CHILD SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST;

LITERATURE, TRAUMA, MEMORY.

by

AMALIA RECHTMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty French Dept.
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2005

UMI Number: 3187431

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in the French Program in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September, 8, 2005	Dist. Prof. Nancy K. Miller
Date	Chair of Examining Committee
September, 8, 2005	Prof. Francesca Canadé Sautman
Date	Executive Officer

Prof. André Aciman_____

Prof. Lucienne Serrano_____

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

CHILD SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST
LITERATURE, TRAUMA, MEMORY

By

Amalia Rechtman

Adviser: Distinguished Professor Nancy K. Miller.

This dissertation explores the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary culture, with particular emphasis on the experience of child survivors. I have taken an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of my dissertation, exploring the historical and psychological dimensions of the Holocaust experience, as well as its literary representations. I have focused on the relations between trauma and literature, notably on the complex ways in which the historically specific traumatic material has been expressed in the literature written by the survivors.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters: Chapter One deals with the situation of Jewish children in Europe before and during the war. Chapter Two concentrates on the studies conducted on child survivors after the war: on those who had been in concentration camps, or hidden in Europe. Chapters Three, Four and Five analyze the war's testimony in the literature produced by child survivors. Chapter Three deals with the memoirs of the Holocaust experience in the works of Elie Wiesel, Ruth Kluger and Saul Friedlander. Chapter Four deals with works in which the child survivors' experience of the war has found more indirect expression through the semi-fictional or autobiographical works of Georges Perec and Serge Doubrovsky. Chapter Five considers the most fictionalized

accounts of the Shoah through the works of Louis Begley, Jerzy Kosinski, Binjamin Wilkomirski, and W. G. Sebald.

The Holocaust caused tremendous destruction to its survivors—to adults and especially to children—not only at the moment of catastrophe, but throughout their lives. For many survivors, their traumatic experiences require constant confrontation and struggle with its long-term effects, even fifty years later. The dissertation as a whole seeks to make connections between the historical and psychological components of the Holocaust experience (the first and second chapters) and the varied literary forms European writers have created in the long aftermath of the war (the third, fourth, and fifth chapters).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like here to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my dissertation adviser, Distinguished Prof. Nancy K. Miller, without whose priceless expert assistance, sharp wit, patience, understanding, and guidance this project would have never been realized.

I would also like to thank my readers, Professors André Aciman and Lucienne Serrano, whose expertise, insight and feedback were most valuable.

And of course, the French Department at the Graduate Center and its outstanding Executive Officer, Prof. Francesca C. Sautman, who provided me with the niche from where I could expand my wings and reach the goal I desired.

My thanks to Prof. Thomas Spear for the material he generously lent me on autobiography and autofiction which proved to be very helpful for my fourth chapter.

The assistance I received both at the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaire (CDJC) in Paris, particularly from Dr. Diane Afoumado and Marcel Meslati, and at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, from Timorah Perel, was extremely precious and I will always be grateful to them for their time and guidance which continued even after I visited them and was back in New York.

Lastly, I would like to thank my good friend, Nan Bremen, for her proofreading assistance and valuable advice.

I also wish to thank the "J. & O. Winter" Fund for the grant administered by Prof. Randolph Braham.

Last, but not least, I would like to dedicate this work to my son, in memory of his father.

Table of Contents

Introduction

My dissertation concentrates on the plight of Jewish children in Europe before and during WWII, on the traumatic impact the war had on the lives of those who survived, and how it translated in literature (autobiographies, biographies, autofiction and fiction) through the works of Louis Begley, Serge Doubrovsky, Saul Friedlander, Ruth Kluger, Jerzy Kosinki, Georges Perec, W. G. Sebald and Elie Wiesel.

The Holocaust has caused tremendous destruction to its survivors—to adults and especially to children—not only at the moment of catastrophe, but throughout their lives. For many survivors, their traumatic experiences require constant confrontation and struggle with its long-term effects, even fifty years later.

For the first 30 years after the end of the war, only those who survived imprisonment in the death camps were considered to be survivors. In the course of time, others who suffered from persecution were included in this group. For the last two decades, more and more people who were children (aged 16 or younger) at the outbreak of WWII have begun to admit to themselves and to announce to others that they, too, are "Holocaust survivors."

No one survived the Holocaust unscathed, especially the children; yet every individual has a unique history. Everyone has personal memories, personal losses and bereavements. At the same time, it is possible to outline features that are common to survivors who shared similar experiences. As Cathy Caruth wrote in Trauma: Exploration in Memory (1995) "the traumatized carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.[1]

[1] Caruth, Cathy, ed. Trauma Exploration in Memory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995) 5.

What drove me to research and write about child survivors was the fact that although much has been written about adult survivors and the second generation, little has been done on those who were children.

I took an interdisciplinary approach to my dissertation. Historical, cultural, sociological, psychoanalytical and literary aspects have been explored, especially in their representation of the Holocaust experience. I focused on the relations between traumatic experiences, what has been learnt from them, through the psychological and psychiatric studies conducted on this subject, and, in particular, the way the traumatic material has been expressed in the literature engendered by the survivors. Each text studied here represents in its own way a kind of testimony and might be said to express the innermost wish of these survivors to try to come to terms with that specific period of their lives. As Elie Wiesel said in his essay "The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration," "if the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony." [2]

My dissertation is divided in five chapters: Chapter One deals with the situation of Jewish children in Europe before and during WWII and the rescue efforts to save them. My main resources for this chapter were CDJC documents, and the literature written by historians and rescue organizations and rescuers. My research was conducted in the CDJC (Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine) in Paris, where I came across such priceless material, as cannot be found in history books when I was faced with handwritten letters from children to parents from whom they had been separated; parents imploring to be reunited with their children, and the struggle of the Jewish organizations to provide assistance through any possible means. This research covered the situation before and during the war.

---

[2] In Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University, Elie Wiesel et al (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977).

Chapter Two concentrates on the studies conducted on child survivors after the war: on those who had been in concentration camps, hidden, or living like terrified hunted animals in Europe. For the studies conducted on these child survivors, regarding the impact the war had on them, I went to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, where I found a wealth of material and to AMCHA–The National Israeli Center for Psychosocial Support of Survivors of the Holocaust in Jerusalem, in addition to the scientific literature on the subject.

Chapters Three, Four and Five focus on the war's representation in the literature generated by child survivors. Chapter Three deals with the direct expression of the Holocaust experience in the works of Elie Wiesel, Ruth Kluger and Saul Friedlander. My choice of these writers was based on the fact that although the three of them achieved international recognition, we can feel, in their works, how on a personal level, the way they represent their personal memories shows how the traumatic childhood still lies deep inside them. When they, after many years, finally confronted their past, they realized how it still weighed on their lives; their experience was the driving force that drove them to achieve what they accomplished later: Wiesel, by bearing witness and paying tribute to the dead and reestablishing a connection with life; Ruth Kluger in her quest for a purer, harsher truth, trying to build a bridge with her past; and Friedlander, through his exhaustive research as a historian, concentrating on trying to make sense of a past and of the way it could be represented. Chapter Four deals with works in which the child survivors' experience of the war has found more indirect expression through the works of Georges Perec and Serge Doubrovsky. I chose these two writers because of their exceptional ways of transmitting their experience. For Perec the writing of memory becomes a place of inscription for the absence of his parents, which writing cannot redeem but whose place it can mark forever. He writes *W* ou le Souvenir d'enfance as two parallel narratives, one fictional and the other autobiographical, in alternating chapters. The overall effect of

the work depends on the juxtaposition of the two parts which builds up into a powerful testimony of his conflicting need to confront his own history, to defer the confrontation, and to overcome a history that cannot be overcome. Doubrovsky, like Perec, is convinced that fantasy and imagination govern both his life and his writing and for this purpose created "autofiction" as the invention of self through writing. The double creation of a language as a "genre" allowed him to remediate the waste and dispersion that haunted him and against which each of his books struggles. His work also expresses his strong desire to "laisser des traces" for his readers to question his "Moi en mots." Chapter Five considers the most fictionalized accounts of the Shoah through the works of Begley, Kosinski, Wilkomirski and Sebald. Begley writes his story from the distance of a fiction based on actual facts; Kosinski: in his fictionalized account of a child persecuted by Polish peasants, strove to illustrate in an extreme case of persecution of a child in those circumstances, the horrors of the war and of discrimination. Wilkomirski (who was not Jewish) wrote a first-person account of a child Holocaust experience which proved to be a fraud and not a memoir. Wilkomirski's Fragments puts into question the culture which accepted it without questioning it and Wilkomirski's own drive to maintain that it was *his* true story even after exposed. Finally, Sebald, in Austerlitz, gives a poignant quest for a past and an identity on the part of a child survivor who had been saved through the *Kindertransport.* At the same time Sebald expresses his concern with historical consciousness and contemporary culture and its drive to erase all evidence regardless of its historical significance.

The relation between Chapters One and Two to the following three represents the inevitable and complex connection history and psychology had on this kind of survivor literature which can be understood in the light of that "specific history" and its impact.

Chapter I

Jewish children in Europe before and during WWII and the rescue efforts to save them.

Jewish children suffered because their destiny began with their birth as Jews and their fate was marked by their ill-luck to have been Europeans during the Nazi years. For the small number who survived, their lot remained troubled long after the war ended. The oppression, persecution and murder of children is stunningly symbolized in the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, on the memorial terrace where one final object can be seen: the high-topped shoe of a child, symbolizing those many children who disappeared.

What different types of living experiences did Jewish children have in Nazi Europe? They lived under the direct rule of the Germans, in ghettos, forced labor camps, and death camps. They eked out a marginal existence in hiding and hidden (concealed in an attic, closet or closed convent), or in hiding and visible (openly obscured: adopted by non-Jews, in religious orders, Christian orphanages, on the run without papers, or passing as Christians with false papers.)

1. **Before the war – at home**

During the late 1930s, as the European nations moved towards belligerent positions, both gentile and Jewish children were subjected to the restrictions engendered by the preparatory state, and by the war that ensued. What were the early rumbles and tremors? How were the initial steps of this special war against the Jews manifested with regard to child life whilst the children were still at home and how did the children experience these signs?

The following edicts were directed against adults but their impact on the children's world were filtered through their parents and the complacency and unconsciousness of childhood was further shattered by the restrictions on normal social life that came with the second wave of anti-Semitic legislation which was designed to ensure the social segregation of the Jewish population.

Jews were defined in the Nuremberg laws—comprehensive anti-Semitic legislation—in September 1935, then in the First Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law of 14 November 1935, which was later adopted by Germany's first ally, Italy, in its legislation in the Provisions for the Defense of the Italian Race dated 17 November 1938, in its second part "Pertaining to the Jewish Race," and in Poland, first country to be occupied by Germany where the "Official Definition of the Term 'Jew' in the 'Government-General'" was dated 24 July 1940.

The legal definitions were ominous; they reflected a perception of Jews as the other, the stranger who, because of her or his birth, never could become part of the "Aryan" community. German Jewish civil servants lost their jobs as a consequence of the 7 April, 1933 Law for the Reestablishment of the Professional Civil Service. A second anti-Jewish law, the Bill to restrict Jewish Penetration in the Public Affairs and Economic Life of the Country was introduced in December and passed in May 1939, barring Jews from civil service and fixing a quota system to regulate Jewish participation in the professions and in commerce. The first *Statut des Juifs* passed by the French Government at Vichy on 3 October 1940 excluded Jews from the upper echelons of civil service and from professions that influenced public opinion: teaching, the press, radio, film, and theater.

The first and most tremendous of shocks was the expulsion of Jewish children from the state and state-supported schools. The immediate response was related to the trauma of ostracism and expulsion. Suddenly, a basic structure of their experience collapsed and for them alone. They were forced to confront the concept of what being a Jew meant to them and to the society in which they lived. Expulsion from school, the sudden and shocking introduction of segregation in education, was the first of the legalized social abuses Jewish children suffered, but unfortunately not the last. Followed, innumerable prohibitions on normal daily activities designed to harass, terrorize and

subjugate the Jews—by forcing them to conduct their lives according to a distinct set of rules and regulations—and of course the visible brand of the Star of David imposed nearly everywhere. These anti-Semitic measures affected all Jews, including children. They narrowed and made extremely perilous the world they, as children, inhabited.

Jewish children were affected by the plethora of edicts and regulations to harass and mortify the Jewish population by regulating its movements in every facet of ordinary social life. Little by little their normal activities were curtailed and the parameters of their physical world reduced. Unlike the yellow star, which was feared for its consequences, these prohibitions meant that the children could no longer go anywhere. Transportation, for fun or as a means of conveyance to permitted activity, became increasingly problematic. Children could go nowhere and could do nothing in the outside world. They were restricted to their own homes, gardens, and courtyards

Then came the moment of departure: to go into hiding, to escape as a refugee, go to the ghetto, to be deported. They left their homes and this was the end of life as they knew it. Few returned.

2. Ghettos

Ghettos were places of forced residence within the cities and they existed—long-term—in Warsaw, Lodz and Vilna, and—short-term—in Hungary and regions annexed to Hungary from Czechoslovakia and Rumania. After they were stripped of their possessions by edict, persuasion, threats or torture, Jews were sent to specifically designated ghetto areas. To be forced into a ghetto was not without precedent. Historical examples were well known to them. It was only at the beginning of the 19th century that Jews were no longer required to live in the ghetto of Frankfurt, and the ghetto of Rome had been opened in 1870. In cities like Vilna, where there had never been a closed ghetto, there were historic Jewish quarters, traditional Jewish neighborhoods.

Children in ghettos were supported in a number of ways, especially in the early ghetto period before mass deportations began. One of the most important efforts to sustain child life was the institution of food services and policies for their benefit. A number of self-help societies were active, independent of the central bureaucracy. The Jewish Organization for Social Care (ZTOS) served as an umbrella to coordinate the activities of a number of philanthropic enterprises: CENTIS (the National Society for the Care of Orphans), TOZ or OSE (the Society for the Protection of Health) and ORT (the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training). Day-centers and soup kitchens were established and clandestine classes organized in order to maintain education and to embody a principle of normalcy; life would go on, there would be a future after this madness. Whether in hiding, in transit camps or in the ghetto many children wished to continue to learn and sometimes in extraordinary circumstances. All the time, day by day, week by week, month by month, the situation worsened, conditions deteriorated, the atmosphere tensed and even younger children took on the adult responsibilities of earning a living and procuring food. The harsh order of the ghetto, the reign of terror, and the ring of famine trapped everyone. As the population was transformed into a labor force, it became increasingly clear that the only way children would be protected from *Aussiedlung* would be if they, too, were able to join the ranks. This was impossible, of course; very young children simply were unsuited for such work in labor. When a Commission of the German authorities visited Lodz Ghetto on 4 June, 1942, so important was the impression of the ghetto as a work camp that no children or old, weak or ill people were to be seen on the streets. "The populace knows and understands that it concerns something larger, more important—the question of its very existence."[3] Inspections persisted and although the timing differed in each ghetto, the pattern of their existence was invariable: establishment, deportation actions, and final liquidation.

[3]Dobroszycki, Lucjan, ed., The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984) 199.

In 1942, there was a general inspection and all the children were taken away. "They were to be lined up, thirteen, twelve, ten years old, eight years old. They were taken away, thrown on the wagon. The smaller ones, from four to seven years old were literally thrown in the wagon. The cries reaching the sky, but there was no help, there was no one to turn to, to plead your case, to beg."[4]

Although the timing differed in each ghetto, the pattern of their existence was invariable. From the moment of the institution of the ghettos to the hour of their demise, the children who lived in them participated in activities of a former world of childhood, games, groups, clubs and classes, while they were plagued by the rampant and deadly hunger, cold and disease of the ghetto world. "Life wasn't difficult; it was unbearable. Many of us wished to be finished with it. But there was always this glimmer of hope."[5]

By the end of the summer of 1944, nearly all the ghettos of Eastern Europe had been liquidated, their inhabitants deported and dead. With the Soviet army approaching, the Germans became frantic to finish the task they had undertaken. The last of these ghettos of infamy, the Lodz ghetto, fell victim to their frenzy. The Judenrat (the Elders of the Jewish Council)—especially Chaim Rumkowski—the Elder of the Ghetto of Lodz who tried to negotiate with the Germans, to protect the community, especially the children, realized that it was all an illusion. Adam Czerniakow—the Elder in the Ghetto of Warsaw—committed suicide after refusing to sign a deportation order for children. The note he left said: "I am powerless…I can no longer bear all this."[6] To be powerless to save, defend or shield children was, for Czerniakow, unconscionable and, ultimately, unacceptable. The Judenrat chairmen of the other ghettos had been given to understand

---

[4] As cited by Deborah Dwork, in Children with a Star. Interview with Sarah Grossman-Weil (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1991) 21.

[5] As cited by Deborah Dwork, Children with a Star. "Interview with Sara Grossman-Weil" (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1991) 22.

[6] The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow, eds. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, Josef Kermisz (New York: Stein and Day, 1982) 23.

by the Germans that the labor of Jews could be essential to the occupying power and they believed that survival of at least part of the community would be achieved through productivity. Who was to be protected and at the sacrifice of whom? The Germans presented a figure (for deportation) to the Elders and it was up to them to decide who was to go. Gens (the Elder of the Vilna Ghetto) made up his decision: "We shall not give the children, they are our future."[7] He rejected the Germans' demand to seize the children. A month earlier, Rumkowski had confronted the same horror. Children under ten and adults over sixty-five years of age were demanded of him. He announced that "by order of the German authorities, 25,000 Jews under the age of 10 and over 65 must be resettled out of the ghetto and that if this action encountered any difficulty or resistance, the German authorities would step in."[8] In addressing himself to the crowd in a meeting he had convened he said: "We, all, myself and my closest associates, have come to the conclusion that despite the horrible responsibility, we have to accept the evil order. I have to perform this bloody operation myself; I simply must cut off the limbs to save the body! Because otherwise others will also be taken." Some 15,000 people were deported, the children amongst them. The Judenrat activities were criticized after the war, especially by Hannah Arendt.[9]

Smuggling was a necessary fact of the ghetto world. The only way to obtain enough food to sustain oneself was through "illegal" transactions and most of the smugglers were children whose task was to provide food for their families and themselves by stealing through the wall and back; they were the breadwinners for their families. Slowly, slowly, the Germans were achieving their goal of dehumanizing the Jewish population and hunger was one of the ways of degrading and

---

[7]Trunk, Isaiah, Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation (New York, Macmillan, 1972) 75-79, 400-13.
Dobroszycki, Lucjan, ed. The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-44 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984) 122.

[9] Hannah Arendt, A Report on the Banality of Evil, Eichmann in Jerusalem (New York: Penguin, 1964), cited by Mona Sue Weissmark in Justice Matters (Cambridge/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 25.

demoralizing them. Child beggars were also a common sight; orphaned and ultimately abandoned by the administration. Their needs overwhelmed their meager resources. The community structures and the adults who ran them could not help these children so they lived in the streets and made their living there. "I see them every time I go out. Their heads are shaven; clothes in rags, frightfully emaciated tiny faces bring to mind birds rather than human beings. Their huge black eyes, though, are human; so full of sadness. The younger one may be five or six, the older ten perhaps. They don't move. They don't speak. The little one sits on the pavement, the bigger one just stands there with his claw of hand stretched out."[10]

The streets of Warsaw, like Radom, Vilna, Lodz, and elsewhere, were filled with beggars, and the majority were children. "The most painful was the begging of three and four-year olds. In the gutters, amidst the refuse, one can see almost naked and barefoot little children wailing pitifully."[11] "These are children who were orphaned when both parents died either in their wanderings or in the typhus epidemic. Yet there is no institution that will take them in and care for them as human beings."[12] Beggar children did not last long in the streets. Ringelblum mentions the story of a six-year old boy who lay gasping all night, too weak to roll over to the piece of bread that had been thrown down to him from the balcony; this was a common casualty of the Germans' war against the Jews. In his autobiographical memoir, When Memory Comes, Saul Friedlander recalled an incident recounted by a friend of his, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto: "It is night, the curfew has sounded. Sitting in his room, he (the survivor/narrator), debating with himself whether to eat a piece of bread or save it for the next morning when he hears a prolonged but unintelligible cry coming

[10]Bauman, Janina, Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, (London: Virago Press, 1986) 41.
[11] Ringelblum, Emmanuel. Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum, ed. Jacob Sloan (New York: Schocken Books, 1974) 204.
[12] Kaplan, Chaim. Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan, ed. Katsh, Abraham I. (New York: Collier, 1973) 290.

from the street. He leans out of the window and throws the piece of bread to the child who doesn't budge. He remains motionless and the narrator suddenly understands: the child is dead."[13]

During the war, children had their vehement persecutors, but also their devoted defenders. One such faithful friend of the poorest children was Dr. Korczak of Warsaw. During the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, tempted as he was by the possibility of escape, he voluntarily remained with the children, and he died with them. He had made an interesting experiment before the war. He took a child from an orphanage, for a walk into the streets of Warsaw, then led him into a darkened lecture-room filled with students and placed him in front of the X-ray apparatus. The tiny heart of the child, trembling with fear, appeared on the X-ray screen and Dr. Korczak said to his students: "Do not ever forget this picture. Before you raise your hand against a child, before you punish him, recall how his frightened heart beats."[14] (Unfortunately the war did much more than just frighten them).

3. Hidden children

Arrangements for hiding were made in one of two ways: informally through a network of friends and family, or with the help of some type of organization. In other words, the problem of an individual child was resolved through a personalized solution, while those who were concerned with the plight of all Jewish children tried to devise a generalized, or universally applicable solution. There was also a rare third pattern. Sometimes, no arrangements were made, but the child, operating independently, nevertheless went into hiding. All these plans were precarious at best—there were no guarantees—but to hide oneself, to function alone, was in many ways the most insecure of all. To do so meant that the young person spent the war years on the run, moving from place to place constantly maintaining an existence outside the law or, alternatively, by obtaining false papers and

[13] Friedlander, Saul, When Memory Comes (New York: Avon 1980) 75-76.
[14] Sosnowski, Kyril. The Tragedy of Children under Nazi Rule (Zachodnia Agencia Prasowa, Western Press Agency, Polish Edition, 1962; English Edition 1962).

simply living and working illegally, "passing as a gentile." In either case the child had to be of an age to be able to care for himself, and the majority of those who undertook to hide themselves in this way were older than the young people who are the subject of this study. There were children who did so, however, and Jerzy Kosinski and Jack Kuper were amongst them. Kosinski's poetic memoir, The Painted Bird,[15] and Kuper's fictionalized Child of the Holocaust[16] depict their extraordinary ordeals.

By their very nature, children were too young to operate independently, and arrangements were made for them. The most common situation was that of informal contacts which meant that parents would ask a friend, or a friend of a friend, or the relative of a gentile relative-by marriage whether she would hide, or help to hide, their family. Families usually separated when they went into hiding (unlike the well-known example of Anne Frank's household). Some did so to reduce the risk of total annihilation. Most, however, found that for purely logistical reasons it was impossible to remain together as a single unit. To hide one person was an enormous undertaking; it required space and food as well as constant vigilance and luck. The more people hidden in one place, the greater the risk and the more onerous the task. Organizations were formed and in the context of the war and the resistance work of hiding children, it meant the creation of a network or system to save children, rather than individual, informal family and friend arrangements. Such an "organization" could have been started by just one person, or a family like the Boogaards which developed their own network and hid hundreds of Jews (as well as others) on their and their neighbors' farms in the Haarlemmermeer area of Holland.[17] It could have been a group formed by a number of disparate

---

[15] Kosinski, Jerzy, The Painted Bird (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1976).

[16] Kuper,Jack, Child of the Holocaust (Toronto, General Pub. Co., 1960).
(Kosinski was six and Kuper eight when they were left on their own to wander from village to village in rural Poland, hiding their Jewish identity and past history, and scrambling to survive by doing odd jobs for peasant farmers in exchange for food and a place to sleep).

[17] Cited by Deborah Dwork, Children with a Star: 35. Mauritz Cohen interview with author, the Hague, Netherlands, 9 June 1986: claims the Boogaard family organization helped save 324 people.

people whose common cause was their concern about the Jews, like Zegota (the Council for Aid to Jews) in Warsaw, or the Naamloze Vennotschap (or NV) in the Netherlands. And finally, institutions such as the Protestant and Catholic churches, self-help associations like the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), youth groups from the scouts to university student clubs, or as the apparatus of political parties who undertook to hide children as part of their resistance work. For all these organizations, the important questions were how contact was made between those who needed help and those willing to offer it, and how did the system function. The Boogaards helped Jewish people because they were convinced that Jewish people should be saved. They found a way to save children with the aid of two women collaborators in Amsterdam. Their task was to pick up children as they walked in a queue to school and on outings. They took on the work of hiding Jews and other people who had to disappear, out of a deep religious conviction and strong anti-German sentiment. Their network began with a familial nucleus. As their operations became increasingly complex, more people joined them in their efforts.

Other groups did not begin with such an organic core. People who were unrelated to each other and indeed shared nothing except their common cause, came together to establish organizations to accomplish the same ends. Their motivations varied. Animated by political ideology, humanitarian beliefs, and religious principles, they formed alliances to aid and assist Jews through the Nazi years.[18] Thus, for example, in Poland, late in September 1942, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, a well-known novelist and one of the founders as well as President of the conservative Catholic social organization, the Front for Reborn Poland, and the democrat Wanda Krahelska-Filipowiczowa, worked together to found the (clandestine) Temporary Committee to Help Jews,

[18] The issue of the motivation to help has been discussed at length in psychological and sociological literature which focuses on the question. See Eva Fogelman, V.L.Wiener, "The Few, the Brave and the Noble" Psychology Today 19, #8 (August 1985): 60-65; Samuel P. and Pearl M. Oliner, The Altruistic Personality (New York: The Free Press, 1988); Nechama Tec, When Light Pierced the Darkness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

centered in Warsaw with branches and contacts in Cracow and Lwow. In the first two months of operation 180 Jews were saved, primarily children. This organization was later known as Zegota and its purpose was to secure hiding places for children and by providing financial assistance and false documents to those leading a clandestine existence. Mass expulsions of the Jews from Warsaw had begun in 1942, and they were determined to smuggle children out of the ghetto to hide them on the Aryan side; they had addresses in the city of families willing to take the children and they were brought out of the ghetto through underground corridors and placed with families or in orphanages and convents. By the end of 1943, in addition to those in private homes, the Children's Bureau had found berths for 600 youngsters in public and ecclesial (over 550 children) and relief organization (at least 22 young people), institutions. In total some 2,500 children were registered by the Warsaw branch of the Council.[19]

Other underground groups equally devoted to saving Jews—and Jewish children in particular—were organized far less formally. Unaffiliated with any established association or political party; they were formed by people who, very simply, felt the need to act. Many of these groups did not receive either honor or attention after the war. Indeed, while much is known about the armed resistance, the history of the organizations which helped children has only recently become part of the legitimate public past. The majority of these underground networks (like the NV or Piet Meerburg Group) did not apply for or receive financial assistance from their respective national central councils of resistance organizations; their work was never on public record. There were also ideological reasons for the marginalization of underground activity dedicated to the rescue and relief of children.

[19] These rescue efforts are mentioned in detail in Bartoszewski and Lewis, eds. Righteous Among Nations: People who helped Jews. See the section "Under the Wings of Zagota" (London: Earlscourt Publications, 1969).

For many years after the war, each country's "Resistance Movement" was defined in terms of those groups which undertook activities of a more public nature; armed defiance, underground newspapers, etc…These more "heroic" operations were clearly patriotic and nationalistic and they became part of the history of the honor of each country. Saving children was, by contrast, neither a public deed at the time nor the stuff of glory later on. Finally, the majority of the resistance workers who undertook to save and sustain life were women, and the people for whom they cared were children—Jewish children. After the war these women underground workers disappeared from public life. They did not seek publicity and left few records. The last factor to be mentioned to explain why organizations dedicated to the rescue of children only recently have become the focus of public attention is that the children themselves, the very people who were saved, either were not or were not perceived to be articulate witnesses after the war. Individuals and organizations concerned with saving adults were honored much sooner, as those they helped were able to demand this recognition for their benefactors.

It took forty years for the children who were hidden and helped to come of age. And it was only when these former children took on the responsibility of adults in public life that they were able to call attention to those who had saved them, the ignored women and men of cleverness and courage during the war.

We have considered how children came to be hidden through informal family and friend contacts and with the help of two types of organizational network: family groups like that were begun by the Boogaards in the Haarlemmermeer, and groups that were run by a disparate group of people who came together because of a common dedication to saving children. Some of these were formally structured, like Zegota; others like the NV and Piet Meerburg, in Holland, networks far less

so. The third genre of organizational arrangement involved the transformation of an extant structure from legal to illegal work.

The charitable preventive health organization, OSE (Obsczestvo Sdravochraneniya Eryeyev, or Society for the Health of the Jewish Population) was founded by Jewish physicians in Russia in 1912. After the revolution, its headquarters were moved to Berlin and, following the election of Hitler in 1933, to Paris. It was there that the Society took the name "Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants et de Protection de la Santé des Populations Juives." Like the Russian and German branches, the French division of OSE focused on medical issues in general and child welfare in particular. The OSE leadership in France was responsive to the deteriorating situation in Europe, and in 1937 began to concentrate on the protection of Jewish children. This work was done legally at first; later when France was occupied and the Jews were besieged, the organization and its operation went underground.[20] When the war began in 1939, OSE was supporting 300 refugee children, primarily from Germany and Austria, in special homes created for this purpose (*maisons d'enfants*). The organization also provided extra-institutional help, and subsidized many young people who lived in poverty with their parents. The fall of France in 1940 and the subsequent division of the country into the northern "occupied" zone and the southern "free" zone, under the collaborationist government of Marshal Pétain in Vichy, forced OSE to move quickly. In the midst of the occupation of Paris and the mass exodus to the south, OSE emptied its *maisons d'enfants* in the Parisian suburbs. The children and most of the OSE staff fled to the southern zone, and for purely practical reasons the organizational apparatus split along the geographic lines. "OSE-Sud" became responsible for the

[20] There is a fair amount of published literature on OSE and a wealth of archival documentation in the CDJC Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaire: L'Activité des Organizations Juives en France sous l'Occupation, 1983 117-79, Lucien Lazare, La Résistance Juive en France (Paris: Stock, 1987); Jacques Adler, The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 167, 226-7; Dorothy Macardle, The Children of Europe (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949) 184-8.
Zeitoun, Sabine, Ces Enfants qu'il fallait sauver (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989) 145-70; Katy Hazan: Les Orphelins de la Shoah (OSE) (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000).

activities carried out in the unoccupied zone and two officers, Falk Walk and Eugène Minkovski, continued with their work in Paris. Due to their efforts, the OSE office on the Champs-Elysées remained open throughout the war.[21]

As it became increasingly clear that, at least initially, foreign Jews were at greater risk than their French-born co-religionists, the first task of OSE-Nord was to smuggle central and eastern European children across the demarcation line into the free zone. OSE-Sud, in its turn, immediately begun to develop its network of services. Medical and social assistance were made available to the great number of refugees arriving in Vichy France, and more homes were opened to accommodate children sent to the south by their parents, as well as those who were orphaned and abandoned.

In addition to the medical and social aid offered to adults and children living more or less normally and the support of the children in the *maisons d'enfants*, OSE refused to abandon the Jews enclosed in internment camps[22] (*camps d'internement* or *camps de concentration*) that had been built in the spring of 1939 at the insistence of the ultra-conservative right to minimize the perceived security problem posed by the flood of refugees from the Spanish Civil War. By the time war was declared in September, many had returned to Spain. The camps were ready for the incarceration of all enemy aliens but specifically for foreign Jews. Stateless, impoverished, and unable to speak French well, foreign-born Jews were particularly vulnerable to administrative harassment and maltreatment.

---

[21] CDJC, L'Activité des Organisations Juives: 118-22.

[22] Numerous documents in the archives of the CDJC describe the activities undertaken by OSE: Doc. CCCLXVI-II – Rapport sur l'activité de l'Union OSE pour les mois Juin, Juillet et Août 1941.
OSE was engaged in a number of concerns, but the children commanded their primary interest. The report noted that 1,201 children were under their sole care, which were about 100 more than in the previous trimester. "The series of tragic cases encountered during the last trimester continues and often we are obliged to admit immediately to our homes children who, in the majority of cases, have nearly been picked up (by the Police); they remain alone in the world without support and it is impossible for us not to take them." (4).

A year later (after the fall of France in 1940) there were thirty-two camps in the southern zone and perhaps half as many in the occupied north.[23] The anti-Semitic decrees in the north and the passage of similarly oppressive legislation in Vichy ensured that all Jews, but especially those who were neither French nor financially well off, were at special risk of imprisonment, and when the round-ups began in 1941, it was to those camps that the Jews were sent. The most urgent task of OSE was to find ways to liberate the internees and to provide emotional and material support to those who remained. Like a number of other philanthropic organizations, OSE sent social workers to live in the camps as voluntary interns "*internés volontaires*,"[24] "to share the daily life of the internees, to know their real needs, to provide whatever assistance was possible, and to defend their meager rights," as OSE workers, reflecting on their experiences, in 1946, explained.[25] Or, as Vivette Samuel-Hermann, who, *volontaire* at Rivesaltes put it, her role was quite simply "to be present." "Just to be there was significant."[26] In the camps, at that time, to be present could still mean something. That was why there were representatives of international philanthropic foundations. If someone was there, the guards and the people who represented Vichy could not give full vent to their evil side."

It was a job that required commitment and engendered despair. "I do not know how to depict or to make you understand, uncle, what goes on and the entirely exceptional nature of the events we live," an anonymous social worker wrote on 17 November 1941. "My only hope is that the people who come from here and have seen with their own eyes the walking cadavers of Drancy will find,

---

[23] Marrus, Michael and Paxton, Robert. Vichy France and the Jews (New York: Schocken, 1983) 64-5, 165-6; Weill, Joseph, Contribution à l'Histoire des camps d'internement dans l'anti-France (Paris: Editions du Centre, 1946) 9-15, 21-2.

[24] The Uniterian Service Committee, YMCA, Caritas, American Friends' Service Committee, Secours Suisse aux Enfants, Service Social d'Aide aux Emigrants, and CIMADE were very active.

[25] CDJC, L'Activité des Organisations Juives: 129.

[26] Samuel, Vivette, Sauver les Enfants (Paris: Publ. L. Lévi, 1995).

perhaps, the words and expressions needed to make you feel the depth of the tragedy and the moral importance of our work."[27]

The Oeuvre specialized in health care. To fight disease and alleviate malnutrition OSE started medical services and opened clinics, infirmaries, pharmacies, and food distribution centers. OSE concentrated specifically on child welfare and instituted a *crèche* and children's programs in a number of the larger camps. The primary concern of the organization, however, and its most essential business was not to ameliorate life in the camps, but to extricate those sequestered in them. In a September 1941 report on their activities, especially on behalf of young people, they stressed: "the liberation of children. As always that question is the essence of our main preoccupation. The prolonged stay in a camp constitutes a permanent danger for a child and we must strive to free as many as possible."[28] While OSE pressed the interests of individual adults who had reason to be administratively exempt according to the particulars of each case, it presented the problem of child internees to the government as an issue of general principle. Following prolonged and intensive negotiations, Vichy for a short time allowed young people under the age of fifteen to leave the camps on the condition that they were placed in OSE homes and that they were granted a residence certificate by the prefect of the department to which they were to go. A number of OSE vacation camps were set up and the children were passed from them to other departments and in this way more than a thousand children were freed from the Vichy concentration camps.[29]

While OSE-Sud worked to protect children by legal means, OSE-Nord, operating under the conditions of occupation, engaged in clandestine activities from the moment the Germans marched into Paris. Initially OSE-Nord concentrated on the secret transfer to the south of refugee children. After the ferocious manhunt in Paris of 16-17 July 1942 (the round-up of the Vélodrome d'Hiver, or

[27] CDJC, Doc. CCXIII-86, Rapport sur les conditions de vie à Drancy.
[28] CDJC, Doc. CCCLXVI-II: .9.
[29] Klarsfeld, Serge, The Children of Izieu: 8-9; CDJC, Doc. CCLXVI-13 'OSE'.

Vél d'Hiv, as it was known) OSE-Nord engaged in numerous underground activities. The *rafle* (or round-up) of the Vél d'Hiv was the result of the so-called Spring Wind operation to arrest 28,000 foreign and stateless Jews in the Greater Paris region. Ordered by the Germans but conducted entirely by French police and their auxiliaries, the *razzia* trapped 12,884 people in two days. A total of 6,900 people, of whom 4,051 were children, were forced into the Vél d'Hiv. Single men and women, and families without children (5,984 souls), were sent to Drancy. There the deportation trains were filled and began to roll.[28] For OSE-Nord there could be no more delusions about the ultimate fate of Jews caught in the occupied zone, and their main objective was to hide as many people as possible. In January 1943 one of the two OSE-Nord directors, Falk Walk, was arrested, sent to Drancy and deported. The other, Eugène Minkovski, remained in Paris and, together with five women collaborators (Hélène Matorine, Simone Kahn, Jeanine Lévy, Céline Vallée and Mme Averbouh) organized a child camouflage service by passing Jewish children to gentile families who hid them, maintaining contact with the foster families throughout the war—to ensure the children were well treated and to provide maintenance funds, ration coupons, and false identity papers as needed. This network helped 700 children to survive the German occupation in the north.[29]

Clandestine activities to save Jewish children were undertaken later in the south than in the north; the OSE staff in the free zone operated under the illusion that a French government would deal more kindly with its Jewish citizens and refugees than would the German invaders. In the wake of the August 1942 dragnets which ravaged several cities in the south, OSE decided more or less officially to go underground. The legal structure of children's homes and health care centers

[28] Diamant, David, Les Juifs dans la Résistance française (Paris:Le Pavillon, 1971) 119-20; Claude Levy and Paul Tillard, Betrayal at the Vel D'Hiv, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), La Grande Rafle du Vel d'Hiv (Paris: Laffont, 1967); Marrus and Paxton, Vichy France and the Jews: 250-2; George Wellers, L'étoile jaune à l'heure de Vichy (Paris: Fayard, 1973) .83-5; CDJC DOC. CCXIV-74, Situation au 25 Août 1942: 1-3.

[29] CDJC, L'activité des organizations Juives, 141-2; CDJC docs. CCXVI-12a, "Exposé sur le circuit Garel:" 2; CCXVIII-104. Travail clandestin de l'OSE: Témoignage de M. Georges Garel:. 8-9; CCLXVI-13; CCLXVI-16: La situation du judaisme en France, Juillet 1945, 25. According to this report 1,000 to 1,200 children were evacuated by OSE-Nord from the Occupied Zone to the South.

remained intact, but they also served as a screen for the organization of secret border crossings, for laboratories to produce false papers, and to hide those in imminent danger of arrest. It was decided that "the young people in the OSE residences had become too obvious and too vulnerable a target. They had to be hidden."[30] An extensive network was developed to move, screen and save the children in OSE's care. The architect of the *réseau Garel*, or Garel network, Georges Garel, had gained the respect of the OSE leadership through his devoted effort to liberate the children caught in the brutal *rafle* in Lyon and subsequently incarcerated in the concentration camp of Vénissieux.[31] Garel later met with Monsignor Jule-Gérard Saliège, the archbishop of Toulouse who, from the beginning of the occupation had publicly decried anti-Semitism and condemned racism and racial programs. He had also been among the first Catholic prelates in France to denounce the deportation of the Jews in a pastoral letter read in all the parishes of his diocese on 23 August 1942.[32] He advised Garel not to create a new philanthropic organization but to work within the framework of the Catholic or other charitable organizations which already existed. Furnished with a reference from Saliège, Garel made contact with public, private, religious, and non-sectarian organizations. The network grew rapidly until it covered the entire southern zone and children were taken in by Catholic (the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul) and Protestant (CIMAD) and official (Secours National) and private (Mouvement Populaire des Familles) groups.[33] Garel and his associates divided the children into two groups: those who could "pass" as gentiles, and those who for cultural, religious, or

[30] CDJC doc: CCXVII-12-a:1

[31] Late in August 1942, some 1,200 Jews were arrested in a sudden dragnet operation in Lyon and sent to Vénissieux internment camp. Garel, who was a resister but not a member of OSE, managed to enter Vénissieux in an official capacity to help liberate the children who were legally entitled to their freedom, as well as a number who were decreed prey: 108 in all. Garel, Charles Lederman, Elisabeth Hirsch, and Hélène Lévy from OSE, the director of the interconfessional philanthropic group Les Amitiés Chrétiennes, l'Abbé Glasberg, Madeleine Barot, the general secretary of CIMADE (Consul Inter-Mouvements auprès des Evacués), the Jesuit priest Pierre Chaillet, and others worked furiously to free children under sixteen years of age who were not technically under arrest. See also René Nodot, les enfants ne partiront pas (Lyon: Nouvelle Lyonnaise, 1970) and CDJC doc. CCXVIII-104:1-3.

[32] Diamant, Les juifs dans la Résistance Française, 132; Lazare, La résistance Juive: 179-81; Marrus and Paxton, Vichy France: 206, 271.

linguistic reasons could not do so. The former with false identity cards or birth certificates were dispersed in "Aryan" milieus and remained under the direct surveillance of Garel. The other children, more than a thousand young people, were cared for by a *réseau* (network) run by a young woman named Andrée Salomon (*Circuit B*) who looked after these children openly until OSE was forced into an entirely clandestine existence when they were smuggled over the French border, primarily into Switzerland but occasionally also into Spain.[34]

With more than 1,500 children to look after by the summer of 1943, the network had become extensive and was divided into four separate geographic sections and finally a transport division was responsible for moving children quickly and at short notice when it was necessary to do so.[35] The réseau Garel and Solomon's *Circuit B* differed from the networks run by Zegota, the Boogaards, or the NV in that the former were developed within an already extant organization (OSE), depended on pre-existing institutions, and run by Jews for the benefit of their co-religionists.[36] In other respects, however, the OSE rescue and protection operations had much in common with the underground groups. All were dedicated to maintaining the lives of Jewish children in the face of ruthless persecution and despite the risks such work posed. Then, too, a great majority of OSE couriers, like their counterparts in the clandestine organizations, were women. Women assistants worked in the *maison d'enfants* and when these were closed and the children dispersed, the women carried on with the responsibility of safeguarding children's lives. They worked, finding homes for the children,

---

33 L'activité des organizations Juives en France: 157-60; CDJC doc. CCXVIII-104: .3-5;

34 CDJC doc. CCXVII-12A, PP.1-2: According to a statement by the American Joint Distribution Committee, OSE was responsible for smuggling 2,000 children into Switzerland. CDJC doc. CCCLVI-14, American Joint Distribution Committee: 5

35 CDJC, docs CCXVII-12a, 1-2; CCXVIII-104: 3-8.

36. OSE was merely one already extant institution to develop networks to protect and save Jewish children. In France alone such work was undertaken by a spectrum of organizations: public, private, Catholic, Protestant, communist and socialist. Indeed with just the Jewish community, numerous associations formed special child welfare services. The Young Zionists (Jeunesse Sioniste), Jewish Scouts (Eclaireurs Israélites de France), CIMADE, Rehabilitation and Training Organization (ORT), and Zionist socialist groups like Hashomer Hatzair, Dror, and Gordonia, were committed to the protection of young people.

escorting them from endangered locations to hiding places, obtaining false papers, food, shoes, clothes. Finally, the OSE network in practice functioned very much like the other networks. It, too, depended on courageous and sympathetic gentiles to shelter children for the duration of the war.

Commenting on the situation of the Jews in France and Belgium, the historian Lucien Steinberg rightly observed that "the majority of Jews who survived either did not need the help of the Jewish and non-Jewish rescue organizations, or turned to them very infrequently."[37] It is obvious that these organizations could not save the entire Jewish population. Most of the Jews who survived did so thanks to their own initiative. The majority supported themselves illegally, but on an individual level, they received help from the local population. Although precise figures are not available, the picture that emerges indicates that this pattern prevailed throughout Europe. By and large, the better part of Jewish children was not helped by organized networks but through personal, familial contacts and first and foremost the children were saved by their parents. The act of giving up one's child, or surrendering one's own daughter or son, of recognizing that one no longer could protect and shelter one's own child, was the first and most radical step in the chain of rescue.

England's contribution to the rescue efforts started with The World Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, which was the response of the British people to the pogrom of 10th November 1938. Representatives were sent to Germany and Austria to set up the mechanisms for selecting, processing and transporting the children. It was able to build on a series of existing schemes, such as the Inter-Aid Committee for Children from Germany (Associated with Save the Children Fund), the Quaker German Emergency Committee and the Jewish Refugee committee. Wilfred Israel, descending from a wealthy Anglo-German family, provided an early rallying point for refugee workers. He was already busy in Germany organizing Youth Aliyah—a scheme to train

[37]Steinberg, Lucien, "Jewish Rescue Activities in Belgium and France" in Yisrael Gutman and Ephraim Zuroff, eds. Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1977) 608-9

young Jews in agriculture so they would qualify for emigration to Palestine—via the Zionist movement. Israel, who had sent to London a proposal to evacuate children on a larger scale, helped lay the infrastructure.[38] The first transport of 320 children arrived at Harwich on 2nd December; when the war broke out 9,354 children had come, of whom 7,482 were Jewish. The scenes at the stations were heartbreaking. Parents and children came face to face with the reality of separation. No one could know how long it would last and for some parents it was literally impossible to let go and allow their loved ones to pass "into the arms of strangers." For the first three months the Kindertransports came mainly from Germany. Then the emphasis shifted to Austria. When the German army rolled into the Czech lands in March 1939 to establish a "protectorate" under the Third Reich, frantic arrangements had to be made to get children out of Prague, too. In addition, three trainloads of Polish Jewish children were arranged in February and August 1939. By the end of 1939, the RCM (Refugee Children Movement) ran out of money and said it could not take more children. The outbreak of war, a few days later, negated the dilemma. Hundreds of children, some literally waiting on the trains, were trapped. So were the parents of those who had made it to safety. Older children had to care for younger siblings and also took upon themselves to find sponsors and jobs for their mothers and fathers. They wrote letters, knocked on doors and pleaded with relatives. "In a unique inversion of normal affairs, in such cases it was the children who rescued the parents"[39]

With the outbreak of the war and in anticipation of devastating bombing raids, the government set in motion plans to evacuate children and pregnant women to "safe areas." Children of the Kinderstransport were caught up in the great migration and found themselves totally isolated, living with uncomprehending families in remote areas. From the moment of their arrival and

[38] Introduction by David Cesarani in Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, Into the Arms of Strangers (New York/London: Bloomsbury Press , 2001) 15.
[39] Introduction by David Cesarani in Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, Into the Arms of Strangers (New York/London: Bloomsbury Press , 2001) 16.

throughout the war years the children (those old enough to write) struggled to remain in touch with their parents, but from September 1939 it became more difficult, and then the British press and the radio reported the deportation of Jews from Germany and Austria to Poland. By the end of the war it became clear, that deportations ended in mass murder. In a handful of astonishing cases parents survived and families were reunited, but these were awkward encounters. Children were no longer children and the parents were changed and exhausted by the horrors of the war. The majority of children had to face the reality that home and family as they had known were lost forever.

4. What was it to be "in hiding:"

It was one thing to save a person and another to be the child who was saved. What was it like to be in hiding and hidden, like Anne Frank, or in hiding and visible (under assumed identities)? Each child's experience was unique, but certain aspects were almost universally shared. They could not understand why they were forced to leave their homes, their families, their friends, and they did not know what was safe and what was dangerous. It was both physically and psychologically difficult to go into hiding. As one of them explained: "It was all of a sudden a way of life without life (without living)."[40] Every act of daily life had to be considered consciously and adapted to fit the situation.

Both the children and those who hid them strove to conduct themselves in such a way that the young people's presence would not be disclosed by their behavior either in the house or in dealings with the outside world. Children were literally minimized (belittled to the point that they had to vanish) and marginalized. They had no choice but to adapt to the customs and manners of the family that hid them. Children who were in hiding and hidden were denied a normal childhood and they were robbed of all that would have ensued from such a youth: education, development of

[40] Steinberg, Lucien, "Jewish Rescue Activities in Belgium and France" in Yisrael Gutman and Efraim Zuroff, eds. Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust (Jerusalem: Yad Veshem, 1977) 608-9

abilities, models for familial relationships, normal socialization process. Instead they suffered deprivation and a persistent psychological dilemma between the (usually silent) assertion of their right to live and a (too often manifest) gratitude towards those who protected them.

For many children, life in hiding and visible posed problems similar to those which young people in hiding and hidden experienced. Children who "hid" lived openly, indeed sometimes they were fortunate enough to lead the normal life of a child but, especially if old enough to understand (however dimly) the dangers of the situation, they also feared inadvertent exposure or denunciation. It was not their physical existence that children who "hid" had to conceal, but their Jewish identity. Some children found themselves the focus of their hosts' avarice, frustration and aggression. Young people were taken as cheap maids or farm-hands and then summarily dismissed if their work failed to please. Some were abused and had numerous foster homes. As one girl reported: "How did I feel during all this? I had never thought, 'How do I feel?' It's just lately that I finally came to the conclusion what I thought: I didn't think.and I didn't feel. I certainly did not cry when my parents were taken because I was so busy getting myself into a place, into a safe place for survival. I don't think I cried one tear during those entire years. I did not cry, I did not mourn. I just survived. All my energy went into planning to survive and to day-to-day; there was no room for any other emotion."[41]

This business of accommodation, the concern to fit in, to conform to the situation, was dominant and omnipresent. It also took a lot of time and energy and was a major occupation of children in hiding. They were dealing with people that were constantly different and even those who were happy in their foster homes were busy with the task of accommodation, and the sort of obvious and insidious pressure to adjust, adapt, was not healthy either for the foster parents or for the children. Inevitably it occasionally led to the psychological and sexual abuse. For young children, it was an obstacle in building a sense of self and, for the older children, it led to a certain disintegration

[41] As cited by Deborah Dwork. Children with a Star: interview with survivor .

of their former identity. Children in hiding and hidden were burdened with terrible isolation and deprivation. Their lot was to live as if they were not living, to exist without a trace. Children in hiding and visible did not have those difficulties. Their oppression was packaged differently; it was their burden to live another identity. To live as gentiles among gentiles encompassed a spectrum of experience: to give up the past and adopt a new history, to renounce who they were and become another person created its own problems.

On the other hand, Le Chambon, a small village in southern France, was one of the few extraordinary exceptions in the sad story of the Judeocide. The Chambonnais offered refuge to the persecuted, and resistance groups throughout France brought Jews, and especially Jewish children, to the village. The few thousand Jewish adults and children who came to Le Chambon stayed for the duration of the war or were passed over the border to Switzerland. Many people were harbored by individual families, others lived in seven group of homes supported by philanthropic organizations.

Many Jewish children "in hiding" in convents and monasteries in Italy, after the fall of Mussolini and the subsequent German occupation, were in a situation similar to those in Le Chambon. But the situation which at the beginning had appeared calm and stable was shattered with the sudden round-up of Jews in Rome's ancient ghetto on October 16, 1943, when 1,259 were caught and 1,007 deported. For the Jews of Rome, as for those throughout Europe, the problem was to find a hiding place. Jewish children who eventually found refuge were hunted and lived in primitive conditions. They were in "hiding" and prey because of their Jewish identity. Very young children who had no concept or memory of Jewish life simply grew up as Christians. Those from about four or five years old remembered their families and former customs. They had to be constantly vigilant to avoid disclosure and for years they lived a dual reality as internal Jews and external Christians. It was easier and it was safer to forget the past and remember only their new

histories; there was only one problem; if they forgot their names and who they had been and the war ended and someone of the family returned, how would he know how to find them? This was a constant fear. In the case of very young children, who lived in pious homes and religious institutions, they simply grew up as Christians. Any criticism against of the Christian Community in this regard, must be confined to actions after and not during the war.[42]

In The Destruction of the European Jews, Raul Hilberg summarized the 2,000 years of Jewish history in a few sentences. First, he said, Jews were told, "You have no right to live among us as Jews." Then, they were told, "You have no right to live among us." Finally, in Germany's Third Reich, Jews were told, "You have no right to live."[43] Jewish children who went into hiding began life with a different message from the gentile world. "You *may*; you are entitled, to live among us as Jews." Within a very short time, sometimes even a month or week, they experienced the three stages Hilberg had identified, and as they went into "hiding", they began a camouflaged life. But for many this ruse did not suffice. "You have no right to live among us;" they lived but left no trace of their existence; and again that did not satisfy. Like Anne Frank, they were betrayed and deported.

5. Deportations:

The vast majority of Jews were shipped directly to the extermination centers through the transit camps, which were, quite literally, holding pens or repositories for Jews in transit to the east and facilitated the process in many ways. As Raul Hilberg discussed in great detail in The Destruction of the European Jews, and Claude Lanzmann illustrated very clearly in his documentary film, *Shoah*, the German bureaucracy of death policy was carried out by a number of different and

[42] The issues of baptism and conversion have been discussed in Louis Allen, "Jews and Catholics," in Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin , eds. Vichy France and the Resistance (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1985); Roger Braun, Les enfants Juifs à la liberation en France, rencontre Chrétiens et Juifs (1980) 88-94; Werner Weinberg, "A Dutch Couple," The Christian Century (22-29 June 1983): 611-15.
[43] Hilberg, Raul. The Destruction of the European Jews (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985) 9.

sometimes competing administrative offices. They were all committed to a common policy of Judeocide, but the actual mechanism for it varied from place to place according to regional conditions, and the train lines became the physical, practical, unifying network, the sole connection between the transit camps and the extermination centers. The transit camps helped to expedite the murder machinery, prevented strains on the system and provided an additional screen or camouflage for the ultimate goal of extermination, known as the "Final Solution." For these reasons transit camps were primarily a phenomenon of the operation in the west and not the east of Europe. The logistical difficulties of moving people through a greater number of individual bureaus and to a more distant destination engendered more problems and, therefore, a greater need to warehouse human beings.

It was different in the Soviet Union where Jews were killed on the spot or in Poland where the Ghettos served as storage pens and, as the distances to the camps were short, the authorities could coordinate their activities more closely.

In the west there were no closed ghettos; there was no direct connection between the capital cities of Western Europe and the extermination destinations in the east; thus the need for transit camps. They were presented as permanent settlements, "The Fuhrer Gives the Jews a Town" was a propaganda film about Terezin (a transit camp). In transit camps, as elsewhere, "education" was of great importance to children: a symbol of normal life. "There are about 250 children between the ages of 6-15 years," an anonymous social worker reported about Gurs, a Vichy French camp in the foothills of the Pyrenees. In September 1939, from a camp that had been built for refugees of the Spanish Civil War, Gurs became a destination for German Jews who had fled to France. By the autumn of 1940 the population swelled to about 13,200, of whom only 400 were children. Education was considered important but education material was missing. A report on a visit of June

19, 1941, the social workers of Pithiviers noted that the diet was execrable, but that the lack of books was equally serious. "The social workers believe that the books are as necessary as bread."[44] Pithiviers had begun to house Jews in May 1941; just over a year later, in late July and early August 1942, it became a depot for the damned.

As said earlier, in France, the fact that social work teams were permitted to live in the camps as "*volontaires,*" in order to ameliorate camp life by providing additional food, medicines and clothing, represented a link to the outside world, a sign that the prisoners were not forgotten. With regard to children, their primary goal was to work towards liberation and until that goal could be reached, they tried to normalize the young people's lives and to that end established educational facilities. In the camps in the other occupied and Axis countries, where the phenomenon of voluntary intern social teams was unknown, education for children was as central an issue. There, as in France, there was a strong discrepancy between what was supposed, and even reported to exist, and the actual situation.

In the Netherlands, Barneveld, was considered a privileged transit camp—a little community with school and very good teaching, but the idyll did not last long. By September 1944, they were sent to Theresienstadt,[45] which had been built as a fortified garrison town and was transformed into a transit camp. Between November 1941, when the first Jews to be deported to Terezin arrived and the liberation of the camp in May 1945, 141,162 Jews were sent there; 88,162 subsequently were deported, 33,456 died, 1,623 were released to neutral countries (1,200 to Switzerland and 423 to Sweden) in 1945; and 16,832 remained.[46] Despite the constant threat of the deportation trains, the

[44] CDJC doc. CCXIII-101, "Visite du 19 Juin à la Permanence des Assistances Sociales à Pithiviers:" 2
[45] Mechanicus, Philip. Waiting for Death: a Diary, (London : Calder and Boyars, 1968)
[46] H. G. Adler, Theresienstadt, 1941-45; Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1960) 47-8, and his discussion of statistics: 37-60. There is some confusion in the literature with regard to the statistics pertaining to children. Jiri Weil, I Never Saw Another Butterfly, writes in his epilogue: "there were 15,000 children and 100 came back:" 61. In p. 81, above a child's drawing of a flower and a butterfly the following information appears: "A total of around 15,000 children under the age of 15 passed through Terezin.

famine, lack of hygiene and disease, the Jewish inhabitants created an intellectual and cultural life for both adults and children. Because proper scholastic classes were prohibited, teaching became an underground activity. Child welfare was taken seriously by the adult inmates of Terezin. The purpose was to safeguard the children's health and to continue their education. Up to the age of four, children were left with their mothers, after that they were placed in a children's home, the purpose of which was "to take the children away from their parents (so that) the children shouldn't see all the suffering and trouble of the grown-ups."

While Theresienstadt may well have had a rich cultural life, a variety of activities in which children participated were undertaken in other transit camps too; at Gurs, in France,[47] culture and Zionism were part of the education and activities for children.

Two other activities were dictated by the Germans' hard and despotic rule; the ritual of *Appell*, and the queues for food. Children (indeed all the inmates) were there simply as bodies, units to be counted. They were brought into the camp, registered, and deported, and all that mattered to the German camp administrators was for their figures to tally. The *Appell* gave them great pleasure, apparently, and they made children stand for hours. If the ritual of *Appell* reflected the Germans' concept of the position of the Jews in the transit camps, for the children, waiting on queue for their meager portions of miserable food was the quintessence of their experience. It represented the two

---

Of these around 100 came back." Inge Auerbacker's autobiographical memoir, I Am A Star (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1986) explains: "of fifteen thousand children imprisoned in Terezin between 1941 and 1945, about 100 survived. I am one of them:" 1. The introduction to Terezin, published by the Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands (Prague, 1965) offered a variation on these figures. "The transports (out of Terezin, to the east) included also 15,000 children, of whom 150 returned (5). According to Adler 6,588 children were transported *out of* Theresienstadt and of those only 100 lived to see liberation; Adler believed that all of the survivors were between 14 and 16 years old. However 7,407 children under the age of fifteen were transported *into* Theresienstadt. Furthermore, a certain number was born there and an entire transport of children from Bialystock mysteriously arrived in and not so mysteriously disappeared again and Adler figured that this brought the number to 10,000. To this he added 2,000—15 and 16 years' old—and according to him there were 12,000 children there at one time or another. At the end of October 1944, there were 819 children still in Tereczin, more arrived thereafter, and when it was liberated there were 1,633 children under 15:.572-3. See also Lederer Zdenek, Ghetto Theresienstadt: 263.

[47] CDJC doc. CCXX-13, Camp de Gurs, Noël 1940 Letter dated 29 Sept., 44 by Ruth Lambert, OSE resident social worker detailing cultural activities in the camp.

major determinants of their life: waiting and want. "They stood on line three times a day, and the rations for which they waited were insufficient to keep them alive."[48] In a report of May 1941 on the conditions in the French internment camps, the situation was explained in detail, and as a result the Secours Suisse aux Enfants and the American Friends' Service begun (especially in Gurs and Argelès) to distribute supplementary food rations to children. Unfortunately, the largest number was in Rivesaltes who had 3,200 children while Gurs had 59 and Argelès 300. "The camp authorities would not allow social workers within the boundaries of Rivesaltes. Malnutrition was rampant. Same situation in Drancy and Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande."[49] The deprivations of transit camp life, the confinement, waiting and hunger led, ineluctably, to the children's deterioration. They suffered from feelings of shame and degradation. Their family structure weakened if it did not collapse entirely and, physically, all children succumbed to a variety of illnesses and not a few to death. The children's perception of their parents, reduced to sub-human conditions, changed radically. From her vantage point as a social worker, Vivette Herman noticed the corruption of filial respect. "In that jungle they quickly adapt, the total anarchy and the freedom from all tutelage seduces them, there is no vestige of parental authority, the arbitrary is substituted for justice and in that upside down universe the sharpest child, those most adroit in attending to daily existence put themselves before their parents."[50]

Life in transit camps was a gradual acclimatization to the abnormal; they lived on a daily basis with degradation and they saw their parents humiliated and abused, they grew accustomed to hunger, waiting and want and they endured incarceration, malnutrition and disease. On one level, some echo or shadow of normal life was preserved. A woman "who had taken the task of looking

[48] Weill, Joseph, Contributions à l'histoire des camps d'internement dans l'Anti-France. (Paris: Editions du Centre) 37-41.
[49] CDJC doc. CCXIV-74, "Situation au 25 Août 1942:" 1,4.
[50] Samuel, Vivette. "Journal d'une Internée" Evidences, #14, (Nov.1950): 12.

after children" in her barrack in Bergen-Belsen described, in her diary, how the extraordinary became ordinary, the incredible even more believable, and the unimaginable commonplace occurrence.[51]

A small number of children were liberated. Two committees were involved: OSE, on the one hand, and the Commission Israélite des Camps—representatives of the Jewish agencies, the most important EIF (Ëclaireurs Israélites de France). The Commité de Coordination pour l'Assistance dans les Camps (CCAC) was its non-Jewish counterpart. Efforts were made to bring the release of those under sixteen, and Garel's network together with Abbé Glasberg (a converted Jew who was posthumously honored at Yad Vashem last January), falsified files and were able to release children from the camps. In addition to children under sixteen, adults with French nationality were to be released too. It was terrible to choose the people to save, when you knew that the others were to be deported. 108 children and 60 adults were released, but then 80 of them taken back by the police and deported.

Most children in Nazi-occupied Europe left the transit camps in cattle cars bound for the east. In occupied France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and from Terezin, in Czechoslovakia, they were amongst those who were locked up and shipped out. After the round-up of the Vél d'Hiv, single people were sent to Drancy and families with children to Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande. Initially, it appeared that children under twelve would not be deported but be put under the care of the German-imposed Jewish Council, UGIF (Union Générale des Israélites de France). Within a few days their parents and the older children were forced into the deportation trains. "It is useless to describe the lacerating scenes at the moment of separation. There were numerous suicide attempts. Some mothers became mad. Children were torn away from them and in the end the very children

[51] Lévy-Haas, Hanna, Inside Belsen (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982) 15. The last chapter in the book is a concise and very clear description of the camp: "The Concentration Camp at Belsen:" 128-34.

who had been separated from their parents were themselves deported not long afterwards "*Hélas,* all efforts have been in vain, and many departures of 500 children each have taken place; these children, aged two to twelve, first were transferred from Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande to Drancy."[52] It is from there that they left under the same conditions as adults, in sealed wagons, supervised by women who were deported also. In some wagons there were just children alone. "Upon leaving, each child is handed a bit of bread and a tin of condensed milk."[53] Ultimately, no one was spared. Some children were deported to slave labor and death camps such as Auschwitz and Sobibor immediately. Others went eastward gradually, eventually locked into a cattle car, and shipped to "Pitchipoi" as the children in Drancy called the mysterious "unknown destination" to which they dreaded to be sent.

6. Extermination centers (Death and Slave Labor Camps)

Kiryl Sosnowski, in his book, The Tragedy of Children Under Nazi Rule noted that "Jewish children as an "unproductive element" were, as a rule, the first to be killed. This was a matter of policy. According to the testimony of Rudolf Höss, the Commandant of Auschwitz, "Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work." A contemporary camp report explained that women were killed "because most of them had children."[54]

In Auschwitz, Chelmno and the Operation Reinhard camps (named after Reinhard—one of the important figures in the annihilation of the Jews), the extermination centers of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, there was no route to life, and certainly no child life. Children were not specially singled out for slaughter; everyone, except the few slave laborers who were needed to run the

[52] CDJC – DOC.CCXIV-74 – Situation au 25 Août, 1942: .6
[53] CDJC – DOC.CCXIV-74 – Situation au 25 Août, 1942: 7. Also Gilbert. Martin. Final Journey (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979), Ch. 12: "The Children's Convoys:" 143-8; Weill, Joseph. Camps d'internement:.217-8; and Wellers, George, De Drancy à Auschwitz: .55-8.
[54] Sosnowski, Kyril, The Tragedy of Children Under the Nazi Rule (Posnan: Western Press Agency, 1962) 5-6 & 70-71.

murder machinery, was killed on arrival. These camps, most of them located in Poland, with its three million Jews, (10% of the total population), extensive railway system, sparse countryside and thick forests, were established at the very end of 1941 and early 1942. In the summer of 1942 burning systems were added. No one knows precisely how many Jews were murdered; the figures range from 150,000 to 340,000 in Chelmno, 550,000 to 600,000 in Belzec; 200,000 to as many as 600,000 in Sobibor, and 750,000 to more than a million in Treblinka.[55] Most of the Jews annihilated in these death factories were Polish but, especially in Sobibor and Treblinka, victims were shipped in from every corner of occupied Europe in trains of "resettlement workers."

One of the few contemporary eye-witness accounts of this process was that of Kurt Gerstein, appointed head of the SS Disinfection Services, who gave an accurate account of what was going on with Zyklon B gas in the camps and through him the Allies were informed.[56] Another source was the Polish Courier Jan Karski who also informed Allies of the extermination camps.[57] There were individual and extraordinary exceptions to the inexorable process, the most notable being the slave laborers, because they were not murdered immediately. Most of them were young adults, but a few children were given specific tasks to do, like "that little Jewish boy of three or four years of age who was made to hand out bits of string with which the victims had to tie their shoes together,"[58] in Belzec, or kept as pets like the thirteen-year-old Simon Srebnik, one of the two survivors of Chelmno. Srebnik was in a work detail, but he outlived the cohorts because he was a favorite of the SS. Finally, he was shot together with all the remaining workers two days before the Soviet Army

---

[55] The higher estimates from Feig, Konylyn G, Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness (London: Holmes and Meier, 1981) 266,277,283,296. The lower figures are given by Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985) 1219.

[56] Friedlander, Saul, Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good (New York: Albert Knopf, 1969) 106, L'Ambiguité du bien (Paris: Casterman, 1967). Also Pierre Joffroy's study of Gerstein: A Spy for God (London, Collins, 1971), L'Esprit de Dieu (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1969).

[57] Karski, Jan. The Story of a Secret State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1944) .339-52.

