art historian Paul Moscanyi notes in his general discussion of culture in Theresienstadt: "All [the] . . . cruelty and sadism contrasted strangely with the total indifference of the SS as to what was going on in the houses and barracks after the doors closed for the night. Cultural life sprang up quickly and spontaneously as a necessity for survival."[90]

Ultimately, the survival of theatre in the Nazi concentration camps illustrates novelist Jorge Semprun's observation that "in the camps man . . . becomes that invincible being capable of sharing his last cigarette butt, his last piece of bread, his last breath to sustain his fellow man."[91] Theatre was simply more sustenance.

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[90]Paul Moscanyi, "Foreward," Art in a Concentration Camp (New York: New School, 1968), p. 6.

[91]Semprun, p. 60.

CHAPTER II

DRAMAS SET INSIDE THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Rolf Hochhuth, in a stage direction in The Deputy, warns that "we lack the imaginative faculties to envision Auschwitz."[1] Various historians, psychologists, and sociologists have also pointed out that both new internees as well as the outside world found the concentration camp system to be incomprehensible and unreal. Elie Wiesel, in discussing the possibility of Holocaust drama and literature, has pessimistically remarked, "Auschwitz has been and will remain in the realm of mystical experience or of insanity; the play beyond everything--beyond logic, beyond description. . . . Auschwitz and literature do not go together, they exclude one another."[2] Apparently those playwrights who have attempted to place their dramatic action within the concentration camps have realized this difficulty, for no two have delineated the Nazi internment centers in the same dramatic style; the various perceptions of the camps become clear after analyzing Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy, James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice, Carlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, and Peter Barnes' Auschwitz.

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[1]Rolf Hochhuth, The Deputy, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Grove Press, 1964), p. 222.

[2]Elie Wiesel, "Auschwitz: An Incident," Hadassah Magazine 46 (March 1965):12.

Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy (1963) is probably the best-known Holocaust drama. Depicting the attempts of Father Riccardo Fontana and Kurt Gerstein, a rebellious SS man, to persuade Pope Pius XIII to speak out against the extermination of the Jews, the play was frequently condemned as an attack on the Papacy.[3] Most critics, therefore, focused their analyses on Act IV, "Il Gran Refiuto," the confrontation between Riccardo and Pius XIII in which the Pope refuses to intervene directly on the Jews' behalf and would probably agree with Egon Schwarz's observation that the final act, set in Auschwitz, "follows as kind of epilogue."[4] For that matter, since Hochhuth's drama is too lengthy and unwieldly to produce uncut, in most productions Act V has been excised.[5] Yet this is a misreading of The Deputy's structure; for the movement and building of the scenes is not to the confrontation between the priest and the Pope but to the inevitable confrontation between Riccardo and Auschwitz. As Mark Cohen correctly points out in his critique for the Jewish Quarterly: "Certainly the charge [against Pius XIII] could hardly be more serious, but it is not the dramatic crux of the play. . . . Its climax is not the fourth act in the Vatican, but the fifth in Auschwitz. The huge political forces have melted into the ugly background and good wrestles with

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[3]See the essays by religious leaders in Eric Bentley, ed., The Storm Over the Deputy (New York: Grove Press, 1964) and Dolores Barracano Schmidt and Earl Robert Schmidt, The Deputy Reader: Studies in Moral Responsibility (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1965).

[4]Egon Schwarz, "Rolf Hochhuth's The Representative," German Review 39 (May 1964):228.

[5]Sidney F. Parham, "Editing Hochhuth for the Stage: A Look at the Major Productions of The Deputy," Educational Theatre Journal 28 (October 1976):348.

evil."[6] Hence, the key to an understanding of Hochhuth's semi-documentary drama is an understanding of his conception of the concentration camps.

Throughout the first four acts Hochhuth carefully prepares for his representation of Auschwitz. Vividly and accurately the renegade Obersturmfuehrer Gerstein frequently describes the horrors of the concentration camp, carefully citing statistics and atrocities. For example, when he first appears before Riccardo and the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin, he screams:

> Like marble columns the naked corpses stand.
> You can tell the families, even after death
> convulsed in locked embrace--with hooks
> they're pulled apart. Jews have to do that job.
> Ukranians lash them on with whips.
> There was the manager of Berlin's biggest store . . .
> There was a violinist, too, decorated in World War I . . .
> Fought at the front for Germany.
> And bodies of dead children. A young girl
> ahead of the procession, naked like the rest.
> Mothers, all stripped, babies at their breasts.
> Most of them know the worst--the smell of gas . . .[7]

Yet, on a less literal level, two specific scenes function as foreshadowing for the eventual resolution in Auschwitz.

The first is Act I scene ii, which takes place in "the Jagerkeller in Falkensee, near Berlin; a small hotel which for the past several weeks, ever since the onset of regular Allied air raids on the capital has been requisitioned as a recreation center by the Reichsfuehrung SS (Himmler's office)."[8] In this scene we are introduced to Auschwitz's dramatis

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[6]Mark Cohen, "The Roots of Fear and Hatred: Reflections on Two Plays," Jewish Quarterly 12 (Spring 1964):16.

[7]Hochhuth, p. 25.

[8]Ibid., p. 28.

personae, including Adolf Eichmann, businessman Baron von Ruta, his hero son Air Force Lieutenant von Rutta, Nazi experimenter Professor August Hirt, his assistant Dr. Littke, the guilt-ridden Officer of the Prisoners-of-War Department Colonel Serge, Regierungsrat Pryzilla, and the Auschwitz doctor, the man who decides who will live and who will die in the camp. As Jack D. Zypes points out, throughout this episode "They drink, bowl, and make small talk out of Auschwitz. Words like Dienst, todt, Verantwortung are played upon callously. The trite and merry conversations have a dimension unintended by the Speakers. Only the reader (or the audience) understands the real significance of their words."[9]

The real picture of Auschwitz is drawn in this scene; the characters in Jagerkeller establish the mise en scène for the final act. From Eichmann we learn that Auschwitz is the ultimate extermination center and that the Nazis continue to improve its efficiency: "Let's get down to business, gentlemen./ Gerstein was in Belzec to find out/ whether we can't handle the final solution/ more efficiently, and above all more quickly/ with Cyclon B."[10] The camp will also take over the functionings of some of the smaller Ukranian labor camps; hence Baron Rutta jokingly asks Eichmann not to be too efficient "for otherwise there won't be any labor/ when Krupp goes into production in Auschwitz."[11] From Hirt the audience learns of the scientific experimentation undertaken in the Nazi

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[9]Jack D. Zypes, "Documentary Drama in Germany: Mending the Circuit," German Review 42 (January 1967):53.

[10]Hochhuth, p. 60.

[11]Ibid., p. 45.

camp; a colleague of his has been quite successful:

> Next time you're in Auschwitz, Baron
> ask for Dr. Berger--Captain Bruno Berger . . .
> and ask him to show you his collection
> of skeletons. Enormously interesting.
> Let him show you the specimens he's still working on
> as well. Seventy-nine Jews, thirty Jewesses, two Poles
> and even four absolutely authentic Central Asiatics.
> He's got them in quarantine now.[12]

It is Sturmbannfuehrer Fritsche, however, who represents the true horror of Auschwitz. It is Fritsche who illustrates Hochhuth's thesis that Auschwitz was able to operate smoothly because it was manned by ordinary individuals who were not particularly evil. The camp officer admits he is "sick of Auschwitz," yet in the internment center the Sturmbannfuehrer attempts to continue his "normal" existence. "Clear the Deck," he remarks to his compatriots, "is even simpler, if you ask me./ Each man has three shots at the full set up. A strike/ counts twelve, a double fifteen points./ We play a lot of it in Auschwitz."[13] Fritsche remains in Auschwitz only because it is safer than the Eastern front. His character is a dramatic representation of Hannah Arendt's theories about Eichmann and his underlings: "It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us--the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying banality of evil."[14]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 53-4.

[13] Ibid., p. 36.

[14] Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 252.

The scene also prepares the audience for the Nazi camp by carefully introducing the Doctor, who "does the sorting in Auschwitz,/ on the railroad platform. I mean,/ he sorts out the Jews for the ovens"[15] and who will become Riccardo's and Gerstein's antagonist in the final act. Hochhuth's description of the Doctor hints at the nature of the installation he presides over:

> If he is like the others, he is like them in the way the puppet-master resembles his marionettes. . . . He has the stature of Absolute Evil. . . . At the same time he is not outwardly arrogant, but extremely charming. . . . With this character an ancient figure in theatre and in Christian mystery plays is once more appearing on the stage. . . . The Doctor is in reality . . . a young evil god of death.[16]

Hochhuth has created his character by mixing characteristics of the Medieval Devil, Goethe's Mephistopheles, and historical documentation. Grete Salus, an Auschwitz survivor, in describing Doctor Mengele, the real camp physician, appears to be analyzing Hochhuth's dramatic creation:

> He stood before us, the handsome devil who decided life and death. . . . He stood there like a charming, dapper dancing master directing a polonaise. . . . He radiated an air of lightness and gracefulness, a welcome contrast to the brutal ugliness of the environs; it soothed our frayed nerves and made whatever was happening devoid of all meaning. . . . A good actor? A man possessed? A cold automaton? No, a master of his profession, a devil who took pleasure in his work.[17]

As early as Act I scene ii, Hochhuth reveals that Auschwitz will be the battleground on which twentieth-century religion will be defeated. His is a pessimistic, modern morality play.

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[15]Hochhuth, p. 48.

[16]Ibid., pp. 31-2.

[17]Cited in "For Your Information: The Deputy," an unidentified clipping, found in the "The Deputy Clippings File" at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, Theatre Research Division.

The German dramatist further prepares for the climax in the extermination center, particularly for the battle between Gerstein's forces and the doctor, in the scene immediately following the Jagerkeller episode. In short short vignette, the doctor visits Gerstein, bringing with him the preserved brain of a Jewish child. The verbal sparring foreshadows the eventual physical battle and further prepares us for the horrors of Auschwitz.

The other scene that is a harbinger for the final act is Act III scene iii, which takes place in the Gestapo headquarters in Rome after the round up of the Italian Jews. Here Hochhuth presents a microcosm of the world he will later dramatize. The manhunt has resulted in the arrests of converted Jews, whose only crime is having been caught. Their plight makes it exceedingly clear that their fates will be arbitrarily determined both in Rome and later in Auschwitz. A shoe salesman's skills, for example, will keep him and his family alive: "Listen, Witzel,/ if that shoe salesman you mentioned before/ knows how to make boots himself, good custom work,/ then he--and his whole family too, for all I care--/ is temporarily an Aryan, get me?"[18]

Throughout Act III scene iii, Hochhuth is leading up to the ultimate brutalities, both emotional and physical. The women are sexually abused by the Italian militiamen. A converted Jewish industrialist is promised his freedom if he renounces his fellow Jews and spits in the face of an old man; after doing so, he remains imprisoned.

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[18]Hochhuth, p. 173.

Still, in dramatizing these cruelties, the German playwright again stresses the "banality of evil," personified by the Chief of the German Police in Rome, Salzer. Salzer

> . . . is typical of most people performing similar functions in the past, today, or tomorrow: this intelligent, unconditionally obedient officer did not even have a distaste for his victims. On orders, he would just as conscientiously have arrested the prostitutes or nuns of Rome. He was no rascist fanatic and worked with as little passion as a guillotine.
>
> Nevertheless, history records that terror reigned in the cellar of his prison.[19]

The Chief of the German Police does not enjoy his job; when confronted by the elderly Luccani, a front-line officer during World War I, he is shamed into lying about what awaits the ex-soldier and his family. To rationalize his actions Salzer curses his captive, but it is his conscience he is attempting to soothe:

> . . . I'm going soft, Gerstein.
> Here's an old army officer, shows his medals
> and begs for the lives of his grandchildren.
> I'll never let it happen again, never.
> We always wind up as the fools
> each time we let one of that scum
> we're supposed to send into the gas
> come close to us on a human basis.
> I'm not hardboiled enough. Anyhow I
> am sick to death of it.[20]

Like Fritsche, he remains obedient because it is safer "hunting defenseless civilians in the occupied territories instead of risking his life on the Russian front like the great majority of men his age."[21]

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[19]Ibid., p. 166.

[20]Ibid., p. 183.

[21]Ibid., p. 166.

If, then, in the Jagerkeller sense we are introduced to Auschwitz through the eyes of its overseers, in the episode in the Gestapo headquarters, we are presented a sample of the persecuted population, many of whom will re-appear in Act V, in their initial confrontation with their captors.

Once the action moves to Auschwitz, however, Hochhuth's careful construction becomes apparent; the relationship between the play's final act and the preceding dramatic action is quite noticeable. What is most "striking [is] that we cannot tell from their tenor whether the scenes take place in Rome, Berlin, or Auschwitz."[22] Auschwitz is simply an extension of the previously presented outside-the-camp life. This is made apparent through the work's dialogue, which is written in verse throughout. Hochhuth claims that he employs poetry in order to make his drama less like an historical document:

> Free verse carries its speakers along much more readily than prose, especially when it concerns a subject which is so closely involved with contemporary events and depends so extensively on historical documents. Then things must be transposed, heightened by language. Otherwise it would often be likely to sound as if one were merely quoting from the documents.[23]

What this also does is make the style, quality, and tenor of the dialogue outside the camp identical to the language spoken inside Auschwitz. For that matter, camp cliches and jargon are frequently employed by non-Nazi characters in the scenes set in Italy.

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[22]Rolf C. Zimmermann, "Drama or Pamphlet: Hochhuth's The Deputy and the Tradition of Polemical Literature," in Bentley, p. 125.

[23]P. Marx, "Interview with Rolf Hochhuth," Partisan Review 31 (Summer 1964):363.

Another dramatic device that links the extermination center with the outside world is the doubling and tripling of roles, thereby implying parallels between the Nazis and their non-German counterparts. For example, one performer would be placed in the roles of a Father in the Papal Legation, SS Sergeant Witzel, and a Jewish Kapo. In explaining this dramatic technique, Hochhuth again sounds very much like Hannah Arendt:

> The characters grouped together here by twos, threes, or fours should be played by the same actor--for recent history has taught us that in the age of universal military conscription it is not necessarily to anyone's credit or blame, or even a question of character, which uniform one wears or whether one stands on the side of the victims or executioners.[24]

The close bond between these two supposedly disparate universes is also emphasized by the presence of Helga, the waitress in the Jagerkeller scene, in Auschwitz. She is now "an office girl . . . keeping the register of the gassing of thousands of Jews, doing it as any office work is done, being charming, having her love affairs."[25] She is as efficient in keeping track of the dead as she was in serving the SS food and drink. Helga's primary concerns are coffee and silk stockings, which, as Rolf Zimmermann notes, in "Drama or Pamphlet: Hochhuth's The Deputy and the Tradition of Polemical Literature," the playwright carefully contrasts against the concerns of the innocents being slaughtered:

> In the Fifth Act the coffee and silk stockings of a spoiled mistress cannot be linked in satirico-comic fashion to the war, but must be treated moralistically in their relation to the inferno of Auschwitz. It is not that these people have or do not have something (as in war), but that creatures with

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[24]Hochhuth, p. 11.

[25]Hjordis Roubiczek, "Der Stellvertreter and Its Critics," German Life and Letters 27 (April 1964):195.

> silk stockings are beasts and the cattle ready for slaughter
> in the freight cars are human beings. Helga fails as the
> Pope fails.[26]

Helga's failure is the failure of all those within and outside the camp who passively contributed to the success of Auschwitz. This is the point novelist Jorge Semprun makes in defense of The Deputy: "One of the great virtues of Hochhuth's play is the attempt to denounce all those who were in any way responsible."[27] If, as the German dramatist notes, "Pius is a symbol, not only for all leaders, but for all men--Christians, Atheists, Jews. For all men who are passive when their brother is deported to death,"[28] then Auschwitz is dramatically conceived as the resultant of their inactivity.

What does make Act V distinct from the rest of the play is that, in order to create the mise en scène of Auschwitz, Hochhuth mixes stylization with realistic effects. The transport to the internment center is dramatically created through sound effects (train rumblings, cries of children, the murmur of voices), lighting, and suitcases and bundles. The speakers' monologues poetically prepare the audience for "the inferno of Auschwitz:"

> But this car is no boat going down to Hades,
> This railroad track to Poland is not the Styx.
> Even the nether world has been wrested from the gods,
> Now held by prison guards no song can move.[29]

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[26]Zimmermann, "Drama or Pamphlet," in Bentley, p. 131.

[27]Rene Saurel, "Interview with Jorge Semprun," in Schmidt, p. 82.

[28]Judy Stone, "Interview with Rolf Hochhuth," Ramparts (Spring 1964), reprinted in Bentley, p. 43.

[29]Hochhuth, p. 226.

The set is also suggestive of the extermination center, and, again, in keeping with Hochhuth's Hell imagery; it is not a realistic recreation:

> No attempt was made to strive for an imitation of reality. . . . The set is dream-like and ghostly, even if the actuality could be "realistically" communicated. . . . It is, however, that constant pall of smoke and fire which makes the stage setting characteristic of Auschwitz.[30]

In contrast to this stylized representation, which includes characterizing the doctor as a "handsome devil," realistic emphasis is given to the plight of the internees. What Hochhuth does, as Rolf Zimmermann points out, is dramatize "the Jews . . . [as] a horrifying variation of the naturalistic hero; the helpless, blind victims of their natural humanity--driven wild by the dog packs--they conform to Hauptmann's favorite image."[31] When the freight trains arrive in Auschwitz and are unloaded by the Kapos, "the yelling . . . is a series of often-repeated commands to be reproduced with great realism."[32] When Carlotta, a converted Italian Jew who has been protected by Riccardo, is told that her family has been liquidated,

> Her movement is so wholly natural, so utterly irrepressible, so lacking in the "alienation" of theatre, that it completely smashes all our efforts, heretofore, to create theatrical stylization, to remove from actuality the atrocities of the Final Solution.[33]

Hochhuth also uses naturalistic effects to heighten his stylized conception of this "modern Hell;" when the deportees are led down the ramp to

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[30]Ibid., pp. 223, 228.

[31]Zimmermann, "Drama or Pamphlet," in Bentley, p. 134.

[32]Hochhuth, p. 227.

[33]Ibid., p. 282.

their deaths, "We hear . . . the low, gentle rumble of a concrete mixer. From the right, a police whistle sounds--almost at the spot where the glow of the fire is visible."[34]

Two negative judgments of The Deputy's final act must be considered in order to have a complete understanding of Rolf Hochhuth's conception of Auschwitz. Egon Schwarz, speaking for a majority of the critics, complains that Act V is melodramatic.[35] But this is exactly what Hochhuth has prepared us for, a conventional battle between good and evil. However, unlike a typical melodrama, The Deputy concludes with the triumph of evil. In the ironic denouement reminiscent of Nathan the Wise,[36] the major Western religions, represented by Riccardo, Gerstein, and Jacobson, are united in suffering; this resolution indicates that Hochhuth views Auschwitz not as a Jewish defeat but, rather, as the defeat of Western civilization.

R. C. Perry attacks "the theological argument between the Doctor and Ricardo [because] Hochhuth attempts a subjective interpretation of Auschwitz which has nothing to do with documented fact."[37] Perry, however, misses the point of this scene. When the Doctor tells the priest, "Auschwitz refutes Creator, Creation, and the Creatures," and that he will destroy Riccardo's belief, Hochhuth comes closest to fusing fiction

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[34]Ibid., p. 239.

[35]Schwarz, p. 228.

[36]Ibid.

[37]R. C. Perry, "Historical Authenticity and Dramatic Form: Hochhuth's Der Stellvertreter and Weiss's Die Ermittlung," Modern Language Review 64 (October 1969):829.

with fact. As Eugen Kogon explains, the concentration camp system was organized so that new internees would "abandon all hope, seeing nothing to make life worth living."[38] Elie Wiesel tells the story of a pious young Jew whose spiritual death resulted in his physical death:

> Poor Akiba Drumer, if he could have gone on believing in God, if he could have seen proof of God in this Calvary, he would not have been taken by the selection. But as soon as he felt the first cracks forming in his faith, he had lost his reason for struggling and had begun to die.[39]

Riccardo's death follows a pattern documented in much of Holocaust literature; the loss of faith leads to the loss of life. For Hochhuth, who is concerned with Christian morality, the tragedy of Auschwitz is intertwined with this loss of faith.

Lawrence Langer, in discussing the "literature of atrocity," his term for Holocaust writings, notes "that there are two forces at work . . . in most of what I have designated the literature of atrocity: historical fact and imaginative truth."[40] Both these forces, of course, are operative in Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy; they are also apparent in James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice (1975). The difference is that the German dramatist emphasizes the historical fact, hoping to give his play the feel of documentation, while Schevill's focus is on imaginative truth.

Schevill's drama is subtitled "a dream play," and depicts Hitler's rise to power, from his poverty in Austria through his takeover

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[38]Kogon, p. 302.

[39]Elie Wiesel, Night, trans. Stella Rodway (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p. 88.

[40]Langer, p. 91.

from Hindenburg, to the Final Solution and ultimately his death in the bunker. It is a dream play because, as Edwin Honig points out, it shows "how crazy Hitler's own dreams are."[41] While the material is quite obviously historical, the presentation is non-realistic; the style is almost circus-like. Schevill, in discussing his play in a report to the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, attempted to explain why he dealt with history in such a fantastic manner, citing two reasons, one artistic and the other tied to the type of documentary material he employed:

> A lot of absolutely documentary material in the play seemed fantastic in style . . . because I have always liked to use in my poems and plays the strange, little noticed facts of history as opposed to the literal documentation that is the preoccupation of so many historians. . . . Another question that came up repeatedly in discussions focused on style. The gist of this question was: "Can the horrible events of the Nazi years be portrayed as a carnival, as a circus play?" Both Adrian [Hall, the director of the first production at the Trinity Square Playhouse in October 1975] and I replied to this question several times. We reiterated our belief that a literal, documentary portrayal of that era would be impossible. Audiences would stay away in droves.[42]

These rationales also guided Schevill in his dramatization of the Final Solution; the playwright feels that the scene which is set in a Nazi concentration camp is the climax of Cathedral of Ice:

> The fantastic, large-scale, quick-flowing actions of the play, using a slashing satirical style based on unusual historical juxtaposition required a different kind of redemptive ending. The concentration camps, the darkest vision of the twentieth

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[41]Edwin Honig, An Introduction to Cathedral of Ice, by James Schevill (Woods Hole, Massachusetts: Pourboire Press, 1975), p. i.

[42]James Schevill, "Cathedral of Ice: A Report to the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities," pp. 38, 47. (A copy of this unpublished report was provided to me by Mr. Schevill.)

> century had to be represented. Yet these events, like the entire Hitler saga, could not be presented literally.[43]

Hence, an examination of the climactic Final Solution episode will aid in understanding the American dramatist's techniques as well as his thematic concerns.

The camp's principle inmates, the male Night and the female Fog, are introduced in a scene with Hitler. If Cathedral of Ice is a dramatization of Hitler's dreams, then the concentration camps are presented from the Fuehrer's perspective. Night and Fog are named after Hitler's code phrase for the gassing and cremating of the Jews in the Eastern extermination centers. The two are perfect concentrationaires. They are nameless: "In the Night/ I lose my name. / I am the Night. . . ./ In the Fog/ I lose my name./ I am the Fog."[44] Donning their burlap uniforms, "they are almost identical--their identities vanished."[45] On stage they mime their torturous daily rituals.

Nevertheless, Night and Fog hold onto their humanity. They frequently joke with one another, even at the moment of selection:

> NIGHT: That's Dr. Mengele. If he points to the left you die. If he points to the right you live.
> FOG: How does he decide?
> NIGHT: Who knows? He's a doctor. If he likes your looks. . . .
> FOG: He should have had a Jewish mother.
> NIGHT: What good would a Jewish mother do him?
> FOG: She would have taught him not to point. . . .
> NIGHT: We'll meet again in a better world.
> FOG: What better world?
> NIGHT: We'll meet in a shop window as soap.[46]

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[43]Ibid., p. 30.

[44]Schevill, Cathedral of Ice: A Play, p. 64.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Schevill argues historically and philosophically for his interpolating humor into the camp situation:

> During the discussions [after the production] several people questioned the propriety of laughter at this dark moment of inhumanity. Yet there is a book of jokes out of the concentration camps. Didn't their unique sense of humor play an important part in the way that the Jews managed to die with dignity or survive with courage in the camps?[47]

(His use of camp jokes, then, is in keeping with his employment of "fantastic documentation.") But it is not only through the use of humor that Schevill attempts to dissuade his audience from the stereotypical view of the concentration camp inmates as sheep-like victims.

The only other major inhabitant of the internment center is the Jew Neumann, who befriended Hitler in Austria. Throughout the dramatic action, the Fuehrer tries to exorcise him from his past.[48] It is the Austrian Jew who at first holds the sign "Arbeit Macht Frei" that signals to the audience that the "Final Solution" scene takes place in Auschwitz. More importantly, throughout the camp episode, Neumann undergoes transformations into a variety of Hasidic masters, including the Baal Shem Tov, the Rabbi of Berditchev and Rabbi Zusya.[49] If Night and Fog are the

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[47]Schevill, "A Report," p. 33.

[48]Many historians have drawn portraits of Hitler similar to Schevill's. See in particular two studies by Robert G. L. Waite, "Adolf Hitler's Anti-Semitism: A Study in History and Psychoanalysis," in Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History, ed. Benjamin B. Wolman (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 211-15 and "Adolf Hitler's Guilt Feelings: A Problem in History and Psychoanalysis," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 1 (Winter 1971):220-49.

[49]Hasidic Masters were revolutionary eighteenth and nineteenth-century Jewish religious leaders. For a unique, interpretive history of their movement, see: Elie Wiesel, Souls on Fire: Portraits of Hasidic Masters, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Random House, 1972). Interestingly, by placing the Baal Shem Tov, the Rabbi of Berditchev and Rabbi

perfect concentration camp prisoners of Hitler's visions, then Neumann-the Hasidic Master is the Fuehrer's nightmare; the nightmare that prevents a successful Final Solution. According to Schevill, Hitler did not envision the physical destruction of the Jews to be the Final Solution, but rather the eradication of their spiritual belief: "God must cease to exist for the Jews. . . . When they lose their faith--that is the Final Solution."[50] The Viennese Jew, however, does not allow his "disciples," his fellow concentration camp prisoners, to lose their belief: "Neumann mocks him [Hitler] by playing various Hasidic Masters to show how faith survives even after the Holocaust."[51] Through these transformations, Schevill, in philosophical opposition to Rolf Huchhuth, dramatizes the miraculous survival of belief.

When Night and Fog first agonize over their camp labors, Neumann becomes the Rabbi of Berditchev, an understandable metamorphosis, for "when what is required is a buffer between victim and persecutor, between moribund and death, it is he who comes to mind."[52] Berditchev was the

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Zusya in Auschwitz, the playwright is dramatizing a religious phenomenon that Elie Wiesel observed during the Holocaust:

> What cannot help but astound us is that Hasidim remained Hasidim inside the ghetto walls, inside the death camps. In the shadow of the executioner, they celebrated life. Startled Germans whispered to each other of Jews dancing in the cattle cars rolling toward Birkenau: Hasidim ushering in Simhat Torah. And there were those who in Block 57 at Auschwitz tried to make me join in their fervent singing. Were these miracles?

Wiesel, Souls on Fire, p. 38. In an interview with Schevill at the City University of New York Graduate Center on April 15, 1977, he told me that he was unaware of this "strange, little noticed fact of history."

[50]Schevill, Cathedral of Ice: A Play, p. 72.

[51]Ibid., p. 67.

[52]Wiesel, Souls on Fire, p. 90.

patron of the destitute, the ignorant, the misfits, providing them with dignity. Appropriately, Neumann's first transformation is into the Rabbi of Berditchev, who then dances with his oppressed disciples-internees, even in the midst of the human destruction in Auschwitz.

When Hitler specifically calls for the destruction of the Jews' faith, the Viennese Jew reacts and becomes the Baal Shem Tov, the Hasid who brought renewed faith to the downtrodden eighteenth-century Jews:

> He taught them to fight sadness with joy . . . and this joy leads to the absolute, to redemption, to God. . . . And Jews by the thousands let themselves be carried by this call; they needed it to live and survive.[53]

During his brief appearance, Neumann-Baal Shem Tov teaches a disciple to sing, dances with the Torah, and allows his body to be filled with the "fire" of spiritual teachings.[54] If, in The Deputy, the fires of the Auschwitz inferno cremate life and spirit, in Cathedral of Ice, faith, like the phoenix, resurrects itself in the fiery image of the Baal Shem Tov.

When "the masked figure of the SS Dr. Mengele appears,"[55] Neumann, followed by his disciples in old-fashioned Hasidic dress, is transformed into Rabbi Zusya, the Master of Hanipol. His final metamorphosis into Zusya is quite appropriate. Zusya was considered the humblest and most compassionate of the Hasidic Masters; as he must be, as he waits with his

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[53]Ibid., p. 26.

[54]This was how, in the eighteenth-century, the "Besht," as he was known to his followers, supposedly revealed his God-given powers. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[55]Schevill, Cathedral of Ice: A Play, p. 78.

disciples to face Mengele's selection. Zusya was also considered "the victim of victims," an appropriate image for the man who leaves for the gas chambers uttering, "And God said. . . . And God said."[56] Yet, he was a sufferer whose faith was strengthened by setbacks, just as Schevill's concentration camp prisoners never lose their beliefs nor their humanity. The Hasidic Masters embody the playwright's theory that the Final Solution failed because faith survived; logically, in the dramatic action that follows the concentration camp scene, Hitler's dreams crumble and he is forced to commit suicide.

Another major theme that permeates Schevill's work becomes clearer in the Auschwitz scene. For Schevill, like for Hochhuth, the Nazi era is simply another "dream" in the long history of banal, evil dreams. Thus, the American dramatist prefaces the play with a vignette dealing with Richard Nixon and concludes with a tableaux of "Napolean [as he] presides over a dance of power with Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill."[57] As the playwright explains, "the play depicts the growth of totalitarian doctrines not merely Nazi doctrines."[58] Hence, Schevill universalizes the concentration camp experience so that it too becomes a symbol not only for the annihilation of the Jews, but of all previous genocides. Again, this is accomplished by the use of "fantastic historical documentation." Throughout the play Hitler refers to himself as Old Shatterhand, a Wild West hero created by the German author Karl May.

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[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid., p. 86.

[58]Schevill, "A Report," p. 47.

(It should be noted that Hitler was a great admirer of May's Westerns and that he did identify with the author's Wild West hero.[59]) Eventually, the Fuehrer equates his extermination of European Jewry with the Americans' destruction of their Indian population. As Himmler confides to his doctor, during the Final Solution scene,

> . . . the Americans were not afraid to exterminate the Indians to secure land. We must be as strong. . . . Only a few whites protested when Americans marched the Indians hundreds of miles to their reservations. Why should Europeans protest our difficult task with the Jews and the Russian Communists.[60]

While Schevill was criticized for equating the two examples of genocide, his purpose is not to compare, but to show history as a continuous movement of "crazy dreams of power." What makes James Schevill's concentration camp scene so powerful, then, is that it is a collage of the Holocaust, the Jewish past, and previous genocides, all occurring within the "three-ring circus" of Auschwitz.

Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? (1974), which is an autobiographical portrayal of the playwright's internment in Auschwitz's women's camp, is quite distinct in tone and style from Hochhuth's The Deputy and Schevill's Cathedral of Ice. What makes her delineation unique is that, stylistically, it is very much like a classical Greek tragedy. Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? is most reminiscent of Euripides' Trojan Women. Set in a female internment center, the French women are the "spoils and slaves" of the Germans who have "conquered" the

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[59]Ibid., p. 17.

[60]Schevill, Cathedral of Ice: A Play, pp. 76-7.

Resistance. Like the Trojans, these modern captives have also seen their spouses systematically executed.

Francoise, Delbo's raisonneur, is a Hecuba-like heroine; she cries for death, begs for an end to her intolerable suffering, yet continues to survive and aids others in their survival. Francoise is surrounded by a chorus of victims. They tramp together to roll-call and frequently change places in order to keep warm during the winter. Their movements are reminiscent of a classical Greek choral dance. (Two members of this chorus are Hélène and her mother, an obvious reference to Euripides' tragedy.)

Like the Greek tragedians, Delbo observes the "unity of place." Just as Hecuba's drama never moves from "the camp of the Greeks,"[61] so too Francoise and her compatriots remain in the German internment center. The movement from roll-call area to barracks is done primarily through minor light changes; in reality there is no difference. The omnipresent suffering unifies all the camp places. (For that matter, Delbo's stage directions call for very little differentiation between the indoor and outdoor environments.[62])

Just as the young are unable to survive in Euripides' tragedy, they are also destroyed in Delbo's play. The murder of Astyanax, who is hurled from the battlements of Troy, is paralleled in the mass

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[61]Euripides, Ten Plays, trans. Moses Hadas and John McLean (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 175.

[62]Charlotte Delbo, Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? (Paris: Pierre Jean Oswald, 1974), p. 7. (All translations are from an unpublished English version provided by Len Borger.)

execution of the children by the Nazis, which Elisabeth describes to Francoise: "Ils ont trouvé cela pour faire plus de place dans les chambres à gaz. Ils mettent les enfants à part et ils les brûlent vivants. Les enfants, cela ne se débat pas."[63]

Much of the tragic tension in Euripides' Trojan Women is also derived from the fact that the play is the tragedy of a mother and her daughters; the political demise of Troy is underscored by the horrors faced by Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra, and the murdered Polyxena. So too Delbo heightens the tragedy of the concentrationaires by emphasizing the plights of Hélène and her mother and Sylvie, whose mother has died in the camp:

> Regarde Hélène, qui est avec sa mère. Chacune souffre doublement, pour elle et pour l'autre. Pour la mère, c'est pire encore parce qu'une mère croit toujours qu'elle peut protegér son enfant. Et ici, elle ne peut rien. Elle voit battre sa fille et elle baisse la tête. Et pour la fille! Voir sa mère mise toute nue, tatouee, tondue, sale. Puis chacune a bientôt le sentiment d'être à charge à l'autre. Et regarde, Sylvie, qui elle, a reellement perdu sa mère et qui la cherche dans les mortes dont les pieds pendent de la petite civière.[64]

In the Greek work the terror of separation intensifies our pity for Hecuba and her daughters; similarly, separation haunts Delbo's

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[63]Delbo, p. 50. ("They've discovered that in order to have more room in the gas chambers, they put the children aside and burn them alive. The children don't fight back.)