[58] Friedlander, Gerstein: 113.

arrived, but he survived.[59] Some children were exceptions to the murder process because they were not killed immediately, but for the hundreds of thousands of children who passed through these murder mills, the common pattern prevailed. Essentially, there was no child life in Chelmno or the Operation Reinhardt killing centers. Just as Jewish children were a rare phenomenon in the prisoner population of the extermination camps in Poland, they were also an infrequent presence in the original concentration camps in Germany. These camps and their hundreds of satellites were meant for political opponents and criminals. Jewish children who entered the concentration camp system through deportation to Auschwitz or Majdanek and who survived the first selection may have been dispatched to any of these camps later on in the war (starting at the end of 1943) for labor purposes. Originally, there was no Jewish child life in the Germans' concentration camp system, just as in principle there was no Jewish child life in the Operation Reinhard extermination centers. Auschwitz and Majdanek were the gates to the concentration camp network, the unique, terrifying and bizarre world, the *univers concentrationnaire*, as the French resister David Rousset, who survived the German camp system, called it.[60] Children who passed through the portals of Auschwitz and survived the selection became adult slaves in one or another part of the complex. In other words, once in the camp, we are no longer in the realm of the history of Jewish child life, but in that of those rare Jewish children who labored as adults. There were no young children and therefore no child life. There were only older youths and a slave existence. And yet those Jewish youngsters who passed the selection lived until the moment they succumbed to disease or starvation, or were killed, or were liberated, and so the history of their lives is part of the history of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe. For the children who entered that portal, the camp was not a "universe," it was a lived experience of horror. This was not a world they contemplated, but a reality they endured. Young

[59] Lanzman, Claude. Shoah (New York, Panthéon Books, 1985):3-4
[60] Rousset, David, L'Univers concentrationnaire (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1965; re-edition of 1945).

people who entered the slave labor network, whether through the selection at Auschwitz/Birkenau or because they were sent directly to forced labor camp, shed their childhood with their names. They were robbed of their youth just as they were stripped of their packages, clothes, and hair. From the moment they joined the slave ranks they had no choice but to act as the adult laborers they were taken to be.[61] This was true not only of the children's role with regard to the Germans, but also within the personal context of a son and his father or a daughter and her mother. The system dictated relationships. The young people were no longer in a position to be the children of their parents, the adults were defeated in their attemps to protect their progeny, and young people learned that they were no longer children very quickly.

This physical degeneration and emotional atrophy marked the last phase of the situation of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe. Baptised into the Kingdom of Death, the young inmates continued to make choices and to maintain relationships. But they had no control over the system. The machinery of death worked too well and ground too fine. Despite the young people's efforts to find a way to navigate the perils of camp life, the support and care they gave to and received from their closest companions, they were doomed. Most young people eked out an existence each day until their ordeal ended in death by selection, starvation, or disease. Liberation saved all too few. Excerpt from "The Lament on the Slaughtered Jewish People:"

> They, the children of Israel, were the first in doom and disaster;
> Most of them without father and mother
> Were consumed by frost, starvation and lice;
> ……
> Say, then, how have these lambs sinned?

---

61. There were some exceptions to this rule. At Strasshof, for instance, there was no selection, and dependents remained alive so long as others in the family worked, but if they were left alone, unaccompanied by a productive member of the family, they "disappeared" after some time. (Deborah Dwork, Children with a Star: 307)

[62]According to Kiryl Sosnowski, 180 children under the age of fourteen were found alive at the liberation of Auschwitz, about 500 in Bergen-Belsen, 500 in Ravensbrück and 1,000 in Buchenwald. The Tragedy of Children: 99

Why in the days of doom are they the first victims of wickedness?
The first in the trap of evil are they!

The first were they detained for death,
The first into the wagons of slaughter;
They were thrown into the wagons, the huge wagons,
Like heaps of refuse, like the ashes of the earth –
And they transported them,
Killed them,
Exterminated them
Without remnant of remembrance…..
The best of my children were all wiped out!

Yitzhak Katzenelson.[63]

[63]From The Massacre of European Jewry, (World Hashomer Hatzair: Kibbutz Merhaviah, 1963) 208.
Yitzhak Katzenelson a prolific poet, dramatist and educator, was an active member of the Jewish underground. He lost his wife and two younger sons in Treblinka and he succeeded to flee to Vittel with his eldest son, after obtaining papers. During his internment in Vittel from May 1943 to September 1943, Katznelson wrote his moving Vittel Diary which was published in his memory by the Ghetto Fighters' House. In September 1943, father and son were transported to the furnaces of Auschwitz.

Chapter 2

Studies on Child Survivors

Around eleven per cent of Jewish children survived in Nazi-occupied Europe and of the millions of Jewish victims of the Holocaust, a staggering number were children (1.5-2 million).

According to Dr. Robert Krell[31] child survivors of the Holocaust have only recently been identified as a group of individuals deserving attention separate from survivors in general. Whereas there exist many articles in the psychiatric literature about Holocaust survivors and their offspring, little mention is made of child survivors as a distinct group. Indeed there are some differences between "child" and adult survivors in respect to the role of memories, methods of coping and long-term adaptation.

The harm done to children was far greater than that done to older survivors, who possess a memory of family and tradition, daily life and habits, smells and sounds of a past. They may pass on to their children fragments of such memories and, protective of them, withhold not only details of the war but also of prewar life and their own precious memories; but child survivors may not have such memory. Too young to have partaken of a foundation for life, too traumatized to experience a childhood, too preoccupied with survival to reflect on its impact, they were not blessed with the opportunity for systematized, chronological collection of ordinary personal history. The youngest of them recall no parents or experience of family and sometimes do not even know their first language. The older ones recall fragments from which to reconstruct memory, if afforded the opportunity or sufficiently self-motivated. As Moskowitz (1983) discusses so poignantly: "The loss of parents in early life meant loss of the very nucleus of their own identity." She observes, "…the continuing burden of loss the survivors feel for parents, who they have never known, a hunger for some link

[31] Krell, Robert, in "Child Survivors of the Holocaust, 40 years later" Journal of American Academy of Child Psychiatry (1985): 24

with the past through family connections destroyed or distorted, for traces of themselves buried in childhoods they dare not remember."(236)[32]

Child survivors of the Holocaust are defined as those survivors who, at liberation in 1945, were between the ages of one to sixteen years old, and whose ages at the present time range from the late sixty to mid-seventies. Almost without exception, Jewish children in Europe during the war experienced chaos in their world and according to Dwork (1991)[33] only eleven percent of those children were still alive in 1945. How could this eleven percent explain to themselves this chaos and how did they adjust to it while it occurred, and later in their life? These questions have attracted attention for the past two decades. Historians, psychologists, and child survivors themselves, have directed increasing attention to them.[34] Organized groups of child survivors of the Holocaust began meeting internationally in the 1980s, as well as hundreds of local groups. Oral testimonies have been collected and memoirs published.

Gideon Hausner, Israel's Attorney-General, was chief prosecutor at the Eichmann Trial, in 1961 and, in the summary of his indictment of the atrocities perpetrated against the Jewish children of Europe, he expressed in the strongest way the children's tragedy when he accused the prisoner, declaring:

> No part of all the bloody work is as shocking and terrible as that of the million Jewish children whose blood was spilt like water throughout Europe; how they were separated by force from their mother, who tried to hide them, or murdered before their mothers' eyes. Nor can we say who suffered the more terrible fate: those who died or those who concealed themselves in every conceivable hiding-place and

[32] Moskowitz, S. Love Despite Hate: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and their Adult Lives (New York: Schocken Books, 1983).
[33] Dwork, Deborah. Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press. 1991) xxxiii
[34] In some instances, the psychologists and social scientists are themselves child survivors. Peter Suedfeld, who recently edited a book of autobiographical essays by child survivors with careers in the social sciences (including himself) Light from the Ashes: Social Science Careers of Young Holocaust Refugees and Survivors (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); he notes that "until very recently" he and many others had "never made the connection" between their Holocaust experiences and their later pursuits,vi.

> crevice, who lived in perpetual terror of expulsion, who survived by grace of Christian neighbors who agreed to hide them…[35]

During the Nazi persecution, the normal developmental process of individuation and separation, which begins in childhood and progresses as the child develops into a teenager and then emerges as an adult, was interrupted and distorted (Kestenberg & Brenner, 1996).[36] For hidden children, for instance, hiding meant separation, abandonment, suppression of identities and suspension from the normalities of life. Fear of exposure was equated with fear of death, and the precariousness and randomness of the war situation dominated most moves of their lives.

Indeed, trauma in childhood can disrupt normal developmental processes. Because of their dependence on their caregivers, their incomplete biological development, and their immature concepts of themselves and their surroundings, children have unique patterns of reaction and needs for intervention. At a lecture on child survivors' trauma, given by NAHOS (National Association of Child Survivors) on March 29, 2004, Dr. Irit Felzen, herself a child of survivors and a clinical psychologist, presented the trauma condition as being like a splinter under the finger's nail; everything is done to hold it in such a way to avoid pain by using only the other hand; but there will be times when things will push on this specific area and the reaction will be the one they would have felt in the real situation.

The term "wounded self" seemed an appropriate way to describe those who survived. Even when physical symptoms could be cured, memory seldom was. Laurence Langer (1991) describes the wounding in his typology of memory for Holocaust survivors. The following are his concepts: 1) *deep memory*—the buried self, seeping out into the life from which it is walled off, altering the meanings the present could take on, 2) *anguished memory*—perception of self and life from within

---

Cited by Robert Krell, M.D. in "Child Survivors of the Holocaust: 40 years later," Journal of American Academy of Child Psychiatry 24: 4: 378-380 (1985).

Kestenberg J., & Brenner, I., "The Last Survivor: The Child Survivor of the Holocaust," U.S. American Psychiatric Press (1996).

the wounded heart. The comparative backdrop for savoring reality includes a profound sense of suffering. To be part of what is ongoing in any present requires a separation from this self of the past, a dividing which could be painful and at times is pathological, 3) *humiliated memory*—the self, alone within a diminished past that is unwanted and rarely shareable. It is accompanied by an awareness of being completely violated, raped, having been powerless to change any of the conditions set by an oppressor who was both violent and exploitive, 4) *tainted memory*—the self remembered as having had to respond impromptu and in compromising ways to brutal exigencies in the camps or in hiding; and overall, there is 5) *unheroic memory*—the irretrievably diminished self which could only stand by helplessly as homes, occupations and beloved others were taken away, emptying life of all that had been fulfilling.[37] Elie Wiesel has presented us with vivid recollections of himself and his family in the concentration camps. He has spent a lifetime sifting through memory, allowing us all to share. In 1970, in two essays titled, "The Death of My Father" and "Snapshots," he tells himself and us, "surely it is impossible to invent suffering more naked, cruelty more refined. The smoke of the children burning maims our vision of the future."[38]

The fate of Holocaust survivors, who were children during WWII, has drawn increasing interest in mental health circles over the past several years. The interest of professionals is a result of the awakening of child survivors who have become active in writing and telling their life stories, as well as in initiating numerous conferences since 1991 (First International Gathering of Hidden Children in New-York) and forming self-help organizations in North America, Australia, Europe and Israel. This was the beginning of a social and cultural movement, which has rapidly gained momentum. Group meetings, and therapies of now-ageing child survivors, conferences and

[37] Laurence Langer, Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991).
[38] Wiesel, Elie, Night (New York: Avon 1969) 44.

publications on and by child survivors, have grown into a worldwide activity, as if child survivors feel the need to step forward before it is too late.

In community services such as AMCHA, the National Israeli Center for the Psychosocial Support of Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation, and in similar organizations, child survivors are differentiated as a special subgroup exhibiting their own specific, unmet needs and, in the expertise presented by psychiatrists dealing with Claims for Restitution, the special status of child survivors and their clinical features were frequently mentioned.[39] The aging child survivors become aware of their unfinished business from the distant past, and demand more psychotherapeutic, psychiatric, post-traumatic and rehabilitative attention, and search for opportunities for creative expression.[40]

Despite this rise in awareness, until now very few controlled studies have tackled the question of the long-term consequences of the Holocaust on the children who survived.

In her article: "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking about Child Survivors and the Holocaust,"[41] Susan Rubin Suleiman refers to child survivors as too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them but old enough to have been *there* during the Nazi persecution of Jews. The 1.5 generation shared experience is that of bewilderment and helplessness. This characterization may appear inadequate, in view of the massive trauma experienced by both child and adult survivors during the Holocaust. The operative word, however, is "premature"—for if all those who were there experienced trauma, the specific experience of children was that the trauma occurred (or at least began) before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases

[39] Paul H. Herberg H.J., ed. Psychic Sequelae of Persecutory Influences During Childhood and Youth, 1967, as cited in Israel Journal of Psychiatry (November 1, 2001): vol. 38.
[40] Brink T.L., ed. Holocaust Survivors' Mental Health. (New York, London: Haworth, 1994).
[41] American Imago (2002): 59.3: 227-295.

before any conscious sense of self. Paradoxically, their "premature bewilderment" was often accompanied by premature ageing, having to act as an adult while still a child.

The question is: where should the line be drawn between children and adolescents? The National Association of Child Holocaust Survivors (NAHOS) defines its members as those who were children or teenagers during 1938-1945, which would allow a range of birth dates from around 1930 to 1943.[42] Psychoanalysts who have studied child survivors pay special attention to early childhood, distinguishing between infancy, late infancy, the latency period and early adolescence.[43] Since the reasoning ability of pre-adolescent children (under eleven) differs markedly from that of adolescents, one should emphasize the difference between childhood and adolescence. Children under the age of eleven have a different way of understanding what is happening to them from those who are older. The older child possesses the capacity to think hypothetically, to use abstract words appropriately and with understanding, as well as a vocabulary to name the experience that the younger child lacks. The difference in understanding has its impact on the child's experience at the time of trauma and also on the child's subsequent development. One might ask how such developmental differences could influence the memories and narratives of survivors looking back after many years and provide accounts of their childhood.[44] Therefore, we could divide the survivors into three groups: children "too young to remember" (infancy to around three years old); children "old enough to remember but too young to understand" (approximately age four to ten), and children "old enough to understand but too young to be responsible" (approximately age eleven to fourteen), but who can make and act upon choices in response to catastrophe about their own or their family's actions.

---

[42] NAHOS flier advertising: 10th International Conference, held in Teaneck, New Jersey, Oct.11- 14 (1996).
[43] Kestenberg, Judith and Brenner, Ira. eds. The Last Witness: The Child Survivor of the Holocaust Washington, American Psychiatry Press, (1996).
[44] Information on cognitive psychology provided to Suleiman by Howard Gardner and cited in her article.

The degree of trauma to which children were subjected in the Holocaust is difficult to compare with other known forms of victimization of children. Only a few systematic studies were conducted on child survivors of the Holocaust after they reached mid-life. Interestingly, several earlier researches (1948-1951) wrote about these children or adolescents in generally optimistic terms.[45] They found that they had developed some neurotic symptoms, but were "neither deficient, delinquent or psychotic. Their functioning bears witness to a basically unharmed contact with their environment." (Janoff-Bulman,1992: 168). Another example: "We will have reason to hope that the accumulated aggressiveness of the remnant may be harnessed to productive activities and the cultivation of the arts and peace." (Janet, P. 1995: 510) But in fact, it was not as simple as that; there were, indeed, traumatic sequences.

Three Traumatic Sequences:

The Dutch psychiatrist Keilson was the first to do a systematic follow-up of Dutch Jewish children who survived. He coined the term "sequential traumatization" to refer to three phases (pre-, peri-, post-) that should constitute the focus of the attention when assessing the trauma history of the survivor.[46]

The period of childhood deprivation related to the Holocaust is subdivided into three main phases or "Traumatic Sequences" as defined by Keilson (1992).

The first sequence (or "prelude") is during the prewar and early war years when the child is still with its family, although suffering from anti-Semitic harassment, discrimination, ghettoization and threats to its life. The parents are overburdened, frightened and can no longer provide security to their children. The older children often had to take over responsibilities from their parents and already suffered from deep fears of death.

---

[45] Friedman, P., "The road back for the DPs: Healing the Psychological Scars of Nazism," Commentary 1948: 6: 508-510, cited in Israel Journal of Psychiatry Vol. 38, #1, (2001), CDJC: 2.24433.

[46] Keilson, H., Sequential Traumatization in Children. (JM: Magnes: The Hebrew University J'lem, 1992).

The second sequence begins after the breakup of the family and, after final separation from the parents, uprooting and transfer either to inside the system of the persecutors (camp life, forced labor camps or special child barracks such as those that existed in Theresienstadt or Buchenwald), or, after going into hiding with Christian families, monasteries, or in forests. During the second sequence the child is dependent on non-parental, often untrustworthy, adult strangers, in addition to direct exposure to the other vagaries and terrors of persecution as described by adult victims.

At liberation, the third sequence begins. The re-entry into the postwar society and return to the postwar adults is decisive for the outcome of the entire traumatic sequence. For many the main impact of childhood deprivation began here because of confrontation with their refugee status, their massive losses, chaotic postwar conditions, new forms of neglect, and misunderstandings in foster families.

Keilson made an extensive and in-depth study of a random group of 204 Jewish war orphans from the Netherlands. The survivors were in their late twenties to early forties at the time of the interview. In particular, Kielson investigates the relationship between the age of the child during the traumatic period of Holocaust persecution and the influence this had on the development of psychopathology. He concluded that the younger child survivors (up to 4 years old) tended to suffer from neurotic character development. Those aged 11 to 14 years at liberation tended to suffer more from anxiety, and those aged 14 tended to suffer more from chronic reactive depressive symptoms. Generally speaking then, the younger the child was during the traumatic period, the greater the damage to personality development. Other writers came to similar conclusions about the relationship

between the age of the child survivors at the time of the trauma and the degree of damage to the person: the younger the victim, the greater the damage even 40 or 50 years later.[47] [48] [49]

On the other hand, Moskowitz and Krell (1990) discuss the task faced by the child survivors in coping with their past. They define this task as follows: "to reconstruct a terrible past into a sensible present."[50] They suggest that over a lifetime the child victim has to deal with three fundamental questions:

1. Why me?
2. Since it happened to me, how shall I live my life?
3. In living my life, what must I do with my grief and painful memories?

This approach emphasizes the search for meaning on the part of the child survivors as the crux of the coping process. Moskowitz and Krell explain the Holocaust survivors' paradox concerning their past: on the one hand they have a great deal of nostalgic emotion concerning their past and a need to remember it; on the other, these memories produce great anxiety and pain.

Fifteen child survivors were interviewed by Mazor et al and they found that denial was the dominant coping strategy that allowed adjustment to post-war circumstances.[51] They also claimed that the more the trauma was repressed and not dealt with in the immediate post-war period, the more the memories, when they appeared 40 years later, arose indirectly, and were more painful.

---

[47] Lempp, R., "Delayed and Long-term Effects of Persecution Suffered in Childhood and Youth." Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe. Eds. Klas-Goren Karlsson and Ulf Zander. Lund: Academic Press, 2003) 4: 30-35

[48] Robinson, S., "Late Effects of Persecution in Persons who as Children or Young Adolescents survived Nazi Occupation in Europe," Isr. Ann. Psych Rel. Disciplines (1979): 17: 3.

[49] Yehuda R. Schmeidler J, Siever I.J.Binder-Brynes K., Elkin A." Individual Differences in Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Symptom Profiles in Holocaust Survivors in Concentration Camps or in Hiding." J. Tr. Stress (1997): 10: 453-463.

[50] Moskovitz S., Krell R., "Child Survivors of the Holocaust: Psychological Adaptation to Survival." Isr. J Psychiatry Rel. Sci., (1990): 27: 81-91.

[51] Mazor, A., Gampel, Y., Enright RD., Orenstein, R., "Holocaust Survivors: Coping with Post-traumatic Memories in Childhood and 40 Years Later." J. Tr. Stress, (1990): 3: 1-14.

All of the above cited in the Editorial of the Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences, Vol.38 #1 (2001): 1-2. CDJC document: 2.24433.

Dasberg's survey of the literature suggests that child survivors are a high-risk group for emotional imbalance, although their ability to adjust has been very high.[52] This ability to adjust is accompanied by marked emotional distress, which is apparent in chronic feelings of non-belonging, loneliness, questions about identity, and unprocessed feelings of grief and sadness.[53]

The main focus of surveys of research on child survivors as adults and on ageing which were conducted in various countries over the span of 20-50 years after the war was based on:

1. Surveys on files from the 1960s of child survivors who claimed compensation in German Courts.

2. Late follow-up studies (on average, 30 years later) of Holocaust orphans who were in children's homes or with foster families.

3. Research based on non-structured interviews, structured interviews and questionnaires, mostly from about 40 years later.

4. Non-clinical samples of adult and ageing child survivors, with emphasis on coping and developmental issues, problems of adaptation and late or delayed and postponed reactions to childhood deprivations.

Types of Traumatic Impact:

1. *Childhood deprivation*: Growing up with too little nourishment, insufficient cover/shelter, inadequate hygiene and extensive exposure to infectious diseases, cruelty, the absence of adults the child could trust to guide, protect and create an atmosphere of safety for him/her. Adequate care, love and trust were lacking—the vital ingredients for normal development. Children were exploited and deprived of normal patterns of schooling, games, and friendships with other children, and hope for the future.

---

[52] Dasberg H., "Child Survivors of the Holocaust Reach Middle Age: Psychotherapy of Late Grief Reaction." J. Soc. Work Policy in Israel, 1992: 71-83.

[53] Kestenberg J., "Child Survivors of the Holocaust." Psychoanalitic. Review (1988): 75: 495-663.

2. *Traumatic stress*: This ensued upon sudden and unprepared exposure to excessive threats, death and horror, rendering the child helpless and unprotected. For young children separation from caring parents and exposure to the unknown was an aggravating factor. Exposure to a series of repeated traumatic events over time had cumulative trauma with possible impoverishment of the personality and retardation of social and emotional development.[54] Traumatic stress and cumulative trauma in addition gave rise to specific post-traumatic symptoms and disorders (Herberg (1967), Klimkowa-Deutschowa (1971), Kielson (1992), Mazor A., Gampel Y. (1990), Dasberg H. (1987), these sometimes overtly manifest themselves after long or very long delays. Logically, the terms childhood deprivation and childhood trauma are not interchangeable. In practice, however, both occurred simultaneously.

3. *Massive losses*: In addition, children suffered loss of parents, family and home, resulting in lifelong, often irremediable, mourning.

Children as a rule depend on trusted adults, look up to them and try to adapt to their expectations, exceeding set limits gradually by small steps; in younger children this is necessary for normal individuation and separation processes. However, under the extreme circumstances normal development was hindered, since they lacked a normal adult world. They had to sharpen their foresight and guess at the whims of the adults (Moskovitz, 1983) on whom their survival depended and thus became anxious and suspicious under the life-threatening circumstances in which they found themselves.

Smaller children often reacted with fearful, subdued behavior, often leading to personality disorders with low self-esteem, doubts concerning independence, with inner insecurity and loneliness (Herberg, 1967), Lempp (1979), Kielson (1992), Moskovitz (1983). A split between inner,

[54] Groen-Prakken H. "Traumatic and Non-Traumatic Damage to the Psychic Structure: Traumatization and War." The Dutch Annual of Psychoanalysis (1995-1996).

childish insecurity and outer seeming adaptadness will turn out to become the most typical feature of young child survivors who turned for help in their later years.[55]

The very small children, of whom few survived in the camps, but more did in hiding (even being born in hiding), suffered from early neglect. These very young children are at greater risk of having suffered through all three traumatic sequences as described by Kielson (1992) (see p.7 above) because of their biological and developmental incapacity to look after themselves, and their total dependency on others, whereas older children, not totally dependant on others for their basic needs, may suffer from prewar reminiscences and memories (Mazor, Gampel (1990), Dasberg (1992), Dasberg, and later depression (Kielson, 1992).[56]

Child survivors, as defined above in three groups, would include those children who were torn away from their families to find refuge outside the Third Reich. They include those from the "Kindertransporten" who were sent to England in the late 1930s, Youth Aliyah children sent to Palestine at the last moment before the outbreak of the war, and children scattered, with or without families, beyond the eastern border of Poland into exile in the Soviet Union.

In 1993, according to the Population Register of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were 105,000 inhabitants in Israel born between 1925 and 1943, who immigrated to Israel from former Third Reich territories after 1945. This number was thought to reflect the number of child survivors in Israel. According to Factor's estimates,[57] 164,000 of the total number of the approximately 250,000 survivors in Israel in 1995 were aged 65 and over, meaning that at that time there were

---

[55] Vegh, C., Je ne lui ai pas dit au revoir. (Paris: Gallimard, 1979).
[56] Dasberg H., "Intervention with aging child survivors: An account of a narrative group in AMCHA," In David P. Goldbar J., ed. Selected papers from "A time to Heal. Caring for the Aging Holocaust Survivor" A Multidisciplinary Conference, Toronto (1999).
[57] Factor H., "The Need for Long-term Care Services among Elderly Holocaust Survivors Living in Israel" In: Lemberger J., ed. A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation, (Jerusalem: Brookdale Institute, 1995).

approximately 86,000 aged child survivors of the Holocaust in Israel, born after 1930, those younger than 15 years of age at liberation.

Child survivors have been studied as a separate subgroup of survivors in Israel, North America, Australia, England and western European countries, Poland and by German child psychiatrists. The exact global distribution of child survivors is not known.

The traumatic impact of having been a hidden child:

"Hidden children, as survivors, were unable to reflect and dwell on the terrors of the previous years."(Gordon, 2002)[58] Parents often told children that they were too young to remember the dangers they had undergone or the losses many had to bear; both parent and child seemed to be encouraged to believe in the false sense of security and didn't face the trauma. In the words of one child survivor, "*repression is always a bad thing*."[59] Both adults and children repressed the horrors in order to get on with post-war survival.

Fogelman (1993) makes the observation that for hidden children, "hide and seek" was a reality, not a game. She says: "At any moment a hidden child could be confronted with a life-and-death decision. As a result, the basic trust that a child develops in an ordinary childhood is absent among hidden children."[60] Fear, which may not have been a familiar part of their childhood initially, quickly crept into their lives in an insidious manner and suspicion and distrust became the modus operandi for these children. In a discussion with child survivors (2000), all readily recognized the mechanism of "cutting-off" their emotions as a survival strategy. For some children, this sense of being cut off was exacerbated by the object-like way in which they were treated. The experience of being placed, and sometimes the treatment in these placements was dehumanizing, not because of

[58] Gordon, Vicki. "The Experience of Being a Hidden Child Survivor of the Holocaust" (PhD dissertation—School of Behavioral Science University of Melbourne), Yad Vashem Doc. (Dec. 2002): 103-3061F.
[59] Magnus, B., "Holocaust Child: Reflections on the Banality of Evil." Philosophy Today, (1997): 41: 8-18.
[60] Cited in Marks, Jane. The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993) 295.

the sometimes commercial arrangement which precipitated gentiles into hiding the children, but psychologically, because there was no contemplation of the individuality of these children nor their needs.

Smaller children often reacted with fearful, subdued behavior, often leading to personality disorders with low self-esteem, doubts concerning independence, with inner insecurity and loneliness Herberg, (1967), Lempp (1979), Kielson (1992), Moskovitz (1983). These very young children are at greater risk of having suffered through all three traumatic sequences as described by Kielson (1992) (see p.7 above) because of their biological and developmental incapacity to look after themselves, and their total dependency on others, whereas older children, not totally dependant on others for their basic needs, may suffer from prewar reminiscences and memories (Mazor, Gampel (1990), Dasberg (1992), and later depression (Kielson, 1992).[61]

Also essential to the experience of being hidden was the suppression of the children's identities in hiding. First, their identity as Jews: they had to adopt false identities and deny their Jewish identification. The personality constriction of these hidden children extended beyond the suppression of their Jewish identities to the suppression of almost their entire personalities, as they were expected to blend in and adapt to their hiding places, whether this might be a foster family or an orphanage or convent. They were not permitted to have needs or feelings of their own; if they did they had to be suppressed. Feelings were considered a luxury in times of survival: their experience was that of "not experiencing feelings." Life became stripped down to the practicalities of surviving in hiding; the nuances of personalities and individual details of these children were largely ignored as irrelevant details in the broader picture of survival. For some, this cut-off state in hiding seems to have permeated their articulation of the experience as they present their experiences in basic terms,

[61] Dasberg H., "Intervention with Aging Child Survivors: An Account of a Narrative Group in AMCHA, in David P. Goldbar J., ed. in "A timeto Heal, Caring for the Aging Holocaust Survivor," A Multidisciplinary Conference, Toronto (1999).

detailing the physical routines of the hiding and being and unaware of the more subtle undercurrents of the psychological and emotional void that existed. (I personally experienced this feeling when I met with child survivors at the last Conference of Hidden Children, in Washington, in August 2003).

Another facet of this loss of identity, particular to the group of children in hiding, was the reality that most were isolated in their hiding and had no-one with whom they could share the trauma of this identity suppression. Although the concentration camps were filled with many horrors, child survivors acknowledged that there was a certain feeling of solidarity and a sense of belonging, which did not exist in hiding.

Hidden children, in addition to being often very isolated in their hiding, had to deny their connections to Judaism, and adopt an alien and unfamiliar persona; this suspension between the two worlds could often extend for many months or even years, leaving them unsure of who they were and where they belonged. Indeed "Man's identity is based on his name, his personal and cultural background. In hiding permanent harm was done to the core of the individual, who lost his most personal and individual possessions (his identity). (Wijsenbeek, 1977)[62]

Giving up their Jewish identities meant playing a part, becoming someone else. (Tec, 1993)[63] Hiding under an assumed identity meant a loss of all—familial and community supports and required an uprooting of familiar patterns of behavior, adoption of unfamiliar ways of life and constant vigilance, in view of the consequences of discovery. As Wijsenbeek (1977) points out, few authors, in describing the effects of the stresses of war, explicitly talk about the *loss of identity* involved; yet for hidden children, this construct was paramount. As he states, the very aim of the German war machine was to eradicate Jews, rob them of their identity, their separateness as a nation.

---

[62] Wijsenbeek, H., "Is there a Hiding Syndrome?" Israel-Netherlands Symposium on the Impact of Persecution. (Dalfsen: Amsterdam, 1977) 14-18.

[63] Tec, Nechama, "A Historical Perspective: Tracing the History of the Hidden Child Experience," In .Marks ,J., The Hidden Children: The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993) 273.

Paradoxically, to maintain this identity and survive, Jews had to suppress their identity. The World Federation for Mental Health pronounces that the "identity of an individual is a property which is inalienable from him, but in another sense an individual's identity is only needed, and it may be argued, only possible, when he is the member of a group." (Wijsenbeek, 15) For these children, not only was their identity suppressed but also they were separated from *the context of their identification*, making the trauma even more unbearable and difficult to integrate. According to Kestenberg and Brenner (1986): "The identity of the child is molded within the family and within the holding environment of the group. The external environment and its object define the child. Playmates provide a feeling of sameness—of belonging to the group, day after day. The Jewish child under the Nazi yoke suffered a break in continuity; pride in self and in the extension of self among peers and community was shattered." (Kestenberg, Brenner, 194)[64]

Particularly for those children who were placed in hiding on their own, whether in a convent or in a foster family, being isolated from their group, both familial and cultural, had its own further challenges and impact on their identities. This isolation differentiated children who were in camps from those who were in hiding. As Tec (1993) says of her own hiding

> All hiding children had to learn many new facts to support their new identities: names, dates, places regarding not only themselves but also their fictitious relatives. Inconsistency could arouse suspicion; one slip could mean disaster. Giving up our identity meant playing a part, becoming someone else. The better we played the role, the safer we were. Sometimes we were so caught in the new part that we actually forgot who we really were. This was temporary. Though helpful, this forgetfulness was emotionally void. It made us feel anxious, anxious that we might never recapture our past. We also felt guilty, ashamed that we were giving up that which had been cherished by our parents, by those we loved. (Marks, 287)

Kestenberg and Brenner (1986) further elaborate on the double/split identity issue with which many hidden children were forced to grapple. In their transition to the Christian world, it was

[64] Kestenberg, J. & Brenner, I., "Children who Survived the Holocaust. The Role of Rules and Routines in the Development of the Superego." International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, (1986): 67: 309-315.

drilled into them never to reveal their names, to claim they had no relatives due to bombings and to take on identities of Christian children. These children learnt very early to blend in and not be recognized as Jews. Yet for some children, Catholicism represented safety and comfort and, indeed, many wanted to adopt this new religion and identity in a very sincere manner. Kestenberg (1985) reports on a child survivor who was envious of the Polish gentiles who could go to school and belong somewhere, while he had to remain at home and feeling like a second-class citizen who could never fit in and feeling totally resentful of this. Lying about one's identity became the necessary tool for survival; they grew up "in the role of a Catholic hating Jews and pretending to be Christian, knowing well that one is a Jew" (Kestenberg and Brenner, 43.)

Kestenberg and Kestenberg (1988) found that child survivors suffer greatly from a feeling of not belonging anywhere. They argue:

> The country of their origin has rejected them and their Jewishness has been a plague rather than a source of pride. Many of these children found out they were Jewish only when they were jeered at or attacked by other children or teachers. Reared in Catholic families or in convents where they were hidden, many became attached to the Holy Family. Some became priests and nuns without renouncing their Jewish origin. Others did not want to return to their Jewish families after the war, they were attached to their rescuers; still others, who returned to Judaism, still succumb to the conflict between their Jewish and Christian beliefs.[65]

According to Kestenberg and Brenner (1986), drawing in depth on some 1,500 interviews with Holocaust survivors from around the world who were children living with these assumed identities, these survivors had had to undergo a psychological splitting of the ego:

> The ego ideal of children who were born during persecution suffered most as they grew up in an atmosphere of distrust and defamation. Many wished to be born gentile and some who had been converted looked down on Jews as inferior. Many times, however, a prevailing Jewish identity and a feeling of belonging to Jews dominated over the wish to be protected by persecutors. This representation created a split in the superego, especially between the penal code and the ego-ideal. To want to be a Nazi

[65] Kestenberg, M. & Kestenberg, J., "The Sense of Belonging and Altruism in Children who Survived the Holocaust." Psychoanalytic Review (1988): 75:4: 533-560.

> who had killed your family was bad, but the wish to belong to the protected who could survive persisted nevertheless. (190)

There was a rupture of the conscience into two parts for these children and there was confusion between the ego and superego functions. In Freudian terms, the splitting of the ego denotes the coexistence of two psychical attitudes towards the external reality: the first attitude taking reality into consideration, and the second attitude disavowing this and replacing it with a fantasy of desire. For these children, this meant being torn in their inner psychological world with conflictual feelings: on the one hand being Jewish and having to hide their identity in the face of persecution, whilst at the same time posing as gentiles, with some harboring a secret wish that this was really so. For some children, there was a psychological desire *to be* that Gentile and disavow their Jewishness, even if this meant identifying with the enemy.

As evidenced by Quindeau, a German researcher—cited in Kestenberg and Fogelman (1994)—the very narration of the hiding and trauma was often so overwhelming in the minds of the children that it was hard to assimilate and at times became fragmented. He describes his experience of interviewing survivors, relating that some children used the interview process as a means to *construct* their identity. Quindeau writes: "The narrator constructs a story that integrates elements of pain and affliction into a meaningful whole, lends continuity to one's own experience and combats the perception of randomness. This process contributes to the formation of ego identity. At the same time this ego identity is also the basis of the unity of one's life story, the same consistency that gives individual episodes their proper places."(37) [66]

The children who were overwhelmed at a very basic level between the meaning of life and death, where "death was the norm and survival was the contingent" (38), found it difficult to integrate their experiences into their post-war lives; the narration of their experiences often reflected

---

Kestenberg, J. & Fogelman, E., Children During the Nazi Reign: Psychological Perspective on the Interview Process (New York: Prager Press.1994) 37, 38.

this lack of integration and relied on the splitting of their identity. It is almost as if there are two distinct parts of their lives: when hiding and when not in hiding.

Rather that this representing simply a temporal discontinuity, it enters a deeper psychological level of splitting present in those children who have been traumatized, as in the cases of children victims of sexual abuse (in their foster families). For example with sexually abused children, often the abuser was the very person who could give them images of goodness, which led to great difficulties in the integration of the child's mind of the ego and superego functions. They coped with their trauma by withdrawing, cutting off and creating splits in their minds, numbing themselves, dissociating, suppressing emotions, compartmentalizing the abuse from other aspects of their lives and hiding their identities as victims. (Valent, 1995)[67]

The element of fear in children in hiding consisted in the fact that, as part of the systematic genocide whose aim was to extinguish Jews forever, they, as children, were not spared any of the horrors (Tec, 1993; Valent, 1994, 1995). The presence of hidden children in Nazi-occupied Europe represented an opposition to the German policies of annihilation. Furthermore, the "uselessness" of children in their inability to "work hard" under the German regime made them especially redundant in the Nazi scheme of events, and their extra needs were treated with impatience and brutality. "For instance, infants who could not evacuate a hospital in Lodz ghetto during a roundup were thrown out of a window; children were used for target practice, medical experimentation, were tortured; but above all, they were killed." (Valent, 1998, 519). Tec (1993) makes the observation that these children were forced to endure these formidable stressors alongside their adult parents, yet without the coping resources and adaptation that an adult would have. Furthermore, as the persecution

[67] Valent, P. "Documented Childhood Trauma (Holocaust); Its sequelae and applications to other traumas." Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, (1995): 2,I: 81-89. See also Valent: Child Survivors: Adults Living with Childhood Trauma (Port Melbourne Vic.: William Heineman Australia, c1994) where he describes the sexually abuse of children who had been with foster families and now, as adults, live in Australia.

against the Jews gained momentum and escalation, these children had to witness their parents' increasing dread and fear which more often than not led to separations in hiding.

Fear was a common thread of the experiences of the children in hiding. There was a fear of "being caught" or "being discovered;" much as the exposure or revelation of being caught in a game of hide-and-sick, only here the game had far higher stakes. The fear in hiding seemed to be a pervasive one and had a qualitatively different "feel" to it, compared with those children who were interned in camps or were exposed to the "sounds of war." Valent (1991) in a talk in the International Hidden Child Conference, says: "Hiding from bombs does not rate high with me. I remember the fear and the frights, but they were somehow 'clean,' tangible, shared and open. There was greater anxiety hiding from humans. It was a lonely, 'unclean' anxiety, because it included fear of oneself and one's protectors. One move, a sneeze in a cupboard, could be disaster for all, or turn others against oneself."

Child survivors were faced with death on a regular basis. Many too young to know of a normality before war or hiding (Magnus, 1997), thought that death was an expected occurrence (Kestenberg and Brenner, 1996). Few hidden children were spared the experience of witnessing violent death. They witnessed brutalities such as lineups and shootings in the ghettos, or being held at gunpoint by Germans when asked if there was anyone hiding in their homes. For those hiding with the partisans, death was a regular occurrence as they saw both their colleagues and German soldiers being killed.

Fear was not only a unique feature of the children who were hidden by gentile families in relation to their own discovery, but there was a fear that, if discovered, not only they, but the very people who hid them would be killed. Being discovered, not only endangered the children themselves, but also the rescuers that protected them. Children feeling abandoned by their parents in

strange homes had the added fear that failing to please their new guardians would mean abandonment by them too. Moskovitz and Krell (1990) As a hidden child survivor says: "We were told if we were to survive we were never to tell anyone that they hid us, because to hide a Jew was worse than to kill your own mother." Also, their sense that the period of hiding was a period of suspension for the hidden children was further compounded when they were reunited with their families, post-liberation. Their parents, adult survivors themselves, were more often than not consumed with their own traumas and focused on resettling the family. This often meant migration to another country; a new language to be learnt, new skills needed and an urgency in providing protection and stability for their families. The attitude of parent survivors to their children was usually one of "glossing over" the intervening period where often they would have been separated. This was not carried out with any malicious intent but adult survivors themselves traumatized may truly have believed "that their children may have been too young to have been harmed" or certainly too young to remember anything, and there was an expectation that they would fit right back into their previous lives. Furthermore, this "gap" in their lives, the period of hiding, which was often not validated by their parents, compounded the hidden children's belief that this was a suspended time, somewhat between "being and not being" (Valent, personal communication, 2000), and became difficult to integrate into their resumed post-war lives. Being taught to "know and not to know" during their years of hiding often left them with an implicit legacy of difficulties in remembering what they were forbidden to know: their childhood persecution. (Kestenberg and Kestenberg, 1996)

Life was expected to resume as if the hiding had never taken place, and the children were given the implicit message not to talk about it. Having survived the hiding by cutting off their feelings and not giving in to their emotions, it seemed as if post-war adaptation demanded similar responses from these children. Lifton (1968) notes in his discussion of Vietnam veterans that while

the "psychic closing off" is a positive defense mechanism when facing the need to survive, at other times when the threat is no longer present, this can have its own ramifications.[68] He notes that the Vietnam soldiers, who at the time were aged between 17 and 21, were exposed to situations for which they did not have a well-developed response. The defenses they may have employed at the time to deal with the extremities of this situation then became an integrated and perhaps maladaptive part of their personalities, which had not fully formed at the time of this trauma. Similarly, many of the hidden children survivors were far younger than the Vietnam soldier, and would have had an even more immature personality to deal with the trauma inflicted upon them. The defense of psychic numbing, which may have been a useful and even crucial survival technique while in hiding, became maladaptive following the war. Furthermore, the lack of acknowledgement which many children found post-war for their experiences in hiding seemed further to encourage this coping mechanism of "blocking everything out," and repressing these feelings. Kestenberg (1996) reported that, post-war, many parents, rescuers or adoptive parents believed, perhaps mistakenly, in protecting the children by not discussing the atrocities and experiences they had undergone. Schools, communities and health professionals further corroborated this attitude, resulting in many children continuing to hide the innermost feelings of their experiences. Many still seem to be doing so, feeling constricted in talking about their hiding as well as repressed in their emotional reflections of this period.

Research on children's experiences:

The following narrative is based on the various introductory remarks by different authors to their respective research on adult child survivors.

After the war, the older children were homesick at first, longing for the lost milieu of early childhood. However, in order to progress into their new reality, mourning was not accompanied or

[68] Lifton, R.J., "The survivors of the Hiroshima Disaster and the Survivors of Nazi Persecution." in H. Krystal, ed. Massive Psychic Trauma (New York: International UP, 1968).

dealt with, old longings and recent traumas were set aside and suppressed for the time being and ignored as far as possible.

On emigration, to Israel or other places, adaptation to a new climate and acculturation took place. All vital forces were mobilized not to disappoint the new caretakers. What was negated was the emotional impact of the missing family, loss of ties, religion, faith and tradition, and loss of prior cultural roots.

In Israel they were pressured to change their old family and personal names and to forget their native language. The early social pressure, not to express feelings in regard to the Holocaust, was very strong in Israel. It helped the early adaptation but there was a price to be paid later, namely: guilt feelings or the feeling of not being valued by other Israelis (or others elsewhere). Furthermore, there existed in the children a relentless striving to belong, which brought about identity problems and insecure self-esteem.

All child survivors, but especially the older ones, after reentry into postwar society, developed overcompensatory hyperactivity in achieving set goals, and often succeeded, but there remained a nagging inner awareness of rootlessness, emptiness, guilt, inability to achieve harmonious intimacy inside the close family circle. Dasberg, (1992), Tauber, Y. (1996).[69] The extra effort in maintaining self-esteem and justifying survival brought social achievements on the one hand, but on the other it covered up the dormant (or often overt) psychological or even psychiatric problems. Some could not learn or study or adapt to new family life, first in foster families or orphanages, and later in their own new families as young adults. Many of these child survivors missed numerous opportunities because of the lost years. Others had tuberculosis, resulting in further postwar separation and isolation in sanatoria.

[69]Tauber Y., "The Traumatized Child and the Adult: Compound Personality in Child survivors of the Holocaust" Isr. J. of Psychiatry Rel. Sci. (1996): 33: 228-238.

In the early years after the Holocaust, there was a lack of professional help to an extent unimaginable today. Dvoretzky (1962)[70] reported on lack of trust, youngsters' fear of being misunderstood, their reduced ability to achieve a harmonious family life, as well as problems of adaptation despite extra efforts spent to be worthy of esteem and solidarity. There were also found incidences of overconformity to adults' expectations, thereby giving up their assertiveness or, contrarily, oppositional, unruly behavior with ensuing social complications.

Other frequently reported phenomena included: Contact disturbances, especially among those who were 6-10 years of age during the second sequence, Keilson (1992), problems with authority, particularly among the adolescents, Lempp (1979), loneliness for which compensatory overactivity was the solution, Krell (1985), lack of intimacy in their early marriages, Dasberg (1987), and depression after excessive early losses, Tauber (1996).

Research Literature on Adult Child Survivors:

The following literature sources are from file reviews by psychiatrists and from non-clinical and psychological studies on adult child survivors.

From Compensation Claims:

Several series of case histories have been published of adult child survivors who had claimed compensation for loss of earning capacity due to persecution-related psychopathology, Paul and Herberg (1967), Klimkowa-Deutschowa (1971), Lempp (1979). These descriptions deal with psychopathology and also with childhood deprivation.

Files of 23 child survivors aged 21-22 years of age at liberation were reviewed by Paul and Herberg (1967). They mention deprivations such as early neglect, uprooting, shattering of all prior ethical norms in ghettos and camps to which children were exposed, and predicted that despite

---

Dvoretzki, M., "Youth in the Ghetto and Nazi Camps and their Readaptation to Freedom." In: Eck, N., Robert A., eds. Yad Vashem Research Issue (1962): #5. (In Hebrew)

children's benefits from their innate powers of positive development at a young age, at a later date they may fall apart. Indeed, this is what had already occurred in the 1960s in some of their published cases. Paul and Herberg mention affective disturbances, personality disorders and amnesia, not always in relation to the cruel details of the persecution itself, but amnesia of close relationships with the lost parents, lost, whether by death or psychological closure and hardening (a term used to describe increased pessimism yet decreased sensitivity to current pressures, with associated emotional detachment and constricted personalities). Dasberg (1987)

There was also amnesia of the circumstances of re-entry into the postwar world or family, with memory gaps in all these periods.

Child survivors as adults search for remnants of or links with their vanished parents. A perpetual feeling of loss pervades their lives, despite their own occasional hardness and seemingly successful lives. They are described by Paul and Herberg (1967) as suspicious and on their guard, with problems in their marriages and in raising their children. Even socially successful cases suffered from deprivation and developmental interference in acquiring basic trust, ability for re-attachment and social norms and identity. The authors predict that sooner or later, upon ageing, this will be manifested by even more clinical symptoms.

Their prediction has turned out to be correct, Brink (1994), Hunt, Marshall, Rowlings, (1997), Lempp, (1992); however, no specific rates or percentages exist. Other German publications on child survivors mention that those who were sent to England or other free countries before the outbreak of the war were isolated, estranged, frightened and homesick, and also deprived and with late traumatic sequelae.

Forty-five cases of child survivors were studied by Lempp (1979) and he emphasized, 13 years after his original research (1992), that psychic suffering emerges often between 50 and 70

years of age in deprived child survivors.[71] Symptoms may appear late in life without there having been symptoms during the intervening years, meaning that it could increasingly be expected as they age.

Family status at Re-Entry into Postwar Society:

After liberation, many child survivors were orphans, while others reunited with one or both parents. The physical reunion of parents with children did not automatically mean re-establishment of normal emotional ties; in most cases these remained defective. The war against the Jews was not only physical extermination, but also the severing of intimate ties between children and surviving parents, especially mothers, resulting in lifelong irreversible estrangement. The ties to the children born after 1945 often may be of a different and more intimate nature, although the so-called second generation suffered from the indirect exposure to the parents' persecutional trauma.

Later Follow-up :

In spite of their sometimes unexpected later social achievements, older child survivors often remained deprived of opportunities for finishing school, studies or vocational development.

Some complained of estrangement, such as feeling like immigrants in their own families, which is reminiscent of their separations and complicated post-war re-entries and is a subtle phenomenon which robs them of the joys of life. This is a typical post-traumatic alienation. These feelings could develop at any time—given additional triggers—into full-blown post-traumatic depression and traumatic memories. However, they did not, as a rule, seek psychiatric help. Therefore, a total view of late reactions still in store for erstwhile child survivors is not yet available. Late aggravations are apt to occur only on reaching the pregerontic or gerontic age. These late

[71] Lempp R., "Seelische verfolgungschaeden bei kindern in der ersten and aweiten generation." In: Hardmann G. ed. Spuren der Verfolgung. Gerlingen (Germany: Bleicher Verlag, 1992) cited in the Editorial of the Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences, Vol.38 #1(2001): 1-2. CDJC document: 2.24433.

aggravations, "Verschlimmerung" in German, are recognized by the compensation authorities, provided, of course, that claimants for "Verschlimmerung" had already filed a first claim in prior years during the allotted period. Without an initial earlier diagnosis there is no recognition of late aggravation. But as is specifically in the cases of young child survivors, there *is* no earlier claim. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s when they were still relatively young, overactive overcompensators, they were not yet aware of, or still denying, and never admitting that they indeed suffered from a host of post-deprivation and post-traumatic deficiencies, and that their well-being was less-than-optimal.

There are, indeed, ample psychiatric research and clinical reports on the newly-described phenomenon of the revival of post-traumatic childhood illness in the elderly after 50 years have passed. This is seen not only among Jewish post-Holocaust populations, but also in other early-traumatized now-elderly individuals: Brink (1994), Laden A, Groen-Prakken H, Stufkens A, (1995)[72], Dasberg (1987), Marshall, Rowlings (1997)[73].

Thirty-Year Follow-up Studies of child survivors from Orphanages and Foster Families:

A 30-35 year follow-up was published by Moskowitz (1983)[74] of 24 of the very young child survivors from concentration camps (20) and from hiding (4) who had been interviewed immediately after the end of the war in the warm and receptive orphanage of Alice Goldberger in Lingfield, Surrey. These children grew up under good conditions, in a group. The very young ones had been found in Theresienstadt, as well as Auschwitz, Buchenwald, various ghettos, on the wayside, and in monasteries, all orphaned by the war. Few remembered their parents clearly; some did not even remember their real names. They suffered from divided loyalties between their dead parents and

[72] Lasden A. Groen-Prallen H, Stufkens A., eds. The Dutch Annual of Psychoanalysis 1995-1996. "Traumatization and War," (1995).
[73] Hunt L. Marshall M, Rowlings C., eds. Past Trauma in Late Life: European Perspectives on Therapeutic Work with Older people. (Gateshead, Britain: Athenaeum, 1997).
[74] Moskovitz, S. Love Despite Hate (New York, Shocken Books, 1983).

their new caretakers, from depressive moods, suspiciousness, and eating disturbances, with the older children suffering also from guilt feelings ("survivor guilt"), identity problems and doubts about the purpose of their continuing to live. All had subsequent difficulty with re-attachment.

After 30-35 years, of the 24 followed up, most had married and had children. Home life is their central concern, and some also had successful careers. Moskovitz admired their resilience in readapting to life. However, they continue to suffer from the loss of their parents and, often, of their parents' and their own names; in many cases they were constantly searching for hints and signs of their vanished pasts. Fragmented early memories and, consequently, a sense of fragmented identity, made them feel like strangers even in their own new families. Many had suffered a loss of religion and faith causing them lifelong problems with the Christian faith that had been forced upon them as hidden children. They suffered from feelings that no one in the world could understand their traumatic experiences fully. They experienced low anxiety thresholds, provoking lifelong crises and difficult situations. They suffered from a fear of recurring disaster, problems of intimacy in their own family, and yet, most of these 24 had never been registered as psychiatric patients. They were deprived children, all grown up. These people had no wish for revenge because that infinite rage would have totally incapacitated them. Moskovitz predicts, though, that these feelings may still come upon them as they grow older.

Fourteen child survivors 30 years later[75] were investigated by Hemmendinger—originally from a large group of 140 male child survivors from Buchemwald (kept there in children's barracks), all orphaned by the war and had been under her care after liberation in a children's home in Taverny near Paris during the postwar years. Although initially with psychopathic-like behavior due to extreme neglect, 30 years' later most of them had married and had not undergone psychiatric treatment, though they suffered from depressive moods and nightmares, according to their spouses.

[75] Hemmendinger J., Children of the Holocaust (Betsheda, MD: National Press, 1986).

They often exhibited worries that were triggered by political tension. All the wives reported a variety of post-traumatic symptoms from their husbands. However, the now adult child survivors themselves eschewed psychiatrists. The youngest ones (those who were 8-9 years old at war's end) did less well socially, and had not all married.

Of thirty women, non-patients, investigated by Vegh, (1979)[76] 30 years after liberation: most were Holocaust orphans or half-orphans, had been hidden during the war as children, and some had survived the Drancy transit camp. They had not been part of a children's group but were raised individually. All suffered from split loyalty between their own dead parents and their later educator role models. Those who were reunited with their surviving parents remained estranged from them as time went on.

Vegh was impressed by their lifelong grief and non-acceptance of the final loss of their parents, of lost opportunities because many could not re-enter schools. Most had tried to turn their backs on the past by marrying non-Jewish men. They felt lonely and estranged in their own families. Some reported inappropriate fits of anger, chronic feelings of guilt, difficulties in establishing spontaneous contact and forgetting entire periods of their life histories. In conclusion, almost all women experienced a pervasive disturbance or personality disorder as a result of a deprived childhood, which had not been attended to immediately after liberation.

Two hundred and six randomly selected adult child survivors were evaluated by Kielson (1992) from over 2,000 orphans who had been placed in foster families. He interviewed them in the Netherlands and in Israel, and described the outcome by age groups and the three traumatic sequences described above: both the clinical-descriptive and the quantitative-statistical analyses revealed an age-specific traumatization: younger child survivors as adults show character-neurotic developmental disturbances with difficulty relating to others and with personal and social insecurity,

[76] Vegh, Claudine. Je ne lui ai pas dit au revoir. Des enfants deportés parlent (Paris: Gallimard, 1979)

while the older children as adults tend more to reactive depression or anxiety states. One striking finding was a discrepancy between high intelligence and lack of education (i.e. missed opportunities), especially among older child survivors. Loyalty and identity problems were present throughout the population. The course taken during the third traumatic sequence (the postwar period) is crucial for the final outcome. Overall, he noted symptoms of unresolved mourning, identity problems, feelings of insecurity, difficulties with interpersonal contact, and personality problems. However, they managed well socially. Keilson's subjects were selected for research *not* on the basis of their clinical state, but at random, and so his findings have general validity for child survivors across the board.

A late follow-up of small samples of adult child survivors was effected by Krell in 1985; most described their parents who survived as restricted emotionally and not the same parents as before: "More than anything else, they (the child survivors) wished to be normal; that is why they remained hidden for so long as carriers of deprived childhoods." (379)

Four now adult child survivors interviewed by Hogman (1985), who were all orphans showed affective isolation, suppressed anger, damaged ability for intimacy, as well as successful "overcoping".

Adult child survivors of the Holocaust in a non-clinical setting were interviewed by Gampel (1988).[77] These child survivors volunteered for the research and most discussed the relentless, vain hopes that vanished parents will some day return, and described somatic complaints, aggression, difficulties with emotional expression and low thresholds for anxiety.

According to Kestenberg (1985) most of the professional literature on massive trauma pertains to adult survivors, while studies of child survivors as children has been a neglected topic.

[77] Gampel Y. "Facing War, Murder, Torture and Death in Latency" Psychoanalytic Review (1988): 75: 494-510.

She noted lifelong bitterness among child survivors due to irrepressible memories of unavenged traumatic cruelties experienced or witnessed. Adult child survivors speak of "lost childhoods," and of "stolen childhoods," and of a nagging inability to remember. Among those adopted after the war, the absence of memory of their own parents is felt as a constant, disturbing emptiness.

Clinical studies of survivors who came for psychotherapy were reviewed by Dasberg (1992), (1994).[78] Their amnesic emptiness was a major source of suffering and sadness. Other investigators described withheld rage, outburst among their families, and a reduced ability to enjoy achievements. Shoshan (1989)[79] writes about very early disruptions causing identity disorder in late life; never is there a full experience of belonging.

Fifteen child survivors who were aged 6-16 years at the beginning of the war were investigated by Mazor et al (1990); 13 had been in concentration camps, two in hiding. All had married, were middle-class, and independent. All reported remembering now more than ever about their pasts, and dreamed about the past at night. They realized only now the full extent of their losses and experienced late grief; some also experienced depression and anger. Their memories have become very painful and the emotions of early abandonment and loss are now stronger than ever. While their early development was arrested because they turned to the task of postwar re-entry, they exhibited also feelings of strength. They concluded that postponed post-Holocaust malaise has reappeared 45-50 years later.

The fate of hidden children in the Netherlands were investigated by Evers-Emden and Flim (1995)[80] based on a large group of subjects who attended a child survivors' convention, and on the

---

[78] Dasberg H., Terror: landscape of the Soul. Contributions to Theory and Therapy of Extreme Traumatization (in German) (Germany: S. Roderer Verlag, 1994).

[79] Shoshan T. " Mourning and Longing from Generation to Generation." Amer. J. Psychotherapy (1989): 43: 193-208.

[80] Evers-Emden B, Flim BJ., Having Been in Hiding. A Forgotten Past. Jewish Children on their Hiding: 50 years later. (Holland: Kampen, Kok, 1995).

statistical workup of questionnaires with complementary personal interviews. Two-thirds of their informants spontaneously spoke of the "stealing of their childhoods," and the authors emphasized the estrangement between surviving children and their surviving parents, their compensatory overactivity, and their "double-life": outwardly active and achieving, with inner fragmentation, identity problems, lifelong longing for parents and suffering. They note their lack of well-being, tenacity in reconstructing their lives and developmental disturbances which take their toll in later life.

Ten aging child survivors were interviewed by Valent P. (1994)[81] He concluded that "children are assaulted through the assault on their parents"(269). They are not appendages in adult traumas; they are vulnerable victims of adult powerlessness, inability to care, absence, pain, anger and scapegoating.

Controlled Research:

One hundred aging non-clinical child survivors aged 13 years or under, were investigated by Robinson et al[82] at the beginning of the war using symptom-ratings. It was found that the symptoms of depression were present in over 50% of child survivors, from concentration camps and in over 30% of those who had been in hiding; 73% of child survivors suffered from hypermnesia concerning Holocaust events and other symptoms of the survivor syndrome unabatingly since the end of the Holocaust/persecution period. Camp child survivors were less well-adjusted than those child survivors who were in hiding. Most continued to be active socially or in their vocations, far beyond retirement age.

---

[81] Valent, P., Child Survivors, Adults Living with Childhood Trauma (Australia: W. Heineman, 1994).

[82] Robinson S., Rapaport-Barsever M., Rapaport J., "The Present State of People who Survived the Holocaust as Children." Acta Psychiat. Scand., (1994): 89: 242-245.

Cohen et al[83] compared 50 child survivors and 50 control subjects and found that supposedly-healthy non-clinical child survivors exhibit post-traumatic symptoms to a degree far beyond what is expected of healthy people, and the level and intensity of their post-traumatic symptoms at mid-life was comparable to what had been measured in diagnosed post-traumatic patients. They did not turn to psychological or medical help more often than controls despite continuous intensive suffering. The remarkable finding was their optimistic worldview, despite their high level of post-traumatic symptoms, and their fear of failing in pursuit of their ambitions.

In an earlier review, Dasberg (1987) stated that child survivors (at that time 45-65 years of age) were a neglected group.[84] Because of their initial adaptation during the postwar years, the real etiology and meaning of later collapse was not understood properly. A later review (1994)[85] confirmed a general consensus on what child survivors' lifelong problems were, and the possibility of increased psychiatric risk at ageing.

Based on the definitions, clarifications and descriptions of what child survivors went through as children, it proved to be possible to understand and make order out of the findings and opinions of investigators of adult child survivors. There seems to be an interdisciplinary consensus of what defines child survivors and their fates.

The term "Child Survivor Complex" is suggested with psychological, relational, educational, and cultural features at each phase of life. The child survivor is the carrier of this complex. The term "syndrome" is the psychopathological and clinical portion of the complex. After childhood ends it

---

[83] Cohen M. Brom, D. Dasberg H., "Child Survivors of the Holocaust: Symptoms and Coping after Fifty Years." Isr. J. Psychiatry Relat. Sci. (2001): 38: 3-12.

[84] Dasberg H., "Psychological Distress of Holocaust Survivors and Offspring in Israel, Forty years later." Israel J. Psychiatry Relat. Sci. (1987): 24:245-256.

[85] Dasberg H., Persecution-trauma of Childhood and Delayed Mourning Reactions in Terror-Landscapes of the Soul: Contributions to Theory and Therapy of Extreme Traumatization (Regensburg: S. Roderer Verlag, 1994). In German.

becomes the adult child survivor syndrome, its ageing syndrome of the Holocaust persecution and aftermath. The main impact is on the development of the child.

The main deprivations are:

1) The lack of functioning parents or caretakers, who are initially filled with fear and worry, they either disappear, die or may even return, although as changed persons, after liberation, and
2) Being at the mercy of strangers in the Holocaust world *and* afterwards. The child survivors are both gravely deprived and, at the same time, traumatized children.

After re-entry into postwar society and after an initial malaise of a variety of acute psychic symptoms and social disabilities and conflicts, child survivors were able to take advantage of the innate vital powers of progressive development characteristic to their young age and they, seemingly, adapt. In most instances they set aside or were forced to set aside, by educators and society, the hurts and impact of losses and traumatic memories.

In the typical case, what remained as an overt feature was their relentless striving to belong, to succeed, to be accepted, not to disappoint their caretakers, and not to fail. This was the most important lesson they learned during the period when their lives were threatened. The price paid is the adult child survivor syndrome, namely: lifelong symptoms in different combinations, intensities and courses over time, as follows:

Subjectively pervasive feelings of loneliness and estrangement; insecurity; lack of self-esteem; feeling deficient; anhedonia, i.e. not enjoying life or their own achievement without undue guilt and doubts; guilt and suppressed grief and recurrent bouts of grief; amnesia often of periods of childhood; and a personal feeling of loss and lack of intimacy.

Observed *objective* phenomena are: low threshold for anxiety; bouts of depression; withheld rage with unexpected emotional outbursts, combined with, at other times, emotional detachment and difficulty in expressing emotion, and difficulty in making interpersonal contacts; deregulation of aggression; authority conflicts; marriage conflicts; anxiety states; identity problems, and late identity disorder; post-traumatic symptoms.

Child survivors speak of stolen childhoods, including missed education (Kielson, 1979), opportunities for study or for learning a vocation and the loss of the social status of their parents, yet, despite a measure of social adaptation, they also seem to suffer from stolen adulthoods. The characteristic feature of adult child survivors' personalities is the *split.* In the early years it was a split of loyalty between dead parents and new caretakers, between returning parents and wartime caretakers, or between what was the reality into which they had grown up and what became their new postwar reality now. This split is a feature of incomplete and postponed mourning, and also between a traumatized inner core and outward adaptedness. There characteristically seems to be a split between the outer shell of psychological adaptation, and the inner core of infantile, not matured child features. Dasberg et al (1987)[86] and Tauber and Van der Hal (1997)[87] elaborated on the psychodynamics of the inner child and ageing adult in the context of group dynamic and psychotherapeutic reports.

I attended workshops during the last Hidden Children Conference in Washington, in August 2003; some of the participants, who had achieved successful careers, when reminiscing about what they went through as children, would break down in sobs and one could feel the inner child still hurting.

---

[86] Dasberg, H., "Psychological Distress of Holocaust Survivors and Offspring in Israel, Forty Years Later." Isr. J. Psychiatry Relat. Sci. (1987): 24: 245-256.

[87] Tauber Y. van der Hal E., "Transformation of Perception of Trauma by Child Survivors of the Holocaust in Group Therapy." Jnl. Contemp. Psychotherapy (1997) 27: 157-171

The Course Over Time

Upon reaching mid-life, and towards ageing, the post Holocaust malaise now comes out into the open. Several reasons may be suggested why child survivors as a separate subgroup of Holocaust survivors were not recognized earlier:

1. The child survivors as children, and later as young adults and adults—during the rebuilding phase (Valent, 1994) wanted nothing better than to be normal like other children (Tauber Y, 1996)[88]. This was especially true for those whose fate was to become refugees. They hid their childhood traumas and deprivations as much as possible.

2. They acquired the ability to induce and maintain a split between their outward tenacity and resilience and the inner, hidden, hurt child who could not overcome the losses and injuries. Psychologists and other experts speak of denial, negation, selective neglect, repression, dissociation and amnesia when characterizing forms and intensities of this split. As a consequence, child survivors were able to disregard the manifestations of their adult child survivor syndromes over long periods of time.

Only in the 1990s did child survivors become aware of their special situation. As a neglected subgroup of survivors, namely child survivors, they demanded their place on the stage of history. The First International Convention of Hidden Children took place in 1991. (Foxman 1992)[89]

3. After the war, surviving parents or other adult caretakers wished nothing more than to have normal children, and so influenced these children to disregard their own traumas and deprivations. The adults would often "lead" these children toward normalcy through social pressure and education. These children became their only hope, as all they had had been lost.

---

[88] Tauber Y., "The Traumatized Child and the Adult: Compound Personality in Child Survivors of the Holocaust." Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci (1996): 33: 228-238.

[89] Foxman A. et al "On the Hidden Child: Dimensions," A Journal of Holocaust Studies (special issue) (1992): 6: 3.

4. The medical/psychiatric establishment initially did not believe that what people, i.e., adults, were exposed to during the Holocaust and in the concentration camps would result in long-standing psychic problems or disorders. This was especially true for doctors in Germany. There is literature describing this situation, the attitudes and ensuing misjudgments that took place.

Germany is the country where the compensation laws for post-persecution damage originated. Die Psychiatrie der Verfolgen[90] was a milestone in the course of the turnaround of professional opinions, demonstrating that traumatic life experiences of the Nazi persecution could result in chronic permanent psychic damage. In the U.S., Krystal (1968)[91] and Niederland's work (1968)[92] were similar milestones. *Survivor syndrome* is a concept which they claimed appeared only after a delay of many years. In the Netherlands, Bastiaans (1974)[93] pioneered changes in professional concepts regarding the consequences of chronic trauma in ex-prisoners of the Nazi regime.

In the case of child survivors, similar changes in professionals' attitudes began after 1980, and gained acceptance slowly.

5. It is only recently that child survivors have entered their aging period. It was, therefore only during recent years, that the massive recurrence of the consequences of childhood deprivation became apparent. Accordingly, the concept of the adult child survivor syndrome became necessary only now.

Children with complete loss of identity:

Another traumatic aspect of the Holocaust is the fact that many Jewish children, born between 1937 and 1945, all over Europe, were placed in orphanages by desperate parents or caretakers who

---

[90] Von Bayer W., Haefner K. Kisker K., Psychiatrie der verfolgen. Berlin: (Springer, 1964) (cited in Israel Journal of psychiatry, Vol. 38, #1 (2001).
[91] Krystal H. Niederland W. G., eds. Massive Psychic Traumatization (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).
[92] Niederland WG., "Clinical observation on the survivor syndrome." Int J Psychoanalysis 1968, 49: 313-315.
[93] Bastiaans J., "The KZ syndrome: A Thirty Year Study of the Effects on Victims of the Nazi Concentration Camps." Revue Medico Chirurjical d'Jassy 1974, 78: 573-578.

were trying to save their lives. In these terrifying circumstances, children were often given new identities in an attempt to hide their Jewishness, and efforts were made to erase any trace of their original lives. There are approximately 300 "children without identity" alive in Israel who do not know who their parents were, what was their real names and where they were born.[94]

A few years' ago, an Israeli researcher, named Leah Balint (herself a hidden child survivor), began gathering material from Europe and Israel to help determine the true identity of these survivors. She subsequently joined the Ghetto Fighters' House to establish a new department and contacts with individuals who worked in Israel and in Poland, caring for orphans during and after the war.

So far several dozens of survivors have discovered their true identities and the search continues.

One of them had refused to discuss his past with his family and was finally convinced by his children to see if Leah could help him. After research in Poland, his origins were discovered; his parents had been deported and had put him in a suitcase which they threw from the train. He was rescued and brought to a monastery. After the war he was placed in a Jewish orphanage and later on adopted by a Jewish couple who brought him to Israel. After the research, he discovered that he had an aunt in Israel.

The important factor is that there is now an address for those survivors to get help on the subject. I met Leah in Jerusalem (she leaves across the street from Yad Vashem) and she told me of an encounter with a woman, a few years' ago, who threw herself at her feet and begged her to help her find her identity.

These child survivors, in addition to everything else they went through, still live in a void…

[94] Yad Vashem Ref. 97-F 937 VI-26.

Chapter 3

Child survivors of the Holocaust – The representation of their traumatic experience and memory in Literature.

> Ce que les gens désirent tous—quelques-uns à leur insu—c'est d'être témoins de leur temps, témoins de leur vie, c'est d'être, devant tous, leurs propres témoins.
>
> *Jean-Paul Sartre* [95]

Introduction:

In the narrative of child survivors, the degree of isolation from parents and other family members influences how and what they experienced during trauma and the way in which they remember what occurred. Their narratives are studies in shadow and light and the memories of a very young and fragile part of humanity, living in fear and loneliness, under attack by what normally should have protected them. Their words center on images of fear and loss in relational terms and they may signify terror as much by allusion as direct reference. Marie Gallant argues that child survivors tend to retain their memories intact but holistically, that is primary memory and its imagic content dominates the structure of what is remembered. The content of memory may be locked into what was not yet reasoned and this makes for a construal of the trauma landscape in the narratives that is different from that of adults.[96]

Laub and Auerhahn (1993) argue that at its most basic, children's traumatic memory is impaired and its impairment may be due to an active, if possibly unconscious, decision of the child survivor to inhibit recall in order to control the degree of reality.

---

[95] Cited by Ellen Fine in her Introduction to Legacy of Night: The literary Universe of Elie Wiesel, (State University of New York Press, 1982).

[96] Gallant, Mary J., Coming of Age in the Holocaust: The Last Survivors Remember, (Landham, Md.: UP of America, c2002) 3

> Trauma in children creates a quandary between the compulsion to complete the process of knowledge and the inability or fear of doing so… The knowledge of trauma is fiercely defended against, for it can be a momentous, threatening, cognitive and affective task, involving an unjaundiced appraisal of events, and our own injuries, failures, conflicts and losses. During massive trauma, fiction, fantasy, and demonic art can become historical fact; this blurring of boundaries between reality and fantasy conjures up affect so violent that it exceeds the ego's capacity for regulation. Trauma also overwhelms and defeats our capacity to organize it. Our psychological abilities are rendered ineffective. (288)[97]

It is just as likely that the magnitude of the traumatic experience may have the effect of creating vivid and intrusive memories. Such arousal may even overwhelm the psyche to a degree that the memories are completely unavailable. According to Laub and Auerbann, "memory for traumatic events may fall on a continuum from not knowing to full knowing, with degrees of remembrance depending on dynamic, cognitive, social, and neurological factors in complex interactions. Memory impairment may be caused by repression and dissociation and the issue of "truth" is central in autobiographical memory in the manner in which the patient and the therapist reconstruct the past."[98] Memory impairment could go as far as amnesia. Although amnesia following adult trauma has been well documented, the mechanisms are still insufficiently understood. Van der Kolk (1991) mentions Janet's distinction between traumatic and ordinary memory. According to Janet,[99] traumatic memory consists of images, sensations, affective states, and behaviors that are invariable and do not change over time. Janet suggested that these memories are highly state-dependent and cannot be evoked at will. They also are not condensed in order to fit social expectations. In contrast, narrative (explicit) memory is semantic and symbolic; it is social and adapted to the needs of both the narrator and the listener; and it can be expanded or contracted, according to social demands.

---

[97] Laub, D., & Auerhahn, N.C., "Knowing and not Knowing Massive Psychic Trauma: Forms of Traumatic Memory." International Journal of Psychoanalysis (1993): 74: 287-302, cited in Susan L. Riviere Memory of Childhood Trauma (New York: Gilford Press, 1996) 4.

[98] Susan L.Riviere. Memory of Childhood Trauma: 6.

[99] Janet, P., L'automatisme psychologique (Paris: Alcan, 1889).

The issue becomes even more complicated when it concerns childhood trauma, since children have fewer mental capacities for constructing a coherent narrative out of traumatic events. Child survivors experience greater difficulties reconstructing their pasts than older survivors. The younger they were the more blurred or inaccessible are details about their family history and pre-Holocaust memories. It isn't always possible to distinguish whether these are personal memories from that period or stories told to the child by others later on (considering that those who could tell were still alive). Many of the young children who survived the Holocaust have "empty spaces" or "black holes" in their memory. For some, details of their past were discovered later on in life, when they felt they had the time to investigate them. It is sometimes difficult to separate early memories from fantasies (Kestenberg, 1987).[100] Kestenberg claims that being unable to remember leaves a gap in the past that must be filled. This gap is identified with insignificance, emptiness, death, and identity problems. To know and to remember give a different quality to life. The purpose of remembering is to return feelings of belonging to and owning the past. As Schachtel (1947)[101] defines it: "Memory as a function of the living personality can be understood as a capacity for the organization and reconstruction of past experiences and impressions in the service of present needs, fears, and interests. Remembering increases self-esteem and narcissism, and builds a feeling of continuous self-identity."

Those who were children during the Holocaust describe their lost childhood and early adolescence. They changed all too soon from children to "adults", or even "old people," whose childhood needs were never fulfilled, and who would forever remain hungry for the early parent-child relationship that had been annihilated in the Holocaust.

---

[100] Kestenberg, J., "Imagining and Remembering" Isr. Jnl of Psychiatry and Rel Sci. (1987): 4: 229-241.
[101] Schachtel, E.G., "On Memory and Childhood Amnesia" Psychiatry 10: 1-26, cited in Israel Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 38, #1 (2001). CDJC: 2. 24433.

Elie Wiesel

In 1974, Elie Wiesel declared: I never spoke about it; I never made notes, I only read. I read every single book that appeared on the Holocaust. I still do. I'm a voracious reader of Holocaust literature and World War II literature. *I still want to understand what happened* [102]

By 1974 Elie Wiesel was internationally known and celebrated, the author of more than a dozen books translated into many languages. The time he is speaking about, however, is the ten-year period 1945-1955, the time between his liberation from the Buchenwald concentration camp and the writing of his autobiographical account of the last year of the war, La Nuit, first written in Yiddish in 1955—under the title Un die Welt Hot Geshvign (And the world remained silent)—was published in Argentina in 1956 and appeared in France in 1958, and could be considered as an attempt of the narrator to understand himself and his place in history. It is above all the narrative of a loss; in the course of the text, family, community, religious certainty, paternal authority, and the narrator's identity are corroded and destroyed.

Over the next decade Wiesel published eleven books and has stated that only La Nuit is autobiographical; yet "all the stories are one story built in concentric circles. The center is the same and is in La Nuit. "What happened during that Night I'm afraid will not be revealed." In La Nuit, Elie Wiesel reveals the summons of memory when he says, describing the death of his father: "His last words were my name. A summons to which I did not respond." Yet this memory from the child whose childhood was consumed by the Night is a response. If the Holocaust memoir is distinguished not by the memory of one's life but by the memory of one's death, the death of the self is linked to the death of this sacred other.

The imperative to testify characterizes the life and literature of Elie Wiesel. Obsessed with the need to remember and to transmit the story and history of the six million Jews annihilated by the

[102]Cargas, Harry James, Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel (New York: Paulist Press, 1976)

Nazis, Wiesel has committed himself to the role of witness as the justification for his existence. He considers writing "not a profession, but an occupation, a duty,"[103] and his primary function as a writer is to give testimony. His testimonies, novels, plays, legends, essays, dialogues, and speeches form concentric circles around the dark event of the Holocaust and the identity of the Jew in its aftermath.

Two major factors influenced Wiesel's dedication to the written word: his religious background as an Orthodox Jew and the event of the Holocaust which was to radically change his destiny. At the age of fifteen he was plunged from the stability of small-town life into the grotesque universe of Night. Together with his parents and three sisters, he was deported to Auschwitz, where his mother and younger sister were immediately sent to the gas chambers; his two elder sisters managed to survive while Wiesel and his father stayed together as they were shunted from Auschwitz to Buchenwald where the youth watched his father slowly die. This was to mark him for the rest of his life, and his vow to bear witness to his father's murder is reflected throughout his writing. Wiesel's entire literary structure appears to be founded on the need to transmit his father's legacy and to reaffirm the paternal authority by telling the story. After his liberation from Buchenwald, Wiesel was put on a train with four hundred other child refugees; they were first sent to Normandy then to Paris, under the auspices of OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants). There he was exposed to intellectual movements, such as existentialism, and to the thinking of such men as Camus, Sartre and Malraux. He first realized that he was going to write when he looked at his face after the liberation of Buchenwald and knew that he had to speak about "*that*" face and *"that"*

[103] Wiesel, Elie, "Why I Write" in Confronting the Holocaust: The Impact of Elie Wiesel, eds. Alvin Rosenfeld and Irving Greenberg (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978) 200.

mirror and *"that"* change. "I knew that anyone who remained alive had to become a storyteller, a messenger, had to speak up."[104]

Although Wiesel made a vow to keep silent for ten years after the war, during that time he read widely and thought constantly about the Holocaust. Conscious of the need to bear witness, he did not know how to approach a subject so overwhelming in its magnitude that words could only distort it. It was only after he met with the French Catholic writer François Mauriac that he published his first work, first in Yiddish (1956) and then in French as La Nuit (1958). The desire to commemorate the dead and to give expression to their presence through his voice is one of the primary sources of Wiesel's will to bear witness. Throughout his texts there is an unresolved conflict between the urge to cry out and to remain silent, resulting in a complex dramatic interplay. Silence is both destructive and beneficial; it is death, absence, betrayal, and exile, as well as purification and affirmation of being. Words, too, are double-edged; they can misrepresent what they aim to describe but have the power to create, reconstruct, and render immortal. The dialectic of silence and language—transmitting silence through language—is at the core of the theme of the witness.

Wiesel insists that it is impossible to write about the Holocaust; that Auschwitz negates the foundations of art, defies the imagination, and lies beyond the grasp of literature. He has sought to change his focus and widen his concentric circles by turning to historical and contemporary Jewish themes outside the realm of the Holocaust. Yet, he persists in remembering and in transmitting the legacy of Night through the enduring power of his words and silence.

Elie Wiesel has chosen to reach out: he has given birth to a literary universe in which the protagonists testify for him. They tell his story, the story of how a young survivor, mute and passive, transforms himself into an articulate messenger. His first book which depicts the long journey into

---

Cargas, Harry James, Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel, (New York: Paulist Press, 1976) 87-88.

Holocaust darkness, defies all categories. It has been described as personal memoir, autobiographical narrative, fictionalized autobiography, non-fictional novel, and human document. Essentially it is a *témoignage,* a first-hand account of the concentration camp experience, succinctly related by the fifteen-year-old narrator, Eliezer, who initiates us, the readers, into the grotesque world of the Holocaust and compels us to observe the event taking place before our eyes. He is first of all a witness; he does not interpret or explain the facts but allows them to speak for themselves. "The child of La Nuit is too old to write about children," Wiesel has remarked.[105] Indeed the words of the author-narrator depict the metamorphosis of a child into an old man, his abrupt passage into the blackness and silence of nonbeing in one never-ending night. The voice of the child-witness reveals the effects of the landscape of violence upon the psyche of one individual. It is the vision of a nightmare: the voyage from a familiar to an unknown world, a son's perception of the slow death of his father and the spiritual death of himself. As François Mauriac, who wrote the foreword to it points out: "In truth, it is much less a deposition dealing with historical facts than the inner adventure of a soul who believed for a time that God, too, had been massacred—God, the eternally innocent."[106]

Eliezer, the narrator of the book is, in effect, a child of the Night, who relates the journey from the friendly Jewish community to the frightening kingdom of Night. In entering Auschwitz he experiences the *other* haunted and interminable night defined by Maurice Blanchot as "the death that one does not find; the borders of which must not be crossed."[107]

Ten years after the actual experience, Elie Wiesel brought forth this "inner" testimony and was able to reconstitute his fragmented memories in such a way as to form a structured and coherent

[105] Wiesel, Elie, in Michael Houlston and Anthony Rudolf, "Beyond Survival: Conversation between Elie Wiesel and Eugene Heimler," European Judaism 6 (Winter 1971): 51: 5.
[106] Mauriac, François "Les Bloc-Notes de François Mauriac," Figaro Littéraire, (8 June 1963): 20.
[107] Blanchot, Maurice, L'espace littéraire (Paris: Gallimard, Collection Idées, 1955): 216, 221.

narrative resulting in a text of literary quality, rich in themes that lay the foundation for the author's subsequent works. Two of the book's principal motifs—*night* and the *father-son* relationship show that to live through the forces of darkness and to care for another proves the persistence of self in a system principally designed to annihilate the self and, to survive to testify, reinforces the will to remain human in the aftermath of the inhuman. The question of the annihilation of the self by the Nazis is mentioned in an article on the Holocaust memoir, where Barbara Foley writes:

> One goal of the Nazis' plan for the camp inmates was precisely to obliterate such a sense of individuality; the goal of the Holocaust memoir is, accordingly, not to convey a rich and unique particularity, but to delineate that process of dehumanization and anonymity that aimed at producing in the victim a negation of self. Innocence, initiation, endurance, escape—such is the pattern repeated in memoir after memoir, a kind of negative mirror of the traditional autobiographical journey toward self-fulfillment. And after the description of escape, a silence" ... another aspect of these memoirs that sets them apart from traditional forms. Traditional forms of autobiography, she explains, are an "elaboration of a unique individuality." (1982) 338-9 [108]

Wiesel's La Nuit (translated into Night), a remarkable book, occupies a unique and ambiguous position more than thirty years after its first publication in the corpus of Wiesel's work. It is the only text in which he talks at length about his experiences in the concentration camps and it constitutes the nonfictional basis of Wiesel's subsequent fiction; it is the center around which his later works revolve and to which they always implicitly refer.

How does one respond in the face of monstrous moral evil? Wiesel had been a pious Jew, and on the very first night his Hassidic faith was destroyed. After being parted from his mother and sister forever, he walked into the camp with his father and discovered a large ditch from which giant flames were leaping. Wiesel writes: "They were burning something. A lorry drew up and delivered its load—little children. Babies!" (Night, 42). He knows that this is a nightmare, and that it is not to be believed, that the terrible dream will come to an end. And so, on that night, his childhood faith

[108] Foley, Barbara,. "Fact, Fiction, Fascism: Mimesis in Holocaust Narratives." Comparative Literature (1982): 34: 336-60

was destroyed: "Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever."(Night, 44) When morning came, he writes, "A dark flame had entered into my soul and devoured it." And the evening and the morning were the first day. The rest of the book describes the powerless and helpless role of a victim, the unwilling recipient of actions over which he has no control, given unbearable poignancy because they are being etched in the life of a fifteen-year old boy.

Wiesel's description of the concentration camps is inseparable from his memory of the death of his father. Night recounts the stages of the father's decline and demise in autobiographical form, and therefore provides the grid against which the later fictionalized versions of the same events may be measured. The narrative of events in Night is always influenced and mediated by the narrator's understanding of them, so that there is no raw depiction of uninterpreted reality. There are five elements that will dominate the later fictional versions of the relationship with the father:

1. *Ambivalence*. Eliezer's filial loyalty is tested in the course of Night as his father becomes an increasing burden on him. The obligation to help a sick and enfeebled man diminishes his own chances of survival. The desire to be rid of his father is emphasized by the stories of filial disloyalty that Eliezer recounts in the course of the book, and that he perceives as having important similarities to his own situation. Finally, after his father's death, Eliezer confesses to a sense of liberation: "And, within myself, if I had searched the depths of my enfeebled mind, I would perhaps have found something like: free at last." (Night, 118)

2. *Guilt*. This ambivalence results in a sense of guilt. The term "survival guilt" has been used to describe the feeling common to many Holocaust survivors that their own survival is in some sense culpable.[109] This is intensified in the case of Eliezer by the fear that survival was bought at the price

[109] Lifton, Robert, J.: Death in Life: the Survivors of Hiroshima (New York: Random House, 1968) 484, relates survival guilt to "the process of identification—the survivor's tendency to incorporate within himself an image of the dead, and then to think, feel and act as he imagines they would." Lifton also writes that "the

of rejection of the father. In Night Eliezer underscores his sense of guilt by emphasizing his increasing disloyalty to his father: "Ï had not stood the test any more than the son of Rabbi Eliahu." (Night, 114)

3. *Reversal of roles*. In the concentration camps Eliezer begins to take over his father's dominant role. He issues instructions and brings food for his increasingly childlike father: "He had become like a child: week, fearful, vulnerable." (Night, 112) As his father becomes more like a child, Eliezer assumes a more adult role. Indeed, Night could be read as the narrative of Eliezer's coming to adulthood, a process that corresponds to the usurping of the father's authority. After the liberation of Buchenwald, Eliezer classes himself among the "free men" of the camp (Night, 121); he has now become a man.

4. *Impaired mourning*. This is signaled in Night and the later fiction by the absence of tears (see the Town beyond the Wall, 106). Mourning, according to Freud, is essential if the bereaved person is to come to terms with loss; it forms part of the process of recovery. By failing to repair trauma through mourning, by not accomplishing the rituals that traditionally mark the decease of a loved one. "There were no prayers over his tomb. No candle lit in his memory," (Night, 118), Eliezer impedes his own recovery and so remains locked within the trauma of loss: Wiesel will be condemned to reenact his father's death in his fiction because of Eliezer's failure to undertake the work of mourning.

5. *Loss of authority*. At the beginning of Night the father is represented as having authority over language and as being, in particular, "a good storyteller" (Night, 22). In the course of the book that authority is diminished and lost; but in the process of role reversal, the son does not simply *replace* the father and assumes his authority. With the death of the father, authority seems to be lost definitively, and the son is unable to establish an adequately secure position from which to assume

---

survivor of sudden, overwhelming disaster, as in Hiroshima, experiences various kinds of *impaired mourning*—a general inability to accomplish the 'work of mourning.' "

paternal power for himself. This has consequences on the nature of the narrative: Night is hardly the "good story" that his father might have narrated. (Night, 22) And the loss of paternal authority also has consequences on intelligibility. At the end of Night Eliezer's father can no longer deliver the judgments, instructions, and interdictions upon which his authority was founded. After he has pronounced Eliezer's name for the final time, he produces only unintelligible mutterings: "When I returned after the roll call, I could still see his lips murmuring something as they trembled." (Night, 118) Eliezer can never know what his father's final message might have been; the father's ultimate legacy is an incomprehensible murmur. Although this is given relatively little prominence in Night, the fact that Wiesel returns to it in later texts indicates its importance. The Town beyond the Wall refers to the father's "unintelligible words that the son must but cannot interpret." "His lips were murmuring unintelligible words and you were trying to pick them up, to decipher them with your eyes." (Town, 91)

The problem of understanding the father's final message occupies a crucial position in Wiesel's essay "La mort de mon père," published in Le Chant des Morts:

> His dried out lips were moving imperceptibly. Incoherent murmurs (*Murmurs incohérents*), I could just hear the sounds but not the words. Probably he was fulfilling his duty as a father by passing on his last wishes, perhaps also he was telling me his definitive views on history, knowledge, the abjection of the world, his life, mine. I will never know. (Chant, 11)

According to Colin Davis, Elie Wiesel's Secretive Texts (1994) "the father's mutterings then, are the sign of a more general intellectual and linguistic failure that forms the background of all Wiesel's texts."[110]

[110] Colin Davis, Elie Wiesel's Secretive Texts (Gainsville: Florida University Press, 1994): The failure to understand the father's message represents more than the disappointment of a son who does not hear his father's dying words, since it is associated with broader intellectual questions: "history, knowledge, the abjection of the world, his life, mine." In Wiesel's essay, the absence of interpretable meaning in the sounds made by the father seems linked to the senselessness of his death, the unintelligibility of the Holocaust, and the inadequacy of language to communicate the experience of the death camps.

The first retelling of the death of the father occurs in L'Aube. (Dawn, 1960). Elisha, the character in Wiesel's *récit,* is clearly related to Eliezer from Night. Dawn, however is a fictional work and Wiesel himself highlights the fictional nature of the text by describing it as a way of experiencing through the imagination what could not be experienced in reality: "It is because I could not, at that time, join the clandestine Jewish struggle in Palestine, that I wrote a novel about it later." (Silences, 14) It may also have been his need to turn from victim to executioner.

Elisha has been ordered to kill a British officer in retaliation for the execution of one of his comrades in arms.[111] The connection between this murder and the death of the father is suggested in the title of Dawn. In Night the body of Eliezer's father is removed "before dawn" (Night, 118); and his death presumably to have taken place some time before dawn and it is at dawn that the British officer is to be killed. Dawson's role as a father figure is further indicated by his reference to his own son, who is compared and contrasted with Elisha: "I have a son of your age, he began. He is your age but he is not like you (Dawn, 121). Before being shot, Dawson writes a letter for his son and confides it to Elisha who thereby becomes the surrogate of his enemy's son. But the most telling evidence that the murder of Dawson is a transposed version of the death of the father is given by verbal echoes between Night and Dawn. Before his words become unintelligible, Eliezer's father pronounces the name of his son twice; before he is shot, Dawson twice addresses Elisha by name. The following comments of Eliezer and Elisha strongly resemble one another: "My father made one last sound—and it was my name: "Eliezer." (Night, 118) "It was a dead who, his lips still warm, had pronounced my name: Elisha" (Dawn, 140). After the death of his father Eliezer feels that he also has died; when he looks in a mirror, he comments that "a corpse looked back" (Night, 121). After he

[111] Some of the parallels between the death of the father in Night and the murder of John Dawson in Dawn have been observed by Fine in Legacy of Night: 42-43.

has shot Dawson, Elisha has the feeling that he has in fact killed himself: "It's done, I've killed. I've killed Elisha. (Dawn, 140)

Dawson's murder could represent, then, a heightened but repressed sense of responsibility for the father's death but also Eliezer's and Elisha's own demise. The increased sense of guilt and the act of dissociation from the father binds the subject to the past all the more effectively, because it condemns him to live with the guilt. The son dies with the father. The act that might have ended the work of mourning has the result of impeding its completion; the past retains its hold over the present, the lost object retains its power over the living (but half dead subject). Eliezer's feeling in Night that the death of his father makes him "free at last" (Night, 118) is illusory, and it is belied by the very existence of the text in which it is expressed. During their mutual ordeal, Eliezer felt helpless when his father was being beaten and tortured. So Eliezer is freed from his father (or more by the sense of his helplessness towards him), but tied to a perpetual recollection and reenactment of the events that led to that so-called freedom; he is irredeemably bound to the past by the very event that seems to liberate him from it. Further evidence of this is given in The Town beyond the Wall (1962), published two years after Dawn and seventeen years after the liberation of Buchenwald. This novel presents another survivor subject to guilt because of his failure to cry over his father's death:

- Tell me, Yankel, what was I doing whilst my father was dying?
- I've just told you. Nothing. You did nothing. You watched.
- I didn't cry.
- No, you didn't cry.
- Did you wonder why I didn't cry whilst my father was dying.
- No.
- You're lying! I know you're lying. (Town, 91-92).

Here, Wiesel expresses his ongoing torment at not having been able to assist his father before he died.

The increased prominence of the theme paternity in Wiesel's later fiction—Le Testament d'un poète Juif assassiné (1980) and Le Cinquième fils (1983)—may in part be explained by the fact

that he became a father in 1972; the return of the theme to the center of his writing also marks a greater degree of reconciliation with the past. Le Testament d'un poète juif assassiné and Le Cinquième Fils are moreover novels of reconciliation; they indicate, if not the eradication, then at least the control of ambivalence and hostility toward the father figure. They deal with continuity and reintegration within the Jewish community, rather than emphasizing revolt or the desire to break with or annihilate the past. (The desire to annihilate the past by not recounting it is one of the elements, though not in the end the dominant factor, in Wiesel's preceding Le Serment de Kolvillag (1973).

In the last of his trilogy, his third book, The Accident (1961) Eliezer, a young survivor, who is still gripped in a past he cannot escape, is being run over by a taxi which he did not try to avoid. He sees himself only as a "messenger from the dead" among the living and cannot find a way to escape from the past and affirm the present. His friend Guyula, a painter, paints him emphasizing the torment in his eyes and, for Eliezer to overcome the past and look at the future, he lights a match to the portrait and burns it, leaving behind the ashes. The ashes of the past are still there and are only destructive. There seems no way to begin again, free of its destructive grip.

Wiesel turned to writing out of responsibility to the universe of his past. "Literature is expiation," he says, "and that is why writing is suffering. The happy do not write."[112] As a survivor, therefore, Wiesel found himself inspired by one overwhelming need—to justify his life: "I believe that, having survived by chance, I was duty-bound to give meaning to my survival, to justify each moment of my life. I knew the story had to be told."[113] Critics and readers who do not understand this underlying principle of his work do not concern him; his debt is to the victims: "I couldn't care less, when I know the work is true and is what I want to say. I do not write to please the reader, I

[112] Walker, Graham B. Jr., Wiesel: a Challenge to Theology (London: McFarland, 1968) 119
[113] "Why I Write," in Confronting the Holocaust: The Impact of Elie Wiesel, eds. Alvin H. Rosenfeld and Irving Greenberg (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1978) 21.

write for the dead."[114] At bottom, the determination of the child of Night to survive is the same determination that has driven the man to write. "A man must have faith in something indestructible within himself; he cannot live, or write, without it."[115]

In a conversation with Harry James Cargas, in 1976, Elie Wiesel said :

> I must confess that I find it maddening that Jewish writers today have to justify themselves for writing about Jews and Jewish themes. No one dares to ask why Faulkner wrote about the South, why Hemingway wrote about the civil war in Spain, why Goethe wrote about Germans, or Musset about the French. Ten books can be written about a single murder, and no one resents that. But writers who have survived the Holocaust are asked to justify themselves for taking on that lonely obligation[116].

Wiesel's anger is at the world indifference on the subject, and his feeling, which is right, that of having to apologize when speaking or writing about it. This is the reason why the first version of the book, in Yidish, was Und di Velt Hot Geshvign (and the world remained silent).

If, after the Holocaust, it was hard to believe in God, it was hard also to believe in Man; as Wiesel has written, "At Auschwitz not only man died, but also the idea of man."(Chant, 210)[117] Alan Berger refers to Night as the phase of the "death of God" but the designation of the text as a "phase" already implies that other phases will follow, that the less negative phases will mitigate the initial rejection of God. And indeed Berger goes on to describe Dawn as "the first attempt to enter a new phase which permits the reconstruction of a covenant tradition."[118] Wiesel subsequently espouses messianism and becomes "a covenant revisionist," revising but reaffirming God's covenant with the Jews.[119]

Alan Berger's use of the word "phase" is not a neutral choice; on the contrary, it actually preinscribes the conclusion that restores Wiesel to the tradition from which he had seemed to deviate

---

[114] Walker: 12 .
[115] Walker: 119 .
[116] Henry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel (New-York: Paulist Press, 1976) 84-85.
[117] Wiesel, Elie. Le Chant des morts, (Paris: Seuil, 1966).
[118] Berger, Alan, ed. "Crises and Covenant" in Bearing Witness to the Holocaust (Lewiston: New York, 1989) 67.
[119] Berger, Crises and Covenant: 73, 79.

in Night. This is achieved by Wiesel's critics through the metaphor of a journey. The dominant reading of Wiesel's fiction uncovers a progression from trial to wisdom, darkness to light, despair to hope. The chapter headings from Ted Estess's short book indicate this progression: "The journey into night," (ch.2) "A New Beginning," (ch.4) "Choosing Life." (ch.5) Ellen Fine, in Legacy of Night analyses Wiesel's fiction and points out "a progression in the author's thinking from the individual to others, from isolation to communication, from resignation to regeneration." Edward Grossman describes Wiesel's work as "a forced march from despair to affirmation."[120] Robert McAffee Brown describes Wiesel's writing: "Darkness that Eclipes Light," (ch.2) is relieved by "Light that Penetrates Darkness," (ch.3) and he describes a "moral journey—not only an affirmation of humanity, won back by Michael (in The Town beyond the Wall at such great cost); not only an affirmation of God, won back by Grégor (in The Gates of the Forest*)* at such great cost; but an affirmation of humanity and God together, won back by Elie Wiesel at so great a cost." John K. Roth refers to Wiesel's "journey from the despair of Night where God dies at Auschwitz to the theodicy of Célébration Biblique;" and Irving Halperin locates in Wiesel's writing a movement "from Buchenwald to the synaguogue, from the image of the corpse-like face in a mirror (at the end of Night*)* to the grandiloquent and serene words of the Kaddish (at the end of Gates of the Forest.)[121]

I have mentioned some of Wiesel's critics, but the journey-metaphor occurs with sufficient frequency for it to be more than coincidental; it actually structures and predetermines readings of his fiction. It corresponds to the deep need that motivates writing on the Holocaust that, although it demonstrated the worst evil accomplished by human beings to others, we must not lose faith in humanity. In contrast to Wiesel's uncompromising maxim quoted above "At Auschwitz not only

[120] Fine, Ellen. Legacy of Night,: 80; Grossman, quoted in Walker, Graham B, Elie Wiesel a Challenge to Theology.

[121] Brown, Robert McAffee, Elie Wiesel Messenger to all Humanity (Notre Dame: UP, 1983) 99; Roth quoted in Confronting the Holocaust, eds. Rosenfeld and Greenberg: 66; Halperin, quoted in Brown, Elie Wiesel: 99.

man died, but also the idea of man," (Chant, 210), here, if men died in Auschwitz, then the values of Man seem to have survived relatively unscathed. The journey-metaphor makes Night a starting point; and what is important is the destination. The metaphor predestines (and perhaps dooms) Wiesel to arrive, ultimately, in the homeland of covenant Judaism and humanism.

Whereas the theme of voice predominates in other works of fiction by Wiesel, the written word takes precedence in Le Testament d'un poète juif assassiné (1981). At the center of Wiesel's literary universe lies the dialectic of silence and language: the fear of betraying the dead by speaking in their place conflicts with the need to tell the tale. In the Testament this tension is resolved through the creation of a fictional character—a child of the second generation—who cannot speak and thus, needs not struggle against himself. Grisha is totally committed to the endurance of the legacy of his father who died in jail, and if he is unable to express himself aloud, the absence of his voice nonetheless declares its presence. The author has succeeded in transmitting the unspoken thoughts of one who has lot his tongue. He has made silence go beyond its limits and, from another level of reality, cry out. "Taciturn guardian of the living book that he carries within, the son bears witness to his father's unfinished life through history's silent and invisible dimension—the language of memory".[122]

Elie Wiesel has come full circle. The son who gives his father a voice in Night takes it from him in The Testament. While the other Wieselean protagonists tell the story of how their author became a witness, Grisha takes a pencil and adds his own chapter to the communal record—how he became mute. The act of speaking here is less important than the vow to remember. The father's testimony is doomed to remain incomplete for the poet is executed before he concludes his confession. Yet, his heir keeps the never-ending tale alive.

[122] Ellen S. Fine, "My father is a Book" in Legacy of Night (State University of New York Press, 1982) 144.

Ruth Kluger

Weiter Leiben, ein Jugend,(1992) (Going on Living, a Youth) is one of the most important Austrian works written in the postwar period, precisely because Ruth Klüger remains outside of its geographical borders. Physical distance to her place of birth (and to her dead family members murdered by the Nazis) allows Klüger to examine both the Austria and the family in which she spent the first years of her life in a highly critical and provocative way. The Austria of her childhood becomes in this book what Klüger calls a *Zeitschaft*, a place in time, to which one cannot ever physically return. Here her return to that imagined Austria is a literary journey taken from the relative safety and "neutrality" of California. At the same time, the text reflects upon the contradictions Kluger faces while integrating her identities as a Jewish Austrian woman, a professor of German in the United States and, perhaps most important, as the daughter of a Jewish survivor-mother and as a mother herself.

The work of an Austrian-born author, Weiter Leben does not immediately strike the reader as an Austrian book. In spite of the fact that the book's first part is entitled “Vienna”, it appears to be more a German or even an American work than an Austrian one. Published, first, in the town of Göttingen in Germany, Weiter Leben was specifically dedicated by its survivor-author to "Den Göttingen Freunden" (the friends from Göttingen), to the Germans themselves instead of to the international community at large as are so many of the Holocaust memoirs. By the late eighties, Kluger realized she had unfinished business with a past that was an ongoing story. Something pulled her back to Germany. Perhaps the language. “For language is the strongest bond there is between an individual and a place.”(204). The reason for this was the fact that, when she had an accident and was hospitalized in Gottigen, in the late eighties—while being there as the Director of her American

University Education Abroad program—her colleagues helped her recover and became her very good friends. She describes the accident:

> I believe he is pursuing me, wants to run me down…his headlight, metal, like a spotlight over barbed wire, I want to defend myself…Germany, a moment like a hand-to hand fight, *that* struggle I lose, metal, Germany again, what am I doing here, what did I come back for, was I ever gone ? (272)

She realized at this moment that her past had never left her and that, although she had survived, was still pursuing her.

In "The Barbed Wire of the Postwar World," in his book: Traumatic Realism (2000), Michael Rothberg writes:

> In her description of this occurrence, Klüger creates a constellation consisting of the constructing threat of barbed wire, the accidental impact of extreme events, and the restlessness of the memory of the camps that reverberates back through the entire memoir. By merging divergent locations in time and space, she suggests the essentially traumatic origin of her story."[123]

In relating her experiences in Theresienstadt, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Christianstadt, Kluger reflects on the various types of camps and ghettos and the denial of the general public to recognize it:

> The disinclination of most people to note the names of smaller camps is attributable to the fact that one would like to keep the camps as unified as possible and under the large labels of the concentration camps that have become famous. I insist on these distinctions in order to break through the curtain of barbed wire that the postwar world has hung before the camps. There is a separation between then and now, us and them, which doesn't serve truth, but rather laziness. (82)

"Barbed wire" is metaphorical for all that concentration camps symbolized, a metonymy tied to the material conditions of the camps, a border behind which "literal" death indeed took place. And yet "literal" death cannot be represented. Autobiography and history supplement each other without bringing forth the totality of the event. They reveal, instead, what is almost perceivable and yet which always lacks—mass death behind the barbed wire. How does the self-reflexive memoirist—

[123] Rothberg, Michael, "The Barbed Wire of the Postwar World" in Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation (Minnesota UP, 2000) 130

committed both to narrative and to commentary—represent "realistically" this abyss, this space behind the barbed wire curtain? "She chooses to undermine the authority of experience by refusing to present her story as if it could serve as an all-encompassing origin or synecdoche for a complete narrative of the Holocaust."[124]

This accident was the reason why Kluger decided to write her memoir first in German in 1992. Challenging Geman readers to "face themselves in the mirror of their past" as she puts it:

> After a few weeks at hospital and rehab, it was over, and I was back at work. But the memories remained, like cave paintings, until they become figures and assume a spectral significance. They had at last caught up with me; in my hospital bed I had been their prisoner. When I was well, I had been able to escape them every morning by getting up, away from their shadowy assaults, and making coffee against their sound and fury and focusing on some immediate task. How did I come to write this story? For a long time I had wanted to, but didn't because other urgencies interfered. Now, while I still felt the presence of the angel (of death) with the ambiguous face, whom I have known all my life more intimately than I wished, I began. He became the suicide angel of my teens and in the end I welcomed him.

She first wrote it in German, hoping that her mother, who was against anything German, would not read it; nevertheless her mother heard about it. Kluger rewrote it in English in 2001—Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered (for her American audience) and dedicated it to the memory of her mother.

Weiter Leben in many ways attempts to reclaim a Jewish Austrian literary voice. This act of reclaiming is complicated, however, by the fact that the author is a Jewish Austrian woman. Klüger's book is specifically about Jewish Austrian women, and about the way in which gender has affected the author's own experience as a Jewish Austrian child and later as a Holocaust survivor. Thus Klüger is faced, both as a woman and as an *Austrian* woman, with the task of carving out an original voice. Ironically, she does this by taking up the literary and cultural past and rewriting it.

---

[124] Rothberg: 133.

One of the things that makes Ruth Klüger's book compelling is her utterly uncompromising attitude toward people portrayed in the book, including her mother and herself. This gives the book a certain relentless bleakness that is somehow overwhelmingly appropriate for the subject matter. Ruth Klüger's narrative in Weiter Leben reads like a complete reversal of Elie Wiesel's. In one passage, there is a jarring opposition to the filial piety of Elie Wiesel when she tells the story of a girl who chooses to die with her father: "*I* would not have sacrificed myself for my mother."(135) The fractious relationship between Ruth and her mother may have helped them both to survive the camps, because they were concentrating on a secondary conflict that was less devastating than the primary crisis of dealing with the everyday trauma of the camps. The conflict between mother and daughter acted as a sort of diversion which made the survival of both of them more possible.

Kluger, as narrator, worries that the very act of literature betrays what was experienced in the Holocaust: don't words make "speakable" what is not? The recollection of her mother physically punished and out of control is so "vivid and lurid," she thinks, "I can't write it down." Then she writes it down. Ruth Kluger's book asks what one is to do with such facts, memories, imaginings, how one is to live with knowledge "like a bullet lodged in the soul where no surgery can reach it."[125]

In Weiter Leben, Kluger's early narrative split into four discrete units: Viennese childhood, the camps, postwar Germany and America. Although her childhood ended when she was deported to Theresienstadt, imprisonment and slave labor, however, did not provide her worst experience. Instead she considers childhood and her early years in America to have been more painful than the horrors of war. Born in 1931, Kluger unlike many female Holocaust memoirists, recalls few happy memories of family life before the war.

[125] Cited by Lore Segal, in the foreword to the English edition of Still Alive, A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered (The Feminine Press: CUNY, 2001)

Most of Kluger's childhood memories center on herself and her relationships with elders. Growing up in Vienna as an only child, was not easy. Time has not softened her sense of outrage. Even when writing her memoir in later life, she still feels distressed by her extended family's antiquated belief in hierarchy. Women and children counted for little, especially rebellious little girls who spurned family dicta regarding proper behavior. This preference for boys still embitters her. After the war, she remarks, few family members have been interested in her stories. "Wars," she notes, "and hence the memories of wars, are owned by the male of the species."(18) As she insightfully reports, her intellect and new information have challenged some childhood memories, "but my childish resentments are more deeply ingrained where the mind doesn't reach." (20) In this authoritarian, traditional Viennese family, women and their stories still do not count for much, but in recent years Kluger has received a warm reception for her wartime narratives.

After Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia, Kluger's mother was preoccupied about the fates of her son and second husband. Her first husband had regained custody of their son, Schorschi, and made the boy return to Czechoslovakia, Hitler's first target (28). Early in the war both father and son were deported to Theresienstadt. From there the boy was transported to Riga and shot. {Not until many years after the war did Kluger learn of her brother's fate. (58)} To compound her mother's worries, in 1940 just after the war broke out in earnest, Kluger's father, a physician, was arrested for performing an illegal abortion; few Jews wanted to have babies in such turbulent times. His wife was forced to promise to pay the government a *Reichsfluchtsteuer*, what amounted to a bribe, to allow him to leave Austria. (34-35) Unfortunately, he made the mistake of settling in France instead of Italy where he first landed. (39) From there he was deported to Lithuania and Estonia where he was killed. Not until publishing the German edition of this memoir, did Kluger learn exactly how her father had died. (40) For years, she thought both her father and half-brother had died in Auschwitz, but lacked

the definitive report necessary to come to terms with their loss. She laments, "Where there is no grave, we are condemned to go on mourning."(80) The grave does not have to be a plot of earth, she insists; definite information can be enough.

Gradually the Viennese Nazi laws separated Kluger from other children, increasing the young girl's isolation. Jewish children were thrown out of schools, refused entrance to movies, parks, and most public places. Cemeteries became the one place they could play. Kluger's mother, however, tried to confine her daughter, admonishing her not to join other children in their games. (54) To make matters worse once in 1940 her mother urged her to violate the law by going to see the movie *Snow White*. The young girl sat next to the baker's daughter, who recognized her. After the film, the girl told her that if she ever came to the movies again, she would tell the police. (46) None of her family members regarded this as an important threat. Lacking sympathy, the little girl suffered alone.

Each critical moment in the narrative is framed by some version of the mother-daughter relationship. The first is the mother reluctance to send Ruth to safety on a *Kindertransport*, insisting that mothers and children belonged together. (57) The mother having been separated from her son—of a first marriage—did not want Ruth to leave her too. Young Ruth was not consulted and felt resentment at the fact that she could have been saved.

> I fought down my disappointment without mentioning it, since there was no point in hurting her. But I never forgot that brief glimpse of another life which would have made me a different person. Should she have asked my opinion? Not have treated me as her property? In her last years, when she was a broken woman who had seen most of the century, I still now and then got a glimpse or this powerful claim to ownership, disguised as love and expressed as criticism. And I still ask: “why didn’t we get out on time?” (57, 58).

In September 1942, Ruth and her mother were deported to Theresienstadt, “the transport camp to hell.” (58) From its portals most of the prisoners were sent east to death camps. Curiously, Kluger's memories of the ghetto prison are ambivalent rather than completely unhappy. Like other

children, she lived in a little house with other German-speaking youths. Proximity to other children taught her to be "a social animal," capable of getting along with age-mates. (86) She made close friends with another girl named Hanna, perhaps the first friend in her life. Responsible adults in the community tried to help the children cope with the difficult situation. They attempted to educate the young, and at seventy Kluger still remembers the pleasure of her first lecture. Its subject was creation, the speaker, Rabbi Leo Baeck. Although, she resents a German woman who years later told her authoritatively that "Theresienstadt wasn't all that bad." She is contemptuous of people who "don't want to hear that for me life was better in Theresiesntadt than it had been during the last months in Vienna, because to digest this bit of admittedly subjective information would mean that they'd have to rearrange a lot of furniture in their inner museum of the Holocaust."(87) Despite the positive side of life in this ghetto, Kluger has other unpleasant memories of being endlessly crowded in what she calls "a mudhole, a cesspool, a sty."(87) As a result whenever she meets someone who was also deported there, she rebuffs any friendly overtures. The good that emerged in Theresienstadt, she concludes, was created by the Jews with no help from the Germans. (86)

Like many others, Kluger and her mother were deported to Auschwitz, but their stay was mercifully short. Of the tattooing of the number onto her arm in Birkenau, she writes that it "produced a new alertness in me. I was suddenly so aware of the enormity, the monstrosity, really, of my situation that I felt a kind of glee about it." She was feeling the enormity of the situation and the fact that she was being reduced to and marked by a number. "I was living through something that was worth witnessing." The thirteen-year old poet understood this was going to be remembered and maybe written about later: "Perhaps I would write a book:" "I wouldn't perish here, not I." (99)

> I would have to be taken seriously with my tattooed number as my cousin Hans was taken seriously by the family. It tells you something how beaten down and stripped of a sense of self I already was that I thus invented for myself a future based on the

> experience of the most abysmal humiliation yet, a future where precisely that abyss would appear honorable. (98)
>
> This projection of selfhood into a future time operated as a motor of hope and even confidence. And she reminds the reader that this is not "the story of a Holocaust victim;" the real victims have not escaped the silence of death. Because she is still alive, she has the task of testifying to what she has seen—and of writing critically of what she thinks about what she has seen."[126]

We see here her determination to survive, not to forget and tell about it and "as the narrator of her own—and her mother's story, Klüger is determined to see clearly, a kind of emotional realism, so crucial to her goal in the memoir, a goal of all Holocaust Literature: to bear witness no matter how painful or distasteful the evidence."[127]

A miraculous intervention saved the young girl's life. At first the deportees from Theresienstadt were kept together in a family camp in Birkenau, just as Gypsy families were. Each group met the same fate: the gypsies and the Theresienstadt family camp members were both gassed in 1944 (112). Luckily for Kluger before the annihilation of her group, a selection took place. Most selections in Birkenau determined who were sick and weak enough to be exterminated immediately. This time, however, the SS chose the young and strong to be sent to a work camp. Not too surprisingly, when Kluger told the SS officer she was twelve, he ordered her to stay behind. Normally the selection was final with no appeal to a higher court. But both Kluger and her mother believed that sufficient chaos might allow the girl to sneak back into another line to try her luck again. Her mother reassured her daughter that they would stay together come what may, but urged young Ruth to tell the officer that she was fifteen. Kluger had no intention of lying on such a grand scale—she didn't trust her mother's judgment—but she joined the other line. When she came toward the desk, a young clerk, another prisoner, came forward to ask her age. She advised Ruth to say she

---

[126] N.K.Miller: "Ruth Kluger's Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered: An Unsentimental Education" in Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust, eds. Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kancandes (NY: MLA 2004) 132.

[127] N.K.Miller,388.

was fifteen, even though no reasonable person would believe such a claim. When the officer commented on the child's small size, the clerk pointed out that she was strong. Feeling in an expansive mood the officer agreed, and Ruth was allowed to join her mother. She gives all the credit for her salvation to the clerk, although her mother had given her the same advice. But she acknowledges that family is not about justice but about emotional truth: "I repeat: my mother and I were very unfair to each other." (105) Indeed every critical moment of the narrative is framed by some version of the mother-daughter relationship but considering that the clerk's gesture of solidarity saved the young girl's life, not surprisingly her memories of female guards and authority figures in the camps are more positive than many another survivor's. Every Holocaust narrative is complex and unique. In an interview with Neomi Schwartz, from the Feminine Press, on December 06, 2001, she recounted this episode and added: "I owe my life to a woman who didn't know me. It was an act of the kind that is always unique—an incomprehensible act of grace."

At this point Kluger tells a positive story about her mother but adds a barb at the end. In Birkenau a young orphan girl named Susi attached herself to her mother, and her mother chose to treat Susi as if she were family. (122-23) Kluger, however, insists that this newly constituted family was not always happy. At various points in their later lives, Kluger reports, her paranoid mother rejected Susi, although they were eventually reconciled at the end of her mother's life. (123-124) Yet, during the war, she acknowledges, her mother's paranoia and quick actions generally paid off. Arguing against Bruno Bettleheim's claim that a sane person ought to be able to adjust to living with the horrors of the concentration camp, Ruth Kluger counters that because her mother was not often sane, she was especially well equipped to save the lives of the trio.

> I think that people suffering from compulsive disorders, such as paranoia, had a better chance to pick their way out of mass destruction, because in Auschwitz they were finally in a place where the social order (or social chaos) had caught up with their delusions."(104)

Indeed, Alma's fear of persecution was a fear that shaped the daughter's life in and outside of the camps.

The Nazis evacuated their work camp on one of their infamous death marches, but on the second night Ruth, her mother, and Susi ran away from the chaotic group. They were lucky because most SS guards shot anyone who dropped by the wayside or who attempted to escape.

During the relatively short period before the end of the war, Kluger's mother and Susi both proved to be resourceful in dealing with the prejudiced German population. As a result, most of the time the three lived, unmolested, among gentiles. Yet when the war ended Americans turned out not to be particularly welcoming. The first American soldier they met refused even to listen to their story. In 1947, after delays and bureaucratic entanglements, Kluger, her mother, Alma, and Susi, docked in New York harbor after two weeks in steerage on the *SS Ernie Pyle*. It was Ruth Kluger's sixteenth birthday. As they approached New York harbor, Alma asked a harbor official: "Where do we go now?" He answered: "Wherever you like, lady. It's a free country." And Ruth to remark: "We had been emigrants for many years. Now we were finally immigrants, and the immigrant city New York took us in."(170) The beginnings were hard…

Kluger had a relatively happy two years in Germany once the war was over. She was allowed to return to school and later attended classes in a Roman Catholic seminary for a more advanced education. In many ways Kluger's first encounter with America was complex. America presented more obstacles than postwar Germany. America was not so accommodating. Her ambitious but insecure German American relatives were critical of Klüger's manners. Moreover the impoverished young girl had become enough of a German that she found making American friends a difficult chore. Three months after arriving in the United States, Klüger entered Hunter College. Shortly

thereafter she became depressed from a combination of forces, the effort to obtain an education in a foreign language and the misery of acute culture shock.

Recognizing her daughter's misery, Klüger's mother sent her to a psychiatrist, a Viennese friend of her husband. Not too surprisingly, the therapy turned out to be a disaster. Unfortunately sixteen-year-old Klüger assumed that she had the right to complain about her mother, whose intrusive behavior she found oppressive. The doctor, she recalls, sided with the mother. He lectured young Ruth on her sins, her critical nature and her untidiness. He warned the young woman that she would never make friends, thereby undermining her confidence. Feeling betrayed by the doctor, Klüger lost an opportunity to reassess her early life, thereby better understanding her troubled mother and herself. Instead she refused further treatment. She was lucky enough to spend a summer at the University of Vermont, where she met three young women who became her friends for life. "She begins to understand what it's like to live in the skin of someone unlike you instead of "running in circles within an idiosyncratic enclosure of barbed wire" locked into the camp in your mind. To connect to chosen friends is to remake oneself in the company of others: "Family members by contrast, share your genes; they don't expand your vista, except by chance." (195)[128] She could be closer to her friends than she was to her own mother or any of her other family members, in Austria and in New York, and being able to communicate with her new friends made her realize how frustrated she had felt all her life. She says that making friends was like "climbing into a lifeboat." (192) "I was at last integrated, if only within this small group of young women, for to integrate means to make a whole of parts… Friends fill the gaps: they are complementary to oneself. None of us had grown with a father, and all of us had problems with our mothers. In a way we were each other's parent replacement."(195)

[128] N.K.Miller: Ruth Klüger's "Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered: An Unsentimental Education" in Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust. Eds. Marianne Hirsh and Irene Kacandes (New York: MLA, 2004) 394.

Skillful therapy at a later point might well have been helpful. The tone of Klüger's narrative at many points suggests an unacknowledged battle with depression. For example, when discussing her miraculous escape from death at Birkenau, Klüger refuses to rejoice even for a moment. Instead she feels compelled to "warn the reader not to invest in optimism vouchers and not to give credit, much less take credit, for the happy end of my childhood's odyssey—if indeed simple survival can be called a happy end." (91) This may be part of survivor guilt:

> Without meaning to, I find that I have written an escape story, not only in the literal but in the pejorative sense of the word. So how can I keep my readers from feeling good about the obvious drift of my story away from the gas chambers and the killing fields and towards the postwar period, where prosperity beckons?" (138)

Ruth Kluger writes that she and German friends were at a dinner party exchanging stories when the subject of tight places or claustrophobic experiences came up. Her friends, all of them of her generation, were talking of elevators that had been stuck, of closets that were locked or of tunnels that seemed endless. Suddenly she found herself in a tight place of a different sort: her own experience, she realized, was not proper for salon discussions, for her "confinement" was the suffocating train ride that took her and her mother to Auschwitz. She describes this moment at the dinner table:

> I had this transport to Auschwitz on my mind, but didn't contribute it, because if I had, it would have effectively shut up the rest of the company. They would have been bothered, troubled, sympathetic, and thoroughly uncomfortable. There would have been no further discussion of the way space affects us, which had been our subject. They would have resented me as a spoilsport. It had been an occasion for reminiscing, but there are limits. (84)

In fact, then, her "tight spot" was not narrow enough: it was too broad for the discussion at the table. Her story about the train would have crossed an unstated line and, would not, as she said, have been proper for salon conversation. Better, she thinks, that she remain silent than that they become so after hearing such a story. After all, she is used to being silent**.**

> So my childhood falls into a black hole. I feel that if I open my mouth they'll all look at me as if I had jumped into a seething cauldron. So I listen in bored silences to speeches about the Holocaust with the usual self-enclosed phrases that don't engage anyone's attention, let alone imagination, and when I am with company, I let others talk. (You might not invite me back if I didn't). And yet that evening we had a lot in common, those Germans and I: we had a common language, a common culture, and an old war that had destroyed much of both. We were articulate and knowledgeable. But the bridges had been blown up; we squat on piers that don't connect anything ... but if there is no bridge between my memories and yours and theirs, if we can never say "our memories," then what's the good of writing any of this? (93)

One of the most striking characteristics of this book is its focus on silence as the marker of a Jewish woman's identity. Ruth Kluger depicts herself, in all of her identities, as a daughter, a granddaughter, and even as a mother, as defined primarily by muteness: her experience is consistently denied throughout the text by those who, like her children's friends in California, cannot imagine a woman in the role of survivor. Writing the book breaks the silence while at the same time memorializing it.

German stories about the war are about being bombed or being hungry. Jewish stories are about deportations and concentration camps. And yet, as Ruth Klüger's story points out, all of these people were (are) Germans (or in her case, Austrians), had been neighbors, would have been fellow citizens, had the situation been different. "There is always a wall between us, but here the wall is barbed wire. Old rusty, barbed wire."(57) That the Jewish stories are, by definition, foreign, in spite of the fact that they stem from a native Austrian of the same generation, underscores the irony of being both Jewish and German/Austrian after the Shoah. And yet, of course, Klüger does not remain silent; she writes—in the first version in German—the story of the transport in a book dedicated to "Her friends in Gottingen," reflecting, before she begins, about the need to build bridges from one set of memories to another, not to replace one with the other. Writing the book breaks the silence; her voice, no longer silent, allows for those other voices to stay alive, to be connected to hers with a bridge.

Kaddish: Reclaiming the Woman's Voice in the Jewish Community

As a child and as a girl, but even now as a woman, Klüger claims she felt stripped of the ability to count, to say *kaddish* for the dead, to be a source of memory. She writes that she has always been suspicious of rituals because they did not include her. Women in the Jewish community were excluded from the important rituals. Her grandfather talking to his dog, in front of the women of his family, said that the dog would be the one to say *Kaddish* to him (since there were no men left). According to Klüger:

> Before his daughters he talked this way to a dog, and my mother told me about it uncritically. She just took the put-down the way a Jewish daughter should. It was meant to be funny. Were things different and I might be able to, as they say, officially say *Kaddish* for my father, then I might be able to make friends with this religion. (23)

To some degree, then, the title Weiter Leben also implies a learning to come to terms with her past frustration at the Jewish religion, a frustration and anger which is marked in this story as highly ambiguous: Her anger at her mother for not contradicting the grandfather, whose story clearly marked as harmless and comical, is compounded here with the anger at her mother for not having stopped the camp experience. Klüger has lost everything—family, language, status, father, mother, identity—and in trying to piece together a viable post-Shoah identity, she finds that she must "make friends" with the past, with the Jewish religion itself. Thus, the text becomes a mapping out of her identity as a writer, as a scholar, and as a literary voice.

History and Living On: *weiter Leben*

The title of the work itself, which translates into English literally as "Going on with life" or, more interestingly, as "living more widely, with more room," conjures up several images which generate questions for the reader. On one level, the title describes what she has herself done; she has lived on and this is her story. At the same time, though, the words "*weiter leben*" can be construed as a rough order or a strong admonition for other survivors and, especially, for her younger German

audience to live on. This is quite literally a book for the Germans of younger generations who will read her story and live on.

On another level, the title refers to Klüger's life in America, especially in California, where all is spatially wider and, at least apparently, more open. She writes that, after her years of being boxed in both in the camps and in New York City which caused her to experience a feeling of living in a cage, (237) the openness of the California freeways and wide landscapes came as a shock:

> My university lies between two interstate highways. When I first came to Orange County and got lost every few days on the highways, I imagined that hell must be like this, that everyone would have to travel these highways, alone in their own tin jails, separate from all the others and yet visible for everyone. (280)

The wideness of California was not just terrifying, however: Southern California's desert landscape offers what appears at first to be a break with the past. Kluger comes to like California in spite of its unfulfillable promise of new beginnings; California is still home:

> Meanwhile I am at home again in Southern California, in Orange County. This is a country whose history consists of the fact that its inhabitants fled here to escape history, European, Asian and finally even American history, in as far as it took place further eastward. I like living here. This sea and desert landscape, threatened by earthquakes, blessed by the sun, plagued by drought, this landscape has taken on the foolish and tragic mission of getting rid of the past by denying it, by replacing the present with another present before the first one can get old. This is impossible and that's why it is foolish. (280-282)

The word "*weiter*" in the title has more than a spatial meaning, however; "*weite*r" also calls to mind the lines of Paul Celan's complex poem to the dead, Todesfuge, and thus links Klüger's work closely to the Jewish-German literary past. Celan writes in his poem of the smoke of the burning, murdered Jewish victims rising up into the air where "*da liegt man nicht eng*."[129] Klüger's title, one can almost imagine, echoes the *eng* with *weite*r, and, as we shall see, Celan's *liegen* (lie) with *leben* (live). The association between the two works is by no means inconsequential; it is highly fitting that

[129] Celan, Paul, Todesfuge .in Deutsche Gedichtem, Theodor Echtermeyer and Benno von Wiese, eds. 17th Ed. (Dusseldorf: August Bagel, 1986) 664-665.

Klüger, in this highly constructed and yet emotionally laden memoir, pays tribute to Celan, the great Jewish German poet of the former Austro-Hungarian empire.

The two works of mourning can be read against each other in interesting ways. Kluger's ambiguous word "*weiter*," directed both to the living and the dead, seems to be a response to Celan's poem to the dead, itself full of contradictory imagery and rhythms. While Celan's dead do not lie (*liegen*) narrowly, Klüger's figures are exhorted to live (*leben*) widely. His is a negative statement (*da liegt man nicht eng*), hers is positive (*weiter leben*). His lie, hers live—two German words which are similar in rhythm and sound and yet vastly different in this context. Her title and the book itself is an ambiguous exhortation to both the living and the dead to live on, if only in memory, while Celan's vision in his poem is directed only toward the past, the dead. Like Celan's, Klüger's dead will live on only in the book itself, *not eng* but *weiter*, but her living will also live *weiter*, perhaps even in the open spaces of California. Klüger's text functions then on many levels simultaneously: it is a prayer for the living to live on, and it is, like Celan's, a *kaddish*, the Jewish prayer of mourning for the dead, for those who will not live on except in memory. In the end, *Weiter Leben* becomes a tribute to the Jewish German literary past, a *kaddish* written, very appropriately, as a German literary text.

Ironically, it is only through taking on the traditional role of the man in the Jewish mourning ceremony, by "writing the book" and, in so doing, saying *kaddish* for the dead, that she is able to take that step and begin the process of making friends with Judaism again. The book becomes the *kaddish* she never said for her father, for her grandfather, and for her lost brother, for even as she complains bitterly about not having been allowed to say the prayer, she begins to remember her father, to recount his life, and to mourn for him. This work of mourning is colored, however, by the guilt she feels at having no way of bringing together her everyday memories of him, some bad, some

good, with his death which is too terrible to imagine. And this guilt, in turn, produces in her narrative a tone of aggressive anger at a man for dying a death after which she cannot express the normal anger a child might have felt toward a parent ever again. His death, which she imagines, is indeed horrible. She sees him naked in a gas chamber, attempting to scratch his way to the top of the pile, and she tries to imagine whether he, like many men, was stronger than the others and thus able to crawl up over the children, children who were perhaps her own age. Such a vision, planted into her head by the stories she had heard after the war, haunts her as she attempts to remember him not only as a victim, but as a father. This *kaddish* is an attempt to rescue his memory—to exorcise such visions by writing them down.

Reclaiming the German Fairy Tale

Giving a voice to the Jewish woman's survival story is just one part of Klüger's mission, however. The book also attempts to go back further in time before the Holocaust and to reclaim the German literary tradition for Jewish women. Klüger relies greatly on the fairy tale as a vehicle for telling some of her survival stories. Fairy tales are rich sources for literary depictions of the Shoah experience for many reasons. Their very structured form, from the formulaic language of "if they are still alive…" to their rigid narrative patterns, makes their "constructedness" transparent, thus underlining the author's awareness of the difficulty of using language to describe the indescribable.

Furthermore, that fairy tales have a perceived double status, both as a part of high (written) and low (oral) culture within the German literary canon, adds to their usefulness in telling the Shoah story. The survivor-author can both locate her or himself within a high German cultural context and identify her or himself as a "mainstream" German by retelling the famous Grimm tales. These writers, then, can use these particular literary texts to call attention to their own identity as members of high German culture. Such an act of assertion becomes necessary for Jewish survivors, who had

been told that they were not members of the dominant group in German culture and that their language was false, their discourse degenerate. Thus, in rewriting and undermining the fairy tale, these authors are claiming an intimacy with German culture that is not allowed to an outsider. They are staking a familial claim by treating the cultural history in a critical though familiar way.

The main fairy tale in Weiter Leben, is not Hänsel and Gretel, but Schneewittchen (Snow White), the story of a princess driven into a dark forest by a malicious witch-like stepmother. In Klüger's complex text, the voice of the child, which is differentiated from that of the adult narrator, often paints the mother as evil and at fault for the entire camp experience, just as Snow White's stepmother had forced her into the forest. Several of Klüger's experiences underline the reasons a child might have for painting such a picture of a mother. When Ruth Klüger and her mother arrived in Birkenau in the summer of 1944, and her mother suggested that they throw themselves onto the electric fence in the yard so that they might be spared watching each other suffer, she was horrified that her mother could suggest her death (113-114). Klüger was twelve when they arrived in the camp, an age in which *children* are supposed to be taking risks, endangering their lives, while the *parents* should be cautious and conservative, worried about the safety of their children. Her life in the concentration camp turned the world upside down for Klüger.

Thus, it is not hard to imagine why the child protagonist likens her mother to the fairy tale witch and herself to Snow White, the innocent victim. Furthermore after she went to see the movie, and was caught by the baker's unpleasant daughter, she reflects:

> The story of Snow White can be reduced to one question: who is entitled to live in the king's palace and who is the outsider. The baker's daughter and I followed the formula. She, in her own house, the magic mirror of her racial purity before her eyes, and I, also at home here, a native, but without permission and at this moment expelled and exposed. Even though I despised the law that excluded me, I still felt ashamed to have been found out. For shame doesn't arrive from the shameful action, but from discovery and exposure. (37)

Fairy tales are associated with a fixed past, a former way of working through trauma (according to Bruno Bettelheim).[130] Nothing in the fairy tale can serve to minimize the real experience; the child is trapped. Lawrence Langer writes of the function of fairy tales in Holocaust fiction:

> The fairy tale allusion produces extraordinary reverberations, since in many respects it epitomizes the continuity in experience which characterized the imagination's attitude toward life before the advent of '1'univers concentrationnaire.' "Once upon a time," the traditional refuge for children, always ended "and they lived happily ever after," assuring an uninterrupted adventure from past to future—what the narrative voice calls a "readiness to live.[131]

For Ruth Klüger, the rewriting and breaking down of the fairy tale is to some degree a reckoning with her own destroyed or broken childhood. This connection sets into motion a whole process explored in her text of rewriting and re-understanding the past, as the many voices of her own persona take turns telling her story. Kluger's retelling of Snow White, as a literary representation of the Shoah, allows both the author and the reader to indulge in certain (perhaps therapeutic) fantasies about survival. The fairy tale realm becomes a world in which the former child-survivor plays out fantasies of guilt at having survived or anger at having almost died; the narrator can align herself with one or with all of the figures taking part in the fairy tale power struggle (in this case the struggle was with the mother and the Nazis), and thus relive her own power struggle as a child-victim of the Nazis, in which she had absolutely no control.

Ultimately, although the child's voice and the fairy tale narrative structure are essential to the intricate texture of Wieter Leben, it is the voice of the adult Klüger which has the final say. The book is, above all else, an act of forgiveness of her mother. For as a mother herself, and as a mature adult, Ruth Klüger is now able to understand the dilemma faced by her own mother who had asked her to

---

[130] Bettelheim, Bruno, The Uses of Enchantment and the Informed Heart (New York: Vintage Books, 1977)
[131] Langer, Lawrence, The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1975) 158.

throw herself onto the electric fence. In her book, the author states: "Only when I had children did I understand that it is justifiable to kill your own children in Auschwitz rather than to wait." (113-114)

Bridging Two Worlds

The publication of W*eiter Leben*, as well as her ongoing work and teaching in both California and Germany (she takes exchange students from Irvine to Gottingen regularly), make it necessary that Klüger travel back and forth between Germany and California. As a survivor, she belongs to both of them equally. Weiter Leben, with its associations with the literary past, has returned to her the lost status as a member of the German-speaking community from which she was violently removed, while her "home" in the United States has literally meant life and a chance to begin again. It is hard to imagine ever being able to reconcile the new world, in which everyone is running from history, with the old, in which all are embracing the past in some sort of masochistic ritual that brings no relief. And yet, this is, to a large degree, one of the primary functions of this text, to bridge these two worlds that are so much a part of the survivor's identity. Austria appears to be a place left behind, full of painful memories, and yet the focus of so much of the book's energy, both positive and negative.

What is striking in the epilogue of the English version, Still Alive: A Girlhood Remembered –which is not a translation but a parallel book to Weiter Leben: Eine Jugend—is the difference of emphasis; it is the defiance of Holocaust survival and the persistence of memory. What is remarkable is the healing role that Kluger's granddaughter played in reconciling the two difficult women. Unlike many sufferers from dementia, returning to childhood erased most of the pain of her mother's adult life. Retreating in her mind to the Czech village of her girlhood, the great-grandmother forgot her four marriages and the Nazis. She believed her daughter Ruth to be the beloved sister of her early days, not the Americanized aunt who years before had given young Ruth and her mother so much grief. Finally in her late nineties, the mother was able to enjoy the child,

whose father's birth had precipitated a suicide attempt. The mother-daughter disputes evaporated, and the four-year-old great-grandchild became a beloved playmate, "*ein Wunderkind!*"(213) As Kluger so movingly put it in the very last paragraph, the two "met in a present that miraculously stood still for them, time frozen in space and space made human. Perhaps redeemed. (214) The choice of ambiguity in “perhaps” is a final rejection of the sentimental. Few lose their minds in such a benign fashion, but the old woman had suffered enough. Her last days brought her peace of mind and playful moments with her beloved great-grandchild.