[64]Ibid. ("Look at Helen who is with her mother. Each one suffers doubly, for herself and the other one. For the mother it is worse because a mother believes she must protect her child and here she can't do a thing. She sees her child struggle and lowers her head. And for the daughter! To see her mother stripped naked, tattooed, shorn of her hair, dirtied, and each one has the feeling of being dependent on the other. And look at Sylvie who has lost her mother and is looking for her among the dead whose feet hang out.")

personages. Mounette, in particular, dreams that her mother, who is still in France, has become faceless and no longer recognizes her.

The most intriguing characteristic that Delbo's drama shares with classical Greek tragedy is her extreme adoption of "stage decorum." The concentration camp, needless to say, conjures up images of violence. Lawrence Langer, as noted, characterizes Holocaust literature as the "literature of atrocity." Yet, what is unique about Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapporter Ces Paroles?, unlike Hochhuth's and Schevill's plays, is that it is devoid of onstage atrocities. When Claire, who in the drama's first scene dissuades Francoise from suicide, is beaten to death for defending Sylvie, who has left the roll-call line to defecate, it is described by Yvonne:

> Une surveillante s'est jetée sur Sylvie qui était sortie du rang pour faire dans le fosse, s'est ruée sur elle à coups de bâton et Claire a couru pour lui arracher Sylvie, la ramener dans le rang. L'autre a laissé Sylvie et s'est tournée sur Claire. Elle lui assène des coups sur la tête, sur la nuque, sur les yeux. Oh! . . . Claire est dévorée de rage. Elle rend coup pour coup, avec ses poings, ave ses pieds. Mais l'autre ne la lâche pas. Je n'aurais pas cru Claire aussi forte. En voilà une qui arrive en renfort . . . Claire est à terre. Les deux furies la piétinent. C'est Claire qui a crié. Elles lui ont fracassé la tête. Elles s'en vont. C'est fait.[65]

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[65]Ibid., p. 23. ("A guardswoman has thrown herself on Sylvie who has just left the line to make in the whole and is rushing on her with her stick and Claire has run to drag her off and bring her back to the line. The other has left Sylvie and is turning on Claire. She is beating her with the stick on her head, on her neck, on her eyes. Claire is devoured with rage. She is returning blow for blow with her fist, with her feet, but the other is not letting go. I would not have believed Claire would be so strong. But another one is coming for reinforcement and Claire is on the ground. Two furies are beating and kicking her. That was Claire who has cried. They have smashed in her head. They're going off. It is done.")

(Note the image of the German guards as furies, another obvious reference to Greek tragedy.) Claire's body, which is returned to its place in the roll call line, is revealed to the audience, as it would have been in a classical tragedy.

In a similar fashion, throughout the dramatic action, all violence and camp horrors occur out of sight. We do not see the internees suffer from dysentery, but in an ironic poetic image are told "life expires through the intestines." In the barracks, the sounds of "death rattles punctuate the silence," but death remains unseen. Early in the play, the audience hears an inmate, who has attempted to throw herself against the electrified barbed wire fence, being shot by the watchtower guard. This death foreshadows the tragic downfall of Gina, who, along with Francoise and Denise, survives the first seventy days in the camp; when ordered to burn children alive, Gina, too, commits suicide offstage by running for the fence.

The brutal work details are not staged, but instead are described by Mounette when she discusses her nightmares. If the young internee drags bricks during the day, she dreams of them at night. The breath of Agnes and Renee against her cheek in the evening makes her dream of the guard dogs, whose hated breath awaits her stepping out of the work line.

Block 25, the execution and torture barrack, is described, not seen. Selections take place off stage. The procession of the dead, through which Sylvie searches for her mother, is presented as a shadow across the concentrationaires' faces. Rather than dramatize all the internees' deaths during their initial ten weeks, Delbo has the present-day Francoise narrate how most of the "chorus" perished. Elisabeth,

Renee, and Hélène's mother were beaten to death. Hélène died of typhus. Mounette simply expired.

If Delbo does not stage the common camp atrocities, she goes to an even greater extreme to observe "stage decorum," by never permitting her audience to view those who inflict the brutalities. When the selections take place, "we can tell the SS is stopping at each row," but we cannot see them. When Gina is ordered to join the Sonderkommando, she argues fiercely with the SS: offstage.

Why does the French playwright so meticulously create these unseen horrors? Cynthia Haft, in The Theme of the Nazi Concentration Camp in French Literature, suggests one reason why the Nazis remain invisible in both Delbo's play and her collection of poems and stories, None of Us Will Return:

> We must point out that just as we never see the SS in Qui Rapportera ces Paroles?, we never see them here [in None of Us Will Return] either. They are referred to at this point only as "on." This "on" troubles us; we want to know its identity. As yet, no one knows these SS, nor has anyone, as yet, penetrated their psychology or become aware of their brutality and thus for the readers they must remain as anonymous as the crowds.[66]

Yet this does not fully explain Delbo's offstage violence.

According to psychologists Bruno Bettelheim and Elie Cohen, the initial adjustment an internee made, after his initiation, was to deny the horrible reality of his new environment and to detach himself from the violence, even in instances when he was the victim. Elie Wiesel's description of his first beatings illustrates this phenomenon: "The

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[66]Haft, p. 130.

Kapos beat us once more, but I had ceased to feel any pain from their blows."[67] The internees' unemotional delineations of the violence in Qui Rapportera ces Paroles? are a dramatization of this psychological defense.

Delbo, however, has also kept her audiences' reaction in mind. If, as one observer notes, the Holocaust was the "unreal" realized,[68] the French dramatist understands the impossibility of staging the "unreal." That she recognizes the futility of getting viewers to believe what has occurred is seen in the epilogue, delivered by Francoise and Denise, the only two survivors:

Francoise: Nous sommes revenues pour vous dire
et nous voilà devant vous
tout empruntées.
Que dire . . .
Comment dire. . . .
Denise: Ne croyez pas que nous en ayons du dépit,
nous savions que vous ne comprendiez pas,
que vous ne croiriez pas,
car cela nous est devenu á nous-mêmes incroyable.
Francoise: Pourquoi iriez-vous croire
a ces histoires de revenants
de revenants qui reviennent
sans pouvoir expliquer comment?[69]

David Rousset, in his memoir The Other Kingdom, expresses the same sentiment when he insists that "Normal men do not know that everything is

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[67]Wiesel, Night, p. 46.

[68]Langer, p. 45.

[69]Delbo, pp. 76-7. ("Francoise: We have returned to tell you and here we are before you, very awkward. What do we say? How do we say it? . . . Denise: Do not believe we are like this out of spite. We knew that you would not understand; that you would not believe, because it too became incredible to us. Francoise: Why would you go and believe these stories of ghosts, of ghosts who returned without being able to explain?")

possible. . . . The concentrationaires do know. . . . They are set apart from the rest of the world by an experience impossible to communicate."[70] Terence Des Pres, in The Survivor, describes how those who were uninvolved perceive the camp experience: "But when we consider the specific nature of their identity--not only as survivors, but as survivors of those places--suspicion deepens to shock and rejection."[71] Bruno Bettelheim is even more specific in describing the "outside" world's rejection of the reality of the concentration camp universe:

> Three different psychological mechanisms were most frequently used [by the outside world] for dealing with the phenomenon of the concentration camp: (a) its applicability to man in general was denied by asserting (contrary to available evidence) that the acts of terror were committed by a small group of insane or perverted persons; (b) the truth of the reports was denied by ascribing them to deliberate propaganda. This method was favored by the German government which called all reports on terror in the camps horror propaganda (Greuel-propaganda); (c) the reports were believed, but the knowledge of the terror was repressed as soon as possible.[72]

Spectators, therefore, would tend to reject the staged horrors of the Holocaust. Charlotte Delbo does not allow her audience such an escape mechanism; they cannot reject the brutalities in her work as exaggerated, melodramatic theatrics. (Perhaps this is why Hochhuth's fifth act in The Deputy was so severely criticized.) By having the atrocities described to us unemotionally, we are forced to view them as common, daily camp occurrences. For that matter, what remains unseen becomes

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[70]David Rousset, The Other Kingdom, trans. Ramon Guthrie (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), pp. 168-9.

[71]Terence Des Pres, The Survivor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 170.

[72]Bettelheim, p. 252.

more magnified in our imaginations.

There is, however, another reason Delbo so carefully observes stage decorum; it is a method of underscoring her primary thematic concern. The title of the play, Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, is the key. Delbo's work dramatizes the main concern of surviving concentration camp prisoners: the need to bear witness. For many, this need became their raison d'etre for remaining alive. "I believe it my duty," writes Margarete Buber-Neumann, "to let the world know on the basis of first-hand experience, what must happen when human dignity is treated with cynical contempt."[73] Diarists Chaim Kaplan and Emannuel Ringelblum kept records of the Warsaw Ghetto experience "so that it will be preserved for future generations."[74]

Francoise, at the play's opening, wishes to commit suicide; her compatriot Claire tells her she has no right to kill herself, that

> Mais il y en aura une qui rentera et qui parlera, et qui dira, et qui fera savoir, parce que ce n'est pas nous qui sommes en cause, c'est l'histoire et les hommes veulent connaître leur histoire.[75]

[Basically, this is a paraphrase of Terence Des Pres' conclusion, "The survivor-as-witness . . . embodies a socio-historical process founded not upon the desire for justice (what can justice mean when genocide is the issue?), but the involvement of all human beings in common care for

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[73]Margarete Buber-Neumann, Under Two Dictators, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1949), p. xii.

[74]Chaim Kaplan, The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan, trans. Abraham I. Katsch (New York: Collier, 1973), p. 395.

[75]Delbo, p. 15. ("But there must be one who will return, who will speak of it and who will make it known because it is not us on trial, but history and the men who wish to know their history.")

life and future."[76]] With Claire's death, Francoise begins to realize that she will be the one to bear witness. Throughout the remaining dramatic action Delbo's protagonist promises each of her fellow prisoners "to return their words." For example, just before Gina leaves to commit suicide, Francoise promises to bring back their memories of the camp:

> Nous aurons vu côte à côte, la pire cruauté et la plus grande beauté. Quand je dis cela, je pense à celles qui m'ont presque portée à leur bras pendant les semaines où je ne pouvais pas marcher, à celles qui m'ont donné leur tisane quand je suffoquais de soif, quand ma langue était comme un morceau de bois rugueux dans ma bouche, à celles qui m'ont touche la main en réussissant à former un sourire sur leurs lèvres gercées quand j'étais désespérée, à celles qui m'ont relevée quand je tombais dans la boue, alors qu'elles étaient déjà si faibles elles-mêmes, à celles qui m'ont pris les pieds dans leurs mains, le soir, au moment de se coucher et qui ont soufflé sur mes pieds quand je sentais qu'ils avaient commencé à geler pendant l'appel. Et je suis là. Toutes mortes pour moi.[77]

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[76]Des Pres, p. 47.

[77]Delbo, p. 66. ("We will have seen, side by side, the worst cruelty and the greatest beauty. When I say that I think of those who practically carried me in their arms during those weeks when I could hardly walk. To those who gave me their water, when I was suffocating with thirst, when my tongue was like a piece of rough wood in my mouth. To those who touched my hand and sticking a smile on those cracked lips when I was desparate. To those who lifted me up when I fell in the mud, even though they themselves were so feeble. To those who took my feet in their hands at bedtime and who breathed on my feet when they began to freeze during the call. And here I am and they are all dead before me.") The survival of camaraderie is similarly described in various Holocaust works. In Auschwitz Elie Wiesel is taught the necessity for camaraderie by a political Kapo: "We are all brothers, and we are all suffering the same fate. The same smoke floats over all our heads. Help one another. It is the only way to survive" (Wiesel, Night, p. 52). In André-Schwarz Bart's The Last of the Just, Ernie Levy learns the same lesson from an elderly concentrationaire:

> But a man with gray temples, stretched out on a bed nearby, slipped a hand into the secret opening in his straw mattress and extracted a spectacle case containing two lumps of sugar and a few moldy pieces of candy. Emptying it into his hand, he paused to reflect and slowly put one piece of candy back into the case. Shuffling up to Ernie, who stood haggard and trembling at the foot of his bed his shoulders bowed under

It is interesting that in these early two episodes, Delbo has found a way to personify the concentration camp prisoner's initial psychological adjustment. According to Elie Cohen, upon entering the camp an internee's personality would split.[78] Viktor Frankl states that this would be followed by prolonged apathy which would usually culminate in "a kind of emotional death."[79] Afterwards there would be a resurrection of the desire to live. Francoise and Claire are personifications of the two forces which struggled within each internee: apathy and the desire to survive. With Claire's literal death, Francoise's emotional death occurs. What follows is Delbo's protagonist discovering her rationale for remaining alive: the desire to bear witness.

In essence, then, Francoise, who has survived and through whose eyes we see the dramatic action, is the spokeswoman for those who have perished in the unnamed camp. (Delbo, unlike most of the other dramatists who place their works in the concentration camps, never specifies what internment center the women are imprisoned in; her mise en scéne is more reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's absurdist Waiting for Godot than of Auschwitz.) The play's prologue and epilogue indicate that Francoise is

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> the gibes, he smiled and handed the boy his small fortune. 'Brother,' he murmered with a note of almost imperceptible regret, 'brother, little brother, you're the one who's right. It's very important to give'--he hesitated, his smile widened-- 'when you have nothing' (Andre Schwarz-Bart, The Last of the Just, trans. Stephen Becker [New York: Bantam Books, 1973], p. 402).

Des Pres interprets the survival of camaraderie as indicating that "their [the survivors'] experience suggests, in fact, that when conditions become extreme a need to help arises" (Des Pres, p. 132).

[78]Cohen, p. 116.

[79]Frankl, p. 18.

recounting the tragedy from the present; this shifting of time, from the present to the past back to the present, is also how Jorge Semprun structures his chronology in The Long Voyage. Hence, we see no violence because, in reality, the entire action is being narrated. In Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, Charlotte Delbo, through her raisonneur, finally allows those who have died in the Nazi concentration camps to bear witness. They are describing, not acting out, the horrors each has seen.

If Charlotte Delbo presents the Nazi concentration camp from the perspective of its internees, Peter Barnes, in Auschwitz, one of two one-act plays comprising the unpublished Laughter,[80] focuses on those who operated the internment center. The short play is not, except for its brief epilogue, set in the Silesian extermination center but, instead, takes place in Oranienburg near Berlin; what we see is the operation of the Administrative Unit that controls the building of all new installations in conquered Upper Silesia. One of the Administrative Unit's concerns is the construction of Auschwitz.

In tone and style, the one-act play is reminiscent of Barnes' earlier Leonardo's Last Supper and The Ruling Class and James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice. The British dramatist attempts "to create, by means of soliloquy, rhetoric, formalized ritual, slapstick, songs, and dances a comic theatre of contrasting moods and opposites, where everything is

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[80]In a letter I received from Peter Barnes (August 14, 1977), the author informed me that a production of Laughter directed by Charles Morowitz will be done at the Royal Court in London in the Winter of 1978. He also notes that he does not think Auschwitz should be analyzed separately from its companion piece Tsar, for Laughter "is very much a play in two parts." While the two one-act dramas do share thematic concerns, for this study I am more interested in analyzing Auschwitz as a concentration camp play.

simultaneously tragic and ridiculous."[81] Barnes, as does Schevill, looks for the fantastic in history: "The more bizarre the fact, the more certain one can be that it happened, sometime, somewhere, to someone. Nothing a writer can imagine is as surrealistic as the reality. Everything has happened. The difficulty is finding the record of it."[82]

For Peter Barnes, the real perpetrators of the crimes in Auschwitz were to be found in the bureaucratic machine that created it. The extermination center began operating in the Administrative Offices of Oranienburg, which was originally also a concentration camp. That he believes the administrators to be as responsible for the liquidations as the actual executioners is made clear to us by the omnipresent "executioner's block [which] remains [from the previous play dealing with Ivan the Terrible] Stage Left."[83] The workings of this office come to symbolize the atrocities of Auschwitz.

The replacement of words and names by numbers and codes, a key method in dehumanizing the concentration camp prisoners, is mirrored in the "nonsense" language employed by the administrators. Their vocabulary consists of citing regulations. SS Cranach's opening memo to his secretary is incomprehensible:

> WVHA Amt C I (Building) to WVHA Amt D I/I. Your reference ADS/MNO our reference EZ/14/102/01. Copies WVHA Amt I V/2, Amt D IV/4: RSHA OMIII: Reich Ministry PRV 24/6D. Component SP3(m) described in regulation E(5) serving as Class I or

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[81]Peter Barnes, Introduction to Leonardo's Last Supper and Noonday Demons (London: Heinemann, 1970), p. ix.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Peter Barnes, Auschwitz, in Laughter an unpublished script, p. 1.

> Class II appliances so constructed as to comply with relevant requirements of regulations L2(4) and (6), L8(4) and (7), L11, L12, L13, L14, L18, (1) (2) (3) and (4), L19, L21 (4), L25, L26 (3), L(28) (1) (7) and (11) and with provisions of paragraph (2) M10 (a) of this regulation L22 (1)a shall have effect as though there were substituted for reference to regulation M (10), reference M (10) a. . . .[84]

(This monologue continues for more than an entire page!) That the deaths which have occurred in the Upper Silesia installations are inconsequential is indicated by the new numbering system adopted to keep track of the dead; a system needed because "of the executive solutions agreed to at the Wannsee Conference," a euphemism for the Final Solution:

> Future cases of death shall be given consecutive Roman numbers with consecutive subsidiary Arabic numbers, so that the first case of death is numbered Roman numeral I/1, the second Roman numeral I/2 up to Roman numeral I/185. Thereafter, cases of death shall be numbered Roman numeral II/1 to 185. Further cases during the year shall be numbered Roman III/1 to III/185, Roman numeral IV/1 to 185 and so on. Each new year will start with Roman I/1.[85]

Cranach's defense of the numbering system reaffirms the Nazis' psychological rationalization of their liquidating "nameless" numbers: "Neutral symbols've become the safest means of communicating. I certainly endorse the use of coded symbols rather than consecutive numbering in recording cases of death. It's more concise and less emotive."[86] Cranach further

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[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[86]Ibid., p. 14. In the same manner, Rudolf Hoess, in his autobiography, rationalizes the first mass execution of Russian prisoners-of-war in Auschwitz by dehumanizing them: "They were no longer human beings. They had become animals who sought only food" (Hoess, p. 136). The actual historical result of replacing individual identities with numbers can be seen in a profit table devised by SS Lieutenant-General Oswald Pohl; Pohl's table, which is cited below, translates a prisoner's worth into marks and is reminiscent of the dialogue in Barnes' one-act play:

divorces himself from the liquidations taking place in Auschwitz by reminding SS Gottleb, who has returned from Upper Silesia to expedite building requisitions, that "Amt D II/3 is Statistics and Auditing, Herr Gottleb. We're Amt C I--planning, costing, and supervising of WHVA building projects. . . . Deaths . . . isn't any of our business."[87]

The audience, then, is made to realize that, for the lower echelon Nazis, the jargon and division of labor are means of avoiding any confrontation with the reality of the genocide occurring in the camps they are constructing. Stroop, the retiring SS bureaucrat, Else, the secretary, and Cranach are aware of previous liquidations carried out in the internment centers. Early in the dramatic action they discuss Hitler's

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Daily farming-out wage, 6 to 8 marks, average			6.00
Minus: 1. Food		0.60	
2. Clothing Depreciation		0.10	0.70
			5.30
Multiplied by 270 (average life span of nine months)			1,431 marks

Efficient utilization of the prisoner's body at the end of nine months increased this profit by the return from:
(1) Dental gold
(2) Personally owned clothing (part of which was used in other camps, reducing expenses for new clothing, while part was utilized in respinning for army uniforms)
(3) Valuables left by the deceased
(4) Money left by the deceased
(Down to the early war years, money and valuables were returned only to the families of the minority of prisoners who were German citizens)

From these returns must be deducted an average cremation cost of two marks per prisoner, but the direct and indirect profit per body averaged at least 200 marks

In many cases it ran to many thousands of marks.

The total profit per prisoner, at an average turnover rate of nine months, therefore ran at least 1,630 marks

Here and there a concentration camp obtained additional revenue from the utilization of bones and ashes (Kogon, p. 297).

[87]Barnes, Auschwitz, p. 14.

"mercy-killing" of the mentally unfit; though they all profess to having opposed the policy, ironically commenting that its cessation reveals that "despite the strains of war, the inherent common decency of our people is still active in Germany 1942,"[88] they easily rationalize it: "It was all repugnant to me on moral grounds, but I must say Brack stressed the mercy in mercy-killing."[89] That they are familiar with the mass executions of Russian prisoners-of-war is revealed by black-marketeer Wochner, who sells unusual souvenirs: "Here's a novelty that's selling well, very risque. Hammer-and-sickle badges. Every one guaranteed taken by hand from the body of a dead Russian soldier. Look their blood's still on them."[90] Yet, they refuse to face the reality of the Final Solution. Though it is their function to provide Auschwitz with Kyklon B, they pretend to be ignorant of its real use:

> Stroop: Amt D already've a contract with them for two tons of Kyklon B rat poison a month. Two tons. There can't be that many rats in the whole of Germany.
>
> Cranach: Kyklon B isn't being used to kill rats but to discredit this department. We built those complexes in Upper Silesia. If Gottleb and Amt D prove they're overrun with ermin we're blamed.[91]

Only when Wochner attempts to peddle confiscated "wedding rings," which are reminders of what is really occurring in the Silesian camp, is he silenced by the citing of the legal code that forbids selling in government offices.

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[88]Ibid., p. 6.

[89]Ibid., p. 5.

[90]Ibid., p. 19.

[91]Ibid., p. 7.

Only Gottleb admits to the truths of National Socialism. Having been with the Nazis since the Munich Putsch, he lambasts the "new wave" of SS bureaucrats and praises the Fuehrer's original ideals. Having returned from Auschwitz in order to convince Cranach to allow Krupp to complete the extermination center, Gottleb desires to return: "That's where I should be, . . . out in the field. Not stuck behind a desk in Oranienburg, but in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, working with people. Dealing with flesh and blood, not deadly abstractions. I'm suffocating in this limbo of paper."[92] It is Gottleb who forces these bureaucrats to see the true workings of the installation they have built and it is through Gottleb's six-page monologue that we are presented Barnes' conception of Auschwitz.

Most of the dialogue in this one-act play lacks descriptive phrases. As was indicated, this is a universe that replaces adjectives with numbers and categories. Gottleb's outburst, however, is strikingly vivid in contrast to what has preceded it, thereby heightening the grotesque picture he paints. Excrement is the key image; an appropriate image, for as Terence Des Pres notes, the early initiation into the concentration camp was an excremental assault.[93] Gottleb describes corpses covered with excrement, people suffering from diarrhea, inmates drowned in the latrines, internees cleaning themselves with "pisswater," and children who are killed because they are nothing more than "shit" to their tormentors. The images of disease and death are also prevalent.

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[92]Ibid., p. 41.

[93]Des Pres, Chapter 3.

Gottleb sarcastically juxtaposes the various means of dying in the concentration camp with the identitiless Roman numerals employed by the Administrative division:

> Roman numerals LXX/27 to LXXXX/84, dying by chloral hydrate, phenol, evipan, air that kills, Roman numeral LLXI/30 to LLLXII/67. Troublemakers die hardest, hanging from window frames, hot radiators, see Roman numeral XXX/104; with iron clamps round temples, screwed tight, skulls craaaack, brains slurp out like porridge, Roman numeral XXXXIII/29; chained and fed on pickles and salt water, Roman numerals XIV/172; heads plunged into bowls of excrement, Roman numeral XXIV/95, "Corpse carriers to the gate house at the double."[94]

Since earlier in the action Cranach, Stroop, and Else had complained of the Reich's meat rationing, Gottleb concludes his description with an identifiable image: "They're laying out the meat for the fire-ovens. It's baking time. That's a sight you must see. 4,500,000 killed and roasted. You'll smell 'em every morning you come into the office, crisp flesh done to a turn, all senses confirm, feathers torn from the wing."[95]

Yet Barnes does not solely rely on Gottleb's verbal delineation to dramatize Auschwitz, but also provides a visual reconstruction, reminiscent of an Elizabethan dumb show. Besides the execution block, the only other major piece of stage scenery called for is "an eight foot high filing unit [which] stretches from Up Stage Centre to Up Stage Right."[96] These files contain the camp records. It is within these cabinets that the victims have become numbers; as Gottleb remarks, "They're [the internees] there, behind those files there, stripped, shaved, tattooed on

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[94]Barnes, Auschwitz, p. 43.

[95]Ibid., p. 47.

[96]Ibid., p. 1.

their left arm. . . ."[97] It is these file cabinets that contain the rationalizations that the SS bureaucrats protect themselves with. Barnes brings this metaphor to life, for, as Gottleb describes Auschwitz,

> . . . the sound of the gas-chamber door being opened reverberates, the whole of the filing section Upstage slowly splits and its two parts slowly slide Upstage Left and Upstage Right to reveal, Upstage Centre, a vast mound of filthy, wet straw dummies; white vapour, the remains of the gas, still hangs about them. They spill forward to show all are painted blue, have no faces, and numbers tattooed on their left arms. . . . Two monstrous figures appear out of the vapour, dressed in black rubber suits, thigh-length waders, and gas-masks. Each has a large iron hook, knife, pincers, and a small sack hanging from his belt. As they clump forward, they hit the dummies with thick wooden clubs. Each time they do so, there is the splintering sound of a skull being smashed.[98]

Throughout the final section of Gottleb's outburst, these Sonderkommandos mime the atrocities described. (As will be seen in Chapter IV, Barnes' fantastic "dumb show" is strikingly reminiscent of the stage images employed by the Polish director Józef Szajna.)

Obviously Barnes is attacking those who are able "to hide behind the words and the symbols." (What he has done is take characters like Hochhuth's Fritsche and Salzer and make them the focus of the action.) If what Gottleb does is repulsive, he is still more admirable than the members of Department C who are truly responsible for the success of the final solution. That the bureaucrats are culpable is made clear in the play's denouement. After Gottleb points out, "no one has ever, or will ever, be punished for saying 'no' to this kind of work. You're free to

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[97]Ibid., p. 43.

[98]Ibid., p. 45.

say 'no.' But no one has ever, or will ever, say 'no',"[99] Department C exorcises him and the presence of Auschwitz by chanting their Nazi-bureaucratic jargon. Again, the rationalizations provide protection and the death machinery continues to operate. It is appropriate that the scene concludes with an invisible chorus singing ironic, cliched lyrics behind which an inhumane humanity hides: "Your life-long membership is free. Keep a-giving each brother all you can. Oh aren't you proud to be in that fraternity. The great big brotherhood of man."[100] (These sarcastic lyrics are Barnes' attempt to universalize the camp experience; like Schevill and Hochhuth, the British playwright wants Auschwitz to represent all the brutalities perpetrated by the "great big brotherhood of man.")

Barnes' representation of the Nazi concentration camp, however, continues into a brief epilogue. An announcer's voice sets the scene:

> Stop. Don't leave. The best is yet to come. Our final number. The Prisoners' Advisory Committee of Block B, Auschwitz II, proudly presents as the climax of this Extermination Camp Christmas Concert, the farewell appearance of the Buffo Boys of Birkenau, Abe Bimko and Hymie Bieberstein--"Bimko and Bieberstein."[101]

Barnes seems to be hinting, therefore, that Auschwitz was a play-within-a-play staged by camp inmates. However, unlike those works to be discussed in the next section, he never develops this suggestion as part of his camp depiction nor does it seem to be an integral part of the one-act drama. Instead, the epilogue switches focus from the victimizers to the victims.

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[99]Ibid., p. 47.

[100]Ibid., p. 51.

[101]Ibid., p. 52.

They, too, like their SS counterparts, are passive individuals hiding behind rationalizations.

Bimko and Bieberstein continue to do their vaudeville act in the gas-chamber. Even as "blood pours from their mouths" and "they writhe in their blood," they repeat stale one-liners that have been adapted for the camp environment: "The doctor told Fleischmann he needed to lose ten pounds of ugly fat and they cut off his head."[102] Like Schevill in Cathedral of Ice, Barnes uses actual examples of concentration camp humor. Yet Barnes, in sharp contrast to Schevill, does not view their ability to laugh as an heroic action, but another instance in which persons refused to say "no" to the Third Reich. When Bieberstein stops joking and curses his tormentors, Bimko cuts him short, ironically exclaiming, "Hymie, Hymie, please; what you want to do--cause trouble?"[103] Bimko may mean his question to be another joke, given the comedians' predicament. Unfortunately, the sentiment is the same one expressed by the Nazi bureaucrats. As SS Stroop exclaims to Gottleb,

> Yes, I see it! But they'll stop me growing roses, wearing slippers all day. I'm peeing down my trouser leg. I'm an old man. You can't expect me to say "no". I couldn't say "no", how can I say "no" to them? It's a bad time to say "no". I'm retiring next year. I'd lose my gold watch.[104]

Both SS Stroop and prisoner Bieberstein are afraid to cause trouble. Ultimately, according to Peter Barnes, the universal fear of "causing trouble" is responsible for the success of the Third Reich and for the

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[102]Ibid., p. 53.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid., pp. 46-7.

deaths of all the Bimkos and Biebersteins.

This chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of all the post-war dramatic works set in the Nazi concentration camps.[105] Among the others are Hedda Zinner's Ravensbrücker Ballade, Martin Speer's Koralle Meier, Francois Billetdoux's Comment va le monde, mossieu? Il tourne, mossieu!, and an experimental adaptation of Tadeusz Borowski's short stories.

Hedda Zinner's drama is quite similar to Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?[106] It, too, is set in a female internment center; the occurrences in both dramatic actions are almost identical. The basic difference is in style. If Delbo stresses subtlety, Zinner emphasizes extremity. The German playwright stages all the violence and atrocities; the confrontations are emotional and melodramatic. Terence Des Pres's theory that in the "literature of atrocity" "extremity makes bad art because events are too obviously 'symbolic'," [107] seems to hold true for

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[105]Bertolt Brecht's The Private Life of the Master Race, trans. Eric Bentley (New York: New Directions, 1944) also contains a camp scene; it is one of twenty-eight scenes that illustrate Nazi brutality. Set in Oranienburg, 1934, Brecht presents a Social Democrat, a Communist, a Non-Political Prisoner, and a Pastor bickering over whose to blame for Hitler's rise to power. Through these characters the playwright is attacking all those forces in Germany who refused to unite against fascism: "The disunity of the people has made us great./ Our prisoners struck each other even in the concentration camps./ And in the end they all rode on our Panzer"(p. 30). Perhaps this purely political interpretation of the camp experience seems naive because Brecht's play was written before World War II (1935-38) and before the final evolution of the Nazi internment centers.

[106]Hedda Zinner, Ravensbrücker Ballade: Schauspiel in fünf Akten. (Berlin: Henschel, 1961).

[107]Des Pres, p. 175.

Ravensbrücker Ballade. In contrast, Delbo seems more perceptive and sensitive in dealing with the concentration camp universe.

Another German dramatist, Martin Speer, has set the dramatic action of his play Koralle Meier (1970) in

> . . . a small Bavarian town, not unlike Dachau, which has a concentration camp on the outskirts. [The time is 1938-1940.] The motto is taken from Brecht: "The womb from which that crawled is still fruitful," suggesting that Fascism is still possible today. Speer's story explains why this is so. Koralle Meier, the town's honorable and beloved whore, decides to become respectable by opening a vegetable store. This causes trouble because her store will be competition for businesses run by the baker and the mayor. Discovering that she has helped some Jews to escape the country by lending them money, they have her shipped to the concentration camp outside the town. She is saved by one of her old customers, a high-ranking Nazi official. When she returns to the town, she tries to get even with the mayor, but her tactics are too naive. Once again she is sent to the concentration camp, and this time she is shot.[108]

Speer, echoing Peter Weiss in The Investigation, attempts to "show how the obsession with profit and the hypocrisy about social and ethical norms creates a breed of men who can easily serve the Fascist system."[109]

Martin Speer has been influenced by Bertolt Brecht. Not only does he borrow the motto of his drama from the epic playwright, the plot of Koralle Meier is derived from The Good Woman of Setzuan. Koralle Meier, "the town's honorable and beloved whore," is the contemporary German dramatist's version of Shen-Te. Speer's economic interpretation of the Holocaust is also inspired by Brecht.[110] In Koralle Meier, the

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[108]Michael Anderson, Jacques Guicharnaud, Kristin Morrison, Jack D. Zipes, et al., Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971), p. 428.

[109]Ibid. Weiss's concentration camp drama will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

[110]See footnote 105.

Nazi concentration camp is the tool employed by those men obsessed with profit to enforce the status quo. If, according to Speer, Fascism is still possible today, so are its internment centers. Martin Speer's fear of the Holocaust reoccurring is similar to the concern expressed by James Schevill in Cathedral of Ice and Rolf Hochhuth in The Deputy.

The first act of Francois Billetdoux's Comment va le monde, mossieu? Il tourne, mossieu! (How Goes the World, Mossieu? It Turns, Mossieu!, 1964) is set in a Nazi concentration camp in Silesia. The structure of the play

> . . . is [also] extremely Brechtian. The characters move around in the world (from Eastern Europe to the United States); the scenes are dated (from December 1944 to August 1945--the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki); the two "human" heroes are surrounded by mute figures (fellow prisoners, soldiers, civilians, customs officers, a wife, and so on) whose silence and pantomime situate them on another level of scenic reality; and the scenes are interspersed with "meaningful" songs (a Nazi improvisation, a Jewish lament, a Negro spiritual, and a ballad in the manner of Boris Vian). But this truly Brechtian spectacle is primarily related to the German playwright's negative works, with the addition of a really French savor. . . . The subject matter itself is a common little Frenchman's cocky banter and gumption confronted by American pragmatism. The Frenchman uses the American, and the American uses the Frenchman, each in accordance with his "national character," throughout an interminable adventure that leads them from a Nazi concentration camp to an absurd murder in Texas.[111]

The opening camp scenes illustrate the French dramatist's belief that "man can only survive by exploiting man."[112] As the dramatic action begins, Job, an American soldier, discovers Hubert, a French male nurse, cooking what seems to be meat outside the barracks. Hubert, in reality,

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[111]Jacques Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre: From Giraudoux to Genet (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 209-10.

[112]Ibid.

is boiling the body of a young Jewish girl whose intact skeleton will be studied by the camp doctor. (While Billetdoux does not specify the camp, the references to Silesia and the camp doctor are images of Auschwitz.) The American soldier--an ironic contemporary caricature of the Biblical Job--is willing to eat the human flesh; he argues vehemently with the French internee that there are instances in which humans must devour other humans in order to survive. While Job has no moral qualms about cannibalism, he does not consume the human flesh because he is uncertain of the camp's sanitary conditions.

The opening image of cannibalism suggests that only those internees who were willing to exploit their fellow prisoners were able to survive. Even the idealistic Hubert remains alive because he is willing to cooperate with the Nazis. While he is envied for his seemingly easy work detail as camp nurse, his position is actually an unenviable one. Hubert assists the SS doctor in his experiments; his duties include such tasks as boiling the body of the Jewish inmate. Act I's Brechtian songs, which detail the war's destruction of idealism, reinforce the French dramatist's pessimistic perception of the concentration camp universe.

The final scene of Act I, in which Job and Hubert escape from the camp, implies that both the victims and victimizers of the Holocaust shared in the guilt. In order to escape, Job and Hubert have dressed themselves as SS men. As they are fleeing, they encounter another escaping deportee whom the American, without hesitating, kills. In response to Hubert's moralistic protestations, Job explains that since they are uniformed like Nazis they must act like Nazis. Thus Francois Billetdoux, in the first act of Comment va le monde, mossieu? Il tourne, mossieu!,

echoes the sentiment expressed by Rolf Hochhuth in The Deputy by presenting us with concentration camp internees who could have exchanged roles with their oppressors.

Since the Teatr Mysterium's dramatic recreation of Auschwitz was not totally original, being based on the short stories and philosophy of Tadeusz Borowski, and since documentation regarding this production is not readily available, a full analysis does not seem warranted. Nevertheless, because of the Polish author's importance as a Holocaust artist, it should be mentioned. Marjorie Young, in her report on the Fourth International Student Festival of Open Theatre in Wroclaw, Poland, describes the pieces dramatized and the production style employed:

> The most significant presentation from Poland was given by a group of young students [known as the Teatre Mysterium] who set out a year ago to come to terms with one of the darkest moments of their nation's history--the concentration camp. They explore this phenomenon through the bitterly frank eyes of Tadeusz Borowski, a young survivor of the camps. The picture he paints is not the oft-cited one of heroism, but instead resembles Sartre's No Exit. Hell is not the SS officer but other people in their desparate competition for survival--and he who survives is guilty because of the thousands who died in his place. This performance took place on the bare ground of a small, dimly-lit, cave-like cellar of a Romanesque church. The five camp inmates tease, beg, tempt, and betray. Efforts toward genuine contact ended in frustration and attempts at amusement ended in a desparate dance-macabre.[113]

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[113]Marjorie B. Young, "The 4th International Student Festival of Open Theatre, Wroclaw, Poland," Drama and Theatre 12 (Spring 1975): 126. Another of Borowski's short stories, "A World of Stone," has been dramatized by Jerzy Adamski. This adaptation was produced at the Teatr Ludowy in Warsaw on January 8, 1966, under the direction of Jerzy Kłosowski. A photograph of the production can be found in Theatre in Poland, nos. 2-3 (February-March 1967):16.

If, as mentioned earlier, Delbo, Wiesel, and Schwarz-Bart find beauty and heroism in the midst of the internment centers' horrors, Borowski's camp universe is devoid of goodness. His is a Darwinian interpretation of the camp experience; survival of the fittest, at its ugliest, is the guiding principle.[114]

What should be apparent, then, from this survey, is the variety of methods employed to dramatize the inside of the Nazi concentration camp. The differences in technique are due to the variety of ways the camp experience is perceived as well as the difficulty inherent in creating a stage representation of this world. Perhaps these dramas prove Friedrich Duerrenmatt to be correct when he suggests "that there are terrible things, in the face of which art is always weaker than reality."[115] Thus, a number of theatre artists, as we will see in the following chapters, have chosen other approaches to dramatically represent what David Rousset terms l'univers concentrationnaire.[116]

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[114]See, in particular, Borowski's short story "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen."

[115]Langer, p. 166.

[116]David Rousset, L'Univers Concentrationnaire (Paris: Le Pavois, 1946).

CHAPTER III

DRAMAS DEPICTING PERFORMANCE IN THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS

A miraculous phenomenon in the Nazi concentration camps was the survival of theatrical activities. As was noted in the introduction to this study, these theatricalities ranged from dramatic readings in the barracks to, in some instances, full-scale productions.[1] However, Holocaust literature has remained unconcerned, for the most part, with the survival of theatre in the Nazi internment centers. Josef Bor's Terezin Requiem is the only major literary work dealing with the plight of the interned performing artists. Bor presents a fictionalized recounting of Raphael Schachter's staging of Verdi's Requiem in Theresienstadt.[2] If novelists have ignored the survival of the performing arts in the Nazi camps, theatre artists have not. In this chapter we will examine those works by Alberto Moravia, the American Jewish Ensemble, the Pip Simmons' Group, and the Polish playwright Ireneusz Iredyński that dramatize concentration camp internees performing. Each of these contemporary theatre artists has employed the concept of performance in the Nazi concentration camps to present their individual perceptions of l'univers concentrationnaire.

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[1]See pp. 25-47. Also see Nahma Sandrow, Vagabond Stars: A History of World Yiddish Theatre (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 348-50.

[2]Josef Bor, The Terezin Requiem, trans. Edith Pargeter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

The American Jewish Ensemble presented The Theatre of Peretz at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City on February 12-15 and March 25-28, 1976. The primary artistic motivation of this group is to make Jewish theatre more accessible to an English-language audience.

> Making its home . . . on Manhattan's Lower East Side, the Ensemble develops and creates works in English dealing with Jewish themes related to the roots and nature of the American Jewish experience. In its relatively short history, the Ensemble has not charged admission to its performances in order to allow the elderly residents of the neighborhood an opportunity to experience a sort of modern-day revival of the old Yiddish theatre in America.[3]

Isaac Loeb Peretz (1852-1915) was a Polish contemporary of Scholem Aleichem. While the Russian Sholem Aleichem was the more popular of the two, many critics believe Peretz to have been the more innovative artist. Peretz, for example, experimented with a greater diversity of styles in both his dramas and short stories:

> Peretz wrote one-act plays about the Jews of Warsaw, as sharply observed as his short stories. Shvester (Sisters), for example, is about three poor young women. . . . At the other end of the spectrum, Peretz was drawn to symbolism. The playwrights he most admired were Maeterlinck and Strindberg, Wyspianski and the other Romantics of the Young Poland movement. . . . Many of Peretz's stories were fantasies, and he wrote several symbolist plays, which might better be called dramatic poems.[4]

The Theatre of Peretz is a dramatization by Isaiah Sheffer of some of the Polish author's best known short stories.

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[3]Dov Eli Stern, "Experimental Jewish Theatre Done Well," Jewish Journal (April 2, 1976):8.

[4]Sandrow, pp. 176-7. According to Samuel J. Citron, The Three Sisters "introduced for the first time the theme of pauperism to the Yiddish stage" (Samuel J. Citron, "Yiddish and Hebrew Drama," A History of Modern Drama, ed. Barrett H. Clark and George Freedley [New York: D. Appleton-Century Inc., 1947], p. 625).

American Jewish Ensemble's director Stanley Brechner presents the string of vignettes as a play-within-a-play.[5] The frame of the production is set in a Nazi concentration camp. The performers are camp inmates, while audience members are treated as new arrivals being introduced to the internment center through the production. Brechner's presentation is rooted in historical fact; Isaac Loeb Peretz's works frequently were recited by the prisoners in their barracks. On various occasions, the Nazis did force internees to take part in theatrical presentations. Such was the case in the Malines transit camp in Belgium.

The experimental theatre space at the Henry Street Settlement's playhouse is well-suited to the dramatic concept. Surrounding the audience are cold, stone walls; above them is the skeletal, unadorned lighting grid. This sterile environment, rather than an attempt at a realistic recreation of l'universe concentrationnaire, is reminiscent of the stark, desolate imagery of Charlotte Delbo's camp poetry as reflected in the following passage from None of Us Will Return:

> A plain
> covered with marshes
> with hand trucks
> with gravel for hand trucks
> with spades and shovels for the marshes
> a plain
> covered with men and women
> the hand trucks and marshes for the spades
> a plain
> of cold and fever
> for men and women
> who struggle
> in agony
> and die.[6]

[5]For a review of this production see Alvin Goldfarb, "Theatre in Review: The Theatre of Peretz," Educational Theatre Journal 28 (October 1976):417-18.

[6]Delbo, None of Us Will Return, p. 47.

Even before entering this space, Jewish spectators are forced to don Star of David armbands. The wearing of the armband forces one to be cognizant of being Jewish, of being separate. This, of course, was the actual historical intention of the Nazis.[7] As audience members enter the experimental space for the performance of The Theatre of Peretz they are shoved toward their seats by SS men. The inmates, in their pin-striped smocks and ragged clothing (the only realistic visual element in the play is the costuming), attempt to soothe and console. They dance with some of the spectators and ask the rest to sing along, or at least keep rhythm, with traditional Yiddish and Hebrew songs. Here the initiation process into the Nazi internment centers has been theatrically sketched. The shock and discomfort of being brutalized is soothed by fellow inmates, whose singing of Jewish folksongs is the murmuring of resistance. Their chanting and dancing is equivalent to Claire's convincing Francoise to survive in Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? or to an experienced internee's sharing his hidden rations with Ernie Levy in Andre-Schwarz Bart's The Last of the Just.

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[7]The feeling the Jewish audience members experience is similar to the retrospective perception Elie Wiesel has of the Nazi's "Star of David" decree:

> When three days were up, there was a new decree: every Jew must wear the yellow star.
>
> Some of the prominent members of the community came to see my father--who had highly placed connections in the Hungarian police--to ask him what he thought of the situation. . . .
>
> "The yellow star? Oh well, what of it? You don't die of it. . . ."
>
> (Poor Father! Of what then did you die?) (Wiesel, Night, p. 20).

In The Deputy the Jewish star is also a powerful theatrical device. When the Pope refuses to intervene on behalf of the Jews, Riccardo pins it to his cassock, symbolically ostracizing himself from Rome and joining forces with the interned Jews.

Once all the spectators are seated, the presentation of Peretz begins. Throughout the dramatic action, however, the players are tormented by their Nazi watchmen. One of the women is raped by two guards; a Jew wearing a skull cap is beaten and forced to confess to being a "pig kike." While brutalizing the pious Jew, the SS men command audience members to kick him. At the end, all but one of the performers are led off to the gas chambers. The remaining inmate is shot after reading the epilogue.

Brechner has chosen to place his Theatre of Peretz within the concentration camp for two reasons. As Dov Eli Stern indicates in his review for the Jewish Journal, Peretz is meant to dramatize the survival of Jewish culture in the Nazi internment centers as well as to reflect the Jewish resistance that existed in the camps. The director of the American Jewish Ensemble affirms Stern's view of his production:

> In a great many of the cases, the performers and the audience were aware that they were close to death and yet they insisted on staging these shows. The two choices these inmates faced meant death in both cases. One was to die like exterminated rodents with every shred of dignity torn from their beings; the other was to die with the torch of their culture held aloft and on their lips. This remains as a magnificent lesson for those not fully cognizant of the value of their own cultural heritage.[8]

The play is meant to be seen as a gift to the new internees, to the audience. Early in the dramatic action it is apparent that these concentrationaires realize that they are to die at the close of the production. The note that the final internee leaves behind explains the

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[8]Stanley Brechner, "Notes About the Production," in The Theatre of Peretz programme.

purpose of the presentation: "Forgive us, with pale fingers we tried to touch you. What else could we do with pale fingers?" Art is meant to comfort the novice prisoners in Peretz. In the same fashion, Schachter's Requiem rehearsals, in Bor's novel Terezin Requiem, offer solace to the persecuted artists in Theresienstadt; when the young tenor realizes he is to be executed, he returns to the rehearsal room: "'I've got to report in an hour. I still have an hour left,' said the young voice at the door unsteadily. 'I've got nobody here. And it's been so beautiful here. I've never in my life felt so happy as I have been here with you.'"[9]

Besides providing comfort and solace, cultural activity is also presented by Brechner as an obvious act of resistance. The American Jewish Ensemble's Theatre of Peretz seems to be a dramatization of Holocaust historian Lucy S. Dawidowicz's statement: "Given those conditions of overpowering German might and terror, the wonder is not that there was so little resistance, but that in the end there was so much."[10] The Nazis, in The Theatre of Peretz, are purposely portrayed as the stereotypical demonic brutalizers. Brechner's presentation of their violence is harshly realistic; unlike Charlotte Delbo, he carefully recreates the atrocities in full view of the audience. The rape scene, for example, was so realistically staged that it resulted in many viewers leaving the theatre. The inmates, therefore, appear to be helpless, passive victims. Yet, Brechner, through the internees' version of Peretz, makes their defiance

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[9]Bor, p. 68.

[10]Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "Resistance: A Doomed Struggle," in The Jewish Presence (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1977); cited in Edward Rothstein, "A Lost World," New York Times Book Review, July 24, 1977, p. 13.

apparent and questions the suggestion that the concentration camp prisoners went to their deaths like sheep.

During the prologue to the production, the interned performers recite famous pronouncements by Isaac Loeb Peretz; the remark that closes the prologue implies that all performances in the camps were acts of resistance:

> Female Inmate: Tell them what he said about Yiddish literature.
> Male Inmate: Yiddish literature must be the tongue and the conscience of harassed and tortured people. It must help us teach our children that, yes, it was even an honor and a distinction to be a persecuted Jew.[11]

Even after the severest brutalities are inflicted--the rape and the beating of the old man--they continue to perform. While it is true that the Nazis coerce them into resuming, they also do so out of an act of defiance. At the close of the vignette in which these atrocities occur, the rape victim leads her compatriots in "clapping in laps," the other internees exhibit "mean faces," and defiantly chant the traditional Hebrew song "Dovid Melech," which praises the victories of King David.[12] In the same manner, Schachter's Requiem in Bor's novel becomes an act of defiance when it is presented to an audience of high-ranking Nazis, including Adolf Eichmann:

> "Confutatis maledictis," thundered through the hall. Listen, you murderers there in the dark, damn you, you and those others a thousand times damned! Moaning could not move you, but soon now, soon, we shall speak to you in a language you'll understand better. . . .

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[11]Promptbook, American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz, p. 4. (Director Stanley Brechner provided me with a copy of his promptbook.)

[12]Ibid., p. 27.

> I will multiply thy seed as the sands of the earth, I will bless him who blesseth thee, and curse him who curseth thee.
>
> Do you hear, you there in the dark? You have marked us as the seed of Abraham, and now we, prisoners in a Jewish camp, exult before you. You have not broken us, you will not break us! . . .
>
> Like the stroke of a bell, Maruska's crystal voice rang out: "Libera me!" Everywhere the bells pealed in answer. "Libera me!" resounded the voices of the choir. "Deliver us! Deliver us!" clamored altos and tenors, sopranos and basses, from all sides. "We want liberty!" the orchestra replied to them. And the kettle drums rolled and thundered: "Libera nos! Libera nos!"[13]

On occasion, in The Theatre of Peretz, passive resistance becomes active. In order to protect her father, a young female prisoner "tries to beat Nazi. Gets dragged out yelling, 'Don't kill my Papa.'"[14] But it is primarily through their performance that the resistance is manifested.

The characterization of the inmates also implies their defiance of the Nazi system. Since for Brechner, those in the pin-striped uniforms are the innocent victims of persecution at the hands of evil villains, the American Jewish Ensemble's conception of the camps, like Rolf Hochhuth's in The Deputy, could be considered melodramatic. The camp inmates are all loyal comrades. Throughout the action they console one another, even at the risk of further punishment. Their defiant camaraderie is most apparent when the audience enters and the experienced prisoners attempt to cheer the new arrivals.[15]

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[13]Bor, pp. 105, 107-08, 110-11.

[14]Promptbook, Peretz, p. 33.

[15]As noted earlier, this phenomenon of internees aiding one another was not unusual. Terrence Des Pres entitles the section of The Survivor that deals with camp camaraderie "Life in Death;" see Des Pres, Chapter 5. An example similar to that presented in the American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz is found in Eugene Weinstock's description of a camp work detail in his memoirs Beyond the Last Path:

That The Theatre of Peretz is a theatrical representation of camp resistance is also made clear in the structuring of the material. Brechner has not presented the vignettes in the order found in Isaiah Sheffer's adaptation.[16] Instead, the director has rejected some of the episodes and re-ordered all of those employed. Much of the selected material deals with revolt. The American Jewish Ensemble's opening vignette, "The Din Torah: Judgment of the Court," deals with a horse who, after his death, takes his owner to the Heavenly Court to complain of the persecution he suffered. Peretz's conclusion that justice does eventually prevail, that the horse and owner will exchange roles when they are reincarnated, has a double significance when those performing the piece are concentration camp inmates who are being brutalized by their SS overseers. In "A Conversation on a Hilltop," a mother revolts against conventional morality; realizing that her strict supervision has destroyed her older daughter, she does not constrain her younger child. In "A Domestic Idyll," the revolt is against God. During a conversation with his rabbi, a porter learns that when he ascends to Heaven his wife will be his footstool. Incensed, he pledges to fight the Heavenly authorities for his wife's equality. In all of these episodes, the dramatic tension created

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> I was equal to the job, but working with us were weaker men who grew exhausted after a few trips. The younger of us, myself included, pitched in to help them. We had agreed among our group that we would help one another to whatever extent was possible, rather than to surrender to the dog-eat-dog philosophy which poisoned the mind of some prisoners. (Eugene Weinstock, Beyond the Path, trans. Clara Ryan [New York: Boni and Gaer, 1947], p. 154).

[16]Isaiah Sheffer, adapter, The Theatre of Peretz: A Dramatic Presentation from the Works of Isaac Loeb Peretz (New York: Samuel French, 1964).

by the characters' acts of defiance is heightened because of the juxtaposition to the camp situation. The defiance dramatized in Peretz symbolizes the internees' resistance to l'univers concentrationnaire.

For that matter, all the material in The Theatre of Peretz gains an additional level of meaning by being set within the Nazi concentration camp. "The Pious Pussycat" suggests that the cat's piety proves fatal. The death of piety amongst the Jews is a common concern in Holocaust literature. "What the Man Tells," a short vignette that depicts impoverished children bragging about their rich relatives, becomes a representation of the camp inmates who are starving and naively attempting to dream of a better world.

If the American Jewish Ensemble presents the concentration camp universe in terms of good and evil, Peretz's philosophy seems to negate this perception. For example, in "All for a Pinch of Snuff" even the holiest of rabbis is shown to have a vice. When the prisoners present this piece, we realize that it is too simple to label those wearing the swastikas as melodramatic villains and those in the pin-striped uniforms as the persecuted innocent victims. The implication that "we all share the guilt"[17] is conveyed through Peretz's conception of humanity.

Finally, the last lines delivered in The Theatre of Peretz, before the inmates exit to the gas chambers, indicates the careful structuring of the material: "But we Jews? Where will we find the snow? Where are our wings?" The image of being set free concludes both Brechner's Peretz and

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[17]This is a paraphrase of the title of a well-known essay by Elie Wiesel. See Elie Wiesel, "The Guilt We Share," in Legends of Our Time (New York: Avon Books, 1970), pp. 201-12.

Josef Bor's Terezin Requiem, for both the play and the novel view the survival of the performing arts as the survival of resistance in a system that doomed its Jewish inhabitants.

As in The Theatre of Peretz, internees in the Pip Simmons Group's An die Musik are coerced into performing; however, in the latter work, the prisoners entertain their tormentor rather than fellow inmates. The experimental English troupe's concentration camp presentation stirred as much controversy as had its earlier works.

Before disbanding in April 1973, the Pip Simmons Group frequently presented topical productions which were meant to satirize their audiences' political beliefs. As critic John Ford explains:

> The Pip Simmons Theatre exists to jangle nerves which are only just concealed below the surface. His last play in England The George Jackson Black and White Minstrel Show articulated the liberal dilemma over black power and racism, and jangled the right English nerves at the right time. Then he went to Germany and chose to do a play about the "Bader-Meinhof" gang and jangled the right German nerves at the right time.[18]

It was while in Germany that Simmons became interested in the concentration camps and their relevance to contemporary audiences; the English director was shocked that the Holocaust had been forgotten:

> According to Pip, they [young Germans] seem deliberately to blind themselves to Nazi history. He illustrated his point with a chilling anecdote about a young Bavarian he met in Munich and when he asked "What's at Dachau now?" "Dachau is an ancient historical city," the Bavarian replied, apparently oblivious to the irony of his remark.[19]

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[18]John Ford, "An die Musik," an unidentified clipping in the "An die Musik Clippings File," Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.

[19]Jonathan Howard, "A Requiem for the Fringe: Pip Simmons Talks to Jonathan Howard," Plays and Players 20 (May 1973):56.

In the spring of 1975 the Pip Simmons Group reorganized and presented a new work, An die Musik, in the Netherlands.[20] They then brought their newest production to London in July 1975 and to Paris in January 1976.[21] This experimental piece deals with musicians in the Nazi concentration camps: "The idea for the play came from the fact that Jewish orchestras were formed in the concentration camps to play traditional Germanic music."[22] An die Musik consists of a concert performed by a camp orchestra under the supervision of an SS guard. "Its ironic title . . . is taken from the title of a poem by Goethe set to music by Schubert, which is a tribute to music--'Thou Heavenly art, I thank thee.'"[23]

Before examining Pip Simmons' conception of l'univers concentrationnaire, it might be helpful to cite John Ford's lengthy synopsis of the dramatic action since the production is not well-known to American audiences:

> There's a high concert party platform at one end of the theatre. The whole room is lit. Rows of benches face the platform. . . . A man in uniform introduces the first part of the evening: "A Comic Operetta entitled The Dream of Anne Frank." Music grows slowly and orchestrates a grotesque mime. A family of Jews--mother, father, son, daughter--eat a celebratory meal. Those characteristics generally

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[20]Theodore Shank, "Commemorating the Nazi Concentration Camps: The Pip Simmons Group," The Drama Review 19 (December 1975):42.

[21]Harold Hobson, "Theatre," London Sunday Times, July 6, 1975. Also see the programme for Recamier-Bourseiller, Paris, January 5, 1976.

[22]Shank, p. 42. This statement is not totally accurate historically. In many instances Jewish orchestras were not permitted to perform "Aryan works." Raphael Schachter chose to do Verdi's Requiem in Theresienstadt because he would not have been given permission to present a Germanic work (Bor, p. 9).

[23]Shank, p. 42.

> attributed to their race are presented in exaggerated and offensive parody. They are waited on at their table by a Nazi. From obsequious servility his attitude hardens to ingratiating demand. He requests their jewelry, their rings, their wealth. They oblige, with neither complaint nor resentment.
>
> . . . The Nazi's demands become more extreme. In a single effort to retreat, the father is shot. The family mimes grief and despair. As the first movement ends the words are heard: "We must go from here." The family does not move.
>
> All the actors and musicians come on to the platform and change into the uniforms of a concentration camp. The Nazi uniform is worn by another actor. He presents an entertainment by the Jews. On an improvised selection of instruments they perform classical German orchestral music. During the music and between the selections, the Nazi puts them through a hideous display of self-humiliation. . . . One is singled out and the others are made to scorn him as a Jew, spitting at him, spurred on by the Nazi to greater derision. One is made to display his penis, and the others are made to laugh at his circumcision. . . . The Nazi presents them in a comic interlude, a traditional Jewish dance and song during which one is made to bang two tin trays on his head until he collapses. Two are told to "be funny", and are beaten because the audience does not find them funny. They are made to humiliate themselves. They oblige, with neither complaint nor resentment.
>
> Finally all the actors remove their clothes and place them in neat piles on the platform. They sit and begin to play a Beethoven dead march. A third Nazi's jack boots are heard on the steel grid above the audience. He makes a long descent to the platform. He releases the valve of a gas cylinder, and it hisses through the music. White smoke slowly fills the theatre. The image on the platform is obscured. The music stops. Silence but for the hissing of gas. The white smoke engulfs the audience.[24]

There are obviously many similarities in the stagings of An die Musik and the American Jewish Ensemble's The Theatre of Peretz. Neither production uses scenery; the only elements that create the camp milieu are the pinstriped outfits and the SS uniforms. In both productions the Nazi terror is symbolized by the SS overseer who humiliates and brutalizes.

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[24]Ford, "An die Musik Clippings File."

The atrocities presented in both pieces are strikingly similar. These include the singling out of one individual to be scorned by the others, spitting, sexual abuse--frequently in An die Musik the guard would torment a female prisoner by pulling her breasts out of her sweater and jiggling them--and verbal assault. The concluding image of the internees walking off to the gas chambers is common to both works.

There are, however, many differences, all of which are related to a major thematic difference. Brechner, in The Theatre of Peretz, presents culture as a form of resistance; he rejects the view that the Jews were passive victims. At the heart of Pip Simmons' concentration camp presentation, on the other hand, is the affirmation of Bruno Bettelheim's theory that the Jews passively accepted their deaths. As Theodore Shank notes: "He [Simmons] was puzzled by the resignation of the Jews, who knew they would be killed, who had nothing to lose by fighting back, but merely submitted to their own humiliation and death. He suspects that this derived from an inherited sense of being a victim, of being persecuted--amounting to almost a racial death wish."[25] John Walker, repeating the general critical consensus, summarizes the thematic thrust of An die Musik in his review for the International Herald Tribune: "There is in the play an implied link between the acquiesence in the cast in their humiliation and an actual acceptance and participation by Jews in their deaths in extermination centers."[26]

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[25]Shank, p. 42.

[26]John Walker, "Theatre in London: A Flawed Confrontation," International Herald Tribune, July 5-6, 1975, p. 6.

Simmons employs a number of theatrical devices to reinforce his conceptualization. The title of the first segment, "The Dream of Anne Frank," is an ironic suggestion of his view of the Holocaust. Apparently, the British director is in agreement with Bettelheim, who believes that the hiding together of the Frank family was a childish action and a passive acceptance of their ultimate deaths.[27] If Anne Frank has become a sentimental symbol of the Holocaust, Simmons undermines the conventional view of the teenage girl and her family by having the internees mime a ludicrous Passover celebration, which mocks the Frank's family drama. Without resistance, they turn over all their personal belongings to their Nazi tormentor. They are forced to gorge themselves with food, be sexually provocative, and perform a chorus dance. When the father is unable to carve a live dove with a butcher knife, he is shot. Passivity is at the heart of the sequence. "The Father, even with a knife in his hand, is unable to use it against the Guard; he is more frightened of the weapon than of his enemy."[28] The Jews allow themselves to be molded into the Nazi stereotypes.

The portrayal of the concentration camp prisoners passively acquiescing to their tormentor is further reinforced by the music and lyrics that accompany the opening segment's "dumb show." The words are based on H. Leivick's The Golem, which according to Nahma Sandrow is

> . . . a blank-verse retelling of the legend of the mechanical man created from clay by a rabbi in Prague in the seventeenth century to defend Jews from an accusation of killing Christian

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[27]Des Pres, p. 158.

[28]Shank, p. 44.

> children for their blood. In the end, the golem gets out of control. He becomes too human, desires the rabbi's daughter and begins to get violent and kill people.[29]

Through his use of The Golem, Simmons seems to be suggesting the Jews' inability to escape persecution and their ultimate resignation in the face of it. Theodore Shank implies this in his discussion of the dramatic function of the lyrics:

> There is no literal relationship between the lyrics and the action, but there is a thematic one. In one segment, the voice of a German sings:
>
> I have seen in dungeons, in so many prisons
> So many faces of so many Jews
> So many eyes, eyes of every sort
> But I have never seen the face of a Jew
> That looked upon me with true fury.
>
> The voice of a Jew, answering his own question, "What is anguish?" sings:
>
> We have grown into it
> Wrapped it around ourselves.[30]

The second section of An die Musik is a more direct depiction of concentration camp existence. In this scene the prisoners attempt to please their Nazi tormentor with their performances. He, instead, torments them for his own entertainment. Here the image of performing arts in the concentration camps becomes most affective for, as Robert Cushman, the theatre critic for the London Observer, points out: "There is a sense in which the camps were theatre--to the guards who reduced the prisoners to objects in a spectacle, even to the prisoners who felt they were fitting allotted roles."[31]

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[29]Sandrow, p. 189.

[30]Shank, p. 43.

[31]Robert Cushman, "Cruel Concert Party," London Observer, July 6, 1975. (This clipping can be located in the "An die Musik Clippings File" at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.)

Again, the concentration camp prisoners passively accept the brutalities inflicted. One moment in particular is strikingly reminiscent of The Theatre of Peretz: "Another [inmate] is made to call himself a dirty Jew while the others gather around and spit in his face with the obvious intent to please the Guard so as to avoid punishment."[32] In the American Jewish Ensemble's Peretz, an elderly internee is singled out and the audience is asked to "kick the kike" and to spit at him. In Simmons' piece, the director is indicting the Jews for their complicity in their own deaths and humiliations. In Brechner's production, however, no one in the audience, or among the other performers, complies with the Nazi's demands. These two moments, when contrasted with each other, indicate the disparate views of l'univers concentrationnaire found in An die Musik and The Theatre of Peretz.

There is also a vignette in An die Musik reminiscent of Peter Barnes' epilogue in Auschwitz. Two camp prisoners,who are very much like Bimko and Bieberstein, make derogatory jokes regarding Jews in an attempt to placate their Nazi guard.

First Man: Who are you?
Second Man: Number 743876. Who are you?
First Man: Number 538714.
Second Man: Funny, you don't look Jewish.[33]

Here, too, the comedians are depicted as passively complying with their executioner.

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[32]Shank, p. 44.

[33]Ibid., p. 45.

The violence in An die Musik is staged in a unique manner; an analysis of the staging technique sheds more light on Simmons' perception of the concentration camps. The actor in the role of the SS guard decides on the night of each performance who is to be punished and how. The violence inflicted on the performers is arbitrary and real, just as it was in the actual Nazi internment centers. The actors, therefore, must really attempt to escape the notice of the actor-guard. This heightens the sense of their passivity and their willingness to comply with the Nazi's orders. It also effects a unique response in the viewers

> . . . because the focus of the audience is partly on the actual stage circumstances, rather than being absorbed totally into the fictional world, they are able to think of the actual victims of the Nazi concentration camps whose situation is being demonstrated. The method blocks off an audience retreat into dramatic or historical fiction in contrast to the audience response to the stage and movie versions of The Diary of Anne Frank.[34]

The goal of this staging technique is somewhat similar to Peter Weiss's employment of actual testimony of witnesses at the Frankfurt trial in order to recreate Auschwitz in The Investigation. Weiss too, as will be seen in the next chapter, does not want his audience to escape into dramatic or historical fiction. The unemotional reiteration of what actually occurred in Auschwitz in The Investigation and the arbitrary violence in An die Musik are meant to prevent audiences from rejecting the stage picture as "unreal." As was noted earlier, Charlotte Delbo does not present any staged violence in Qui Rapportera ces Paroles? for the same reason; she too does not want her audience to reject her dramatic representation of the camp.

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[34]Ibid., p. 46.

Simmons further illustrates his belief that the Jews shared in the blame for their extermination by linking the two sections of An die Musik through a recurring character. One of the oppressed in "The Dream of Anne Frank" becomes the Nazi in the second half of the piece. Benedict Nightingale, in his review for New Statesman, points out the dramatic function of the recurring personage:

> Their torturer and executioner is performed by one of the oppressed from Anne Frank's dream. We actually see him donning his uniform, with the obvious inference: that the capacity for evil has no human boundary and we should keep a wary eye on ourselves as well as on our enemies.[35]

Rolf Hochhuth, in The Deputy, uses the same dramatic device when he has his performers double and triple their roles. For example, Eichmann and an imprisoned Jewish manufacturer are played by the same actor. Similarly, the American soldier in Comment va le monde, mossieu? easily exchanges uniforms and roles with his Nazi captors. We will also see, in the next chapter, that Peter Weiss in The Investigation and Arthur Miller in Incident at Vichy and After the Fall agree philosophically that victim and victimizer could exchange positions easily given different historical circumstances.[36] Simmons has here, too, been influenced by Bruno Bettelheim, who suggests that "old prisoners . . . [had] a personality structure willing and able to accept SS values and behavior as its

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[35]Benedict Nightingale, "Theatre: An Die Musik," (London) New Statesman, July 11, 1975, p. 62.

[36]This is also the message of Hannah Arendt in Eichmann in Jerusalem. Tadeusz Borowski also suggests universal culpability in his short story "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," wherein the brutalizers are concentrationaires working in the "Canada" detail.

own."[37]

Ultimately, Simmons' camp orchestra is antithetical to the one described by Dr. Rudolf Vrba: "My position was made tolerable only by the music of the Auschwitz orchestra, truly a superb body of musicians drawn from the capitals of the world."[38] In An die Musik, the orchestra is also the antithesis of Schachter's group in Terezin Requiem who, through their art, confront their Nazi tormentors. Instead, Simmons' musicians are more reminiscent of the meek performing artists Charlotte Delbo describes in None of Us Will Return, who are forced to continue to to play in the midst of the camp horrors:

> Seated on the stools, they continue to play. Do not look at the fingers of the cellist, nor at her eyes when she plays, you will not be able to hear it. . . .
>
> Do not look, do not listen, especially if they play "Merry Widow," while beyond the second barbed wire fence men emerge one after another from the barracks and the kapos strike them one after another with belts as they emerge, naked.
>
> Do not look at the orchestra playing the "Merry Widow."
>
> Do not listen. You would only hear blows on the men's backs and the metallic clicks that the buckles make when the belts fly.
>
> Do not look at the musicians who play while skeleton-like naked men come out under blows that make them stagger. They are going to delousing because there are definitely too many lice in that barracks.

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[37]Bettelheim, p. 169. It should be noted that Bettelheim's viewpoint has come under attack, particularly since many of the psychologist's hypotheses are predicated on his experiences in pre-World War II camps. Bettelheim suggests, for example, that many Kapos accepted the values of their SS overseers. Most brutal Kapos, however, were chosen from the camp criminal populations; hence, their camp actions were in keeping with their outside life-style. Furthermore, as Terence des Pres points out, Kapos and prisoners frequently feigned imitation of their SS counterparts in order to placate their Nazi overseers. Dr. Rudolf Vrba describes such an instance when reminiscing about Franz, a Kapo in an Auschwitz storeroom: "As he shouted, he swung at us with his club. To the passing SS men he looked and sounded a splendid Kapo, heartless, brutal, efficient; yet never once did he hit us" (Vrba, p. 90).

[38]Vrba, p. 11.