The English title Still Alive thumbs its nose at those who wanted Ruth Kluger dead, but loses perhaps a small nuance in the German Weiter Leben; “going on living” suggests it’s a bit of a chore. Ruth Kluger accuses us all of avoidance. She employs the metaphor of the museum. The camps tidied up, cleaned out, and helpfully labelled, give the visitors an experience that is the opposite of what was suffered there by Ruth, her mother, Susi, the crowd of dead. We are not to settle down in whatever attitude to the Holocaust we have created for ourselses. Her tool is language at once so fierce and precise it aims to understand all without the temptation to forgive anyone or mitigate anything.

Saul Friedlander

Historian, teacher, author, policy-maker, survivor. It is the last, in fact, that defines all the rest because of his personal experience. Survivor. One of the world’s leading scholars of the Holocaust, Friedlander studies, teaches and writes about an era with which he is intimate on more than merely academic terms. His parents were lost in the fires of Auschwitz four months before Hitler came to power. Pavel Friedländer was born in Prague to a middle-class Jewish family. In 1939, seven-year-old Pavel and his family were forced to flee Czechoslovakia for France, but his parents were able to conceal their son in a Roman Catholic seminary before being shipped to their

destruction. After a whole-hearted religious conversion, young Pavel began training for priesthood. The birth of Israel prompted his discovery of his Jewish past and his true identity. In his book, When Memory Comes, written in 1977, 10 years after the Israeli 6-day war, Friedländer describes his experiences, as a tender elegy, moving from Israeli present to European past with composure and elegance, from fear to memory, in a mosaic of Proustian images, the past casting its shadow over the present, the present illuminating the past.

> June 5, 1977**:** 10th anniversary of the beginning of the Six-Day War. Period of tension, anxiety and enthusiasm. I lived through these events with fervor, and when I began teaching in Jerusalem in the fall of 1967, everything seemed new and wondrous to me, as it had when I arrived in Israel for the first time almost twenty years before. My strongest impression during this decisive year? Perhaps the one made on me by a certain category of students: the "soldier-intellectuals." Bearers of the nation's destiny, hallowed and thereby glorified, by their permanent contact with death, young people thirsting for knowledge—that was how they struck me, and in a way, that is what they were.(9)

The most remarkable feature of When Memory Comes is its composure and elegance. As Leon Wieseltier put in his review:

> His language seems armored (even more formidably so in the French) against the dissolution he describes.Yet dissolution triumphs.The pieces of memory do not cohere…Friedlander's life remains disrupted, despoiled of its dreams; not least because of the honesty with which he has attempted to discover what the death of the Jews might mean… Even the structure of his memoir thus seems disconsolate; he refuses to impose narrative order upon his account of the catastrophes."[132]

Friedländer describes his experiences in lean, graceful sentences; he portrays, in fragmented form and with almost unbearable restraint, his tale of survival under the Nazis and its effects on his dismembered life: the pain of a Czech Jewish child "abandoned" by parents intent on saving his life by placing him for care in French Catholic hands; the nature of terror and its regressive effects ("and every morning I was sopping wet with urine when I woke up";) the confusion of identity and the consolatory move to Catholicism (in devotion to the Virgin "I rediscovered something of the

[132] See "Between Paris and Jerusalem," New York Review of Books 26, no.16 (25 Oct. 1979): 3-4.

presence of a mother"); the secret shame ("of having passed over to the compact, invincible majority, of no longer belonging to the camp of the persecuted but, potentially at least, to that of the persecutors."[133]

> When did I feel the first tremors of what was going on around me—when did I feel the stable and peaceful world of my earliest years begin to shift? I could not say exactly, for I think the inner upheavals that preceded the events that made history were later integrated with these latter to form an indissoluble whole. Inner upheavals, the fear of being abandoned, and successive encounters with death. (13)

Learning from a compassionate priest of his parents' death and of Auschwitz ("to hear him speak of the lot of the Jews with so much emotion and respect must have been an important encouragement for me;") the rediscovery of his Jewishness (with its immediate, albeit confused, "sensation of absolute loyalty") and the ongoing complexities inherent in the move from Pavel to Paul-Henri, to Sha'ul, to Saul.

> When crisis occur, one searches the depths of one's memory to discover some vestige of the past, not the past of the individual, faltering and ephemeral, but rather that of the community, which, though left behind, nonetheless represents that which is permanent and lasting." (69)

> It has been said that to be a Jew is to continue, from generation to generation, to tell a story with blurred outlines. Perhaps the essence of a tradition, its ultimate justification, is to comfort, to bring a small measure of dreams, a brief instant of illusion, to a moment when every real avenue of escape is cut off, when there is no longer any other recourse. (70)

With his "Jewish identity" recovered and, as did many young Jewish survivors in post-Holocaust Europe, Friedlander tried to join a moderate Zionist youth movement, but it wouldn't take him because, at fifteen, he was too young. He lied about his age and joined a more militant group that was linked to the hard-core Irgun, an underground organization that was fighting the British mandate in Palestine.

---

[133] Friedlander, Saul, When Memory Comes. (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux 1979) 137-8

Not long after David Ben-Gurion announced the formation of the State of Israel, Friedlander sneaked away from his boarding school in Paris and boarded an Irgun-sponsored arms-smuggling ship, the Altalena, en route to Israel. However, as the Altalena approached Tel Aviv on June 20, 1948, with its cache of weapons, contrary to the orders of the newly formed Israel Defense Forces, it was shelled. Twenty-two on board the ship were killed in the assault. (Among the survivors was Menachem Begin who would become Prime Minister of Israel and sign a peace treaty with Egypt, in 1979). The destruction of the Altalena was among the bitterest episodes in Israel's war of Independence.

> When the *Altalena* left Port-de-Bouc, the first truce of the Israeli-Arab war had just taken effect. Sending in reinforcements was now illegal. So getting this ship underway amounted to a daring step on the part of the Irgun command in Europe. For David Ben-Gurion's provisional government this was an act of defiance, a provocation and, perhaps, the beginning of a plan for armed secession by the most extreme section of the country.

The chapter (and the book) ends with the very personal experience of the "faint lapping of the waves" as the ship was "gently gliding toward the coast" of Haifa.[134] The knowledge of the ship's destiny and the memory of the lapping waves will become the two sides of all the stories he will tell, such that "when knowledge comes, memory comes too, little by little."[135]

Precisely because the child's story is not suffused with the foreknowledge of apocalyptic or epic events, but is rather *juxtaposed* with the voice of the mature historian writing in 1977, the reader is invited to experience When Memory Comes as a *pas de deux* of his two selves, the one who inhabits the present in Israel and the other who inhabits his past in occupied Europe. By supplementing the diachrony of destruction, survival and rehabilitation on which the "official,"

---

[134] Friedlander, Saul, When Memory Comes (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979) 180, 186. The French original, Quand vient le souvenir was published in 1978.

[135] The full epigraph of Friedlander's memoir, from which the title was taken, is: "When knowledge comes, memory comes too, little by little. Knowledge and memory are one and the same thing." It is a quote from Gustav Meyrink, whose *Golem* figures here are central artifact and allegory.

redemptive Israeli narrative is based with the synchrony of individual memory, this memoir refuses to privilege either one."[136]

Lawrence Langer defines the bifurcated consciousness of the survivor as a sign of unmastered trauma and that the Holocaust is a communal wound that cannot heal. "This is the ailing subtext of their testimonies, wailing beneath the convalescent murmur of their surface lives."[137] I would like to argue than in When Memory Comes, the "ailing subtext" is as much a *critique* of as an unhealed wound beneath the "convalescent murmur" at the surface. The life of the little Jew from Prague who was hidden in Saint-Béranger while his parents attempted their ill-fated crossing into Switzerland becomes, in the telling, neither the explanatory nor the preferred subtext of, but rather the primary—though disrupted and therefore still unformed—ego beneath the "resolved," framed life of the citizen, father, professor and world-renowned historian. Furthermore, coming when it did, this slim volume may actually have provided a model for a new kind of historical narrative that can incorporate elements usually reserved for the domain of fiction.

> It was only when I was around thirty that I realized how much the past molded my vision of things, how much the essential appeared to me through a particular prism that could never be eliminated. But did it have to be eliminated? A great number of us go through life this way, insensible to a whole range of shades and tones, though, despite everything, the eye still manages to penetrate, in certain situations, far beyond the neutral, aseptic normal meanings that reality presents. If our reactions may sometimes seem strange, let there be no mistake about it: behind the harmless surface `of words and things, we know that at any and every moment abysses await us. (145)

By writing, in the very first sentence, that he was born in Prague "at the worst possible moment, four months before Hitler came to power," Friedlander acknowledges the force of historical knowledge. But that sentence is followed by a return to the conventional discourse of the memoir. "My father was also born in Prague, while my mother came from the Sudetenland, from Rochlitz, a

[136] Dekoven Ezrahi, Sidra "Reflections on When Memory Comes," History & Memory Vol. 9 #1&2, 364-375.
[137] Langer, Lawrence, Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory (New Haven, 1991) 204-205.

little textile town near Gablonz celebrated for its glassware," and several pages of genealogical detail follow. At the end of this presentation Friedlander implicitly acknowledges not only the privilege of prewar innocence in the recounting of prewar events, and open-endedness as its structural correlative, but their proprietary value for lives that were about to be incorporated into the apocalyptic precincts of the "historical viewpoint:" "the way of life of the Jews in the Prague of my childhood was futile and 'rootless,' *seen from a historical viewpoint*. Yet this way of life was o*urs*, the one we treasured."[138] Even as he claims his own vocation as historian, guardian of what he will call the historian's "gaze," he allows the child's memory in him to speak as representative of history's ever-inassimilable, intractable, raw material. "Whether I consciously remember it or not, I caught all the signs of this city; the most insignificant baroque town still immediately arouses in me a powerful echo than can only come from these childhood impressions."(17)

Friedlander's ability to fabricate a narrative of childhood out of a cup of hot chocolate with his mother at the Café Slavia and his father's decorative copy of Gustav Meyrink's version of The Golem, is, like the beginning of all narrative, the point of departure that makes post-Holocaust journeys possible. These objects, scarce as they may be, are not loose fragments floating through disconnected memories, but the remnants of a narrative that could, if one had all the parts, be reconstructed.

According to Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, "in the critical discussions of the memories constructions of autobiography much space is given to the rift in the continuous narrative of the self created by trauma. Holocaust memoirs or testimonies are the most appalling sites of such a rift, but what precedes the rifts is absolutely crucial in shaping what follows."[139] I agree to that statement, since in order to fill that void, they try to go from a point in the past "before" the rift/hole and try to bridge

[138] Friedlander, When Memory Comes: 3, 9.
[139] Dekoven Ezrahi, Sidra "Reflections on When Memory Comes" History & Memory Vol. 9 #1&2: 368.

with the "after." Most autobiographies of child Holocaust survivors draw upon an area of reference in the childhood of the narrator and this reference is essential for narratives of child Holocaust survivors. Richard Coe discusses childhood's paradise lost as "a closed or sheltered world, an 'alternative dimension' that becomes particularly compelling when something in the present itensifies the normal sense of loss and nostalgia."[140] Loss and nostalgia belong to territory once held, a family once intact, time once experienced as open-ended. Only the presumption of a protected, pre-traumatic past, of whatever duration, furnishes a base from which a future can be built. It is here that autobiography becomes therapeutic as the act of welding the facts of memory with the imagined futures that were foreclosed by violent disruption. The self engaged in an endless act of recovery of the pre-traumatic world struggles to define the legacy of a mother and father killed in the middle of their parenting and then to project it through the imagined turbulence of adolescent separation and adult reconciliation. Without that base, the ruins remain apocalyptic on which no exploration can be performed. Even the most fragile of home can stand up to the most imposing historical constructs:

> Those first years (in Prague) left me with memories of abundance. Everyone knows our national dishes. A very old memory, perhaps my earliest. I must have been no more than three and was sitting in our kitchen at Rochlitz. My grandmother Cilia was busy at the stove. I could hear her talking. I could hear the little repeated sounds of a wooden spoon striking against the walls of a pot and in the background the noise of flies circling the immense table.[141]

These passages have in them images that can serve as premonitory signals, but it is in the heart of such descriptions that the adult who lost all the tangibles of his childhood except for his memory can try and reconstruct it.

---

[140]Coe, Richard N, When the Grass was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood (New-Haven, 1984)

[141] Friedlander, When Memory Comes: 154.

When the innocent voices of those who haven't figured it out, those who are not only nameless but clueless, as to the rules of the deadly game in which they are the pawns, invade the historical account, as they do in Friedlander's memoir but also in his monumental study of Nazi Germany and the Jews *(*1997),[142] knowledge and memory remain mutually subversive, and equally balanced, forces. The consciousness that clings to the sound of his grandmother's wooden spoon, to the concrete comprehensible world, is quite simply affirming the magnificence of the ordinary—which, from the perspective of life interrupted, is quite extraordinary:

> Everyday images: Rochlitz with frost flowers in the early morning; the squeak of snow under the soles of my shoes; mountains with gentle slopes covered in pine forests, and –another winter image—my mother turns around, a pair of skis on her shoulder, slender and beautiful, with a radiant smile and a face glistening in the cold.[143]

The naïve, terrified voice of the small child comforted momentarily by his father's kiss—on their separation—at what was to be their last meeting is a diaphanous but ultimately impervious barrier against the historical wisdom that incorporates the nameless into named events and apolyptic contours. "The more time passes, the more I feel that it is there, in this earliest setting of my life rather than in the terrible upheavals that followed, that the essential part of my self was shaped."[144] Before leaving Prague, his father gives him a ring, explaining: "It will help you remember the country we're about to leave," (30) and Friedlander's reaction is:

> Did I need a ring to remember my first, brief vision of social injustice? That winter evening my mother and I were returning home with our arms full of things we had bought in the stores, when a child in rags in front of us began to plead plaintively for food. Did I really need a ring to still see the witch in *Snow White*pry loose the rock to crush the seven dwarfs and herself be plunged, with a terrifying howl, into the abyss? Prague and the setting of my childhood, however indistinct its outlines may have been, were imprinted in my memory forever. (31)

---

[142] Frieldander, Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol.1, The Years of Persecution, 1933-39 (New York: Harper Collins, 1998).
[143] Friedlander, When Memory Comes, 15-16.
[144] Friedlander, When Memory Comes: 32.

Here, he too makes the connection to fairy tales, like Ruth Kluger; as the representation of a frightening reality and its reference to German culture.

> As I write today, I have already reached the age my father was when he disappeared. I contemplate my parents from a distance and I ask myself what blindness led them from mistake to mistake to the very end? Even today, I look at them only through the eyes of a child. (52)

Since they left him, when he was a child, until the time he is writing about them, Friedlander is trying to make sense of their loss, judging them with the soul of the child he was at that time, who suffered from their disappearance, and still does.

Locating the "essential part" not in the trauma that in Langer's scheme entraps every survivor, but in what precedes it, is both an existential privilege and a narrative decision.

After his visit in Prague in 1967, when he meets again with his childhood nanny, Vlata, he writes:

> I resaw Prague again once in unusual circumstances. A Czech translation of my book on Pius XII had just come out. Through the papers Vlata (my former nanny) had found me. A few weeks later, I was with her once more. (32) I found that my affection for Vlata was as great as ever, for there is no possible link between the memory of the constant companion of my early childhood and what she revealed to me thirty years later. But even if I had learned this immediately after the war, things would doubtless have been the same, since for each of us, who lived through the events of this period as children, there is an impassable line of cleavage somewhere in our memories: what is on this side, close to our time, remains dark, and what is on the other side still has the intense brightness of a happy dawn—even if our powers of reason and our knowledge point to obvious links between the two periods. When one looks back to the other side of the line, an irrepressible nostalgia remains. (34)

The happy dawn of his childhood, and the darkness between then and the present time express the void he still feels.

For the young Friedlander the public, open spaces and thick texture of a bourgeois Jewish life in Prague are followed by the hidden spaces and shadow life of a young child who changes his name at least five times, from Pavel in Prague to Paul in France to Paul-Henri Ferland in the world of his Catholic refuge to Shaul in Israel and Saul in the international scholarly community. When Pavel

Friedlander became Paul-Henri, he says, "I became someone else." When Paul-Henri became Shaul, he became a "person divided."[145] In reversing the order of the primordial Saul/Paul conversion, the young man joining his fate to that of the Jewish nation makes a commitment that, over the years, he will be hard pressed to fill:

> It would never have occurred to me to read a novel or a poem in Hebrew, even though my new language had become as familiar as French to me, for the little I knew of this literature gave me the feeling that I would find nothing in it. But for a far greater degree it was the other culture, the one that my own books, for the most part French ones, furnished me, which I missed as a fish beached on sand misses water.[146]

The language of the historian living in an epic moment in Jerusalem in 1977 is in partial fulfillment of a pledge to citizenship and integral identity: "Isn't the way out for me to attach myself to the necessary order, the inescapable simplification forced upon one by the passage of time and one's vision of history, to adopt the gaze of the historian?"[147] And yet it is the gaps between "necessary orders" that remain the most evocative parts of this narrative of Jerusalem's magic and Israel's prowess, as of history's judgment of the faith and fate of the assimilated Jews of Central Europe.

Paul Friedlander had disappeared: Paul-Henri Ferland was someone else," writes the memoirist, recording the enthusiasm and comfort with which he had embraced the worship of the Virgin at the age of ten. But the very next entry in this bifurcated narrative, dated 22, September 1977, begins: "Yom Kippur. An extraordinary silence. May I be pardoned, *Miscreant that I am,* for continuing to write, but I must capture the silence.[148] Reconnecting with Judaism as his "central axis"[149] at the very brink of taking priestly vows, yet unable to eat meat at the Seder table after the war because it was Good Friday, he remains a "miscreant" in every system, neither Paul nor Saul, neither Pavel nor Paul-Henri, but all of them. As a "person divided," he is the most inclusive persona

[145] Friedlander: 62, 79.
[146] Friedlander: 62.
[147] Friedlander: 32.
[148] Friedlander: 122.
[149] Friedlander: 128

of all. He cites excerpts of an essay from one of his students in Jerusalem with whom he obviously agrees, regarding his feeling about Israel:

> It is absolutely imperative to distinguish between the ephemeral and the essential; the ephemeral leaves its painful marks; the essential still remains. Until the day when the ephemeral has eaten away so much of the essential that the nucleus itself is destroyed. Our entire vision of the world, all our ties, all the products of our imagination are steeped in guilt: the catastrophe of destruction and exile, brought down on the heads of a people imbued at a time with messianic fervor, could not help but arouse the image of a deserved punishment, a crushing tribute exacted as the consequence of some obscure absence of fidelity. The return of Israel would thus be one last effort to reject this age-old shadow, a genuine defiance of our fate: we are no longer guilty; because here we are in our homeland once again, together once more on the soil of our ancestors. (95)

According to Paul John Eakin's Fictions in Autobiogrtaphy: Studies in the Act of Self-Invention (1983), Friedlander's inversion of the relation between memory and knowledge in the title of his narrative suggest that to engage in autobiographical retrospect is to move toward united consciousness:

> The title contains other meanings as well, however, meanings which qualify this idea of a process of gradual restoration, making it stand in relation to the narrative more as a kind of wish than as any reference to an achieved experience of identity, of wholeness of being "one and the same thing." As Friedlander unpacks the significance of the epigraph in the narrative, he uncovers a network of conflicting associations that organizes his memories of his childhood in Prague, associations with the legend of the Golem, with his father, and with his own early fears of abandonment and death.[150]

In a very sensitive analysis of the excavation of the repressed self that culminated in the writing of this memoir, Paul John Eakin cites the enigmatic passage in which Friedlander writes:

> Perhaps I am the one who now preserves, in the very depths of myself, certain disparate, incompatible fragments of existence, cut off from all reality, with no continuity whatsoever, like those shards of steel that survivors of great battles carry about inside their bodies.[151]

---

55 Eakin, Paul J. Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention (Princeton: 1985) 238
[150] Eakin: 110
[151] Eakin: 242.

Friedlander recalls three different versions of the legend of the Golem, the robot of clay fashioned by the grand rabbi Loew to serve the Jewish community of Prague. In the first of these the robot goes beserk, rampaging through the ghetto, and is destroyed when his creator reverses the process of his creation: "To breathe life into him, the Hebrew word *emeth*, "truth" written on a scrap of parchment, had been stuck to his forehead. To destroy the robot, it was necessary to efface the first letter, which left *meth,* "dead." Some variations of the legend have it (18) that when the rabbi at last succeeded in erasing this first letter from the forehead of its mad robot, the immense mass of clay came crashing down and crushed the rabbi beneath its weight, "for language if all-powerful is also dangerous in the life sign, the symbolic name, of this monstrous identity, "dead" dwells at the heart of "truth."[152] In the second version, Friedlander's favorite, "language, inversion, de-creation, and loss of identity are again the central features of the story of the creature's destruction"[153] since the dangers threatening the Jews of Prague were no longer imminent, Rabbi Loew decided to destroy the robot. The rabbi and his aides placed themselves behind the Golem's head and the phrases of the Sefer Yetzirah were read *backward*. "The words of the epigraph seem to promise the advent of wholeness and identity, while language in these versions of the legend acts instead as the exorcism of a threat, deconstituting a created being into a mass of clay."[154]

Friedlander's associations with the third version of the legend focuses on the memory of the many daydreams he links to the reading of "this haunting, spellbinding book" (20) with his father. He mentions twice that this volume was one of the few books that his father managed to take with him when the family fled from Czechoslovakia to France in 1939 and he speculates that it may have come to form for him—with the other book—"a magic screen against an unbearable reality,"

---

[152] Eakin,: 238

[154] Eakin: 239.

opening up "an inner domain of calm and isolation." (56) Interestingly, the image of his father reading a book seems to have functioned in a similar way at a time when he needed reassurance, in his childhood; he would get up in the middle of the night, sneak to the library door and through the keyhole derive a sense of security and reassurance from the knowledge that his father "was there, in his usual place," (14) reading a book. "Thinking back on my father sitting there in the dying light," (55) Friedlander interprets his father, in the period preceding his deportation to Auschwitz,

> As the victim of historical forces which hunted him down for what he had refused to remain: a Jew. What he had wanted to become, a man like all the others, had been taken away from him, leaving him no possible recourse. He was being refused the right to live and no longer even knew what to die for. Much more than an impossibility of acting, his desperate straits had become an impossibility of being. (36)

And he expresses his regret at not having really known his father:

> Leafing through these volumes left to me, I have more than once pondered what profound affinities, what reminiscences, what associations could have caused my father to make this particular choice. The impossible reconstruction of a sensibility that never revealed itself to me, who's only remaining trace is my uncertain memories, these books, and a few scattered letters written in the grip of mounting distress. When my father was not in pain, we would walk along side by side, not saying much of anything, and sometimes he would take my hand. Through this simple gesture he doubtless wanted to express everything, and I understood. His hand held out to me and walking along in silence was all that I needed. (57)

Like the fate of the Golem, "his desperate straits had become an impossibility of being;" (56) he gives his own interpretation of the symbol of the Golem in the larger meaning of the fate of the Jews and its connection to his father's destiny:

> Everyone interprets symbols in his own way: for me the first variation of the legend announces the fate of the Jews, sorcerer's apprentices who set in motion forces they could no longer control, and the second prefigures the essential feature of Jewish life in our time; a perpetual restlessness, an anxiety in perpetual motion. My father was less interested in its Jewish content than in its esoteric meaning. We often used to leaf through the rather rough-textured pages together. How many daydreams of mine are linked with this haunting spellbinding book! (20)

Friedlander again survived after the experience on the *Altalena*; he arrived in Israel and made his way to two uncles living in a small village North of Tel-Aviv. They packed him off to agricultural school "so I could learn something useful," he says. "They told me, "Enough with this intellectualism. Learn a skill."

Friedlander's thirst of knowledge about his newly adopted country was great, and each day he would walk several miles to the nearest city to buy a newspaper, struggling to learn Hebrew so he could read it. "I was so enthusiastic about every little detail," he says. Agricultural college soon wore thin, however, and Friedlander turned his attention to more intellectually rigorous pursuits. After a stint in the Israeli army, he returned to school full time, attending the School of Law and Economics in Tel-Aviv, thinking he would become a diplomat. He earned a Master's degree in political science from the Institut D'Etudes Politiques in Paris. From 1956-61, he served as secretary to the president of the World Zionist Organization and as head of the scientific department of Israel's Ministry of Defence under Prime minister Shimon Peres, who was then vice minister of defense in the government of David Ben-Gurion. In the 1980s, Friedlander was active in the Middle East peace movement, Peace Now. But, even while studying political science, Friedlander says he was drawn to the historical, rather than the political, dimension of that field. "From there it was a natural progression to historical studies."

After earning a Ph.D. in 1963 from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, Friedlander decided he wanted to be a teacher. But always hovering just beyond the periphery was the specter of the Holocaust—a life-defining event that, he says, shaped not just the destinies of those who went through it, but also the destinies of their children. "It is a block of stone that you can't remove from life," he says. "How does one get beyond, if not over, such a horrific experience? That's a very deep question with no clear answers. Holocaust survivors tend to deal with

the past in two ways: Some try to block it out and never talk about it. Others, like myself, come to struggle with it by dealing with it."

> It took me a long, long time to find the way back to my own past. I could not banish the memory of events themselves, but if I tried to speak of them or pick up a pen to decribe them, I immediately found myself in the grip of a strange paralysis. When I finished my military service, since I could not forget the facts, I made up my mind to view everything with indifference, every sort of resonance within me as stifled. But sometimes one awaits something without knowing it, a sign. (102)

The critical phase of this process occurs ten years later during a visit in Sweden to his Uncle Hans, who was the director of an institution for emotionally disturbed children. Friedlander places the account of this visit in 1956 at the heart of his narrative, as the psychological heart of his story. Despite the fact that he and his uncle almost never speak of the past, its presence is inescapable and insistent in "this year outside of time" in Tulsa. There he discovers, in his uncle's library, books by Martin Buber, which give him another perspective of his Jewish heritage, different from his "superficial" identification with Israel.

> I felt as never before the hidden grace of this world of Hassidism. For the first time, I began to feel a clear difference between my identification with Israel, which for a time at least seemed to me to be superficial and almost empty of meaning, and a feeling of my Jewishness, certain aspects of which appeared to me in this unusual setting with a new, mysterious, powerful, magnificent dimension. (103)

Like Wiesel, Friedlander espouses messianism and becomes "a covenant revisionist" revising but reaffirming God's covenant with the Jews.[155]

Another painful encounter with the past occurs when he experiences a visceral revulsion to a German friend, Wolf, working in the institution, who reveals that he had served in the Waffen SS. The result was "an urgent summons to turn toward this chapter of history, for nothing could be forgotten yet, and in fact nothing was over." (104)

[155] Berger, Crises and Covenant: 73, 79.

This year in Sweden had yet another lesson about the past to teach, more profound than either the revelation of the reading in Buber or the shock of the evening with Wolf. Both of these taught the necessity and value of taking the road back to the past; contact with the disturbed children at the institution, on the other hand, suggested the impossibility of doing so. These are children "who wanted to speak and could not, would merely repeat a name, for hours" (103), and the apparently permanent inaccessibility of their lives in a closed world of fantasy and delirium becomes for Friedlander "an obsessive symbol" of "powerlessness." (105) The basis for his identification with their autistic condition is not far to seek, for they embody an extreme nightmare version of the isolation that Friedlander had always feared for himself. The institution and its setting in Sweden reminded him of the Catholic school he attended in France, and it was in this school that he had suffered the collapse of his own identity and had attempted suicide, which occur in the narrative, immediately preceding the pages devoted to the year at Tulsa. Thinking at his sense of dissociation from himself in this darkest phase of his own story, Friedlander asks: "Was this child really me?"(100) This sick child joins the autistic children of Tulsa, in their isolation and abandonment, repression and disintegration, that bind together so many of the episodes of this life of discontinuity.

Friedlander's encounter with the children of Tulsa occurs at a time in his own life when "a strange paralysis" frustrated any attempt to speak or write of the past. He relates his experience with two of the children, Arne and Bert (two patients he tried to help there) and their isolation, unredeemed by language, seems to have shocked Friendlander to adopt a new posture toward the private world of his own past, "on a personal level, an actual provocation."(105) When he leaves Tulsa he leaves, (not only Arne and Bert), but the isolate, closed condition of his own personality as well, the "sick child" he had been and the "paralyzed adult he had become: "When the *Gripsholm*

slowly pulled away from the Göteborg docks, I knew that this strange stay in Sweden had opened doors for me that would never close again." (107)

For Friedlander to write history and finally autobiography is not merely to recover the lost content of the past; it is to perform metaphorically a work of personal restoration. This is the connection he makes between his own history and the history of his people. "My image of the past is like a plot of land thirsting for water. The moment a drop falls, it disappears; the moment a torrent begins to flow, it is absorbed." (114). This "need for synthesis, for a thoroughgoing coherence that no longer excludes anything" (114) which drives him to write of the past is counterbalanced by deep misgivings about the power of language to perform the work of restoration:

> When I leaf through these pages I often feel deeply discouraged. I will never be able to express what I want to say; these lines, often clumsy, are very far removed, I know, from my memories, and even my memories retrieve only sparse fragments of my parents' existence, of their world, of the time when I was a child. When people leave us, one after the other, their presence quite naturally anchors itself and survives in the memories of the ones who remain, in the albums one sometimes takes out of the cupboard to show the children, to explain to those who never knew the ones who have departed. From time to time, flowers are put on their graves, and their names are there, engraved in stone, essential symbols, through which different generations maintain the ties between each other. But for me the break was an abrupt one and it cannot become a part of everyday life. (134)

If Friedlander pursues in the work of commemoration, it is because language offers the only possible avenue to the lost experience of presence upon which alone a wholeness of identity can be founded: "I must write, then. Writing retraces the contours of the past with a possibly less ephemeral stroke than the others {surviving letters and 'two or three yellow photographs,'} (134)} it does at least preserve a presence, and it enables one to tell about a child who saw one world founder and another reborn."(135).

> This story is drawing to a close and once more the question arises: have I succeeded in setting down even so much as a tiny part of what I wanted to express? As a matter of fact, this quest, this incessant confrontation with the past during these months, has become sufficient reason in itself, and a necessary undertaking. And the words of Gustav Meyrink leap to mind once more: "When knowledge comes, memory comes

> too, little by little"—a sequence, however, that has been inverted here: when memory comes, knowledge comes too, little by little. "Knowledge and memory are one and the same thing."(182)

Friedlander finally understood why it took him so long to write about his past and he explains that "Jews erect walls around our most harrowing memories, and our most anxious thoughts of the future. Even a story complete to the last detail sometimes turns into an exercise in hiding things from ourselves. These necessary defenses are one of the chief features of our most promised dread."(74)

> I understood that what was missing was not literary talent but rather a certain ability to identify. The veil between events and me had not been rent. I had lived on the edges of the catastrophe; a distance impassable, perhaps—separated me from those who had been directly caught up in the tide of events, and despite all my efforts, I remained, in my own eyes, not so much a victim as—a spectator. I was destined, therefore, to wander among several worlds. Knowing them, understanding them—better, perhaps, than many others—but nonetheless incapable of feeling an identification without any reticence, incapable of seeing, understanding and belonging in a single, immediate, total movement. Hence—need I say?—my enormous difficulty in writing this book. (156)

Conclusion

This chapter presented three child survivors and how their traumatic experience is directly expressed in their respective autobiographies and later oeuvre. The three of them achieved international recognition but we can feel how, on a personal level, the reconstruction of their personal memories is an authentic and revealing portrait of how the traumatic child is embedded deeply in the mind of the adult. It took them a while to confront their past and, when they finally did, they realized how the memory of it impacted, and still does, their lives. Their experience is at the background of everything they strove to achieve: Wiesel, by bearing witness, seeking to pay tribute to the dead and reestablishing a connection with life; Ruth Kluger's need for a purer, harsher truth, trying to build a bridge with her past; Saul Friedlander, through his exhaustive historian research, concentrating on trying to make a sense of how the Holocaust could have occurred and how it could be represented.

Chapter 4

> Chaque personne, elle n'est pas sûre d'être positivement quelqu'un ; elle se déguise et se nie plus facilement qu'elle ne s'affirme. Tirant de sa propre inconsistance quelques resources et beaucoup de vanité, elle met beaucoup de vanité, elle met dans les fictions son activité favorite. Elle vit de romans, elle épouse sérieusement mille personnages. Son héros n'est jamais soi-même.
>
> (Valéry, 1894).[156]

Georges Perec

Georges Perec (1936-1982), was a French novelist, poet, essayist, dramatist, and literary innovator, who gained fame with his formally complex and puzzling works. His most famous books include La Disparition (1969, A Void), a 300-page novel written without the letter *e* and La Vie mode d'emploi (1978, Life: A User's Manual).

Georges Perec was born in Paris into a family of Polish Jews. He was the only son of Icek Judko and Cyrla (Schulewicz) Peretz, who had emigrated to France in the 1920s. When the war broke out in France, Perec's father enlisted in the French army and died in 1940. Other members of the family, including Perec's mother, were killed in the Nazi concentration camps. Cyrla Peretz was taken to a camp in Drancy and from there she was probably sent to Auschwitz. In 1947 the French government certified her "disappeared."[157] From 1942, Perec was brought up by his paternal aunt Esther and her husband David Bienenfeld and they formally adopted him in 1945.

W ou le souvenir d'enfance (1975), (*W* or the Memory of Childhood) is an exceptional Holocaust narrative. "I have no memories of childhood," Perec wrote. He compares his isolated memories with photographs, and imagines comforting scenes from his unfulfilled childhood.

---

[156] Valéry, Paul. "Théorie poétique et etesthétique, introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci (1894), Oeuvres I. (Paris:Gallilmard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1957) quoted by Michel Servent in his article "*W* ou le souvenir d'enfance or the space of the double cover." Sites, The Journal of 20th Century Contemporary French Studies, vol.1 no.2. (University of Connecticut, 1998): 261-480. Special Issue on Autobiography.

[157] Bellos, David, Georges Perec: Une vie dans les mots (Paris: Editions Seuil, 1994) 400.

> Moi, j'aurais aimé aider ma mère à débarrasser la table de la cuisine après le diner. Sur la table, il y aurait eu une toile cirée à petits carreaux bleus; au-dessus de la table, il y aurait eu une suspension avec un abat-jour presque en forme d'assiette, en porcelaine blanche ou en tôle émaillée, et un système de poulies avec un contrepoids en forme de poire. Puis je serais allé chercher mon cartable, j'aurais sorti mon livre, mes cahiers et mon plumier de bois, je les aurais posés sur la table et j'aurais fait mes devoirs. C'est comme ça que ça se passait dans mes livres de classe. (99)[158]

Here he presents, a subtly restrained image, in the conditional perfect, with remarkable lucidity, of what life might have been with his mother. He continues to explore the notions of "cassure" and "rupture"—with relation to his memory—as they reappear in his life as a series of dislocations, for all of his memories:

> Ils sont comme cette écriture non liée, faite de lettres isolées incapables de se souder entre elles pour former un mot, qui fut la mienne jusqu'à l'âge de dix-sept ou dix-huit ans, ou comme ces dessins, disloqués, dont les éléments épars ne parvenaient presque jamais à se relier les uns aux autres, et dont, à l'époque de *W*, entre, disons, ma onzième et ma quinzième année, je couvris des cahiers entiers. [159]

According to Joanna Spiro, in "The Testimony of Fantasy in George Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance," "Perec supplements his scarce memories of the period by presenting the reconstruction of a fantasy from his adolescence."[160] The memoir is an unsatisfying document in which Perec emphasizes the insufficiencies, contradictions, and improbabilities of his narrative as well as the laboriousness of assembling it and he weaves together the two narratives, an attempted autobiography and a recreated childhood fantasy, into a rich literary tapestry which has fascinated readers and earned the appreciation of critics as a major literary work.[161] Bernard Pingaud considers it "l'oeuvre la plus énigmatique de Perec, celle aussi où il se livre le plus et qui appelle

[158] As for me, I would have liked to help mother clear the dinner from kitchen table. There would have been a blue, small checkered oilcloth on the table, and above it, a counterpoise lamp with a shade shaped almost like a plate, made of white porcelain or enameled tin, and a pulley system with pear-shaped weights. Then I'd have fetched my satchel, got our my books and my writing and my wooden pencil-box . I'd have put them on the table and done my homework. That's what happened in the books I read at school." (99)

[159] They resemble a disconnected writing made of isolated letters unable to come together to form a word, which was mine up to the age of seventeen or eighteen, or like these dislocated drawings, whose separated parts could ever get whole, of which, at the time of *W*, I covered entire notebooks.

[160] Spiro, Joanna, "The Testimony of Fantasy in George Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance." Yale Journal of Criticism 14.1 (2001): 115-154.

[161] The book was the subject of a 1987 public seminar at the Université de Paris VII.

irrésistiblement le commentaire." [162] Superficially the weaving is rather a coarse grafting with obvious seams, for Perec merely alternates chapters of the two narratives. One of the narratives tells the story of Gaspard Winkler, and his search for his missing namesake—the sickly child lost at sea or perhaps abandoned by his mother—and his fascination with an Island in the Tierra del Fuego dominated by athletic competition. The parallel between the investigation of this disappearance and Perec's search through old photographs and documents for evidence of the orphaned boy he once was and doesn't remember are obvious and disturbing. The other narrative represents Perec's attempt to piece together memories and reminders of his childhood. The final chapter quotes at length from David Rousset's L'Univers concentrationnaire.[163] Perec describes his fantasy as "la reconstruction, arbitraire mais minutieuse, d'un fantasme enfantin." ("The arbitrary but careful reconstruction of a childhood fantasy")—a fantasy which Perec, in adulthood, suddenly remembered having had as an adolescent, around the age of 12 or 13.[164] "Je n'avais pratiquement aucun souvenir de *W*. Tout ce que j'en savais tient en moins de deux lignes: la vie d'une société exclusivement préoccupée de sport, sur un ilôt de la Terre de Feu." (14)[165]

Perec makes explicit the connection between the *W* society and the concentration camps. *W* is gradually revealed to be a *machine énorme* (*huge machine)* for the *anéantissement systématique des hommes* (218) *(*systematic annihilation of men).

Perec's memoir sets itself apart from other accounts of Holocaust events in its emphasis on the scarcity and unreliability of his memories and in its use of fantasy. For *W* 's signification lies at their intersection, to express the "unsaid:"

---

[162] The most enigmatic of his works and the one where he uncovers himself the most and which irresistibly attracts commentary.
[163] David Rousset, L'Univers concentrationnaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).
[164] From a statement written by Perec, printed on the book jacket of *W*.
[165] I had practically no memory of *W*. All I knew of it came to a couple of lines: it was about the life of a community concerned with sport, on a tiny island off Tierra del Fuego.

> Il y a dans ce livre deux textes simplement alternés; il pourrait presque sembler qu'ils n'ont rien en commun, mais ils sont inextricablement enchevêtrés, comme si aucun des deux ne pouvait exister seul, comme si de leur rencontre seule, de cette lumière lointaine qu'ils jettent l'un sur l'autre, pouvait se revêler ce qui n'est jamais tout à fait dit dans l'un, jamais tout a fait dit dans l'autre, mais seulement dans leur fragile intersection. [166]

("such a composition "could make apparent what is never quite said in one, never quite said in the other, but said only in their fragile overlapping.")[167] "With these two elements Perec provocatively differentiates *W* from testimonies of both the survivors of the Nazi death camps and the children of the survivors (the "second generation"). Primo Levi, in Moments of Reprieve, sees his imperative to testify as a survivor as following from the clarity and intensity of his memories: "At Auschwitz, and on the long road returning home, I had seen and experienced things that appeared important not only for me, things that imperiously demanded to be told. I have not forgotten a single thing, not a detail was lost."[168] Perec, in contrast, directs our attention to the gaps and falsehoods that riddle the few memories of the wartime years he retains. On the question of reliability of memory, historically and ethically crucial to accounts of the Holocaust, Perec gives way before he can even be questioned. Elie Wiesel further suggests that this imperative to testify is accompanied by an injunction against fabrication: "If someone could have written my stories, I would not have written them. I have written them in order to testify. My role is the role of the witness. Not to tell, or tell another story, is to commit perjury."[169]

Claude Lanzmann elaborates on the felt commandment against fictional representation of the Holocaust in his response to Steven Spielberg's film *Schildler's List.* "L'Holocauste est d'abord unique en ceci qu'il édite autour de lui, en un cercle de flamme, la limite à ne pas franchir parce

---

[166] Perec's remarks on the jacket of the French edition.
[167] The back jacket copy is placed as a preamble in the English edition.
[168] Levi, Primo Moments of Reprieve, trans. Ruth Feldman (New York: Summit Books, 1986) 9-11
[169] Wiesel, Elie, quoted in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (New York and London: Rutledge, l992) 204.

qu'un certain absolu d'horreur est intransmissible: prétendre le faire, c'est se rendre coupable de la transgression la plus grave. La fiction est une transgression ; je pense profondément qu'il y a un interdit de la représentation. " [170]

Writers of the second generation also feel the weight of Lanzmann's interdiction. Henri Raczymow, for instance, writes of "un cadre au centre duquel gisait le silence. C'était tabou." ("a frame at the center of which lay silence. It was taboo.") What can it mean then, for Perec, the only member of his immediate family to survive the war, to write a memoir of the war years largely constituted by a fantasy? In presenting this double narrative as his autobiography, Perec suggests that he can tell his story only by telling "another story," that is, through what Wiesel calls perjury. In what follows I will explore the way the fictional element in *W* functions as an inquiry into the place of fantasy in mourning Holocaust losses.

Perec begins by proposing an elegant solution to his autobiographical difficulties, inaugurating the memoir strand with the statement, "Je n'ai pas de souvenirs d'enfance." ("I have no childhood memories") (13,16). Although he immediately moves to qualify this statement, the narrative nevertheless proceeds under the sign of amnesia. He backs off from the memoir of total forgetfulness not on the grounds that he does in fact remember; rather, he accuses himself of having put forward this monolithic denial, in the past, as a defense:

> Je n'ai pas de souvenirs d'enfance. Jusqu'à ma douxième année à peu près, mon histoire tient en quelques lignes: j'ai perdu mon père à quatre ans, ma mère à six; j'ai passé la guerre dans diverses pensions de Villard-de-Lans. En 1945, la soeur de mon père et son mari m'adoptèrent. Cette absence d'histoire m'a longtemps rassuré: sa sécheresse objective, son évidence apparante, son innocence, me protégeaient, mais de quoi me protégeaient-elles, sinon précisément de mon histoire réelle, de mon histoire à moi qui, on peut le supposer, n'était ni sèche, ni objective, ni apparemment

[170] The Holocaust is first, unique in that it constructs around itself, in a circle of flame, a border that must not be crossed because a certain absolute of horror cannot be transmitted. To claim to do so is to become guilty of the most serious transgression. Fiction is transgression.
[170] Lanzmann, Claude, "Holocauste, la représentation impossible," Le Monde (3 March 1994): 12.

> évidente, ni évidemment innocente? 'Je n'ai pas de souvenirs d'enfance:' je posais cette affirmation avec assurance, avec presque une sorte de défi. L'on n'avait pas à m'interroger sur cette question. Elle n'était pas inscrite à mon programme. J'en étais dispensé: une autre histoire, la Grande, l'Histoire avec sa grande hache, avait déjà répondu à ma place: la guerre, les camps. (13).[171]

Perec belongs to what Susan Rubin Suleiman calls the 1.5 generation, child survivors too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of Jews:

> The 1.5 generation shared experience is that of bewilderment and helplessness. This characterization may appear inadequate, in view of the massive trauma experienced by both child and adult survivors during the Holocaust. The operative word, however, is "premature"—for if all those who were there experienced trauma, the specific experience of children was that the trauma occurred (or at least began) before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases before any conscious sense of self. Paradoxically, their "premature bewilderment" was often accompanied by premature ageing, having to act as an adult while still a child.[172]

Perec writes: "Dans le témoignage que je m'apprête à faire, je fus témoin et pas acteur. Je ne suis pas le héros de mon histoire(10). L'événement eu lieu, un peu plus tard ou un peu plus tôt, et je n'en fus pas la victime héroique mais un simple témoin." (100)[173]

Perec has resolved no longer to hide behind this absent history; however, this resolve does not solve the problem of how to gain access to his "histoire réelle." This "histoire réelle" is something obscure and dangerous: it is not innocent. At the same time it is something from which he has sought protection by hiding *behind* "l'Histoire avec sa grande hache," which excuses him from having to

---

[171] I have no childhood memories. Up to my twelveth year or thereabouts, my story comes to barely a couple of lines: I lost my father at four, my mother at six; I spent the war in various boarding houses at Villard-de-Lans. In 1945, my father's sister and her husband adopted me.
For years I took comfort in such an absence of history: its objective crispness, in apparent obviousness, its innocence protected me, but what did they protect me from, if not precisely from my history, the story of my living, my real story, which presumably was neither crisp nor objective, nor apparently obvious, nor obviously innocent? "I have no childhood memories"; I made this assertion with confidence, with almost a kind of defiance. It was nobody's business to press me on this question. It was not a set topic on my syllabus. I was excused; a different, History with a capital H, had answered the question in my stead: the war, the camps.

[172] Suleiman, Susan R. "The 1.5 generation," American Imago 59.3 (2002): 277-293.

[173] In the testimony I am about to give, I was a witness and not a participant. I am not the hero of my story.
The event took place, a little later a little earlier and I wasn't its heroic victim but a mere witness.

speak. The apparent contradiction of his describing his "histoire réelle" as something of which the guilt is evidently his and yet which could cause him harm, as if from outside, suggests the pressures at work on the autobiographical subject whose formative memories are memories of catastrophic losses. Nevertheless, in *W* Perec insists that, for himself, not remembering the past is no excuse for not speaking about it.

Autobiography is traditionally a site of contact between the objective and the subjective, the place where "L'Histoire" meets "mon histoire réelle," where their relation is articulated. Here, history is split into contradictory and antagonistic strands, objectivity misleads, and the story of subjectivity is simultaneously a revelation of guilt. As Perec indicates in this passage, the subjective experience and its historical context—that is those events which he signals with the barest shorthand ("la guerre, les camps")—cannot be brought into a unity in an orderly autobiographical exposition. Instead, it offers parallel narratives which barely acknowledge each other's presence, but whose juxtaposition mimics a moment of insight from his own past. Perec understood the connection of the childhood fantasy to the historical events in which his parents were killed only when, he tells us, "Des années et des années plus tart, dans l'Univers concentrationnaire, de David Rousset" (219) ("years and years later, in David Rousset's Univers concentrationnaire (163) he read a passage about sport and starvation in the "camps de répression" ("punishment camps").[174] His autobiographical project turns on the attempts to create a similar moment of intertextual reaction in his readers, in which the encounters of a historical text (the memoir strand) with a text of a fantasy (the *W* strand) will convey some elusive essence of his past.[175] While the memoir strand tells the story of the events

[174] As Bellos points out, Perec's reading concerned not the death camps where millions of Jews and other Nazi victims died, but Aryan punishment camps; Perec has excised the lines indicating these camps were for Aryans, not Jews, from the passage he cites (Bellos, George Perec: 151).

[175] "l y a dans ce livre deux textes simplement alternés,.ils sont inextricablement enchevêtrés, comme si aucun des deux ne pouvait exister seul, comme si de leur rencontre seule, de cette lumière lointaine qu'ils jettent l'un sur l'autre, pouvait se réaliser ce qui n'est jamais tout à fait dit dans l'un jamais tout à fait dans l'autre, mais seulement dans leur fragile intersection." ('In this book there are two texts which simply alternate, they are

of Perec's childhood, the fantasy strand, tells a story of a shadow childhood, an atemporal ongoing and violent process, in which the author shows himself engaging in the perpetual activity of representing to himself a fact that can be stated so simply it almost escapes notice: that a child's father and mother died in "la guerre, les camps."

In the memoir strand, Perec begins to make the familiar gestures of autobiography—he describes his earliest memories, tells what he knows of his parents' origins, looks at family photographs. However, the narrative is continually interrupted by Perec's doubts and qualifications. He tries, as promised, to get around his hesitations and repressions, making use of two general tactics as he works through his memories. The first may call an objective approach: minute examination and description of the autobiographical material available to him (scenes of memory, photographs, and documents). This approach, which begins as merely neutral, thorough, and inquisitive, gradually reveals a harshly self-critical underside through Perec's exaggerated scaffolding of parenthetical statements and footnotes. The footnotes not only correct and clarify but criticize and harangue, multiplying to absurd proportions in chapter 6, in which the memoir comes to a point of crisis.

Perec's second mode of approach to his memory material, through interpretations recognizable as psychoanalytic, appears to offer a gentler, more sympathetic route to self-knowledge. In this mode, he examines his memories looking for evidence of unconscious processes (distortions, displacements, etc…), searching for coded references to his missing emotional history. He finds, for instance, clues to his feelings at parting from his mother in an apparently false memory of having his arm in a sling at the train station. This approach seems to offer the hope of making the

---

inextricably bound up with each other, as though neither could exist on its own, as though it was only their coming together, the distant light they cast on each other, that could make apparent what is never quite said in one, never quite said in the other, but said only in their fragile overlapping') From Perec's statement on the book jacket of *W*.

distortions and falsehoods that trouble his memory give access to an autobiographical truth. However, just as the "objective" approach undermines itself in overzealousness, Perec's psychoanalytically-inspired reading of his memory derails as he takes the psychoanalytic imperative to attend to any detail that comes to mind as a readyexcuse to get off the subject. Perec recounts that after the war, "Je suis allé voir une exposition sur les camps de concentration. Elle se tenait du côté de La Motte-Picquet Grenelle (ce même jour, j'ai découvert qu'il existait des métros qui n'étaient pas souterrains mais aériens). Je me souviens des photos montrant les murs des fours lacérés par les ongles des gazés et d'un jeu d'échecs fabriqué avec des boulettes de pain." (213)[176]

The psychoanalytic sanction to scrutinize trivial details becomes for Perec a method just as likely to provide another defense, an excuse remaining always on the periphery, as it is likely to lead past repression to whatever "histoire reélle" remains to be discovered. Both these approaches to memory prove equally unfruitful, leaving Perec's text stalled in chapter 8, the chapter in which he presents two memoir-texts that he wrote in his twenties about the lives of his father and his mother. "Les deux textes qui suivent datent de plus de quinze ans. Je les recopie sans rien y changer, renvoyant en note les rectifications et les commentaires que j'estime aujourd'hui devoir ajouter." (41, 42)[177]

Perec burdensomely annotates these recopied memoirs, criticizing his earlier autobiographical efforts with increasing aggression. But despite the failings for which he attacks these two texts of his youth, he must concede that he has made no progress, he can do no better now. Perec despairs over a sense of unending, static repetition : "Quinze ans après la redaction de ces

[176] My aunt took me to see an exhibition about concentration camps. It was being held somewhere near La Motte-Piquet-Grenelle (that same day, I learnt there were metro stations that were not underground but on stilts). I remember the photographs of the walls of the gas chambers showing scratchmarks made by the victims fingernails, and a set of chessmen made from bits of bread.

[177]The following two passages date from more than fifteen years ago. I have copied them out without making any changes; I have used notes for the corrections and comments which I now feel obliged to add.

deux textes, il me semble que je ne pourrais que les répéter. Il me semble que je ne parviendrai qu'à un ressassement sans issue."(58)[178]

He declares the failure of the psychoanalytic and pseudoscientific modes he has made use of in attempting this autobiographical project:

> J'aurai beau traquer mes lapsus ou rêvasser pendant deux heures sur la longueur de la capote de mon papa, ou chercher dans mes phrases, pour évidemment les trouver aussitôt, les résonances mignones de l'Oedipe ou de la castration, je ne retrouverai jamais, dans mon ressassement même, que l'ultime reflet d'une parole absente à l'écriture, le scandale de leur silence et de mon silence. (59)[179]

As the memoir arrives at this moment of stalemate, a brief allusion suggests the complex of tensions underlying the impasse. Perec mentions that on the back of the one photograph he has of his father, "J'ai essayé d'écrire, à la craie, un soir que j'étais ivre, sans doute en 1955 ou 1956 ; " il y a quelque chose de pourri dans le royaume de Danemark. Mais je n'ai même pas réussi à tracer la fin du quatrième mot." (41) [180]

Thus in the passage introducing the chapter in which he will recopy his earlier memoir texts and despair of ever moving beyond them, Perec invites a comparison to Hamlet and his famous difficulty with mourning. Hamlet's trouble in knowing what he must do or in doing what he must… "If thou didst ever thy dear father love"[181] finds an echo in Perec's failure to achieve a satisfactory form in which to write the story of his life, which is simultaneously, necessarily, the story of his parents' death. In response to the murder of his own parents, Perec has set himself the task of writing. It is a writing that is intrinsically autobiographical: "Le projet d'écrire mon histoire s'est

[178]Fifteen years after drafting these two passages, it still seems to me that I could do no more than repeat and in my very reiteration is the final refraction of a voice that is absent from writing, the scandal of their silence and of mine..

[179]It would be quite pointless to hunt down my slips or to muse for hours on the length of my father's *capote*, or to comb my sentences for, and obviously locate straight away, soppy little echoes of the Oedipus complex or of castration, for all I shall ever find in my very reiterating is the final refraction of a voice that is absent from writing, the scandal of their silence and of mine.

[180]I tried to chalk: "There is something rotten in the state of Denmark." But I didn't even manage to scrawl to the end of the fourth word.

[181] Shakespeare, William, Hamlet, ed. Cyrus Hoy (New York and London: Norton, 1963) 1.5.23.

formé presque en même temps que mon projet d'écrire …(4) ("The idea of writing the story of my past arose almost at the same time as the idea of writing"). The success or failure of this autobiographical project involves Perec's obligation to his dead parents as well as his sense of vocation, that is, the deepest obligation to himself:

> J'écris: j'écris parce que nous avons vécu ensemble, parce que j'ai été un parmi eux, ombre au milieu de leurs ombres, corps près de leurs corps; j'écris parce qu'ils ont laissé en moi leur marque indélébile et que la trace est l'écriture: leur souvenir est mort à l'écriture; l'écriture est le souvenir de leur mort et l'affirmation de ma vie. (59).[182]

In evoking Hamlet as it founders, Perec's memoir requires the reader to attend to its own mode of mourning. Perec presents his own gestures of mourning as forms of dissimulation or hypocrisy. He tells us that in his earliest experiences as a reader he was attracted by an image of a disjunction between suffering and its expression found in a book called "Michael, the Circus Dog." (141) In the scene that struck him, "un athlete"–-the terms he uses to refer to the inhabitants of *W*–-is directed to show the audience exaggerated signs of a pain he is not experiencing:

> un episode au moins s'est gravé dans ma mémoire, celui de cet athlète que quatre chevaux vont tenter d'écarteler; mais en fait, ce n'est pas sur ses membres que les chevaux tirent, mais sur quatre câbles d'acier disposés en X qui sont dissimulés sous les vêtements de l'athlète. Il sourit sous cette prétendue torture, mais le directeur de cirque exige de lui qu'il montre les signes de la plus atroce souffrance. (192)[183]

Perec writes of a visit he made to his father's grave when he was 19 or 20 years old as characterized by a sense of play-acting. His description of "ce pélérinage" ("this pilgrimage") occurs in a footnote to the recopied memoir of his father; in that original text his only comment on the visit is that "il y avait de la boue partout" (45) (there was mud everywhere). In the footnote,

---

[182] I write: I write because we lived together, because I was one amongst them, a shadow amongst their shadows, a body close to their bodies. I write because they left in me their indelible mark, whose trace is writing. Their memory is dead in writing; writing is the memory of their death and the assertion of my life.

[183] at least one of those episodes imprinted itself in my memory: an athlete is about to be drawn asunder by four horses, but in actual fact the horses are pulling not on the athlete's limbs but on four steel cables crossed over in an X and camouflaged by the athlete's costume; he smiles under this fake torture, but the circus director demands that he make a show of the most excruciating pain.

however, Perec writes that when he found his father's name on one of the wooden crosses marking graves in the military cemetery, "l'impression la plus tenace était celle d'une scène que j'étais en train de me jouer (that I was playing a role, acting in a private play…" There is some relief in the concrete confirmation provided by the grave site of "cette mort que je n'avais jamais apprise, jamais éprouvée, jamais connue ni reconnue, mais qu'il m'avait fallu, pendant des années, déduire hypocritement des chuchotis apitoyés et des baisers soupirants des dames. (54-5)[184]

Having no way of directly knowing his father's death, he has been able to approach knowledge of it only indirectly, through a cerebral process (déduire) in which he reads his own hypocrisy. Perec describes the suit that he wore for the occasion of the trip to his father's grave: "Je portais ce jour là, pour la première fois, une paire de chaussures noires et un costume parfaitement hideux, dont je ne sais plus quel membre de ma famille adoptive avait eu la bonté de se débarasser sur moi. Je revins à Paris crotté jusqu'en haut des mollets. Chaussures et costume furent nettoyés, mais je m'arrangeais pour ne plus jamais les remettre (55).[185]

The muddy suit described evokes Hamlet's speech on the forms of grief:

> Seems madam? Nay, it is, I know not 'seems',
> 'This not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
> Nor customary suits of modern black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected behaviour of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
> That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
> For they are actions that a man might play,
> But I have within which passes show –
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe (1.2.76-86)[186].

---

[184] that death which I had never learnt of, never experienced or known or acknowledged, but which for years and years I had had to deduce hypocritically from the commiserating whispers and sighing kisses of the ladies.
[185] That day I was wearing for the first time a pair of black shoes and an absolutely hideous dark twill suit with white pinstripes which some member of my adoptive family had had the kindness to fob off on me. I came back to Paris with mud up to my kinees. The shoes and the suit were cleaned, but I found a way of ensuring that I would never wear them again.
[186] Cited by Joanna Spiro in "The Testimony of Fantasy in Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance," 22.

While Hamlet accuses others of false mourning, Perec makes the accusation against himself. He finds himself surrounded by others 'windy suspiration," the "baisers soupirants des dames." But he himself can only play a scene, and wear mostly a muddy "suit of woe" that does not really belong to him. Authentic mourning "which passes show" remains elusive.

Peter Sacks, in The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats, (1985) makes use of Freud's model of the mourning process to interpret the literary tradition of elegy. He offers a perceptive account of the particular complexity of Hamlet's predicament as a mourner. In order to consider the relevance of this interpretation here, we must first look briefly at Sack's interpretive model of the genre of elegy, a model that draws on Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia." Sacks argues that in elegy we must see the work of mourning as a recapitulation of the oedipal resolution, in that any loss recalls the child's loss of his or her first love object, the mother, or the sense of undifferentiated unity she represents. The work of mourning, in recapitulating the child's earlier loss, involves "the renunciatory experience of loss and the acceptance, not just of a substitute, but of the very means and practice of substitution." Sacks finds that the work of the elegy replays the process described by Lacan's model of the "child's 'entry' into language," into a signifying system. The acceptance of the practice of substitutions "is the price of survival," and offers "a form of compensatory reward inherited legacies and consoling identifications with symbolic, even immortal figures of power"—an idealized, internalized figure of the father.[187] The successful mourner re-embraces the possibility of metaphor, while the unsuccessful mourner, the melancholic who, due to ambivalence and unconscious impediments, has not been able to complete the process of mourning and free the energies invested in the lost object for reinvestment elsewhere, remains mired in anger

[187].Sacks, Peter M., The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 8-9.

and repetition.[188] A crucial aspect of elegy, then, is "the elegist's reluctant submission to language itself." Sacks, eloquently, describes Hamlet's "tragically over-determined" inability to mourn:

> Hamlet will neither accept nor invent a substitute for the lost object of his love in having to turn from the dead father Hamlet is called upon to recapitulate the loss of his mother, or of the matrix that she had once represented. The torment of that necessity is intolerable now that he is actually losing her again, to Claudius, a travesty of a father. And it is particularly intolerable because Hamlet has just lost the very figure of paternal authority in whose name and under whose aegis such a renunciation might be made. What Hamlet had once suffered in the name of a genuine totemic figure he is now asked to repeat in the name of a mockery of that figure.[189]

The surfacing of Hamlet in the context of mourning in *W* raises the question of the relevance of Freudian models to Perec's text and the complexity of Perec's position with regard to psychoanalysis. Early in his writing career Perec hit on the idea of a new genre in which to accomplish his literary aims, the "reversible text," a literary mode that David Bellos refers to as Perec's "palindromic ambition, a two-part text of which one part 'undoes' or deconstructs the other."[190] Perec defines this ambition in a letter "un livre qui se met en question, qui se nie, un livre hypocrite, un livre qui triche et qui aboutit néanmoins.[191] One of the things *W* simultaneously constructs and undoes is the possibility of a psychoanalytic interpretation of itself. Perec shows us his autobiographical self as already and inevitably that of a psychoanalytic subject. But even as he deploys sets of symptoms that provoke psychoanalytic interest, notably around the questions of the mourning process and the workings of fantasy, he is building a critique of psychoanalysis. Perec's text will raise the crucial question of the ethical implications of a psychoanalytic approach to

---

[188] Freud, Sigmund "Mourning and Melancholia" The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol.4, trans. James Strachay (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958).
[189] Sacks, The English Elegy: 2.
[190] Bellos, David, George Perec: Une vie dans les mots, trans. Françoise Cartano, and David Bellos (Ed. du Seuil, 1994) English translation from David Bellos, George Perec: A Life in Words: 195.
[191] "A book that puts itself into question, that denies itself, a hypocritical book, a book that cheats but works nonetheless" in a letter to Jacques Lederer, quoted in Bellos, French edition, Georges Perec: Une vie dans les mots: 265.

Holocaust history. It will further question the very possibility, in ethical terms, of mourning the losses of the Holocaust.

As Perec arrives at a repetition "sans issue" in his process of remembering, writing, mourning, he comes face to face with the void that all those in the second generation must face, "le scandale de leur silence et de mon silence." Perec will not observe the taboo against representation: for him it is already too late. "A treize ans, j'inventai, racontai et dessinai une histoire. Plus tard, je l'oubliai... elle était d'une certaine façon, sinon l'histoire, du moins une histoire de mon enfance.(14)[192]

Writers of the second generation cannot testify as survivors of the Holocaust do. Geoffrey Hartman distinguishes between the experience of the survivors' generation and the generation following: "The eyewitness generation expresses a return of memory despite trauma; the second generation expresses the trauma of memory turning in the void."[193] Ellen Fine writes of the literary responses to the Holocaust of second generation French Jews: "For those born in the shadow of genocide, apprehensions about the right to speak are often linked to the guilt of nonparticipation, a kind of regret for having been born too late; the past eludes and excludes them." She describes the "sense of nothingness" experienced by the second generation, "caused by the deprivation of memory, or by memory that is concealed, refused, or forbidden."[194] Some writers of the second generation feel compelled to regard the "nothingness" of Holocaust memory as sacred. We can see examples of an approach marked by reverence in texts of Nadine Fresco and Henry Raczimow, both of whom write eloquently of the predicament of French-Jewish children whose parents' wartime experiences remain an over powering unknown. Fresco, after interviewing a group of others who

---

[192] When I was thirteen, I made up a story which I drew in pictures. Later I forgot it;. it was, in a way, if not the story of my childhood, then at least a story of my childhood.

[193] Hartman, Geoffrey, ed. Introduction: "Darkness Visible," in Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory (Cambridge: Blackweed, 1994) 18.

[194] Fine, Ellen, S. "The Absent Memory," in Berel Lang, ed. Writing and the Holocaust (New York and London: Holmes and Meir, 1988) 44.

are, like herself, second generation French Jews writes in "Remembering the Unknown" of children who sought "clues to a drama that one was forbidden to witness," from parents who "transmitted only the wound to their children, to whom the memory had been refused." Such children, she writes, dared not speak of the war and felt an imperative to remain silent; silence holds an almost mystical power: "I felt that the only possible communication I had with her (my mother) was through silence, that if I said anything, something would be lost. My mother's brother could be alive only if we waited for him in silence."[195]

Henry Raczymow, in a text called "La mémoire trouée," recognizes a similar silence. He speaks of: "Une parenthèse marquant l'avant et l'après, l'avant-guerre et l'après-guerre, un cadre au centre duquel gisait le silence. Seul le silence, pour moi, à cette époque, pouvait dire l'horreur, C'était taboo."[196]

Raczymow makes the silence a founding principle of his literary work:

> Mes livres ne cherchent pas à combler cette mémoire absente mais à la présenter, justement, comme absente. Je tente de restituer une non-mémoire, par définition irrattrapable, incomblable. C'est vrai pour tout homme, parce qu'en tout homme il y a un tel trou symbolique incomblable. Mais c'est vrai tout particulièrement pour le Juif ashkénaze né en Diaspora après la guerre. Parce que ce trou symbolique rejoint un trou dans le réel.[197]

In *W*, Perec suggests that while his psyche too has been dominated by a void "je n'ai pas de souvenirs d'enfance"—something has rushed in to fill the vacuum, and that thing is fantasy. He has come to see the silence as an evasion, as something he has hidden behind, and in the *W* strand of the memoir, he turns a spotlight on what those who stop at the evocation of absence and silence avoid:

---

[195] Fresco, Nadine , "Remembering the Holocaust", International Review of Psychoanalysis 11 (1984): 419.

[196] Raczymow, Henri, "La mémoire trouée," Pardès 3 (1986): 179. (Parentheses marking before and after, before the war and after the war, a frame at the center of which lay silence. Only silence, for me, at that time, could speak the horror. It was taboo).

[197] Raczymow, Henri, "La mémoire trouée", Pardès 3, (1986) 181. (My books do not seek to fill up the absent memory but to present it precisely as absent. I try to restore a non-memory, by definition irretrievable, unfillable. It is true for everyone, because in everyone there is a symbolic note that is unfillable. But it is particularly true for the Ashkenazi Jew born in the Diaspora after the war. Because this symbokic hole joins a hole in the real).

the embarrasing, uncomfortable, implicating means by which the mind—the child's mind, the adolescent's mind—responds to the absence of memory with the production of fantasy. The scene Perec reveals to the reader is far removed from the reverential silence presented by second generation voices. In *W* he claims authorship of, and plays out in detail, a sadistic, at times sexual fantasy in which elements apparently gleaned from accounts of the concentration camps mix arbitrarily with desires and fears both childish and adult. For example, defeated athletes are "purement et simplement privés de repas du soir" (121) (purely and simply denied their evening meal) while the victors gorge themselves on sweets (123); here the naughty child's punishment of going to bed without supper entangles itself with the systematic starvation of concentration camp inmates. The childish fascination with enumerating sets of sports figures and the details of their competitions is here inseparable from an intricate system of infinite persecution where athletic defeats lead to starvation and death.

Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bernard Pontalis, in their essay synthesizing Freud's writings on fantasy, emphasize:

> Fantasy is not the object of desire, but its setting. In fantasy, the subject appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms his representation of the desired object, but is himself represented as participating in the scene although, in the earliest forms of fantasy, he cannot be assigned any fixed place in it. As a result, the subject, although always present in the fantasy, may be so in a desubjectivized form, that is to say, in the very syntax of the sequence in question.[198]

The aspect of fantasy suggests a way to interpret the peculiar transformation that takes place in the *W* strand at the textual break Perec marks (. . .). This mark divides the W strand into two parts, the novelistic preface and the ethnological body. With the transition from the first to the second, the markers of selfhood fall away. The preface still has characters with names, histories, and

[198] Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality: Formations of Fantasy" ed. Victor Burgin et al (London and New York: Routledge, 1986) 26. Pontalis was Perec's analyst during the composition of *W* (Bellos: Georges Perec:, 543).

personalities (however roughly sketched), and the opening of the *W* strand is marked by extravagant expressions of novelistic emotion: "Mes rêves se peuplaient de ces villes fantômes, de ces courses sanglantes. L'incompréhension, l'horreur et la fascination se confondaient dans ces souvenirs sans fond il me semblait parfois que j'avais rêvé, qu'il n'y avait eu qu'un inoubliable cauchemar." (9-10)[199]

"After" the transitional mark, such expressions of subjectivity disappear. The island of *W* is inhabited by positions, not persons. There are athletes, officials, judges, and spectators. The athletes are forced to compete incessantly; "les Officiels s'en amusent"(159) ("the officials find it entertaining"). Watching from the stands athletes have no names, they are designated by their affiliation with villages and their standings in the competitions. A limited number of names may be won in competition. These names, which entitle their bearers to privileges necessary to survival belong only to those "qui ont réussi à se décrocher une identité en triomphant dans les Spartakiades" (198) ("who have managed to grab an identity by winning in a Spartakiad"). Those who do not succeed find themselves in "L'Enfer des innommables" (159) ("The hell of the unnamed men"). No families exist on *W*; the athletes are forced to compete incessantly; women and children live separately in walled compounds.

History, with its "grande hâche" insists on rigorous categorization of the participants in "la guerre, les camps," as, for instance, in historian Raul Hilberg's title: Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders.[200] The necessity for such designations is not in dispute, but in the memoir Perec shows us that these categories have given him trouble. He produces images of himself as a victim, but simultaneously insists on the falsehood or hypocrisy of these images. His own testimony—of

---

Those ghost towns, those bloody contests ... came back to live in my dreams. Incomprehension, horror and fascination commingled in the bottomless pit of those memories; it sometimes seemed as though I had dreamt, that there had been only an unforgettable nightmare.

[200] Hilberg, Raul, Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Destruction of the European Jews (New York: Harper Collins) 1992.

having had a fantasy—is necessarily simultaneously a confession. Having "learned" about the concentration camps through fantasy, having filled the gap in his experience with this home-made substitute, any attribution of guilt he can make implicates him as well. It is in connection with this predicament, of being obliged to occupy both sides of the victim/perpetrator divide that a crack appears in the complacency of the *W* narration. Toward the end of the *W* strand, the sense of a subjective viewpoint begins to form again: after many chapters of general description, the narrative focuses on the experience of an adolescent on *W* as he is removed from the free and happy life in the children's quarters and is thrust into the tortured existence of a *W* athlete. "L'enfant *W* ignore presque tout du monde où il va vivre."(185) ("A *W* child knows nothing of the world in which he will live.") The children know nothing of the sport-ordeals outside: "De ce qui se passe dans les villages et sur les stades, ils n'ont qu'une connaissance confuse, presque entièrement imaginaire."(185-6) ("Of what goes on in the villages and stadiums they have only a muddled knowledge based almost entirely on fantasy.") As the narrator describes the first months of the adolescent's life as an athlete of *W*, the neutral tone of the narrative gives way, at last, to a view of the horror of *W*: "La découverte de la vie *W* est, il est vrai, un spectacle assez terrifiant; il verra revenir la cohorte des vaincus. Athlètes gris de fatigue; il les verra un peu plus tard se battre, s'entre-déchirer pour un morceau de saucisson, pour un peu d'eau…(188)[201]

The fate of the *W* adolescent is not only to suffer physical torture and deprivation, but to inflict pain on others. The system is organized so there is not enough food to go around, he can get nourishment only at others' expense: "Plus les vainqueurs sont fêtés, plus les vaincus sont punis, comme si le bonheur des uns était l'exact envers du malheur des autres."(145) ("the more the winners are rewarded, the more the losers are punished, as if good fortune of the former were the

[201]initial acquaintance with *W* life is, in truth, a somewhat frightening spectacle…they see the cohort of the beaten returning, the exhausted, ashen-faced Athletes...they see them, a little later, tearing each other to pieces for a scrap of salami, a drop of water …

exact reversal of the latters' misfortune.") The young man of *W* is forced into sexual servitude to an older athlete. He will have contact with women only through participation in a public ritual of rape. The chapter describing this key event on the island occasioned a breakdown in the writing of *W*.

What appears in *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance, as the *W* strand, was originally published on its own, in serial form, in La Quinzaine Littéraire.[202] Perec chose the serial form for the *W* story, but at one point the pressure of the form proved too much, and he missed an installment. The break occurred at the chapter in which it is revealed that relations between men and women on the island of *W* take the form of a monthly sporting event called "Les Atlantiades" in which the top athletes pursue women around the stadium track.[203] This race is preceded by violent attacks in which the men competing attempt to incapacitate each other by any means possible. Then, on the track, "Un tour de piste suffit généralement aux coureurs pour rattraper les femmes, et c'est le plus souvent en face des tribunes d'honneur, soit sur la cendrée, soit sur la pelouse, qu'elles sont violées."(167)[204]

The *W* adolescent enters a system that ensures not only that he will suffer and starve but attack and rape. His fate is to become simultaneously a victim and a perpetrator; he pursues the women simultaneously out of desire and under duress. This is the form sex, desire, and procreation take in the world he finds himself in, as an adolescent awakening out of ignorance of childhood and coming into contact with the immutable structures of the prison island in which he is trapped. The story of the adolescent culminates with a long passage about the reality of the world the boy finds himself in:

> Au début il ne comprendra pas. Comment expliquer que ce qu'il découvre n'est pas quelque chose d'épouvante, n'est pas un cauchemar, n'est pas quelque chose dont il

[202] The text published in serial form is reproduced with minor changes as the W strand of *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance.

[203] "There was no installment ready for the mid-May issue of La Quinzaine, and installment 16—the cruel chapter on organized rape—did not appear until June" (Bellos: Georges Pérec:, 450).

[204] One lap is usually all that the runners need to catch up with the women, and as a rule it is right in front of the podium, either on the cinder track or on the grass, that they raped.

> va se réveiller brusquement, quelque chose qu'il va chasser de son esprit, comment expliquer que c'est cela la vie, la vie réelle, que quelque chose d'autre existe, de faire semblant de croire à autre chose; il y a cela et c'est tout; il n'existe aucune alternative. Il n'est pas possible de se boucher les yeux, il n'est pas possible de refuser; Il n'est même pas possible à espérer que le temps arrangera cela. C'est cela qu'il verra et rien d'autre et c'est cela seul qui est vrai. (1988-9)[205]

In the account of the adolescent's gradual emergence from his childhood ignorance into a knowledge of what life on *W* is really like, we may see a parallel to the story of Perec's own understanding of his fantasy. Of how his parents died, he had only "une connaissance confuse, presque entièrement imaginaire"(186) ("a muddled knowledge based almost entirely on fantasy"). But he has come into a perpetual confrontation with the knowledge that his fantasy describes a reality: concentration camps really existed, and for those imprisoned and murdered in them, it was the only reality. Perec's insistence on reality within fantasy suggests the deforming effect of knowledge of the Holocaust murders on our understanding of reality at the same time that it describes Perec's entrapment in the world his fantasy describes. At the start of *W*, Perec stated his seemingly paradoxical intention to reveal, in contrast to the deceptive objectivity of history, "mon histoire réelle." The enfolded logic of this claim corresponds to a psychic landscape in which the supposed escape of fantasy has turned out to demonstrate the inescapability of the real and is supposed to fill the void he confronts in the absence of his parents' history. The question is: why does he present it as part of his autobiography?

Perec mentions Kafka in the canon of modernists he likes to read and some clues in the comparison of the two islands of *W* to Kafka's In the Penal Colony, which Perec invites, could be found. In each case the exposition of the notable customs of the society is narrated through the filter of detached ethnological interest: Kafka's "explorer," a figure who travels as an observer and makes

[205] To begin with he does not grasp. How can you explain that what he is seeing is not anything horrific, not a nightmare, not something he will suddenly wake from, something he can rid his mind of? How can you explain that this is life, real life, this is what there'll be every day, this is what there is, and nothing else, that it's pointless believing something else exists or to pretend to believe in something else. That's what there is, and that's all. There is no alternative. It is not possible to close your eyes to it, it is not possible to say no. There's not even any hope that time will sort things out; that's what you will see, you will not see anything else, and that is the only thing that will turn out to be true.

it a policy not to interfere in others' affairs, and *W*'s narrator, who tells us early on that he strives for the "ton froid de l'ethnologue"(10) ("the cold impassive tone of the ethnologist"). Of particular interest is the connection between the machines that dominate each account. Kafka describes an execution machine that engraves its victim with a needle that writes the commandment, the accused is said to have violated, into his body. The inscription to be carved is drawn from ancient drawings made by a former (now dead) commandant, and the machine is designed to make meaning legible through pain: the victim deciphers it through his wounds. Perec's fantasy would seem to be itself like this machine. The island of *W* is a "machine énorme dont chaque rouage participe, avec une efficacité implacable, à l'anéantissement systématique des hommes (218) ("huge machine, each cog of which contributes with implacable efficiency to the systematic annihilation of men"). It too derives from archaic drawings, those Perec made in his childhood: "Pendant des années, j'ai dessiné des sportifs aux corps rigides, aux facies inhumains…"(219) ("For years I did drawings of sportsmen with stiff bodies and inhuman facial figures"). And like Kafka's machine, which, once set off "works all by itself," *W* runs on its own.[206] We see this in the perpetual calendar of competitions among the athletes of *W* in their four villages. The athlethes rotate through their Olympiades, Atlantiades and Spartakiades endlessly. *W* is a machine for perpetual motion. The forgotten childhood fantasy resurfaces for Perec: "Il y a sept ans, un soir, à Venise, je me souvins tout à coup que cette histoire s'appelait '*W*'"(4) ("Seven years ago, one evening, in Venice, I suddenly remembered that this story was called *W* "). The recovery of this detail suggests that the fantasy has been, even while concealed, a constant presence; the gradual elaboration of the increasingly sadistic *W* fantasy throughout Perec's exposition of the story of his youth lends a sinister undertone, an omnipresent continuo, to a more recognizable narrative of self, and suggests again that the

[206] Kafka, Franz, "In the Penal Colony," The Penal Colony, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York, Schocken, 1976) 192.

embattled, suffering athletes of *W* have never ceased, and still continue, their mechanical, perpetual, painful engagements, "leurs incessants combats"(219) ("their unending combats"), somewhere in Perec's psyche and like the embellished maxims taken from the ancient drawings of the old Commandant, the message represented by Perec's old drawings is not easy to decipher. In recasting elements of Kafka's In the Penal Colony, Perec has chosen a text which has been seized upon as prophetic. George Steiner, for instance, reads In the Penal Colony as a text which speaks of the Holocaust without knowing that it does so. Steiner writes of Kafka that he was in a literal sense a prophet and that he saw, to the point of exact detail, the horror gathering ... "In the Penal Colony foreshadows not only the technology of the death-factories, but that special paradox of the modern totalitarian regime—the subtle, obscene collaboration between victim and torturer."[207] Steiner reads Kafka's story as a text that does not yet know that it is about Auschwitz but that achieves an anavailable knowledge of the future. Perec reworks Kafka's "prophetic" story as a way of speaking about events that have already taken place, in a memoir that is an account of his attempt exactly to gain an unavailable knowledge of the past. Perec borrows from the mode of prophecy, which sees into an unknowable future, as he addresses an unknowable past.[208] Through the narration of the *W* fantasy, Perec locates the knowledge he cannot have in a number of inaccessible positions: it might be an unknowable future (as the events of the Holocaust were for Kafka); in an unknowable past (the

[207] Steiner, George , "K" in Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman (New York: Atheneum, 1982):121.

[208] The two-part structure of prophetic knowledge, in which only a later event can make sense of an earlier event, suggests the structure of traumatic knowledge. Perec, by borrowing from a text that has been read as prophetic for the "adventure novel" he means to use to represent the absent history of his childhood, invokes—in yet another palindromic pattern—the model of prophecy (a motion toward knowledge reacting forward in time) in relation to the model of trauma (motion toward knowledge reaching backward in time). See Kathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP, 1996). Walter Benjamin, in 1938, also saw Kafka's work as making a prophecy whose message could only be understood at the time of its catastrophic fulfillment: "Kafka's world is the exact complement of his era which is preparing to do away with the inhabitants of this planet on a considerable scale. The experience which corresponds to that of Kafka, the private individual, will probably not become accessible to the masses until such time as they are being done away with." (Walter Benjamin, "Some Reflections on Kafka," Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969) 143. From a letter to Gershom Sholem, June 12, 1938.

unknown experiences of his parents, his own childhood blotted out by amnesia); in the space of the unconscious; or just very far away (on the island of *W*, at the other end of the world). Perec even suggests that when it comes to knowing the past, maybe he just "prefers not to:" "Une fois de plus, je fus comme un enfant qui joue à cache-cache et qui ne sait pas ce qu'il craint ou désire le plus: rester caché, être découvert"(14) ("Once again, I was like a child playing hide-and-seek, who doesn't know what he fears or wants more: to stay hidden, or to be found"). Do the workings of the *W* machine have a pedagogical function analogous to Kafka's execution apparatus? Perec does not know to what he has been sentenced, or even that he has been sentenced, only that the machine, the involuntary "writing" of fantasy, has begun its inscriptions. Without knowing what kind of allegory his fantasy is, it has begun to trace its marks for him to decipher if he can. The punishment, as in Kafka, is the knowledge of what he has done: the child has created a world of murderous fascist persecution within himself without any clear understanding of how its images may relate to history outside himself. It is exactly because he has no direct knowledge of the history he is so deeply implicated in, because he has not seen it for himself, that he has become the author of this sadistic fantasy, the inventor of a hell. *W* is Perec's confession that he is guilty of imagining his mother's death, guilty of creating Auschwitz in his mind.

Perec and psychoanalysis

Perec's precocious creation of a fascist universe did not pass unnoticed. When, in adolescence**,** he began making strange drawings of athletes and machines of war, his adoptive family entered him into psychotherapy.[209] Thus the intervention of psychoanalytic ideas in his life coincided with the surfacing of the *W* fantasy. By the time he wrote *W*, Perec had undertaken two periods of

[209] Sometime between 1946 and 1949 Ela Bienenfeld, Perec's cousin/adoptive sister, took him to the child-guidance clinic Centre Claude-Bernard, with "an exercise book that Perec had filled with strange, disjointed drawings of athletes, vehicles, and machines of war." There followed a period of a year or more of psychotherapy with Françoise Dolto, an expert on problems of adolescence. (Bellos: George Perec: 96).

psychoanalysis in adulthood (he was in analysis during the composition of *W*) in addition to his adolescent therapy. [210] He was steeped in psychoanalytic theory and method, and was acquainted too with psychoanalysis's specific engagement with the problems of survivors of the Holocaust.[211] Philippe Lejeune calls *W* "A psychoanalytic autobiography;" "it is a montage of symptoms that leaves the reader to tackle the problem of interpretation."[212] Perec does indeed, with symptoms and symbols, wave a red flag before the psychoanalytic eye. One function of *W* is to settle accounts with psychoanalysis.[213] Perec has told us that he once tried to rewrite part of Hamlet on the back of the photograph of his father, but did not get farther than the fourth word. In *W* Perec will make a renewed gesture to rework Hamlet for the purpose of telling his own story. Why does he put his fantasy on stage for the public? The deliberately primitive quality of the fiction calls to mind the play that Hamlet stages to root out a response from Claudius that proves his guilt: "I'll have these players play something like the murder of my father before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks. If 'a do blench I know my course" (3.1.561-5). The play produces exactly the desired effect: Claudius's reaction betrays his familiarity with and implication in the crime.[214] The *W* strand, like the play within the play, functions as a test, a trial, for the audience. Explicitly and implicitly, *W* continually

---

[210] See Philippe Lejeune, "*W* or the Memory of Childhood," trans. David Bellos, Review of Contemporary Fiction 13.1 (Spring 1993): 92.

[211] The extent of Perec's interest and sophistication in precisely the psychoanalytic issues surrounding mourning—as well as his interest in subversively recontextualizing psychoanalytic ideas—may be seen in his reference in a parodic essay on Roussel to Abraham and Torok's "Introjecter-incorporer, Deuil et Mélancholie" Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse *(*1972): 6, in which, as David Bellos notes, Perec reviews the different approaches to metaphor Abraham and Torok identify with regard to these two processes. See also Perec, Cantatrix Sopranica L et autres écrits scientifiques (Paris: Le Seuil, 1991).

[212] Lejeune, Philippe, *W* or the Memory of Childhood , trans. David Bellos, Review of Contemporary Fiction (Spring 1993): 13.1: 90.

[213] In one of the footnotes on the memoir of his father he remarks that "Ce n'est évidemment pas à mon père que je m'intéresse ici; c'est plutôt un règlement de comptes avec ma tante (53) ("It's obviously not my father I'm tackling here; more like a settling of old scores with my aunt."

[214] Georffrey Hartman suggests a related reading of a Resnais film: In "one of Resnais' films (I believe it was *Muriel* a home movie is inserted. The crude tape was like a play within a play, and I thought of the mime in *Hamlet* that serves to catch the conscience of the King. Here as there the irruption of an archaic medium takes us out of the temptation to smooth over or anesthetize what happened. Breaking the frame suggests that a crude form of realism may be closer to the truth than its sophisticated version." Geoffrey Harman, "The Cinema Animal: On Spielberg's *Schindler's List,*" Salmagundi (Spring-Summer 1995): 106-7: 140.

confesses guilt (for instance, a memoir chapter protesting the author's innocence in an incident in which he was falsely accused of shutting a little girl in a closet (172) is juxtaposed to the *W* chapter on the Atlantiades). Perec has come to know of the existence of the concentration camps only by finding that he has already created them as a fantasy representation for himself, and this denies him the luxury of residing in a sense of the innocence of his own victimhood while he makes attributions of guilt elsewhere. If in this, his situation bears a resemblance to Hamlet (at least in Freud's reading), so Perec's novel within a memoir bears a resemblance to Hamlet's "Mouse-trap." He invites us to watch him playing out the fantasy before our eyes, as if to observe our reaction. The vicious contests, cruel defeats, and public rapes take place before the "tribune d'honneur"—where, like it or not, we readers find ourselves seated. Psychoanalysis has demanded that Perec bring his fantasy out into the light, scrutinize it, and speak about it. Now Perec replays his fantasy-in-installments, but this time he is not the analysand figuratively strapped down on the penal machine of the analytic couch, undergoing a procedure that, while billed as therapeutic, hovers in its painful repetitions unknowably between the enlightening and the merely destructive[215]

Perec has created and undergone the ethical complications surrounding his fantasy (for not only must he play the role of both subject and object within the fantasy, but he himself is both the subject and the object of his fantasy, both its creator and its victim); but where does it indicate that his mourning process is in trouble? According to Peter Sacks's argument—concerning Hamlet—successful mourning depends upon the embrace of substitutes, i.e. Claudius an illegitimate authority and a mockery of a father. Nor can Perec arrive at an elegiac resolution in which he consents to make such a renunciation of the original object of his love. He tells us about an incident of his childhood:

[215] In "Les lieux d'une ruse," Perec lists some of the adjectives with which he assessed his sessions: "morne," "terne," "chiante," "merdeuse," (71) ("sad," "dull," "crap," "shitty,")

> Il me semble qu'avec plein d'autres enfants, nous étions en train de faire des foins, quand quelqu'un vint en courant m'avertir que ma tante était là. Je courus vers une silhouette vêtue de sombre qui, venant du collège, se dirigeait vers nous à travers champs. Je m'arrêtai pile à quelques mètres d'elle: je ne connaissais pas la dame qui était en face de moi et qui me disait bonjour en souriant. C'était ma tante Berthe ; je garde avec une netteté absolue le souvenir, non de la scène entière, mais du sentiment d'incrédulité et de méfiance que je ressentis alors: il reste, aujourd'hui encore, assez difficilement exprimable, comme s'il était le dévoilement d'une vérité élémentaire (désormais, il ne viendra à toi que des étrangères; tu les chercheras et tu les repousseras sans cesse; elles ne t'appartiendront pas, tu ne leur appartiendras pas, car tu ne sauras que les tenir à part) dont je ne crois pas avoir fini les méandres. (137-8).[216]

The child stops short before this vista of loss and substitution, of love replaced by an endless train of strange women. This "verité élémentaire" is represented in another way in the *W* fantasy. Here, relations between men and women are limited to the forum of the public rapes of "Les Atlantiades." Under the rules of these combats, one woman is necessarily as good as another, "toutes les victoires étant identiques, il serait évidemment utopique de la part d'un concurrent de convoiter une femme particulière." (177) {"all the wins are identical to each other (it would be utopian for any runner to covet any particular woman.") The desire for one woman as against the endless and endlessly unsatisfying pursuit of "des étrangères" is "utopian" and unattainable, it must be renounced under the duress of the immutable Law of *W*.

The Law *W*

Perec emphasizes that *W* is ruled by Law, a Law both absolutely powerful and absolutely unjust: "Les lois du Sport sont des lois dures et la vie *W* les aggrave encore. (145) La Loi est implacable mais la Loi est imprévisible. Nul n'est censé d'ignorer, mais nul ne peut la

[216] I think that it was when we were haymaking with masses of other children someone came running to tell me that my aunt was there. I ran towards a dark-dressed silhouette moving towards us across the field, coming from the school. I stopped short a few feet from her: I did not know the lady standing in front of me and saying hello with a smile. It was my aunt Berthe. I have an absolutely vivid memory not of the whole scene but of the sense of disbelief, hostility and mistrust which I felt at that point; even today it is not easy to express it, as if it were the revelation of a basic "truth" (henceforth only strange women will come unto you: you will seek them for ever and for ever reject them; they will not be yours, you will not be theirs, for you will be able only to hold them at arm's length) the intricacies of which I don't think I have quite unraveled yet.

connaître(155); ses Lois les plus clémentes ne sont jamais que l'expression d'une ironie un peu plus féroce."(207)[217]

These laws are not only revealed to be in themselves systematically unjust—they are implicitly the way Perec links the *W* society to the Nazi concentration camps. This law is the law of genocide and extermination, and it is simultaneously the law that denies the mother to the son. If Perec, like the *W* adolescent, has no power to defy this law, neither can he submit to it without protesting its eternal injustice.

In the final chapter of *W*, Perec writes: "Pendant des années, j'ai dessiné des sportifs aux corps rigides, aux facies inhumains, j'ai décrit avec minuties leurs incessants combats; j'ai énuméré avec obstination leur palmarès sans fin."(216) ("For years I did drawings of sportsmen with stiff bodies and inhuman facial features. I described their unending combats meticulously; I listed persistently their endless titles"). In this way he testifies that the fantasy is an autobiographical fact. He quotes the passage from David Rousset concerning sport and starvation which he read years later, and goes on: "J'ai oublié les raisons qui, à douze ans, m'ont fait choisir la Terre de Feu pour y installer *W*: les fascistes de Pinochet se sont chargés de donner à mon fantasme une ultime résonnance: plusieurs ilots de la Terre de Feu sont aujourd'hui des camps de déportation." (220)[218]

These are the last words of *W*, and with them the collapse of metaphor becomes complete. The *W* strand starts out with generically novelistic gestures. It then veers off into the exposition of *W*, becoming increasingly recognizable as a representation of a concentration camp. Finally, with the reference to l'Univers Concentrationnaire and the mention of contemporary deportation camps, the

---

The rules of sport are harsh and life on *W* makes them harsher still. The Law is implacable, but the Law is unpredictable. The Law must be known by all, but the Law cannot be known. Its most lenient laws are but the expression of a greater and more savage irony.

[218] I have forgotten what reasons I had at the age of twelve for choosing Tierra del Fuego as the site of *W*. Pinochet's Faschists have provided my fantasy with a final echo: several of the islands in that area are today deportation camps.

attempt to sustain a metaphoric project is abandoned entirely. *W* has never been a novel. The message of the fantasy is that it contains reality; the text's concluding words tell us that concentration camps are a reality not only of the past but of the present.

A continuous repetition: (un ressassement continu)

Perec belonged to the OuliPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle), a Paris-based group of writers interested in using linguistic constraints and permutations as generative devices. Oulipian projects often involved rewriting existing texts with variations. Perec's work points us toward a number of positive meanings for repetition. He describes the process of puzzle-making (a favorite activity of his, both in literary form and in the forms of crosswords and other games) in a way that allows us to see that it offers, exactly in its repetitions, a sense of connection and community: "En dépit des apparences ce n'est pas un jeu solitaire: chaque geste que fait le poseur de puzzle, le faiseur de puzzle l'a fait avant lui" (despite appearances, puzzling is not a solitary game: every move the puzzler makes, the puzzle-maker has made before.)[219] The puzzle-maker holds the answers and invites others to come and seek them. Such a game, in which the author is master of a certain kind of knowledge, stands in stark contrast to the utterly unsatisfactory autobiographical investigation rehearsed in *W.* In *W*'s two strands, Perec finds ignorance and speculation to be equally punishable offenses as responses to the vacuum of knowledge that is his only autobiographical fact.[220] A passage on the pleasure Perec finds in re-reading suggests the possibility that repetition, rather than substitution, can offer the mourner consolation. After the war, Perec's older cousin Henri gives him books to read. Episodes from these readings, Perec tells us:

---

[219] Perec, La Vie mode d'emploi (Paris: Hachette, 1978) 251, quoted in Bellos, French ed: 645, English ed : 629.

[220] In "Knowing and Not Knowing Massive Psychic Trauma: Forms of Traumatic Memory" International Journal of Psychoanalysis 74 (1993): 296, Dori Laub and Nanette C. Auerhahn comment on the tendency of children of Holocaust survivors "to become mental health workers—they have an interest in secrets, and a need to decode them and help those who suffer from them." One may see a related interest in the mastery of secrets and codes in Perec's Oulipian work.

> m'ont presque servi d'histoire: source d'une mémoire inépuisable, d'un ressassement, d'une certitude: les mots étaient à leur place, les livres racontaient des histoires; on pouvait suivre; on pouvait relire, et, relisant, retrouver, magnifiée par la certitude qu'on avait de les retrouver, l'impression qu'on avait d'abord éprouvée: ce plaisir ne s'est jamais tari: je lis peu, mais je relis sans cesse ... je relis les livres que j'aime et j'aime les livres que je relis, et chaque fois avec la même jouissance ... celle d'une complicité, d'une connivence, ou plus encore, au-delà, celle d'une parenté enfin retrouvée.(193)[221]

Through repetition, re-reading (almost) delivers the satisfactions of memory, history, and family, from which Perec finds himself barred. Perec has produced the game-system of *W* in response to the extreme difficulty of coming to terms with his own history. The fantasy has filled the void of not knowing, and its function as an approach to the reality he must come to know is complex. Psychoanalysis in *W* serves not as a key to deciphering the figures of the text, but as itself a figure for Perec's conflicting desires to know and not to know the horror of his own history and it is on the balance of these conflicting desires that *W* precariously rests. The recombination of elements which propels Perec's puzzles and the *W* system hovers between postponement and arrival, as we see in Perec's description of such recombinations in his psychoanalysis:

> Lorsque j'essayais de parler, de dire quelque chose de moi, d'affronter ce clown intérieur qui jonglait si bien avec mon histoire, ce prestigidateur qui savait si bien s'illusioner lui-même, tout de suite j'avais toutes les combinaisons possibles, je pouvais un jour arriver enfin à l'image que je cherchais.[222]

Immersed in the fantasy of its reconstruction, Perec distracts himself from what *W* means. But by showing the *W* fantasy to the public, Perec takes responsibility for having created a representation of

---

[221]were to my mind, virtually part of history; an inexhaustible fount of memory, of material for rumination and of a kind of certainty: the words were where they should be, and the books told a story you could follow; you could re-read, and, on re-reading, re-encounter, enhanced by the certainty that you would encounter those words again, the impression you had felt the first time. This pleasure has never ceased for me; I do not read much, but I have never stopped re-reading. I re-read the books I love and I love the books I re-read, and each time it is the same enjoyment, an enjoyment of complicity, of collusion, or more especially, and in addition, of having in the end found kin again.

[222] Whenever I tried to speak, to say something of my own, to confront the clown within who was juggling so cleverly with my life-story, the conjuror who was so good at deceiving himself, I suddenly had the impression that I was starting on the same puzzle all over again, as if, by using up one by one all the possible combinations, I could one day arrive at the image I was searching for.

a death camp world, and, via *W*'s final rejection of metaphor, acknowledges the irreversible reality of the Holocaust. The simultaneous seeking and avoidance of Perec's recombinative puzzles respond to the paradox of his conflicting needs to confront his own history and to defer the confrontation. The brilliance of *W* lies in its representation of the stalemate that structures Perec's failure to overcome a history that cannot be overcome.

Serge Doubrovsky

> L'intellectuel juif assimilé, pour sa part, semble condamné au statut de "Juif imaginaire." La judéité devient une recherche, une interrogation, une invention perpétuelles. Cette désubstantialisation de l'identité de Juif assimmilé fait de lui un prototype du moi postmoderne: instable et solitaire, libéré s'il le désire des idéologies coercitives, autonome et pourtant constamment inquiet du regard de l'autre, guetté par la tentation d'abdiquer, d'être "un homme sans qualités" pour s'abandonner aux identifications parfois hâtives, qui se proposent[223]

In *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* the writing of memory becomes (to use Perec's own terms) an *encrage*, an inking, which provides an *ancrage*, an anchorage—a place of inscription for the traces of a scandalous absence which writing cannot redeem but whose place it can mark forever. Perec, by reversing the 'X,' which represents an absence, an erasure and which, dismembered and dismantled into two 'v's, could proliferate into a 'swastika,' the letters SS, the star of David, and of course the double 'V'—*W* of his writings, achieves by a circular process the inscription of marks and traces which perpetuates his links to his parents even as it annihilates them again by marking their absence. Serge Doubrovsky, on the other hand, in order to come to terms with his life in writing created "autofiction." He repeatedly uses this expression as the invention of self through writing. For Doubrovsky, autofiction, which defines a fictional account of events that are true in the strict sense, stresses the power of language. Through autofiction, he re-invents himself and is able to face his life and his past. Doubrovsky replaces the language of adventure with the adventure of language. Like Perec, he is convinced that fantasy and imagination govern both his life and his writing, which

[223] Jacques le Rider, Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité, (Paris, Presses universitaires de France 1990) 243-244.

explains the use of dreams, assonances and dissonances in his books. By creating autofiction, integrating the teachings of psychoanalysis, and touching on themes rarely discussed to-date, Doubrovsky fights against different kinds of ineffability or "the unspoken" in his works. His writing style, directly inspired by psychoanalytic theory, corresponds to an effort to write in a language that is as close as possible to the unconscious. Doubrovsky reveals himself completely in this quest for a truth created by the text in this "*révélé/caché*" (revealed/hidden) process that only *appears* to be a game. Régine Robin writes in Le Golem de l'écriture (1997):

> Serge Doubrovsky a trouvé le terme d'autofiction on l'a vu. Encore et partout, il revient sur cette création de soi par l'écriture, sur cette mise en scène du sujet ne coincidant jamais avec lui-même. Serge Doubrovsky s'expose totalement dans cette quête d'une vérité produite par le texte, dans ce "révélé/caché" qui n'est ludique qu'en apparence; un écrivain narrateur et personnage qui croit pouvoir dire une vérité sur lui-même alors que, à travers une longue psychanalyse, sa pratique de la fiction et de la théorie littéraire, il a compris que cette "vérité" pouvait être un leurre, un instrument de maîtrise autant qu'une mise à nu de ses zones d'ombre (121).[224]

Cut off from his origin, the language of his ancestors, and his indefinite suspension between two professions (writer/professor), two countries (France/United States), two languages (French/English) and two given names (Julien/Serge), as he repeats from book to book, cut off from his past by his memory-holes, Jew without really being one, French, but living abroad, could not this be the foundation of his autofiction, a writing between *genres* as he bore his identity, during the war, on his chest and *entre les jambes*?

The strength of autofiction lies in its representation of reality through fiction. It could not be only fiction, where an invented character would give multiple faces to this emptiness, and it could not be autobiography, which gives the illusion of self-unity and an all-powerful memory. The only writing possible would be that which, while seeming to respect the autobiographical pact

[224] Robin, Régine Le Golem de l'ecriture: de l'autofiction au Cybersoi. (Québec: Presses Montréal 1997) "His experience as a writer is that of a narrator as well as the character who thinks he can tell the truth about himself after experiencing a long psychoanalysis, his expertise in fiction and literary theory having taught him that this "truth" is either a lure or a tool of mastery while revealing its dark zones."

(author/narrator/protagonist one and the same—as defined by Philippe Lejeune),[225] would have a form of its own. He therefore created autofiction which, as defined by John Ireland in "Monstrous Writing," is an on-going exploration of the elusive divide separating autobiography from fiction."[226] To write real fiction, one has first to be certain of one's own existence. If this is not the case, one has to spend time at reconstructing it in the text, in order to survive, to reshape oneself, to weave and adjust, in a word to be resuscitated. To disperse oneself, as announced in the title of his first autofiction, seems to be his ultimate goal and it is from this "dispersion" that the writing is born.[227]

With autofiction, a fiction but nevertheless the story of real life, therefore neither autobiography nor novel in the strict sense of the word, but which operates between the two, Doubrovsky proposes to give a legitimate approach to reality: "Pour être ENTIER. Faut vouloir être. CE QUI VOUS MANQUE. Normal, c'est logique. EN MÊME TEMPS QUE CE QU'ON EST. Vie réelle. Moitié de vie. Vieux L'AUTRE MOITIÉ. Elle est. DANS L'IMAGINAIRE. Mes temps s'emmêlent, mes lieux vacillent. J'EXISTE PAS. JE CO-EXISTE." (Fils, 257). If life creates writing, life can also be created in writing and this opens the hitherto impenetrable area in which the self is enclosed. Contrary to the classical norm of the writer standing in front of a mirror, the status of the scrutinizing self is an apparent and vacillating picture, a sort of non-reality for Doubrovsky.

Doubrovsky takes pains to point out that his writing is created by neurosis. Unlike autobiography, autofiction delights in its intensive transgressions and one of the most striking narrative features of his autofiction is its unusual typography which uses block capitals, italics and blank spaces as well as entire paragraphs where all punctuation is suspended to forge a very distinctive syntax. Autofiction's status as a *fictional* construct constitutes a minutely crafted and ultimately triumphant response to the particular *form* of its author's neurosis. In other words, despite

[225] Lejeune, Philippe, Le pacte autobiographique (Paris: Edition: Seuil 1975).
[226] Ireland, John: Introduction: "Monstrous Writing" in Genre, Volume xxvi, #1 (Spring 1993): 1
[227] Doubrovsky, Serge, La Dispersion. (Paris, Hachette, 1982).

their shared name and identical biographies, the author and protagonist of Doubrovsky's autofictions are very different entities. The painful divisions that structure and punctuate his life—his indefinite suspension between two professions, two countries, two languages and two given names—are represented in the textual level as meaningful dualities the former can exploit. Life's obstacles, its many impasses and disappointments are transformed by the closed system of the text as the resistance of referents gives way to the ceaseless productivity of what Julia Kristeva has termed "signifiance."[228] There will be no longer voids; the fissures of existential lack, bridged by dynamic chains of signifiers, become the locus of endlessly inventive combinations of sound and sense.

The idea of creating the oxymoronic neologism "autofiction" came to Doubrovsky as he examined Philippe Lejeune's classification in his book Le pacte autobiographique, where Lejeune set up a system based on the relations of identity between the narrator, the author and the character in autobiography: "Le récit rétrospectif en prose fait par une personne de son existence quand elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, l'histoire de sa personnalité."[229] Noticing that the system relied on the identity and the non-identity between the author and his/her character, Doubrovsky suggested that the empty space of the "héros d'un roman déclaré" could bear the same name as the author.[230] Admitting the reason for this innovation: "Il faut que ma vie fasse roman pour que je l'écrive" (La vie l'instant, 26), Serge Doubrovsky introduced a new rule to the game by limiting himself to writing the truth and by reserving the right and freedom to compose his life through the interplay of words.

Doubrovsky, professor, critic and novelist, has written six autobiographical novels : La Dispersion (1969), Fils (1977), Un Amour de soi (1982), La Vie l'instant (1985), Le Livre brisé (1989) and l'Après-vivre (1992). In these autofictions, where the author is both narrator and

228 Cited by Renée Kingkaid in "Serge Analysand." Genre xxvi, Spring 1993: 55.
229 Lejeune, Philippe, Le pacte autobiographique (Paris: Seuil, 1975.)
230 This information is contained in a letter written by Serge Doubrovsky to Philippe Lejeune and cited in Moi aussi. (Paris: Seuil, 1986) 63.

character, Serge Doubrovsky tries to be an innovator, pushing the limits of the genre. Although the term autobiography, etymologically, is constituted by three major components, the identity of the subject (auto), life (bios), and writing (graphy), the genre does not necessarily imply a single form of writing but rather different combinations of these three elements, combinations that are numerous but all leading to the same result: to achieve self-consciousness. The attempt to recapture a life through writing often takes the form of reconstructing the past through the act of writing in the present, which involves a great deal of selection. The past of memories haunts the present of writing, but in doing so, is profoundly transformed. Moreover, autobiographers always have to resort to their failing memory. The present leaves its imprint on the past and memories are often perceived through a distorting lens, as Simone de Beauvoir points out in Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée*:* "Cette belle histoire qui était ma vie, elle devenait fausse à mesure que je la racontais."[231] Therefore, since autobiography is not the exact transcription of reality but (only) its more or less reconstruction, its practitioners are faced with a possible lack of authenticity in their project, like Simone de Beauvoir who mentions: "Je laisserai dans l'ombre beaucoup de choses."[232] As Wolfang Iser proposes, the need to fictionalize is an anthropological necessity: "fictionalizing begins where knowledge leaves off."[233] For the critic Jean Starobinski, the problem of authenticity is sterile, and he prefers to draw attention to the nature of the author's feeling as it is reflected in the mirror of autobiography. "Despite the amount of distortion in the narration, the emotion in the quest for oneself stays true and authentic."[234] For Nathalie Sarraute, this genre is like "une façon de prendre sa retraite, de se ranger." (Enfance*,* 8). And, of course, this issue is even more complicated when it refers to child

[231] "This beautiful story which was my life, was becoming false as I was telling it." Simone de Beauvoir: Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée, (Paris Gallimard 1958) 204.
[232] "I will leave many things in the dark."
[233] Iser, Wolfang, "Fictionalizing: the Anthropological Dimension of Literary Fictions." New Literary History, 21,4,Autumn 1990: 951. Cited by Anne Jouan-Westlund in Sites, vol. I, 2, 1997, 417.
[234] Starobinski, Jean, "Le style de l'autobiographie." Poétique, vol.1.3 1970.

Holocaust survivors; the trauma they went (and still go through) adding to their difficulty and to the way in which, they remember.

Therefore, this new literary form, created by Doubrovsky, could be summarized as "le mentir vrai" (true lying), as put by Breton and defined by the author himself as: "Une fiction d'évenements et de faits strictements réels ou encore une fiction mariée à un contrat de vérité."[235] The gap between life and writing is such that autobiography is reduced to a hopeless endeavor. "Il faut choisir, vivre ou écrire" says Roquentin in La Nausée. Doubrovsky shares the same opinion in his novel entitled La Vie l'Instant *(*1985*).*[236] "Et puis quand j'ai vécu, je m'évanouis. Je me dissipe, de minute en minute, dans le non-être. Je ne cherche pas à me retenir, une vie c'est de l'acrobatie sans filet d'encre. On tombe dans le vide, un point, c'est tout. (15)[237]

For Doubrovsky, writing remains the only way to capture his life, however elusive it may be. He bitterly points out that autobiography is a genre reserved for the great of this world, at the twilight of their life and that "les humbles qui n'ont pas le droit à l'histoire ont droit au roman."[238] Engaged in a kind of crusade, Doubrovsky manages to legitimize his falling back on fiction. It is interesting to note that his new method of introspection is closely linked to his desire to please the reader: "L'homme quelconque que je suis doit, pour capturer le lecteur rétif, lui refiler sa vie réelle sous les espèces plus prestigieuses d'une existence imaginaire."[239] For Serge Doubrovsky, autobiography is not "un exercise de fin de carrière" but constitutes a permanent dimension in his quest for writing. In his case the innovation consists of an ambiguous form of writing that lets the reader know that it expresses a certain truth without claiming to be totally truthful.

---

[235] "A fiction of strictly real events and facts or still a fiction married to a contract of truth," Serge Doubrovsky, "Autobiographie/Vérité/Psychanalyse.." L'Esprit créateur, 20.3.1980:87.
[236] Doubrovsky. Serge, La Vie l'instant, (Paris, Balland, 1985).
[237] "And then when I have lived, I lose consciousness. I disappear, from minute to minute, in the non-being. I don't try to hold myself; a life is a jump with no 'ink' net. One falls in the void, and that's it."
[238] Doubrovsky, Serge, "Autobiographie/Vérité/Psychanalyse." L'Esprit créateur, (1980): 20.3. 97.
[239] Doubrovsky, L'Esprit créateur: 90.

Contrary to traditional autobiography which is more a form of self-scrutiny based on the belief of the unity of identity, Doubrovsky's autobiography is based on the concept of a fragmented self. His research is a therapeutic confrontation revealing the Id, real and invisible, as opposed to the Ego, visible in the mirror of self scrutiny. The narrator uses the style favored by the Nouveau Roman and manages to clarify in his autobiographical project that by recognizing his fantasies, he succeeds in discovering his self. "The fictive self is at the origin of the fictitious pact but behind this pact lies the Id buried under repressed layers of memories."[240] Inspired by Leiris, Doubrovsky wonders what could clarify "certaines choses obscures" that are revealed to the subject through the psychoanalytic experience. With this in mind, he conceived of his auto-analysis as a session inside the text in which writing leads the way. Nevertheless the narrator still faces the problem of self-knowledge. By integrating the Lacanian concept of the individual, that is to say the access to Self-knowledge through the recognition of the Other, Doubrovsky feels that it is necessary for him to proceed to what he calls "hétéroconnaissance." According to Annie Jouan-Westland, "in his writing project, Doubrovsky needs the participation of the reader in the shaping of the picture refracted by the analytical mirror of autobiography. Solitary and at the same time in solidarity with his reader, the narrator/analyst places the reader in the position of an analyzing character."[241] In a real session, the patient is left alone with the truth; in this case the writer is left alone with a vague idea of the truth projected by the reader; Doubrovsky reverses the typical reading of autobiography.

Psychoanalysis translates into the writing of a fiction, in place of a past which can neither be restored nor resuscitated. A fiction! Why not his own, based on the material of his life and including the contribution that psychoanalysis will add to its elaboration:

---

[240] Westlund , Annie Jouan, " Serge Doubrovsky's Autofiction: De l'autobiographie considérée comme une tauromachie." Sites, vol. I,2,1997: 423.
[241]Westlund , Annie Jouan : 423.

> La mémoire que l'analyste façonne est comme un anus artificiel: on fait avec. On digère ce qui ne passe pas, on assimile le passé, au lieu de s'étioler de chagrin, on nourrit son désir de vivre. Un admirable résultat que ce périple guérisseur à travers soi. Seulement, ce n'est pas, tel le couloir sombre, poussiéreux de l'appartement, le parcours d'origine. Un autre trajet, grâce à une opération savante, avec de précieuses ouvertures éclair. Cela ne ressort pas par le vrai trou. Cela ne remplit pas le trou de mémoire. (Livre brisé, 267)[242]

For Doubrovsky: if the artificial anus allows him to live, by enabling the body to reject what it cannot assimilate, the analysis would allow the mental dejections originating from the unconscious to be released without leaving any symptoms or intoxicating the subject's life. If through analysis he regains a fictitious memory, he decides that, fiction for fiction, he is better placed than his psychoanalyst to write the story of his own life. Through writing he will fill what is missing. Even his style is an expression of his impulses, through the fragmented breathless syntax which is conceived to reproduce a fragmented sense of his own existence; the play with words; the sentences without verbs, incomplete, with him in total control. Autofiction's purpose, ultimately, is not to represent his life but *redeem it* "tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or"[243] aesthetically, which, at least, and in this way, fills the void created by his Holocaust experience.

The almost unavoidable destruction of the border between reality and fiction in Doubrovsky's autofictions and particularly Le Livre brisé introduces a new dimension in the purely esthetic appreciation of this writer's stylistic innovation. The book opens with a failure of memory. Serge Doubrovsky, a Jew, came through the Holocaust and blames himself for not having been Anne Frank, and cannot even remember what he did on May 8, 1945. His memory (or lack of it) is expressed in Le Livre brisé which starts with a "trou de mémoire" (the memory-hole regarding what

[242] (The memory created by the analyst resembles an artificial anus: for evacuation. You digest what doesn't go through, you assimilate the past, instead of wasting yourself away in crying, you intensify your desire to live. An admirable result achieved by the analyst through you. Only, it's not the original recollection; it's another way thanks to intelligent maneuvers. It doesn't come out from the real hole and it doesn't fill the memory-hole.)
[243] Here he adopts for autofiction Baudelaire's famous principle of poetic alchemy: "You gave me your mud and I made it into gold."

happened on May 8, 1945.) He writes: "Je me replonge dans mes bas-fonds, jusqu'au tréfonds. Désespérément, je sonde, je fouille. Pas un reste, pas une trace. Tout a disparu dans un absolu naufrage. Comme une épave, je suis là, pétrifié, sur le terre-fin de l'Etoile. 8 mai 1945: Trou de MEMOIRE"[244] After watching on television the ceremony of the anniversary, he decides to go by the Arc de Triomphe and tries to remember the real victory day, 8 May 1945, but is incapable of it. "Sur le dos, sur le ventre, sur le côté, sous mes couvrantes, je halète. Je me tourne et me retourne sans cesse, dans mon lit, dans mes pensées, vers l'An Quarante. Damné en années, ce temps-là reste mon enfer. J'y suis enfermé. Toujours en quarantaine. Depuis quarante ans. Prison sans barreaux, sans bourreaux, je n'arrive pas à sortir de cette geôle révolue. Je demeure entortillé dans d'impalpables liens. Ma mémoire me ligote." (Le Libre brisé, 21). What we have here is the memory-hole, the void, the emptiness of an event otherwise fundamental. Psychic memory-holes like memory-holes in history, are not only lack of documentation, they also show personal and collective amnesia, of taboo, censorship, and voluntary or involuntary silence. This specific year will be the focal point of the writer beyond which he remembers specifically: "La rafle du 'Vel d'Hiv', en juillet 42, c'étaient des flics français. Quand le giletier roumain de mon père a disparu, quand sa fille est venue pleurer à l'atelier. Ça ne s'oublie pas. C'est aussi un flic français qui est venu nous prévenir, en novembre 43, arrestation imminente, qui nous a sauvé la vie. Ça ne s'oublie pas non plus." (L'Après-vivre, 30-31).

Serge Doubrovsky was eleven years old, a child, when the war started, and seventeen when it ended in 1945. Wearing the yellow star, he and his family were miraculously saved, in hiding. This experience marked him deeply and he never forgave himself for not having joined the Resistance. This failure is felt through his work and this lack of participation in the Resistance is at the heart of

[244] Doubrovsky, Serge, Le Livre brisé: 65-68
(I dive into the depths of my soul, to the bottom. Desperately, I search, I excavate. Nothing left, not a trace. Everything disappeared in absolute wreckage. Like a wreck, I am there, petrified, at l'Etoile, 8 mai 1945: MEMORY-hole.)

his feeling of absence that could only find refuge in his writing. In La Dispersion, he writes: "NOM DE DIEU J'AI RATÉ MA GUERRE...depuis ça n'arrête pas de me torturer de me tarauder de m'assaillir de battre en tempête entre les tempes de me ravager le ventre…ils se sont mis à cent millions pas un je n'en ai bûté, crevé PAS UN trop jeune trop tôt TROP TARD." (La Dispersion, 310-311)[245]

These memories manifest themselves suddenly. For instance, while walking through the Bois de Boulogne where he sees, in the trees, traces of German bullets that had been fired during the execution of hostages. "Ces souvenirs, je ne les oublie jamais, ils me reviennent manifestement à l'esprit, me frappent, me happent au passage, inscrits dans les fibres." (La Dispersion, 200). Indeed, these memories are inscribed under the skin and refer to a specific and difficult historical period.

Doubrovsky dedicated his first novel, La Dispersion, to the war period, the yellow star and to persecution. In this book, where historical facts and testimony are powerful, the name of the author-narrator-character is absent and the book presents itself as a "roman," a genre which all Holocaust deniers would exploit to show their doubt on its true representation of that period. Apart from this absence, the reader realizes that this "Je" emphasizes a strong identification with the "dispersed" six millions Jews who died in concentration camps. So many "sépultures sans morts" (Le Livre brisé, 398), so many dead without burial-places where only ashes are left, ashes on which no names can be inscribed. In choosing not to give any names to his characters, Doubrovsky reduces them to the state of ghosts and makes of La Dispersion a book where his bursting anger could only be expressed through writing with its various means of enunciation. There is the weave of historical facts, stressed by the use of italics, which details the Vichy laws against the Jews. They are represented in the form of fragments ending in blanks, a metaphor that runs all through the book. Regarding the law of October 3, 1940: "LOI *portant statut* des *nous maréchal de france chef de l'état français le conseil*

[245] Doubrovsky, Serge, La Dispersion (Paris: Hachette, 1982).

*des ministres entendu décrétons article premier est regardé comme article deux l'accès et l'exercise des fonctions publiques et mandats énumérés ci-après sont interdits aux" (*Dispersion, 133). We can see that he does not punctuate the text—to force the reader to re-divide it in order to make sense of it; he takes out the capital letters of the names, to show total rejection, not only of the authorities but of a France incriminating itself through this law, and he inscribes a void at the heart of it, since the category of citizens this law refers to is totally absent.[246] The word Jew is again absent from the law of October 4, 1940, and he cites it in the same manner as the former one: *"nous maréchal de france article premier les ressortissants étrangers de race pourront à dater de la promulgation de la présente* ÊTRE INTERNES DANS DES CAMPS SPECIAUX *par décision du préfet du département de leur résidence*."(Dispersion*,* 133). In this citation, "internment" is the core and equivalent of a death sentence. From the legal point of view, the "internment" had been facilitated by the German law, dated 27 September 1940, demanding all Jews in the occupied zone to register with the authorities. Doubrovsky asks: "Faut-il se déclarer? Porter obligemment sa tête sur le billot?" (134) To the naivety of this question follows an answer directed at the same time at his father and the French. When Israel Doubrovsky arrived in France in 1912 and was asked his name, he proudly said: Israel. "Nom. Prénom. Pas de passeport. Pas de papiers. Il aurait pu dire Ivan, Dimitri, Joseph, Fédor, n'importe quoi. Il a répondu: 'Israel.' Comme ça machinalement, sans y penser, sans savoir ni quoi ni qu'est-ce. Puisque c'était vrai."(136) He goes on adding how the French assisted the Germans in creating administrative services and in voting laws against the Jews: "tout seuls les boches n'auraient pas pu n'auraient pas su pas si bien (220). In addition, "the Jewish Section in the authorities, established in 1940, had put into place a card-index (Fichier) which reported around 150,000 Jews registered in the Seine department, in alphabetical order, by streets, professions and

[246] This is an important detail since, in spite of the numerous years he spent in the U.S., Serge Doubrovsky is viscerally French: "Mon unique fibre patriotique est hexagonale." (L'Après-vivre*,* 31).

nationalities" (Vichy France and the Jews).[247] To try to ignore the census meant the risk of being interned in one of the many camps which Doubrovsky designates as "bien français":

> A Argelès et à Rivesaltes, à Gurs, Barcarès, Brens, Rieucros, au Vernet et à Septfonds, à Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort, aux Milles, à Bram, à Agde, à Récébédou et à Noé, à Sainte-Marthe et à Clairfonds,à Miramard, à Fréjus, aux Monts, aux Tourelles, à Tonnere, Saint-Maurice, Seignelay, Saint-Florentin, Vermenton, Reare-les-Touches, à Drancy et à Beaune-la-Rolande, à Pithiviers, à Nexon, à Campiègne et à irrus, à Igny-le-Châtel et à Brienon, et aussi à Boghari, Colomb-Béchar, Djelfa, en Algérie, à Azemmour, Bou-Arfa, Qued-Zem, sur des bateaux en rade de Casablanca, au Maroc. (147)

The reader who might have heard only of Drancy is overwhelmed by this long list. Contrary to the historian who would geographically situate every camp, give the number of prisoners in each, elaborate on the conditions in the camps, include the testimony of a survivor having escaped deportation, Doubrovsky enumerates the names of these places, consecutively, not allowing the reader to catch his breath, so much so that the latter comes out suffocated in learning about all these names one never talks about and, which he learns, were concentration camps. From this enumeration, a feeling of malaise is born which, a history book cannot communicate.

In La Dispersion, Doubrovsky does not present the events following the entry of the Germans in Paris, and the first anti-Jewish measures taken by the French administration in a chronologically linear way, although he incorporates certain temporal landmarks and historical documentation which seem to remove the story from fiction, but his fragmentation of excerpts from the Vichy laws and his spreading them over a number of pages, and the repetition of key-passages—i.e. "pourront être internés dans des camps spéciaux"—bring back the narration to fiction, as he intends; although the fact that he rejects giving a linear account of the lived events does not reduce the power of the testimony. The text of La Dispersion renders the essence of the situation in the form of fragments which try to convey the feelings of Julien/Serge, his family, and the Jews in their totality, while

[247]Marrus, Michael R and Paxton, Robert O. Vichy France and the Jews. (New York: Basic Books. 1981) 380. Was this card-index created following the orders of the Germans, on 27 September 1940, under the orders of General de la Laurencie or those of lieutenant-colonel SS Theodor Dannecker? Paxton is not clear on that but insists on the fact that the development of this card-index "went beyond the orders of the German authorities." 341-42.

misleading the reader, since, if taken separately, they make no sense. The text has to be reconstructed continuously and, regarding the question he asked about the census, it is only fourteen pages later that we get the answer when he remembers the endless line he and his family had to stand in: "elle n'en finissait pas devant le commissariat, elle s'étirait sur cent mètres, le long du trottoir, surveillée par des agents."(Dispersion, 153) In between these pages, questions, reflections, testimonies, family history, legal excerpts, phantasmagorical situations constitute a narrative web reflecting the same web Jews have seen woven in front of their eyes. Doubrovsky asks if his family should be worried about the laws of October 3 and 4, 1940: "TROIS (grand-parents) le compte y est quatre d'ailleurs comme les Mousquetaires." (Dispersion, 144) Will his father be able to continue his tailoring business? By placing at the head of this question a reference to the October 4 Law on the internment of "des ressortissants étrangers de race juive," Doubrovsky emphasizes that this internment is the inevitable outcome of all the articles of the October 3rd, 1940 Law. Therefore all his father's efforts to examine the law in depth, trying to find a breach in it, and a way for his family and himself to avoid internment, seemed useless. If the father could continue to work, he was no longer in charge of his atelier, its direction being taken over by an Aryan. When Doubrovsky finally describes the census, he has already proven that the Jew was not only a prisoner of the laws but that he had also realized the advantages in showing submission to the enemy:

> Dès le dimanche, des filles en tulle vaporeux, en corolles blanches, passent et repassent, oeillades en veux-tu en voilà, devant la terrasse du Colisée, archi-comble, plus une place, pas pris longtemps à rouvrir, à se repeupler, la terre des hommes, pleine à craquer, affairés comme aux grands jours les loufiats, les affaires sont les affaires, empressés de table en table, messieurs-dames bien mis, cravatés, gantés, mélangés aux officiers gris-bleu distingué, vert céladon, soleil du solstice tamisé par l'ample vélum, casquettes plates, évasées sur l'avant, frappées à l'aigle. (152)

At the heart of these few pages, the narrator has disclosed the first laws enacted by Vichy, described their effect on his family and the Jews, and put in opposition this hunted minority and the majority, whom Jankelevitch called "les Français de naissance, les privilégiés de la bonne conscience et de la

nationalité à-titre-originaire, ceux (qui) n'ont rien à craindre d'un ennemi aussi correct que chevaleresque."[248]

Doubrovsky's reaction towards such a Jewishness is that it is the source of familial errors. First his father and his Jewish name (Israel), then "quatrième grand-père, disparu. Plus rien, plus de trace. Grand-mère, juste avant la guerre. Les deux autres, jamais connus, morts et entérés avant ma naissance. Je suis pur, net. Pas de chance. Ils m'ont refilé la vérole. A titre posthume. D'outre-tombe. Sans eux, je m'en tirais."(Dispersion, 151) He creates for himself new roots, those taught to all French students: "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois avaient les yeux bleus, les cheveux blonds et longs, les moustaches tombantes. Ils portaient des braies et des sayons, s-a-y, pas i-*ll* (Dispersion, 117). He makes the French cultural heritage, his own. He strongly rejects the Jewish faith: Jéhovah, Yahvé, Elohim, Adonai? Connais pas. De nom, à peine. De loin. Comme Jésus-Christ ou Confucius. On fraye pas ensemble. On se fréquente pas. J'EN AI RIEN A FOUTRE." (Dispersion, 252) His Jewishness seems abstract since in fact, he is "un aryen déguisé en Juif." (Dispersion, 254). This non-identification is nevertheless refuted as it is working to assert itself. Mentioning the exhibit: "Le Juif et la France" which opened in September 1942 at the Berlitz Palace, under the auspices of the Institute for Jewish Questions, Doubrovsky compares his reflection to that of the Jewish type and concludes: "Merde. Pas à dire. Un peu. Pas mal. Beaucoup. J'ai LE TYPE." (Dispersion, 204) Then he reports the testimony of a friend, Wilhelm, who, a former soldier in the German army, admits having seen "nothing" during the war. All of Doubrovsky's testimony which follows is punctuated with remarks that contrast with the bitterness characterizing the previous pages, as they show a narrator who, up to the end of the narration, will attack the various manifestations of forgetfulness. Therefore when Wilhelm relates that, upon returning from an absence, having left the train, he

[248]Jankelevitch, Vladimir, L'Imprescriptible. Pardonner? Dans l'honneur et la dignité (Paris: Editions du Seuil 1986) 84.

remarked that "ça puait dehors une odeur étrange produits chimiques des volutes noires sur le ciel on nous a dit un camp de prisonniers de guerre," Doubrovsky adds immediately "et de youpins." (Dispersion, 277) This addition is meant to break the silence that wraps the testimony of the executioners and bystanders, of those who did not want to see. And the reader will have to realize that what is written in the pages following this testimony details what the official discourse strove to suppress. First, Doubrovsky emphasizes that he thought that the former leaders of the Vichy regime would be condemned for their crimes. But he realizes that most of them have been taken back: "Dides fait carrière dans la IVè République. Rabatet reprend la plume. Vallat ses éditoriaux" (292). Then he attacks the discourse held by historians and in particular Robert Aron's book Histoire de Vichy[249] of which he cites a very representative passage: "*le personnel de Vichy que certains ont été tentés à priori d'inculper de trahison du seul fait de son appartenance au pseudo-gouvernment la plupart* S'ILS SE SONT TROMPES CE DONT L'AVENIR DECIDERA *l'ont fait en tout cas de bonne foi et dans la conviction sincère qu'ils servaient la patrie.*" This brings Doubrovsky to violently condemn those historians who have nothing to say against the manner the Vichy personnel treated the Jews: "Je voudrais leur foutre le nez dans la merde. Leur enfoncer les étrons de l'Histoire dans le gosier, aux Historiens. Qu'ils en crèvent. Jusqu'à ce qu'ils étouffent."(290) What La Dispersion is trying to show is that, on the one hand, Vichy's actions were not condemned in 1969, and on the other, that history books were the official vehicles of a whitewashed history which left people without guilt feeling. The real knowledge on the role played by Vichy in the deportations of Jews is recent: first, a documentary, "Le chagrin et la pitié" of Marcel Ophuls, in 1971, was shown to the French public but was censured for television until François Mitterand came to power and, second, a book which served as a detonator, Vichy France

[249] This book complete title is Histoire de Vichy: 1940-1944 (Paris, A Fayard, 1954).

and the Jews, from Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, which finally broke the silence that had surrounded until then the actions of Vichy.

La Dispersion, therefore, is a striking example of what autofiction can bring to the representation of the Holocaust. It supplies a version of the facts which is much closer to reality than history books of the time could provide. La Dispersion rebels against any narration rendering an ordered and smooth representation. In fact, at the end of the book, the narrator asks Wilhelm to take him to see "le camp." (Dispersion, 282)[250] Arriving there a little bit before closing, he has just the time to walk along one of the buildings, where, through the open windows, he sees photos and notices retracing the Hitlerian era and of its first manifestations in the concentration camps. These few documents were saved "pour réveiller la mémoire. De ceux qui en ont. Pour en inventer une. Aux autres." (Dispersion, 295). They were a reflection of the manicured lawns of the camp and of its alleys free of weed; it offered no roughness; they are "Déjà engloutis dans le gouffre du temps. Avalés dans le ventre sans fond de l'histoire." (Dispersion, 323-24) Although the narrator laments over his own participation in the annihilation of the horror: "Rien. Moins que rien. Du néant de néant. Ce qui en reste. Voilà. C'est tout. Des mots. Des phrases. Les miennes. Mots *vides.* Phrases *creuses*." (Dispersion, 294)

We can ask if La Dispersion belongs to the type of books which opens another way for the representation of the Holocaust, namely, the writing of fragments, such as: Isabella Leitner's Fragments of Isabella, Maurice Blanchot's L'écriture du désastre, and Benjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments*: a Childhood 1939-1948. This writing of the fragment suits the fragmented existence of the Jews and the different imperatives a Holocaust survivor has to submit to: He/she has to remember in order to testify; he/she has to survive; he/she should despair in a world that allowed Auschwitz; and finally, he/she should not lose faith in God, whether he/she is a religious or secular

[250] It was Dachau.

Jew. Yet these four fragments are contradictory. In fact, how can he/she turn to the past just as he/she chooses to turn towards life, which should include joy, laughter and the innocence of childhood? How can he/she hope and believe in humanity as if Auschwitz did not exist? This can only lead to a fragmented existence which he/she has to endure if he/she wants to survive.

This fragmented existence is, at the same time, present in the life of the narrator of La Dispersion, as well as in his writing, which refuses any linearity, any chronology, and any link from cause to effect, which are characteristics of the form of a traditional narration or historical discourse. This writing, which uses typography where blanks intermingle with italics or capital letters, constantly holds his reader's attention, forcing him to be implicated in what he reads, to end incomplete sentences and to unravel the threads of a narration, thus projecting to him the image of a chaos:

> ACHtung, ACHtung, les hauts-parleurs grésillent et crépitent. BEKANNTMACHUNG en rouge, en jaune, bordé de noir, seront fusillés, ceux qui ne la porteront pas seront immédiatement, en direction de... ; ta valise au bout de mon bras qu'elle arrache, de mes doigts qu'elle écrase, pouce rabattu sur la paume jusqu'à l'éclatement de l'os sous la peau et du larynx dans un cri, plongé dans la baignoire d'eau glacée, suffoquant, expirant, le Père est pris sous les planches, il se débat, perdant souffle, je fais surface, replongé aussitôt dans le gel liquide qui m'inonde les poumons, efface les pensées, sombrant au fond, trois, quatre, cinq, je compte, je cercles de braise striant la nuit dans le noir plus rien lueur qui palpite au rideau des paupières (328).

This is the chaos he felt himself in during the war and especially the terror when he thought of himself and his family being discovered.

La Dispersion, therefore, is another way of representing the Shoah. Based on fragmented memories and on documents which Doubrovsky chose to represent in a truncated manner, this work imposes a reading frame on the whole of the oeuvre and allows the focusing of the reader's vision. But La Dispersion, although seminal in Doubrovsky's oeuvre, is to be considered separately from his other books, since what characterized it will be abandoned in the following ones, to a more or less

pronounced degree. In fact, the fragmentation, the switching from one narrative form to another, will disappear. In spite of their differences, each book returns to moments which are the core of the oeuvre. The best example is the policeman who came to warn them, at his own risk, that he was supposed to be back, within an hour, to arrest them and allows them to run away and therefore saved their lives. This key moment is related in Fils (52) and serves as genesis for the long development on the narrator's escape with his family. Another example: the gratitude towards Aunt Paula's sister who hid them for almost ten months, from November 1943 to August 1944. Their escape is narrated, without punctuation, and is symptomatic of a writing meant to reflect their fleeing and their anguish. The same episode returns, with variations, in l'Après-vivre, Le Livre brisé and Laissé pour conte. In the last book, he also emphasizes the role of his French professor who had been briefly mentioned in La Dispersion:[251] *Doubrovsky, j'ai à vous parler après la classe*, les yeux gris-bleu, bleu céleste de Grosclaude, l'as de tous les profs de français, *mon cher ami, j'ai un avis à vous donner, très important,* rien à voir avec Cicéron ou Montesquieu, suspendu à ses lèvres, *ne revenez plus,* coup au coeur à défoncer la poitrine, coup de pied au cul, comme un chien chassé du lycée, *je sais qu'il va y avoir des rafles de source sûre, il faut que votre famille* et vous, à bon entendeur, on lui doit le salut. (Laissé pour conte*,* 406). If an episode remains identical it gets new details added in each version, thus giving it mythical proportions.