> Do not look at the violinist. She is playing on a violin that would be Yehudi's if Yehudi were not miles and miles away across the ocean. What Yehudi did this violin belong to?
> Do not look. Do not listen.
> Do not think of all the Yehudis who brought their violins.[39]

Pip Simmons' An die Musik, then, is a dramatic reflection of Bruno Bettelheim's theory that the Jews went to their deaths without opposing their executioners and that they, on occasion, even assisted in their own destruction. Unlike the performers in The Theatre of Peretz, Simmons' characters perform in order to protect their lives; no resistance is implied. They are meant to epitomize the passive internees who do not protest as they are marched to the gas chambers. Such is the implication of the final image: the prisoners are stripped, both of their clothing and their humanity, and led to their deaths. Also unlike Brechner's piece, An die Musik does not physically involve the audience; they are not part of the action, but instead passive observers. "The actor-audience relationship for the performance was structured behind a proscenium arch to prevent any reaction from the spectators other than that of passive collaboration."[40] The only time Simmons brings the audience into the action is at the denouement when they too are trapped in the gas; again this theatrical effect seems to emphasize how easily the passive audience could become victims. It is only fitting that a production so heavily influenced by Bettelheim should conclude with a quotation from his The Informed Heart; it encapsulates Pip Simmons' view of l'univers concentrationnaire:

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[39]Delbo, None of Us Will Return, pp. 119-20.

[40]Walker, p. 6.

> Fellow Jews . . . death has allotted us the cruelest fate, that of participating in our own destruction, of witnessing our own disappearance, down to the very ashes to which we will be reduced. . . . We must accept, resignedly, as Sons of Israel should, that this is the way things must be. God has ordained it. . . . This is the fate that has befallen us. Do not be afraid of death. If were to remain alive, what would there be.[41]

Italian novelist Alberto Moravia has also employed a play-within-a-play to recreate the Nazi concentration camps in his drama Il dio Kurt (1968).[42] The basis of the action is Sophocles' Oedipus Rex.

> Kurt, the commandant of the camp, arranges for the Oedipus myth to be acted out in real life by an unsuspecting Jewish family in the camp. Saul [who is a Jewish actor] is induced to sleep with his mother Myriam in a dark room. [He is unaware of whom

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[41]See the Paris programme as well as Shank, p. 46.

[42]While Moravia has not written an extensive number of plays, Ferdinando Alfonsi points out that in his later career he has shown a preference to the theatre, "relegating the novel to second place" (Ferdinando Alfonsi, "An Interview With Alberto Moravia," in An Annotated Bibliography of Moravia Criticism in Italy and the English Speaking World [1929-1975], eds. Ferdinando and Sandra Alfonsi [New York: Garland Publishing, 1976], p. xv). Moravia has been particularly intrigued by classical tragedy. In an interview for the Summer 1964 Paris Review, he revealed that his "literary education has been for the most part classical. Classical prose and drama. The realists and naturalists, frankly, don't interest me very much"(Anna Maria de Dominicis, "Art of Fiction: Alberto Moravia [An Interview]," Paris Review, no. 6 [Summer 1964]:20). He has been particularly fascinated with the Greek theatre: "The Greek theatre . . . I consider the greatest theatre that has ever existed" (Alfonsi, xvi). Frank Baldanza has pointed out the classical elements in Moravia's early novels (Frank Baldanza, "The Classicism of Alberto Moravia," Modern Fiction Studies 3 [1957]:309-320). Jane E. Cottrell has discussed the influence of Euripides on Moravia (Jane E. Cottrell, Alberto Moravia [New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1974], p. 22). Il dio Kurt was not the first time Moravia turned to Oedipus Rex for inspiration. For that matter, Cottrell views the 1968 play as a natural outgrowth of the author's earlier works: "Il dio Kurt is . . . a vehicle for the exploration of the incest theme that had fascinated Moravia for years, surfacing here and there for a moment in the earlier works before becoming an integral part of the action of L'attenzione in 1965"(Cottrell, p. 130).

> she is; she, however, is told she must have intercourse with her son in order to save his life.] . . . Later in an attempted escape, he shoots his father, Samuel, who has been dressed for the purpose as an SS officer and made to stand in Saul's way.[43]

As the dramatic action begins, all of these events have already occurred, but Saul is still ignorant of what he has done. Saul's ignorance parallels the initial ignorance of Sophocles' Oedipus. Kurt, who suggests he is Fate, slowly reveals what has actually happened to the Jewish actor. The entire "cultural experiment," as the commandant labels it, is presented to an audience of SS men who are expecting to see the original Greek tragedy.

The Italian author has long been interested in the problems of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Many of his novels metaphorically represent his self-imposed exile into the Italian mountains after Mussolini took power. In Man as an End, he focuses on the modern political state which, he believes, has evolved out of the experiments in Nazi Germany. According to Joan Ross and Donald Freed, Moravia is obsessed "with the camps and bomb."[44]

Il dio Kurt, which seems to have developed out of the Italian author's "obsession with the camps" is Pirandellian in style.[45]

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[43]Carlo Bo, "The Nazis and Oedipus--a "First" by Moravia," Atlas 15 (July 1968):62.

[44]Joan Ross and Donald Freed, The Existentialism of Alberto Moravia (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), p. 151.

[45]The influence of Pirandello on Moravia has already been investigated. See the essays found in Pirandello, Moravia, and Italian Poetry (New York: Macmillan, 1968). When discussing the primary thematic concern of his novels, Moravia reveals the bond between the two Italian authors: "The dominant theme of my work appears to be man's relationship

Moravia's characters in the concentration camp drama frequently confuse "real" life with the Oedipus drama. Numberous times during the action the SS audience complains that they are not really seeing the Greek tragedy but a sentimental Jewish tragedy. Kurt really believes that he has become Fate. Saul, when confronted with the realization that he is a parricide and that he has had an incestuous relationship with his mother, who is now expecting his child, begins to recite Oedipus' final speech. Kurt has the deportees costumed in sheets which serve as mock togas and frequently refers to them as Oedipus and Jocasta.

In his presentation of l'univers concentrationnaire, Moravia substantiates the claim by Robert Cushman, in his review of An die Musik, that "there is a sense in which the camps were theatre--to the guards who reduced the prisoners to objects in a spectacle, even to the prisoners who felt they were fitting allotted roles."[46] The presentation of "man as an actor" is a common element in many of Moravia's novels, according to Joan Ross and Donald Freed:

> There is one final and unequivocally existential common denominator for Alberto Moravia: mythomania. He shares with Sartre, Buber, Camus, and Unamuno the idea of man as an actor. . . . After man eats his bread, everything else he may do is an act or role. He has no "character;" he plays roles.[47]

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with reality. Although to some this may seem a strictly philosophical problem, it is the fundamental issue of our time." (Cited in Luciano Rebay, Alberto Moravia [New York: Columbia University Press, 1970], p. 3). For that matter, Kurt's "cultural experiment," which subverts conventional morality brings to mind the Father's "Demon of Experiment" in Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author; the father, by sending his wife away with the secretary, also attempts to subvert accepted morality.

[46]See footnote 31.

[47]Ross and Freed, p. 19.

When Kurt coerces Saul into taking part in the cultural experiment, the commandant informs the Jewish actor that as a prisoner he has lost his personality; the role he plays in the camps is that of an object, of a prop in a theatrical experiment.

> No, Saul, un deportato e un oggetto. . . . e appunto perche sei un oggetto il tuo nome no e un nome bensi un numero che infatti ti e stato impresso a lettere di fuoco sul braccio. . . . e io come comandante del campo posso fare di te quello che voglio.[48]

Moravia, like many of those authors of Holocaust literature previously cited, emphasizes the internees loss of individuality upon becoming a serial number.

Life in the camp, then, is portrayed by Alberto Moravia as analogous to a theatrical event. The brutalities inflicted upon the Jews--represented by Saul's family--are staged by their SS overseers. The atrocities are all "cultural experiments" similar to Kurt's Oedipus Rex. Moravia makes this clear in his play's prologue, when the commandant equates his Oedipus with the scientific experiments of Mengele, Clauberg, Rascher, and Ding. For the Italian author, it is a moot question whether the prisoners passively comply with their tormentors or whether they resist. They are totally controlled; they are actors under the supervision of a dictatorial director. At first Saul passively complies with Kurt and takes part in his experiment. At the denouement he revolts and uses the pistol supplied for his escape to kill the commandant. Yet,

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[48]Alberto Moravia, Il dio Kurt (Milan: Bompiani, 1968), pp. 38-9. ("No, Saul, a deportee is an object. . . . and just because you are an object your name is not a name but a number, which in fact has been impressed by fire on your arm." All translations are from an unpublished English version provided by Jana and Enrico Bazzoni.)

his action is meaningless. He and Myriam still find themselves in the line of new internees and are sent off to meet their fates within the confines of the death camp. They are puppets manipulated by their Nazi tormentors.

We can better understand the implications Moravia draws from the Holocaust by examining how he develops the metaphor of art and life being intertwined in the concentration camps. As does Charlotte Delbo in Qui Rapportera ces Paroles?, Moravia has adopted many of the conventions of classical Greek drama. The employment of these conventions, of course, is in keeping with Kurt's attempt to mimic Sophocles' Oedipus. As Cecilia Ross points out in her review for Books Abroad: "In good classical style, most of the action occurs off-stage."[49] Violence is unseen. The corpse of Saul's father, for example, is brought on stage. When Kurt unsuccessfully suggests that Saul blind himself for his sins, he asks him to do it in Greek style: off-stage. Moravia, as does Delbo, endeavors to prevent a stereotypical emotional response. Instead, the Italian author, who is a well-known essayist, has carefully constructed Il dio Kurt like an essay. Moravia wants his audience to learn a moral lesson from the play. Hence, according to Milan critic Carlo Bo, "there is no dependence on sentiment not generally on any human reaction. . . . He is not interested in our emotions."[50]

The SS audience observing the action is similar to the Greek chorus. They react to the occurrences on stage. At one point in the

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[49]Cecilia Ross, "Il dio Kurt," Books Abroad 43 (Summer 1969):395.

[50]Bo, p. 62.

action they warn Kurt that by confessing to his friendship with Saul prior to the war he may make himself liable to prosecution under the Race Laws: "Oltre tutto nei vostri ricordi si potrebbero riscontrare gravissime infrazioni alle leggi razziali."[51] As in classical Greek tragedy, the chorus in Moravia's work "establishes the ethical framework of the play."[52] Through his SS chorus, Moravia indicates that the concentration camps symbolize the birth of a new ethical framework; the modern polis can be characterized as SS-like. The SS chorus illustrates the primary thematic concern of Il dio Kurt; for Moravia, l'univers concentrationnaire implies the death of humane values which are replaced by the concentration camp norms. The rational nineteenth-century conception of humanity is superseded by a barbaric twentieth-century one.

As in the Greek tragedies, Fate plays a key role. Kurt casts himself as Fate in his experimental Oedipus. He puts the dramatic action into motion. His goal is to discover whether Greek Fate, which is tied to conventional morality, still exists. After quizzing Myriam and Saul about their sexual relations, the commandant explains his purpose: "E io vi faccio tutte queste domande non gia per tormentarvi ma per sapere se il Fato Greco, il vostro Fato ha ancora qualche motivo di trattenersi su questa scena; o se invece deve congedarsi per sempre e lasciare il

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[51]Moravia, pp. 50-1. ("In addition to which these things that you are remembering could threaten your order in the Army since they are grave infractions of the Racial Laws.")

[52]Oscar Brockett, The Theatre: An Introduction (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974), p. 80.

posto al Fato Tedesco."[53] German Fate implies, according to the camp commandant, the death of morality, religion, taboo, and individual tragedy. Throughout Il dio Kurt, Moravia depicts l'univers concentrationnaire as the natural resultant of twentieth-century humanity forsaking these values and embracing German Fate. Herein is the message of the Holocaust for the Italian author.

The death of religion is immediately symbolized in the stage picture. "Una grande stufa di maiolica occupa tutto un angolo della platea; un albero di Natale addobbato festosamente, l'altro angolo. Attraverso una delle finestre si scorge un abete dal quale pendono i cadaveri di alcuni deportati impiccati."[54] The juxtaposition of the Christmas tree with the executed deportees and the oven twists the Christian imagery. (The ironic use of Christian imagery is common to a great deal of Holocaust literature.[55]) We are also made aware that there are no benevolent gods in this universe. As the title indicates, God has been replaced by Kurt and by his Nazi compatriots:

> L'umanita pura, nobile, eroica, forte, luminosa e libera alla quale noi aspiriamo sara un'umanita senza morale. Cioe un' umanita senza Dio: e questo per la semplice ragione che

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[53]Moravia, p. 88. ("I ask you all these questions not to torment you, but to find out if the Greek Fate, your Fate, should still linger on the stage; or if it instead must take its leave forever, giving way to German Fate.")

[54]Moravia, p. 2. ("An oven occupies a whole corner of the stage. The other corner contains a Christmas tree, richly decorated. Through one of the windows, one can see a tree from which few bodies of deportees are hanging.")

[55]See my discussion of Peter Weiss' The Investigation in Chapter IV.

> ciascum uomo, in una simile umanita, sara a tutti gli effetti un dio. Il dio Horst, il dio Max, il dio Fritz, il dio Heinrich, il dio Ludwig. . . .[56]

Morality and taboo will also be destroyed in the German future; their destruction is foreshadowed in the camp "experiment." For Kurt, incest is not taboo. He reveals that he has had an incestuous relationship with his sister Ulla. Within the camps, under the supervision of the commandant, taboos become normal. As Carlo Bo indicates:

> Moravia signifies the death of . . . taboo by Myriam's reply to Kurt. When Kurt asks, "were they or were they not absolutely normal relations which you had nine times during these two months," Myriam responds in a low voice, "They were normal;" and Saul, "as if echoing his mother's words," confirms it.[57]

Moravia's emphasis on the abnormal becoming normal in the concentration camps is reminiscent of Witness #5's testimony in Peter Weiss' The Investigation:

> And . . . we had started to live
> with a new set of values and
> to adjust to this world
> which for anyone
> who wanted to survive in it
> became a normal world.[58]

It is the denouement that reveals how successfully German Fate had obliterated taboo. Kurt offers Myriam the possibility of a painless suicide; unlike Jocasta in Oedipus Rex, she refuses. Saul also refuses to blind himself. Instead, they "insist on

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[56]Moravia, p. 11. ("Humanity, to which we aspire--pure, noble, heroic, strong, luminous, and free--will be a humanity without morality. A Humanity without God. And this is simply because each man will himself be a god. The god Horst, the god Max, the god Fritz, the god Heinrich, the god Ludwig. . . .")

[57]Bo, p. 62.

[58]Peter Weiss, The Investigation, trans. Jon Swan and Ulu Grosbard (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 40.

continuing their life, even while guilty of incest and parricide."[59]

Most obviously, Kurt's Oedipus suggests that the concepts of family and individual tragedy no longer exist. The destruction of familial ties was an actual goal of the concentration camp system. Rudolf Hoess, in his autobiography, discusses the difficulties of dealing with Jewish prisoners because of their strong familial attachments.[60] For this reason, families were immediately separated. In the death camps the women and children were frequently liquidated. Elie Wiesel, in Night, reveals how successful the Nazis were in destroying familial bonds:

> I went to look for him [his father].
> But at the same moment this thought came into my mind:
> "Don't let me find him! If only I could get rid of this
> dead weight, so that I could use all my strength to struggle
> for my own survival, and only worry about myself."[61]

Kurt tells his captives: "Vuol dire che le vecchia tragedia dei rapporti familiari no e piu possible; e non e piu possible perche la famiglia non existe piu."[62]

What replaces individual tragedy is what the Holocaust epitomizes: the tragedy of races, nations, societies. German Fate is unconcerned with the individual; it is "Il Fato delle raze, delle nazioni, delle societa, dei gruppi."[63] Kurt wishes to prove that individual tragedy no longer

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[59]Bo, p. 62.

[60]Hoess, p. 136.

[61]Wiesel, Night, p. 118.

[62]Moravia, p. 94. ("It [the cultural experiment] means that the old tragedy of family relations is no longer possible because the family is extinct.")

[63]Ibid., p. 95. ("The Fate of races, nations, societies, and groups.")

exists at the drama's conclusion. Even after realizing that Saul has mortally wounded him, he elicits a promise from Vice-Commandant Horst that the two deportees will not be punished, but returned to the lines of the incoming internees. Punishment is not warranted for incest or even murder, but for Jewish birth: "Il Fato Tedesco che punisce Saul non gia perche ha ucciso suo padre e ingravidato sua madre; ma perche e nato."[64] Saul and his mother are not allowed to become individual tragedies, even after the Jewish actor begs for death. They must join in the tragedy of their race:

> Ecco, signori, da una parte, gli ebrei con le loro casacche a righe; dall'altra il comandante del campo nella divisa delle SS. Ossia signori, da una parte il Fato Tedesco. Dall'altra i rappresentanti di una razza che il Fato Tedesco ha condannato irrevocabilmente. Questa e la tragedia, no ce ne sono altre.[65]

For Moravia, the Holocaust was not the tragedy of individuals, but of human beings who had become objects and numbers.

Cecilia Ross criticizes Alberto Moravia because Il dio Kurt "does not achieve any true artistic catharsis of Greek tragedy."[66] But the Italian dramatist has purposely avoided "the artistic catharsis of Greek tragedy." There is no cleansing or purgation in the tragedy

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[64]Ibid. ("The German Fate punishes Saul not because he has killed his father and impregnated his mother, but because he is born.")

[65]Ibid., p. 96. ("Here, gentlemen, on one side the Jews with their deportee uniforms; on the other side the commandant of the camp with the uniform of the SS. Or gentlemen on one side is German Fate. On the other side the representatives of the race which German Fate has condemned irrevocably. This is the tragedy, there are no others.")

[66]Ross, p. 396.

created by German Fate. For that matter, the tragedy is to continue even after the war, even after Germany's defeat. Kurt proudly proclaims the victory of German Fate:

> Si, la guerra e perduta. Ma la nostra idea appunto perche la guerra e perduta, ha vinto. L'umanita, domani, sara come noi l'abbiamo sognata; non gia un'umanita conformista e timorata di piccola gente, di cui questi due sono degni rappresentanti, bensi l'umanita eroica degli uomini-dei voluta e creata del Fato Tedesco.[67]

This nihilistic perception recurs in Moravia's literary oeuvre:

> One facet of Moravia's nihilism which emerges over and over again is cruelty--man's monstrosity towards man. . . . Further, cruelty is not the exclusive or sacred right of the few; there are no Hitlers or Mussolinis who corner the market on cruelty; but rather cruelty runs rampant, leaving no one exempt--it belongs to all of us.[68]

As does James Schevill in Cathedral of Ice, Rolf Hochhuth in The Deputy, Martin Speer in Koralle Meier, Peter Weiss in The Investigation, and Arthur Miller in After the Fall, Alberto Moravia perceives l'univers concentrationnaire as a possible harbinger of future atrocities. If the Holocaust can be viewed as a large-scale "cultural experiment" by the "Nazi gods," what is even more frightening to Moravia is that the morality that is the subject of experimentation in Kurt's death camp may become the norm of future generations.

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[67]Moravia, p. 97. ("Yes, the war is lost. But just because the war is lost, our idea has won. Humanity tomorrow will be as we have dreamed it; not a humanity that is conformist and scared, a humanity of which these two [Saul and Myriam] are representative, but an heroic humanity of human-gods created by German Fate.")

[68]Ross and Freed, p. 86.

In concluding this section we should take a brief look at the Polish playwright Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne (1962).[69] The interned performers in this drama, like those in An die Musik and Il dio Kurt, are preparing a presentation for their Nazi tormentors:

> A group of prisoners in a German concentration camp are rehearsing a Christmas play, written by the Commandant of the camp. The modernized mystery play (for such it becomes in the hands of the German Commandant) is interrupted from time to time by the routine of prison life and by the conversations that take place in the cell block.[70]

The similarities between Iredyński's Holocaust drama and Moravia's are quite striking. The mise en scène in both works consists of a barrack with a large window. In Jasełka-Moderne, however, one sees the camp's watchtower through the window. The watchtower functions like the tree used for executions in Il dio Kurt; both remind the audience of the impossibility of escaping the Nazi internment centers.

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[69]Ireneusz Iredyński, Jasełka-Moderne, Dialog 7 (November 1962): 15-36. An unpublished English translation of the play was made available to me by Mrs. Anna M. Furdyna of West Layfayette, Indiana. Ireneusz Iredyński has published novelettes, short stories and poetry. His career has been a turbulent one. In 1968, E. J. Czerwinski noted, "he is a controversial figure among Polish intellectuals. Now [he is] serving a two-year term for rape. . . . According to some informants, the fact that he is part Jewish accounts for the erratic treatment accorded him by the authorities." (Edward J. Czerwinski, "Three Lesser Known Polish Dramatists of the Absurd: Grochowiak, Iredyński, and Drozdowski," Polish Review 13 [Winter 1968]:59). Iredyński's works were banned from the Polish stage until 1971. Among his recent dramas are Farewell Judas and The Imagined World (See: Andrzej Wroblewski, "New Polish Plays: Farewell Judas by Ireneusz Iredyński," Theatre in Poland, no. 1 [January 1972]:26 and Elizabeth Wysinska, "New Polish Plays: The Imagined World of Ireneusz Iredyński," Theatre in Poland, nos. 4-5 [May 1973]:54).

[70]Czerwinski, pp. 63-4.

Both dramas occur at Christmas time. Iredyński is borrowing from a traditional Polish presentation, the szopka, or mummer's play. Here, too, the Christmas setting is meant to be ironic and to indicate the death of the Judeo-Christian tradition in the Nazi internment centers. Iredyński draws ludicrous parallels between the lives the internees lead and the parts they perform in the Christmas play. The sixteen-year-old Holy-Child is a sexual toy for the SS overseers. The forcing of young internees into homosexual relationships was a common phenomenon in the camps. Frequently the Kapos chose young boys as sexual pets. Elie Wiesel describes one of these youngsters in Night:

> At Buna, the pipel [as they were referred to] were loathed; they were often crueler than adults. I once saw one of them beating his father because the latter had not made his bed properly. The old man was crying softly while the boy shouted: "If you don't stop crying at once I shan't bring you anymore bread. Do you understand?"[71]

Iredyński's pipel is also disliked; at one point, Herod attempts to beat him because he received such luxuries as chocolate and cigarettes from the Nazis. Mary too trades sex for additional rations. As E. J. Czerwinski notes: "Iredyński's purpose, it would seem, was to juxtapose the religious scenes upon the profane ones, to mingle them in such a way to make them indistinguishable."[72] Moravia does the same visually when he contrasts the decorated Christmas tree in one corner of the stage and the tree seen through the back window in the roll-call area on which are hung the bodies of deportees.

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[71]Wiesel, Night, pp. 74-5.

[72]Czerwinski, p. 64.

Iredyński's camp commandant is reminiscent of Moravia's Kurt. He too wishes to become a god: "Czekałem na dzień, w którym mógłbym się zmienić w boga, . . . Taki dzień nadszedł i już zaczynam być bogiem."[73] Like Moravia, the Polish dramatist uses the image of the theatre director controlling his performers to recreate the Nazi tyranny. Though Iredyński's play contains a regisseur, we learn that he is really impotent. The production he is staging has been conceived by Strażnik, the commandant, who frequently criticizes and curses the performance. At the denouement, the commandant attempts to show that he has god-like powers over the concentration camp prisoners by marching them outside and executing them.

Iredyński's internees, however, are not sympathetic personages. Ironically, the kindest prisoner is the internee portraying Herod, the villain of the Christmas play. Before entering the camps, he was a pimp who murdered a competitor. Yet Herod is the most moral of Iredyński's characters. He shares his cigarettes, castigates those who transgress--for instance, Mary, who, in order to have Joseph punished, tells Strażnik he attempted to rape her--and, ultimately, functions as the Polish playwright's raisonneur. The reversal of accepted morality in the camps is frequently mentioned in memoirs.[74] Iredyński, as does Moravia, plays

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[73]Iredyński, p. 33. ("I waited for the day when I would be able to become a god. . . . Such a day has come, and I am beginning to be a god.")

[74]Micheline Mauriel cites one such instance:

> One evening we were served a soup made with semolina. I drank this with all the more relish since I often had to forgo the daily cabbage soup because of my bowels. Just then I noticed a woman, one of the prostitutes, who always kept very much to themselves, approaching my bunk, holding her bowel out to me with both hands. "Micheline, I think this soup is a soup you

with conventional morality, which the concentration camps have subverted. Those who were respectable on the outside--the child, Mary, Joseph--become, within l'univers concentrationnaire, easily corrupted. The disreputable pimp, on the other hand, changes into the most admirable personage.

For that matter, Herod is the only internee who suggests a revolt against the Commandant. He alone stands up to Strażnik. After the Nazi takes the director out and kills him, the others, when questioned by their tormentor, plead ignorance in order to protect themselves. Only Herod confronts the Commandant with the fact that he has killed the regisseur. The other internees, in Jasełka-Moderne, are reminiscent of those in Pip Simmons' An die Musik. When Iredyński's inmates march out to be shot by Strażnik, their passive acceptance of their deaths is similar to Simmons' camp inmates meekly removing their clothes and walking into the gas chambers.

Iredyński's drama is also reminiscent of Brechner's The Theatre of Peretz. Strażnik is very much like the SS men in the American Jewish Ensemble's production. During the course of the dramatic action, the Commandant frequently leaves and reenters. Through his brutalization of the cast, he demonstrates his domination. The manner in which the internees in Jasełka-Moderne interpret their Christmas play is similar to the way Brechner's prisoners present Peretz's short stories. The morality play becomes an attack on tyranny. The events in the modern

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can eat; here take mine too." She emptied her bowl into mine and went without food for that day (Mauriel, p. 21).

mystery play are provided with contemporary relevance. The Three Wise Men talk as if they were partisans plotting against Hitler. Anachronisms play an important role in creating this additional level of meaning; the use of anachronisms, of course, is appropriate in a parody of a Medieval mystery. For example, when plotting against Herod, who is given many of the Fuehrer's characteristics, they decide to employ bombs. Herod, in retaliation, arbitrarily decides to exterminate Bethlehem's children; the code name given to the plan is "Silent Night." Similarly, Hitler cryptically referred to his liquidation of the Jews during World War II as the "Final Solution." Mary and Joseph are forced into hiding, as were the Jews in occupied Europe. Just as the Peretz pieces become subtle expressions of resistance when staged in the Nazi internment center, so does the Jasełka-Moderne.

Iredyński also employs the watchtower in his mise en scène in a manner suggestive of Arthur Miller's After the Fall. In the American dramatist's work, the destroyed watchtower reminds the audience of the Holocaust and frequently illumines the present-day action.[75] In Act II of Jasełka-Moderne, the watchtower seems to become a spotlight illumining the interaction among the concentration camp prisoners. We see, in another ironic twist, Mary and Joseph bickering. Jan provides Michal with bread and the latter describes his fantasies of the outside world. After his earlier outburst, Herod attempts to comfort the sexually abused child. The watchtower circumscribes the internees' lives; it suggests their entrapment.

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[75]See my discussion of Miller's After the Fall in Chapter IV.

The final moments in Ireneusz Iredyński's drama are enigmatic; nevertheless, they hold the key to the Polish playwright's perception of the Holocaust. Just as the Commandant in Il dio Kurt commits suicide by allowing Saul to retain his pistol, Iredyński's Commandant also kills himself. Kurt, however, wants to die at the hands of the Jewish actor in order to prove that Greek Fate has been replaced by German Fate and that his "cultural experiment" has been successful. Strażnik kills himself because he realizes he can never become a god; he realizes that he will always be a camp Commandant. Only Herod remains alive.

E. J. Czerwinski attempts to explain the concluding scene:

> The final vignette in which Herod, with the [Commandant's] helmet on his head, is admiring himself in the mirror is certainly filled with irony: Has he, like the others, also become a lifeless mummer, or does the image in the non-existent mirror signify the transmutation of the Poet-Priest into a Jester-Fool--the result of an experience which, from all appearances, seems hopelessly meaningless.[76]

The scene seems to have a simpler meaning. Transmutation of character is quite common in Holocaust literature; in essence, the extraordinary adaptability of man in situations of extremity is a lesson of the Holocaust. We have already noted that ex-internees frequently recount instances in which individuals changed into either heroes or villains. Hannah Arendt has theorized that we all have the capacity for being transformed into Nazi-like victimizers. Iredyński suggests the same thing. All of his characters undergo transmutations in the camp. Herod is the perfect example. On the outside he was a pimp and murderer; in l'univers concentrationnaire he becomes heroic. Yet, even the most admirable of

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[76]Czerwinski, pp. 64-5.

internees has the potential to don the Commandant's helmet. Previously in the dramatic action Iredyński carefully establishes the ludicrous helmet with a cock-feather attached to it as a symbol of the brutal Commandant. When Strażnik wishes to discuss the art of the theatre, he removes his headpiece and puts on glasses. When he wishes to torment the concentration camp prisoners, he again dons the Nazi helmet. Iredyński emphasizes Strażnik's transformations in the opening stage direction of Act III: "Strażnik zdejmuje helm, rzuca go na podłoge, wyjmuje z kieszeni okulary, nakłada je; jego postawa rowniez ulega zmianie: nie stoi juz w rozkroku, lecz w niedbałej pozie inteligenta rozmawiajacego niezobowiazujaco podczas spotkania towarzyskigo."[77] The final image we are left with is Herod wearing the headpiece. He, too, given the proper circumstances, could change into a victimizer.

One final point regarding Ireneusz Iredyński's Jaselka-Moderne must be made. E. J. Czerwinski, in the only English-language piece of criticism dealing with the play, concludes: "Nonetheless few critics would deny the importance of Iredyński's play; for . . . it is the brilliant work of a little-known writer who can be numbered among Poland's dramatists writing in the idiom of the Absurd."[78] Iredyński's Holocaust drama, however, is not Absurdist. It is the camp environment that is absurd. But again this is the essence of l'univers concentrationnaire.

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[77]Iredyński, p. 30. ("Strażnik takes off his helmet and throws it on the floor, then takes out his glasses and puts them on; his posture also undergoes a change: he no longer stands with his feet apart, instead he assumes the careless pose of an intellectual talking in an unobliging manner at a social gathering.")

[78]Czorwinski, p. 65.

As Lawrence Langer suggests, it was the "unreal" realized.[79] Many survivors remark that it was a universe totally devoid of reason and beyond belief:

> The SS guards took pleasure in telling us that we had no chance of coming out alive, a point they emphasized with particular relish by insisting that after the war the rest of the world would not believe what happened; there would be rumors, speculations, but no clear evidence, and people would conclude that evil on such a scale was just not possible.[80]

Ostensibly, there are certain absurdist elements in the play. Martin Esslin suggests that the Theatre of the Absurd "present[s] the audience with almost mechanical puppets."[81] Yet, Iredyński's "mechanical puppets" are rooted in the reality of the camp experience; internees were forced into becoming conforming puppets. The Musselmanner, those who had given up hope of surviving, epitomized this type of character: "They behaved as if they were not thinking, not feeling, unable to act or respond."[82] Therefore, in the context of l'univers concentrationnaire, Iredyński's characters and their actions are quite logical and understandable, precluding Jasełka-Moderne from the Theatre of the Absurd.

While Iredyński employs a few non-realistic staging devices, such as suggesting that Strażnik's uniform be "metaphorical" and having the performing internees wear clogs that are reminiscent of Greek kothornoi, the dramatic action of Jasełka-Moderne is casually structured. The Polish

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[79]Langer, p. 45.

[80]Cited in Des Pres, p. 35.

[81]Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), p. 4.

[82]Bettelheim, p. 152.

dramatist provides motivations for all of his personages' actions. Mary despises Joseph because she has had to submit sexually to him for bread. Strażnik decides to murder the inmates because the Russians are drawing near and he has little chance of escaping. We are even told why the camp theatre is allowed to exist. Before the war, the Commandant had worked for the imprisoned director; now Strażnik wishes to be in control. In absurdist dramas, plots and motivations are not as logically developed.

What might be considered absurdist in Jasełka-Moderne is the Nativity play Strażnik has authored. The Commandant so perverts the Christ story that it becomes incomprehensible. The series of vignettes that the prisoners stage contain both the personages of the Nativity and the images of twentieth-century tyranny. In Strażnik's szopka, there are sudden transformations of characters and the plot is not logically constructed. The dialogue, which juxtaposes New Testament imagery with the imagery of contemporary oppression, is also absurd. Hence, while the play-within-the-play may be absurdist, Iredyński's frame is not.

If the Polish playwright's thematic concern seems to be the absurdity of the human condition, just as it is Samuel Beckett's, the Holocaust in literature is rarely viewed other than as a symbol of humanity's absurdity. Instead, the style of Jasełka-Moderne comes closer to "literary irrealism," which, according to Holocaust critic Lawrence Langer, is "virtually defined by the phrase 'the absurdity of fact'."[83] Holocaust literature cannot be categorized as "literature of the absurd" for we are dealing with the reality of World War II. Thus Ireneusz

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[83]Langer, p. 129.

Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne is not absurdist; even though the world he dramatizes seems absurd, it is rooted in the actuality of the Third Reich. His performers present a Christmas play in an absurd universe that existed little more than three decades ago.

While the works dealt with in this section contain a variety of conceptualizations of l'univers concentrationnaire and its inhabitants, they nonetheless all use the theatre as a metaphor for tyranny. In each work the performers' presentations are organized by the SS. They direct the dramatic works as well as the atrocities inflicted. Just as the internees have no control over their artistic material (the only exception being The Theatre of Peretz), they have no control over their fates. As has been previously pointed out, Robert Cushman is correct in suggesting that "there is a sense in which the camps were theatre." Brechner, Simmons, Moravia, and Iredyński realize this. The camps were a continuous theatre of oppression, or, to borrow a phrase from Lawrence Langer, theatre of atrocity.

CHAPTER IV

DRAMAS OF THE SURVIVORS

The problems of the survivor have been a foremost concern of Holocaust literature. Elie Wiesel in Dawn, seemingly a continuation of his Auschwitz novel Night, places his concentration camp survivor in Palestine immediately following the war. Yet, his thoughts and actions are still tinged with his concentration camp mentality. When, as a member of the Jewish underground fighting for Israeli independence, he is forced to decide whether or not to execute a British professional soldier, he cannot help but equate his moral dilemma with that of his Nazi persecutors.[1] Jorge Semprun, in The Long Voyage, plays with time. While the majority of the action takes place on a transport headed for Buchenwald, much of the novel's tension is derived from the fact that the narrator is describing, and re-living, the events with historical hindsight. Nonetheless, he too cannot escape from l'univers concentrationnaire. The narrator's affair with a German woman, for example, is poisoned by his inability to forget Buchenwald. In non-fiction, of course, a number of studies have dealt with those who survived the camps,[2] the most recent being Terence Des Pres' The Survivor. Similarly,

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[1]Elie Wiesel, Dawn, trans. Frances Frenaye (New York: Avon Books, 1970). Since much of Wiesel's work deals with the plight of the survivor, I will be alluding to him frequently in the notes for this chapter in an attempt to compare his perceptions with those of the playwrights discussed.

[2]Almost all the memoirs of the survivors deal with the problems they encountered as they returned to society. A particularly interesting

several playwrights have attempted to deal with the lingering effects of the concentration camp experience on individuals and societies.

Yehuda Amichai's Bells and Trains is an award-winning 1962 Israeli radio play[3] which depicts the visit of Hans (Yohanan), a forty-year-old Israeli, with his Aunt Henrietta who resides in a German old-age home, all of whose inhabitants are survivors of the Nazi concentration camps. They are also persons out of Yohanan's past since he had been fortunate enough to escape from Singburg prior to the war.

On a literal level Amichai, through his raisonneur Hans and the elderly survivors he reminisces with, recounts the horrors of the Nazi internment centers. The impetus for the Israeli's return is his need to arrange for the reparations due his family for the losses they sustained during the war, immediately reminding the audience of the Germans' destruction of Jewish property. Most of the play's dialogue concerns itself with the concentration camps; it is as if the camp horrors continue to be daily gossip for the elderly. Henrietta tells her nephew about the dentist Rieger and the widow Gruenfeld: "Nine of his family died there and he has been left alone. . . . Mrs. Gruenfeld's three brothers were also burned there."[4] Herr Levin, the tailor, saw both his

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study is: Strøm Axel Christian Smith, ed., Norwegian Concentration Camp Survivors (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1968).

[3]Yehuda Amichai, Bells and Trains, trans. Aubrey Hodes, in Midstream 12 (October 1966):55-66. For additional Israeli plays dealing with the Holocaust, see Appendix A.

[4]Amichai, p. 57.

sons shot on the same day, while Herr Schloss's son, Bruno, was killed because the SS discovered him dating a German girl. Hans' childhood sweetheart, Lore Rosenberg, also died "there." In the most poignant reminiscence, Aunt Henrietta reveals that she had married while in Theresienstadt, but that her new husband was stolen from her:

> When I arrived at Theresienstadt one of the men helped me to lift my suitcase to the attic in which we sat crammed together. The next day we married. Rudolf was sixty. We had to bend so as not to touch the low ceiling. Rabbi Rothschild made a short speech. I remember every word: "May the rafters of this roof be your bridal canopy. And may our sadness be turned into gaiety, and merrymaking shall still be heard in the streets of Jerusalem. . . ." We all wept. And then, three days later . . . he died . . . kind old Rabbi Rothschild. Rudolf was given permission to accompany the coffin to the cemetery, which was outside the camp. . . . When he did not return, I enquired in the office . . . and they sent me to the camp guards. I asked them and they told me that a man of that name had left the camp with the coffin, but he did not have a permit. "What do you mean?" I asked them. "He had a permit!" And then they laughed out loud and said to me: "Yes he had a permit to leave, but he did not have a permit to return."[5]

Even Sister Theresa, who cares for these survivors and is the only German in the drama, lives in the past, attempting to atone for the guilt everyone shared: "All were people of Sodom. One sent Jews away, and the other pushed them along. One kept the record and the other denounced. One turned them over and the other locked them up. One signed the order, and the other sold gas for the death chamber. One sent barbed wire, and the other heard but did not see."[6]

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[5]Ibid., p. 65.

[6]Ibid., p. 61. That the Holocaust implies universal guilt is also the sentiment Elie Wiesel expresses in "A Plea for the Dead: "The more I search, the more reasons I find for losing hope. I am often afraid to reopen this Pandora's box, there are always the newly guilty to emerge from it. Is there no bottom to this evil box? No." (Elie Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," in Legends of Our Time [New York: Avon Books, 1968], pp. 232-33).

But it is not simply through a recitation of past horrors that the Israeli playwright recreates the concentration camps, but through his portrayal of the old age home. The institution is a metaphorical representation of the internment centers. Yohanan characterizes the old age home as a world of "ghosts." Except for Henrietta and the Rosenbergs, none of its inhabitants speak during the course of the play; like spirits, only their presences are felt. (The image of returnees as ghosts or spirits is frequently employed in Holocaust literature. Francoise and Denise, in the epilogue of Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, refer to themselves as apparitions.[7]) These elderly Jews died emotionally in the concentration camps; their present way of life indicates that they continue to live in them. Sister Theresa tells Hans, when he offers to take his aunt back to Israel, that Henrietta and her compatriots still live in l'univers concentrationnaire:

> Do you think she will feel at home among people who have not been in the camps? Leave her here, Hans. She is living in the past. She came from the past, and will return there.[8]

Like Henrietta's husband, Rudolf, none of Amichai's survivors have been given a pass to return.

The regimentation of these "inmates" daily routines parallels their existences in the Nazi camps. As Henrietta explains to her nephew, "Everyday the same thing at the same time. . . . Each of us has his special place in the rooms, in the dining hall, and in the garden."[9]

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[7]Delbo, Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, pp. 76-7.

[8]Amichai, p. 64.

[9]Ibid., p. 56.

Theresa complains that "the slightest change in the seating order can disturb the peace of this place."[10] Death and numbers still control these ex-concentrationaires lives. There is no problem in finding the young Israeli a room because "there's always a vacant room. People die."[11] (Ironically, the old Nun remarks to Yohanan that the "Angel of Death" frequently visits. The "Angel of Death" was the nickname given to Dr. Mengele by Auschwitz internees.[12]) When Hans tells his aunt that he has checked his luggage, she warns him that "eventually that's all that will be left of life: a slip of paper."[13] When lunch is served, the only food referred to is bread and watery gravy. Thirty years after the war's conclusion, Frau Rosenberg and her husband continue to communicate as they must have in the camps. Since men and women were kept separate, intermediaries smuggled messages. In the old-age home, Henrietta must be their go-between:

> They are together all the time, they sit on a bench in the garden together and do not talk. They do not speak to one another and they do not separate. But sometimes . . . they ask me to act as an intermediary. Then I become sort of an interpretor between them. . . . I repeat his words for her and her words for him.[14]

The most powerful dramatic devices employed to indicate that the old-age home is a metaphor for the camps--and obviously necessary for a successful radio play--are the sound effects. There are dogs barking in

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[10]Ibid., p. 59.

[11]Ibid., p. 57.

[12]Wiesel, "An Old Acquaintance," in Legends of Our Time, p. 78.

[13]Amichai, p. 57.

[14]Ibid., p. 60.

the background, reminiscent of the camp watchdogs. But the key sounds are the bells and trains. The importance of the railroad sounds is made clear in Amichai's stage directions: "The noise of passing trains, some of them freight trains, others passenger trains, all recalling those 'other' trains."[15] Henrietta informs Yohanan that "the trains are so close to the garden that they seem to be passing right on the wall of the old age home;"[16] similarly, the cattle cars came close, but never actually entered the concentration camp.[17] For that matter, one of the passing trains is "a cattle truck," like the one the Jews were transported in. Henrietta has memorized the train schedule; her life revolves around the arriving and passing of the trains. It is as if she were keeping track of the new transports.

Bells also control the survivors' lives. They awaken to Church bells in a manner reminiscent of the way they were roused for roll-call. Likewise, they eat and retire at the sound of bells. At one point in the dramatic action Hans characterizes the Rosenbergs' dogs as being like Pavlov's dogs; the analogy is more than suited to the ex-internees.

What Amichai has done, therefore, is juxtapose the past with the present to create a complete picture of life in the concentration camp. As noted, the descriptions of the past shed light on the Nazi atrocities. It is the dramatization of the survivors' contemporary lives that reveals

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[15]Ibid., p. 55.

[16]Ibid., p. 56.

[17]See the map of KL Birkenau (Auschwitz II) in: Jadwiga Bezwinska and Danuta Czech, eds., KL Auschwitz Seen by the SS (Publications of Panstwowe Muzeum Oswiecim, 1972), between pp. 128 and 129.

the dehumanization within the internment centers. Rather than focus on the physical horrors, Amichai choses to stress the emotional destruction the elderly Jews suffered and continue to suffer. Perhaps, for this reason, the only camp the Israeli playwright specifically cites is the model camp, Theresienstadt; is not the old age home they now find themselves in a contemporary equivalent? If nothing else, they have been again ghettoized. For these "inmates," the Nazi universe still lives. When Hans decides to stay in a hotel rather than in this institution, Henrietta pleads with him to

> . . . first ask Doctor Rieger which one you should go to. The proprietor of the Rosen Hotel had a son in the SS. The brother of the owner of the Hotel Koengen was one of the heads of the local Gestapo. The Metropol was Army headquarters. And in the Hotel zur Glocke they kept Jews in the basement before the last transport.[18]

Amichai, however, wants these modern day martyrs remembered. Aunt Henrietta complains, "very few people come to visit the old age home. There is no one left to come."[19] Sister Theresa also confirms this:

> Here everyone waits for visitors. But they don't come. . . . We are waiting for Frau Goldman's sister. We are waiting for Doctor Rieges's grandson. . . . We postponed Frau Mendelsohn's funeral so that her relatives could be there. They didn't come.[20]

The Israeli playwright chastises those who forget the Holocaust. In his eyes, these survivors are the modern day equivalents of Biblical

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[18]Amichai, p. 57.

[19]Ibid., p. 58.

[20]Ibid., p. 59.

Jewish heroes. When Hans recites two speeches he gave in school, both of which commemorate Jewish survival in the face of oppression, we are made aware of the Biblical parallels Amichai is drawing:

> Antiochus was a tyrant king
> Who knew not wrong from right
> He smote the Jews of the Holy Land
> With all his main and might.
> But soon the Maccabees will come
> To raise their flag and fight.
> They'll beat the wicked tyrant
> And kindle the freedom light.
>
> I am the King Ahasverus
> With my crown and sword.
> Wicked Haman's hung up high:
> That's his just reward.
> Esther my queen and Mordechai
> Believed and trusted the lord.[21]

Amichai's protagonist was drawn back to Singburg; he admits that his visit was not really motivated by the need to arrange reparations. ("I could have asked my lawyer," he confides to his aged aunt.) Instead, he has come "to remember, to see;"[22] he has returned so that he could partake in the hell of the Holocaust and learn about the most recent of the Jewish martyrs: "I could almost compare myself to Orpheus who went down to Hell to fetch his dead."[23]

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[21]Ibid., p. 62. The key to Amichai's poetry is his "pervasive awareness of what he owes to the Diaspora, his sense of displacement, anachronism, division, incongruousness, fortuitousness, his ironic shifts between three layers of Jewish history--the Biblical past, the new nation's future, and separating these two, the long unheroic, wearying centuries of dispersion, terminated by the destruction of Jewish communities throughout the greater part of Europe" (Michael Hamburger, Introduction to Poems, by Yehuda Amichai [New York: Harper and Row, 1968], p. viii). These same elements are operative in Amichai's radio play.

[22]Ibid., p. 56.

[23]Ibid., p. 64.

Yet, just as the survivors cannot leave, he cannot remain. He must visit the old-age home, but afterwards break his ties with it for he is not really part of this world. Henrietta closes the play by begging her nephew: "At 3:20 there is an express from Singburg. . . . Don't come back. . . . At 3:20 Hans . . . Hans . . . Hans . . ."[24] The Israeli playwright urges his audiences to remember the modern Jewish martyrs; but, ultimately, he also indicates that none will ever understand their martyrdom nor be able to comprehend the emotional deaths of those who survived physically.[25]

Tadeusz Hołuj's Puste Pole (1963) is thematically similar to Yehuda Amichai's Bells and Trains. A critic has characterized the drama as "a naturalistic play of manners, a story of a museum of martyrology in a former concentration camp."[26] While the plot of Hołuj's play is

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[24]Ibid., p. 66. Amichai seems to be in agreement with Elie Wiesel, who warns against the outsider becoming too immersed in the Holocaust: "One of my friends, in the prime of life, spent a night studying accounts of the Holocaust, especially the Warsaw Ghetto. In the morning he looked at himself in the mirror and saw a stranger: his hair had turned white. Another lost not his youth, but his reason. He plunged back into the past and remains there still" [Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," in Legends of Our Time, pp. 221-22]. A. Alvarez also tells of acquaintances who committed suicide after delving deeply into the "literature of atrocity" A. Alvarez, Beyond All This Fiddle, p. 28).

[25]Elie Wiesel expresses the same sentiment in his essay "A Plea for the Dead": "I should envy those scholars and thinkers who pride themselves on understanding this tragedy in terms of an entire people; I myself have not yet succeeded in explaining the tragedy of a single one of its sons, no matter which. I have nothing against questions: they are useful. What is more they are alone. To turn away from them would be to fail in our duty. . . . It is against the answers that I protest, regardless of their basis. Answers: I say there are none" (Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," in Legends of Our Time, p. 222).

[26]Andrez Hausbrandt, "Interviewing Men of the Theatre: Józef Szajna," Theatre in Poland, nos. 5-6 (May-June 1968):16.

fairly conventional--including a melodramatic confrontation between two ex-internees and a failed love--the Polish playwright's depiction of the survivors is reminiscent of Amichai's; they are individuals unable to escape their past.

Hołuj's modern universe is one which has not been able to divest itself of the Nazi internment centers. The opening setting is reminiscent of the camp roll-call area: an empty field, cloudy, and graveyard-like.[27] Leon, Hołuj's protagonist, an ex-concentration camp prisoner, is unable to divorce himself from his camp past.[28] Leon's living quarters are described as being like a concentration camp sleeping room. As a caretaker at the museum of martyrology, he acts like a Kapo when dealing with his underlings. Leon still rolls cigarettes from newspapers, the way most inmates who were able to obtain tobacco did. In searching the empty

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[27]Tadeusz Hołuj, "Puste Pole," Dialog 4 (1963):5-33. (Shirley Goldfarb provided me with a synopsis of the plot and a rough translation of the dialogue so that I would be able to do this brief analysis.) Hołuj's mise en scene is strikingly similar to the scene Elie Wiesel describes in Night when recounting the transport between Auschwitz and Buchenwald just before his emancipation: "When at last a gray glimmer of light appeared on the horizon it revealed a tangle of human shapes, heads sunk upon shoulders, crouched, piled one on top of the other, like a field of dust covered tombstones in the first light of dawn" (Wiesel, Night, p. 110).

[28]When in Wiesel's The Accident, the suicidal young journalist who has survived the death camps is berated by his lover, her description of him characterizes Amichai's survivors of the Holocaust as well as Hołuj's Leon: "You claim you love me but you keep suffering. You say you love me in the present but you're still living in the past. You tell me you love me but you refuse to forget. At night you have bad dreams. Sometimes you moan in your sleep. The truth is that I am nothing to you. I don't count. What counts is the past. Not ours: yours. . . . Maybe you think it is easy to live beside someone who suffers and won't accept any help" (Elie Wiesel, The Accident, trans. Anne Borchardt [New York: Avon Books, 1970], p. 110).

field for the treasures the SS had supposedly left behind, he alone can still reconstruct the positioning of all the camp barracks.

The environment is further permeated with l'univers concentrationnaire because a "jubilee" in celebration of the new museum construction, a memorial for the internees, is being held; it includes the staging of a dramatization of the camp experience. We see young girls costumed like camp prisoners who talk of being "gassed." March music is heard in the background reminiscent of the camp orchestras. The director of the production is referred to as the camp Commandant. Hence, the present blends with the past. For Leon, the confusion between the two is heightened; as Janka, his niece, prepares for the final gassing sequence, he expresses fear of losing her to the Cyklon B. For that matter, the apprehension that the camps will be brought back into operation is frequently expressed. Janka fears that the horrors will happen again, as does Leon. The Guest, who appears at the close of the play, and who is an ex-concentrationaire, speaks the language of the camps as if they were still operating.

Hołuj's drama, with the omnipresent image of the internment center, also deals with attempts to memorialize the camps. A museum of martyrology is an obvious representation of this concern. Yet he, too, like Charlotte Delbo in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, questions the possibility of those who were uninvolved to understand the concentration camp experience. Puste Pole is almost a dramatization of Elie Wiesel's outburst in "The Death of My Father:"

> As for the scholars and philosophers of every genre who have had the opportunity to observe the tragedy, they will--if they are capable of sincerity and humility--withdraw without daring to enter into the heart of the matter; and if they are not,

> well, who cares about their grandiloquent conclusions?
> Auschwitz, by definition, is beyond their vocabulary.[29]

As was noted in an earlier chapter, psychologist Bruno Bettelheim suggests that the outside world's reaction to the Nazi camp was to either disavow the truth of the reports of atrocities or to repress the information.[30] Hołuj's characters, on the other hand, desire to know what occurred. Janka asks her uncle to recount his experiences; she is excited over the prospect of reliving camp life through the jubilee staging. Diana, a well-known actress appearing in this "camp production," tells Leon that she wishes to understand what was behind the barbed wire. The museum, itself, is an attempt to make known what occurred.

Yet the outside world cannot understand; "Auschwitz, by definition, is beyond their vocabulary." (Hołuj, like Delbo, does not specify the camp; the two that come to mind are Auschwitz and Dachau, both of which have memorials to their internees.) The Museum Director professes familiarity with the camp documents; however, he and Leon continuously argue over the true statistics. The audience is made aware that it is the ex-internee who truly knows; that he is the real expert. The Jubilee Guest tells the young journalist, who is reporting the event and who is Janka's boyfriend, that no one outside the camp has the right to judge the actions of those inside for they cannot comprehend the situation.

The Memorial project epitomizes the outside world's lack of understanding of l'univers concentrationnaire. Against their objections,

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[29]Wiesel, "The Death of My Father," in Legends of Our Time, p. 19.

[30]Bettelheim, p. 252.

those who live in the area of the designated site have been relocated. Ironically, this is what the Nazis did to inhabitants in the vicinity of new camp installations. The entire area is to be cemented; the ashes of the cremated, which remain in the ground, will be cemented over. In essence, the memorial seems more reminiscent of the camps than the internees it supposedly memorializes.[31] Hence, Marian, another local survivor in Puste Pole, criticizes the "cement" memorial and suggests instead that the grounds be consecrated as holy, that flowers from the countries of all the internees be planted, and that a plexiglass statue of a beautiful young girl be constructed in the middle. Marian's testimonial implies re-birth; the cement memorial suggests continued death.[32]

Tadeusz Hołuj's survivors, as do Yehuda Amichai's old-age home inhabitants, exist in a world that cannot understand their experience; furthermore, they cannot escape from their pasts. Leon's niece cajoles her uncle to leave the empty field but like Chekhov's three sisters who

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[31]Cement is an image frequently used in relationship to the concentration camps. A cement mixer is the sound effect Rolf Hochhuth employs in The Deputy to symbolize the gas chambers and crematoria. In Brecht's The Private Life of the Master Race, the internees' slave labor consists of mixing cement. Elie Wiesel's first impression of Auschwitz is ironically optimistic because of the concrete employed in the construction: "First impression: this was better than Birkenau. There were two-storied buildings of concrete instead of wooden barracks" (Wiesel, Night, p. 51).

[32]Elie Wiesel, in a return to his Transylvanian home town, also discovers a memorial as meaningless as the one being erected in Puste Pole: "I walked from one synagogue to another; the biggest and oldest of them no longer existed; it had been destroyed by the retreating Germans, and a commemorative stone had been erected above its ruins. The others were empty, abandoned, cluttered with sacred books piled up helter-skelter and covered with dust. One single synagogue, too spacious for the fifty Jews who assemble there on Rosh Hashana, remained open" (Wiesel, "The Last Return," in Legends of Our Time, p. 160).

are trapped in the house of the Prozorovs, he is doomed to remain in l'univers concentrationnaire, a universe only his fellow survivors understand and one he fears may again come to life.

French playwright Armand Gatti who, during World War II, was imprisoned in a Nazi internment center,[33] has written two experimental dramas that also suggest the inability of those who survived the concentration camps to divorce themselves from their pasts. In both plays the present-day lives of internees are haunted by their experiences in l'univers concentrationnaire.

In L'Enfant-Rat (The Rat-Child, 1960), Gatti employs devices common to much of Holocaust literature.[34] Rather than refer to his characters, who were laborers and guards in a salt mine during World War II, by their names, the French dramatist alludes to them by numbers, thus implying that they continue to be identitiless internees and overseers. Gatti, as does Alberto Moravia in Il dio Kurt and Ireneusz Iredyński in Jasełka-Moderne, twists religious imagery. The scenes of L'Enfant-Rat are titled after sections of the Old and New Testaments. The play's climax is an ironic, mock nativity scene; a rat-child is born in the salt mine to one of the former prisoners. The grotesque, modern Messiah has been conceived out of the concentration camp experiences.

The various episodes in L'Enfant-Rat illustrate the obsession of Gatti's characters with the death of internee number Five. While pushing

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[33]Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama, pp. 172-73. For a fuller discussion of Gatti's dramaturgy, see Guicharnaud, Modern French Theatre, pp. 206-08.

[34]Armand Gatti, L'Enfant-rat, in Theatre II (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1960), pp. 8-125.

wheelbarrows filled with corpses, the prisoners discovered that Five, one of the Nazis' victims, was still alive. Rather than aid the wounded internee, the laborers resealed the box he had been placed in. Their guilt keeps Five alive in their memories. In the "Book of Job" scene, Five complains that he has been unable to rest peacefully since the end of the war, for he continuously dies in the thoughts of the ex-prisoners and guards who, even in their present-day lives, are haunted by his death. (The dead internee is Gatti's modern Job, just as the American soldier in Comment va le monde, môssieu? is Francois Billetdoux's version of the Old Testament sufferer.) For example, at the inquests the Police Commissioner presides over, it is always Five's body he sees.

The omnipresent photograph of all the characters as internees, which is part of the mise en scène, visually represents the oppressive presence of the concentration camp universe in their post-war existences. Even though the prisoners and guards have separated, they still inhabit each others' minds. Therefore, in the subjective scenes that individually depict the characters' outside lives, the minor roles are portrayed by members of the concentration camp group. In L'Enfant-Rat, as in Bells and Trains, l'univers concentrationnaire continues to live in the thoughts of its survivors.

In La Deuxième Existence du Camp de Tatenberg (The Second Existence of the Tatenberg Camp, 1962), Gatti again dramatizes the haunting presence of the Nazi concentration camps in the minds of those who remained alive. The conflict in the play is the battle between the pasts of Ilya Moissevitch, an ex-internee, and Hildegarde Frolick, a widow of a soldier who was executed for desertion. While both Frolick and Moissevitch

care for each other, they are unable to break free from their pasts.

Hildegarde is a puppeteer in Ilya's fairground troupe. Employing her marionettes, Frau Frolick continuously stages the death of her husband. (Frequently Gatti makes it unclear whether she controls the puppets or whether they have a life of their own.) If the marionettes symbolize the widow's obsession with her spouse's death, the travelling company of carnival artists represents Moissevitch's past; all of the members are ex-concentration camp inmates. The troupe is a microcosm of the Nazi internment center, reflecting the wide spectrum of nationalities imprisoned. Among the performers are a French female, her teenage son, a Cracow Jew, a Baltic Jew, a Ukranian, and a Spaniard.

At one point in the dramatic action, the Spaniard Rodriguez comments that the Tatenberg camp has never died; the structure of Gatti's play substantiates his observation. The scenes are divided up into those depicting "actuality" and those that are "returns into the past." In "the returns into the past," the troupe members reminisce, reconstruct, and act out their existences in l'univers concentrationnaire. However, even in the episodes labelled "actuality," the conversation revolves around Tatenberg.

The final scenes of La Deuxième Existence du Camp de Tatenberg illustrate the inability of Gatti's protagonist to escape from his past. Moissevitch, wishing to erase his memories and those of Frau Frolick, shoots the German widow's marionettes and two of his troupe members. Yet neither the ex-internees, who symbolize Ilya's camp past, nor Hildegarde's puppets can be destroyed. They return to torment Moissevitch. At the denouement, "Ilya Moissevitch est maintenant completement entoure par les

personnage du passe."[35] Ilya is unable to break free from the "human barricade" and join Hildegarde who is calling for him. Moissevitch, like Yehuda Amichai's old-age home inhabitants in Bells and Trains and Tadeusz Hołuj's Leon in Puste Pole, is unable to relate to someone who has not experienced the concentration camps. For Gatti's protagonist, in La Deuxième Existence du Camp de Tatenberg, there is no real present-day life; the final image of Ilya encircled by the ex-internees suggests that he is doomed to remain entrapped in l'univers concentrationnaire.

In After the Fall, Arthur Miller's protagonist Quentin is contemplating a third attempt at marriage, this time with Holga, a survivor of the Nazi camps who is as obsessed with her past as are the characters in the Holocaust plays by Gatti, Amichai and Hołuj. Holga, however, is not the only survivor of the Third Reich in After the Fall; an omnipresent blasted camp watchtower has also remained alive. It is a remnant of the Nazi universe Miller has dramatized in Incident at Vichy. For that matter, to gain a clear understanding of the American playwright's perception of l'univers concentrationnaire, we should briefly examine Incident at Vichy before turning to After the Fall.

Set in "a place of detention" in Vichy, France, the play deals with a group of Jews who are holding falsified identification papers; the only non-Jewish character is Prince von Berg who has been mistakenly detained. While the camps are never represented on stage, Miller does

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[35]Aramand Gatti, La Deuxième Existence du Camp de Tatenberg, in Theatre III (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), p. 311. ("Ilya Moissevitch is completely surrounded by the persons from his past." Claudine Quiclet provided me with plot synopses of both of Gatti's plays.)

dramatize how each personage contends with their possible reality. Most are in agreement with the actor Monceau's rationalization:

> You actually believe that Doctor? About the furnaces? . . . But what good are dead Jews to them? They want free labor. It's senseless. You can say whatever you like, but the Germans are not illogical; there's no conceivable advantage for them in such a thing.[36]

They are like the Transylvanian townspeople in Elie Wiesel's Night who scoff at the Hasid Moche's description of the inferno of Auschwitz.[37] Only von Berg and the Jewish doctor, Leduc, believe the tales of the atrocities; the Prince even attempts to explain the horrors:

> That is their [the Germans] power. To do the inconceivable; it paralyzes the rest of us. But if that is its purpose, it is not the cause. Many times I used to ask my friends--if you love your country why is it necessary to hate other countries? To be a good German why must you despise everything that is not German? Until I realized the answer. They do these things not because they are German but because they are nothing. It is the hallmark of the age--the less you exist the more important it is to make a clear impression. . . . I believe in this fire; it would prove for all time they exist, yes, and that they were sincere. . . . And in my opinion, win or lose this war, they have pointed the way to the future.[38]

The belief that the Holocaust is a harbinger of future genocides should, by now, be a familiar one.

In Incident at Vichy's final, climactic moments, Leduc, sounding very much like Elie Wiesel in "The Guilt We All Share," convinces the Prince of humanity's universal culpability:

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[36]Arthur Miller, Incident at Vichy (New York: Viking Press, 1965), p. 37.

[37]Wiesel, Night, Chapter 1.

[38]Miller, Incident at Vichy, pp. 38-9.

> Part of knowing who we are is knowing we are not someone else. And Jew is only the name we give to that stranger, that agony we cannot feel, that death we look at like a cold abstraction. Each man has his Jew; it is the other. And the Jews have their Jews. And now, above all, you must see that you have yours--the man whose death leaves you relieved that you are not him, despite your decency. And that is why there is nothing and will be nothing--until you face your own complicity with this . . . your own humanity.[39]

When the aristocrat turns over his exit pass to Leduc, Miller has not, as some critics contend, switched focus to an individual act of heroism. Instead, the Jewish doctor has proven himself correct. Leduc now shares in the guilt, for he has been relieved by von Berg's suicidal action.

As noted, the concentration camp remains invisible in Incident at Vichy because the play deals with events before the fact; the camps exist only in the imaginations of the detained French men. The image of the Nazi internment center, however, does hang over the dramatic action of After the Fall, which as the title indicates, takes place after the fact. Thus, both dramas are attempts by Miller to explain the Holocaust. The playwright himself notes that the two works, which were produced in the same year,[40] share an identical theme: "And Incident at Vichy was taken to mean that I was against Nazism. And of course it's only because I'm dealing with a theme that I dealt with in After the Fall, which was quite simply that when we live in a time of great murders, we are inhabiting a world of murder for which we share guilt."[41] It is through an understanding

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[39]Ibid., p. 66.

[40]Chronologically, After the Fall was produced first on January 23, 1964. The premiere of Incident at Vichy was on December 3, 1964.

[41]Cited in: Richard I. Evans, Psychology and Arthur Miller (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969), p. 74.

of the dramatic functioning of the omnipresent concentration camp image in After the Fall that one ascertains Miller's perception of l'univers concentrationnaire.

Visually, the importance of the Nazi camp is immediately felt. "Rising above it [the setting], and dominating the stage is the blasted stone tower of a German concentration camp. Its wide lookout windows are like eyes which at the moment seem blind and dark; but reinforcing rods stick out of it like broken tentacles."[42] That Miller feels the camp image should be of utmost importance is revealed in his discussion of Franco Zeferelli's production of After the Fall, which he greatly admired: "You see, in Italy, the steel frame became the concentration camp, so that the whole play, in effect, was taking place in the ambiance of that enclosure."[43] Yet, Miller's response, when questioned regarding his reason for employing the concentration camp, is vague:

> Well, I have always felt that the concentration camps, though they're a phenomenon of totalitarian states, are also the logical conclusion of contemporary life. If you complain of people being shot in the streets, of the absence of communication or social responsibility, of the rise of everyday violence which people have become accustomed to and the dehumanization of feelings, then the ultimate development on an organized social level is the concentration camp.[44]

Several critics have also attempted to explain the dramatic function of the destroyed camp in After the Fall. While many would agree with Ronald

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[42]Arthur Miller, After the Fall (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 1.

[43]Olga Carlisle and Rose Styron, "The Art of the Theatre: An Interview," Paris Review 9 (Summer 1966):93.

[44]Ibid.

Hayman that "the failure of the play is the failure to justify the use of this image,"[45] some have tried to justify the employment of the watch-tower. Rodney Holmes Carlton, in his unpublished M.A. thesis "Arthur Miller's After the Fall Reflecting Sartre's 'The Problem of the Other'," gives the camp a very general purpose: "A spectre of death hangs over the whole play, which is most dramatically illustrated with the concentration camp tower posed over the action."[46] Robert Corrigan's explanation of the internment center image is more in line with Miller's: "By extension, to relate to one individual is to accept a personal responsibility for what happens to all men. This is the significance of the many flashbacks to the concentration camp."[47] Birgitta Steene comes closest to comprehending the importance of the image to the rest of the dramatic action: "Scenically the concentration camp tower functions as a symbol of Holga's world and by analogy of Quentin's painful past."[48]

The Nazi internment center is first accurately described by the survivor Holga, who has taken Quentin to visit:

> In this camp a minimum of two hundred thousand Dutch, Belgian, Russian, Polish, French, and Danish prisoners of war were killed. Also, four thousand two hundred and seven refugees from the Spanish Republican Army. The door to the left leads

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[45]Ronald Hayman, Arthur Miller (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), p. 85.

[46]Rodney Carleton Holmes, "Arthur Miller's After the Fall Reflecting Sartre's 'Problem of the Other'" (M.A. thesis, Hunter College of the City University of New York, 1970), p. 16.

[47]Robert Corrigan, "The Achievement of Arthur Miller," Comparative Drama 2 (Fall 1968):149.

[48]Birgitta Steene, "Arthur Miller's After the Fall: A Strindbergian Failure," Moderna Språk 58 (December 1964):448.

> into the chamber where their teeth were extracted for gold; the drain in the floor carried off the blood. At times instead of shooting, they were individually strangled to death. The barracks on the right were the bordello where the women prisoners were forced to--[49]

Holga is the archetypical survivor; she is the personification of the last two lines of Charlotte Delbo's None of Us Will Return: "None of us will return./ None of us should have returned."[50] She refuses to forget the Nazi era: "I suppose . . . one doesn't want to lose the past, even if it's dreadful."[51] If Delbo's survivors in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? cannot make the outside world understand their experiences, Holga is doubly burdened; as a German she cannot speak of her ordeal:

> In fact, when I first visited America after the war I was three days under questioning before they let me in. It was impossible to explain to them. How could one be in forced labor for two years if one were not a Communist? And of course, not being Jewish either, it was very suspicious. I was ready to turn back. I was so frightened. In fact, it was only when I told them I had blood relatives in several Nazi ministries that they were reassured. You see? Here it's not talked about, and outside it's not understood.[52]

She also suffers from the guilt that torments those who remained alive in the Nazi concentration camps. When Quentin asks her why she keeps revisiting the internment center, she replies, "because I didn't die there."[53] Her belief that "no one they didn't kill can be innocent

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[49]Miller, After the Fall, p. 12.

[50]Charlotte Delbo, None of Us Will Return, trans. John Githens (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 126-27.

[51]Miller, After the Fall, p. 13.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid., p. 15.

again"[54] is the key to the relationship between the blasted camp tower and Quentin's past.

In his first visit to the Nazi internment center, Quentin associates himself with the victims, identifying with their suffering:

> I think I expected it to be more unfamiliar. I never thought the stones would look so ordinary. . . . Believers built this, maybe that's the fright--and I, without belief, stand here disarmed. I can see the convoys grinding up this hill; and I inside; no one knows my name and yet they'll smash my head on the concrete floor! And no appeal.[55]

By the end of the dramatic action, however, Quentin makes an admission that is reminiscent of the one made by the inmate-physician in Peter Weiss's The Investigation; the lawyer realizes, as Leduc does in Incident at Vichy, that he could have as easily have been the victimizer as the victim:

> I know how to kill. . . . No man lives who would not rather be the sole survivor of this place rather than all its finest victims! . . . I tell you what I know! My brothers died here--but my brothers built this place; our hearts have cut these stones.[56]

Quentin's expression of guilt, then, explains the function of the concentration camp; it looms over the dramatic action like an omnipresent evil against which all present brutality is measured. As Nathaniel Lehrman pointed out in his review for Reconstructionist, the fall was the Holocaust and it is Miller's contention that "after the fall, the fall continues."[57]

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[54]Ibid., p. 23.

[55]Ibid., p. 17.

[56]Ibid., p. 127.

[57]Nathaniel Lehrman, "After the Fall the Fall Continues," Reconstructionist 30 (May 1, 1964):20.