Even in his relationships with women, Doubrovsky is linked to his experience "of Jew living in Paris under the Occupation." In La Dispersion, Elizabeth points to the Hôtel Crillon asking: "qu'est-ce que c'est que là-bas?" (31). At this moment he realizes that this hotel, which had been the General Headquarters of the Germans, will never represent anything for her while he is almost collapsing, traumatized at the remembrance "perd pied tombe dans le puits sans parois, profondeurs

[251] "Le flic est venu sonner à la porte. A dix heures. Un matin. Déjà au lycée. Le prof de français m'a prévenu. Il a des tuyaux. Un Résistant, c'est probable. Il se prépare quelque chose" (La Dispersion, 298)

lisses, sans assaut où se rattraper."(Dispersion, 31). Follows the episode at the train station Munich, as specified in Laissé pour conte, (219) which brings back to his mind an imaginary deportation scene. He relives what had been buried inside of him for the last twenty-five years: "C'est vrai, avec toi, d'un seul coup, ça s'est rouvert. D'un seul coup, je suis tombé dans le trou béant, vingt-cinq ans de vide, jusqu'au fond de moi." (Dispersion, 159). This expression of void runs through the whole book.

Another claustrophobic panic seized him, symbolic of his situation as a Jew during the war when he could not find the exit from the ship *Bremen* where he had escorted his wife and two children:

> *Peur et peur.* La peur *normale.* Embarqués, sans billets, sans passeports. Emotion forte. Pour n'importe Qui. Et puis, dedans, dessous, la peur *symbolique*. La nôtre. La profonde. La viscérale. Dans Les entrailles de la bête. Boche. Pas de sortie. Pas d'issue. Faits comme des rats. Pris au piège. Quatre ans. Quinze cents jours. Des dizaines de milliers d'heures. Millions de minutes. Des centaines de millions de secondes. D'un coup revenu. Vieille douleur endormie. Soudain rallumée. Lancine. Plaie qu'on débride. Dans les chairs, restée. La marque demeurera toujours. Ineffaçable. Un stigmate. L'étoile jaune. Beau matin de juin. Lundi 12. Pour partir à l'école. 42. Jusqu'à la Gare du Vésin. Rasant les murs. Me demandant comment. Si. Ça me ronge. Peur intense. Faut y aller. Jusqu'à la gare du Vésin, d'abord. Ensuite, les rafles. Commencé, peu à peu. En douce. Puis ouvertment, 6000 apatrides de moins. La vermine juive. Après les Polonais, les Tchèques. Quand on aura épuisé les Roumains, les Russes. Notre tour, les Juifs français. Viendra. certain. Partir, *où*. S'en tirer, *comment*. Geule de loup. Pétain-Himmler. Indésirables aux camps de travail. Une gamelle, une paire de chaussures, des chaussettes. Le reste, Pas besoin. On laisse. A coup de pied, de crosse, les gendarmes. Autobus verts, entassés. Débordant sur les plates-formes. Direction Drancy. Direction. *Vers...* Noms qui circulent. *Où.* Buchenwald. Dachau. Plus loin encore. En Pologne. Les grandes rafles, au début. Du spectaculaire. Ensuite, les petites, les quotidiennes. Question de chance. Pile ou face. Chaque matin, le dernier jour. Je sors. On ne rentre plus. Soudain. Bas de culotte, aux chiottes. Papiers, pénis. On vérifie. Après, embarqués. *Bremen.* Sur le bateau boche. Haut-parleur qui hurle. *Dernier avis.* (Fils, 240).

In this passage, we can feel how Doubrovsky's traumatic experience of the war marked him deeply and how it keeps on haunting his writing. A simple incident and all comes back, with the same power and anguish.

In Un amour de soi, his relationship to Rachel is lived under the sign of suffocation as she threatens to leave him if he does not decide between his wife and herself. This brings back the memory when, during the war, he tried a gas mask and had the same feeling. As soon as the loved one becomes too invasive, he cannot breathe. He resents this as a loss of freedom as he was deprived of it during the war. When he realizes that their liaison is ending, "elle a été ma dévaine, ma défaite, l'entrée des boches à Paris; elle a réduit ma vie à une débâcle; elle a eu ma peau, ma Gestapo, j'aurai survécu trente ans pour rien, la vie cesse, soudain on m'arrête, dans le néant emporté." (Un amour de soi, 348) This dying relationship takes historical proportions. In Le Livre brisé, the love story is dominated by the metaphor of war and the Holocaust. Ilse is Austrian, her uncle a former S.S. man, and in his eulogy at her death he said: "elle souffrait dans son coeur, d'une souffrance très vive, très personnelle, du mal que son pays a fait aux juifs." (Livre brisé, 398) During one of their fights he, the victim, turns into the executioner, and their relationship turns into an oppressor/oppressed type. At her death when she is incinerated, through her he "rejoins mon destin au crématoire." (Livre brisé, 384). In La Dispersion, he was asking himself why he had escaped the gas chambers; like many survivors, who came back from the camps, he had survivor guilt. "Je vis. Vous ai trahis. Je vous ai laissés. Partir. En haillons. Dans la chaise. Hagards. Sans parents. Sans personne. Ayez pitié. Je n'ai pas suivi. Je n'ai pas connu. Je n'ai pas flambé. Suffoqué dans les parois en ciment des chambres." (294-5) It seems that the manner in which he lives his relationships is his way of reliving separations, deportations, gas chambers, known to six million Jews, to finally reach complete and final dissemination

The Jewish theme comes back from novel to novel, sometimes with insistence but never in a meta-discourse. His only direct mention of the subject was made during a conference in Germany in 1992 on the subject of "Autobiography and Avant-garde." "Par une curieuse coincidence, parmi les

invités à ce colloque, mon ami Sukenick, mon ami Federman et moi-même sommes juifs, mais eux ce sont des juifs, je veux dire par là: leur langage était distingué, ils avaient pris une certaine distance, ils ont parlé le langage qu'ils avaient à parler et qui était le leur, dans une langue qui était pour Federman, devenue la sienne, l'anglais. Moi, je ne suis pas un juif, je suis un *Yid*, c'est une difference, mon texte va dire cette différence-là."[252]

Also, in answer to a question from Alex Hughes, when he was asked about the importance that Judaism has had on his being a writer, he answered: "Il y a plusieurs mots en français qui ont été inventés ces dernières années pour caractériser quelque chose qui n'est pas de l'ordre du judaisme. En Israel, on parle des juifs religieux et des juifs laiques. Ce dernier mot a été adopté par le journalisme. Quant à moi, j'irai plus loin; je ne suis pas un juif laique, je suis un juif non-juif! Je ne me sens absolument aucun attachement idéologique, spirituel, intellectuel au judaisme. Mais en même temps, et c'est une contradiction, je suis quand même juif." [253]

Doubrovsky will demonstrate his Jewishness in the fragmented style of his books. His writing will show his rapport to it as a *coupure* (a cut) and a *blessure* (a wound). He carries it through the symbol of circumcision, which, together with the yellow star, becomes his identity as a Jew. In La Dispersion he expresses his humiliation:

> Sortir. Affronter la rue, la gare, le train, le lycée, les regards, et encore les regards sans trêve. Devenu d'un seul coup objet de honte, de haine ou, pire, de pitié. Comme une marchandise dans une vitrine, brusquement marqué, etiquetté. Petite ardoise carrée, avec le prix griffonné à la craie, fiché dans la volaille, à l'étal, au milieu du bréchet. *Là*. Un doigt ricaneur, fer rouge, sur la pochette de la veste, en haut de la poitrine, à gauche. En plein coeur *JUIF* Je n'ai plus de nom. Plus rien. Un mot. Quatre lettres à la Gothique. Vidé d'un seul coup, jusqu'à l'os. Quatre lettres qui se

[252]Hornung, Alfred et Ruhe, Ernstpeter (dir.) Tübingen, Verlag, Gunter Autobiographie et Avant-Garde, 1992: 1341. (By a strange coincidence, amidst the guests of this colloquia are my friends Sukenick and Federman and myself, who are Jews, but they are real Jews: their language is distinguished they have taken a certain distance, they spoke the language they had to speak, which is theirs, for Federman, English, which has become his own. I am not a Jew, I am a Yid, there is a difference and my texts will bring out this difference.)

[253] Electronic interview. < http:/artsweb.bham.ac.uk> (Alex Hughes, University of Birmingham, Department of French Studies, one of the creators of this site on Doubrovsky and autofiction).

> tordent et grimacent entre les murs de l'hexagone tracés à l'encre de Chine. (Dispersion, 128)[254]

Wearing the yellow star forever makes him different and bestows on him a Jewishness within a painful historical context which is essential—"Mon histoire n'est pas seulement familiale, elle est historique" (L'Apres-vivre, 30)—and refers to a specific period: "Je commence à la page 40. Débute là, finit là. La suite, du rab. De la frime." (Fils, 303)[255] The yellow star becomes, like his circumcision, a sign of visibility: The theme of the "wound, the cut" runs through La Dispersion:

> Papiers ? En règle. Pas si vite. Suivez-nous. Avec les autres. On verra bien. Toilettes. Messieurs. C'est tout vu. Un par un. Office fini, baisser le rideau. Bas le froc. Allez, ouste. L'oiseau au nid. Il se cachait. Sous le cache-sexe. Voyez-vous ça. Bas le culbutant, la farce est jouée. Mais non, mais non, il y a erreur, je ne suis pas, regardez ma carte, ta carte, mon gaillard, on la connaît, t'expliqueras au Commissariat, rigolade, raisons médicales, il y aurait cent mille cas de phimosis dans Paris. Promener là, au chaud, partout, avec soi, entre les jambes, LA MORT. (Dispersion, 252)[256]
>
> C'est LÀ, identité, voilà ma carte, non, pas la truquée, la vraie, celle qui est sous, taillée, à même, au couteau, au bistouri, gravée, sous les bandelettes dévidées...le sacré bout de peau qui manque, coupé, retranché, égorgé, au rasoir, à Drancy. J'étais de nulle part, un néant collectif d'extraits d'un manuel, un collage. Vous m'avez mis dessus ce titre: *JUIF*. J'ai mis dix ans, quinze ans pour oublier. Du travail soigné, consciencieux. (Dispersion, 257, 8).

Cut off from the others in a France, a country cut in half: On one side, a France with those who expressed their anti-Semitism and denounced the Jews, who wrote on the walls and on store windows: "MORT AUX JUIFS;" there were those Vichy decrees who chased Jews away from their professions and ordered them to register themselves formally before wearing the yellow star; there were those teachers who took advantage of the situation to manifest their anti-Semitism and sadism;

---

[254] Doubrovsky, Serge. La Dispersion. (to become suddently an object of shame, hatred, or worse, of pity. Like marked goods on display in shops' windows branded on my jacket's pocket, above my chest, on the left side .Deep in my heart *JEW*. I have no name. Nothing. One word. Four Gothic letters. Emptied all at once, to my bones)

[255] This reference to the year 1940 is mentioned in Le Livre brisé: "Moi, l'An Quarante, je ne m'en fiche pas. J'y suis fiché. Cloué, comme un papillon epinglé de part en part " (14) and in a personal letter dated 23 February 1997, he writes: "Doubrovsky" n'existe pas sans 'l'an quarante'."

[256] This passage is repeated in Laissé pour conte: 328 and 405.

a France "*pétainiste*" "MA-RÉ-CHAL-NOUS-VOI-LÀ," a France that had condemned Alfred Dreyfus and now persecuted the Jews, of all ages:

> Bambins ceuillis à la sortie des maternelles par les inspecteurs et ceux qui avaient été mis en nourrice et dans les hôpitaux tirés des lits en France par des Français tout seuls les boches n'auraient pas pu n'auraient pas su pas si bien pas infailliblement fenêtres s'ouvrent voisins regardent passants passent fourgon plein a craquer de mioches yeux dilatés gesticulent pleurent gendarmes en cordon bus démarre mères courent derrière courbées en deux en gésine de nouveau dans le ventre déchirées par le cri viscéral en rasoir fendant la chair sanglante derrière le bus emportés les gendarmes maman maman échos les hurlements dans la rue montent au ciel flamboyant d'été mères tombent se tordent se relèvent retombent s'arrachent les cheveux s'évanouissent et l'air soudain empli bercé de plaintes de sanglots les murs geignent derrière les fenêtres les voisins sur les trottoirs. (La Dispersion*,* 220)

And on the other side, the other France, where there were those who, like the policeman who came to warn them that he would come to arrest them within an hour *"Filez"* (he said: Run) and allowed them to run away, or those who welcomed them, at the risk of their own lives, hid them in their homes "*Faites comme chez vous,*" or the school kids who didn't "see" his yellow star and let him play with them. This brings the young boy back to his sense of existence: "Ce n'était pas la Pologne, ici, ou la Hongrie. Ils avaient raison de vilipender Danton et la Révolution et la République; c'est eux qui les tenaient en échec, de leur tombe. Peut-être cloche, les grands fonctionnaires des mairies, avec le grand bla-bla-bla: on a beau dire ça inocule. Ça immunise. Ce matin-là, j'ai aimé jusqu'aux polynômes sur le tableau. Avec fureur. De nouveau Français parmi des Français. Part entière, cent pour cent." (Dispersion*,* 215).

Serge Doubrovsky has an endless account to settle with France. French/Jew, Jew/French, double bind. His parents repeating endlessly: "N'oublie pas d'où tu viens," ("don't forget where you come from") and at the same time: "Tu n'es pas différent des autres." ("You are not different from the others"). How could he forget where he came from (his mother, Renée Weitzmann, was born Caroline Wormser, from Alsace, and his father came from a *shtetl* in Ukraine), since his parents were buried in the Jewish cemetery of Bagneux where there are empty graves: "Sous les dalles,

aucun défunt. De la fumée. Pas un fragment d'os, pas une poussière. Dissipés net. Ici tout le monde a disparu à la même date: 42 ou 43. Au même endroit: Auschwitz ou Birkenau. Notre caveau de famille est un des rares tombeaux habités de l'allée." (Livre brisé, 398)[257] How could he forget that he was not on the victims' list, that he was not found in the "maquis," that he is guilty to have survived. How could he forget that his surname, which is his identity, is constantly "mispelled:"

> N'y coupe pas. On me les coupe. Sans arrêt, sans trêve. Quoi. Mes letters à moi. Je n'ai pas un nom français. D'accord. Pas une raison pour m'esquinter, me mutiler. Il n'y a qu'à lire. Pas difficile. Demande pas trop. DOUBROVSKY. Que dix letters. Prière respecter. Mon nom m'a assez coûté. M'en a fait baver. J'y tiens. A failli me faire passer à la casserole. On me met à toutes les sauces. Doubrowski, Doubrowsky, Doubrouvski. N'importe quoi, n'importe ky. Comptes rendus, sur les programmes. Services rendus à l'Education Nationale. Sur mes Palmes Académiques. Sur mes diplômes. Nom à coucher dehors, on me charcute. On ampute. (Fils, 68)

And, yet, he is desperately French.

Doubrovsky went through psychoanalysis and he transformed it into an inspiration, in theme and in subject. His experience of persecution during the war, and a painful Jewishness constitute the matrix of his organized "*errancy.*" There is a constant movement between the power of the writer who succeeded in auto-analyzing himself (getting rid of his psychoanalyst and replacing him) and his life, whose only salvation is in writing. For Serge Doubrovsky, writing is vital: "Vite en route, je dois me remettre à mon roman. Mon roman, c'est ma vie. Ça marche dans les deux sens: ma vie est le support de mon roman, mon roman est le soutien de ma vie. Comment est-ce que j'arriverais à vivre, si je ne racontais pas ma vie. Rien qu'à cette pensée, je sue d'angoisse. Mon existence, elle me pèse souvent une tonne sur la poitrine, elle m'écrase, j'étouffe dedans, elle me gêne. En l'écrivant je l'oxygène. En fait le récit l'aère. Chaque matin séance de réanimation."[258] This suffocating subject

---

[257] Doubrovsky, Serge. Le Livre brisé (Paris: Grasset, c1989) 398.
(Under the tombstone, nothing. Smoke. No bones, no dust. Completely dissipated. Here everybody disappeared around the same time: 42 or 43. Same place: Auschwitz or Birkenau. Our family vault is the only one, in this alley, which is inhabited.)

[258] Doubrovsky, Serge, Le Livre brisé (Paris: Grasset, 1989) 253.

is centered on "absence," an absence in search of substance: "Mais une vie romancée, même la sienne, devient une vie imaginaire. Ça ne veut pas dire qu'elle soit fausse: elle n'existe que dans l'imagination. Si je me transforme en Julien Sorel, j'existe comme lui. Je veux exister comme moi. Ressaisir enfin ma vraie vie. Au lieu de m'halluciner en personnage, ressusciter ma vraie personne. Ce qui en subsiste. Fragments, débris, peu importe: au moins ce sont de vrais restes. (Livre brisé, 254)[259]

Doubrovsky reconstructs himself throughout his books and as J.B.Pontalis argued, in Autobiographie (1988): "Il y a quelque chose de posthume dans les dispositifs autobiographiques; .l'autobiographie apparaît souvent comme une nécrologie anticipée, comme le geste ultime d'appropriation de soi et par là peut-être comme un moyen de discréditer ce que les survivants penseront et diront de vous, de continuer le risque qu'ils n'en pensent rien."[260]

Indeed Doubrovsky invents himself over and over through imagining obituaries or biographies. In Le Livre brisé:

> 23 Mai 1928—Naissance à Paris dans une clinique du IXº arrondissement, de Julien (en souvenir du cousin tué aux Dardanelles) Serge (pour quand il serait violoniste ou écrivain) Doubrovsky, fils d'Israël Doubrovsky, tailleur d'habits, et de Marie Renée Wietzmann, sans profession (on appelait alors "sans profession" une femme qui avait exercé les fonctions de secrétaire et d'assistance de direction dans plusieurs cabinets d'affaires, dont un d'avocat international, et qui avait inventé une nouvelle méthode de sténo anglaise). Ses parents habitent au 40, Avenue Junot.
> 1937-39—Les événements extérieurs, accords de Munich, invasion de la Tchécoslovaquie, pacte germano-soviétique, défaite des républicains espagnols, prennent le pas sur les incidents de la vie mondiale. L'Histoire avec un grand H, domine et efface les petites histoires.

---

[258] (Quick, on my way, I have to go back to my novel. My novel is my life. It works both ways: my life is the support of my novel and my novel is the support of my life. How could I live without telling about my life. The thought of it fills me with anguish. My life often weighs a ton on my chest, smothering and choking me; I can't breathe**.** In writing I put some fresh air in it. In fact, it ventilates it. Every morning, a reanimation session)

[259] "A romanced life, even mine, becomes an imaginary life. It does not mean that it is false: it exists only in imagination. If I transform myself, as Julien Sorel, I exist as him. I want to exist as myself. Recapture at last my real life. Instead of hallucinating myself in a character, resuscitate my real person. What is left of it. Fragments, pieces, who cares: at least these leftovers are real."

[260] Pontalis, J.B., "Derniers, premiers mots" in L'Autobiographie, (Paris, les Belles Lettres, 1981) 51.

> 1940-1944– Période insituable, intemporelle, détachée du reste, qui forme comme un 'no man's land,' un tout éternité, au coeur d'une vie. Occupation. Juif. L'étoile jaune. Cachés, sauvés, sa famille et lui, par l'extraordinaire dévouement d'une famille française. (Livre brisé, 259-260).[261]

In Fils (1977), he writes his own obituary: "Nous apprenons la mort, des suites d'un cancer, de Serge Doubrovsky, critique et écrivain, décédé hier à l'Hôpital Américain de Paris. Bien oublié aujourd'hui, le destin de cet auteur apatride et apolitique, bref typiquement cosmopolite, nous rappelle certains éléments des années 70. SERGE DOUBROVSKY (1928-1996). Nous apprenons la mort, des suites d'un...C'est vrai. Logique. Si je claque à Paris. Sera à l'Hôpital Américain." (Fils, 306)[262] In the same book he writes the same obituary in English: "Prof. Doubovsky died at 83. He is survived by two daughters and four grandchildren. Two of them live in America, one in France and one in Israel." (Fils, 303)

Who is this "I," this "me," this I/me of the text? In Fils as well as in La Place de la Madeleine; écriture et fantasme chez Proust, Doubrovsky theorizes about Proust, about himself, and it all comes down to the same themes: the role of memory and the place of the subject in the writing, and particularly in the writing about oneself. The psychoanalysis he underwent is central in his work. Doubrovsky mentions a meeting his psychoanalyst requested of him and his other patients, twenty years after treatment, to see how they all turned out. In that meeting the psychoanalyst said: "You won't change if you don't want to change." Doubrovsky's reaction was: "Ma vie, je n'ai pas voulu la changer, je l'ai échangée contre l'écriture; bien sûr, on peut créer des fantômes imaginaires, en

---

[261] Robin, Régine, " Serge Doubrovsky; je suis un être fictif" in Le Golem de l'écriture (125).
(May 23rd 1928. Birth in Paris (with all details), name of father and mother, their respective professions, and why he was given the name of Serge/Julien Doubrovsky.
1937-39 – What is happening in the world, namely: The Munich agreement, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the German-Russian pact, the defeat of the Spanish Republicans; all these are more important than everyday life. History, with its capital H (hâche = axe) dominates and erases small personal histories.
1940-44 – Unstable period, separation from everything, like a no man's land, in the heart of one's life. Occupation. Jew. Yellow star. Hidden, saved, him and his family, through the extraordinary loyalty of a French family. (Livre brisé,.250-60)

[262] Doubrovsky, Serge, Fils (Paris: Ed. Galilée c1977).

peupler des romans; moi, ma vie *est* mon roman, je suis mon propre personnage; l'analyse m'a permis d'écrire; j'ai appris à jouer, à qui perd gagne, déjà ça, je lui refile ma névrose, ne l'a pas guérie, il en a fait un filon; pas un instant de mon mal-être delivré."[263] His psychoanalysis allowed him to become an accomplished writer. He dramatized it in his writing; it became the subject of a meta-discourse and it was also theorized in a number of articles and books. Jean-François Chiantaretto in: De l'acte autobiographique: la psychanalyse et l'écriture autobiographique shows how in Fils, Doubrovsky moves from autofiction to auto-interpretation, to auto-theorization.[264]

> *Fils* montre-t-il le mouvement auto-interprétatif du narrateur-analysant, qui buterait dans sa cure sur le sentiment d'être fictif, c'est-à-dire sur la fixation à un registre de toute-puissance le privant d'un véritable accès à l'altérité? Auquel cas, dans la séquence du cours sur Racine, le narrateur-analysant ruserait par une latéralisation du transfert sur Racine. Ou bien *Fils* est-il à lire comme une exhibition-démonstration de la maîtrise toute-puissante de l'auteur, qui ferait oeuvre d'un transfert dans et sur l'écriture ? Il y aurait alors un bouclage qui définirait l'autofiction comme la mise *en fiction d'un auto-témoignage sur le sentiment d'être fictif par l'auteur.*[265]

Truly, as Renée Kingcaid demonstrates in her essay: "Serge Analysand," "Doubrovsky's analysis of this scene is much more than a fictionalized class lecture on Racine: ultimately, its exegesis is strategically assembled to weave together the threads left dangling at the end of the earlier psychoanalytic session that forms the core of the book"[266] With Akeret (his psychoanalyst), Doubrovsky attempts to transfer at least part of the burden of his self-analysis to a fellow literary character whose job it will be to explore his (Doubrovsky's) unconscious, alongside, but not entirely with him. For the professor-of-critical-theory turned novelist-of-the-self, the use of psychoanalytic

---

[263] Doubrovsky, Serge, "Echanges," InfoMatin, (28 juillet 1994): 21.
(I never wanted to change my life; I exchanged it for my writing; of course one can create imaginary phantoms and place them in fictionary novels; but for me, my life is my fiction, I am my own character; my analysis allowed me to write…I learnt to play, whoever loses wins, at least that; I give him back my neurosis; never healed it; made of it a gold mine… not one moment of my discomfort alleviated).

[264] Chaiantaretto, Jean-François: De l'acte autobiographique: la psychanalyse et l'écriture autobiograhique, (Seysel, Champ Vallon, 1995) cited by Denise Robin in: " Serge Doubrovsky; je suis un être fictif." in Le Golem de l'écriture, 131.

[265] As cited by Denise Robin "Serge Doubrovsky; je suis un être fictif" in Le Golem de l'écriture, 131

[266] Kingcaid, Renée, "Serge Analysand" in Genre.xxvi (Spring 1993): 1.58.

discourse is a screen behind which he hides the real interpretative work of the novels. There is little Akeret can tell him about himself that the novelist-character Doubrovsky does not already know at some deep level and has not, as the novelist of his own life, both consciously and unconsciously, already *set out to tell*. Before he becomes an analysand, Serge is already an auto-novelist, hence, already an auto-analyst, who can rightly say of his literary counterpart, the professional psychoanalyst: "c'est un fait, indubitable. LUI ou MOI. Un des deux qui est dingue." (Amour de Soi, 361*)* In Doubrovsky's own analysis of his work, however, Fils represents a highpoint of psychoanalytic discourse in autofiction. In "Autobiographie/vérité/psychanalyse" Doubrovsky explains the formal narrative role he intended the analytic session to fill:

> *Strates, Streets, Rêves, Chair, Chaire, Monstre*, se distribuent, en effet, selon une structure tripartite; l'avant de la vérité, (le vécu pré-analytique); le champ de bataille du vrai (la séance d'analyse); l'après-vérité (le vécu post-analytique). Du coup, la banalité de la formule: " une journée dans la vie de J.S.D.," professeur de littérature Française à l'Université de New York, de son réveil *jusques et y compris* son cours en fin d'après-midi, prend une valeur symbolique (mise en récit des effets de l'analyse), voire une dimension mythique (séquence vie-mort-résurrection).(67-68)

It is also in this essay that Doubrovsky underlines the necessity of transference in the psychoanalytic interchanges. The "battle of truth" between analyst and analysand has scant chance of being resolved, however if, as in Un amour de soi, he suggests that both participants are equally crazy. Nonetheless, still in reference to Fils, Doubrovsky is willing to accept the analyst as some sort of existentialist guru, who enables the analysand to discover and experience his own identity: "L'experience de la psychanalyse, possible seulement depuis Freud, est bien le premier effort ou effet de rupture par rapport au dilemme classique d'une auto-connaissance coupée d'elle-même en sa dimension de l'autre, puisque c'est de l'écoute de l'autre que la vérité revient (advient) dans le discours où le sujet tâche à se saisir " [267]

[267] Doubrovsky, Serge, Autobiographie/vérité/psychanalyse: 65.

In Fils, Doubrovsky weaves (*fils*-threads) between dreams and reality and their impossible superposition. The theme is always between the two and attempts to show the impossibility of one finding his place in relationships or elsewhere:

> Ma place N'EST JAMAIS LA MIENNE, J'existe. LÀ OÙ JE NE SUIS PAS. Là où je suis. J'EXISTE PAS! Quoi qu'on fasse, il faut toujours REGRETTER. L'INVERSE. Si on est un. On se mutile. Être multiple, on se disperse. Faudrait pouvoir désirer tout. A la fois, ensemble. Pour se sentir exister. Y a d'existence. Que TOTALE. Une existence complète. N'existe pas. Le présent, du fragmentaire. Les instants sont successifs. On est par parcelles. Pour être ENTIER. Faut vouloir être. CE QUI NOUS MANQUE. Normal. C'est logique. EN MÊME TEMPS QUE CE QU'ON EST. Vie réelle. Moitié de vie.Veux L'AUTRE MOITIÉ. Elle est. DANS L'IMAGINAIRE. J'ai donc pas de place réelle. J'EXISTE PAS, JE CO-EXISTE. C'est pas. Réel. Là où je suis. Sans importance. Le réel. C'est JAMAIS RÉEL *(*Fils, 256-257) [268]

This feeling of being out of place is doubled by the one of wanting to occupy all places. This is particularly true regarding the psychoanalytic relation, since it means being at the same time the patient and his own analyst, thus rejecting what is essential in a psychoanalytic relation, namely the transference. The fact that Doubtrovsky presents himself as a fictional character, living between two places, Paris and New-York, and using his life as the material of his books allows the analysis to be at the center of a process of auto-interpretation and auto-theorization.

Fils, fulfilling all the ambiguity of its title, simultaneously recounts the engendering of a son (*fils*) who perceives himself as monstrous and designates his Jewish connection as the alienating linguistic web in which his self-portrait is both constituted and examined. John Ireland in his essay, "Monstrous Writing" (1993), writes: "In his autofiction, the transformation, into art, of the troubled and often desperate moments of the character Serge Doubrovsky—as well as those of other "real"

---

[268](My place is NEVER MY OWN, I exist. WHEREVER I AM NOT. Where I am. I DO NOT EXIST. Whatever one does, one always REGRETS. THE OPPOSITE. If you are one. One mutilates and spreads oneself. Should be able to desire everything. Together, at the same time. To feel that you exist. There is no existence. But WHOLE. A complete existence. Don't exist. The present of the fragmented. Moments are succeeding. We are parcelized. To be WHOLE. Must want to be.THAT'S WHAT'S MISSING. Normal. Logical. AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE ARE. Real life. Half life. Want MY OTHER HALF. It is. IN THE IMAGINARY. I have therefore no real place. I DO NOT EXIST. I CO-EXIST. It's not. Real. Where I am. Unimportant. The real. It's NEVER REAL).

characters whose lives are inextricably linked with his—is a source of aesthetic pleasure to the writer."[269] "Such are the 'threads' (*fils*) out of which the narrative is woven, constantly needing to be twisted anew—the very process by which they were initially constituted. The truth is there between the two (dream and reality), never formulated, and probably beyond any possibility of formulation, it is always in between—a circuit of meaning that is forever ambiguous, where no final judgment is possible, where the flow of everything is caught-up in a contrary current."[270] Fils is an attempt to grasp an elusive life in order to transform it into a meaningful story: "Contrôle, reprise de ce qui est passé par la bouche, l'écriture est bien cette élaboration à l'autre bout. Au-delà des enjeux psychiques, des liquidations de transferts et contre-transferts, l'écriture est la revanche sur la parole, par absorption. La "vérité", ici, ne saurait être de l'ordre de la copie conforme, et pour cause. Le sens d'une vie n'existe nulle part, n'existe pas. Il n'est pas à inventer, non de toutes pièces, mais de toutes traces: il est à construire." {Autobiographie/Vérité (96)} By resorting to imagination, through the interplay of signifiers in his writing, Doubrovsky wants to reveal the truth unveiling repression and ignorance.

According to Jacques Derrida, the trace, a sort of clearing the way, opens a space for knowledge for the writer. It is with this purpose in mind that Doubrovsky's first autofiction Fils was conceived. He narrates one day of his life—centered around his visit to his psychoanalyst. Taking the place of his doctor, Doubrovsky resumes the analysis and instead of simply describing his visit, in a diary, for example, which is what Marie Cardinal did in Les mots pour le dire, he turns the psychoanalysis into a textual analysis: "*Julien*, peu à peu. Prénom desert. Plus personne qui m'appelle ainsi. Devenu Serge. Mon costume bleu, Costume à filles. Etait en *serge.* Homme-Femme. Pas mon rayon, pas mon désir." (Fils*,* 276). Doubrovsky claims that Marie Cardinal does

[269] Ireland, John. "Monstrous Writing" in Genre xxvi. " UP of Oklahoma (1993): 3
[270] Doubrovsky, Serge: "Autobiography/truth/psychoanalysis." Trans. Logan Whalen and John Ireland. Genre xxvi.. UP of Oklahoma (1994): 39,42.

not pay enough attention to the interplay between analyst and analysand as the method through which the new (healthy) personality is created. For Cardinal, writes Doubrovsky, the wisdom of the analyst remains "Inexpugnable, puisque située hors texte: "il" (l'analyste) demeure, non point certes en marge, mais sur le seuil du livre, communiquant, aux points stratégiques de la narration, de son retrait avare et fécond, juste ce qu'il faut de savoir pour que l'autobiographie devienne enfin une auto-connaissance non leurrée, c'est-à-dire à hétéroconnaissance incorporée. Dans le système ainsi fermé, Autobiographie/Vérité/Psychanalyse, la psychanalyse est l'instance régulatrice, maîtrisée des deux autres, et qui en assure du dehors le bon fonctionnement." (73)[271] This is why Doubrovsky distinguishes the *results* of the psychoanalytic session in Les Mots pour le dire—i.e. the essence of Marie Cardinal's enterprise as the story of her return to life and health—from his own incorporation of a real-life analytic session into the autofiction itself as another event in the possible life, sort of real, sort of invented, that his writing continually creates: "C'est ce fonctionnement (de la psychanalyse) que Fils pervertit, en annexant l'expérience analytique au texte même, c'est-à-dire en transformant le processus de dévoilement du vrai en fiction. Par fiction, il faut entendre, à ras de sens, une 'histoire' qui, quelle que soit l'accummulation de références et leur exactitude, n'a jamais 'eu lieu' dans la réalité, dont le seul lieu réel est le discours où elle se déploie."(73)[272] Marie Cardinal entertains virtually no linguistic exchange with the little doctor, who simply warns her at the beginning that if the analysis did not cost her money, she would not take it seriously. Although I believe that Cardinal's account is riveting, the "proper functioning" of psychoanalysis in her book is

[271] (Unassailable, since it is situated outside the text; "he" (the analyst) remains admittedly, not in the margin of the book but on its threshold, communicating at strategic points in the narrative from his discreet but productive retreat, just enough to ensure that the autobiography becomes a kind of undeluded self-knowledge, that is to say, incorporated knowledge. Within the system thus created—Autobiography/Truth/Psychoanalysis—it is psychoanalysis which becomes the regulatory agency, mistress of the two others, ensuring from without their proper functioning.)

[272] {It is that function (psychoanalysis) that Fils perverts, by annexing the analytical experience to the text itself, that is to say, by transforming into fiction the process by which the truth is revealed. By fiction must be understood, very simply, a "story" which, whatever the accumulation of referenced details and whatever their accuracy, has never "taken place" in "reality," whose only real situation is the discourse in which it operates.}

thus surprising for its almost total lack of reference to transference.[273] In Doubrovsky's case, he has told Akeret nothing at all; rather, under the guise of telling himself, Serge has told the reader his true chain of associations and given the analyst a barely adequate summary of what they were. With psychoanalysis, Doubrovsky is battling his tennis balls against a cleverly erected wall of his own making.

Doubrovsky had another title in mind for this book: Le Monstre (The Monster). Ultimately the title was not so much abandoned as strategically displaced to introduce, as a subtitle, the final section of the book in which the principal character, Professor Serge Doubrovsky, explicates for his N.Y.U. graduate class the famous monologue from Racine's play Phèdre, recounting Hippolythe's killing of the sea monster and subsequent death. Racine's monster from the sea is both the object of a dazzling pedagogical demonstration and the final crucial piece to be woven reflexively into the monstrous tapestry of Doubrovsky's psyche. "Seventeen years and four novels later, that all mark further explorations of the ground broken by Fils, that first phantom title still haunts the whole of Doubrovsky's autofiction."[274] Beyond the uncompromising portrait of himself, constituted in large part by Doubrovsky's experience of psychoanalysis, the monster is a crucial and multi-faceted figure of writing, a tactical construct that allows the novelist to switch constantly and often imperceptibly from thematic to formal concerns: "What is monstrous about me," proclaims the narrator of Fils, "(is) MY STRUCTURE," a statement which opens up limitless textual possibilities. "Monstre" if we consult Larousse, is first and foremost a phenomenon "contrary to nature." Constantly working to erode "natural" divisions, autofiction will be the monstrous production of a monstrous individual ("monstre," continues Larousse: a "cruel and perverse individual" whose "vice or defect will surpass

[273] For Marie Cardinal psychoanalysis was to have a powerful impact on her life; she recovered her health and her life.

[274] Le Livre brisé, for example, was specifically marketed by Doubrovsky's publisher, Grasset, as a "livre monstre." (cited by John Ireland: 3).

anything one can imagine.") Exploiting every facet of his remembered and fantasized biography which features, notably, in addition to his Holocaust experience, a very heightened awareness of the bisexual components of his literary persona, Doubrovsky's great lucidity transforms the figure of the monster into a rhetorical machine which works systematically and comprehensively to undermine both genus as *gender* ("category founded on a natural distinction of the sexes") and as *genre*. It is almost as if Doubrovsky had conceived autofiction to contravene, point by point, the law of genre itself formulated authoritatively by Jacques Derrida: "As soon as the genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly or monstrosity"(203, 4). According to Régine Robin, Doubrovsky "se voit en 'monstre' difforme, dix formes. Il n'a pas assez de mots obscènes, injurieux, péjoratifs pour évoquer sa part féminine." "Moi mon gars, j'aime pas les femmelettes" (Fils*,* 275), his father used to repeat to him. He sees himself as " tantouze," "gonzesse."[275] Doubrovsky, then, will spend his life proving his masculinity through his relationships and his phallocentric oeuvre: "Mon enseigne. Jaune. Juif. La mort sur la poitrine. Entre les Jambes. Je l'ai portée. Mon bel organe. Vielle histoire. Boches, bacilles. Mes cicatrices. A l'autre. A l'âme. Laissé des traces. M'ont marqué. Ma youpine. M'a rendu. Exhibitioniste. Fallait la cacher. Ja la brandis." (Fils*,* 280*)*

Doubrovsky went through two nervous breakdowns: the first when his mother died and the second at the death of his wife while he was writing Le Livre brisé (1989). He describes the mechanism of depression in his book L'Après-vivre (1994)*,* shortly after the publication of Le Livre brisé*,* which was acclaimed by the critics and became a best-seller: "Et c'est là que ÇA arrive. A dix heures et demie, pas dix heures, vingt-huit ou trente-trois, la demie, pile. Je suis soudain saisi par une étreinte, ça m'aggrippe, le thorax, remonte, m'étrangle la gorge. Sur mon fauteuil, haletant, je suis

[275] Robin, Régine, Le Golem de l'Ecriture : 127.

pétrifié." [276] Doubrovsky's book Le Livre brisé recounts events in the author's life and portrays him writing a book about those events. The book that was meant to end in a hymn, to recover lost memory and self, is *brisé* (broken): "quarante ans de rescapé soudain se volatilisent, j'ai rejoint mon destin au crématoire."[277]

In Fils*,* at the center of his analysis, is his mother and her disappearance; a mother to whom he was very close and whom he cannot symbolically put to death in order to become himself. He is separated from her, physically, but not psychically. In Fils, he writes about his mother: "*Sans parler,* stoíque, alourdie d'âge, frappée de rides, sillons chauds, disque des mots, j'enfonce les lèvres, plis de peau tiède; Maman m'apprend à parler, à DIRE, vers, prose, classique, matinées poétiques du Français, samedi ensemble, quand c'était encore permis, avant les lois, avant l'étoile jaune, avant, pendant la guerre, dès l'aube, à nos risques, périls oubliés, notre périple, je reprends pied, je touche terre."(Fils*,* 224)

The son learns of her real death by phone and the details of her last moments in a letter from his sister. He will not take the airplane**;** will not see his mother dead, a fact which will fill him with eternal guilt. Everything in the book centers around the word *place*: "Je nais, j'arrive. Ma mission. Chargé d'EXISTER A SA PLACE. Tout ce qu'elle n'a PAS PU. (his mother). JE POURRAI. Forcément. Se joue à deux. Je suis personne. Tu seras quelqu'un. A ma place. Notre Pacte. On sera UN-EN-DEUX. Deux corps, un coeur. Le même être. Un seul destin double. Notre Histoire s'écrit en double exemplaire. L'original. Le papier carbone. Original, c'est elle. Par définition. L'original, c'est l'origine. Peux pas être moi. Si je passe pas par elle." (Fils*,* 271) She wanted to be an artist; she could sing and had stage presence and real talent. She did not or could not do anything with it.

---

[276] Doubrovsky, Serge, L'Après-vivre. (Paris. B. Grasset, 1994) 271
(and it's there that IT starts. At ten thirty, not ten twenty-eight or thirty-three, thirty sharp. I am suddenly gripped at the chest and seized at the throat; it invades and strangles me. On my armchair, I am petrified, breathless.

[277](forty years of being a survivor suddenly vanish. I've rejoined my destiny in the crematorium.)

She remained behind her husband, her family, her son. "*L'Oedi-fils*" (Fils 258). So one has to exist in her place and it is difficult because he was so close to her, as if they were one and the same person. One can understand why he wants to have his *place*, when in reality, he means all the places, "his," "hers" (his mother's) but also that of the analyst and the analysand.

In an article on Doubrovsky's teaching at N.Y.U, Thomas Spear (an ex-student of his) remarks:

> Perhaps Doubrovsky's Aristotelian fatal flaw is derived from the memories and nightmares (cf.Fils) he carries as a European Jew who survived the Second World War. More importantly, for Doubrovsky, tragedy stems from a will for it, a will for powerlessness, unhappiness and autodestruction. (Fils, 458). One might wonder if his written texts are thus intended to help or hurt their author. Doubrovsky likes to be witty, and cutting. Does he ultimately condemn himself? Or, having been condemned as a Jew under the Occupation, perhaps his writing simply serves to reiterate a lingering, essentialist domination."[278]

According to Spear, there is the smell of enclosed spaces in Doubrovsky's works. Little Julien/ Serge was locked away in hiding during the Occupation in France; he wants to ensnare his readers with him: "Literature has to fill in the holes (*"bouche(r) les interstices"*) bind together got to be with the reader as among Jews during the war in the same sack accomplices together caught in the same raid in the same net."(Après-vivre, 41) Doubrovsky feeds us his childhood complexes and claustrophobic hell; the smell of (Jewish) guilt reigns over the bad boy's infidelities to *Maman*, to Wife, to Lover, to Children. This is hardly the smell of the *cabinet* of little Marcel (Proust). In his "love session" with his shrink, Doubrovsky takes a submissive role and becomes the "gonzesse" (Fils, 296-299) until, in an appropriately bourgeois manner, all returns to its "proper" position at the end of the session. The shrink with the analysand, the professor with his student, the autofictioner with his reader: Doubrovsky would like to lock us up as accomplices to his endeavors.

---

[278] Spear, Thomas, "Doo-doo in the classroom ; Doubrovsky's Professional Performances." Genre xxvi, (Spring 1993): 109-125.

I think that Doubrovsky mainly tries to deconstruct his memory and to shed light on the problems of his childhood. His style also reflects another kind of unspoken, namely obscenities. Also, his predilection for vulgarities, is sometimes expressed by a contrast between form and content as shown in this passage recounting the death of the character's father: "Fini. Terminé. Terminus. Le Père-Lachaise. Le Père descend. Mou bouffé aux mittes. Par plaques, en écharpe, sur le ventre, zona purulent, putride. Le Père pourrit. (Fils, 49) Devoid of any embellishments, it is also characterized by a clear attraction to triviality and erotic descriptions. Moreover, the author apparently takes great pleasure in describing his sexual life in its crudest aspects, and has ostensibly no scruple about exhibiting his turpitudes: vile lies, cowardly promises, cheating and base thoughts. The flexibility of autofiction, as it is understood by Doubrovsky, is that it can allow excesses in the eyes of the author and the reader. Le Livre brisé drives the author to write a type of unspoken other than the language of the unconscious and the obscenities to which Doubrovsky's reader had become accustomed in his earlier novels. In Le Livre brisé he writes: "Si on joue le jeu de la vérité, vraîment, ça devient un jeu de massacre. J'hésite, j'avoue. J'ai beau être, dans mes livres, un professionnel de l'impudeur, j'ai mes limites. Entre le dicible et l'indicible, où s'arrêter. Plus de frontière.**"**(281). The unspoken in Le Livre brisé moves from the perverse pleasure taken by the sado-masochistic couple (Doubrovsky and his wife were partners in writing the book on their life) to his wife's death (suicide or accident), to his being blamed for it, a fact which did not prevent his book, when finally published, from achieving tremendous success.

Autofiction indeed represents the opportunity for Serge Doubrovsky to disclose the unspoken concerning himself, the dose of fiction in this genre enabling him to ramble on about himself. Aside from the audacity of mixing fiction and reality, one can interpret this complex manipulation as a refusal to take on the moral and legal liability implied in the strictly autobiographical pact. The author

waits for the death of his mother to write Fils, yet in the case of Le Livre brisé, his wife is called by her real name and there is little doubt that the book had direct consequences on the life of the main character. The symbolic murder of the women who preceded her, "si j'écris c'est pour tuer une femme par livre" (Le Livre brisé, 50), becomes almost an authentic murder in her case. Also, in this book the reader has not been spared the details of his wife's drinking binges and alcoholism and this helps to establish his wife's neurotic personality, which in turn diminishes the writer's responsibility. In addition, by sharing with the readers the nature of his autobiographical project and the progress of his writing from the very beginning of Le Livre brisé, Doubrovsky invites them in the writing of the text, seemingly written at the same time that it is read, therefore giving the readers the impression that they also contribute to the work of recollection by the author.

As he allows the reader to devour his book, the narrator attempts to have his book devour his reader. Stressing the fictitious component of autobiography, usually hidden in life stories, and problematizing it "au grand jour" by declaring that the text is not an autobiography but an autofiction, radically changes the situation of reception. The reader is imprisoned in a schizophrenic situation. The uneasiness felt by the reader is linked to the fact that it is a false fiction where all events are verifiable, strictly true and adapted. The truth about the character of the novel, Serge Doubrovsky, appears to be the truth of the fiction, remaining unread but real as far as the character is concerned. In Doubrovsky's autofictions, the reader is often invited on a journey through the twists and turns of the unconscious of the character, whose most unpleasant and inexpressible secrets are exhibited. In La vie l'instant, for example: "Je me raconte, je me débile. Pas au hasard: par tranches choisies. Je laisse de côté les bas morceaux. Je m'étale, opération à coeur ouvert, je m'éventre, j'offre mes tripes au public."(15). Although the narrator is convinced that his self is weak and insignificant, he cannot prevent himself from being egocentric and is driven to explore this self by a strange kind of neurosis. Doubrovsky

feels somewhat disgusted by his obsession but also finds some (masochistic) satisfaction in self-punishment**.**

Conclusion

For Doubrovsky, like Pérec, there are in fact no childhood memories, only fragments. In *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance writing is a substitution for loss and a form of commemoration. It is a trace, the sign of something that once was but has disappeared. On the book's first page, a single very brief line: "Pour E," which also means *pour eux*, for them, the unnamed, or *e,* the letter that disappeared from a book that has not disappeared, La disparition. In life, as in writing, the void is not filled; but its place is marked, it is not nothing, as the central ellipsis (…) before part 2, suggests, an unsayable—absence or disappearance; it is an assertion of a writer's life, yes, but also a reminder of death, of an irreparable. For Doubrovsky, on the other hand, writing is, first, his answer to those who, by their laws, wanted him dead. The double creation of a language and a "genre" allowed him to remediate the waste and dispersion that haunt him and against which each of his books fights. There is a strong desire, in this writer, to leave traces "laisser des traces" (*Fils*, 304) and to have future readers who would question his 'MOI EN MOTS"(305) and who, by their interpretation will try to fix, if only for a short while, this "Je" which is the object of an interminable quest.

Chapter 5

Louis Begley

Child survivor Louis Begley (born Ludwik Begleiter in Poland, 1933) survived the war under an assumed identity and, after the war, moved with his parents to the United States, where he practised law. Louis Begley's Wartime Lies (1991) is a persuasive memoir dressed up as a fiction.

The enigmas of the author's life—the source of his drive; the sudden, late emergence of his fictional voice—are surrounded by the darker enigmas of his childhood. He spent the Second World War trapped in Poland, with the Holocaust raging around him. He was saved by his mother, who kept him close to her through four years at the edge of the abyss. In June of 1941, Begley's father, a doctor in the town of Stryj, was taken into the Russian Army as it retreated to the east. Three months later, the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators in Stryj took a thousand Jews, including the boy's paternal grandparents, into a nearby forest and shot them. Begley's mother helped arrange for her own parents to go into hiding; she then obtained false papers and embarked on the harrowing ruse of passing herself and her son off as Catholic Poles. In Wartime Lies, a boy named Maciek and his Aunt Tania adopt just such a ruse, manage to avoid the firing squads and the death camps, and survive the war, at great cost. Ludwik Begleiter and his mother were reunited with his father, after the war, and in 1947 the Begleiter family came to New York to start over. Ludwik was thirteen.

The narrator of Wartime Lies writes that he "has no childhood that he can bear to remember." Louis Begley says much the same thing when he is asked about his life in the immediate aftermath of the war: "Whether I had bad dreams then about the war—I'm not sure I did, I have them now. But I don't really remember." His rebirth in Brooklyn, he says, entailed "a rejection of Poland, a rejection of Europe, a rejection of the Old World." He wanted an American self and "some

imagined life that was all right, that didn't have to be forever explained, that you didn't have to drag around like a sack of potatoes."[279]

His first novel, Wartime Lies, made Begley famous. It tells how Maciek had to hide his Jewish identity as a boy in Poland during the Holocaust, but also afterwards, when Jews returning to their homes in Poland were attacked at Kielce and were resented when they resettled in Krakow. Maciek's story of a privileged, idyllic childhood in prewar Poland is convincingly set in the historical and political circumstances leading up to the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. It gives a vivid, at times suspense-filled, account of the deportation of Jews, the Warsaw Ghetto revolt, the Warsaw Uprising, and the liberation by Soviet Union forces all seen by an innocent child who is not fully aware of the consequences of these events.

Framed by classical references and pausing for a Dantean interlude, the story is all the more gripping because of the boy's growing knowledge of the adult world around him. On the run from Polish police and the Gestapo with his beautiful and courageous aunt Tania, the boy passes for her son and learns to lie in order that they will both survive. Aunt Tania schools him in how to behave in public and strictly scrutinizes his speech and his body: his circumcision could easily give them away. Moving from one rented room to another, they have to deal with the suspicions, blackmail, and rapaciousness of Polish landladies and farmers; but after they escape the mass deportations of Poles from Warsaw following the uprising, they find kindness and assistance on a peasant farm, although primitive. However, they can never let down their guard for a moment. The last chapter switches to a third-person narration and, in a highly ironic tone, describes Maciek's reunion with his father, who had returned from Siberian exile with a mistress, a Russian obstetrician. The narrator tells us that Maciek continues his wartime lies in communist Poland, thus suggesting the paradox that, as in the

[279] Aspen, Hal, interview, "The Lives of Louis Begley." The New Yorker: May 30, 1994. <http:www.Louis Begley.com/espen.htm.>

Catholic faith he has adopted, he confesses that he lies, but cannot tell the truth except by making it up as a story.

Indeed, the autobiographical mode is a fiction, and the author is at pains to disengage himself from the boy's life: he tells us that the former Maciek "died" and was replaced by a man who used one of his false names. The narrator asks "Is there much of Maciek in that man? No: Maciek was a child, and our man has no childhood that he can bear to remember; he has had to invent one."[280] The narrator has separated himself from the boy he once was, but has also distanced himself from unbearable memories. The truth can only be told by inventing it. Sara R. Horowitz draws attention to this deliberate breaking of the autobiographical pact, which allows Begley to conflate testimony and fiction: "Using the word *fiction* as a synonym for *lies* juxtaposes it antithetically to truth and reflects negatively on the expressive possibilities of a particular literary form when applied to the actual world of historical events."[281] The child has lost his childhood in the Holocaust, but he can only narrate that loss by telling the lies that saved him. False identity and untruths enable survival but suffocate the ability to tell the entire truth.

Wartime Lies was nominated for a National Book Award, and received several major American and European literary prizes. Although the book is a work of fiction, it is also an unmistakably authentic testament, and Begley has had to contend with a succession of journalists wanting to interrogate him about his actual experience. He responds with several kinds of demurrals, but they all amount to an insistence that his memories are personal rather than historical, and that fiction gives him more freedom to tell the truth than the facts do. Begley's first loyalty is to fiction and its capacity to embody moral and emotional truth. "There are some doors one cannot open just

---

[280] Begley, Louis, Wartime Lies (New York: Ballantine, 1992) 180-1.
[281] Horowitz, Sara R., "Auto/Biography and Fiction After Auschwitz: Probing the Boundaries of Second-Generation Aesthetics," in Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz, ed. Ephraim Sicher (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998) 283.

by turning the doorknob; their opening must be conjured"[282] is how he once put it. Outside of his fiction, the closest Begley has come to addressing the question of memory and identity is an essay entitled "Who the Novelist Really is," which was published in the New York Times Book Review in 1992. "It is no secret that I am a Jew, that I was born in Poland in the same year as Maciek, that I lived in Poland during the war and that the name I bear is not the one that was written in my first birth certificate," he wrote, "I am unwilling to separate incidents in my book that may be said to have happened to me or that I have witnessed, from those I have imagined." He described the novel's Aunt Tania, Maciek's savior, as "a woman of great beauty, courage and cunning," but the acknowledgement of who his own savior was comes in a passage that could hardly be more indirect: "My recollection is vague except with regard to very important events—and even with regard to those, I am not sure that what I remember is right. For instance, my memory of certain events differs from my mother's." It was the only time he mentioned the model for his greatest character.

The only evidence that Begley was haunted to some degree by the war appears in the stories he wrote at Erasmus and at Harvard. Essentially, they are early drafts of Wartime Lies. He won a high-school fiction prize for "Polonaise 1943-1944," in which a boy named Peter is hiding from the Nazis in Warsaw. In "Krzysztof," one of the stories he published in the Harvard Advocate, a motherless boy who was taken in by a Polish farmer and baptized when he was eight—the implication being that he is Jewish—plays an eerie game of identifying with a Nazi squad terrorizing the village. ("He, at the head of others, faced a hostile crowd. It converged on his group of soldiers and his fingers ached excruciatingly for the trigger. He tried to assign faces to the gray figures and in hopeless fear prayed to erase from the picture the face of his mother.") Finally, he runs away and hides in a haystack. There a bayonet pierces his breast and kills him. Reading these youthful

[282] In an interview with Richard Eder. "Horrors of Survival, Clothed in Grace." L.A. Times Review: May 15, 1994. <http:www//louisbegley.com/eder.htm>

writings, one is amazed by the precocity of the writer—particularly since he had only recently learned to speak English—but one also realizes why he turned away from writing for so many years. The experiences he dramatizes are so overwhelming and so freighted with moral anxiety that it is impossible to imagine that a young writer could really master them. Yet the material stood in the way of any other subject: on the one hand, this was his necessary confession, his *bildungsroman*; on the other hand, the merest trace of callousness, anything less than the highest pitch of solemn irony, would have rendered the project worthless. Begley will not address these speculations. "Why I wrote my first book when I wrote it, that's a question to which I don't know the answer," he told his interviewer.[283] But, by waiting, he wrote a book that will last.

Through the years, Begley told very few people about his childhood of wartime lies. At Harvard, he presented himself as someone who had come from Erasmus Hall—a bright and interesting young man from Brooklyn. Charles Platt, the architect, went to Harvard with Begley and they were in the army together, stationed in Germany. He remembers that he first heard a few details about Begley's childhood one night when Begley told him that during the day he had encountered a Polish man living in a displaced-persons camp who had once worked for his family in Stryj, and that the man had somehow recognized him and had come over and kissed his hand.

One day, they went to Munich and struck up a conversation with an elderly German couple, and somebody mentioned Dachau. Did they know? Of course they knew, the couple said. Everybody knew—Dachau was near Munich, and they could smell it. "Louis was questioning them like us—like an American—rather than as someone separate," Platt said. "But on the way back from Munich we went to Dachau. We couldn't get in. It was late, and it was closed. We parked our car and got out and looked at the walls. And then Louis told me some stories that came up in Wartime lies. It was

[283] Aspen, Hal. "The Lives of Louis Begley." The New Yorker. May 30, 1994. <http:www.Louis Begley.com/espen.htm.>

the first time I had any real idea of what had gone on in his life. He spoke with a degree of detachment, but also with intensity—he wanted to have the description be real, and not casual."[284]

Begley decided to write Wartime Lies during a four-month sabbatical in the summer of 1989. His books have several elements in common: they all employ a slightly detached narrator who observes painful events from certain remove; they dramatize the relation between questions of identity and those of survival; and they attend equally to the predicament of those who escape danger as to those who succumb to it. Begley's early experiences seem to have made him a meditative writer; suspense and simple heroism have no place in his vision of the world. In an interview with Hal Aspen, for the New Yorker, on May 30, 1994, he said that his characters have "a dryness of the heart," and that they struggle to sustain themselves against an encroaching numbness.

To a question, during an interview with Diane Osen at the National Book Foundation Archives in 1991, as the finalist of the Award for fiction, as to how did he initially conceive Wartime Lies and why did he use two narrators, he replied that he had to ask himself how one would have become a man after having been a boy of the sort he had been, and that the two narrators is the whole point of the book because it's a meditation by a man who survived the war and has arrived at a form of accommodation with life, and at the same time has never made peace with the past and what his childhood had been; that it was a reasonable choice, though, to tell about the childhood with the voice of the young boy; that he thought it was the purest way of telling his story but it would have been meaningless without the framework of a grown man looking back at the beginning, or the same man, or perhaps the author, looking back on the boy.

He did not return to Poland for almost a half-century after that illegal and dangerous flight, from Communism, in 1946, the carnage of the German occupation, and the sense of impossibility—

[284] Aspen, Hal. "The Lives of Louis Begley." The New Yorker. May 30, 1994. <http:www.Louis Begley.com/espen.htm>

of the future having come to an end—that weighed on him like a leaden mantle. The family had no money and no destination. In the next few years, he felt no desire for renewed contact with his Polish roots. His chief preoccupation was to become as American as possible. Then, when he had become sufficiently settled in his new identity to afford the occasional luxury of such longings, the specter of *danger* put an end to them. He did not revisit his sad fatherland until there came a reason that he could treat as objective, and independent of his will, although in truth, it was uniquely personal: the invitation by the Polish publisher of his first work, Wartime Lies, to come to Warsaw for its launch. An unexpected benefit came out of it. He had maintained obstinately, in the face of persistent questioning and incredulity, that his book was not an autobiography but a novel, a work of imagination that corresponded only in outline to what might be called a summary of his early life in Poland. "In the fall of '95, walking along Nowy Swiat and Krakowskie Przedmiescie to the reconstructed old city, and, later strolling in the Saxon Gardens, I obtained the certitude that I had been right: Wartime Lies was indeed a novel. I had lost all visual memory of Warsaw. The places I described in my book I had invented. Only my memory of the language and manners—understood in the largest sense—had remained intact."[285]

Regarding Memory, Begley says that it is no wonder that, in the invocation that opens his tale of Aeneas, that quintessential refugee, buffeted cruelly on land and on sea by winds of high fate, the poet Virgil cries out, "*Musa mihi cause memora."* Memory, remind me what were the causes of Juno's anger, the reasons for punishing so excellent a man? The past can become dim much sooner than one would have thought possible. Events as painful as being branded with a red-hot iron all at once stand in isolation, without context. Thus, for instance, Begley remembers clearly only certain moments of grotesque horror during their escape from Warsaw, burning, like Troy, in September of '44, at the end of the uprising, along with the bewildering courage and resourcefulness of his mother,

[285] Louis Begley by Louis Begley. February, 4, 1997 <http://www: slate.msn.com>

which were worthy of Aeneas and Ulysses and he says: "The rest is lost; I cannot find it. Or have I given it all away?" (and he quotes) "In his Speak, Memory Vladimir Nabokov, that master illusionist, put it this way: 'When we write a novel, we hand over our belongings, page by page. They turn into the property of our readers. We become paupers.' It is possible that something like this has happened to me. Having written Wartime Lies, the material of which is drawn from my life in Poland until '46, I have nothing left of that life except what I set down on the pages of my book."[286]

In an interview with Victoria N. Alexander entitled "Louis Begley: Trying to Make Sense of it" which appeared in the Antioch Review (summer 1997) he keeps coming back to the same provocative question about justice. War experiences such as his are not to be forgotten no matter how high one is on the socioeconomic ladder. In fact it was Begley's good fortune that led to his interest in one of the oldest themes in literature: the idea of divine capriciousness which can reward the undeserving and punish the good. As a writer, Begley also examines the implications of poetic justice, divine justice's secular analogue, for which he has a great appreciation and which is shown in his references to the classical literature that defines our sense of what is poetically just. However, his skepticism keeps him from writing novels that reflect a supernaturally designed and just universe. Begley's designs, though sometimes incredible, are strictly man-made.

The fact that Begley lived while so many others died has left him with survivor's guilt and the sense of that sting is most effectively realized in his second work, a melancholic masterpiece, The Man Who Was Late (1992). When the book opens, Ben has already committed suicide. As executor of his friend's will, Jack has inherited the task of piecing together and shaping Ben's story, explaining his sadness and his fate. Like his author, Ben, a Central European Jew who had somehow missed the train to Auschwitz, redefines himself somewhat guiltily among the leisured rich in

[286] Louis Begley by Louis Begley. February, 4, 1997. Internet site: slate.msn.com

America. When Ben decides his destiny in life is to be "too late" to enjoy it, he is not really the victim of cosmic bad-timing but of his own taste for making art out of life. And so if happiness is impossible, what better option is there for Ben—who shares his narrator's (and his author's) interest in shaping stories—than to change the meaning of his being late? The man who is late is not just "not on time," he is dead. By this way of thinking, then, Ben's suicide seems at least to follow a supernatural design.

In Wartime Lies, the young hero Maciek, like Ben, escapes the horrors of the Third Reich. Having had to pretend he is not Jewish and to lie to survive, Maciek develops survivor's guilt which later informs his self-perception as it does Ben's. He is especially ashamed when he compares himself to heroes in his favorite Latin classics: He reveres the Aeneid. That is where he first found civil expression for his own shame at being alive, his skin intact and virgin of tattoo, when his kinsmen and almost all the others, so many surely more deserving than he, perished in the conflagration. Maciek would like to believe that God has decreed that he and his Aunt Tania should have food while others starve and that they can escape the camps while others do not. But it is Tania that secures the protection of a German soldier and it is Tania and Maciek who contrive to feed and shelter themselves. Maciek knows that they have escaped by their own designs not God's. No one is up there for this sad small boy but Begley, who cannot, or will not, make a commedia out of his life. Because his life fails to be shaped or contrived it does seem less like fiction, more like a memoir. This is what makes Maciek's story a frustrating paradox; Maciek believes there is no poetic justice in his survival. In Wartime Lies, Maciek's experiences are compared to those described by Dante, Virgil and the Ancient Roman lyric poet, Catullus. According to Begley these references "provide

certain moral landmarks in the story;"[287] Aeneas, like Maciek, also emerges from a wrecked existence and must construct a new one. Unfortunately, the comparison soon fails because Aeneas, destined to found Rome, has gods and goddesses to guide him. Maciek believes he defied his destiny by failing to board the train to Auschwitz. Forced to forsake his Jewish religion, Maciek has no God. He tries to replace religion with literature seizing on a poem by Catullus because, explained Begley, "Catullus thinks that he is entitled to be happy. The man with the sad eyes (the mature Maciek), not at all; he isn't sure that he is entitled." Maciek fears he has done no good deeds because he has not saved anyone but himself. The nine-year old boy reflects, "I was a liar and a hypocrite every day; I was mired in mortal sin on that account alone, even if all the other evil in me was disregarded." Begley decided to write Wartime Lies because of an issue of justice Catullus raises: "There was a question that I carried around with me for some time. "It was a question of good deeds. What is the reward for good deeds? What happens if you have no good deeds and no expectations?" Begley has been rewarded with professional success, a happy marriage, and five children. When he considers his fortune he asks, "Why me? Why are some people rewarded and other punished without respect to their deeds?" Begley believes that his own happiness was a "random reward."

In an interview with James Atlas of the Paris Review, on "The Art of Fiction" Begley said he would have never written that novel if he hadn't had the wartime experiences he had, but "as I keep on insisting" Wartime Lies is a novel, not a memoir. "Putting aside the barrier created by my modesty—in the sense of *pudeur*—I didn't have enough memories to write a story of my own life. Invention was necessary to fill out the story, and to carry the story along. Had there been no

---

[287] Alexander, Victoria, N. "Louis Begley: Trying to Make Sense of It." The Antioch Review, Summer 1997 <http:www.dactyl.org/directors/.vna/begley.html.>

invention, had I written only what I remembered, I would have had a boring text of perhaps forty-five pages. I have no interest in writing confessions, in deliberately baring myself to my readers. I prefer to remain behind a screen. The novel as a form is a very convenient screen, and it is the one I need. I intend to stay behind it. There is not a single thing in Wartime Lies that is not supported by my personal experiences, but my personal experiences have been altered, by additions and subtractions, in a way that made me able to use them in my novel."[288]

To a question as to what made him able to finally deal with this subject he replied that it certainly was not the emergence of Holocaust literature as a genre, of which he had read very little.

> I think that it was the passage of time that made writing Wartime Lies possible. I had matured emotionally and intellectually. I had become infinitely more sure of myself. I was finally able to make a story I thought was worth telling out of experiences I had sometimes talked about but, in the most profound sense, had kept under lock and key, to find a voice for Wartime Lies with which I could be comfortable, and to put myself at a sufficient distance from the story. I don't like self-pity or sentimentality. I don't think I would have known how to avoid it if I had tried to write something like Wartime Lies too early.

Regarding the author's obligation to the reader he tells Diane Osen, from the National Book Foundation Archives, in an interview:

> I have an obligation to myself, which is *to write as well as I can*, and never to depart from the truth. And the truth is not an autobiographical truth, which interviewers are usually after, but an *emotional truth*. My obligation is not to tell things that aren't right from my perspective and experience—not to tell things that I've simply invented in order to fill pages. I've never done it and I never will. What I write comes out of some crucible inside me. And I never, never want to write a bad sentence, if I can help it.[289]

False identity and untruths, as in Begley's Wartime Lies enable survival but suffocate the ability to tell the entire truth; the end result was that he could not remember everything entirely and had to fill in the blanks. His truth is more an "emotional truth" which came out of a "crucible" inside

---

[288] Interview with James Atlas of the Paris Review: June 4, 2002: 117-120.
[289] Interview with Diane Osen. from the National Book Foundation Archives. "1991 Finalist of the National Book Award for Fiction: Wartime Lies. <http://www.nationalbook.org/authorsguide_lbegley.html>

him. As he told a *New York Times* interviewer (1992) "I wrote the book that I wrote because I had a story to tell, and I wanted to do so in an artistic way."

Jerzy Kosinski

Since his suicide in 1991, the literary reputation of Jerzy Kosinki has continued to sink. He was, at one time, one of the most promising writers on the American scene, publishing three hits in a row—the cult classic The Painted Bird, Steps (winner of the 1969 National Book Award) and Being There (filmed in 1980). His books painted grisly violence and a sexuality bordering on the masochistic and raised Kosinski into the ranks of America's celebrity class.

Some might say a fitting end to a literary life that was built upon lies. For years Kosinski passed off The Painted Bird as the true story of his own experience during the Holocaust. This book was published in 1963 and made Kosinki's reputation.[290] Many saw it as a thinly disguised autobiographical account. It was believed that the boy's story was, quite simply, Kosinski's story. But later questions concerning its facticity gave rise to a series of controversies.