The tower becomes most prominent during the scenes dealing with Quentin's defense of his colleague Lou before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. (Throughout the play Miller employs two techniques to emphasize the presence of the camp; either "the camp tower comes alive" with light or Holga appears in front of it carrying flowers. Her innocence--at least in Quentin's mind--is contrasted to the guilt shared by the personages on stage.) C. W. E. Bigsby has suggested the strong relationship between the tower and the 1950's Congressional committee:

> Two main symbols provide the background for the examples of cruelty and love destroyed by egotism which abound in Quentin's past. These images, a tower of the German concentration camp and the Committee on Un-American Activities are in their own ways personification and public extensions of these personal feelings--the one in a physical and the other in an intellectual sense. The symbols gain their particular effectiveness from the realization that both institutions derive their power from the ready complicity not only of the "innocents" who stood by and watched but also of the victims who succumb still naively believing in the folly of opposition and the virtue of inactivity.[58]

Quentin, in defending Reverend Barnes, draws parallels between the Committee and the Third Reich: "And this question--innocent! How many Negroes do you allow to vote in your patriotic district? And which of your social, political, or racial sentiments would Hitler have disapproved?"[59] The levels of guilt vary, just as they did in the camps. The extremes are Mickey and Lou. Mickey's guilt is obvious; he will testify against friends to protect his own professional position. Lou, however, is the victim who allows himself to be victimized. Rather than

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[58]C. W. E. Bigsby, "The Fall and After--Arthur Miller's Confusion," Modern Drama 10 (September 1967):126.

[59]Miller, After the Fall, p. 93.

revolt against HUAC, he submits and commits suicide. His Holocaust equivalent would be the stereotypical passive concentration camp prisoner.[60]

Lou, like the European Jews of World War II, has nowhere to turn. Everyone shares in the guilt for his death. Even Quentin, seemingly a compatriot, admits his complicity in the new persecution, which, as is seen through the references to the omnipresent camp tower, is simply a re-birth of the previous one:

> When I saw him last week he said a dreadful thing. I tried not to hear it. That I turned out to be the only friend he had. . . . It was dreadful because I was not his friend either, and he knew it. I'd have stuck it to the end but I hated the danger in it for myself and he saw through my faithfulness; and he was not telling me what a friend I was, he was praying I would be. . . . Because I wanted out, to be a good American again, kosher again--and he saw it and proved it in the joy . . . the joy . . . the joy I felt now that my danger had spilled out on the subway track! So it is not bizarre to me. . . . (The tower blazes into life, and he walks with his eyes up. Holga appears with flowers.) This is not some crazy aberration of human nature to me. I can easily see the perfectly normal contractors and their cigars, the carpenters, plumbers sitting at their ease over lunch pails, I can see them

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[60]The view of internees passively going to their death has come under harsh attack, most recently by Terence Des Pres (Des Pres, Chapter 5). Elie Wiesel rejects this perception of the inmates by suggesting that they had no choice but to accept death: "Then we all held our heads up high and murmuring the words of the Kaddish we marched ahead, almost like conquerors toward the gates of death. . . . Had the Jews been able to think they had allies outside, men who did not look the other way, perhaps they might have acted differently. But the only people interested in the Jews were the Germans. The others preferred not to look, not to hear, not to know. The solitude of the Jews, caught in the clutches of the beast, has no precedent in history. It was total. Death guarded all the exits" (Wiesel, "A Plea for the Dead," in Legends of Our Time, p. 228). As I point out, Lou's situation in After the Fall is analogous to the Jews during World War II. His friends "prefer not to look, not to hear, not to know." His solitude is also total.

> laying the pipes to run the blood out of this mansion; good fathers, devoted sons, grateful that someone else will die, not they.[61]

The Committee on Un-American Activities scenes prove that Holga is correct when she claims that "no one they didn't kill can be innocent again."

We see this not only in the political sphere, but also in Quentin's personal life. Here his actions indicate complicity with emotional atrocities, many of which are again measured against the remnant of the Nazi horrors. "Everytime Quentin experiences agression, either within himself or inflicted from without, the top of the tower lights up, indicating a hit. . . On the pin-ball machine of guilt, the crime of any one man rings a tiny, pecadillo bell."[62] This is most effectively done in the Maggie-Quentin confrontations. Maggie is another example of the supposedly complacent victim. Laughed at, abused, she allows herself to be victimized but she also victimizes. Maggie's destruction is not, as J. J. Stinson suggests, caused solely by others;[63] she, too, is responsible. As Quentin finally tells the singer before her suicide:

> You eat those pills to blind yourself, but if you could only say "I have been cruel," this frightening room would open up. If you could say, "I have been kicked around, but I have been just as inexcusably vicious to others, called my husband idiot in public, I have been utterly selfish despite my generosity, I have been hurt by a long line of men but I have cooperated with my persecutors."[64]

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[61]Miller, After the Fall, pp. 64-5.

[62]Leslie Epstein, "The Unhappiness of Arthur Miller," Tri-Quarterly (Spring 1965):166.

[63]J. J. Stinson, "Structure in After the Fall: The Relevance of the Maggie Episode to the Main Themes and Christian Symbolism," Modern Drama 10 (December 1967):236.

[64]Miller, After the Fall, p. 120.

Quentin and Maggie, therefore, embody, for Miller, his view of the Holocaust, wherein all shared complicity and victim and victimizer could have easily exchanged places.

Basically, the American playwright's portrayal of the concentration camp universe is in keeping with Hannah Arendt's theories. According to Nathaniel Lehrman, "Miller has thus come to agree with the . . . judgements of Hannah Arendt . . . about the shared responsibility of victim and villain in situations of persecution."[65] Miller was already thinking along these lines when he reported on the Auschwitz trials:

> The question in the Frankfurt courtroom spirals around the world and into the heart of everyman. It is his own complicity with the murder even the murder he did not perform with his own hands. The murders, however, from which he profited if only by having survived.[66]

(This is a paraphrase of Quentin's speech after Lou's suicide and Leduc's remark to the Prince at the close of Incident at Vichy.) Miller seems to have reached some of the same conclusions Peter Weiss did after observing the Frankfurt trials. For that matter, Witness #3, when testifying in The Investigation, sounds very much like Miller's protagonists:

> Every prisoner
> from those who held the most privileged positions
> down to those who were dying
> was part of that system
> The difference
> between us and the camp personnel

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[65]Lehrman, p. 25. Miller has admitted the influence of Arendt on After the Fall. See Arthur Miller, "With Respect for Her Agony, But With Love," Life, February 2, 1964, p. 66.

[66]Daily Express, March 16, 1964, cited in Sheila Huftel, Arthur Miller: The Burning Glass (New York: Citadel Press, 1965), pp. 192-93.

was less than what separated us
from those who were outside.[67]

Miller, unlike Weiss, however, chastises the entire political spectrum as being guilty; this is made apparent when Quentin questions Reverend Barnes, after his client, who is an accused Communist, has taken the Fifth Amendment: "But are we sure, Harley--I ask it, I ask it--if the tables were turned, and they were in front of you--would you permit them not to answer? Hateful men that they are?"[68]

What is frightening about Miller's perceptions regarding the Holocaust is that he dramatizes "the fall continuing after the fall," or as Clinton W. Towbridge explains it: "Even the Nazis, the play seems to say, must be recognized as our brothers; for we are all capable of their atrocities."[69] Robert Hogan correctly points out that "Miller makes what happened in the concentration camp a macrocosm of what the individual does to others."[70] Our complicity is not only in the historical Holocaust, or the more recent political ones, but also in those personal holocausts we cause in our daily existences. Allen J. Koppenhauer, in his comparison of Albert Camus' The Fall and Arthur Miller's After the Fall, sums up the relationship between the camp watchtower and the American dramatist's theme:

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[67]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 107.

[68]Miller, After the Fall, p. 93.

[69]Clinton W. Towbridge, "Arthur Miller: Between Pathos and Tragedy," Modern Drama 10 (December 1967):229.

[70]Robert Hogan, Arthur Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964), p. 41.

> It represents the estrangement, the inhumanity of humans and it becomes the central focus of a number of scenes in which characters hurt each other. Interestingly enough Miller and Camus both use the terror of the Nazi concentration camps for significant scenes and both come to the same conclusion. Quentin is driven to say that the human can be strong only if he has killed his conscience; power is felt only if there is no conscience.[71]

German dramatist Martin Walser has written two plays that suggest the haunting presence of l'univers concentrationnaire in contemporary Germany. However, rather than focus primarily on surviving victims, as is done in the previously discussed works, Walser dramatizes the present-day existences of the victimizers. Eiche und Angora (The Oak and Angora, 1962)[72] contains

> . . . a series of scenes dating from 1945 to the present, [in which] he depicts the development of Alois, who is caught in a process of deterioration. Alois is always a step behind his times. When others have become Nazis, he is still a Communist. When others have become good democrats, he is still a Nazi. This retardation has led to Alois' castration by the Nazis in a concentration camp. After his release from prison, he saves his town from destruction and in the postwar era wants nothing more than to join the men's singing club as countertenor and raise Angora rabbits with Jewish names. Gorbach, the corpulent and intimidating mayor of the town, constantly manipulates Alois for his own gain. Either he uses Alois' voice to win singing competitions, or he sends Alois to mental institutions to cure his ideological thinking, which embarrasses the town. In the final act, Alois is not permitted to sing for the men's club because his voice as castrato brings back memories of the Nazi past. In defiance, he kills his Angora rabbits and hangs

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[71]Allen J. Koppenhauer, "The Fall and After: Albert Camus and Arthur Miller," Modern Drama 9 (September 1966):208.

[72]There is an English adaptation of Eiche und Angora by Ronald Duncan entitled Rabbit Race. It can be found in Martin Walser, Plays (London: J. Calder, 1963). The original German version can be found in Martin Walser, Gesammelte Werke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), pp. 55-113.

> their fur on a flagpole. At the play's close Alois is sent to another asylum and his wife, who has become an alcoholic, is sent for a cure.[73]

According to Walser, "Alois is, so to speak, the embodiment of the masses, the people. He mirrors the mentality of the common man which always changes after the government and not with it--and from whom new governments always require 'a credo.'"[74] Alois also represents the continued presence of the Holocaust in Germany, no matter how hard the new society attempts to cast it out. His high-pitched singing voice is an omnipresent reminder of the Nazi atrocities committed in the concentration camps. Alois' Angora rabbits, with Jewish names, symbolize those imprisoned in the Third Reich's internment centers. Alois imprisons the rabbits, toys with them, and, in his final fit of rage, exterminates them. The singer also haunts those persons who were officials in the SS during the war. Though they are now viewed as respectable, the castrato reminds them of their hidden pasts. Alois is particularly troublesome to Mayor Gorbach, an ex-SS officer. Ultimately, the town can never cast Alois out; the Holocaust, as personified by the castrated singer, remains to torment the German conscience.

Walser again suggests that the Nazi atrocities cannot be cleansed from the German conscience in Der schwarze Schwann (The Black Swan, 1964).[75] In this later play, "the twenty-year-old son of a doctor who runs a mental

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[73]Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama, p. 470.

[74]Bettina Knapp, "Interview with Martin Walser," Modern Drama 13 (December 1970):318.

[75]Martin Walser, Gesammelte Werke, pp. 217-72.

institution confronts his father with crimes committed in a concentration camp during World War II. In doing this, he also confronts himself and others. Like a German post-war Hamlet, he cannot piece the world together and eventually hangs himself."[76] The haunting presence of l'univers concentrationnaire, in Der schwarze Schwann, poisons Rudi Goothein's relationship with his father and with Irm, the girl he loves, and causes his self-destruction. The parallels between Walser's two Holocaust dramas are clear. Alois, in Eiche und Angora, is a living reminder of the Nazis' camp experiments and can be viewed as a personification of the guilt Rudi Goothein feels. Rudi's suicide is caused by the guilt which permeates contemporary German society. In both of Walser's plays, the victimizers' culpability cannot be expiated; the concentration camps cannot be forgotten. In Der schwarze Schwann the innocent younger generation continues to atone for the sins of the previous generation.

Peter Weiss, in The Investigation (1965), also focuses not only on the survivors of the Nazi terror but on their victimizers as well. The Investigation is a recreation of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials; all the dialogue is taken from the actual court transcripts. For employing this documentary technique Weiss has been castigated by a variety of critics. Lawrence Langer's dismissal of the work is typical:

> The journey from documentation to art, from the gross horrors of the Holocaust to their imaginative realization in literature, is a devious and disconnected one, full of unexpected detours through terrain scarcely surveyed by earlier critical maps. Writers themselves have gone astray in this uncharted landscape, a circumstance best illustrated, perhaps, by Peter

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[76]Crowell's Handbook of Contemporary Drama, p. 471.

> Weiss's The Investigation, an attempt to create with a minimum of alterations from the testimony of witnesses at the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt between 1963 and 1965 a series of dramatic scenes which would convey the authentic reality of that experience by using only the language of history, the words of men and women who themselves endured--as victims or tormentors--its fearful tenure on time.
>
> The result on stage is singularly undramatic. . . . by duplicating the details of history without embellishing them . . . the result is not a new aesthetic distance but an aesthetic indifference.[77]

However, if we examine how the German dramatist has employed the documentary material and how he has altered and embellished it, we will gain a better understanding of Weiss's portrayal of the concentration camp experience as well as be able to refute much of Langer's criticism.

Just from an examination of the play's title and subtitle, it becomes apparent that Weiss will be carefully molding his documentation. The German title Die Ermittlung, while translated into English as The Investigation, stressing the judicial nature of the piece, has been translated into French as L'instrucion, which suggests that Weiss wishes his drama to be a Brechtian lehrstuck.[78] In an interview, the author has

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[77]Langer, p. 31. East German playwright Rolf Schneider has similarly recreated the Nürnberg trials in Prozess in Neurnberg (Hamburg: Fischer-Bucherei, 1968). In his documentary drama, he takes less liberties with the transcripts; however, like Weiss, Schneider emphasizes a Marxist interpretation of the Holocaust. Also like Weiss, Schneider has expressed interest in the problems of documentary theatre. See his essay "Documentary Theatre: Yes and No," World Theatre 17 (1968): 397-99. Documentary material has also been employed in Polish composer Alina Nowak's Auschwitz Oratorio. The first section of the oratorio's libretto is based on the memoirs of an Auschwitz nurse who functioned as a midwife in the camp hospital. (An English version of the libretto is available from Anna M. Furdyna.)

[78]Erika Salloch, "The Divina Commedia as Model and Anti-Model for The Investigation by Peter Weiss," Modern Drama 14 (May 1971):1.

indicated that didacticism is at the heart of his Auschwitz piece: "If I want anything from the audience, it's that they listen very carefully and be completely awake, not hypnotized, absolutely alive, answering all the questions in the play."[79] That he has subtitled his work "an oratorio in eleven cantos," makes it apparent that The Investigation is meant to be viewed as a contemporary Divine Comedy. Weiss, therefore, seems to be equating Auschwitz with Hell, as Rolf Hochhuth did in The Deputy. Yet, he will also attempt to prove, as Erika Salloch notes, that "the hell of Auschwitz is . . . a euphemism."[80]

Weiss carefully organizes his material so that he can "lead his audience from the railroad station through the tortures of the concentration camp to the present day."[81] While what we are seeing seems to be the Frankfurt trials, what is really being recreated is Auschwitz. According to the German dramatist, The Investigation "is a description of the present in which the past comes to life."[82] (In a sense, this technique is similar to Yehuda Amichai's in Bells and Trains.) It is Auschwitz, not the trials, that he wants to dramatize: "I wanted a scientific investigation of the reality of Auschwitz, to show the audience, in the greatest of detail, exactly what happened."[83]

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[79]P. Gray, "A Living World: An Interview with Peter Weiss," Le Drama Review 11 (Fall 1966):111.

[80]Salloch, p. 9.

[81]Zypes, p. 56.

[82]Cited in: Salloch, p. 5.

[83]Gray, p. 108.

R. C. Perry's lengthy description of the dramatic action is worth citing here for it clearly indicates how Weiss's structure works:

> The play starts with the arrival of the deportees ("Gesang von der Rampe") and then the conditions in the camp are described ("Gesang von Lager"). In the "Gesang von der Schankel" we hear how the prisoners were tortured one by one. Canto four deals with various aspects of life in the camp; it includes an account of the experiments carried out on the women, as well as more general speculation about "die Moglichkeit des Uberlebens" and the whole phenomenon of Auschwitz. In the fifth and sixth cantos we're told about the fate of two individuals--one a victim (Lili Tofler), the other a tool of the system (Stark). Then some more efficient methods of destruction are described: "Gesang von der Schwarzen Wand--vom Phenol--vom Bunkerblock." The suffering and death become more and more anonymous as the numbers involved become larger. With the description of the properties of the gas and the first experiments with it ("Gesang vom Zyklon B") we approach the climax of this progression; the final canto deals with the gas chambers and the inferno itself: "Gesang von der Feuroefen."[84]

Also, through a variety of other dramatic devices that the German playwright imposes upon the historical material, he succeeds in more fully recreating the Nazi internment center.

The language of the play is in free verse. This imbues the witnesses' monologues with an unemotional, unemphatic tone. The dialogue is totally controlled and exact which is in direct contrast to the actual court proceedings: "The confrontations of witnesses and accused, as well as the addresses to the court by the prosecution and the replies by the counsel for the defense were overcharged with emotion."[85] That the internees became insensitive to their plights is what Weiss wants illustrated through his poetic dialogue. That the prisoners became

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[84]Perry, p. 833.

[85]Peter Weiss, The Investigation, note.

desensitized becomes particularly clear in Canto 2, when a witness describes how all the atrocities in the camp were "normal:"

> It was normal
> that everything had been stolen from us
> It was normal
> that we stole too
> Dirt sores and diseases
> were what was normal
> It was normal
> that all around us people were dying
> and it was normal
> to live in the face of one's own death.[86]

The internees of Auschwitz had to constitute new norms, for the abnormal reigned and became the "normal." They had to become desensitized.[87] The gassings and cremations were commonplace, and the result was that

> Our feelings grew numb
> and we looked at corpses
> with complete indifference
> and that was normal.[88]

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[86]Ibid., p. 41.

[87]It is with the same commonplace acceptance of the surrounding horrors that a Sonderkommando, in Tadeusz Borowski's "Auschwitz (Our Home), A Letter," responds to the question, "what's new with you, personally?" "What sort of personally is there for me? The oven, the barracks, back to the oven . . . Have I got anybody around here? Well, if you really want to know what's new 'personally'--we've figured out a new way to burn people. Want to hear about it? . . . Well then you take your kids with plenty of hair on their heads, then stick the heads together and light the hair. The rest burns by itself and in no time at all the whole business is gemacht" (Borowski, p. 122).

[88]Weiss, pp. 41-2. Again, this is the same indifference Borowski's characters develop in order to survive: "At that moment several trucks full of naked women rolled in from the FKL [Female Camp]. The women stretched out their arms and pleaded: 'Save us! We are going to the gas chambers! Save us!' And they rode slowly past us . . . and then disappeared from sight. Not one of us made a move, not one of us lifted a hand" (Borowski, p. 96).

The dialogue in The Investigation also makes the audience realize that the atrocities were ordinary events because the horrors are recounted as carefully detailed lists. We are told the number of prisoners per car, the amount of phenol employed, the number of bodies that could be burned per day in the crematorium, how many persons could be placed in the gas chambers. These language devices undercut the audiences' emotional involvement and are Brechtian in intent;[89] as R. C. Perry notes,

> . . . the contrast between the disgusting subject-matter and the cool harmonious form . . . is intentional. Weiss wants us to understand just what went on and think about how Auschwitz happened; it is the function of the verse to carry us along through the detailed horrors, controlling our emotional response in order to keep us receptive to the facts and their implications.[90]

The language also aids in our understanding the Nazi mentality. The jargon of the Third Reich and the euphemisms of the camp administration are frequently employed. When one ex-Nazi is asked how many persons arrived on a certain day, his instinctive response is "thirty-five stücke [pieces]."[91] The mechanical language the defendants employ thus becomes

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[89]According to O. Clausen, "Bertolt Brecht is Weiss's favorite playwright" ("Weiss Propagandist and Weiss Playwright," New York Times Magazine, October 2, 1966, p. 126). Weiss has expressed his indebtedness to Brecht: "Brecht is the one who has helped me the most, because he never wrote anything for the sake of the dramatic event, but rather to show how the world is and find out how to change it" (Gray, p. 112).

[90]Perry, p. 836.

[91]Obviously the transformation of human beings into "stücke" is another illustration of Peter Barnes' thesis in Auschwitz and Elie Wiesel's conclusion in "Appointment with Hate:" "The Nazis saw the Jews not as human beings--stimulating hatred or justifying it--but simply as objects, minerals, numbers: one does not hate numbers" (Wiesel, "Appointment with Hate," in Legends of Our Time, p. 177).

an illustration of the "order" the SS tried to create. Harry Slochower, in his review for Jewish Currents, surmises that "for Weiss the modern Golem is automation" and "mechanical order;"[92] we immediately comprehend this through the ex-Nazis' dialogue.

Weiss's characterizations add further insight to our understanding of his conception of Auschwitz. Like two choruses the witnesses and defendents face each other in debate. The witnesses have no names; they remain identitiless, as they did in the camps. Only the accused retain their names: "The fact that they bear their own names is significant, since they also did so during the time of the events under consideration, while the prisoners had lost their names."[93] Furthermore, in the course of the dramatic action, Weiss never refers to "Jews." Instead, he uses Verfolgte, the German term for those persecuted for racial reasons. Morris Schappes spoke for a number of Jewish critics when he complained that, "Equally astonishing is Weiss's omission of the word Jew. From the production you would never know there were Jews in Auschwitz, much less that many of those done to death were Jews."[94] Martin Esslin was correct, however, when he responded to these attacks, by explaining, "It [the non-mentioning of Jews] is precisely in order to deemotionalize the issue."[95]

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[92]Harry Slochower, "Peter Weiss's The Investigation," Jewish Currents 20 (September 1966):8.

[93]Weiss, note. Gatti employs the same device in L'Enfant-rat. However, the French playwright, differing with Weiss, also refers to the SS by numbers, thereby implying that the victimizers were as identitiless as the victims.

[94]Morris Schappes, "Peter Weiss's The Investigation," Jewish Currents 20 (December 1966):6.

[95]Martin Esslin,"Peter Weiss and Auschwitz," Encounter 26 (March 1966):90.

It is also done to universalize the situation. In fact, Weiss has remarked, "I do not identify myself any more with the Jews than I do with the people of Vietnam or the blacks in South Africa."[96] For the playwright, the Holocaust symbolizes all genocides and persecutions, past and present; this was a belief he developed after visiting Auschwitz:

> The living man who comes here, from another world, has nothing but his knowledge of figures, written reports, statements by witnesses, it lies heavy upon him, but he can only grasp what he experiences himself. Only when he himself is dragged away from his table and manacled and kicked and beaten does he know what this is. Only when, beside him, they are herding people together and knocking them down, loading them into wagons, does he know how this is.
>
> Now he is only standing in a vanished world. Here there is nothing more for him to do. For awhile everything is utterly still.
>
> Then he knows it has not ended yet.[97]

(The attempt to universalize the camp experience, as was indicated in Chapter II, is also found in Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy and James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice.) One of the witnesses reaffirms the view that l'univers concentrationnaire symbolizes all genocides, including future ones, when he warns,

> . . . We
> who still live with these pictures
> know that millions could stand again
> waiting to be destroyed
> and that the new destruction will be far more efficient
> than the old one was . . .
> I came out of the camp
> yes
> but the camp is still there.[98]

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[96]Clausen, p. 131.

[97]Peter Weiss, "My Place," trans. Christopher Middleton, Encounter 25 (December 1965):7.

[98]Weiss, The Investigation, pp. 109-11.

Related to Weiss's attempt to universalize the camp experiences, is his more controversial thesis that inherently there is little difference between victims and victimizers. The playwright's statement that "given a different deal, the Jews . . . could have been the exterminators,"[99] is reminiscent of Leduc's remark in Arthur Miller's Incident at Vichy that "the Jews have their Jews."[100] The sentiment, that even the oppressed were guilty, is repeated frequently during the testimony. Only the guilty survived:

> And it was normal
> that there were some among us
> who helped those that stood over us
> to beat us . . .
> Only the cunning survived . . .
> The unfit
> the retarded
> the slow
> the gentle
> were crushed.[101]

The prisoner-doctor, who concedes having helped liquidate fellow internees, admits that the roles played in the camp could easily have been switched:

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[99]Clausen, p. 131.

[100]Arthur Miller, Incident at Vichy, p. 66.

[101]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 42. The survivors' guilt feelings for having remained alive are frequently dealt with in Holocaust literature. One has only to remember Francoise's poignant description of all those who comforted her in the camp, in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, and the guilt she feels for being the one to survive (Delbo, Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, p. 66). Elie Wiesel comments on the guilt feelings of the survivor in "The Guilt We All Share:" "Thus, the one who had been spared, above all during the selections could not repress his first spontaneous reflex of joy. A moment, a week, or an eternity later, this joy weighted with fear and anxiety will turn into guilt. 'I am happy to have escaped death' becomes the equivalent to admitting: 'I am happy that someone else went in my place'" (Wiesel, "The Guilt We All Share," in Legends of Our Time, p. 211).

> They [the prisoners] were equally dedicated
> to the same nation
> to its prosperity
> and its rewards
> And if they had not been designated
> prisoners
> they could equally well have been guards.[102]

That the Holocaust implies universal guilt is the message of the final witness's testimony in Weiss's play:

> I am not concerned here
> with the individual accused
> but only wish to bring to mind
> that what they did
> could not have been carried out
> without the support
> of millions of others . . .
> I only
> want to point out if I may
> how many spectators lined the way
> when we were driven from our homes
> and loaded into freight cars
> The accused in these proceedings
> were only the last
> in a long line.[103]

Nevertheless, in The Investigation, Weiss pinpoints more specifically what, rather than who, is to blame for the concentration camps. The answer lies in the present lives of the perpetrators of genocide. The SS stationmaster in the camp "at present . . . holds a high executive position/ in the management of the government railways."[104] An overseer of the guards is "currently/ director of an insurance company."[105] All have continued to succeed in a system that has not changed; as one witness

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[102]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 108.

[103]Ibid., pp. 265-66.

[104]Ibid., p. 4.

[105]Ibid., p. 63.

exclaims:

> We must drop the lofty view
> that the camp world
> is incomprehensible to us
> We all know the society
> that produced a government
> capable of creating such camps
> The order that prevailed there
> was an order whose basic nature
> we were familiar with
> For that reason
> we were able to find our way about
> in its logical and ultimate consequence
> where the oppressor
> could extend his authority
> to a degree never known before
> and the oppressed
> was forced to yield up
> the fertilizing dust
> of his bones.[106]

Weiss's interpretation of the Holocaust is an economic one; the German dramatist focuses his attack on supporters of the camp:

> All I knew about the camp
> was it had to do with
> a large industrial complex
> and that its various branches
> employed prisoners as labor supply.[107]

We learn that I. G. Farben was the internment center's major financial subsidizer and that the overseers of the camp workers still receive pensions from this concern. The prosecuting attorney's outburst that,

> Let us once more bring to mind
> that the successors to those same concerns
> have ended up today in magnificant condition
> and they are now in the midst of
> as they say
> a new phase of expansion.[108]

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[106]Ibid., pp. 108-09.

[107]Ibid., p. 124.

[108]Ibid., p. 131.

caps the playwright's argument that the concentration camp system was a natural outgrowth of capitalism. That Weiss puts the blame on this economic system explains why, while he does not specifically refer to who was being persecuted nor where these atrocities took place, he does clearly name those industrial concerns involved. Profit even motivated the guards for they were rewarded for shooting prisoners. Weiss's attack on capitalism, then, is a primary concern of The Investigation: "A large part of it deals with the role of German big industry in exterminating the Jews. I want to brand capitalism which even benefited from the experiments of the gas chambers."[109]

While Weiss's focus seems to be on the mass of victims and victimizers who passed through Auschwitz, he does on occasion switch the spotlight to an individual or specific group of prisoners. The brutal liquidations of children are frequently cited; the deaths of these innocents thereby symbolizes the annihilation of the elder inmates' innocence. One ex-internee describes his futile attempt to save life in an institution geared for death:

> A baby was born during the unloading
> I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth
> and set it down by the mother
> Baretzki came at me with his stick
> and beat me and the woman
> What are you doing with that piece of garbage there
> he yelled
> and he kicked the baby
> so it flew about ten yards
> Then he ordered
> Bring that shit over here
> By then the child was dead.[110]

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[109]Cited in: Ian Hilton, Peter Weiss: A Search for Affinities (London: Oswald Wolff, 1970), p. 47.

[110]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 23.

A female prisoner-typist testifies about the brutal slaying of a young boy; the effect of her lingering memory implies the success of the Nazis' brutality:

> A truckload of children
> drove by the outside
> A small boy jumped off the truck
> He was holding an apple
> Boger came out the door
> The child stood there with his apple
> Boger went over to the child
> grabbed him by the ankles
> and smashed his head
> against the barrack wall
> Then he picked up the apple
> called me out and said
> Wipe that off the wall
> Later at an interrogation
> I saw him eat the apple . . .
> Since that time
> I have never wanted to have
> a child of my own.[111]

Witness #7's description of a nine-year-old boy, who eased his fellow children's hysteria on the way to the gas chambers, is almost a reversal of the Christ on the crucifix image:

> Stop your crying
> You saw the way
> Your parents and grandparents
> went
> Climb in
> then you'll get to see them again
> And as they were being driven off
> I heard
> him shout back to the guard
> You won't be forgiven
> anything.[112]

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[111]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 75.

[112]Ibid., p. 44. The portrayal of the suffering of children is not unique to Weiss's work but is frequently found in Holocaust literature. Lawrence Langer feels that the reason for this is that, "In most literature of atrocity, the specific forces behind the suffering of the victims are as anonymous as they themselves are destined to become; and

The only other individuals referred to in The Investigation are Lili Tofler and SS Corporal Stark. Tofler, for Weiss, is the archetypical, anonymous concentration camp prisoner. She was executed for sending a letter to a fellow internee, asking: "if they would ever be able/ to go on living/ after the things they had seen/ and experienced there?"[113]

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the choice of children as victims compounds the anonymity (because of the even more limited comprehension of the children) and intensifies the atmosphere of intimidation" [Langer, p. 164]. Ilse Aichinger's Herod's Children deals with the fates of youngsters trapped in the Third Reich. Elie Wiesel, like Peter Weiss and Ilse Aichinger, also employs the image of Christ when describing the execution of a boy who had "the face of an angel:"

> The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses.
>
> "Long live liberty!" cried the two adults.
>
> But the child was silent.
>
> "Where is God? Where is He?" someone behind me asked.
>
> At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over.
>
> Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon the sun was setting.
>
> "Bare your heads!" yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping.
>
> "Cover your heads!"
>
> Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive. . . .
>
> For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in a slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet glazed.
>
> Behind me I heard the same man asking:
>
> "Where is God now?"
>
> And I heard a voice within me answer him:
>
> "Where is He? Here He is--He is hanging here on the gallows. . . ." (Wiesel, Night, p. 76).

The death of the concept of God and his teachings, in the Holocaust writings of Weiss and Wiesel, is illustrated through the martyrdom of children in Auschwitz. The death of the concept of God because of the concentration camps has been a concern of a number of philosophers. See, in particular, Hans Jonas, "The Concept of God After Auschwitz," Harvard Theological Review 55 (1962):1-20.

[113]Weiss, The Investigation, p. 120.

When the inmate to whom she sent the communication is questioned about her origins, he replies: "I don't know where she came from."[114] Like the mass of prisoners who endured, she never lost her resolve for survival:

> Whenever I met Lili
> and asked her
> how are you Lili
> She said
> Fine
> I am always fine.[115]

Even when tortured, she did not divulge the name of the internee to whom she sent her letter; her actions are reminiscent of the camaraderie Charlotte Delbo applauds. But it is also through the fate of Lili Tofler that we learn of the industrial exploitation of the camp's slave labor. It is in the second section of "The Song of Lili Tofler" that the economic importance of the camp is revealed. Lili, before her execution, was one of the anonymous workers; even her boss cannot remember her function.

In the same manner, SS Corporal Stark is the archetypical oppressor. His brutality is unquestioned:

> Once a small man hid himself
> under a pile of clothes
> Stark found him
> Come here he shouted
> and pushed him up against the wall
> He shot him first in one leg
> and then in the other
> Finally he slid down on a bench
> and then Stark shot him dead
> He always liked to shoot the legs first.[116]

Yet, he is fastidious in his personal grooming:

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[114]Ibid., p. 135.

[115]Ibid.

[116]Ibid., p. 147.

When he came back from a killing . . .
he would wash his hands in a basin
his flunkey always had ready for him
on a stool next to the door
When he had washed his hands
he pointed at the dirty water
and the flunkey had to run out
for more.[117]

Stark's attempt to "wash away his sins" is reminiscent of Pius XII cleansing his hands after refusing to intervene on behalf of the Jews in The Deputy.[118]

Most importantly, Stark has been programmed by the existing system. Like Hochhuth's Salzer, he does not hate those persons he is brutalizing:

I would like to explain
Every third word we heard
even back in grammar school
was about
how they
were to blame for everything
and how they
ought to be weeded out
It was hammered into us
that this would only be for the good
of our people
In leadership school
we were taught above all
to accept everything
without question.[119]

At the heart of his training, however, has been the rationale for executing the Soviet prisoners-of-war; Stark's testimony is the only instance in which the playwright is specific about the camp's victims:

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[117]Ibid., p. 145.

[118]Hochhuth, p. 220.

[119]Weiss, The Investigation, pp. 156-57.

> We were dealing with the annihilation
> of an ideology
> With their fanatical political orientation
> these prisoners constituted a threat
> to camp security.[120]

Throughout the dramatic action Peter Weiss returns to his economic interpretation of the Holocaust; for him, the concentration camps were a capitalist phenomenon and he believes that the past could easily be repeated in the present.

While the manner in which the survivors are dramatically represented is unique in each of the plays discussed, the lessons are the same.

> A certain young poet, a symbolic-realist, says with a flippant sarcasm that I have a concentration-camp mentality.
> In a moment I shall put down my pen and feeling homesick for the people I saw then I shall wonder which one of them I should visit today: the smothered man in the officer's boots, now an electrical engineer employed by the city or the owner of a prosperous bar, who once whispered to me: "Brother, brother. . ."[121]

As Tadeusz Borowski indicates in this passage, only the past is real for the survivors. Charlotte Delbo's title None of Us Will Return has a dual meaning. It was the pessimistic reaction of the internees being initiated into the concentration camps, but it is also the fate of all survivors, of the elderly in Amichai's old-age home, of Armand Gatti's characters in L'Enfant-Rat and La Dieuxème Existence du Camp de Tatenberg, of the inhabitants of Puste Pole, of the witnesses in The Investigation, of Holga. None can return from l'univers concentrationnaire. Nor can their past be understood; the outside world is like the "symbolic-realist" poet who

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[120]Ibid., pp. 149-50.