According to biographer James P. Sloan,[291] Kosinski could not help being a pathological liar and a control freak. By the age of nine he learnt that to live, he must not be himself. At the beginning of WWII, his father carefully invented a gentile identity that allowed his family to survive the Holocaust. Sloan argues that Kosinski's psyche was permanently damaged by the absolute necessity of his disguise as the Catholic Jurek Kosinski; he must hide his otherness, his circumcised penis—for to be found out was death.

No wonder Kosinski lost track of the truth. Truth was dangerous. Survival depended on play-acting and lies. So he became an expert actor and storyteller. Paradoxically, since his father had chosen Kosinski, the Polish equivalent of Smith, as the family's new name, Kosinski could tolerate

---

[290] Kosinski, Jerzy, The Painted Bird (New York: Bantam, 1976)
[291] Sloan, James P. Jerzy Kosinski, A Biography (New York: Dutton, 1996)

disguise, but not anonymity. Thereafter, he created many selves, each more beautifully painted than the last, and although his gloss and shimmer attracted others, often his uniqueness made him suspect. In school in Poland, later at Columbia and most significantly when his novels became bestsellers, his masks were questioned, and his audience turned on him furious at his hubris. Rumors about his plagiarisms and ghostwriters were rampant for at least ten years before a 1982 article in the Village Voice made public the 1975 discoveries by Barbara Tepa (now Lupack), a bilingual doctoral candidate whose unpublished thesis revealed that in many cases, long passages of Kosinski's books were more or less directly translated from Polish sources unknown to English speakers.[292]The article also cited the striking stylistic differences apparent from one novel to another which could be explained by the fact that he often changed the poorly paid, never-credited "editors" with whom he would sketch a story line and collaborate as they filled in the details. As rumors of this practice spread, some writers were even required to sign a document saying that they had never given more than superficial "editorial assistance." The article in the Village Voice also revealed that Kosinski (for whom English was a second language) had made extensive use of translators and collaborators to write all his books, and then had concealed the fact. In addition to the attacks on the facticity of The Painted Bird, Being There was accused of plagiarism since it resembled a prewar Polish bestseller called The Career of Nikodem Dyzma.[293] Although Sloan documents that most if not all the accusations leveled at Kosinski are true, he nevertheless devotes his meticulous research and careful scholarly readings of Kosinski's work to explaining why Kosinski was a compulsive liar and to ferreting out the truth, comparing it to the elaborate and multiple personal mythology Kosinski wove into his life as well as in his "autobiographical" fiction.

[292] Lupack, Barbara Tepa. "New Tree, Old Roots," Polish Review 29 (1984): 147-53.
[293] Dolega-Mostowicz, Tadeusz. The Career of Nikodem Dyzma (New York: Roy, 1950)

Even without the lies, Kosinski was a seriously eccentric man. Unable to maintain close friendships, he most often played the role of trickster showing off symbolic skills. His stories and pranks repeatedly enchanted and confounded the revolving groups of prestigious social, intellectual, and political acquaintances he ushered in and out of his life about every two years. "Once he went through his repertory" Sloan writes, "it was time to move on. He tended to use up his stories, or perhaps more accurately, to use up his audience."(Sloan, 207)

Kosinski came to the U.S. in 1957, from his native Poland. Here, as he had there, he gradually became known for a spectrum of sociopathic behavior ranging from mere megalomania to brutal sexual coercion, fraud and plagiarism. Yet he was so convincing that his powerful supporters (including Yale University and the New York Times) believed his side of these accounts for twenty-five years before evidence was finally published in the Village Voice. Kosinski never fully recovered from the Voice's exposé. The remainder of his life, as he himself said, was spent running from it.

Born five months after Hitler came to power, Jerzy Kosinski was the only child of Moses and Elzbieta Lewinkopf, a Jewish couple living in Lodz, Poland. His father changed their name to Kosinski—a more Polish-sounding name—in 1939 when he moved his family 120 miles away to the eastern border of German-held Poland. Far from giving away his son to the care of someone else, Moses Kosinski took in and eventually adopted the son of another Jewish family in the region. Here the family waited out the war, passing as gentiles. Jerzy was carefully instructed to deny he was Jewish if challenged. It was a lesson that took a lifetime to unlearn. According to Sloan, Kosinski could not help being a pathological liar and a control freak. Sloan argues that Kosinski's psyche was permanently damaged by the absolute necessity of his disguise as the Catholic Jurek Kosinski; he must hide his otherness, his circumcised penis—for to be found out was death.

After the war, Moses Kosinski threw in with the "reds" against the "white" Polish loyalists, and when the Soviets took control, he was rewarded with a party appointment. For Jerzy his father's position meant a superficially trouble-free postwar existence: high school, photography, girl friends, jazz, café society, student-exchange trips to Russia, and the University of Lodz.

Unlike his father, he despised communism. Believing that human values would never be restored to Poland as long as the Communists were in power, Kosinski left the country for the United States in 1939. He did not return for nearly twenty years.

His first two books were contributions to the literature of anticommunism: The Future is Ours, Comrade (1960) and No Third Path (1962) were published under the pseudonym "Joseph Novak." They described the harshness of life under the Soviets and were based on Kosinski's own visits to Russia. Sloan tries to make a case for behind-the-scenes CIA sponsorship to further propaganda efforts directed at the Soviets.

"In the first weeks of World War II, in the fall of 1939, a six-year-old boy from a large city in Eastern Europe was sent by his parents, like thousands of other children, to the shelter of a distant village." Thus began The Painted Bird which chronicled the wanderings of that boy somewhere in the primitive borderlands of Eastern Europe during the German occupation. Separated from his parents, the boy is compelled to live by his own wits amidst brutal and illiterate peasantry and meaningless violence. The book's title—and governing metaphor—derives from a feebleminded character named Lekh who amuses himself by capturing wild birds, painting their feathers in brilliant colors, and releasing them to be pecked from the sky by their own kind. Like the painted bird the boy is considered different when he is thrown in with his fellow human beings. Since he has dark eyes, complexion and hair, the villagers, typically blue-eyed blonds, consider him an outsider. Their superstitious nature compounds their stereotype of the boy because they regard him as either a

Jew or a gypsy with "evil powers." The villagers treat the boy with the same cruelty as the flock that persecutes the bird. Because the villagers perceive him as different, they feel justified in harassing and ostracizing him. Some of the more cruel villagers consider it their right to beat and torture him.

The central metaphor of The Painted Bird elaborates a medieval Polish legend: if a captured crow is beautifully painted and released to go back to its flock, the other crows will attack and kill it because it is different. It is the idea of the scapegoat and his function in the moral metabolism of society. "In the Epilogue to The Manufacture of Madness, A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement, Thomas S. Szasz claims "that the social man fears the Other and, if need be, creates him, so that, by invalidating him as evil, he may confirm himself as good."[294] These ideas are conveyed with consummate artistic skill by Kosinski in The Painted Bird which title alludes to the theme: "The Painted Bird" as the symbol of the persecuted Other, of "The Tainted Man." The Painted Bird is the perfect symbol of the Other, the Stranger, the Scapegoat. With inimitable skill, Kosinski shows us both faces of this phenomenom. If the Other is unlike the members of the herd, he is cast out of the group and destroyed.

Norman Lavers, in his book on Kosinski, argues that the boy's comet, a can filled with slow burning materials that provide a constant heat source, becomes a symbol of his developing strength and independence. Lavers writes that the comet is: "A manifestation of the inner spark. It is the outward glow of the boy's determination to survive. But it is still more, it is his apartness itself, his individuality, that which is essential to survival 'without human help.' It is his essential aloneness, which is his independence and freedom. With the comet to fend off the dark, the animals, the other

[294] Szasz, Thomas S., epilogue. The Manufacture of Madness; a Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement, (New York, Harper & Row, 1970) as cited in <http:www//deoxy.org/paintedbird.htm>

humans, he is 'felt perfectly safe.'"[295] James P. Sloan refers to the same use of the comet, defining it as: "a spectacular performance at night, delighting dinner guests and, especially, their children."[296]

Critics like Irving Howe in Harper's wrote that "finally one wonders whether there is in this book a numbing surplus of brutality."[297] Kosinski responded to the attention over the book's violence in his Afterword to the second edition:

> Whether the reviews praised or damned the novel, Western criticism of The Painted Bird always contained an undertone of uneasiness. Most American and British critics objected to my descriptions of the boy's experiences on the grounds that they dwelt too deeply on cruelty. Many tended to dismiss the author as well as the novel, claiming that I had exploited the horrors of war to satisfy my own peculiar imagination. In point of fact, almost none of those who chose to view the book as a historical novel bothered to refer to actual source materials. Personal accounts of survivors and official war documents were either unknown by or irrelevant to my critics.[298]

John Corry, in an article for The American Spectator notes that the novel was "the making of Jerzy Kosinski, just as it was his undoing."[299]Corry explains that after the novel came out: the Warsaw government had set out to hurt him. He was an ordinary anti-Communist émigré Pole; he was a celebrated anti-Communist Pole, and so he had to be discredited. The Painted Bird, the propagandist said, slandered Poland. In fact, it did not, but since the novel was banned, who in Poland would know?

In his Afterword, Kosinski describes how the Polish government responded to The Painted Bird. Poland's state-controlled publications insisted that he had agreed to write the novel "for covert political purposes" as sanctioned by governmental authorities in America. Other Poles accused the book of being "a libelous documentary of life in identifiable communities during the Second World War." Some critics attacked him "for distorting native lore, for defaming the peasant character, and

---

[295] Lavers, Norman. Jerzy Kosinski: (Boston, Twayne, 1982) as cited in <http://www.enotes.com/paintedbird>
[296] Sloan, James P. Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. (New York: Dutton, 1996): 263.
[297] Howe, Irving. "From the other Side of the Moon." Harper's, March 1997: 102-05.
[298] As cited in <http://www.enotes.com/paintedbird>
[299] Corry, John. "The Most Considerate of Men." The American Spectator, July 1991: 17-18.

for reinforcing the propaganda weapons of the region's enemies." Kosinski was also criticized by anti-Communists, who claimed that he portrayed the Soviet soldiers in a positive light in order to justify Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

The campaign to destroy Kosinski's name continued as accusations surfaced regarding: his ghostwriters; that he wrote the book for the CIA and was part of a Zionist conspiracy. Cameron Northouse, in his article on Kosinski for the Dictionary of Literary Biography, explains: "Since the book was completely distorted in the Communist press to depict it as an anti-Polish document that slandered the people of Kosinski's homeland, the local citizenry was aroused to violence. At one point, Kosinski's mother was defamed in the newspapers as the "mother of a renegade" and crowds were incited to attack her house.[300] Kosinski also suffered physical and verbal attacks, as he notes in his Afterword: "On several occasions I was accosted outside my apartment house or in my garage. Three or four times strangers recognized me on the street and offered hostile or insulting remarks. At a concert honoring a pianist born in my homeland, a covey of patriotic old ladies attacked me with their umbrellas, while screeching absurdly dated invectives."[301]

Although The Painted Bird made Kosinski popular with young readers, according to Sloan—he scorned the student movement of the sixties and the political ideas of the young and their so-called counterculture—Kosinski was an enthusiastic participant in the sexual revolution of the sixties and after. According to Sloan his sexual adventurism was due to his love of "sexual theater" that mirrored Kosinski's compulsive need to lie and feign and pose in all areas of his life, compensating for "the hollowness at the core of his being." This theory explains much: the reckless driving, the thirst for fame, the fabrication of personal experience, the secretiveness about how he wrote and the denial of his Jewish identity. "There was a hollow space at the center of Kosinski that had resulted

[300] Northouse, Cameron. "Jerzy Kosinski." In Dictionary of Literary Biography. eds. Jeffrey Hellerman and Richard Layman. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1978) 1: 206-75.
[301] Sloan, James P. Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. (New York: Dutton, 1996) 225.

from denying his past," Sloan writes, "and his whole life had become a race to fill in that hollow space before it caused him to implode, collapsing inward upon himself like a burnt-out star." On this theory Kosinski emerges as a classic borderline personality, frantically defending himself against intense feelings of hopelessness and abandonment. He even appears somewhat heroic, because he restrained himself from crossing the border into all-out psychosis.

Long before writing The Painted Bird, he regaled his friends at dinner parties with the macabre tales of a childhood hiding among the Polish peasantry. He loved to tell outrageous lies, particularly to the rich, intellectual and famous. They were so eager to be entertained, he explained, that they willingly suspended disbelief, and they were so confident in their superiority that they deserved to be played for fools. "Court jester" to his powerful American friends, that's how Jerzy Kosinski sometimes referred to himself.

Among those who were fascinated was a senior editor of Houghton Mifflin, Dorothy de Santillana, to whom Kosinski confided that he had a manuscript based on his experiences. Upon accepting the book for publication Santillana said, "It is my understanding that, fictional as the material may sound, it is straight autobiography." According to Sloan, although he backed away from this claim, Kosinski never disavowed it. He described the book as an "autofiction," explaining that "the emphasis in autofiction was placed on 'standing outside the experience; its deeper rationale being that all remembered human experience is, in one sense, fiction.' It draws upon a childhood spent, by the casual chances of war, in the remotest villages of Eastern Europe." Although it is not "easily justified," he said, it is nonetheless "convenient" to classify The Painted Bird as nonfiction. And so, it was widely received.[302] The final product of Kosinski's theoretical explorations was a document thirteen pages in length, with an epigraph in French from Proust and numerous footnotes, citing Proust, Langer, Valéry, Jung and Kérenyi, Chernyshevsky, Arthur Miller, and Antonin

[302] Sloan, James P., Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. (New York: Dutton, 1996): 217.

Artaud. It was entitled "Notes to the Author" and appended to the German-language edition as a small booklet, completed with admiring comments on The Painted Bird. Compared to Doubrovsky's use of autofiction, I would say that the latter's autofiction was the only way he had in order to come to terms with his life in writing, like Begley who used his fiction as a screen behind which he could write his Wartime Lies, from a certain distance. Kosinski, on the other hand, was more interested in shocking his audience. Both (Doubrovsky and Kosinski) show a taste for exhibitionism through their autofiction but, while Doubrovsky did it through his untranslatable elaborate style—and comes out more sincere—Kosinski's book is more a provocative documentation of the complex consequences of violence and evil.

Reviewing the book for the New York Times Book Review, Elie Wiesel said, "It is as a chronicle that The Painted Bird achieves its unusual power."[303] Other critics described it as "semi-autobiographical" or a "testament," praising its historical value.

As late as 1976, in a preface to the second edition, Kosinski continued to prevaricate. He never said outright that the book was not an autobiography. In a review of Sloan's biography, D. G. Myers says that the reason Kosinski rejected the label was that he did not wish to be cast "in the role of spokesman for his generation, especially for those who survived the war."[304] Even so, Kosinski believed that anyone who would bother to refer to actual source materials would find that he was not overstating the brutality and cruelty that characterized the war years in Eastern Europe. He also quoted a death camp commandant to establish that the theme of his book was true to the experience of all Jewish children under the Nazis, since the rule was to kill children right away. And then he repeated the story he had told so many times before: to save him, his own parents had sent him away to live among strangers, just like the unnamed boy in The Painted Bird. The trouble is, it wasn't true.

---

[303] Sloan, James P. Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. (New York: Dutton, 1996) 223.
[304] "A Life Beyond Repair." Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. Reviewed by D.G. Myers (October, 1996). <http:www.leaderu.com>

And yet the truth about Jerzy Kosinski may be even more fascinating. For though he disclaimed the role of spokesman for his generation, he was representative of it in many ways. A creature of post-modernism, he suffered and celebrated some of the most destructive pathologies of the age. "It was as if he were hellbent on acting out the rupture in human values caused by the Holocaust. That was the central theme of his novels, and of his own life."[305]

Even the truths of Kosinski's life are astonishing in their variety and complexity. Although he was never the mute, brutalized child hero of The Painted Bird, he probably really did escape being killed in Sharon Tate's house the night of the Manson murders because, according to biographer James P. Sloan, he missed his plane to Los Angeles. And, after arriving as a penniless foreigner to go to graduate school at Columbia, Kosinski really did live out the American dream, marrying a millionaire socialite (from whom he was subsequently divorced), earning national awards and huge sums of money for his books and a screenplay, on the way achieving that greatest of dreams, to be a movie star, playing a small but important role in Reds. His suicide in 1991, at age 58, shocked the outside world but did not surprise many friends. They saw it coming; he had always lived on the edge and had seemed depressed in the last few months.

Contrary to what Kosinski said and although The Painted Bird is not set out as a Holocaust book—since what it aims to exhibit is the cruelty and backwardness of the Polish peasants among whom his six-year old narrator, who is indifferently Jewish or Gypsy, must hide—it could represent the imaginary story of a Jewish child during that period hiding with Polish peasants, in the same circumstances. The only mention Kosinski makes of the Holocaust in the book is when he writes "perhaps the world would soon become one vast incinerator for burning people," immediately

[305]"A Life Beyond Repair." Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography. Reviewed by D.G. Myers (October, 1996). <http:www.leaderu.com>

followed by a longer scene in which the rape of a Jewish girl is described in brutal and excruciating detail.

The Painted Bird is notorious for its horrors; people and animals are tortured, women are violated, men are devoured by rats. "The Germans puzzled me," the boy says. "Was such a destitute, cruel world worth ruling?" This is the question that Kosinski's whole life was given over to answering. That he died by his own hand suggests that his answer, finally, was "No." Although The Painted Bird may not be directly about the Holocaust, and may not be based exactly on Kosinski's own experiences—although he had been protected by his parents during the Holocaust he still had lived through this period hiding his identity, passing as a gentile, and afraid to be discovered as a Jew—it is nevertheless an indispensable document *of* the Holocaust. It is perhaps the greatest example of what is coming to be known as a "second-generation" book: a contemporary report of the hell in which a survivor of the Holocaust must live, one generation after the event.

Binjamin Wilkomirski

When Benjamin Wilkomirski's memoir, *Fragments:* Memories of a Wartime Childhood, was published in 1995, it was hailed as a powerfully moving account of the author's experiences as a child during the Holocaust—an account whose disjointed narrative and simple, almost abstract style was said not just to represent, but actually to demonstrate, the effects of trauma on its author. At the time of its German publication, there were already questions about the anthenticity of Wilkomirski's story, as the author's legal name turned out to be Bruno Dösseker, and his Swiss birth record indicated that he was born not in Riga, Latvia, as he had claimed in the memoir, but in Biel, Switzerland, and that he could not have been as old as he had claimed he was during the war.

Because of the questions about his identity, Wilkomirski added an Afterword to the book before publication, citing the birth record and explaining that it was simply part of the new identity

"imposed" upon him by Swiss authorities after the war.[306] This confession seemed not to bother early readers of the memoir, who praised its seemingly artless and unsentimental representation of brutality. As André Aciman put it, in a review for the New Republic, Wilkomirski's "aesthetic vision" was characterized by "incomplete or mistaken readings of reality, accompanied by rude, painful awakenings." While this style could be attributed, he suggested, "to the writer's desire to describe the events of the Holocaust purely from a child's perspective," that would only mean that Wilkomirski had employed what Aciman called an "old" stylistic "trick." Instead, the reviewer argued, "the fragmentary nature of Binjamin's account is not so much a product of the grown man's style as it is a product of a young boy's experience."[307] "It was this kind of claim—thatthe very "fragments"of Wilkomirski's narrative were the evidence of its truth—that led readers to accept it despite the doubts raised at the outset by Bruno Dossekker's birth record."[308]

In his article dated October 28, 1996, Jonathan Kozol, reviewing this book, cites Erik Erikson: "there will exist a well-informed, well-considered, and yet fervent public conviction that the most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit; for such mutilation undercuts the life principle of trust, without which every human act, may it feel ever so good and seem ever so right, is prone to perversion by destructive forms of conscientiousness." Kozol adds, "It is hard to think of any recent book that demonstrates the truth of Erikson's belief as powerfully as Binjamin Wilkomirski's memoir of the years he spent in Nazi concentration camps and of the immediate postwar years in Switzerland. This stunning and austerely written work is so profoundly moving, so

[306] Wilkomirski, Benjamin, *Fragments:* Memories of a Wartime Childhood, trans. Carol Brown Janeway (New York: Schocken Books, 1996). Afterword.
[307] Aciman, André, "French Children of the Holocaust. Innocence and Experience" (a review of several books on children during the Holocaust) New Republic 218. Jan. 19, 1998: 26-28.
[308] Hungerford, Amy, "Memorizing Memory" The Yale Journal of Criticism 2001, vol. 14, #1:67.

morally important and so free from literary artifice of any kind at all that I wondered if I even had the right to try to offer praise."[309]

Susannah Heschel and Shalom Goldman, in their March 13, 1997 article, in Tikkun, entitled "Review of Wilkomirski, Fragments" write: "In the immediacy of his language, his unpretentious recounting of a child's inner life and ways of viewing the world, Wilkomirski has given us a masterpiece. As much as it is a stupendous memoir of the Holocaust, this is also an important book about human existence, as profound as the writings of Primo Levi and Jean Amery."[310]

After Daniel Ganzfried accused Wilkomirski of having known Majdanek and Auschwitz "only as a tourist,"[311] the book's publisher, Schocken Books, hired an independent historian to investigate the matter in 1998 and decided that there was enough doubt to the truth of the memoir to justify taking it out of print from publication in the fall of 1999.[312] Some continue to defend it, believing in the Swiss bureaucracy's capacity in covering the traces of a child's original identity, and also trying to prevent the prolongation of the brutalization the child Binjamin suffered at the hands of the Nazis.[313] Among Maechler's conclusions, he writes that Fragments is the attempt of the adult Bruno Grosjean to assemble elements taken from humanity's remembrance of the Shoah in order to find a means of expressing experiences that were not verbally retrievable either when they occurred or later, and which for that reason cried out for a narrative that would give them meaning. "This same unnarratibility coalesces in the fragmented nature of the text and in the metaphor of falling

---

[309] Kozol, Jonathan. "Children of the Camp." The Nation, October 28, 1996: 26.
[310] Heschel, Susannah and Goldman, Shalom "Review of Wilkomirski Fragments" Tikkun, March 13,1997: 73.
[311] Ganzfried, Daniel. "The Borrowed Holocaust Biography." Die Weltwoche, August 27, 1998.
----"Facts against Memory." Die Weltwoche, Sept. 3, 1998.
[312] See Maechler, Stefan. The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth (New York: Schocken Books, 2001) translated from the German by John E.Woods.
[313] See, Peskin, Harvey, "Holocaust Denial: A Sequel." The Nation 269.14, April 19, 1999. He argues that the controversy may discourage other child survivors to come forward with their testimonies and that "to be disbelieved is to be hunted again."

mute."[314] He adds that what was new with Wilkomirski was that he represented and appropriated the experience of the Shoah—and the public success that followed—as his own, although he himself had no Jewish past and no Jewish roots at all, and this is what unleashed such outrage.

Why did he choose these particular images? Quite possibly his affinity for them was based in standard understanding of the Jewish concentration-camp victim as an educated and cultivated individual. I believe that, in his fantasies, Wilkomirski took narcissistic possession of that remembrance and "with the grace of a sleepwalker" exploited the collective ritual of remembering. His conduct turned highly explosive only because he became a public figure and entangled publishers, schools, museums, the media, self-help organizations, and readers in his game. By uncovering Wilkomirski's true identity and exposing his act as a farce, Ganzfried also laid bare the weakness of this culture of remembrance, revealing the dangers and excesses that threaten it.

In the New Yorker of June 14, 1999, Philip Gourevitch writes that what Wilkomirski had done, was to deck himself out in second-hand, borrowed, and outright stolen memories. That the one thing that Wilkomirski said repeatedly, and which he (Philip Gourevitch) believed, was that he wrote his memories for himself and that he didn't ultimately care what anybody else said, because nobody could take those memories away from him. "But after more than six months of studying the mischief that has followed from Wilkomirski's fantasies and obfuscation, I am more fearful for and depressed by the culture that received him as an apostle of memory than I am for the man himself."[315]

In his essay: "Orphaned Memories, Foster-Writing, Phantom Pain" Ross Chambers claims that "the text of Bruno Dössekker, who is inhabited and indeed (it seems) possessed by Binjamin

[314] Maechler, Stephan. The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth, Translated from the German by John E.Woods (New York: Schocken Books, 2001) 268.
[315] Gourevitch, Philip. "The Memory Thief" New Yorker June 14, 1999: 48-69.

Wilkomirski is evidence of a haunted society, in which an individual can mistake the collective consciousness of a painful past for a personal memory."[316]

According to Ross Chambers, it is the category of non-survivors that is poignantly figured in Fragments by the symbolic figure of the child, and represented in Dossekker's text as Binjamin Wilkomirski. A dubious figure who will not go away—a figure neither historical nor yet fictional, neither real nor imaginary, but symbolic—Benjamin stands for all the ghosts that inhabit a haunting testimonial text but do not—cannot—speak, with their own voice, within it:

> There are Wilkomirskis, or orphaned memories, who haunt the collective consciousness but *need a Dössekker*—a "host"—if they are to achieve some sort of vividness, some degree of discursive status within culture, and force our acknowledgement that they do indeed haunt us—an acknowledgement that will take the form, not of the laying of ghosts, but of anxiety over symptoms of their haunting: a "borrowed" identity, a generic conundrum, lapses in a journalist's hasty prose. Fragments, that is, is "no more than a vivid fantasy." I submit rather that a "vivid fantasy" has truth as a *cultural symptom*, its very vividness testifying to its slightly uncanny quality, and that, in *this case*, its testimonial truth is quite directly conditioned on the very implausibility in historical terms of a child's having survived Auschwitz to tell the story of that survival. It is only through an anomaly of this kind—the anomaly of the symbolic—that what haunts our hauntedness can return, and in doing so, gain some sort of recognition of that hauntedness itself.[317]

According to Jay Geller, who was teaching the Holocaust based on Wilkomirski's book, the response to Fragments has less to do with the *symptoms of a case* than with the *case of a symptom*. As he examined the "case history" of Wilkomirski's identities and intentions, questions about the nature and function of memory, both in general and specifically with regard to the Shoah on the national, institutional, and individual levels, were ever-present in the texts. "Issues of the responsibility of our social and human sciences—especially psychoanalysis—came to the fore, such

---

[316] Chambers, Ross, "Orphaned Memories, Foster-Writing, Phantom Pain: The *Fragment* Affair" in Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community, eds. Nancy K.Miller and Jason Tougaw. (Illinois UP Chicago. 2002).
[317] Chambers: 98-99.

as concerns about the contemporary culture of spectacle."[318] He refers to Daniel Ganzfried's first article (1998): "The Borrowed Holocaust Biography." In this article Ganzfried argues that his purpose was about more than unmasking an opportunistic con man. He saw the reception of Wilkomirski-Dösseker and his narrative as symptomatic of a number of social and institutional problems as the world approached the millennium turn: the problems of living in "posthistory" when historical data, according to Marita Sturken, "become components of an entertaining collage in which personal experience alone claims authenticity, and when always innocent victims claim the last vestige of ethical purity as they embody a reproach to our (feared) complicity in their plight, while we seek cheap grace by extending them our sympathies." (Sturken, 1999)[319]

For Geller, the nature and function of memory are fundamental components of Fragments, and that "the narrator presents a model of memory as literalized trauma."[320] The narrator's encounters with the world of the barracks emerge with seeming immediacy of lived experience rather than as secondarily elaborated reconstructions integrated into his life story. Wilkomirski claimed that these "memories" have a compulsive character that, he claims, defies "his" attempts to organize them. "Hence they comport with a model of traumatic memory as relived rather than recollected experience."[321] Fragments presents itself as a virtual textbook of trauma. It challenges the notion that memory is inherently constructed, and therefore necessarily somehow inauthentic or untrue: "If I'm going to write about my childhood, I have to give up on the ordering logic of the grown-up; it would only distort what happened" (Fragments, 4). Indeed he insists that his narrative is not constructed. Moreover, like his very survival, his text defies the logic, planning and ordering that

[318] Geller, Jay. "The Wilkomirski Case: *Fragments* or Figments." American Imago 59.3 2002: 343-365.
[319] Sturken, Marita. "Narratives of Recovery: Repressed Memory as Cultural Memory." in Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. (Hanover, New Haven UP of New-England 1990) 231-48, as cited by Jay Geller.
[320] Geller: 3
[321] Caruth, Cathy, ed. Trauma: Explorations in Memory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995).

are the operational modes of the perpetrators and their extermination order.[322] He also reproduces the admonition of Elie Wiesel (1983) that any representation of the Holocaust is a misrepresentation—especially by a non-survivor:"[323] "I write to denounce writing. I tell of the impossibility one stumbles upon in trying to tell the tale." (Fragments, 4) As a collection of shards and silence, the text purports to embody that impossibility.

According to Susan Rubin Suleiman, theorists of narrative as well as specialists in Holocaust writing have amply shown that no first-person narrative is (and she cites) "untouched by figuration and by shaping." (Bernstein 1994:47) To believe in "the absolute authority given to first person testimony," writes Michael-André Bernstein "is to give credence to one of the most pervasive myths of our era."[324]

In her essay: "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs"(2000), Susan Rubin Suleiman asks if we should salvage Wilkomirski's deluded memoir by treating it as a compelling piece of writing that "unveils" truths about the effects of the Holocaust on the contemporary imagination: trauma, horror, a sense of victimhood; "it appears that the Holocaust has become, in today's Europe and America, the ultimate signifier of such torments, even for those who have no personal connection to that past event."[325] She cites James E. Young's persuasive writing about Sylvia Plath's poetic identification with the "Holocaust Jew" and the ethical and interpretive problems it poses. Plath was criticized for her use of the Holocaust as a metaphor of personal suffering, thus trivializing that collective event. James E. Young, while recognizing and even sharing

---

[322] A similar argument has been advanced by Saul Friedlander in his call for a new historiography of the Holocaust. See: Friedlander, Saul, 1993. Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe .(Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993).

[323] Wiesel, Elie.. "Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art"? The New York Times. April 17, 1983.

[324] Bernstein, Michael André. Foregone Conclusion: Against Apocalyptic History. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). as cited by Susan Rubin Suleiman. "Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs." Poetics Today #21 Fall 2000: 3

[325] Suleiman , Susan Rubin. "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs." Poetics Today 21:3 Fall 2000: 554.

this criticism, nevertheless concludes that "to remove the Holocaust from the realm of the imagination is to risk excluding it altogether from public consciousness. Better abused memory in this case, which might then be critically qualified, than no memory at all."[326] Susan Rubin Suleiman adds:

> Wilkomirski's book presents an extreme version of this problem, a literalization of Plath's metaphors as well as of her self-identification as a "Holocaust Jew." Being an extreme case, Fragments poses certain questions starkly: Where does literature end (or begin) and psychopathology begin (or end)? Where should the line be drawn—should the line be drawn?—between personal memory and imagined or "borrowed" memory? To whom does the memory of the Holocaust belong? The fact that Fragments raises these questions powerfully, may be reason enough for its continued presence in our literary landscape—if not as a memoir (it is not that), and not as a novel (it is not that either, at least not yet), then at least as a "case."[327]

Two extensively researched essays were published in the summer of 1999, Elena Lappin's in Granta claims that, although she is not a psychologist, the temptations and dangers of literary or any other kind of psychology for the amateur are well known. The similarities between Fragments, the early life of Binjamin Wilkomirski, and what we know of the early life of the real Bruno Grosjean are too striking to resist: obscure origins in a social class that polite Swiss society would rather not discuss; a childhood swamped with loss and change; institutions which might easily seem like child-prisons; distant memories of motherhood. In the book, the mother-substitute, Frau Grosz; in life, Frau Grosjean, "I looked at her" writes Wilkomirski of Frau Grosz as they travel on the train from Poland to Basle. "She is staring at her hands and seemed to be a long way away. Something important, something that couldn't be changed, was going to happen."[328] Whether this is Grosz or Grosjean, Binjamin or Bruno, the destination is the same: adoption, the Dössekkers, a certain luxury but also coldness and formality in that villa in the Zürichberg, overlooking a country where

---

[326] Young, James E. Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narration and the Consequences of Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1988) 133.
[327] Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs." Poetics Today 21:3, Fall 2000: 554.
[328] Lappin, Elena, "The Man with Two Heads," Granta 66, 1999: 65.

Binjamin/Bruno will begin to feel separate, and which he will come to dislike. To remove himself as far as possible from his native environment, he declared himself a Jew. "If he sought a sense of community in Judaism, I doubt that he has found it—he practices a very solitary form. But to Bruno Dösseker, being a Jew was synonymous with the Holocaust. Swiss history has nothing remotely similar to offer, nothing so dramatic to survive, or to explain to a man where he came from, or how he is."[329]

Still, while any account of Holocaust survival is rife with luck and miracle, how this toddler managed to survive the destruction of the entire Jewish children's barracks in Maidaneck, and then wind up on a transport to Auschwitz (as he claimed to have learned after the completion of Fragments*)* seemed to have escaped all the reference works consulted by Geller. Wilkomirski-Dossekker's detractors, both before and after Ganzfried's revelations, regularly cite Raul Hilberg (Lau,1988; Lappin,1999),[330] the Holocaust historian, on the many factual accuracies of the text. Also, in becoming the unofficial spokesperson for child survivors and a part-time fund-raiser for (among other organizations) the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Wilkomirski had encountered many others who could perhaps help him fill in some gaps in his account, make sense of his recurring images, and recognize the recollections of his Swiss youth as but screen memories. (Maechler, 2001)[331] Then, again, he might simply have been adjusting his story to audience expectations. (Van Alphen, 1997)[332]

---

[329]Lappin, Elena, "The Man with Two Heads," Granta 66, 1999: 65.

[330] Lau, Jorg. "An Almost Perfect Pain." Die Ziet, (Sept. 17, 1988). Lappin, Elena, "The Man with Two Heads," Granta 66,1999: 7-65

[331] Wilkomirski-Dossekker told Maechler that, just prior to the publication of Fragments, he had been informed by the former rector of Cracow University and an expert on the Polish death camps that the second camp to which he recalled having been transported was in all likelihood Auschwitz-Birkenau.

[332] Van Alphen, Ernst. "Testimonies and the Limits of Representations." In Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory (Stanford UP, 1997) 41-64.
See also: Maechler, Stephan. "Wilkomirski the Victim: Individual Remembering as Social Interaction and Public Event." History and Memory, 2001.13.2: 59-95.

Beyond national interest or literary taste, both Ganzfried's work and its reception continuously turned on one issue that has had a long-standing and powerful effect on judgments about psychoanalysis: the misappropriation of Freud's work on repression and trauma, namely, the question of recovered as opposed to false memories. Even before he laid out the documentation in his first article on Wilkomirski-Doessekker, Ganzfried indicted the discipline of psychoanalysis as exemplified by the response of the audience at the Zurich Psychoanalytic Seminar to a lecture (1988) by Wilkomirski-Doessekker. There Wilkomirski had presented a version of his paper "The Question of Identity of Holocaust Children: Interdisciplinary Cooperation between the Psychotherapist and the Historian" (a copy of which he gave J. Geller) which revealed that often, by means of skillful cooperation between the historian and the psychotherapist, events surrounding the early life of the "Holocaust child" can be reconstructed, thereby enabling him to discover his true identity. To Ganzfried's—who was present—dismay, the assembled analysts in Zurich were silent about the lecturer's failure to consider the question of the proportion of fact and fiction in each memory.

There was also the relationship between Wilkomirski-Dossekker and the Israeli psychotherapist Elitsur Bernstein who had encouraged him to write down his nightmares, which would later become Fragments. This collaborative endeavor responded to a very real need. A number of orphaned Jewish children had to assume false identities to survive during and after the Shoah. Consequently, as the demand for Holocaust testimony grew, those now grown-ups "children without identity" respond to both personal and collective needs to reconstruct and validate the notion of an "original" and "true" self.

According to Geller, read against this background, "The Question of Identity of Holocaust Children" proves to be a most interesting text, because when one examines the three clients mentioned and compares their biographies with Wilkomirski's accounts in Fragments and various

interviews, one realizes that they are all one and the same. In the first case study, the client remembers "a scene in front of a house in a city, which he connects with the name Riga, where a man, perhaps his father is killed." The client alludes to a nightmare escape by ship. This account is identical to the description in the opening chapter of Fragments (5-8). The second client recalls fleeing with a group of others, following a sort of massacre, along railroad tracks. He also describes the horrible pain in his "inflamed eyes" when he looked to his right at the setting sun. Again this case study exactly reproduces the account in Fragments (96). The final case tells of the client's arrest by men in green uniforms; not coincidentally, Fragments recounts the narrator's arrest by such uniformed soldiers (34-35). In these situations, Wilkomirski assumed the role of the historian. In addition to his musical career, he had been working on a doctorate in Zurich focusing on the plight of Jewish refugees in the 1930s, and he does indeed have an extensive archive of Shoah and WWII material.

Can we look upon Wilkomirski-Doesseker as a self-conscious artist forging what Jörg Lau (1998) has called "an almost perfect pain?" Or are he and his book rather the products of years of conscious and unconscious searching?

We can say that Wilkomirski, if not the calculating liar that Daniel Ganzfried describes, is at least a seriously and sadly deluded person who has invented for himself a terrible history. Or, simply say, that the story of his memoir reveals how one's desire for such memoirs of difficult lives has created an atmosphere conducive to fraud; but there may be more about the relation between the phenomenon of the false memoir and the common interest in trauma. Some people, closely acquainted with the author believe he did not set out to produce a lie and that he really believes he is the child-survivor his memoir describes. Amy Hungerford sustains that in the process of becoming a form, the holocaust memoir and the representation of trauma in general, has been described by our

most prominent theorists of trauma and literature, Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth, as embodying a certain relation between language and experience, a relation that ultimately asks us to understand Fragments not so much as a fraud, but as the epitome of the very assumptions that underlie trauma theory's analytic discourse.[333] Indeed, Wilkomirski refers to that experience in Fragments which opens with a lament for the loss of what Wilkomirski calls his "mother" and "father" tongues. He first introduces himself as an orphan, not by explaining that his parents were killed but by describing his loss of language: an orphan because he has forgotten the Yiddish that his family spoke. "The languages I learnt later on were never mine, at bottom, they were only imitations of other people's speech."(2-3) Personal identity must be somehow the equivalent of language; it is not what you learn, or "imitate" but what is "yours, at bottom" the very source, like a parent, of your identity.

Daniel Ganzfried claimed that Wilkomirski's desire for personal significance drove him to invent himself as a Holocaust survivor. "The life he wants to call his own is one that matters to the history of the century, not the comfortable and insignificant life of an upper-crust Swiss son."[334] For him, the narrative comes first; the claim to experience follows. His friend, Elitsur Bernstein makes this order apparent when he tells of receiving, by fax, the first part of what was to become the manuscript of Fragments. According to Bernstein, Wilkomirski had appended a question to the story he sent: "Could it have been so?"[335] Clearly, his "personal history" was produced, over time, by the production of the stories that then came to be called a memoir.

---

[333] Hungerford, Amy: "Memorizing Memory," Yale Journal of Criticism 14, no.1, Spring 2001: 67-92. She refers here to Cathy Caruth's Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, M.D. Testimony: The Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (New York: Routledge, 1992)

[334] Gourevitch, Philip. "The Memory Thief," New Yorker, June 14, 1999: 10.

[335] Lappin, Elena. "The Man with two Heads." Granta 66, Summer 99.

Becoming a survivor by telling or reading a survivor story does not originate with Bruno Dösseker becoming Binjamin Wilkomirski or with the readers of Fragments who "experience" the memoir. Wilkomirski, in interviews, has noted that he first began to understand what had happened to him when he studied the Holocaust in high school. It is clear that studying the Holocaust in school was a pivotal point in the transformation of Bruno into Binjamin. Shoshana Felman tells about a classroom experience that constitutes the subject of the first chapter of Testimony (1992*),* a work whose juxtaposition of psychoanalysis and de Manian deconstruction has made it the theoretical model for those who seek to analyze the relation between traumatic experience and literature. In a "Literature and Testimony" seminar which concluded with a screening of two videotaped Holocaust testimonies from Yale's Fortunoff Archive, Felman describes how the class, after viewing the first of the two Holocaust testimonies, experienced a "crisis" in which the students were "entirely at a loss, disoriented and uprooted."[336] What the students needed, Felman concluded, was to be brought "back into significance," (Testimony*,* 48) and to accomplish this she prepared an "address to the class" that would "return" to the students "the importance and significance of their reactions" (Testimony, 49). "We have in this second screening session the task of surviving the first session" and she encouraged her students to explore their emotional responses to the tapes. "The work turned out to be an amazingly articulate reflective and profound statement of the trauma they had gone through and of the significance of their assuming the position of a witness." (Testimony, 52) What Felman suggests is that the experience of listening to Holocaust testimony produces symptoms of trauma equivalent to the traumatic symptoms produced by actually experiencing the Holocaust. Felman and Laub explain in the Foreword that "a life testimony" is not simply a testimony to a private life, but a point of conflation between text and life, a textual testimony which can *penetrate us like an actual*

[336] Felman, Shoshana and Laub, Dori. Testimony: The Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History (New York: Routledge, 1992) 48-52.

life"(Testimony, 2) and become ours. To receive traumatic experience one must feel an identification with the victims of the Holocaust and willingly immerse oneself in the literature of testimony, as the students did and as Bruno Dössekker did. Initially, then, the mechanism of identification Felman describes seems to require a commitment to the importance of sentiment and desire in the production of that identification, over and above lived experience of the trauma represented.

As Bruno Dössekker absorbed the accounts of camp life, the stories of extreme violence, the testimonies, histories and photographs, he finally became them, and they made him Binjamin Wilkomirski. Amy Hungerford concludes her article:

> Our recollection of "the things that made us"—in the case of Bruno Dössekker, memorizing and memory have become the same thing. Without setting out to memorize the map of Auschwitz, he nevertheless did. In doing so, he became a child survivor. And further, in doing so, he allows us to understand both the structures and the implications of an important strand of late twentieth-century literature and literary theory. I hope to have suggested how those structures conflate reading and experience in the very cases—cases of extreme suffering—that would appear to challenge such an equation, how the combination of deconstruction and psychoanalysis makes trauma both generic and transmissible, and how the material signifier, takes on the body of the person and with it the pathos of life and death that belongs to that body.[337]

In experiencing Wilkomirski's pain as his own, Dössekker, the man, transforms his personal sense of orphanhood into the experience of a "phantom" pain; and his writing then functions as a mode of transmission for the painful Wilkomirski memories that derive from the collective memory but that he takes as his own, in such a way that they become phantom pain in the minds of his book's readers.

In his book A Life in Pieces, the Making and the Unmaking of Binjamin Wilkomirski, Blake Eskin, a "real" descendant of the Wilkomirskis of Riga—to whose family Benjamin claimed belonging—after a long research which confirmed his doubts about the truth in the supposed

[337] Hungerford, Amy: "Memorizing Memory." Yale Journal of Criticism 14, no.1, Spring 2001: 88.

"cousin's story" writes that in his pursuit of answers, he came across all sorts of clever hypotheses, armchair diagnoses, and paranoid plots: Wilkomirski did it for the money; he did it for the attention; he succumbed to his own tentative fiction; he needed to stir up in others the pity he felt for himself; he couldn't help but make himself into the pariah he has always felt himself to be; he was utterly deluded and remains that way; he is, to use the very words *he* applied to Barbro Karlén, the Swedish poet who claims to be the second coming of Anne Frank, "simply disturbed." One can blame Rudolf Zehnder (his biological father) for abandoning his child, Yvonne Grosjean for her inadequate mothering, Mrs. Aberhard for her physical and psychological cruelty, the Swiss Government for putting wealth before kinship and bypassing Max Grosjean (his uncle who was willing to adopt him), the Doessekkers for their *haut bourgeois* Protestant reserve, and so on. They may be responsible for Bruno's troubles, but none of them wrote Fragments or spread the story. And, in conclusion, he adds that to some degree, the impulse that drove Bruno to become Binjamin is an impulse—shared by Jews and non-Jews, survivors and non-survivors, Wilkomirski and non-Wilkomirskis—who identified with Binjamin and saw their own stories through his. "Each one of us made use of Binjamin's story in our way, and in doing so we gave him substance, we made him real."[338]

Contemporary thought is fascinated by borderlines, those areas where boundaries begin to blur; but such blurring can exist only because categories do, and those of fact and fiction remain very strong. Some contemporary writers play on those categories. An ambiguous case is Georges Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance—which consists of two parallel narratives told in alternating chapters: a science fiction narrative about the island of *W*, which at end turns out to be an allegory of the Nazi death camps, and a memoir about Perec's childhood in wartime France. Although both narratives

[338] Blake Eskin. A Life in Pieces. The Making and Unmaking of Binjamin Wilkomirski (W.W. Norton & Company: New York/London, 2002) 241.

have first-person narrators, the fictional "I" and the autobiographical "I" are differentiated: the appearance of Perec's name is a clear textual indicator in the autobiographical sections, while the science fiction segments indicates fictional discourse. Since the book contains an equal number of chapters devoted to each, it could be said that the overall effect of the work depends on the juxtaposition of the two parts, with the reader constantly "shuttling" from one world to the other and wondering what the relation between them is. Unlike Perec's work, Wilkomirski's book does not *play* with categories. The problem with Fragments is precisely that it does not recognize—or at any rate, does not admit—its own fictionality.

The lesson to be drawn, finally, may be this: If memory is a "shifting and many-layered thing," never reaching the bedrock one longs for, then the way around that problem is not to keep silent, not to confine oneself to fiction, but (to borrow a phrase from James E. Young) to keep on writing and rewriting.[339] Breton was right: "life is other than what one writes"[340]

From a memoir dressed up in fiction (Begley), to fiction (Kosinski) and fraud (Wilkomirski), we are coming to real fiction which eloquently describes the quest for memory and identity of a child survivor.

W.G. Sebald

For his many admirers, W. G. Sebald is one of the greatest European writers of recent years. Born in 1944, Sebald was a professor of German literature in England until he was killed in a car accident in 2000. His books, first published in German, defy easy categorization, and have been regularly summarized as part hybrid-fiction, part memoir and part travelogue, while the expressions most frequently used to describe his extraordinary prose style, built on long, elegant sentences, are haunting and mesmerizing.

---

[339] Suleiman, Susan R. "Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs." Poetics Today: 21:3 Fall 2000: 557.

[340] Breton, André. Nadja, trans. by Richard Howard (New York:Grove, 1928) 28

Sebald grew up in a Bavarian village, and it was while he was at the University at Freiburg that the Auschwitz trials took place in Frankfurt. The discovery that the defendants were ordinary people, like those he knew and had grown up with, came as a disturbing revelation and he doubted whether those who had never experienced Theresienstadt or Auschwitz could simply describe what occurred there. That would have been presumptuous, an appropriation of others' sufferings. He felt that the attempts to look directly at the horror would turn a writer into stone, or sentimentality. It was necessary, he found, to approach this subject obliquely and to invent a new literary form, part hybrid novel, part memoir and part travelogue, even often involving the experiences of one W. G. Sebald, a German writer long settled in East Anglia, always trying (also by adding pictures) not to make a point in an assertive way but through implication and suggestion. Austerlitz, his final publication, is a masterwork, and is about the difficulties of restructuring a memory strong enough to hold an identity that has been erased in the Holocaust. This is a book so good that you find yourself constantly re-reading passages to savor the luminous intensity with which Sebald evokes people encountered, places visited, things seen, and atmospheres recalled.

In 1939, not yet five, Jacques Austerlitz, who carries the same name as the Paris railway station from which Jewish children were deported, is sent to Britain on a Kindertransport before World War II and placed with foster parents in Wales. As a child he was never happy, though he excels at school and becomes an architectural historian. He is told nothing about his identity, and it is years before he even learns his original name. Later, the past he has always avoided thinking about returns to haunt him and he goes in search of his lost parents. The pale pastel shades of the child's faint images of the past match the insipid intangibility of an identity he has lost and cannot hold onto even when he recovers it, traveling to Czechoslovakia to track down people who remembered his parents, who were lost in the Holocaust. He relates this story in a series of sometimes coincidental

meetings with the book's narrator, who reports it to us. The entire story is narrated indirectly, at several removes, in parentheses, through indirect speech reported to the narrator who chances across the itinerant Austerlitz at various places around Europe. It is as if, in the absence of personal memories, the world can be experienced only indirectly. The narrator wasn't a witness to these events and neither can we be. British and American editions of Austerlitz show a photograph of a young boy dressed like a cavalier on the cover and the assumption that this must be Austerlitz is proved correct—the photograph is presented as him in the text. Yet, clearly, if Austerlitz is a fictional character, the picture must be of someone else. The status of many of the images in the book becomes similarly questionable. In fact the photograph is a boyhood picture of a real architectural historian, one of Sebald's friends. Austerlitz was a composite of several real people.

In the book, Austerlitz is a constant taker of photographs and he entrusts his collection, which "one day would be all that was left of his life," to the narrator, who uses them to assemble the story. At one point some of Austerlitz's photographs are employed as a therapeutic aid after a breakdown to reconstruct his "buried experiences" and there is a sense in which the book's entire sequence of eighty-seven images in four-hundred-fifteen pages has been used for this purpose. Here, more than ever, it seems clear that the images haven't arrived after the writing as "illustrations." Rather they have been used as source material by Sebald as a way of generating, or one might say *designing*, this apparently meandering but beautifully shaped narrative, in order to restore memory in them, and reanimate them, bringing them back to life. It is as if Sebald, by writing about a child Holocaust survivor, in quest of his identity all through the book, makes this quest even stronger by the fact of his presenting him as an architectural historian—a very concrete profession of form and substance for someone who has neither form nor identity—and the pictures here are also used to show this contrast, in trying to materialize the unknown. Austerlitz follows a career as a historian of

architecture, and the architecture of railway stations provides both visual orientation and ambiguous metaphor for the construction and deconstruction of memory. So evasive are the personal memories that come with a state of mind in certain places that a typical digression sets off speculation about architectural history that constructs in the mind's eye an unwilling return to the past. The waiting-room at Liverpool Street Station, for example, summons the memory of Austerlitz as a child being met by the foster parents who were to give him a new identity. "In fact I felt, said Austerlitz, that the waiting-room where I stood, as if dazzled, contained all the hours of my past life, all the suppressed and extinguished fears and wishes I had ever entertained, as if the black and white diamond pattern of the stone slabs beneath my feet were the board on which the endgame would be played, and it covered the entire plane of time." (Austerlitz*,* 192-3). Anthea Bell, his translator writes that "this little phrase: 'said Austerlitz' runs through the whole novel, because of its double narrative structure, like a musical motif, imparting rhythm and linking the many strands together, every now and then returning the narrative, so to speak, to the home key."[341] According to Efraim Sicher, in his chapter: Postmodernist "holocausts," in The Holocaust Novel, the pattern, and the digressive way it is introduced, might indeed be a metaphor for the postmodernist novel's own grappling with time and space in the ruins of memory: "Memory, as we discover in the town of Theresienstadt and elsewhere, reflects a faded photograph but does not connect to some meaning that would give direction and purpose to history and life—hence the form of the novel itself winds down into breakdown and death because after the Holocaust there is no longer a generational life cycle or shared knowledge on which to construct a plot. Cultural memory itself has been eroded or erased, so

[341]Bell, Anthea: "On Translating W..G. Sebald" in The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W.G..Sebald," ed. Rüdiger Görner. (University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Germanic Studies) 11.

that the associative resonance of texts and places comes across as a strange echo from a forgotten age."[342]

In her essay: "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory" (2001), Marianne Hirsch cites Roland Barthes: "photography holds a *uniquely* referential relation to the real, defined not through the discourse of artistic representation, but that of magic, alchemy, indexicality. The photo—even the fictional photo—has, as Barthes would say, evidential force. It thus illustrates the integral link photographs provide for the second generation, those who in their desire for memory and knowledge, are left to track the traces of what has been there and no longer is. Pictures 'materialize' memory."[343] In one of the book's most remarked upon uses of photography, the text stops and Sebald shows a sequence of four doorways (like a series of tombstones)—representing the fate of the Austerlitz's family—in Terezin outside Prague, site of a Jewish ghetto in the Second World War, which Austerlitz visits—these are his photos. In this context, the brutal last door, with its heavy iron bands, cannot fail to suggest a death camp gas chamber, though no such thing is stated in the text.

Like Austerlitz, Sebald was a devoted photographer. "In school I was in the dark room all the time", he told an interviewer, "and I've always collected stray photographs; there's a great deal of memory in them." In his books, photographs are used as letters used to be, to authenticate the fiction. Sebald is brilliantly visual. He makes you realize, with some discomfort, that we often fail to look attentively enough at what we see. Another novelist, Poyner Pick, referred to the "phenomenal configuration" of the author's mind and "what astonishes and delights in Sebald's sentences, superbly rendered by his translators, is his ability to convey not just the detail of so many things

---

[342] Sicher, Ephraim "Postmodernist 'holocausts' " in The Holocaust Novel (New York and London: Routledge, 2005) 195.
[343] Hirsch, Marianne: "Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory." Yale Journal of Criticism #1 Spring 2001: 14.

hitting the senses in a rain of fleeting simultaneous impressions, but the precise emotional shading and personal import of each of these moments."[344] His eye records with photographic accuracy, then these perceptions are "recovered" from memory and reconstituted as fictional experience with the same exhilaratingly scrupulous fidelity. The complication in Sebald's writing—a complication he apparently intended—lies in our uncertainty about how much of what he describes derives from his own experiences (seemingly a lot) and how much of it is largely or entirely imagined. Based on a reading of the book alone, the narrator shows every sign of being Sebald himself, but we know from what he has said elsewhere that these melancholy figures are at most fictionalized versions of the author. Another striking aspect of the book is the use Sebald makes, in addition to photographs, of other visual material, of architectural plans, engravings, paintings and restaurant bills. These uncaptioned images are inserted into the text providing an additional level of documentary "evidence," and this is done so effectively that you become convinced that Sebald really must have undertaken the walk or visited the building that he describes. Literary reviewers usually note the presence of these images, acknowledging that they add to the book's unique flavor. If Austerlitz is Sebald's most sophisticated marriage of writing and imagery, its use of images also raises the most questions, because of all the books, it is the one most like a work of fiction, though of a highly unconventional kind.

As Anthea Bell suggests in her essay: "On Translating W.G. Sebald," "It seems that Austerlitz is more of a conventional novel than its predecessors; indeed, it is almost two novels, with its outer framework narrated by the anonymous Sebaldian figure who first meets the protagonist Jacques Austerlitz in Antwerp, and the inner narrative which is Austerlitz's own story."[345] In Spring

[344] Poyner, Rick, Design Observer : W.G.Sebald : "Writing with Pictures" <http://www.designobserver.com>27 July, 2004.
[345] Bell, Anthea. Essay "On Translating W.G.Sebald." In The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of

2002, the Threepenny Review in the States published a set of tributes to Sebald, and Lynne Sharon Schwartz wrote :

> With its fully developed character and story line, Austerlitz may seem a reversion to a more traditional novel, but like the preceding books, it has been finely ground through the sieve of history and metaphor. Though not as wide-ranging or dazzling as The Rings of Saturn, it is more intimate. It wrenches the heart quicker and tighter. Of all Sebald's emigrants—a fictional family of sorts—Austerlitz is the most scrupulously drawn and Sebald offers him a dust-mote of hope at the end, as, having successfully traced his mother, he plans to continue the search for his father. [346]

His account of Theresienstadt, where Austerlitz, in search of his roots, discovers that his mother was interned, is a nine-page sentence and the '*raison d'être'* of this sentence is to reflect the terrible, pointless, bureaucratic industry of the Nazis, intent here upon window-dressing the camp for the benefit of a Red Cross commission, with a view to suggesting that the place was a happy holiday home for Jews provided out of the kindness of the Führer's heart.

Martin Swales in his essay "Intertextuality, Authenticity, Metonymy? On reading W. G. Sebald," points out that "Sebald's texts retain a contingent, inconclusive, absent feel that come from resolutely asserted randomness. This is compounded by the unmistakable refusal on the part of the text to psychologise or explain, to fill in emotional or cognitive gaps."[347] Here we can cite two of the high points in Austerlitz's account of his life. One is the epiphany at Liverpool Street Station:

> For the first time in as far back as I can remember I recollected myself as a small child, at the moment when I realized that it must have been to this same waiting room I had come on my arrival in England over half a century ago. As so often, said Austerlitz, I cannot give any precise description of the state of mind this realization induced: I felt something rending within me and a sense of shame and sorrow, or perhaps something quite different, something inexpressible because we have no words for it, just as I had no words all those years ago when the two strangers came

---

W.G..Sebald," N. ed. Rüdiger Görner. (University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Germanic Studies) 11, presented in "W.G. Sebald Memorial Day" on January, 31, 2003:.l. German version : JUDICIUM Verlag GmbH München 2003.

[346] Sharon-Schwartz, Lynne. Threepenny Review, Spring 2002.

[347] Swales, Martin, "Intertextuality, Authenticity, Metonymy? On reading W.G.Sebald" in The Anatomist of Melancholy. Essays in Memory of W.G.Sebald. Ed. Rudiger Groner. University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Germanic Studies presented in "W. G. Sebald Memorial Day" on January, 31, 2003: l. German version: JUDICIUM (Verlag GmbH München 2003) 83

> over to me speaking a language I did not understand. All I do know is that when I saw the boy sitting on the bench I became aware, through my dull bemusement, of the destructive effect on me of my desolation through all those past years, and a terrible weariness overcame me at the idea that I had never really been alive, or was only now being born, almost on the eve of my death. (Austerlitz, 193-4)

This epiphany triggers Austerlitz's quest for his past. "But if it is a rebirth, it is one that neither restores nor liberates, nor in any significant sense quickens. Rather it seems to compound the deprivation that is at the heart of the life."[348] Revelation there is; but it is something un-negotiable, beyond analysis or comprehension. The same applies to the moment when, in Prague, Vera (his former nanny) gives him the photograph of himself which appears on the cover of the book we are reading: "That evening in the Sporkova, when Vera put the picture before me, I was not, as you might suppose, moved or distressed," said Austerlitz, "only speechless and uncomprehending, incapable of any lucid thought. Even later nothing but blind panic filled me when I thought of the five-year old page."(Austerlitz, 184)

That the moment of confrontation at the time is incomprehensible is not surprising. But it remains so in retrospect. Austerlitz can only tell us what he is and knows; but he cannot come to terms with it. He can scarcely explain or interpret it. He remains then, an absence rather than a presence—both to himself and us. This condition of incomprehension also applies to the narrator—and to the relationship (if we can call it that) that develops between the two of them. There is hardly any dialogue between them. Moreover, the narrator offers no words of explanation or commentary. The vast majority of their meetings are left to chance. He sometimes wonders at the sheer repetitiousness of the random intersections of their paths. At one point he writes: "our paths kept crossing in a way that I still find hard to understand, on all my Belgian excursions of that time, none

---

[348] Swales, Martin, "Intertextuality, Authenticity, Metonymy? On reading W.G.Sebald" in The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W. G. Sebald. Ed. Rudiger Groner. University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Germanic Studies presented in "W. G. Sebald Memorial Day" on January, 31, 2003.l. German version : JUDICIUM (Verlag GmbH München 2003) 85.

of them planned in advance."(Austerlitz, 36) Or again: there was an astonishing, positively imperative internal logic to his meeting me here in the bar of the Great Eastern Hotel, a place he had never before entered in his life." (Austerlitz, 60) Yet both parties are impelled to leave matters to chance; they seem unable to define the strange interdependence that binds them together.

This is, for me, the central conundrum posed by Sebald's extraordinary prose. It resists speculation, psychologisation, conclusiveness. It is curiously decentred, absent rather than present. There is the narrator's relationship with his subject characterized by emotional proximity and overt affective investment. His prose bears witness to and speaks not only of, but also from, a condition of fearful vulnerability. There is a voice in the prose, in spite of the absences and discontinuities. That voice bears witness without explaining. It is not confessional prose. While it may be personal, it is in fact meta-subjective. And it is so because the authentic voice of that anguish were it to be uttered, would be the long-drawn-out scream of the tortured Novelli in Austerlitz—the dreadful sequence of capital A's filling three lines of text. (Austerlitz, 27) What Sebald gives us essentially is not that: rather, he gives us the circumstancial account of places, buildings, persons, all of them marked by the archeology of human suffering. He gives us the circumstances; the things that stand around the centre of pain, the material traces of psychological condition of deprivation and hurt. He avoids confessional overtness because at the heart of that overtness would be the scream that would be neither aesthetically nor morally endurable. Hence, that recurrent lament in Sebald's prose that he never quite manages to say what he wants to say. He can talk around it; about the causes and consequences of pain, about its signs and traces. But, for the most part, the pain itself is implied and not said. Sebald offers us, the melancholy contiguous to the pain condition, rather than the condition itself. If the condition of Sebald's prose, then, is to be found in an eloquence of the not-quite said, how are we to explain the importance of his "oeuvre?" The fact is that the only true remembrance of

the horrors let loose on our world by twentieth-century history, by two World Wars, by Stalinism, above all by the Holocaust, is an abysmal silence, because silence acknowledges the gap left by so many deaths. But as mentioned by Swales, silence "while it could be eloquent in this way as the conduit of loss, is also, by definition, a negation of eloquence. It could also show indifference. Sebald's prose uses words to imply the necessity of silence, to circumscribe silence and make it eloquent."[349]

There is also the issue of physical horror at all that pain and destruction. To dwell on the physical may come close to a display of violence and, not to insist would be to find refuge in abstraction. In this instance, Sebald writes concretely, but never ghoulishly, of suffering.

Finally, there is an historical issue. Sebald belonged to the generation that came after the specific horrors that were to haunt him as a German. Sebald tried to speak obliquely rather than directly. We do not get close to Austerlitz, nor to the narrator. Nor do they get close to each other. The narrator listens and bears witness. Austerlitz talks and bears witness. Witness to the sayable things that are at the circumference of the suffering centre, rather than the suffering itself. It is a form of supremely valuable witness; perhaps the only manageable and endurable one there is. "Not so much an anatomy, nor an allegory, nor a confession, nor an inventory of melancholy. But a hauntingly metonymic witness to it."[350]

Sebald said in an interview with Arthur Lubow, published in the New York Times on December 11, 2001: "The borders between the dead and the living are not hermetically sealed. There is some

[349] Swales, Martin, "Intertextuality, Authenticity, Metonymy? On Reading W.G.Sebald" in The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W.G.Sebald. Ed. Rudiger Groner. University of London School of Advanced Study, Institute of Germanic Studies presented in "W. G. Sebald Memorial Day" on January, 31, 2003: .l. German version : JUDICIUM (Verlag GmbH München 2003) 87.
[350] Swales: 87.

form of travel or gray zone. If there is a feeling, especially among unhappy people, that there is such a thing as a living death, then it is possible that the reverse is also true."[351]

Conclusion

This chapter considered the most fictionalized accounts of child Holocaust survivors' experiences through the works of Begley, Kosinski, Wilkomirski and Sebald. We have in this chapter three categories of fiction: the Holocaust experience represented in fiction, an invented Holocaust childhood, and real fiction.

Begley and Kosinski were child survivors. Begley had to use fiction as a screen to write about his wartime hidden identity—which allowed him to survive—and with this form of writing he could look at his war experience from a certain distance which enabled him to come to terms with his past when he reached the proper time and maturity in his life when he could face it. Kosinski was also a child survivor and his reference to the Holocaust, through The Painted Bird, with its expansion of experience into a surreal inner theater, its construction with the help from editors and translators, its lack of dialogue, and its existence at the shadowy border between fiction and personal statement, remains an important aesthetic response to that period of violence and evil.

In Fragments, Wilkomirski's need to appropriate for himself the childhood of a Holocaust survivor may be judged as his need to fill in him the void left by a childhood raised in orphanages and then adoption. It is not clear how much of a fraud he really meant to be and whether he did it for sensation and profit. Whatever it was, it shows that he was a disillusioned man who needed to create himself, with a borrowed identity—even that of a Holocaust survivor—to give meaning to his life by using a fraud.

Sebald's Austerlitz is a poetic finale to the subject of the tragedy of child survivors' experiences in their quest to retrieve their past and their lost identity. In our present debate about

[351] Swales: 88.

commemoration, remembering and postmemory, Sebald's presence is indispensable. In this book, Sebald explores the power of erasure, focusing on the example of one man's extinguished memory of childhood, but he is also concerned with historical consciousness: about contemporary culture tendency to erase all evidence regardless of its historical significance or its moral content. Contemporary Europe, as the site of collaborative atrocities throughout the twentieth century, provides countless examples of this antihistorical force at work smothering the truth about the past. Reconstructing history with its startling realities and painful repercussions constitutes the heart of Austerlitz. Sebald combats the erasure of history on the collective as well as the individual level: the denial of the Holocaust, the suppression of the effects of bombarding Germany's cities and in the refusal to acknowledge the brutality of Belgian colonialism. In the individual experience of Jacques Austerlitz, however, we find what is perhaps the most insidious, if oblique, infliction of harm achieved by the actions of the Nazis. The case of Austerlitz is a case of larceny; but what the Nazis take from him is not his life or property but his essential personhood, and though this crime is merely the indirect result of the organized persecution of the Jews, it is nonetheless real and devastating. Sebald conveys the mental anguish suffered by Austerlitz in his own words, simply allowing him to speak openly and at his own pace. What he recounts is a reconstructive odyssey as his character searches for himself. One wonders how many other *kindertransport* biographies resemble that of Austerlitz, who experienced in the intervening months and years a near totality of erasure[352].

[352] See also Gershon, Karen, ed. We came as Children, A Collective Autobiography. Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1966.

Epilogue

To sum up an unprecedented act of industrialized killing in a common phrase seems inadequate enough. The Nazis "final solution" (decided upon at the Wannsee Conference which took place on January 20, 1942)—which came three years after the annihilation of Jews was already in process—was an ideologically motivated program of genocide to systematically eradicate the Jews and other racially inferior beings in order to create a new global order ruled by the Aryan master race.[353]

This study has focused on child survivors, their experience, its impact on their adult lives, and the way they later represented this experience in literature. It has examined the relation between narrative/history; between testifying (orally or in writing) and survival; the common ground between literature and ethics, and the meeting point between violence and culture, the very moment when they come to clash—and yet to mingle—in contemporary history. It has been suggested that testimony is the literary—or discursive—mode par excellence of our times, and that our era can precisely be defined as the age of testimony. As Elie Wiesel has claimed "our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony."[354] It is as much a debt of knowledge as of acknowledging the unpayability of the debt of knowledge. "And how, in effect, is it possible to accept not to know?" asks Maurice Blanchot in his meditation on the relationship between the writing and what he calls the disaster: "We read the books on Auschwitz. The vow of everybody there, the last vow; know what has happened, do not forget, and at the same time: you will never know."[355]

---

[353] Rubinstein, Richard L. and Roth, John K. Approaches to Auschwitz: The Legacy of the Holocaust (London: SCM Press, 1987) 6-7.
[354] "The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration," in Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University, Elie Wiesel et al (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1977)
[355] Blanchot, Maurice, L'écriture du désastre (Paris: Gallimard, 1980) 131.