[121]Borowski, p. 156.

cannot comprehend Borowski's stories. Finally, the survivors warn of a repetition of the atrocities they observed; humanity seems doomed to repeat history. The message inherent in almost all the works which deal with those who miraculously remained alive can be found in the following statement by A. M. Rosenthal:

> Then why speak of these things? Only because 25 years later I simply cannot tell myself nor my sons that it cannot happen again. I can only tell them that there was a time of madness and that some of the Jews of the ghetto fought the mad beast and died like men. And if it does happen again, even if there are faint dark signs that it might happen again, that most of all prayers will arise, from myself, my sons, and from men in all parts of the earth: "Forgive them not, Father, for they knew what they did."[122]

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[122]A. M. Rosenthal, "Forgive Them Not, For They Knew What They Did," in Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature, ed. Albert H. Friedlander (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1968), p. 457.

CHAPTER V

METAPHORICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

"The urge to circumvent the literal realities of l'univers concentrationnaire, to discover legitimate metaphors that might suggest without actually describing or mentioning its world, has borne dramatic fruit for several authors in the tradition of atrocity."[1] The two novels that Lawrence Langer then goes on to discuss within this context are Jerzy Kosinski's The Painted Bird and Pierre Gascar's Beasts and Men. Poets have also searched for metaphors for the concentration camps so that the Holocaust could be recreated non-literally. Possibly the most well-known example is Paul Celan's Todesfugue. The poem contains identifiable images of the internment centers; for examples, "he whistles his Jews and orders a grave to be dug in the ground," or "He shouts play sweeter death's music death comes as a master from Germany/ he shouts stroke darker the strings and as smoke you shall climb to the sky."[2] Nonetheless, it is the non-literal imagery of light and dark that really create the impression of l'univers concentrationnaire in Celan's Fugue of Death: "Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night/ we drink you at noon in the mornings we drink you at nightfall/ drink

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[1]Langer, p. 166.

[2]Paul Celan, "Todesfugue," trans. Christopher Middleton, in Modern German Poetry, eds. Michael Hamburger and Christopher Middleton (New York: Grove Press, 1962), pp. 318-21. The poem is also reprinted in Langer, pp. 10-11.

you and drink you."[3]

Most of the works discussed in the previous three chapters have been literal in their presentations of the Nazi concentration camps. They have had comprehensible plots that are based on the Holocaust experience. There have been, however, experiments to discover metaphors in order to create non-literal recreations of l'univers concentrationnaire. This search has been the guiding artistic principle in Polish director Józef Szajna's oeuvre as well as in his collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski on Akropolis.

Szajna's work is not well-known to American audiences. He has brought his Teatr Studio, the company he founded in 1971, to the United States twice. In April 1975, the troupe presented Replika at the Port Jefferson Slavic Center[4] and in May 1976, the Teatr Studio staged their version of The Divine Comedy, called Dante, and Replika at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.[5] Yet, the visits went virtually unnoticed, even though E. J. Czerwinski, Professor of Slavic Languages at Stonybrook University is not exaggerating when he declares: "His [Szajna's] Teatr Studio has become in the seventies what Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre was in the early sixties."[6] Henry Popkins, in a recent article on the Eastern European theatre, also notes that, though Szajna has attracted a coterie

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Teatr Studio Programme, Port Jefferson Slavic Center, April 1975.

[5]Brooklyn Academy of Music Programme, May 25-30, 1976.

[6]E. J. Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna: Polish Messiah-in Residence," Books Abroad 49 (Spring 1975):265.

of admirers, he has not received enough recognition: "His pictorial approach in such plays as Dante, a vivid dramatic evocation of moments and images from The Divine Comedy, made him a culture hero. He has led his company to the Brooklyn Academy of Music and other distant outposts of art; his admirers express resentment that Grotowski gets all the attention."[7]

Józef Szajna was born in Rzeszow, Poland, on March 15, 1922.[8] In 1952 and 1953, he studied in the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow and received diplomas from the Department of Graphic Arts and the Department of Stage Designing. From 1955 through 1966, he served as stage designer, artistic supervisor, and director at the Teatr Ludowy in Nowa Huta near Cracow. For the following five years, he directed and designed at the Teatr Stary in Cracow. Szajna founded his Teatr Studio in Warsaw in 1971.

Among the productions he has designed are Of Mice and Men (1956), Turandot (1956), the Oresteia (1960), Forefather's Eve (1962), and Twelfth Night (1962). His designs for Witkiewicz productions have been acclaimed in Poland; these include: The Madman and the Nun and In a Little Manor. He has staged and designed numerous productions, including: The Government Inspector, Puste Pole (see Chapter IV), Death on a Pear Tree, They, The New Liberation, and The Bath House. At the Teatr Studio, Szajna has tried to become Edward Gordon Craig's total theatre artist;

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[7]Henry Popkins, "The Brilliance, Dazzle, and Despair of the East European Stage," New York Times, July 3, 1977, Section 2, p. 4.

[8]The biographical material is based on information in: Andrez Hausbrandt, "Interviewing Men of the Theatre: Józef Szajna," Theatre in Poland, nos. 5-6 (May-June 1968):3-4, and the Port Jefferson and Brooklyn Academy of Music programmes.

many of the productions presented have been written, directed, and designed by him. These include Witkacy (a collage based on the works of Witkiewicz), Gulgutiera (co-authored with Maria Czanerle), Replika, and Dante. Szajna has also worked in film; he was the recepient of an award at the First National Festival of Short Films in Cracow in 1962. The director has also had numerous exhibitions of his art works. Among the theatre awards he has received are an honorable mention by the International Theatre Institute at the 1958 International Festival of Nations in Paris, the Przeglad Kulturny Award for Plastic Arts (1958), the Artistic Award of Nowa Huta (1959), and the Minister of Culture and Art Award of Third Class (1962).

To fully understand Szajna's oeuvre, however, one must be cognizant of the fact that during World War II he was interned in the Nazi concentration camps. By the time he was twenty-two, he had already spent four years in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. According to the director, "the concentration camps were my university."[9]

While Szajna claims, "I am not a continuator of anything nor do I owe allegiance to anyone,"[10] his theoretical musings and production styles are not totally original. When he explains that his "Open Theatre"--unrelated to Joseph Chaikin's defunct company--is not rooted in literature, that its purpose is "to talk with people . . . about what tears

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[9]Cited in Tom Neumiller, "Józef Szajna's Replika," The Drama Review 19 (September 1975):51.

[10]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," in Port Jefferson Programme, no pagination.

them up inside,"[11] that it is "visual art changed into theatre,"[12] that it is "based on dissonances . . . [which reveal] the complexity and discrepancies of our time,"[13] and that through his art he hopes "to expose bourgeois longing for consumer goods and bourgeois understanding of art,"[14] the Polish director echoes earlier twentieth-century avant-garde artists.

Szajna has very much been influenced by Edward Gordon Craig. Like Craig, the Polish regisseur sees himself as the total theatre artist who directs, writes, designs, and even, on occasion, acts. He strives for a Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk: "What I have in mind is a theatre of unity, an integral theatre, one that is not split into warring elements: the stage design, the music, the text, the actor."[15] In many of his productions--Replika and Gulgutiera, in particular--grotesque puppets take part in the action and are reminiscent of Craig's Uebermarrionetten.

Meyerhold has also been an influence. Szajna believes in restructuring existing texts, in employing them as scenarios for action. Andzej Hausbrandt, in an interview with the director, points this out when discussing his production of Puste Pole:

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[11]Ibid.

[12]"Theatrical Events: Gulgutiera," Theatre in Poland, no. 10 (October 1973):10.

[13]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Teresa Krzemien, "Developing a New Sensitivity: Conversation with Józef Szajna," Theatre in Poland, nos. 4-5 (April-May 1975):43.

> At that time [after his production of Hołuj's play], I drew your attention to . . . the fact that in the production, the text was frightfully cut up and was not clearly heard by the audience, which, by the way, did no harm to the play or the production. You told me then, that it was done purposely and the text should have been even more indistinct. . . . Your attitude is certainly an extreme example of the approach of a director who subjects all elements of a production to his own artistic thought.[16]

Szajna confirms Hausbrandt's statement when he proclaims, "Today we must write productions, not plays."[17] His settings also have a constructivist feel; they are machines for performance. "The actors use . . . objects which are partners and which are quite different from the props of the theatre of manners."[18] Szajna also believes, as did Meyerhold, in converting existing spaces into theatre spaces: "Its [theatre's] susceptibility to transformation makes possible the use of any space (e.g., an airport out of use, a garage, a factory, actually any easily adaptable building)."[19]

When the Polish director suggests that the audiences' senses be bombarded, he is echoing the theories of Antonin Artaud. For that matter, he frequently sounds as if he is adapting the "theatre of cruelty," for his art is based on dissonances:

> This is the theatre of plastic narration: The play of contrasting elements--noise and silence, light and sound, color and form, the surprising juxtaposition of animated objects, fast and slow rhythms--provokes, stirs up anxiety, creates a new form of reality,

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[16]Hausbrandt, p. 16.

[17]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[18]Hausbrandt, p. 13.

[19]Ibid.

> touches the very subconscious layers of thought and feelings. . . . In the simultaneous eruption of all theatrical means, we attain the unity of a work, based on dissonance and revealing the complexity and discrepancies of our time.[20]

In Szajna's productions, "scenes of noise clash against scenes of silence, scenes of laughter with scenes of tragedy, indifference with fascination."[21] Szajna's conception of the perfect theatre space sounds remarkably like Artaud's; according to the Polish regisseur: "The proper architectural match of this theatre would be the form of an egg. Inside the shell, on its revolving wall, there would be the place for acting; it would surround the audience located in the middle and somewhat lower down, but not separated by the threshhold of the stage."[22] Szajna's environmental concept is comparable to Artaud's suggestion that "in 'the theatre of cruelty' the spectator is in the center and the spectacle surrounds him."[23] For Szajna, as for Artaud, there are no more masterpieces; as was noted, the founder of the Teatr Studio states, "today we must write productions, not plays."

What makes Szajna's theatre Brechtian is his belief that the "Open Theatre" must also be didactic. Szajna, like the German artist, attacks "culinary" art: "We live in an epoch so very programmed for the consumer that we hold nothing dear and have lost our sensitivity. For this reason, I want to expose bourgeois longing for consumer goods and bourgeois

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[20]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[21]Hausbrandt, p. 13.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Antonin Artaud, The Theatre and Its Double, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), p. 81.

understanding of art for what it is."[24] The "Open Theatre" functions as a forum for the discussion of humanity's problems: "I want to talk with people through the medium of art, not about what makes them happy and what entertains them, but about what tears them up inside and leads them in opposite directions."[25] Szajna seems to be calling for a "theatre of instruction" when he remarks that "art as an evaluation of its time ought to question, accuse, and deny."[26]

It should be apparent, then, that contrary to Szajna's protestations, he does owe allegiance to previous avant-garde artists. In his most recent experiments at the Teatr Studio, his disregard of text and use of environmental space is in keeping with the mainstream of contemporary experimental theatre. What makes Szajna's work unique is that much of his aesthetic is based on the Nazi concentration camps. The images of the internment centers are omnipresent in his non-literal works.

As Polish critic August Grodzicki has observed: "In each of his spectacles, no matter what the play is, Szajna speaks about himself."[27] Daniel Gerould has noted, in analyzing Szajna's production of Ernest Bryll's November Theme, that "all [of] his work for the theatre is shaped by a terrifying yet moving vision of the horror of the extermination

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[24]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Hausbrandt, p. 6.

[27]"Theatrical Events: Gulgutiera," Theatre in Poland, p. 12.

camps, expressed in powerful visual images."[28] Szajna frequently compares his theatre with the Nazi internment centers, suggesting that his is a "minitheatre in comparison with the Nazi camps, the real Theatre Mundi."[29] In a conversation I had with the director in Port Jefferson in April 1975, he told me that "the greatest cabarets were the Nazi concentration camps."[30] Concentration camp imagery, then, is the key to Szajna's "Open Theatre." While he does not create literal reconstructions of the camps, his productions are saturated with their images and their conventions.

Szajna's scene designs are frequently reminiscent of the concentration camps. "The decor of John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men (1956) shows people 'on their way' in a space leading into the unknown."[31] Szajna reveals "I was on such a road."[32] (The "road into the unknown" is a recurrent image for the transports into the concentration camps in Holocaust literature.) Szajna's design for Jerzy Broszkiewicz's The Names of Power contains an image reminding the audience of the encircling barbed wire of the Nazi internment centers: "the stage is encircled by the hanging ring chain made of shining tin plate."[33] Images of

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[28]Daniel Gerould, "From Theatre Journal 1969," in Breakout: In Search of New Theatrical Environments, ed. James Schevill (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973), p. 232.

[29]Cited in Czerwinski, "Jozef Szajna," p. 267.

[30]Alvin Goldfarb, "Unpublished Interview with Józef Szajna," April 1975, Port Jefferson, New York.

[31]Hausbrandt, p. 15.

[32]Neumiller, p. 51.

[33]Hausbrandt, p. 15.

destruction and extermination are omnipresent in Szajna's setting for Antigone: "the horizon with no exit is clearly lowered, in the finale of the production the audience is led into a space of blinding whiteness. The elements used are rootstock pipes which perish stacked like a pile of trash. The needless crusts of tin plate come down."[34] In Holocaust literature, the image of a stacked pile of trash is frequently used to describe the bodies piled up in front of the crematorium after having been removed from the gas chambers. Daniel Gerould's description of Szajna's November Theme illustrates how integral the concentration camp images are to the Polish director's productions:

> Bryll's November Theme opens in a cemetery in Warsaw on All Soul's Day when Poles mourn their dead. For Szajna, the image leads back to the war, the occupation, and the camps. In the production corpses are the magical objects that carry forward the action: human bodies with amputated limbs, dead mannikins, riddled and mutilated dummies, children's torsos, legs and arms and pieces of people pulled out of the sewer.[35]

These images are also drawn from the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; an appropriate juxtaposition for a play set in a Warsaw cemetery. Those few individuals who survived the Nazi's final destruction of the ghetto did so by escaping into the city's sewers:

> On the next day, Sunday, April 25, I went down . . . into the underground sewer which led to the "Aryan" side. I will never forget the picture which presented itself to my eyes in the first moment when I descended into the channel. . . . In these low, narrow channels, only wide enough for one person to crawl forward in a bent position, dozens of people lay jammed and huddled together in the mud and filth. . . . On May 10, 1943, at nine o'clock in the morning, the lid of the sewer over our

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Gerould, p. 233.

> heads suddenly opened. . . . We started to climb out one after another. . . . The streets were crowded with people, and everybody . . . stood still and watched, while strange beings, hardly recognizable as humans, crawled out of the sewers.[36]

In his production of Puste Pole, Szajna has, as the play suggests, imbued the environment with l'univers concentrationnaire: "The amassed wheelbarrows . . . become graves, fill the scenes of a funeral procession, and finally become transformed into a monument of purification. The falling curtains show portraits of prisoners taken from the camp files: hundreds and thousands of anonymous faces. The frontal play of people and objects gave the production greater force than words or documents."[37] In his adaptation of Goethe's Faust for the Warsaw Teatr Polski, Maria Czanerle notes that all the minor characters carry "Szajna's famous props: sacks and tins, cardboard boxes and rolls of toilet paper strung together like beads." Except for Faust and Mephistopheles, the personages are like internees, uniformly attired.[38]

In the productions he has conceived since founding the Teatr Studio, Szajna has moved away from literary texts and has, instead, devised productions whose aesthetic and imagery are related to the Nazi concentration camps. According to E. J. Czerwinski, one of the characteristics of Szajna's work is that "his theatre humanizes objects and in turn

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[36]Philip Friedman, Martyrs and Fighters (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1954), pp. 284, 290. Cited in Des Pres, pp. 70-1.

[37]Hausbrandt, pp. 20-2.

[38]Maria Czanerle, "Theatrical Events: Józef Szajna's Staging of Faust at the Warsaw's Teatr Polski," Theatre in Poland, no. 1 (January 1972):19.

interacts objects with humans."[39] Szajna also regards his employment of objects in the mise en scène as a trademark of his theatre: "Stage sets disappear and what we see is the representation of images composed and directed with the use of objects which participate in the action and even interfere in it. This kind of stage setting . . . does not describe the place and time of action, but uses concrete often ready objects which participate in the theatrical action."[40] The Polish theatre artist explains this technique by referring back to his experiences in Auschwitz and Buchenwald during World War II: "Such was the concentration camp fate: in it objects gained a value superior to man, they became the goal, while man was brought down to a subservient, servile role."[41] Striped concentration camp clothing, penitence sacks, wheelbarrows from stone quarries, artificial limbs, skulls, and huge, disfigured mannequins have become the basic ingredients of his mise en scène.

In Auschwitz, the Polish artist's life was spared because he successfully outboxed a Nazi opponent in a match staged by the SS for amusement. Mirroring the arbitrary existence in the internment camps, the universe Szajna draws invariably contains unceasing battles for survival. Critic Jan Kłossowicz describes the omnipresent struggle: "Out of the seemingly organized and ready forms emerges his sick, limp world, constantly dying and struggling with death. A world of unceasing war, an

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[39]Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna," p. 266.

[40]Hausbrandt, p. 11.

[41]Ibid., p. 20.

eternal confrontation."[42]

A brief examination of Józef Szajna's Teatr Studio productions indicates how integral the concentration camp images are to the Polish director's oeuvre. For his premiere production at the Teatr Studio, Witkacy, which is loosely based on Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz's They, Gyubal Wahazar, The New Deliverance, and The Shoemakers, Szajna employs "the whole theatrical paraphenalia that . . . [he] has been accumulating for years."[43] One scene evokes the image of the Nazis' bookburning; SS boots are used in the costuming.[44] August Grodzicki, in his lengthy analysis of Gulgutiera, a piece that primarily deals with the torment of the creative artist, points out the typical Szajna elements, many of which are drawn from his camp past:

> People, or rotten anthropoid creatures . . . pull out stage props from the store room. A cemetery of dead things. The whole of Szajna's artistic arsenal of props. Boots, grotesque dummies, stumps, artificial limbs, trunks, sacks, rags, junk sticks. . . . Next follow a series of scenes constituting a catalogue of Szajna's work, metaphysical visions of human existence. First a fight of everybody with everybody, next an ironical scene of human solidarity; one hand washes another, general washing of hands which taken together remain dirty. Climbing a ladder to human paradise and collapsing in defeat and then a shocking descent to hell--a scene inspiring awe. The war and apocalypse of the concentration camps expressed forcefully as only Szajna can do.[45]

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[42]"Theatrical Events: Gulgutiera," Theatre in Poland, p. 10.

[43]Maria Czanerle, "Theatrical Events: Witkacy," Theatre in Poland, no. 10 (October 1972):24.

[44]Ibid.

[45]"Theatrical Events: Gulgutiera," Theatre in Poland, p. 14.

Szajna's production of Dante, based on The Divine Comedy, also has elements in the mise en scène that are reminders of the Nazi concentration camps.[46] As Gautam Dasgupta indicates in his review of the production, "In Dante, it is death that hovers over this realm of wandering souls. . . . That this is to be expected from a director who spent his late teens at Auschwitz comes as no surprise."[47] Arthur Sainer, in his review for the Village Voice, notes that "throughout there is a sense of victims in some grim ceremony of consecration."[48] The omnipresent scenes of suffering imbue the production with a sense of Szajna's experiences. Again, the images employed have camp equivalents: "A ladder leads from the balcony to the stage, forming a cross on which the dregs of humanity sit. These form the real world."[49] Whips are frequently employed as props. One of the most powerful images in Szajna's Dante is that of immense, inflated bladders, which reflect Terence Des Pres' suggestion, in The Survivor, that one of the humiliating horrors in l'univers concentrationnaire was the excremental assault that the internees were subjected to.[50]

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[46]For a detailed description of Szajna's Dante see: Elzbieta Morawiec, "Theatrical Events: Dante Based on The Divine Comedy, Adaptation, Production and Stage Design by Józef Szajna, Music by Krzystof Penderecki, at the Teatr Studio of Warsaw," Theatre in Poland, no. 11 (November 1974):10-14.

[47]Gautam Dasgupta, "Dante," Soho Weekly News, June 10, 1976, p. 28.

[48]Arthur Sainer, "Hell Has Many Faces," Village Voice, June 7, 1976, p. 103.

[49]Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna," p. 267.

[50]See Des Pres, Chapter IV.

The piece, however, that epitomizes Szajna's use of the concentration camp imagery is Replika. The production is "a wordless odyssey through the holocaust . . . [which] depicts the indomitable spirit of man, tempered by the inhumanity directed against him by himself."[51] In the words of its creator, it is "about the agony of our world and our immense optimism."[52] Originally a "plastic-spatial" composition called Reminiscences, Szajna, for the 1972 International Festival at Edinburgh, "decided to animate [it] by placing a living actor among dead things."[53] In 1973, Replika III, which contained new scenes and scenic elements, premiered at the International Festival in Nancy. On October 8, 1973, Szajna presented Replika IV in the Art Atelier of the Teatr Studio; it is this version that has been presented twice to American audiences.[54]

The short-forty-five minute piece is difficult to describe. The mise en scène consists of "the scraps of civilization," grotesque mannekins, wheels, shoes, stove pipes, torn newspapers, ropes, canvas, mounds of hair, and plastic. These remnants are covered with a mound of peat and earth. From this mound emerge humans attired in tattered sacks. They "are in a way relics of the dead, living reminders of those who managed to survive."[55] The only words they utter during the entire piece

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[51]See the advertisements for Replika in the "Replika Clippings File" in the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.

[52]Brooklyn Academy of Music Programme, May 25-30, 1976, n.p.

[53]Ibid.

[54]For the complete history of this production, see: Andrzej Wydrzynski, "History of Replika," in Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[55]"Replika," in Port Jefferson Programme, n.p. This programme contains a complete scenario.

are "see," "help," and "mother." In the course of the dramatic action, these survivors resurrect the mannequins, reconstruct some of their destroyed universe, are enslaved by a "superman," battle amongst themselves with the stove pipes, don gas masks, drag in a roll of photographs of Auschwitz internees with which they cover the mound, throw pictures of these same prisoners at the audience, and bring out shoes resembling the rotting footwear worn by concentration camp inmates. At the conclusion, Szajna appears and sets a top in motion.

Replika is, as its original title Reminiscences indicates, the most "autobiographical" of Szajna's works. Czerwinski characterizes the piece as "a memory-play, much like Williams' Glass Menagerie; but instead of glass animals, Szajna populates his past with ghostly silhouettes of fellow prisoners."[56] Many of the forementioned objects are obvious reminders of the Nazi internment centers. The photographs of the concentration camp prisoners (Szajna's picture is among them) and the shoes are the most recognizable. The "superman" is an exaggerated Hitler figure. The gas masks are meant to remind the audience of the gas chambers. When Szajna's personages don their gas masks they become reminiscent of Peter Barnes' grotesque Sonderkommandos in Auschwitz. Bonnie Marranca is quite correct when she suggests, in her review, that Szajna's scenic elements remind one of the artifacts found in the Auschwitz Museum, in particular the shoes, the suitcases, and the mounds of hair.[57] (The last shipment of hair shown from the liquidated can be seen in Auschwitz.)

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[56]Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna," p. 267.

[57]Bonnie Marranca, "Images of Auschwitz," Soho Weekly News, June 10, 1976, p. 28.

Yet, there are also many subtle "reminiscences" of l'univers concentrationnaire. In the opening moments, "a hand slowly emerges clawing for a chunk of break. Seizing it, the hand swiftly disappears, trembling with fear of losing it."[58] Bread, of course, was sustenance in the camps. Terence des Pres discusses the underground established to provide internees with additional bread.[59] In The Long Voyage, Jorge Semprun remarks that he "saw people grow pale and collapse when they realized that their piece of bread had been stolen."[60] Hence, the groping for bread is an image taken from the camps.

The broken combs, pocket mirrors, and tooth brushes found among the disfigured mannekins, remind one of the belongings brought by the deportees to the extermination centers. The "pile of junk" is reminiscent of the scene that Tadeusz Borowski's "Canada" squad is confronted with, in "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen:"

> The bolts crack, the doors fall open. A wave of fresh air rushes inside the train. People . . . inhumanly crammed, buried under incredible heaps of luggage, suitcases, trunks, packages, crates, bundles of every description (everything that had been their past and was to start their future). . . . The heaps grow. Suitcases, bundles, blankets, coats, handbags, that open as they fall, spilling coins, gold watches. . . ."[61]

The grotesque puppets represent women and children, those who were first gassed upon arrival in the camps. The scrounging for cigarette butts

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[58]"Replika," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[59]Des Pres, Chapter V.

[60]Semprun, p. 60.

[61]Borowski, pp. 17-18.

near the conclusion and the ecstasy over the discovery of the remains of a cigarette are also reminiscences of a surviving concentrationaire.

The acts undertaken by Szajna's characters "are sterile. . . . As we watch, the space becomes an endless and constant wasteland--playground for a lunatic orchestration of profund futility."[62] The futility of action epitomizes l'univers concentrationnaire. Even the work details were inane. For example, as punishment, prisoners would be forced to erect walls and then tear them down; Szajna's personages also build and destroy a grotesque universe.[63]

Why does Szajna continue to return to the concentration camps for artistic inspiration and dramatic images? Possibly the circular pattern of the spinning top, at the denouement of Replika, explains his obsession with the past. Szajna, like many of the previously discussed Holocaust artists, is fearful of history repeating itself. Szajna's art has been guided by this belief even before he founded the Teatr Studio. In an interview in 1968, he proclaimed, "We have been formulating our moral patterns for centuries, but attitudes based on these patterns broke down when people began building crematories for other living people. . . . In this particular situation, art is an evaluation of its time out to question, accuse, and deny the necessity of mass death."[64] Like Peter Weiss,

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[62]Arthur Sainer, "Replika," Village Voice, June 28, 1976, p. 132.

[63]Eugen Kogon describes the futility of working in the Nazi internment centers: "A rational labor system, using incentives and humane treatment, might well have achieved two or three times the actual output, with one-fifth of the labor force. But, of course, the SS did not really care about output. It was out for blood" [Kogon, p. 107].

[64]Hausbrandt, p. 6.

Szajna wishes to universalize the concentration camp experience; for him, the Holocaust symbolizes all of mankind's inhumanity; he attempted to make this apparent when producing Tadeusz Hołuj's Puste Pole: "In taking up the subject of concentration camps--known to me from personal experience--I have attempted to use Hołuj's play to accuse all genocide and, at the same time, to rouse from indifference all those for whom it is merely a historical subject."[65]

For Szajna, Auschwitz symbolizes the entire spectrum of historical barbarities. Hence, he does not attempt to literally recreate the camps, but, instead, abstracts the symbols of the extermination centers so that they become references not only to World War II, but to contemporary atrocities. Halina Bartczak notes, in reviewing Replika II at Edinburgh, that "In Szajna's concept, Replique is an artistic protest against war, oppression, and terror, a protest very topical in the times of the Vietnam war and violence in Belfast and not just an angry requiem for millions of Poles who died in concentration camps."[66] Andrzej Wydrzynski accurately explains Szajna's intent in presenting Replika, as well as his reliance on the concentration camps for an artistic aesthetic: "Replika, this unusual theatrical poem, does not exclusively relate to the debasement of man in the concentration camps. The work has much wider scope, touching upon universal tragedy. It also applies to Hiroshima and man's place in a world threatened with total annihilation. It presents a

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[65]Ibid., p. 20.

[66]Halina Bartczak, "Szajna in Edinburgh," Theatre in Poland, no. 3 (March 1973):6.

metaphoric world which we live in and is an apocalyptic warning."[67] E. J. Czerwinski, in analyzing Replika, suggests, "aggressivity in general (Nazi's in particular) is examined in terms of man's relationship to man."[68]

In concluding his description of Replika, Szajna attempts to explain his reminiscences: "What is it all about? About the agony of our world and our immense optimism."[69] For the Polish director, the end of the Nazi era did not mark the end of atrocities or genocides: "One can only blame the Nazis for being too human--for showing man what he is capable of doing."[70] As was indicated earlier, Szajna has always been an admirer of Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, having produced a number of his plays. (Parenthetically, Szajna's "superman" in Replika is reminiscent of Witkiewicz's Hitlerian character, Gyubal Wahazar.) "In August, 1939, Witkiewicz told a friend, 'What awaits us is one gigantic concentration camp'."[71] In a sense, this is Szajna's message. After experiencing the Nazi internment centers, he has come to dramatize human experience as "one gigantic concentration camp."

It is difficult to compare Jozef Szajna's oeuvre with the works of any of the other major Holocaust artists. In an interview I had with the Polish director, he revealed that Tadeusz Borowski is the Holocaust

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[67]Wydrzynski, "History of Replika," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[68]Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna," p. 268.

[69]"Replika," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[70]Cited in Czerwinski, "Józef Szajna," p. 268.

[71]Cited in Gerould, p. 234.

author whose work he most admires.[72] While these Polish artists' styles are quite different, Borowski's technique has been labelled "documentary,"[73] the two share similar philosophical approaches to l'univers concentrationnaire. In his short story "A Visit," Borowski reveals that he frequently returns to his past and it is only from his experiences in the camps that he can draw artistic inspiration. The images that haunted Borowski after he left the camp are the images out of which Szajna constructs his theatrical oeuvre: half-naked men, a heap of corpses, rails, axes, grotesquely disfigured and diseased human beings, and wheelbarrows. The pessimism that saturates Szajna's work is also common to Borowski's. For example, in many of the Polish director's theatre pieces, the concentrationaire-like characters battle amongst themselves. In Replika, "a ballet of pipes changes into a battle."[74] According to Sazjna, man's inhumanity to man transcends the stereotypical portrayal of villainous Nazis and heroic internees. In his universe, those who are oppressed can be as brutal as their victimizers. Borowski's universe is also bleak for his internees prove that they, too, can be as vicious as their SS overseers. In "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen," which depicts the operation of the "Canada" detail, Borowski's narrator describes his brutal attitude toward those who are to be liquidated:

> You see my friend, you see, I don't know why, but I am furious, simply furious with these people--furious because

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[72]Goldfarb, "Unpublished Interview with Józef Szajna."

[73]Barbara Vedder, "Translator's Note," in Borowski, p. 6.

[74]"Replika," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

> I might be here because of them. I feel no pity. I am not sorry they are going to the gas chamber. Damn them all! I could throw myself at them, beat them with my fists.[75]

Arthur Sainer has pointed out that at the heart of Replika is the view that humanity's actions are futile and sterile,[76] which is the lesson Szajna learned in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Borowski learned the same lesson. In "The World of Stone," Borowski indicates how ludicrous daily activities are in light of what he has experienced and survived:

> No wonder then that full of irreverence bordering almost on contempt, I walk with dignity into the massive, cool building made of granite. I climb unimpressed up the marble staircases. . . . I enter with a casual air the modest but cozy little rooms occupied by people of importance and ask, perhaps a trifle too politely, for things that are perhaps too trivial, but to which nevertheless, I am entitled--but which, of course, cannot keep the world from swelling and bursting like an over-ripe pomegranate, leaving behind but a handful of grey, dry ashes.[77]

While Replika seems to be presenting the survivors of the Holocaust arising from the rubble, their actions, nonetheless, continue to be inane and pointless. The conception is the same as Borowski's. The world, according to both Polish artists, continues "swelling" and will eventually burst "like an over ripe pomegranate, leaving behind a handful of grey, dry ashes." The Holocaust was the harbinger of such an eventuality. For that reason, the concentration camps remain an obsessive element in the works of these two Polish artists.

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[75]Borowski, p. 20.

[76]Sainer, "Replika," Village Voice, June 28, 1976, p. 132.

[77]Borowski, p. 159.

Akropolis (1962) is probably the most renowned post-war theatre piece to deal with the Nazi concentration camps; this, of course, is due to the fame of its producer, Jerzy Grotowski and his Polish Laboratory Theatre. However, what has not been made clear to American audiences is that Józef Szajna was Grotowski's collaborator as well as the designer of the props and costumes.[78] French critic Raymonde Temkine cites Szajna's importance in conceiving Akropolis:

> When the in course of the Akropolis rehearsals, the work evolved to its setting in a concentration camp, Grotowski had the idea of encouraging [Ludwik] Flaszen [his literary advisor] to ask for the collaboration of Józef Szajna, a native of Krakow, already renowned as a stage designer. Szajna had been deported to Auschwitz. He designed the costumes and props . . . and Grotowski considered his contribution so important that he was called codirector of Akropolis.[79]

For that matter, Akropolis is typical of Szajna's concentration camp works, particularly Replika, and becomes even more comprehensible when analyzed in light of his oeuvre.[80]

Like the works at the Teatr Studio, the Grotowski-Szajna Akropolis is, as Richard Gilman suggests, a "poetic paraphrase" of a Nazi internment center.[81] Grotowski, following Szajna's lead, has reworked a

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[78]Szajna's contribution is specified on the Polish programs for Akropolis.

[79]Raymonde Temkine, Grotowski, trans. Alex Szogyi (New York: Avon Books, 1972), pp. 118-19.

[80]Szajna claims that his "Open Theatre" is totally unlike Grotowski's "Poor Theatre." He criticizes Grotowski for comparing theatre with religion, as well as his methods for working with actors. Nonetheless, Akropolis seems to have been a successful collaboration between the two artists.

[81]Richard Gilman, Common and Uncommon Masks: Writings on the Theatre--1961-1970 (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), p. 311.

well-known piece of dramatic literature so that it now deals with l'univers concentrationnaire. The Polish Laboratory Theatre's production is loosely based on Stanisław Wyspiański's Akropolis (1904), which "is set in Cracow, the ancient capital of the Poles, and thus the equivalent of the Greek Acropolis. During the action, biblical, classical and historical figures from the tapestried walls come to life and enact scenes relevant to the contemporary situation."[82] The scenario found in the Polish Laboratory Theatre's programme reveals how many of the standard camp elements contained in Szajna's productions have been incorporated into Grotowski's adaptation of Wyspiański's drama:

> The action of the play is set in a concentration camp. The role of the audience is a passive one. They are the Dead; while the Living, the inmates of the camps, act out their fantasies until they too, at the end of the play, go to their Deaths.
>
> The inmates have a self-appointed task. Out of a pile of rusty metal pipes and tubes they build a rickety structure--an incinerator. From time to time they pause in their work and let their minds wander.
>
> Jacob while negotiating with Laban for his daughter Rachel, tramples his future father-in-law under foot and kills him with his boot. The struggle between Jacob and the Angel becomes a tussle between two prisoners, one of whom supports with his back a wheelbarrow in which lies the limp form of the other.
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> The story of Paris and Helen demonstrates the charm of sensual love, but Helen is played by a man. Their serenade is punctured by jeers from the other prisoners. Love in any guise appears here mad and degraded.
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> The prisoners take part in a wedding ceremony. They sing a popular ritual song at the culmination of which a bell is heard. Some prisoners see themselves as martyrs, pressing themselves to the wall of the room and reciting the words of Trust in God's

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[82]Oscar Brockett and Robert R. Findlay, Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama Since 1870 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 473.

> help, spoken by the Angel in Jacob's dream; others are the Jews at the foot of the Wailing Wall.
>
> Guided by the Singer the inmates find their Saviour--a corpse, a deformed puppet without a head. The Singer lifts the figure in his arms as a priest lifts a chalice. One by one the crowd follows their leader. They sing a Christmas song in honour of their Saviour. The singing increases in fervour and intensity. At last the Singer with a piercing cry opens the lid of the Chest and gets into it with the puppet. The rest follow, singing as they go. The lid crashes down. After a moment's silence a voice from the box informs us, "They have gone and the smoke goes up in coils." It is the end of the play.[83]

While the mise en scène in Akropolis is a bare playing space, the properties employed are typical elements of Szajna's productions: "In the middle of the room stands a huge box. Metallic junk is heaped on top of it: stovepipes of various lengths and widths, a wheelbarrow, a bathtub, nails, hammers."[84] The deformed, grotesque puppet, of course, is a typical element of Szajna's universe. The costuming in Akropolis is also reminiscent of that in Replika. "The costumes are bags of holes covering naked bodies. The holes are lined with material which suggests torn flesh: through the holes one looks directly into a torn body. Heavy wooden shoes for the feet, for the heads anonymous berets."[85] The function of these costumes is the same as that of the attire in the Teatr Studio productions; they are not meant to literally recreate the pin-striped internees' uniforms, but to metaphorically represent the philosophy behind their design: "This is a poetic version of the camp uniform.

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[83]See the programme for the Edinburgh International Theatre Festival (1968) in the "Akropolis Programmes File" in the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.

[84]Ludwik Flaszen, "Akropolis: Treatment of the Text," in Towards a Poor Theatre (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. 64.

[85]Ibid.

Through their similarity the costumes rob men of their personality, erase the distinctive signs which indicate sex, age, and social class. The actors become completely identical beings. They are nothing but tortured bodies."[86]

The musical accompaniment in Akropolis serves the same function as Bogusław Schaffer's score in Replika. Ludwik Flaszen explains the purpose of the single violin in Akropolis: "There is only one musical instrument, a violin. Its leitmotiv is used as a lyrical and melancholy background to a brutal scene, or as a rhythmical echo of the guards' whistles and commands."[87] While Schaffer's electronic accompaniment is more embellished, it too underscores the brutalities and commands of the oppressor.

The performance styles in Replika and Akropolis are also reminiscent. Margaret Croyden's description of Akropolis could also be a delineation of Szajna's autobiographical piece:

> Their faces (untouched by makeup) are gray death masks; eyes turned inward, smiles frozen, foreheads ossified--creatures from another land, tortured wrecks, brutalized automatons. They speak, chant, whisper, and intone, creating an unrelenting rise and fall of sounds quite unlike anything heard in Western theatre.[88]

The dramatic actions of Replika and Akropolis are also quite similar. In both pieces the brutalized personages construct a universe out of junk; in Akropolis, "against the eerie screechings of a violin and the dead

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[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid., p. 76.

[88]Margaret Croyden, "The Most Avant-Garde of Them All?," New York Times, October 5, 1969, Section 2, p. 1.

silence of the audience, the inmates work in unison--hammering, lifting, and hanging their pipes and chimney stoves on vertical wires--building their Acropolis turned crematorium."[89] In a sense, Replika can be seen as a continuation of Akropolis. The movement in the Grotowski-Szajna piece is towards the crematorium. At the conclusion of Akropolis the tortured characters climb into the trunk, into the junk heap. At the opening of Replika, similar individuals climb out of the rubbish and recreate a world similar to the one that wreaked the earlier havoc. They gather most of their materials from an omnipresent trunk.

If Akropolis contains much of the visual style of Szajna's works, its philosophical approach to the concentration camps is also similar. For Szajna and Grotowski, the concentration camps represent "the cemetery of the tribes" of twentieth-century man.[90] The image of a cemetery also opens Szajna's production of November Theme. As is indicated in the cited scenario, throughout the dramatic action of Akropolis, scenes taken from the revered works of Western civilization, Homer, the Old Testament, and the New Testament, are juxtaposed with scenes from the surrounding concentration camp environment. (This juxtaposition is also reminiscent of Armand Gatti's L'Enfant-rat, Alberto Moravia's Il dio Kurt and Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne.) These ironic scenes seem to denote the annihilation of the humanistic beliefs of Western civilization. The concentration camps become a cemetery, not only for living beings, but also for long-held values. Harold Clurman suggests this interpretation in his

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[89]Ibid.

[90]Flaszen, p. 62.

review of the Grotowski-Szajna production: "What we have seen is the tragic farce of civilization's values utterly despoiled."[91] Grotowski himself has substantiated such an interpretation:

> Since World War Two we have noticed that the great, lofty values of Western civilization remain abstract. We mouth heroic values, but real life proves to be different. We must confront the great values of the past and ask some questions. . . . We wanted to confront our ancestral experiences in a situation where all values were destroyed, and that is why we chose Auschwitz.[92]

Some specific examples from the dramatic action of Akropolis reveal how Grotowski and Szajna illustrate the destruction of values in l'univers concentrationnaire.

The Biblical tale of Jacob becomes a brutal story of survival in the internment center. As Rosette Lamont points out, "the cunning Jacob of Genesis becomes a Kapo."[93] If his cunning in the Biblical tales is admirable, in the camp it allows him to victimize fellow prisoners. The love of Paris and Helen becomes perverted within Auschwitz and becomes, instead, a homosexual relationship between two internees. The wedding ceremony is between an inmate and "a stovepipe wrapped in a piece of rag for a veil."[94] The most powerful image that suggests the destruction of the Judeo-Christian tradition within the Nazi internment centers is that of the Savior, "a headless, bluish, badly mauled corpse, horribly

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[91]Harold Clurman, "Theatre," Nation 209 (December 8, 1969):643.

[92]Margaret Croyden, "I Said Yes to the Past: An Interview with Jerzy Grotowski," Village Voice, January 23, 1969, p. 41.

[93]Rosette Lamont, "Jerzy Grotowski: Towards a Secular Ritual," Drama and Theatre 9 (Winter 1970-71):85.

[94]Flaszen, p. 74.

reminiscent of the miserable skeletons of the concentration camps."[95] In following the grotesque representation of the Savior, the internees are led into the crematorium.

The travestying of religion is also an element found in Szajna's Replika, particularly in the scene entitled "Confession and Penance for Sins Uncommitted:"

> "The mock-up of horror" is put on the trunk of the puppet. It is a relic of something that has remained of the altar. Perhaps it is only a picture of a saint, here serving the purpose of collective confession. The women seem to snivel, they sing litanies; they light the candles. Something bordering on a pagan ritual takes place: the devil-usurper dispenses absolution with a hammer.[96]

As has been noted frequently in this study, the mocking of religious imagery is common to much of Holocaust literature.

What also makes Akropolis philosophically reminiscent of Szajna's oeuvre is the portrayal of the relationships between internees. Grotowski suggests that he was attempting to avoid a melodramatic depiction of SS and inmates: "We did not wish to have a stereotypical production with evil SS men and noble prisoners. . . . Thus there were no SS men, only prisoners who so organized the space that they must oppress each other to survive."[97] In the Grotowski-Szajna presentation, "the executioners and their victims become nearly identical: they are kin."[98] The brutality

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[95]Ibid.

[96]"Replika," Port Jefferson Programme, n.p.

[97]Richard Schechner, "Interview with Grotowski," The Drama Review 13 (Fall 1968):41.

[98]Clurman, p. 643.

between inmates is depicted as a necessity for survival and is most clearly presented in the battle between Jacob and the Angel:

> The struggle between Jacob and the Angel is a fight between two prisoners: one is kneeling and supports on his back a wheelbarrow in which the other lies, head down and dropping backward. The kneeling Jacob tries to shake off his burden, the Angel, who bangs his own head on the floor. In his turn, the Angel tries to crush Jacob by hitting his head with his feet. But his feet hit, instead, the edge of the wheelbarrow. And Jacob struggles with all his might to control his burden. The protagonists cannot escape from each other. . . . The famous scene in the Old Testament is interpreted as that of two victims torturing each other under the pressure of necessity.[99]

Throughout Akropolis there are scenes of prisoners committing atrocities against each other. As Rosette Lamont points out, "the quarrel of Isaac's twins suggests a situation of camp life where a mess of pottage meant the difference between survival and death."[100] Physical violence is not the only form of brutality dramatized. In the love scene between Helen and Paris, between the two male prisoners, their fellow internees jeer and hiss; their emotional insensitivity is as harsh as their physical struggles. In Akropolis, "humanity has been reduced to elemental animal reflexes. In a maudlin intimacy, murderer and victim appear as twins."[101]

Again, the similarity to Szajna's Replika is apparent. As was mentioned, the surviving internees frequently battle amongst themselves in the Teatr Studio production. Their brutality is as horrible as that

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[99]Flaszen, p. 73.

[100]Lamont, p. 85.

[101]Flaszen, p. 63.

of their oppressor, particularly when they battle with the stovepipes. Szajna's personages also hoard necessities. The survivor who first discovers bread, hides it. The inmate who discovers a cigarette butt is reluctant to share it.

Ultimately, Akropolis is like Replika because of its pessimistic view of the human condition following the Holocaust. Raymonde Temkine notes this bleak view when comparing Grotowski's production with the original Akropolis by the Polish playwright Stanislaw Wyspianski: "For both men [Wyspiański and Grotowski] the purpose is the same--to confront our roots and our experiences. . . . What he [Grotowski] rejects, because today it is a lie, is its [Wyspiański's Akropolis'] optimism."[102] Jan Kott suggests that the image of the internees leading themselves into the crematorium symbolizes Grotowski's nihilistic viewpoint: "When, in the last scene of Akropolis, the prisoners go down into the depths of the crematorium, the . . . light (as if illumined by an inner light) illumines their faces. In Grotowski's theatre liberation comes only through death, the torture of the body, and the humiliation of the spirit. In order to accept Grotowski's metaphysics one has to believe that there is a God and that there is no hope."[103] This is the same conclusion one reaches after viewing the futility of action in the Teatr Studio's Replika.

As in Szajna's oeuvre, the Holocaust, as dramatized in Akropolis, represents all genocides, all previous atrocities: "Akropolis is the

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[102]Temkine, p. 122.

[103]Jan Kott, "On Grotowski," trans. E. J. Czerwinski, The Drama Review 14 (Winter 1970):203.

story of the extermination of all people after an outbreak of barbarism pulverizes them."[104] Akropolis, like much of Szajna's work, illustrates Witkiewicz's prophesy that what awaits humanity is an omnipresent concentration camp. According to Margaret Croyden, this philosophy creates the dramatic tension in the Grotowski-Szajna piece: "Your production of Akropolis is stunning but very bitter. Not only Auschwitz, but the whole world appears to be a concentration camp. People kill each other swiftly and smoothly; very few seem to help each other."[105] The lack of humanity within Grotowski's concentration camp universe is antithetical to the perceptions of such Holocaust artists as Charlotte Delbo, Andre Schwarz-Bart, and Jorge Semprun. It is, however, reminiscent of the camp world of Tadeusz Borowski. Again, this seems to be the influence of Jozef Szajna. It is not surprising that Ludwik Flaszen emphasizes the thematic similarities between Akropolis and Borowski's "World of Stone;" the relationship between Szajna's oeuvre and the short story was pointed out earlier in this chapter.

Jósez Szajna, by himself and in collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski, has not presented a unique perception of l'univers concentrationnaire. His bleak, pessimistic viewpoint is reminiscent of the theories of Hannah Arendt. His works are thematically similar to Arthur Miller's After the Fall, Peter Weiss' The Investigation, Ireneusz Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne, and the fiction of Tadeusz Borowski. They suggest universal culpability for l'univers concentrationnaire, and they

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[104]Temkine, p. 35.

[105]Croyden, "I Said Yes to the Past," p. 41.

present the concentration camps as symbols for all genocides. What is unique is Szajna's method of presentation. He has fused an aesthetic based on his concentration camp experiences to the twentieth-century avant-garde experiments with non-literary theatre. Elie Wiesel has attempted to explain why most dramas dealing with the Nazi concentration camps have failed: "One expects something from a play on the Holocaust. Something different. Something that no one could see and remain the same thereafter. . . . Auschwitz has been and will remain in the realm of mystical experience or of insanity; the play beyond everything--beyond logic, beyond description."[106] Szajna's work attempts to meet these criteria. It attempts to be different in theatrical technique and to emotionally attack its audience. Szajna attempts to create a mystical experience. His "Open Theatre" he states, "provokes, stirs up anxiety, creates a new form of reality, and touches the very subconscious layers of thought and feeling."[107] And, finally, most critics would agree that his theatre, like l'univers concentrationnaire, is beyond description.

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[106]Elie Wiesel, "Auschwitz: An Incident," Hadassah Magazine 46 (March 1965):12.

[107]"Józef Szajna on Theatre," Port Jefferson programme, n.p.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, we have examined the various dramatic methods employed to present l'univers concentrationnaire. The selected works have been analyzed individually in order to point up each playwright's approach to the concentration camps, both in terms of technique and philosophy. However, Lawrence Langer, in his major study The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, suggests that critics begin to view Holocaust literature as a movement:

> It may seem presumptuous, but perhaps it is time to begin thinking of such literature and such writers as a "movement," and to speak, however hesitantly, of an aesthetics of atrocity. Aristotle may have felt presumptuous when he began to deduce certain principles of drama from the corpus of plays available to him, principles which gradually grew into an art of poetry, a poetics. But in so doing he helped to lay the foundations of literary criticism. . . . Will critics in a half-century, or less, look back on "The Matter of Auschwitz" and speak as familiarly of an "art of atrocity" (or as David Rousset has named it, a Littérature Concentrationnaire)? I believe so; and during the past twenty-five years enough significant work has appeared to enable us to begin making critical generalizations about it today.[1]

Langer, then, in the course of analyzing a number of novels, proceeds to devise a "Poetics" for Holocaust literature. In concluding this study, I would like to briefly examine the concentration camp dramas in the light of his aesthetic principles. Such an analysis will help to make clear the similarities among the various works discussed in this thesis,

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[1]Langer, p. 22.

as well as fill a major gap in Langer's study, since the critic ignores the Holocaust dramas.

"There are two forces at work in . . . most of what I have designated the literature of atrocity: historical fact and imaginative truth."[2] Langer goes on to hypothesize that much of the tension in Holocaust literature is derived from the fact that "no [camp] fiction can ever be completely that--a fiction."[3] Most of the plays analyzed in this dissertation derive their dramatic tension from juxtaposing fact and fiction. Rolf Hochhuth, in The Deputy, and Peter Weiss, in The Investigation, attempt to make their audiences believe that they are viewing historical fact. Weiss does not deviate extensively from the transcripts of the Frankfurt trials, while Hochhuth appends a seventy-page document entitled "Sidelights on History" to the text of his play. Nevertheless, both authors adapt and fictionalize their material. Hochhuth's personages, while based on historical figures, are fictional; the confrontations are "imaginative truth." Weiss molds the testimony. He transforms the language into poetry and carefully deletes emotional outbursts. James Schevill, in Cathedral of Ice, relies on "fantastic" historical facts, such as Hitler having equated his extermination of the Jews with the Americans' treatment of the Indians. Stanley Brechner in The Theatre of Peretz, Pip Simmons in An die Musik, Alberto Moravia in Il dio Kurt, and Ireneusz Iredyński in Jasełka-Moderne present

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[2]Ibid., p. 8.

[3]Ibid., p. 91.

fictionalized accounts of performances in the Nazi internment centers; however, we are aware that such activities did exist. The dramatic tension in Charlotte Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, Hedda Zinner's Ravensbrücker Ballade, and Józef Szajna's oeuvre is derived from the realization that these are fictionalized autobiographies.

"The consciousness that irrationality and unreality were the very essence of l'univers concentrationnaire . . . must somehow be incorporated into their art."[4] Similarly, "the tension between the normal . . . and the abnormal . . . [is] a basic constituent."[5] Peter Barnes, in Auschwitz, dramatizes the irrationality of the Nazi system and the acceptance of this system by the lower echelon SS. Juxtaposed against the normal operations of office workers is the abnormal contents of the file cabinets which surround them and which eventually open to reveal the gas chambers. Weiss, Moravia, and Iredyński focus on the reigning of abnormality in the camps. In Il dio Kurt, the new morality accepts incest and murder. Sodomy, prostitution, and murder are the norms of the camp depicted in Jasełka-Moderne. The "unreality" of l'univers concentrationnaire leads many of the artists, including Charlotte Delbo, Tadeusz Hołuj, and Yehuda Amichai, to suggest that the Holocaust cannot be understood by those who did not experience it.

According to George Steiner, "the world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason."[6] In order to present this world,

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[4]Ibid., p. 20.

[5]Ibid., p. 49.

[6]George Steiner, "K," in Language and Silence (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 123.

artists have experimented with a number of techniques. Langer suggests that there is a frequent employment of dream and fantasy in Littérature Concentrationnaire. When the critic concludes that, "the significance of the literature of atrocity is its ability to evoke the atmosphere of monstrous fantasy that strikes any student of the Holocaust, and simultaneously to suggest the exact details of the experience in a way that forces the reader to fuse and reassess the importance of both,"[7] he is describing the dramatic technique employed by many of the Holocaust playwrights. Cathedral of Ice is structured as "a dream play;" l'univers concentrationnaire is viewed as one of Adolt Hitler's failed dreams. Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, while based on Delbo's actual experiences, seems more like a dramatized dream than a documentary. Her mise en scène is a barren dream-like landscape. Dreams also play an important role in revealing the horrors of the daily camp routine. If Mounette, a young female internee, drags bricks during the day, she dreams of them at night. The breath of Agnes and Renée against her cheek in the evening makes her dream of the guard dogs, whose baited breath awaits her stepping out of line. The theatrical presentations directed by the SS in Moravia's Il dio Kurt and Iredyński's Jasełka-Moderne are depicted as the acting out of the Commandants' fantasies. Both Kurt and Strażnik wish to be gods; the Holocaust is an opportunity to realize their fantasies. In Józef Szajna's productions, l'univers concentrationnaire becomes a nightmarish fantasy composed of the images of the Nazi internment centers.

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[7]Langer, p. 30.

Another key characteristic of Holocaust literature, according to Langer, is that it is a "literature of innuendo."[8] This is an apt description of Szajna's dramatic pieces as well as the Grotowski-Szajna Akropolis. The concentration camps are not literally recreated; l'univers concentrationnaire is hinted at. Wheelbarrows, photographs, and metallic junk suggest the Nazi internment centers. Charlotte Delbo, in her Holocaust drama, does not stage the horrors of camp life, but instead has her characters delineate them. Deaths, executions, and beatings are described to the audience. In Schevill's play, we are not presented a large number of concentration camp prisoners and their suffering, but only Night and Fog who epitomize the oppressed population. In Peter Barnes' play, Auschwitz is recreated through the presentation of the bureaucracy that operates it. A grotesque dumb show represents the brutal workings of the extermination centers. In the dramas by Peter Weiss, Yehuda Amichai, Tadeusz Hołuj, Arthur Miller and Martin Walser, we never see the camps; only their continued presence is felt. The horrors are never seen, only talked about. A trial, an old-age home, a blasted watchtower, and a present-day German village suggest the atrocities of the Holocaust. For that matter, "in most literature of atrocity, the specific forces behind the suffering of the victims are as anonymous as they themselves are destined to become."[9] In Armand Gatti's L'Enfant-rat both the victims and victimizers are referred to by numbers not names. Charlotte Delbo never presents the Nazi tormentors in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? The SS

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[8]Ibid., p. 37.

[9]Ibid., p. 164.

is presented as an anonymous chorus in both The Investigation and Il dio Kurt. The SS is a single, nameless victimizer in An die Musik and The Theatre of Peretz. Hochhuth implies the anonymity of the specific forces behind the suffering by having performers double and triple in roles. In Replika and Akropolis the brutalizers are as anonymous as their victims; Szajna's superman emerges from the same "junk pile" as his survivors. In Auschwitz, the focus of the action is on the Nazis; ironically, they are as identitiless as the numbers they process.

Most Holocaust literature also reverses the pattern of the Bildungsroman, the novel of education; in the literature of atrocity, "the youthful protagonist becomes an initiate into death rather than life."[10] This is the pattern developed in Rolf Hochhuth's The Deputy. Riccardo Fontana, at the opening of the play, is an esteemed young member of the Roman Catholic clergy. The movement of the dramatic action, however, is towards his death. The final lesson he learns is taught by the Auschwitz doctor: "This fellow goes along to the crematorium. . . . You can engage in studies there, theological studies."[11] Riccardo, as a Sonderkommando, is initiated into the realm of death. Francoise, in Delbo's drama, is also introduced to death as she is forced to watch her compatriots die. Kurt teaches Saul the lesson of meaningless death, of dying as an object in Il dio Kurt. The dramatic actions in the experimental works by Brechner, Simmons, and Grotowski move from life into death; these pieces conclude with their characters entering into the

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[10]Ibid., p. 75.

[11]Hochhuth, p. 256.

gas chambers.

Death is also viewed differently in Littérature Concentrationnaire than it is in traditional literature. Death is no longer seen as a natural culmination of life's journey; it is no longer poetically idealized. Instead, death becomes arbitrary, commonplace, and, what is most frightening, dependent on the whims of one's tormentor. Frederick J. Hoffman, in his essay "The Hero in Absentia: The Concentration Camp," describes how meaningless death became in the Nazi internment centers:

> The concentration camp . . . is the end result of modern violence. Not only does it eliminate all possibility of dignity in dying, but it all but destroys any meaningful relationship between assailant and victim. . . . Death in these circumstances is beyond the reach of analysis; even description becomes difficult, because the succession of brutalities dulls the sensibility, and they may make distinctions meaningless.[12]

Even in the face of these difficulties, the Holocaust dramatists have attempted to describe death in the Nazi camps. Charlotte Delbo negates previous poetic images of death by having Francoise exclaim, "Life expires through the intestines." When Delbo's raisonneur delineates the various ways her compatriots met their deaths, she comments that some simply disappeared, which was the fate of many of the victims in l'univers concentrationnaire. Kurt will not allow Saul and Myriam to die as individuals; they must instead become nameless victims, who will be uncertain of when and how they will meet their deaths. The arbitrariness and meaninglessness of the deaths in the concentration camps is symbolized by the file cabinets in Peter Barnes' Auschwitz. All that remains are

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[12]Frederick J. Hoffman, "The Hero in Absentia: The Concentration Camp," in The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 268.

numbers; the persons who process the forms are unmoved by their victims' fates, nor are they even cognizant of how many dead they have processed. That the destruction of life became a joke in the death camps is dramatized by James Schevill. Night and Fog joke about the selection they are about to face; it is a ludicrous game that the SS and the Jews take part in.

"The Holocaust assaulted the very notion of temporal sequence and led to some vital experiments with the manipulation of time."[13] The most renowned example of such an experiment is Jorge Semprun's The Long Voyage. The action has been described as anti-chronological. While most of the novel is set on a transport headed to Buchenwald, the narrator, who is a survivor, frequently jumps to Buchenwald or into the present. Many of the dramatists discussed have experimented with the manipulation of time. Charlotte Delbo attempts a technique similar to that of Semprun. While the bulk of the dramatic action in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? is set in a women's internment center, in the denouement we discover that the play is really the reminiscences of two survivors, which then explains the emphasis on description rather than stage action. While Cathedral of Ice, for the most part, chronologically presents the rise and fall of the Third Reich, Schevill also manipulates time. In order to illustrate his belief that Hitler is representative of many past and present insane "dreams of power," the American playwright has Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Richard Nixon appear in the course of the dramatic action. Some of the plays analyzed in this thesis are not set in the era of the concentration

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[13]Langer, p. 251.

camps; instead, events in the present are employed to recreate the past. Yehuda Amichai uses a contemporary old-age home for survivors to reconstruct l'univers concentrationnaire. Similarly, Tadeusz Hołuj employs a museum of martyrology, Peter Weiss the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, and Arthur Miller the remains of a camp watchtower. Martin Walser, in Eiche und Angora, dramatizes the lives of those who survived--both victims and victimizers--in order to remind his audience of the concentration camps. In Armand Gatti's L'Enfant-Rat and La Deuxième Existence du Camp de Tatenberg, the camp past continues to exist in the minds of the survivors.

While many of the works of Holocaust literature share techniques, they also have common thematic concerns. "This literature usurps the bulwarks of our civilization--childhood, family, love, a sense of the human spirit, reason."[14] The destruction of childhood is dramatized in Delbo's Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? The aging of the teenaged internees into women is emphasized by the French playwright. Hélène becomes responsible not only for herself but for her mother. In Peter Weiss' The Investigation, the only specific victims described, other than Lili Tofler, are the children. The destruction of the family is at the heart of the Commandant's "cultural experiment" in Il dio Kurt. In Walser's Der schwarze Schwann, the reverberations of the Holocaust destroy a family in present day Germany. While some of the theatre pieces attempt to portray the strengthening of the human spirit in l'univers concentrationnaire, including Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, The Deputy, and The Theatre of Peretz, the majority present its destruction. Man turns against man in the

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[14]Ibid., p. 72.

concentration camps. In Akropolis, the internees become burdens to one another; Jacob is tormented by the inmate in a wheelbarrow. In Replika, the prisoners battle amongst themselves with stovepipes. Pip Simmons' concentrationaires humiliate one another in an attempt to avoid punishment. In the works by Simmons, Barnes, Iredyński, Szajna, and Grotowski, human spirit has been so crushed that the internees aid in their own extermination. Iredyński's inmates refuse to revolt against their sole oppressor; they meekly submit to Strażnik.

The desire to bear witness to the Holocaust seems to be a major concern of Littérature Concentrationnaire: "a problem which permeates the literature of atrocity [is] the search on the part of the victim and survivor for a viable attitude to make endurable, if not comprehensible, the human and spiritual implications of . . . [their] fate."[15] The title of Charlotte Delbo's play indicates her fear that no one will return the message of the Holocaust. The play is structured as if it were being described by the two witnessing survivors, Francoise and Denise. As was noted, Pip Simmons was motivated into conceiving An die Musik because he believes the message of the concentration camps is being forgotten. Józef Szajna's works are obviously reminiscences and attempts to bear witness to his experiences in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Weiss' The Investigation is structured on the testimony of witnesses at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials. The focus of Yehuda Amichai's Bells and Trains and Tadeusz Hołuj's Puste Pole is on survivors who are being ignored and who have no one to share their experiences with.

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[15]Ibid., pp. 261-2.

Yet, if these works depict the intense desire to bear witness, they also dramatize "the absurd position of man as Survivor."[16] While the survivors wish to share their experiences, they find themselves unable to do so. Amichai's survivors are impotent inhabitants of an old age home. In Puste Pole, the director of the museum of martyrology is, in reality, ignorant of the Holocaust; his statistics are useless in making l'univers concentrationnaire comprehensible. The concrete monument, designed to commemorate the Holocaust, in reality reveals how insensitive the outside world is to the plight of the survivor. Holga, in After the Fall, epitomizes the absurd position of those who remained alive; she cannot speak of her imprisonment in the Nazi concentration camps with her fellow Germans, nor can her experiences be understood outside of her country. Francoise and Denise, the only survivors in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?, realize that their experiences can never be understood by the eavesdropping audience: "Nous savions que vous ne comprendiez pas, que vous ne croiriez pas, car cela nous est devenu à nous-mêmes incroyable."[17]

In almost all of the Holocaust dramas there is the implication that l'univers concentrationnaire still impinges on the present and is a harbinger of future atrocities. "The recollection of Holocaust experience, the darkening influence of the past on the present . . . is a common theme of the literature of atrocity."[18] Martin Walser, in

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[16]Ibid., p. 270.

[17]Delbo, pp. 76-7. ("We knew that you would not understand; that you would not believe, because it too became incredible to us.")

[18]Langer, p. 108.

Eiche und Angora and Der schwarze Schwann, dramatizes the lingering effect of l'univers concentrationnaire on present-day German society. The surviving castrated singer in the former play continues to remind the ex-SS men of their pasts; the doctor's son in the latter drama commits suicide because of his father's sins. The survivors are depicted as unable to escape from their pasts. They continue to live in l'univers concentrationnaire. The elderly in Bells and Trains act as if they had never left the Nazi internment centers. Leon in Puste Pole continues to treat his subordinates as if he were a camp Kapo. He still rolls cigarettes out of newspaper and lives in a room reminiscent of a camp barrack. Szajna's universe is saturated with the symbolism of the camps. The shoes, the whips, the photographs continue to haunt contemporary society. His personages live in the rubble of the Holocaust.

But not only do the concentration camps impinge on the present, they foreshadow future atrocities. Arthur Miller, in After the Fall, suggests that after the fall--after the Holocaust--the fall continues; the House of Un-American Activities, for example, is presented as a continuation of the Nazi mentality. For that matter, the theories of Hannah Arendt are similar to the views of many of these dramatists. The theme of the banality of evil permeates most of the works, including The Deputy, An die Musik, After the Fall, and Jasełka-Moderne. When Peter Weiss suggests that given the proper historical circumstances victim and victimizer could have easily reversed roles, and when Józef Szajna draws parallels between Auschwitz, Vietnam and Belfast, they are speaking for many of the artists who have dealt with the Nazi concentration camps. Their pessimistic view is predicated on their belief that

history will repeat itself because humanity has not learned from it.

The difficulty of presenting l'univers concentrationnaire in literature and, in particular, drama, should be apparent:

> One of the principles governing the literature of atrocity, as we have seen, is that where the Holocaust was concerned, reality often exceeded the power of the imagination to conjure up images commensurate with the experience the artist wished to record, with the result that the writer was confronted with the dilemma of converting into literature a history too terrible to imagine. . . . The paradox of the Holocaust for the artist is its exclusiveness, the total absence of any shared basis of experience that would simplify the imagination's quest for a means of converting it into universally available terms--to find, in short, in the events of the Holocaust the kind of immediacy of impression of direct communion, that one senses in the acidity of a lemon or the feel of wool.[19]

The problem is particularly acute in drama and theatre because of the difficulty in creating a stage picutre of l'univers concentrationnaire that will not be rejected by audiences. For example, many of the theatre artists discussed in this thesis, realizing that spectators would refuse to believe dramatic representations of concentration camp atrocities, have experimented with various staging techniques. Charlotte Delbo in Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? and Alberto Moravia in Il dio Kurt do not present any staged violence but, instead, allow their audiences' imaginations to recreate the Nazi brutalities. Pip Simmons, in An die Musik, has attempted to recreate the reality of camp violence by directing the actor portraying the SS man to abuse arbitrarily fellow performers. (On the other hand, Rolf Hochhuth seems to be less successful in presenting Auschwitz in The Deputy because the play's violence, rather than illustrating the unique horrors of l'univers concentrationnaire, is in keeping

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[19]Ibid., pp. 284, 289.

with the stage action of a traditional melodrama and, therefore, easily rejected.)

Those playwrights who dramatize the contemporary plights of camp survivors are attempting to deal with the problem of dramatically representing the Nazi concentration camps by recreating the past through their dramatizations of the present. Such, for example, is the technique Peter Weiss employs in The Investigation. Weiss not only dramatizes the 1965 Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, but, through these proceedings, also recreates the existence in the Silesian camp. Józef Szajna's metaphorical representations of the camps are an attempt to find a non-literal means of presenting l'univers concentrationnaire, so that audiences will not be concerned with the reality of the stage picture, but with the images of the Nazi internment centers.

Ultimately, however, none of the dramas discussed in this dissertation seem totally successful in dealing with the concentration camps because Friederich Duerrenmatt is correct when he remarks, "there are terrible things, in the face of which art is always weaker than reality."[20]

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[20]Ibid., p. 166. A. Alvarez comes to a similar conclusion in his essay "The Literature of the Holocaust:" "There have . . . been concentration camp novels by the hundreds, but even setting aside the cheaply sensational, few of them could claim much as literature. With rare exceptions, there are qualities which elude even the best, leaving them in some half-world of art. The root of the trouble lies in the enormity and the truth of the events they describe" (Beyond All This Fiddle, p. 22).

APPENDIX A

The following are additional plays that deal with the Holocaust and touch on the concentration camp experience. I have tried to indicate availability and production dates for anyone who wishes to do further research in the area:

Atlan, Liliane. Monsieur Fugue. [France, 1967].

Chen, Ari. The Judgment. The Seventh Day. Both are available from the author, 35 Binyamin Avenue, Netanya, Israel.

Dagan, Gabriel. The Reunion. In Midstream 19 (April 1973): 4-32. [Israel, 1972].

Gatti, Armand. Chronicles of a Provisional Planet. [France, 1962].

Megged, Aharon. The High Season. Available from the author, 26 Rappin Street, Tel Aviv, Israel. [Israel, 1967].

Sagi, Eli. The Border of Truth. [Israel, 1968].

Shahan, Nathan. A New Reckoning. [Israel, 1954].

Shamir, Moshe. The Heir. Available from the author, 3 Rozanes Street, Tel Aviv, Israel. [Israel, 1963].

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Autobiographical Statement:

Alvin Goldfarb is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Illinois State University. He has taught at Hunter College of the City University of New York, City College of New York, Queens College of the City University of New York, and St. John's University. Mr. Goldfarb received his Bachelor of Arts from Queens College of C.U.N.Y. and his Master of Arts from Hunter College of C.U.N.Y. He has published articles in Educational Theatre Journal, Performing Arts Journal, the Journal of Popular Culture, and Tennessee Williams: A Tribute (University of Mississippi Press, 1977). Mr. Goldfarb has also delivered papers at the conventions of the American Society for Theatre Research and the Popular Culture Association.