Thus the literature of testimony is at once a performance of its obligation and a statement of its inability to cancel its referential debt. "This is why I write certain things rather than others," says Elie Wiesel, "to remain faithful."

> Of course, there are times of doubt for the survivor, times when one would long for comfort. I would like to shout, and shout loudly: "Listen, listen well! *I* too am capable of victory, do you hear? *I* too am open to laughter and joy! I want to stride, head high, my face unguarded, without having to point to the ashes over there on the horizon. One feels like shouting like this but the shout changes into a murmur. One must make a choice; one must remain faithful. This sentiment moves all survivors: they owe nothing to anyone, but everything to the dead. All those children, those old people, I see them. I never stop seeing them. I belong to them.
> But, they, to whom do they belong? [356]

And he concentrated his life to testifying in memory of the dead. "If anyone could have written my stories," says Elie Wiesel, "I could not have written them in order to testify. And this is the origin of the loneliness that can be glimpsed in each of my sentences, in each of my silences."[357]

This feeling is shared by most child survivors. There is a link between survivors' literature and history. While history reports facts, survivors' testimonies, in oral or in writing, reflect the emotional truth, from within.

I divided my dissertation the way I did because I think that in order to understand the whole picture of the children's situation during and after the war, one must take into consideration the historical/sociological context, the psychological research and how the experience of each survivor has been expressed and represented in literature. For child survivors, it was not always easy to open up and tell about their experience and it took them years to reach this stage. First of all, no one would listen and survivors had to wait until they had the necessary maturity to look back at their past

---

[356] Wiesel, Elie. "Why I write" in Confronting the Holocaust, eds. Alvin Rosenfeld and Irving Greenberg. (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978) 202-203.

[357] "The Loneliness of God," published in Dvar Hashavu'a (magazine of newspaper Davar) (Tel-Aviv, 1984) as cited by Shoshana Felman in Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History, eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge and London, 1992) 3.

and write about it. As Begley said in an interview: "What I write comes out of a crucible inside me."[358]

In their introduction to Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust, editors Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kacandes cite Jorge Semprun, who asked in his remarkable memoir: Literature or Life: "Can the story be told? Can anyone tell it?" he wonders, assuring his reader that he does not doubt the capacities of language to "contain everything." "But can people hear everything, imagine everything? Will they be able to understand? Will they have the necessary patience, passion, compassion, and fortitude?"[359] This is a topos of the Holocaust memoir expressed also through Primo Levi's constant dream of trying to tell his story at his sister's table, only to have it fall on deaf ears;[360] of Charlotte Delbo's sense that what she experienced in Auschwitz is "useless knowledge;"[361] or Paul Celan's image of the poem as a "message in a bottle" searching for an "addressable you."[362]

Every generation, every decade since the end of World War II has confronted new controversies over its history, its memory, and its representation. As Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kacandes write: "For teachers and students in the Humanities, the Holocaust has become a limit case, a prime site for testing aesthetic and ethical theories about mediation and representability."[363] As Saul Friedlander writes in Probing the Limits of Representation, Nazism and the "Final

---

[358]Interview with Diane Osen. (see Note page 211).
[359] Semprun, Jorge. Literature or Life Trans. Linda Covendale (New York: Penguin, 1997) 13-14.
[360] Levi, Primo. Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazis Assault on Humanity Trans. Stuart Woolf. (New York: Touchstone, 1976) 60
[361] Delbo, Charlotte. Auschwitz and After, trans. Rosette C. Lamont (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) 115-231.
[362] Celan, Paul. "Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen." Selected Poems and Prose. Trans. John Felstiner. (New York: Norton 2001): 395-6
[363] Hirsch, Marianne and Kacandes, Irene, eds. Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust (New York: MLA, 2004) 3

Solution," "the underlying assumption is that we are dealing with an event of a kind which demands a global approach and a general reflection on the difficulties that are raised by its representation."[364]

This dissertation dealt with a difficult subject, but I had a lot of satisfaction doing it. Through my research, I came across literature depicting suffering, courage and resilience. There is a wealth of literature on the subject and the world should be aware of it so that such horrific event never happens again. This brings me back to Sebald, who was for historical consciousness and against the erasure of history, on the collective as well as the individual level.

Writing and teaching about the Holocaust is important and I hope I will continue to have the opportunity to do so.

[364]Friedlander, Saul, ed. Probing the Limits of Representation, Nazism and the "Final Solution." (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Massachussets, 1992) 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Adler, Jacques. The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal responses and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Altounian, Janine. La survivance: traduire le trauma collectif. Paris : Ed. Dunod,2000

Arendt, Hannah. Responsibility and Judgment. New York : Shocken Books, 2003.

----Report on the Banality of Evil: Eichmann in Jerusalem. New York: Penguin, 1964.

----The Origins of Totalitarianism. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1996.

---- Between Past and future. USA: Penguin books, 1993.

Bauman, Denise. La mémoire des oubliés: Grandir après Auschwitz. Préface de Serge Klarsfeld. Paris: Ed: Albin Michel,1988.

Begley, Louis. Wartime lies. New York: Ivy Books, 1991.

Cargas, Henry James. Harry James Cargas in conversation with Elie Wiesel. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.

Caruth, Cathy. Unclaimed experience: Trauma, Narrative and History. Baltimore: John Hopkins U Press, 1996.

----(Ed)Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Baltimore: The John Hopkins U Press, 1991.

Cornwell, John. Hitler's Pope: The secret history of Pius XII. New York: Viking, 1991.

Caroll, James. Constantin's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Dawidowicz, Lucie. The war against the Jews, 1933–1945. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975.

Delpard, Raphael. Les enfants cachés. Paris: Ed. JCLattès, 1993.

Doubrovsky, Serge. La Dispersion. Paris: Mercure de France, 1990.

----Fils. Paris Editions Galilée, c1977.

----La Vie l'Instant. Paris : Balland, 1985.

----L'Après-vivre. Paris: Ed. B. Grasset, c1994.

----Parcours critique. Paris: Editions Galilée, 1980.

----Le Livre brisé. Paris: Grasset, 1989.

----Laissé pour conte. Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1999.

Dwork, Deborah. Children with a Star : Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Eisenberg, A. The Lost Generation: Children in the Holocaust – New-York:Pilgrim, 1982.

----Witness to the Holocaust. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981.

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub, M.D. Testimony: Crises in Witnessing in Literature,Psychoanalysis and History. New York: Routledge, 1992.

----An outline of Psycho-analysis. New York: Norton, 1963.

Fine, Ellen. Legacy of Night: The Literary Universe of Elie Wiesel. New York: State UP, 1982.

Friedlander, Saul. Pius XII and the 3rd Reich. New-York : Knopf 1966.

----When Memory Comes. New-York: Farrar, Strauss,Giroux, 1979.

----L'antisemitisme Nazi: Histoire d'une Psychose Collective. Paris: Editions du Seuil (1971).

----Ed. Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."

----Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.

----Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good. New York: Albert Knopf, 1969.

Freud, Anna. "An experiment in Group Upbringing." The Psychoanalytic study of the Child. Vol. 6. New York: International Universities Press, 1965.

Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1961.

----"Mourning and Melancholia." The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 4. Trans. James Strachay. London: The Hogarth Press,

1958.

Gilbert, Martin. Never Again: A History of the Holocaust. London: Harper Collins, 2000.

Goldhagen, David. Hitler's Willing Executioners. Frankfurt/Main: R.G. Fischer 1997

Greenfeld, Howard. The Hidden Children – Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993.

Hazan, Katy. Les orphelins de la Shoah. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000.

Heimmendinger, J. and Krell Robert. The Children of Buchenwald: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and their Post-War lives. Jerusalem: Gefen Publ., 2000.

Hilberg, R. La destruction des Juifs d'Europe. Trans. Marie-France de Paloméra and André Charpentier. Paris: Gallimard, 1985. Vol. I & II.

----Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945. New York: Harper-Collins,1992.

----ed. with Stanislaw Staron, Josef Kermisz. The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow. New York: Stein and Day, 1942.

Hirsch, Marianne and Irene Kacandes. Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust. New York: MLA, 2004.

Hoffman, Eva. After Such Knowledge. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

Janet, Pierre. L'automatisme psychologique: Essai de psychologie experimentale sur les formes inférieures de l'activité humaine. Paris : Alcan, 1913.

Jankelevitch, Vladimir. L'imprescriptible. Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1986.

Kafka, Franz. "In the Penal Colony." The Penal Colony, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Kahn, Annette. Le fichier. Paris: Ed. Robert Laffont, 1993.

Kaplan, Chaim. Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan. Ed. Katsh Abraham. New York: Collier, 1973.

Keilson, H. Sequential Traumatization in Children. Jerusalem: Magnes, The Hebrew University, 1992.

----Sequential Traumatization in children. Jerusalem: Magnes, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1992.

Kertész, Imre. Fateless. Evanston Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1992.

----Kadish for a Child not Born. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1997.

Kertzer, David. The popes against the Jews. New York, Vintage Books, 2001.

----The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortada. New York, Vintage Books, 1998.

Kestenberg, Judith S. and Kahn, Charlotte (eds.). Children surviving persecution: an international study of trauma and healing. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998.

----and Ira Brenner (M.D.) – The Last Witness: The Child survivor of the Holocaust. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, c1996.

----and Eva Fogelman (ed.). Children during the Nazi Reign: Psychological Perspective on the Interview Process. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994.

Klarsfeld, Serge. Le memorial des enfants juifs déportés de France. Paris: Ed. Fayard, 2001.

Kluger, Ruth. Still Alive: A Holocaust girlhood remembered. Foreword Lore Segal. The New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2001.

Kofman, Sarah. Rue Ordener, Rue Labat. Paris: Galilée, c1994.

----Le mépris des Juifs : Nietzsche, les Juifs et l'antisémitisme. Paris: Galilée, c1994.

----Paroles suffoquées. Paris: Editions Galilée, c1987.

----Comment s'en sortir. Ed. Galilée, c. 1983.

Kosinski, Jerzy. The Painted Bird. New York: Bantam, 1976.

Laub, Dori and Auerhahn, Nanette, C. "Knowing and not Knowing Massive Psychic Trauma: Forms of Traumatic Memory." Int'l Jnl of Psychoanalysis, 1993: #74.

Le Ridier, Jacques. Modernité Viennoise et crises de l'identité. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

Maechler, Stefan. The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth. Trans. John E. Woods. New York: Shocken Books, 2001.

----"Wilkomirski the Victim: Individual Remembering as Social Interaction and Public Event." History and Memory, 2001: 13.2.

Marks, Jane. The Hidden Children: The secret survivors of the Holocaust. New York: Ballantine Books, c-1993.

Marrus, Michael R. & Robert O. Paxton. Vichy France and the Jews. New York : Basic Books, c1981

Missika, Dominique. Le chagrin des innocents: Itinéraires d'enfants Juifs de 1939-à 1947. Ed. Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1998.

Perec, Georges. *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance. Paris: L'Imaginaire, Gallimard, Ed. Denoel, 1975.

----Romans et récits. Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2002.

----Je me souviens. Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1978.

----La vie mode d'emploi. Paris : Hachette, 1978.

Poliakov, Léon. L'étoile jaune. Paris: Ed. Grancher, 1999.

----Histoire de l'antisémitisme. Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1981. Vol. I & II.

----Sur les traces du crime. Paris: Ed. Berg Int'l, 2003..

Poznanski, Renée. Jews in France during World War II. Brandeis UP & U.S. Holocaust Museum, 2001.

Ringelblum, Emmanuel. Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum. Ed. Jacob Sloan. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.

Rivière, Susan. Memory of Childhood Trauma: A clinician guide to the literature. New York: Gilford Press, c1996.

Roseman, Mark. The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution: A reconsideration. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Co., 2002.

Rousset, David. L'univers concentrationnaire. Paris: ed. de Minuit, 1989.

Sebald.W.G. Austerlitz. New York: Random House, 2001.

----The Natural History of Destruction. New York: Random House, 2003.

Sicher, Ephraim. The Holocaust Novel. New York : Routledge, 2005.

----Postmodernist 'holocausts'." The Holocaust Novel. New York : Routledge, 2005.

Sichirovsky, P. Naître coupable, naître victime. Paris: Maren et Sell et Cie., 1987.

Sloan, James P. Jerzy Kosinski : A Biography. New York: Penguin, 1996.

Van der Kolk, Bessel, McFarlane, Alexander C. and Lars Weisaeth, Eds. Traumatic Sress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society, New York: The Guilford Press, 1996.

Weissmark, Mona Sue. Justice Matters. Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II. New York: Oxford UP, 2004.

Wiesel, Elie. All Rivers Run to the Sea: Memoirs. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

----And the Sea is Never Full: Memoirs. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.

----The Night Trilogy. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.

----From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences. New York: Summit Books, 1990.

----Célébration: Portraits et légendes: biblique, hassidique, talmoudique. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975.

----Chant des morts. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966.

----Le cinquième fils. Paris : Grasset, 1983.

----Le crepuscule au loin. Paris: Grasset, 1987.

----Dimensions of the Holocaust: Lectures at Northwestern University. Evanston, Illinois: The University, 1977.

----"Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art?" The New York Times, April 17, 1983.

----One Generation After. Trans. Lily Edelman.New York: Random House, 1970. Lectures at Northwestern University. Evanston, Illinois: The University, 1977.

----"Why I write." Confronting the Holocaust. Alvin Rosenfeld and Irving Greenberg, eds. Bloomington and London: Indiana UP, 1978.

----"The Loneliness of God." Tel-Aviv: Dvar Hashavu'a, 1984.

----"The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration." Dimensions of the Holocaust.

----Le Golem: Légende d'une légende. Monaco : Du Rocher, 1998.

----Un Juif aujourd'hui. Paris, Seuil, 1977.

----Juifs du silence. New York : Schocken, 1987.

----Messengers of God. New York: Random House, 1976.

----Portes de la forêt. New York: Holt, Rhinehart, Winston, 1966.

----Le serment de Kolvillag. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973.

----Le Testament d'un poête Juif assassiné. Paris: Ed. Du Seuil, 1980.

----Ville de la chance. Paris : Seuil, 1962. Town beyond the Wall. Trans. Stephen Becker. New York: Schocken Books, 1982.

Zeitoun, Sabine. Ces enfants qu'il fallait sauver. Paris: Albin Michel, 1989.

Wilkomirski, B. Fragments: memories of a Wartime Childhood. Trans. Carol Brown Janeway. New York: Schocken Books, 1996.

Zuccotti, Susan. The Holocaust, the French and the Jews. NewYork: BasicBooks, C1993.

Secondary Sources

Aciman, André. "French Children of the Holocaust: Innocence and Experience." The New Republic, 1.19.98.

Agamben, Giorgio**.** A l'épreuve d'Auschwitz**.** Paris: Ed.Kimé, 2001.

Allainmat, Henry. Auschwitz en France: Le Struthof. Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1974.

Améry, Jean. Porter la main sur soi: Traité du Suicide. Paris : Actes Sud, 1996.

----At the Mind's Limit. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980.

----Aron, Robert. Histoire de Vichy: 1940-1944. Paris : A. Fayard, 1954.

Aspen, Hal. "The Lives of Louis Begley." The New Yorker, May 30, 1994. <http://www.LouisBegley.com/espen.htm.>

Atlas, James. Interview with Louis Begley. Paris Review. June 4, 2002.

Barberger, Nathalie. Micheil Leiris: l'écriture du deuil. Villeneuve-d'Ascq: PU du Septemptrion, 1998.

Bartov, Omer. Mirrors of destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

----The Holocaust, Origins, Implementations, Aftermath. London: Routledge, 2000.

Bastiaans, J. :The KZ Syndrom: A thirty year study of the effects on victims of the Nazi Camps." Revue Medico Chiryrjical d'Jassy, 1974.

Bauman, Janina. Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond. London: Virago Press, 1986.

Bell, Anthea. "On Translating W.G.Sebald." The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W.G. Sebald. Rudiger Goner, ed. University of London School of Advanced Study—Institute of Germanic Studies. Munchen: IUDICIUM, 2003.

Bellos, David. George Perec, A Life in Words. London: Harvill, 1993.

Berger, Alan. Bearing Witness to the Holocaust. Lewiston, New York : E. Mellen Press, 1991.

Bernstein, Michael André. Foregone Conclusion: Against Apocalyptic History. (Berkely: California UP, 1994.

Bertrand, Michèle Pour une clinique de la douleur psychique. Paris: l'Harmatan, 1996.

----La pensée et le trauma – entre psychanalyse et philosophie. Paris: l'Harmatan, 1991.

Bettleheim Bruno. The Informed Heart; autonomy in a mass age. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1960.

----"Surviving" The New Yorker, Aug. 2, 1976: 31-52.

----A home for the Heart. New York: Knopf, 1974

.

----Freud and Man's Soul. New York: Knopf, 1983.

----The uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. New York: Knopf, 1976.

----Le poids d'une vie. Paris: Laffont, 1991.

----Surviving and other essays. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Blanchot, Maurice. L'écriture du désastre/The writing of the disaster. Trans. Ann Smock – UP of Nebraska, 1986.

----Après coup: le ressassement éternel. Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1983.

----Le dernier home. Paris: Gallimard, 1957.

----L'arrêt de mort. Paris: Gallimard, 1968.

----Le Très-Haut. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

----L'attente–l'oubli. Paris: Gallimard, 1962.

----L'entretien infini. Paris: Gallimard, 1969.

----L'espace littéraire. Paris: Gallimard, 1955.

Boas, Jacob. We are witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers who Died in the Holocaust. New York: Henry Holt, 1995.

Bolkowsky, Sidney. "Listening for the Silences." Witness 1, #1, Spring 1987: 66-67.

Braham. Randolph L., (ed.). The Psychological Perpespectives of the Holocaust and its Aftermath. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

----Perpespectives on the Holocaust. Boston: Kluwer Nijhoff, 1983.

Braun, Roger. "Les enfants Juifs à la liberation en France." Rencontre Chrétiens et Juifs. #65, 1980.

Brauner, Alfred. Ces enfants ont vécu la guerre. Paris: Les Editions Sociales Françaises, 1946.

Breton, André. Nadja. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Grove, 1928.

Brink, T.L. ed, Holocaust Survivors' Mental Health. New York, London: Haworth, 1994.

Brown, McAffee. Elie Wiesel: Messenger to all Humanity. Notre-Dame: UP of Notre-Dame, 1983.

Bruchfeld, Stephan. Dites-le à vos enfants. Paris: Ed.Ramsey, 1998.

Burinovici, Claudine-Herbomel. Une enfance traquée: témoignage. Paris : Ed. l'Improviste, 2001.

Cardinal, Marie. Les mots pour le dire. Paris: Grasset, 1975.

Carvajal, Doreen. "Disputed Holocaust Memoir Withdrawn." New York Times, Oct. 14, 1999: B1

Celan, Paul. "Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Hanseatic City of Bremen." Selected Poems and Prose. Trans. John Felstiner. New York: Norton, 2001.

----Todesfugue. Aachen: Rimbaud, 1999.

Cesarani, David. Introduction. Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer. Into the Arms of Strangers. Bloomsbury Press, 2001.

Chamber, Ross. "Orphaned Memories, Foster-Writing, Phantom Pain: The *Fragment* Affair." Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community. Ed. Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw. UP of Illinois, 2002.

Chodoff, P. "Psychiatric aspects of Nazi persecutions. " American Handbook of Psychiatry, Ed. S. Arieli and H.K.H. Brodie NY: Basic books, 1975: vol. 6, ch.41

----"Survivors of the Nazi Holaust." Children Today, Sept.-Oct. 1981:10; 2-5

----"Psychiatric Aspects of Nazi Persecution.**"** New Psychistric Frontiers 6, eds Hamburg D. Arieli K and K. Brodie. NewYork: Basic Books, 1974: 75: ch. 41.

Cioran, E. M. Bréviaire des vaincus. Paris: Ed. Arcades Gallimard, 1993.

Coe, Richard N. When the Grass was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood, New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Cohen, Albert. Ô vous, Frères Humains. Paris: Ed. Gallimard, 1972.

Cohen Roger. "For a Priest and Poland. A Tangled identity." New York Times, 10.10.99.

Coquio, Catherine. Parler des camps, penser les genocides. Paris: Bibl. Albin Michel Idées – 1999.

Corry, John. "The Most Considerate of Men." The American Spectator, July 1991.

Couvreur C. "Le trauma : les trois temps d'une valse." Revue française de psychanalyse, 1988 , Vol. III #6 : 1431-1448.

Cravetto, Maria Letizia. Fidélité à l'après. Paris: Ed. Kimé 2000.

Cyrulnik, Boris. Le murmure des fantômes. Paris: Ed. Odile Jacob, 2003.

----Les nourritures affectives. Paris: Ed. Odile Jacob, 2000.

Dasberg, H. "Child Survivors of the Holocaust Reach Middle-Age: Psychotherapy of Late

Grief Reactions." Jnl of Social Work and Policy in Israel.. 1992.

David, Janina. A touch of earth and a square of sky. London: Hutchinson, 1966.

Davis, Colin. Elie Wiesel's Secretive Texts. Gainesville : UP of Florida, 1994.

De Beauvoir, Simone. Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.

Deguy-Michel. Au sujet de Shoah: Le film de Claude Lanzmann. Paris: Belin, 1990.

Delbo, Charlotte. Auschwitz and After. Trans. From Auschwitz et après. Trans. Rosette Lamont. New Haven: Yale UP., 1995.

----La mémoire et les jours. Paris: Ed. Berg Int'l, 1995.

Delega-Mostowicz, Tadeuz. The Career of Nikodem Dyzma. New York: Roy, 1950.

Diamant, David. Les Juifs dans la Résistance Francaise. Paris: Le Pavillon, 1971.

Dimsdale, Joe. "The coping Behavior of Nazi Concentration Camp Survivors." American Journal of Psychiatry 131, 1974: 793.

Dobroszycki, Lucjan. The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.

Doubrovsky, Serge. "Autobiographie/Vérité/Psychanalyse." L'Esprit Créateur, 1980: 20.

----"Echanges." Infomation. 28 Juillet, 1994.

Dvoretski, M. "Youth in the ghettos and Nazi camps and their readaptation to freedom." Eck, N. Robert A. eds. Yad Veshem Research Issue #5, 1962.

Eakin, Paul J. How our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1999.

----Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the art of self-invention. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1985.

Eder, Richard. Interview with Louis Begley. "Horrors of Survival Clothed in Grace." L.A. Times Review: May 1994.

Ende A. "Battering and Neglect: Children in Germany, 1860-1978. " Journal of Psychohistory. 1981: 7:281:-288

Epstein, Nathan and Viok Louis. "Research on the Results of Psychotherapy." American

Journal of Psychiatry 138, 1981: 1027-35.

Ertel, Rachel. Dans la langue de personne: Poésie de l'anéantissement. Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1993.

Easkin, Paul John. Fictions in Autobiography: studies in the art of self-invention. N.J.: Princeton UP, 1985.

Eskin, Blake. A Life in Pieces: The Making and the Unmaking of Benjamin Wilkomirski. New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002.

Evers-Emden, B and Flim, BJ. Having been in hiding: A forgotten Past: Jewish Children In their Hiding, 50 years later. Kampen, Holland: Kok, 1995.

Ezrachi, Sidra DeKoven. "Representing Auschwitz." History and Memory. Fall , 1996: 2: 121-64

----"Reflections on When Memory Comes." History & Memory, vol.9 #1&2.

Faktor, H. "The need for long-term care services among elderly Holocaust survivors living in Israel in Lemberger J.ed. A global perspective on working with Holocaust survivors and the second generation. Jerusalem: Brookdale Institute, 1995.

Feifel, Herman, PhD. New meanings of death. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977.

Feig, Konylyn G. Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness. London: Holmes and Meier, 1981.

Fine, Ellen. Legacy of Night: The Literary Universe of Elie Wiesel. State University of New York Press, 1982.

----"Writing and the Holocaust." In B. Lang ed. Writing and the Holocaust. New York and London: Holmes and Meir, 1988.

Fink, Ida. Scrap of Time. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1996.

----The Journey. New York: Farr, Straus and Giroux, Inc. 1992.

----Traces. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997.

Finkelkraut, Alain. La mémoire vaine: du crime contre l'humanité. Paris: Ed. Gallimard 1989.

Fogelman,Eva and Wiener. "The Few, the Brave, the Noble." Psychology Today, Aug. 1985: 19: 61-65.

Foley, Barbara. "Fact, Fiction, Fascism: Mimesis in Holocaust Narratives." Comparative

Literature, 1982: 34.

Foxman, A. et al. "On the hidden child. Dimensions." A Journal of Holocaust studies, Special issue, 1996.

Frankl, Victor. Recollections: An Autobiography. New York, London: Premium Press, 1997.

Fresco, Nadine. L'"emprise: La Diaspora des cendres. " Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse, 1981: 24.

----Remembering the Holocaust." International Review of Psycho-Analysis, 1984.

Friedlander, Henry. The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution. Chapell Hills & London: The UP of North Carolina.

Friedman, P. "The road back for the DPs: healing the Psychological scars of Nazism." Commentary 1948.

Gallant, Mary. Coming of Age in the Holocaust. The Last Survivors Remember. UP of America, New York: Lanham. 2002.

Gambetta, Diego. "Primo Levi's last moments." Boston Review 24.3, Summer 1990).

Gampel, &Y. "I Was a Shoah Child." Brit Jnl of Psychotherapy, 1992:8.

----"Facing War, Murder, Torture and Death in Latency." Psychoanalytic Review, 1988: 75.

----"I Was a Holocaust Child,"in Wilson, A. (ed.) "The Holocaust Survivor and the Family," Psychoanalytic Review, 1989.

----and Kestenberg, J.S. – "Memories from early childhood." Psychoanalytic Review, 1988.

Ganzfried, Daniel. "The Borrowed Holocaust Biography." Die Weltwoche, Aug.27, 1998.

----"Facts against Memory." Die Weltwoche, Sept. 3, 1998.

Garmezy, Norman and Rutter, M. "Acute Reactions to Stress: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: Modern Approaches." Oxford Blackwell Scientific Publ., 1984: Ch.9.

Geller, Jay. "The Wilkomirski Case: *Fragments* or Figments." American Imago, 2002: 59.3

Gershon, Karen, ed. We came as children. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966.

Geve, Thomas. Youth in Chains. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass Publ, 1981.

Gourevitch, Philip. "The Memory Thief." The New Yorker, June 14, 1999.

Gilles, Elisabeth. Paysage de cendres, Shadows of a childhood. trans. Linda Coverdale New York : New Press, c1998.

Gordon, Vicki. "The experience of being a hidden child survivor of the Holocaust. PhD Dissertation. School of Behavioral Science, University of Melbourne. Yad Veshem Doc. Dec. 2002.

Greenacre, Phyllis, M.D. Trauma, Growth and Personality. New York: Int'l UP, 1969.

Grynberg, Henryk. Children of Zion. Trans. From the Polish by Jacqueline Mitchell Northwestern University Press, 1998.

Hungerford, Amy. "Memorizing Memory." Yale Journal of Criticism, Spring 2001: 14.

Harel, Simon. Le récit de soi. Montréal, Québec: Ed. XYZ, 1997.

Hart, Kitty. Return to Auschwitz: The Remarkable Life of a Girl who Survived the Holocaust. New York: Atheneum, 1982.

Hartman, Georffrey. The Longest Shadow. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.

----"On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies."New Literary History, 1996: 26: 537-563.

----Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory. UK, Cambridge UK & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.

Herberg, Paul, H.J., ed. Psychic Sequelae of Persecutory Influences during Childhood and Youth. Jn'l of Psychiatry, 1967.

Heshel, Susannah and Goldman, Shalom. "Review of Wilkomirski Fragments." Tikkun, March 13, 1997.

Herman, Judith Lewis. Trauma and recovery. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Heschel, Susannah. "Review of Wilkomirski's Fragments." Tikkun, March 13, 1997.

Hicklin, Margot. War-Damaged Children: Some aspects of recovery. Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1946.

Hirsch, Marianne. Family Frames. New Haven: Harvard UP, 1997.

---- "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory." Yale J'l of Criticism – v. 14- #1: 5-17.

Hogman, F. "Role of Memories in the Lives of World War II Orphans." Jnl of the Amer. Academy of Child Psychiatry, 1985.

----"Displaced Jewish Children during World War II: How they coped." Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 1988: Vol. 23.

Horowitz, S. "Autobiography and Fiction after Auschwitz: Probing the Boundaries of Second-Generation Aesthetics," In Breaking Crystal; Writing and Memory after Auschwitz.." Ephraim Sicher, ed. Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998.

Houton, Michael and Rudolf, Anthony. "Beyond Survival: Conversation between Elie Wiesel and Eugene Heimler." European Judaism, Winter, 1971: 6: 51.

Howe, Irving. "From the other Side of the Moon." Harper's, March 1997.

Hughes, Alex. Electronic interview with Serge Doubrovsky: <http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk>

Hungerford, Amy. "Memorizing Memory." Yale J'l of Criticism 14, #1, Spring 2001: 67-92.

Ireland, John. "Monstrous Writing." In Genres. U of Oklahoma, 1993.

Iser, Wolfang. "Fictionalizing: The Anthropological Dimension of Literary Fictions." New Literary History. Autumn 1990: #21

Jaffe Ruth, "Dissociative phenomena in former concentration camp inmates." Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 1968 : 40: 310-2.

Jankelevitch, Vladimir. Le Je-ne-sais-quoi et le Presque rien: La volonté de vouloir. Paris: Ed. Seuil, 1980.

Hunt, L. And Marshal M. Rowlings. Eds. Past Trauma in Late Life: European Perspectives on Therapeutic Work with Older people. Gateshead,Britain: Athenaeum, 1997,

Kafka, Franz. Diaries. New York: Schocken Books, 1948.

----Letters to Milena. Willi Haas, ed. Trans. Tania and James Stern. New York: Schocken Books, Inc. & Farrar, Strauss & Young, Inc., 1953.

----In the Penal Colony, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: Schocken, 1976.

Kaplan, Marion, A. Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish life in Nazi Germany. New

York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Karski, Jan. The Story of a Secret State. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1944.

Katznelson, Yitzhak. The Memory of European Jewry. Israel: World Hashomer Hatzair, Kibbutz Merchavia, 1943.

----Vittel Diary. Israel: Ghetto Fighters' House, 1943.

Kedward, Roderick and Roger Austin, eds. Vichy France and the Resistance. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1985.

Kess, Shlomo. "The Rescue of Jewish Children in Belgium during the Holocaust." Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Kibbutz Nir David, Israel., 1988: vol. 3, No.3, 257-287.

Kessel, Barbara. Suddenly Jewish: Jews Raised as Gentiles Discover their Jewish Roots. Hanover: UP of New England, 2000.

Kestenberg, J.S. "Memories from early childhood." Psychoanalytic Review, 1988: 75: .561-571: 1.

----and Brenner. "Children who Survived the Holocaust." Int'l Jnl of Psychoanal. 1986: 67: I.

----Fogelman, eds. Children during the Nazi Reign: Psychological Perspective in the Interview Process. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publ., 1994. Ch. 5: "Interviews with rescued child survivors."

Kestenberg and Gempel,Y. "Growing up in the Holocaust Culture." Isr. Jnl of Psychiatry and Rel. Sci., 1983: 20.

----"Child Survivors of the Holocaust: 40 years later." Jnl of the Amer. Academy of Child Psychiatry. 1985.

Kierkegaard, Soren. Miettes philosophiques. Le concept de l'angoisse. Traîté du désespoir. Trans. By Karl Ferlov & Jean-Jacques Gateau. Paris: Ed. Galimard 1990.

Kingkaid, Renée. "Serge Analysand." Genre, Spring, 1993.

Klarsfeld, Arno. Les dieux ne songent qu'à dormir. Paris: Flammarion, 1995.

Klarsfeld, Serge. Le calendrier de la Persécution des Juifs en France 1940-1944. Paris: Publ. FFDJ (Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs), 1993.

----The Children of Izieu: A Human Tragedy. Trans. Kenneth Jacobson. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984.

Klein, Kerwin Lee-On an incisive critique of the category of memory in Historical Discourse. Representations 69, Winter 2000.

Kleinman, Arthu and Das, Veena. Social Suffering. UP Of California, 1992.

Klemperer, Victor. I will bear witness 1933-1941, 1042-1945. Trans. Martin Chalmers. New York: Modern Library, 1999. Vol. I & II.

Koster, Serge. Trou de mémoire. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003.

Kozol, Jonathan. "Children of the Camp. Review of Wilkomirski 'Fragments'" Nation, 1996: 10.28.

Kuper, Jack. Child of the Holocaust. Toronto: General Pub. Co., 1967.

Krell, R. "Child survivors of the Holocaust: Strategies of Adaptation." Canadian Journal of Psychiatry: 38.

Krell, Robert & Sherman, Marc. Medical and psychological effects of concentration camps on Holocaust survivors. New-Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997.

Krell, Robert and Leo Eitinger. The psychological and medical effects of concentration camps and related persecutions on survivors of the Holocaust. A research bibliography – UP Of British Columbia, 1985.

Krell, Robert (ed.) Messages and Memories: Reflections on child survivors of Holocaust. Vancouver: Memory Press, 2001.

Krystal, H. & Niederland, W.G. Psychic traumatization: aftereffects in individuals and Communities. Boston: Little Brown, 1971.

----Ed. Massive Psychic Trauma. New York: Int. Un. Press, 1968.

---- "Trauma and affect." The Psychoanalytic Study Of the Child, 1978: 33:81-116 -

Kuchler-Silberman, Lena. My Hundred Children. Trans. From the Hebrew by David C. Gross. Jerusalem: Yad Veshem 719, 1959.

LaCapra, Dominick. Representing the Holocaust, History, Writing Trauma. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

----History and Memory after Auschwitz. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1998.`

Lacan., Jacques. Ecrits. Paris: Editions du Seui, l 1966.

Lagnado, Lucette M. And Dekel, Sheila C. Children of the Flames: Dr. Josef Mengele and the Untold Story of the Twins of Auschwitz. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Laloum J. "L'UGIF et ses maisons d'enfants: L'enlèvement d'une Enfant." Le Monde Juif, 1986: 124.

Lang, Berel (ed.) The absent memory: the act of writing in post-holocaust Literature. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988.

----Writing and the Holocaust. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988**.**

Langer, Lawrence L. Holocaust Testimonies: the Ruins ofM emory. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1991.

----The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1975.

Lanzmann, Claude. Shoah; préface by Simone de Beauvoir. Paris: Fayard, 1985.

----**"**Holocauste, la représentation impossible." Le Monde, 3 March 1994: 12

Lapierre, Nicole. Le silence de la mémoire. Paris: Librairie PLON, 1989.

---- (Dir.). "La Mémoire et l'Oubli." Communications #49. Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Centre d'Etudes Tansdisciplinaires (Sociologie-Anthropologie-Politique. Paris : Publ. Seuil**,** 1980.La mémoire et l'Oubli. Communications # 49. Paris: Seuil, 1989.

Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bernard. "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality." In Formations of Fantasy. Victor Burgin et al, eds. London and New ork: Routledge, 1986.

Lappin, Elena. Landscapes of Memory: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered by Ruth Kluger. London: Picador 2001.

----(Ed.) Jewish voices, German words. Growing up Jewish in postwar Germany and Austria. Trans. Krishna Winston. North Haven, Connecticut: Catbird Press. 1994.

---- **"**The Man with two Heads." Granta 66, Summer 99: 9-65.

Laub, D, and Auerhahn, N.C. Jnl of Psychoanal. "Knowing and Not Knowing Psychic Trauma: Forms of Traumatic Memory." 1993: 74.

Lavers, Norman. Jerzy Kosinski. Boston: Twayne, 1982. <http://www.enotes.com/painted bird>

Lasden, A. Groen. "Traumatization and War." Dutch Annaual of Psychoanalysis, 1995-6.

Lazarre, Lucien. La Résistance Juive en France. Paris: Stock, 1987.

Goeff, Jacques. History and Memory. New York: Columbia UP, 1987.

Leiris, Michel. Zébrage. Paris: Ed. Folio, Gallimard, 1982.

Lejeune, Philippe. La mémoire et l'oblique. Georges Perec autobiographe. Paris: P.O.L., 1991.

----L'autobiographie en procès : actes du colloque de Nanterre, 18-19 Octobre, 1996 Nanterre: Université de Paris X, 1997.

----On Autobiography. Ed. Paul John Eakin. Trans. Katherine Leary. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, c1989.

----Je est un autre: l'autobiographie de la literature aux medias. Paris : Seuil, c1980.

----Le Pacte autobiographique. Paris: Seuil 1996.

----"*W* or the Memory of Childhood." Trans. David Bellos, Review of Contemporary Fiction, Spring 1993: #13.

Lempp, R. "Delayed and long-term effects of persecution suffered in childhood and youth." Echoes of the Holocaust, 1995. cited in Isr. Ann. Psych. Rel. Disciplines, 1979.

Lemalet, Martine, Dir. Au secours des enfants du siècle – regards croisés sur l'OSE Paris: Ed. Nil, Diffusion Seuil, 1993.

Levi, Neil and Rothberg, Michael, (eds). The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings. New Jersey: Rutgers UP: 2003.

Levi, Primo. The Drowned and the Saved. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

----The voice of Memory. New York: The New Press, 1968.

----Moments of Reprieve. Trans. Ruth Feldman. New York: Summit Books, 1986.

----Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazis Assault on Humanity. Trans. Stuart Woolf. New York: Touchstone, 1976.

Levin, Meyer. "They saved the children." Saturday Evening Post, Jan. 20, 1945.

Levinas, Emmanuel. Quelques reflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlérisme. Paris: Ed.

Payot et Rivages, 1997.

Lévi-Strauss, C. La pensée sauvage. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962.

Lévy, Claude and Paul Tillard. Betrayal at the Vel d'Hiv. Paris: Laffont, 1967.

Lévy-Haas, Hanna. "The Concentration Camp in Belsen." Inside Belsen. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.

Lifton, R.J. The broken connection. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979.

----Death in Life; The Survivors of Hiroshima. New York: Random House, 1968.

Louis Begley by Louis Begley. February, 4, 1997. <http://www.slate.man.com>

Lovenheim, Barbara. Survival in the Shadows. Rochester, NY: Publication Center for Holocaust Awareness and Information, 2002.

Lustiger, Jean-Marie. Le Choix de Dieu. Entretiens avec Jean-Louis Missika et Dominique Wolton. Paris: Ed. de Fallois, 1987.

----Osez vivre. Paris: Centurion, c1985.

Lyotard, Jean-François. Le Différend. Paris: Ed. Minuit, 1983.

Macardle, Dorothy. Children of Europe. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1951.

Mauriac, Francois. "Les Bloc-notes de François Mauriac." Figaro Littéraire, 8 June 1963.

Magnus, B. "Holocaust child: Reflections on the banality of evil." Philosophy Today, 41.

Mazor A; Gampel Y. "Coping with post-traumatic memories in childhood and 40 years later." Journal of Traumatic Stress, 1990: 1 (3) 11

Memi, Albert. The Liberation of the Jew. Trans. Elisabeth Abbott. New York: Orion Press, 1962.

----Portrait of a Jew. Trans. Elisabeth Abbott. New-York: The Orion Press, 1962.

Menand, Monique. Tout le plaisir est pour moi. Paris: Hachette Littéraires, 2000.

Mendelsohn, Y. M.D. Child Survivors : Forms of Intervention. Jerusalem: AMCHA Publ., Feb. 1996. Vol. 1

Mesnard, Philippe. Consciences de la Shoah: Critique des discours et des Representations. Paris : Editions Kimé, 2000.

----and Kohan, Claudine. Giorgio Agamben à l'Epreuve d'Auschwitz: Témoignages, interprétations. Paris: Ed. Kimé, 2001.

Meyers, Odette. Doors to Madame Marie. Seattle: UP of Washington, 1997.

Michel, Alain. Les Eclaireurs Israélites de France pendant la seconde guerre Mondiale: Sept. 1939–Sept. 1944. Paris: Ed. des E.I.F., 1984.

Miller, Nancy K. and Jason Tougaw, eds. Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community. Urbana: UP of Illinois, 2002.

Minc, Rachel. "Le comportement de l'enfant juif face au danger Nazi." Revue d'histoire de la médecine hébraïque, March, 1953: 59: 25-33.

Moskowitz, Sarah. Love despite hate. Child survivors of the HC and their Adult lives. New York: Schocken Books, 1983.

----and Krell, R."Child survivors of the Holocaust: Psychological adaptation to survival." Isr. Jn'l Psychiatry Rel. Sci., 1990

Myers, D. G. Review of Kosinki's Biography by James Park Sloan. "A Life Beyond Repair." <http://www.leaderu.com>

Nathan, P. "Trauma et mémoire." Nouvelle Revue d'Ethnopsychiatrie, 1986 : #6 – 7-18.

Northouse, Cameron. "Jerzy Kosinski" in Dictionary of Literary Biography. Ed. Jeffrey Hellerman and Richard Layman. Detroit : Gale Research, 1978.

Oren-Hornfeld, Saul. Comme un feu brûlant: Experimentations médicales au camp de Sachsenhausen. Paris : L'Harmatan, 1999.

Osen, Diane. Interview with Louis Begley. National Book Award Foundation. 1991. <http://www.nationalbook.org>

Perl, Lila and Blumenthal, Marion. Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story New York: Avon Books, 1996.

Peskin, Harvey. "Holocaust Denial: A Sequel." The Nation, April, 19, 1999

Pollak M. "Des mots qui tuent" Actes de la Recherche en sciences sociales, 1982: 41, 29-45.

Pontalis, J.B. "Derniers, premiers mots." In L'Autobiographie. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1981.

Pisar, Samuel. Of Blood and Hope. New York: Little Brown & Co., 1982.

Prager, Jeffrey. Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering. New Haven: Harvard UP, 1998.

Prince, R.M. "The influence of the Holocaust on Identity. A case study of a psychohistorical figure." J'l of Contemp. Psychother. 1980: 11 :1: 44-60.

Pyner, Rick. "W.G. Sebald: Writing in Pictures." Design Observer. 27 July 2004. <http://www.designobserver.com>

Raczymow, Henri. Cri sans Voix/ Writing the Book of Esther. Trans.Dori Katz. New York: Holmes & Meieir, 1995.

----Rivières d'exil. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

----Contes d'exil et d'oubli. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

----"Memory Shot through Holes." Yale French Studies, 1994: 85.

----"La mémoire trouée." Pardès, 1986: 3.

---- Imagining the Jew in France – From 1945 to the Present. Wolitz, Seth L. Yale French Studies, 1994: 85.

Reich, Wilhelm. The Mass psychology of fascism. New York: Orgone Institute Press, 1946.

Ricoeur, Paul. Temps et récit. Paris: Seuil,. 1983. Tome I & 3.

----La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli. Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 2000.

Robin, Régine. La mémoire saturée. Paris: Ed. Stock 1993.

----L'immense fatigue des pierres. Montreal, Quebec : XYZ, 1996.

----Le Golem de l'écriture: de l'autofiction au cibersoi. Montréal, Qébec: XYZ, 1997.

----Témoignage et écriture de l'histoire: décade de Cérisy 21-31 Juillet, 2001 sous la direction de Jean-François Chiantaretto et Régine Robin. Paris : Harmattan, c2003.

Robinson, S. "Late effects of persecution in persons who as children or young adolescents survived Nazi occupation in Europe." Isr. Ann. Psych. Rel. Disciplines, 1979.

----"The Present State of People who Survived the Holocaust as Children." Scand: Acta Psychiat., 1994.

Rosenfeld, Alvin, H. And Greenberg, Irving. "Why I write," Confronting the Holocaust: The Impact of Elie Wiesel. Bloominton: Indiana UP, 1978.

Rubinstein, M. Tout le monde n'a pas la chance d'être orphelin. Paris: Ed. Verticales, Le Seuil, 2002.

Roth-Hano, Renée. Touch Wood: a Girlhood in Occupied France. NewYork: Four Winds Press, c1998.

----Safe Harbors. New York: Four Winds Press, 1993.

Rothberg, Michael. Traumatic Realism: the Demands of Holocaust Representation. Minneapolis: UP of Minnesota, 2000.

Roussel, Raymond. Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres. Paris: Publ. Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1963.

Rousset, David. L'Univers concentrationnaire. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.

Rubinstein, Richard I. and Roth, John K. Approaches to Auschwitz: The Legacy of the Holocaust. London: SCM Press, 1987.

Rutter, Michael."Parent-Child Separation: Psychological effects on the children."Jn'l of. Child Psychiat. Vol.12, 1971.

Ryback, Timothy W. "Evidence of Evil." The New-Yorker. Nov. 15,1993.

Sabbagh, Antoine (ed.) Lettres de Drancy. Paris: ST2Tallandier, 2002.

Salim, Jay. "A Star is Worn Discourses of jewish identity in 20th Century France." Yale French Studies, 1994: 85.

Sacks, Peter, M. The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats.Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP, 1985.

Solomon, Vivette. Sauver les enfants. Paris: Publ. Liane Lévi, 1995.

Samuel, P. and Pearl M. Olimer. The Altruistic Personality. New York: The Free Press, 1988)

Sanyal, Debarati "A Soccer Match in Auschwitz. Passing Culpability in Holocaust Criticism." Representations. UC Press, Summer, 2002 : 79.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. Réflexions sur la question juive. Paris: Gallimard, 1954.

Scasz, Thomas S. The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement . Epilogue. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Schactel, E.G. "On Memory and childhood Trauma." Psychiatry, 2001: #10.

Schur, Helen M.D. "A short history of child analysis. An observation and comments on the development of memory. Anna Freud, LL.D. D. Sc. Comments on some aspects of self and object representation in a group of psychotic children. An application of Anna Freud's Diagnostic Profile. " The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child . New York: Int'l University Press, 1966. Vol. XXI .

Scwartz-Bart, André. Le dernier des Justes. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980.

Schwartz-Lynne, Sharon. Threepenny Review. Spring, 2002.

Sebald, W.G. Les Emigrants. Trans. Patrick Charbonneau. Paris: Babel: 1992.

Segal, Lore Groszman. Other People's Houses. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World (1964).

Semprum, Jorge. Literature or Life. Trans. Linda Covendale. New York: Penguin, 1997.

Shahar, David. The Palace of Shattered Vessels. trans. Dalya Bilu. Boston: Houghton Miflin, 1975.

Shirer, William. The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. London: Mandarin, 1991.

Sicher, Efraim, Ed. Breaking Crystal – Writing and Memory after Auschwitz. Urbana: Illinois UP, 1968.

Sliwowska, Wiktoria. The Last Eyewitnesses: children of the Holocaust speak. Trans. Julian and Fay Bussgang. Ed. Wiktoria Sliwowska. Evanston,Ill: Northwestern UP.

Schmeidler, Yehuda R. and J. Siever and I.J. Binder-Brynes, K., and Elkin, A. "Individual differences in post-traumatic stress disorder: Sympton profiles in Holocaust survivors in concentration camps or in hiding." Isr. J. Tr. Stress, 1977.

Snyders, Jean-Claude. Voyage de l'enfance. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003.

Sosnowski, Kyril. The Tragedy of Children under Nazi Rule. Zachodnia Agencia Prasowa. Western Press Agency, Polish Ed. 1962. English, 1962.

Spear, Thomas. "Doo-doo in the classroom: Doubrovsky Professional Performances." Genre. Spring, 1993.

Spiegelman, Art. Maus: A survivor's tale. New York: Panthéon Books, 1986.

Spiro, Joanna. "The Testimony of Fantasy in George Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance. Yale Journal of Criticism, 2001: 14.1

Stark, Jared. "Suite after Auschwitz." Yale Journal of Criticism, 2001: 14.1: 93-114,

Starobinski, Jean. "Le style de l'autobiographie." Poétique, 1970: vol. 1.3.

Staub, Erwin. The Roots of Evil. The origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP, 1992..

Steinberg, Paul. Speak you also: A Survivor's Reckoning. Trans. Linda Coverdale. New York: Picador USA: 1996.

Steinberg, Lucien. "Jewish Rescue Activities in Belgium and France." Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust. Yisrael Gutman and Ephraim Zuroff, eds. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1977: 608-9.

Steiner, George. Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman. New York: Atheneum, 1982.

Steinitz, Lucy Y. David M. Szonyi (eds). Living after the Holocaust: reflections by children of survivors in America. New York: Bloch Publ. Co. 1975.

Suedfeld, Peter (ed.) Light from the Ashes: social careers of young Holocaust Refugees and Survivors. Ann Arbor: UP of Michigan, c2001.

Sturken, Maria. "Narratives of Recovery: Repressed Memory as Cultural Memory." Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. Hanover, New Haven UP of New England, 1990.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. Risking Who One Is. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1994.

----"Reflections on Memory at the Millenium." Presidential Address of the American ` Comparative Literary Association, 1999: 51 (3): v-xviii.

----"Problems of Memory and Factuality in Recent Holocaust Memoirs." Poetics Today, Fall 2000: 21.3.

Swales, Martin. "Intertextuality, Authenticity, Metonymy? On Reading W.G. Sebald." The Anatomist of Melancholy. Essays in Memory of W.G. Sebald." Rudiger Groner, Ed. IUDICIUM, 2003.

Tauber, Y. "The traumatized child and the adult: Compound personality in child survivors of the Holocaust." Isr Jn'l Psychiatry Rel Sci. 1996.

----and van der Hal E. "Psychological distress of Holocaust survivors and offspring in Israel, forty years late." Isr. Jn'l Psychiatry and Relat. Sci. 1987.

Tec, Nechama. When Light Pierced the Darkness. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.

----"A Historical Perspective: Tracing the History of the Hidden Child Experience." In Marks, J. The Hidden Children. The Secret Survivors of the Holocaust. New York 1993.

Tepa, Barbara. "New Tree, Old Roots." Polish Review, 1984: #29.

Terr, Lenore C. M.D. "Forbiden Games" Am. Acad. Of Ch.Psychiatry, 1981.

Tomkiewicz, Stanislav**.** L'adolescence volée. Paris : Hachette Literature: PUF 1974.

Todorov, Tzvetan. "Fictions et Verités," in Les Morales de l'Histoire: 129-60. Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle.

----Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps. Trans. Arthur Denner and Agibail Pollak. New York: Henry Holt, 1996.

Trezise, Thomas. "Unspeakable." Yale Journal of Criticism, Spring 2001: 14: 1: 39-66.

Trunk, Isaiah. Judenrat. The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation. New York: MacMillan, 1972.

Tubingen, Verg G. Autobiographie et Avant-Garde. Seminar, 1992.

Union O.S.E. Les enfants de Buchenwald. Geneve: 1946, Yad Veshem Ref. 2468.

Valent, P. **"**Documented childhood trauma**.**" Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 1995.

----Child Survivors: Adults Living with Childhood Trauma. Australia: Port Melbourne: William Heineman, 1994.

Valery, Paul. **"**Théorie poétique et esthétique, introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci. " Oeuvre I. Paris: Gallimard, bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1957.

Van Alpen, Ernst. **"**Testimonies and the Limits of Representations." Caught in History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Litterature and Theory. Stanford UP, 1997.

Vegh, Claudine. Je ne lui ai pas dit au revoir.Paris: Gallimard, 1979.

Victoria, Alexander, N. **"**Louis Begley: Trying to make sense of it " The Antioch Review. Summer 1997. <http://www.dactyl.prg/directors/vna/begley.html.>

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. The Jews : History, Memory and the Present. Trans. and Ed. David Ames Curtis, Columbia UP, 1996.

----Les assassins de la mémoire. Paris : Ed. La découverte, 1987.

Von Bayer, W. and Haefner K. and Kisker K. Psychiatrie der verfolgen. Berlin: Springer, 1964.

Waintrater, Régine. Sortir du génocide. Paris: Payot, 2003.

Walker, Graham, B. Elie Wiesel: a challenge to theology. London: McFarland, 1968.

Wall, Thomas Carl. Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot and Agumben. Publ. State University of NY, 1999.

Weill, Joseph. Contributions à l'histoire des camps d'internement de l'Anti-France. Paris : Editions du Centre. 1946.

Wellers, Georges. De Drancy à Auschwitz. Paris: Fayard, 1973.

Westlund, Annie J. "Serge Doubrovsky's Autofiction: De l'autobiographie considérée comme une tauromachie." Sites. 1997: vol. 1.2.

White, Hayden. Topics of discourse: Essays in cultural criticism. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1992.

Wieselter, Leon. "Between Paris and Jerusalem." New York Times Review of Books, 1979: #26.

Wieworka, A. Déportation et genocide: entre la mémoire et l'oubli. Paris: Plon, 1992.

----L'ère du témoin.Paris : Plon, 1998**.**

Weinberg, Werner. "A Dutch Couple." The Christian Century, 22-29 June 1983.

Wijsenbeek, H. "Is there a Hiding Syndrome." Israel-Netherlands Symposium on the Impact of persecution. Amsterdam: Dalfen. 14.

Winnicott, D.W. Playing and Reality. London: Tavistock Publications 1982.

Winter, Jay & Emmanuel Sivan (eds). War and Remembrance in the T wentieth Century Cambridge, UK and NY: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Wiszniewicz, Joanna. And yet I still Have Dreams. Trans. Regina Grol.. Evanston, I Illinois: Northwestern UP, 2004.

Wolf-Machoel, J. La réadaptation de la jeunesse et des déracinés de guerre. La presse française et étrangère. Paris: Oreste Zeluck, Ed. Yad Veshem Ref. 67-774.

Wolfenstein, M. "Loss, Rage and Repetition." The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child 1969. 24: 432-460.

----"How is mourning possible**?"** The psychoanalytic Study of the child, 1966.

Yehuda, Rachel. "Depressive Features in Holocaust Survivors with PTSD." Journal of Traumatic Stress, 1994: Vol. 7 #4.

Young, James E. Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust. Indiana UP, 1988.

----The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning. New Haven: Yale UP, 1993.

Zaide, Nathalie. Souffle sur tous ces morts et qu'ils vivent. Paris: Ed. La Pensée Sauvage, 1993.

----"Les visiteurs et les Messagers. Tentative d'identification des survivants de la Soah et de leurs enfants." Nouvelle Revue d'Ethnopsychiatrie, 19, 55-72.

Zaidman, Annette**.** Mémoire d'une enfance volée.(1938-1948). Paris : Ed. Ramsay, 2002.

Documents from the CDJC (Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris):

CDJC Ref. 17.531 – L'Entraide Temporaire – Sauvetage d'enfants juifs sous l'occupation.

CDJC Ref. XCV-29 – Agissements clandestins de l'UGIF (Union Générale des Israélites de France)– 3è rapport – 1er Mai (pas d'année).

CDJC Ref. CCXVII-13 – No. 54 – 5 Mars 1945 – La vie de nos enfants abandonnés. Une promenade à travers les institutions juives.

CDJC Ref. DLXXIII-7a – Différentes lettres de Déportés .

CDJC Ref. CMXXI-16 – Rapport de Jacques Bielinsky sur la Colonie Scolaire, Rue Amelot – Juillet 1942.

CDJC Ref. CMXX.31 – Rapports d'Andrée Weil sur les activités à la sixième – visites Août 1942 et Mai 1943.

CDJC Ref. CMXXI-15 – Communiqué de Brodsky – Note sur la déportation d'enfants. (4000 déportés don't 1200 de nationalité française).

CDJC Ref. CMXXI-14 – -"Les Enfants juifs cachés" – témoignage de Georges Garel

Sur l'action de L'O.S.E.

CDJC Ref. CMXXI-12 – Rapport de M. Topper à Mrs. Roosevelt sur la condition des enfants juifs en France en 1941.

CDJC Ref. 2123 – Children of Europe by Dorothy Macardle –

CDJC Ref. 22-747 - Le sauverage des enfants juifs de France – Actes du Colloque de Guéret – 29 et 30 mai 1996.

CDJC Ref. 10.592 – L'enfer des innocents – les enfants juifs dans la tourmente nazie, ed. du Centurion – Paris– 1966.

CDJC Ref. 358 – Le livre du commencement – Genèse – Traduit de l'hébreu par Edmond Pleg – Ed. du Chant Nouveau – Paris.

CDJC Ref. 21.523 – Le masque de la barbarie – Le Ghetto de Theresienstadt 1941-1945.

CDJC Ref. 20.836 – Alfred et Françoise Brauner – L'acceuil des enfants survivants.

CDJC Ref. 18.556 – Sabine Zeitoun – Ces enfants qu'il fallait sauver – Albin Michel

CDJC Ref. 18.320 – Aperçus historiques sur l'éducation spéciale en midi-Pyrénees – Issu par le centre regional pour l'enfance, l'adolescence et les adultes inadaptés.

CDJC Ref. 23.011 – Siegi Hirsch: Au coeur des thérapies – Ch. I– Déportation d'un adolescent – Ch. 14 – les familles traumatisées. – Ed. Erès .

CDJC Ref. 18.380 – Barbara Probst Solomon – Izieu and the Jews in the Resistance – 1988. (testimony for the Barbie Trial).

CDJC Ref. 20.696 – Les enfants dans le camp de Drancy – Mémoire de maîtrise de Frederic Schaffer – Un. Paris IV – 1995-96.

CDJC – Le Monde Juif – L'Oeuvre de secours aux enfants O.S.E. –

CDJC – Le Monde Juif – Sept.-Dec. 1995 – No. 155 – Surtout les enfants –

CDJC – Ref. 21.486 – Les juifs dans la banlieue parisienne des années 20 aux années 50 = par Jean Laloum - CNRS Editions.

CDJC – Ref. 18.724 – L'Express No. 2025 – 27 Avril 1990 – Enquête sur un crime oublié – Comment en 1942, les autorités françaises ont parqué 3500 enfants juifs près d'Orléans, avant de les diriger vers les camps de la mort.

CDJC 20.208 – Une petite fille privilégiée – une enfant dans le monde des camps 1942-1945

– Témoignage et chronologie.

CDJC – Document écrit par un groupe d'étudiants a l'Institut d'histoire allemande de l'Université Rumboldt a Berlin concernant le Camp de concentration de Dora.

CDJC – Liste des organizations pro nazises ou antisémites.

CDJC – Documentation sur les activités de l'Oeuvre des Orphelins israélites de la Guerre – reconstituée en 1946.

CDJC – Document – Quelques idées sur le crime de guerre.

CDJC – Ref. CIX- Dossier sur les activités antisémites
#12 – A bas la mobilization pour les boches.
16 – Lettre envoyée du Commissariat Général aux questions juives .
17 – échange de correspondence entre le Commissariat Général aux questions juives et les autorités. (21 janvier 1942).

27 – Rapport sur la question juive – May 1941

30 – échange de lettres entre juifs et autorités. – Mai 1942.

22 – Compte rendu pour la période du 24 au 30 Mai 1942 – Mission mixte de contrôle de Foix .

34 – Lettre de l'Institut des Questions Juives au Commissaire Général aux Questions Juives – 24 Juillet 1942 –

36 – Echange de lettres entre la Direction des Etrangers et des Affaires Juives et le Commissaire Général aux questions juives – 24 Aout 1942.

37 – Lettre au Maréchal - datée 1er Sept. 1942 - demandant d'intervenir en faveur des Juifs persecutés (écrite par une française chrétienne.)

CDJC – Document antisémite fulgurant contre les Protocoles des Sages de Sion.
#122 – Au fond de l'abîme.

CDJC Ref. XCVI-14-29-47 –48-49 – Echange de correspondence avec le Commissariat Général aux questions juives démontrant la politique antisémite entre 1941 et 1944.

CDJC – Communiqué du Carnidal Gehlter – Lyon – protestant contre le traitement des déportés. – à être lu le 6 septembre (no year)

CDJC-Ref. XXII - Copie de rapports addressés à Londres pendant la clandestinité relatant la déportation des familles (+enfants) à Drancy, au Vélodrome d'Hiver.

CDJC – Agissements clandestins de l'U.G.I.F (Union Générale des Israélites de France) - 3ème Rapport sur le placement des enfants chez des aryens.

CDJC – Rapport France Libre - Ref. CCXIV: 73-74-106-103 – Echange entre le Cardinal Garlier et Vichy – l'envoi d'enfants pour remplir le quota.
Déportation d'enfants malades. Dossier 2935/2. Situation au 28 Aout 1942.
Arrestation en masse de juifs et déportés dans l'est – Sept. 1942 – parents et enfants.

CDJC – Ref. CCXXI-72 – Rapport du "Manchester Guardian" – 31/8/42 – sur la persécution des enfants juifs en France.

CDJC – Ref. CCXIX- 12,28,39,55,59,60,61,69 :– Comptes-rendus du Comité de coordination et de l'E.F.I. (entr'aide française Israélite) entre 1941-1944 – concernant les Israélites étrangers et leurs enfants, les camps de Gurs, Rivesaltes, l'immigration des enfants.

CDJC – Ref. CCVIII-3 – Extraits du Journal "The Friend"- the Quaker Weekly Journal du 23 Oct. 1942.

CDJC- Ref. CIX-117 – Pourquoi l'amitié chrétienne a participé aux opérations de criblage au camp de Vénissieux. – Essais de sauvetage d'Israélites étrangers et des enfants.

Material from Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Yad Vashem Bulletin - #12 – Dec. 1962 – Jewish Youth and the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance VII – 1968.
Hehalutz in Theresienstadt: Its influence and Educational activities, Shlomo Schmied. Ed. Livia Rothkirchen.

Yad Vashem – The Catastrophe of European Jewry – 1976 – Ref. A. 102 – 77-79:
The Fate of the Children in the Warsaw Ghetto by Adolf Berman.

Yad Vashem Studies XI – 1976 – Ed. Livia Rothkirchen – Kristallnacht at the Dinslaken Orphanage: Reminiscences. Yitzhak S. Herz.

Yad Vashem Studies XXVII – 1999 – Ed. David Silberklang – The Convent Children: The Rescue of Jewish Children in Polish Convents during the Holocaust. Nahum Bogner.

Yad Vashem - 1998: Belgium and the Holocaust – Jews, Belgians, Germans Sylvain Brachfeld. Jewish Orphanages in Belgium under the German Occupation, Ref. 46216.

Yad Veshem Doc. 95-2397- Reprinted from the Wiener Library Bulletin 1973/7

Vol. XXVII – New Series No.30/31 – J.S. FishmanJewish War Orphans in the Netherlands.

Yad Vashem Doc. 14933 – Project "Mémoire d'enfant." Various testimonies Re various hiding places and O.S.E. activities.

Yad Vashem Doc. 02/615. Our Illegal Life in Holland. Recorded on January 1958.

Yad Vashem Doc. UI 26: Children with Lost Identity. Project of Lea Balint and accompanying newspaper clips.

Yad Vashem Doc. 58-2166a. Children in Bondage. A Survey of Child Life in the Occupied Countries of Europe and in Finland, conducted by "The Save the Children Fund" in 1942.

Yad Vashem Doc. 73-726. International Year of the Child. The Child in the Years of the Second World War 1939-1945. Appeal to the Nations of the World. The Main Commission for the Investigation of NaziC rimes in Poland – Warsaw 1979.

Yad Vashem Doc. 2078-575. The World Remembers those Children. Council for the Protection of Monuments to Struggle and Martyrdom. Document presented at a Conference of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation at Trogen, Switzerland in 1948 by Poland's delegate Roman Hrabar: an extensive report on the Plight of Children during WWII.

Yad Vashem Ref. 98-F 2972. Unicef issue of the Proceedings of the Hamburg Congress of Sept. 26-29, 1993 on Children, War and Persecution. Pub lished. by Secolo Verlag, Donabruch 1995.

Yad Vashem. Ref. 102-2556F. Excerpts from Ph.D. Thesis of Emunah Nachmany-Gafny: The Removal of Jewish Children from Gentile Families in Poland in the Immediate Post Holocaust Years. Oct. 2000.

Yad Vashem. Ref. 100-3268: 2 Newsletters and relevant files (testimonies) from the Jerome Riker International Study of Organized Persecution of Children. Spring and Fall 1986, eds. Judith and Milton Kestenberg.

Yad Vashem Doc. 80-321a. M. Dvoretzki: Children without Childhood: Children in the Shoah (in Hebrew).

Yad Vashem Ref. 85-160a. Excerpts from Judith Hemmendinger: Les enfants de Buchenwald: Que sont devenus les 1000 enfants juifs sauvés en 1945? Ed. Pierre Marcel Favre, Sept. 1984. (Preface d'Elie Wiesel).

Yad Vashem Doc. 100-3282. Judith Kestenberg and Ira Brenner's: Children who Survived the Holocaust: "The Role of Rules and Routines in the Development of the

Superego" Int. Jn'l of Psychoanalysis (1986): 67, 309.

Yad Vashem Doc. 95-856- Judith S. Kestenberg's: Imagining and Remembering – Int. Jn'l of Psychiatry Related Science Vol. 24 No. 4 (1987): 229.241. Interviews of Survivors who were Children.

Yad Vashem Doc. 6894. L'enfance victime de la guerre. Une étude de la situation européenne, par le Dr. Thérèse Brosse, c. 1948 (?)

Yad Vashem Ref. 98-1028F- Deborah Dwork: Custody and Care of Jewish Children in Post-War Netherlands: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Hegemony.

Yad Vashem Ref. 103-3061F. PhD Thesis by Vicki Gordon (School of Behaviourial Science, Un. Of Melbourne, Dec. 2002. "The Experience of Being a Hidden Child Survivor of the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem Ref. 62-0089. Dr. M. Dvoretsky: Psychosiological problems of Jewish Children Hidden by Non-Jews during the Holocaust.

Journals/ articles with no specific authors:

"Aloumim" Bulletin de L'Association Israélienne des Enfants Cachés en France pendant la Shoah, 2002.

"The consequences of the Holocaust on Child Survivors and Children of Survivors." Israel Journal of Psychiatry, 2001: vol. 38, #: Special edition.

"Allegory in George Perec's *W* ou le souvenir d'enfance.". MLN 102: 867-876.

The Hidden Child Newsletter published by the Hidden Child Foundations/ADL – Spring 2002.

Literature and the Ethical Question: Lanzmann, Claude. Seminar with Claude Lanzmann Yale French Studies. 11 April 1990: 79. Ed. Claire Nouvel, 1991.

"Les intermittences de la mémoire." Revue d'histoire de la Shoah: Le Monde Juif. Revue du CDJC # 162. Janvier-Avril, 1998.

Des voix sous la cendre. Manuscrits des Sonderkommandos d'Auschwitz-Birkenau. CDJC: Revue d'histoire de la Shoah, Le Monde Juif #171, Janvier-Avril 2001.

Littérature et Psychanalyse. Vivre et écrire la mémoire de la Shoah. Actes du Colloque de Cérisy. Ed. Nadir 2002.